

Brilliant Star

A BAHÁ'Í COMPANION FOR YOUNG EXPLORERS

JULY / AUGUST 2013



LOVE

MYSTIC EXPLORER

QUEST FOR PEACE

WHAT IS THE
BAHÁ'Í FAITH?

ARE YOU A
PEACEMAKER?

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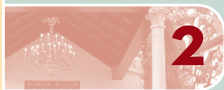
When Internet resources are provided as references, we make every effort to choose reliable websites, but we do not endorse or account for all content in these websites. We urge caution and parental guidance when using the Internet. For more information about Internet safety, visit www.wiredsafety.org

Brilliant Star empowers kids to explore their roles as world citizens. Inspired by the principles of peace and unity in the Bahá'í Faith, we encourage readers to use their virtues to make the world a better place.

The Bahá'í Faith is the second most widespread religion in the world, with over five million Bahá'ís. It was founded by the Prophet Bahá'u'lláh ("Glory of God" in Arabic) in 1863. Bahá'u'lláh taught that all people are part of one human family, and all religions come from one God. Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, interpreted His teachings and led the Bahá'í community after Bahá'u'lláh's passing.

Today, Bahá'ís work to bring love and justice to the world, and end prejudice and discrimination of all kinds.

WHAT'S INSIDE FAVORITE FEATURES



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Maya's Mysteries

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Riley's Rainforest

Shy about sharing? Try these tips and relax!



We Are One

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Radiant Stars

Get to know kids who shine, like you.



Lightning & Luna: Episode 57

Justice Jam on the road, but the Erasers are near!



Nur's Nook

Create cool nine-pointed stars at the Imagination Station!



Treble Chef's Music Café

A song about love written by youth musician Ana Bridges



Stargazer: Dr. Hoda Mahmoudi

Meet the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace.



Shining Lamp: Bahíyyih Khánúm

The "outstanding heroine" of the Bahá'í Faith



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A crossword and more from our favorite chameleon



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DEAR FRIENDS,

How do you describe fantastic friends? Are they supportive and helpful? Do they bring you joy and make you laugh? When we bring out the best in ourselves, we can inspire others. Your faith helps your virtues shine.

Those virtues include unity—a force that can change the world. Bahá'u'lláh, the Bahá'í Faith's Founder, said, "So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth."

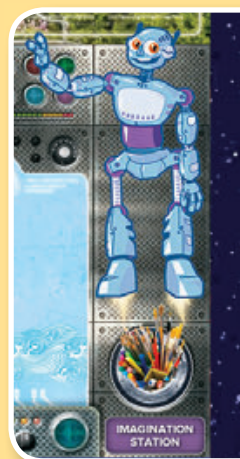
Bahá'ís believe that people of all backgrounds are one human family. The world's major religions are all part of one unfolding faith from God. God sends Messengers—including Jesus, Moses, Muhammad, and Bahá'u'lláh—at different times in history to help humanity advance toward peace.

In this issue, learn more about the Bahá'í teachings and find ways to share them. Explore how religion has evolved. Quiz yourself on peacemaking abilities. Meet Dr. Hoda Mahmoudi, who gets people talking about world peace. And go on a treasure hunt and create art at the **Imagination Station** on our new website,

www.brilliantstarmagazine.org.

Having open minds and hearts leads us through new doors of friendship and fun.

With love from **Brilliant Star**



Bahá'u'lláh's Life: Mission of Peace

Sharing His Teachings

Why are we here? How should we live our lives? What happens when we die? Throughout history, God has sent Teachers to help us answer these kinds of questions. Like Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad, and other Messengers of God before Him, Bahá'u'lláh brought divine teachings for our age. The religion He founded, the Bahá'í Faith, offers a message of peace, unity, and hope.

Bahá'u'lláh was called Mírzá Husayn-'Alí when He was born in Tíhrán, Persia (now Iran), in 1817. As a child of a wealthy nobleman, He didn't attend school, yet He was remarkably wise and could talk about difficult religious teachings with Muslim leaders. "Bahá'u'lláh," the title He would later take, means "Glory of God" in Arabic.

Bahá'u'lláh was always kind and generous. As a young man, He was offered an important job in the government, but He didn't accept it.

Instead, He chose to share His time and money with those in need. People called Him "Father of the Poor."

Vision in a Dungeon

When He was 27, Bahá'u'lláh became a follower of a new Messenger of God known as the Báb, which means "the Gate." The Báb taught that another Messenger would soon come to lead the world to unity.

Islamic authorities wanted to stop the Báb and His teachings. They executed Him in 1850. His followers, called Bábís, were persecuted terribly. More than 20,000 were killed.

In 1852, Bahá'u'lláh was put in heavy chains and thrown into a dungeon called the "Black Pit" with other Bábís. Each day, a Bábí was pulled from the dungeon, tortured, and executed. Bahá'u'lláh's family feared He would be killed. Meanwhile, their home was ransacked, and they were forced to flee.

Bahá'u'lláh spent four months in the filthy, vermin-infested Black Pit. Even in these miserable conditions, Bahá'u'lláh's spirit soared. It was during this time that He had a mystical experience that would change His life. He saw a vision of an angel, a radiant maiden, who called Bahá'u'lláh the "Best-Beloved of the worlds." He later wrote that "the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been." After this vision, Bahá'u'lláh began to reveal holy writings.

Unstoppable Mission

When He was released from prison, Bahá'u'lláh was banished from His homeland. He went to Baghdád, Iraq. Still, He continued to share His message of unity. He taught that the human race is one family and religion should be a cause of peace, not war. He called on all people to work for



November 12, 1817

Birth of Bahá'u'lláh in Tíhrán, Iran. His home in Tíhrán is shown here.



1844

Recognizes the Báb as a new Messenger of God

1852

Imprisonment in the "Black Pit" of Tíhrán. The "X" marks the site of the prison.

1853–1863

Exile in Baghdád, Iraq. From 1854–1856, He goes into the mountains to pray in solitude.



April 22, 1863

Declares Divine Mission as Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith

“These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away,
and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come...” —Bahá’u’lláh

the betterment of the world. “All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization,” He wrote. In time, He announced that He was the Messenger of God Whom the Báb had foretold.

For the rest of His life, Bahá’u’lláh lived in exile or imprisonment in what are now Iraq, Turkey, and Israel. His family shared in His sufferings. At times, they endured strenuous journeys, had very little food, lived in cramped quarters, and faced prejudice and hostility from those around them. The government thought that by sending Bahá’u’lláh away, they could stop His teachings from spreading.

But Bahá’u’lláh’s divine mission for a peaceful world was unstoppable. His exiles only carried the seeds of His Faith even farther. Bahá’u’lláh wrote more than 100 volumes worth of

At right is Arabic calligraphy meaning “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá” or “O Thou Glory of Glories!” It refers to Bahá’u’lláh.

يا باهائي

letters, tablets, and books. When He passed away in 1892, He left a written will naming His eldest son, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, as leader of the Bahá’í Faith.

Making a Vision Real

Bahá’u’lláh’s writings, along with those of the Báb and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, make up the sacred Bahá’í scriptures. The original writings are kept in the International Bahá’í Archives at the Bahá’í World Center in Haifa, Israel.

Nearby, the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh at Bahjí is the holiest spot on Earth for Bahá’ís. The Báb is buried in a majestic shrine on Mount Carmel in Haifa. Bahá’u’lláh’s wife, Navváb, and their three children are also laid to rest on Mount Carmel. Bahá’ís try to go on a pilgrimage to these and other holy places at least once during their lifetime.

More than five million Bahá’ís around the world study Bahá’u’lláh’s life of sacrifice and teachings of peace, striving to make His vision of one unified world a reality.

Bahá’u’lláh’s Teachings

Bahá’u’lláh shared these steps to peace. Imagine what the world will be like when these principles are practiced.

- Establish world peace
- We are one family
- World religions are from one God
- Prejudice must end
- Women and men are equal
- Education for all
- Economic justice



1863–1868

Exile in Constantinople (Istanbul), then Adrianople (Edirne), Turkey, where He lives in this home for one year. He begins writing to kings and rulers in 1867, urging unity.

1868

Last exile, to prison-city of ‘Akká, Israel

1877

Finally free to live in countryside homes of Mazra’ih and then Bahjí, outside of ‘Akká

May 29, 1892

Bahá’u’lláh passes away and is laid to rest in this shrine at Bahjí, in Israel.



'Abdu'l-Bahá:

"It Is the Time for Love"

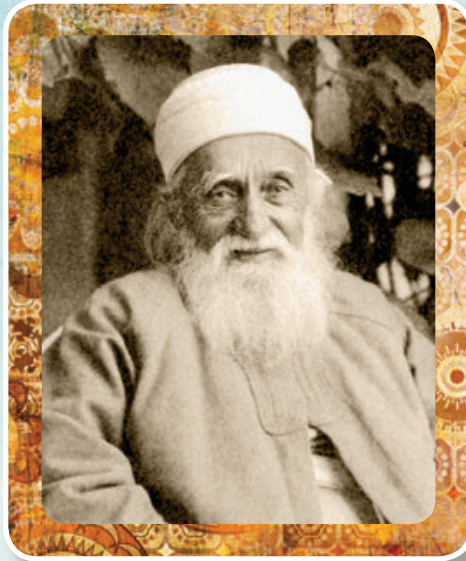
When 'Abbás Effendi was eight years old, his father, Bahá'u'lláh, was thrown into a horrible dungeon called the "Black Pit." Why? Simply because He believed in a new Messenger of God called "the Báb" ("the Gate"). 'Abbás's home in Tíhrán, Persia (now Iran), was robbed, and the family had to go into hiding. They couldn't find enough to eat. 'Abbás was chased by bullies in the streets.

The Báb's teachings encouraged education, the equality of women and men, and helping the poor. He also promised that another Messenger of God would soon appear. In the Black Pit, Bahá'u'lláh saw a divine vision announcing that He was the Messenger foretold by the Báb. Even as a child, 'Abbás recognized his father's station. He later took the name "'Abdu'l-Bahá," which means "Servant of Bahá."

Dangerous Journeys

After Bahá'u'lláh was released, He was banished from Iran. The family made a long, dangerous journey to Baghdád, Iraq, over freezing mountains. 'Abdu'l-Bahá never returned to Iran. He lived in exile or imprisonment in Iraq, Turkey, and Israel. When Bahá'u'lláh declared His Mission publicly, 'Abdu'l-Bahá devoted his life to sharing the Bahá'í teachings of peace.

In spite of harsh difficulties and demanding voyages, 'Abdu'l-Bahá focused on helping others and showering them with kindness. He always looked out for the comfort of his fellow travelers. When his companions fell terribly ill, he spent long hours nursing them back to health.



'Abdu'l-Bahá was 24 when his family was sent to the prison-city of 'Akká, Israel. Over time, as conditions eased, he went into the city to help the poor. His struggles never got in the way of his service. He said, "I was happy in imprisonment. I was in the utmost elation because I was not a criminal. They had imprisoned me in the path of God."

When Bahá'u'lláh passed away in 1892, He left a will naming 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the leader of the Bahá'í Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá guided the Bahá'ís with wisdom and love. Though still imprisoned, he wrote inspiring letters and encouraged them to share the Faith around the world.

Leading by Example

'Abdu'l-Bahá was a prisoner in 'Akká for about 40 years. In 1908, at age 64, he was finally freed. A few years later, though in poor health, he made historic journeys to Egypt, Europe, and North America. He gave hundreds of talks, urging everyone to end prejudice, treat people of all religions as friends, and build peace. He said, "The greatest need in the world today is international peace . . . It is the time for love."

'Abdu'l-Bahá passed away in 1921. Ten thousand people from several faiths gathered to honor him. In his will, he appointed his grandson, Shoghi Effendi, as the leader, or Guardian, of the Bahá'í Faith.

Today, Bahá'ís around the globe are inspired by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's example. He said, "Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path."

Shoghi Effendi: The Guardian



Shoghi Effendi adored his grandfather, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and spent as much time as possible with him. After college, he was “glad and privileged” to help ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as a secretary. Then he went to Oxford University in England. During this time, in 1921, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away.

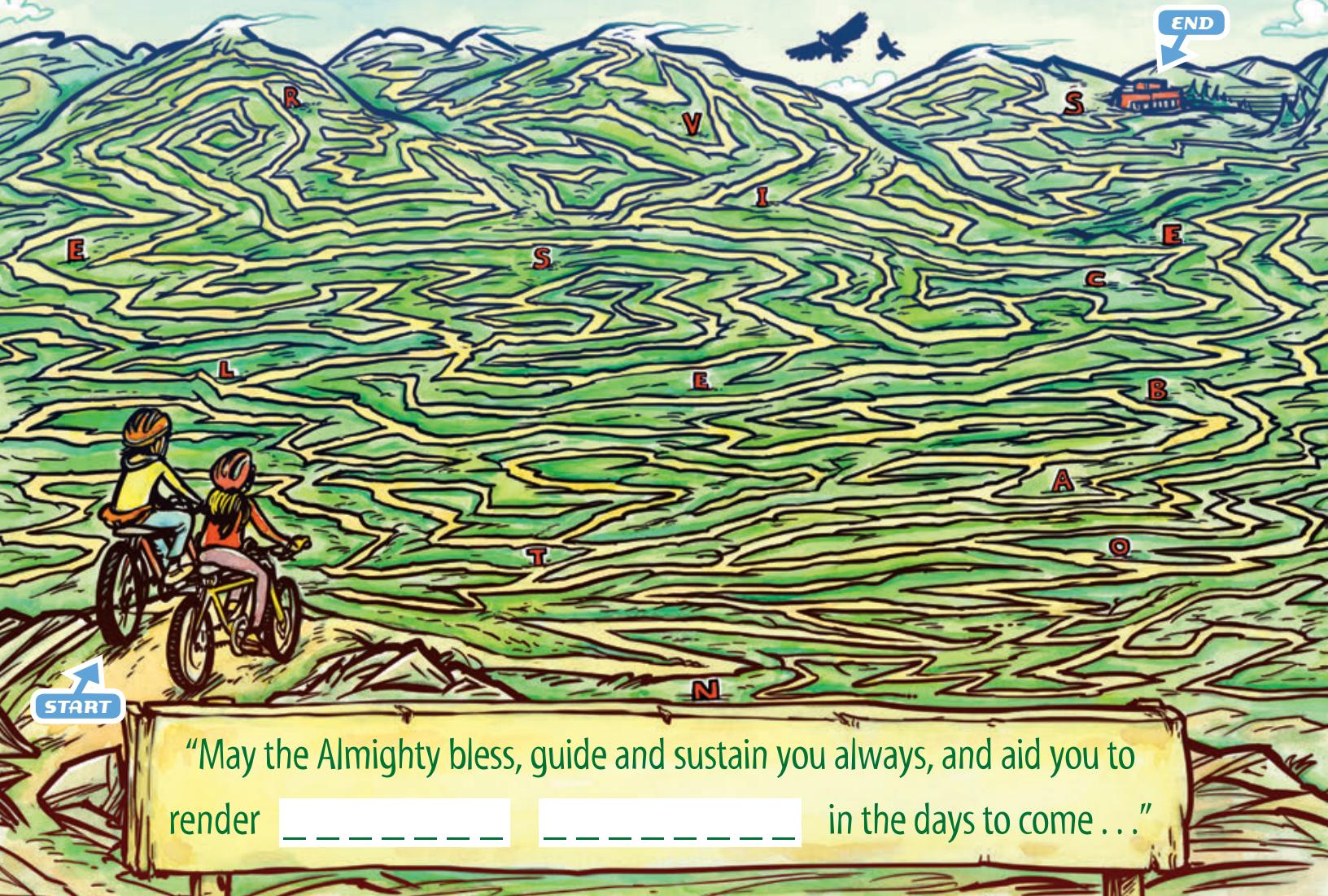
Heartbroken, Shoghi Effendi returned to Israel. He learned that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had appointed him to lead the Bahá’í Faith. It was a huge responsibility—and he was only 24! Shoghi Effendi was overwhelmed and said he needed “health, strength, self-confidence and spiritual energy.” He turned to nature and traveled for eight months. He loved hiking in the Swiss Alps. The journey renewed him.

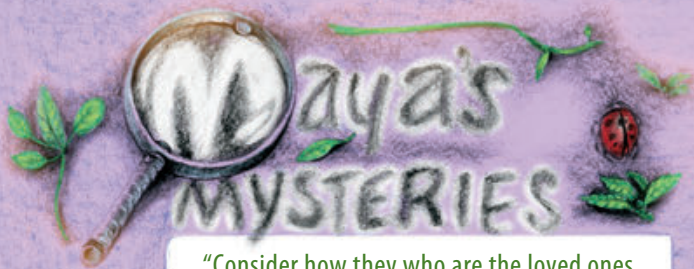
In later years, he hiked and biked on the peaceful slopes. He called himself a mountaineer.

As head, or Guardian, of the Bahá’í Faith, Shoghi Effendi inspired the global Bahá’í community. He wrote about 26,000 letters and began building the Bahá’í World Center. After years of dynamic service, at age 60, he died suddenly, in 1957.

Bahá’ís elected an international council, the Universal House of Justice, as envisioned by Bahá’u’lláh. Today, this body continues Shoghi Effendi’s work to help establish, in his words, “the unity of the human race and the peace of all mankind.”

Find the correct path through the mountains. Then write the letters in order, to see a message from Shoghi Effendi to kids.





"Consider how they who are the loved ones of God must conduct themselves, and to what heights they must soar." —Bahá'u'lláh

PEACEFUL ACTIONS ARE LIKE A CATAPULT!

BOTH CAN HAVE FAR-REACHING EFFECTS!



REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

In ancient times, a catapult was a marvel of engineering. In battle, it hurled stones or arrows for great distances. It used a central lever attached to a spring and to a fixed support called a **fulcrum**. The lever was pulled back to store energy in the spring. It was released, then—whoosh! The force sent the object into flight!

Today, catapults have advanced. A steam-powered version can help an airplane take off

from the deck of a ship at sea in just seconds!

Scientific knowledge is a powerful force. But it's not enough to create a peaceful, happy planet. We need spiritual qualities, too. Both science and religion work together to help us find solutions to Earth's problems—like war, poverty, and hunger. When we combine science with virtues such as respect and generosity, humanity reaches new heights.

What peaceful actions will you launch today?

MAKE A COOL CATAPULT

You'll Need: Duct tape • paper towel tube • 9" x 11" (22.9 x 27.9 cm) box or shoebox lid • craft stick • ruler • plastic spoon • pen • rubber band • brass paper fastener • mini marshmallows

1. Tape tube to box lid (fulcrum).



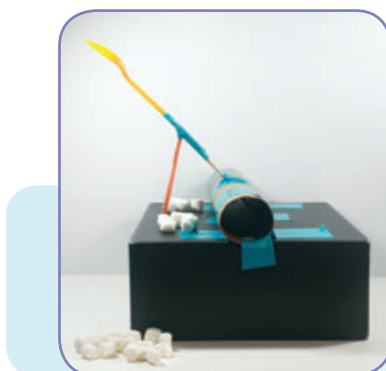
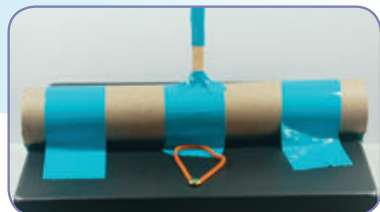
2. Tape stick to spoon (lever bar) so they overlap 1" (2.5 cm).



3. Use pen to make hole in top of tube. Put lever inside and secure with tape.



4. With pen, punch hole in box about 2½" (6.4 cm) in front of tube. Insert fastener and fit rubber band around it snugly.



5. Wrap rubber band around center of lever so it's taut when pulled backward. Tape in place. Add marshmallow, pull back, and release!

HOW IT WORKS

The rubber band stores potential energy when you pull back the lever. This energy is transferred to the lever when the band is released. It's turned into **kinetic energy**, or energy of motion, so the marshmallow goes flying.



Heart to Heart

"Man can receive no greater gift than this, that he rejoice another's heart. I beg of God that ye will be bringers of joy . . ." —'Abdu'l-Bahá

When your heart is filled with happiness, how does it feel? Warm and peaceful? Bouncy and alive?

Love can make your heart dance for joy. Have you ever felt that way? Connecting with God and with other people—family, friends, or neighbors—is a big part of being happy.

How do you touch the hearts of others? Maybe you like to sing, share your artwork, tell jokes, or give homemade gifts. You might be great at encouraging friends to use their talents or cheering them up when they're down. Even simple acts of kindness can have a big impact. Think of fun ways to bring joy to other people—you'll feel your heart do its own happy dance, too.

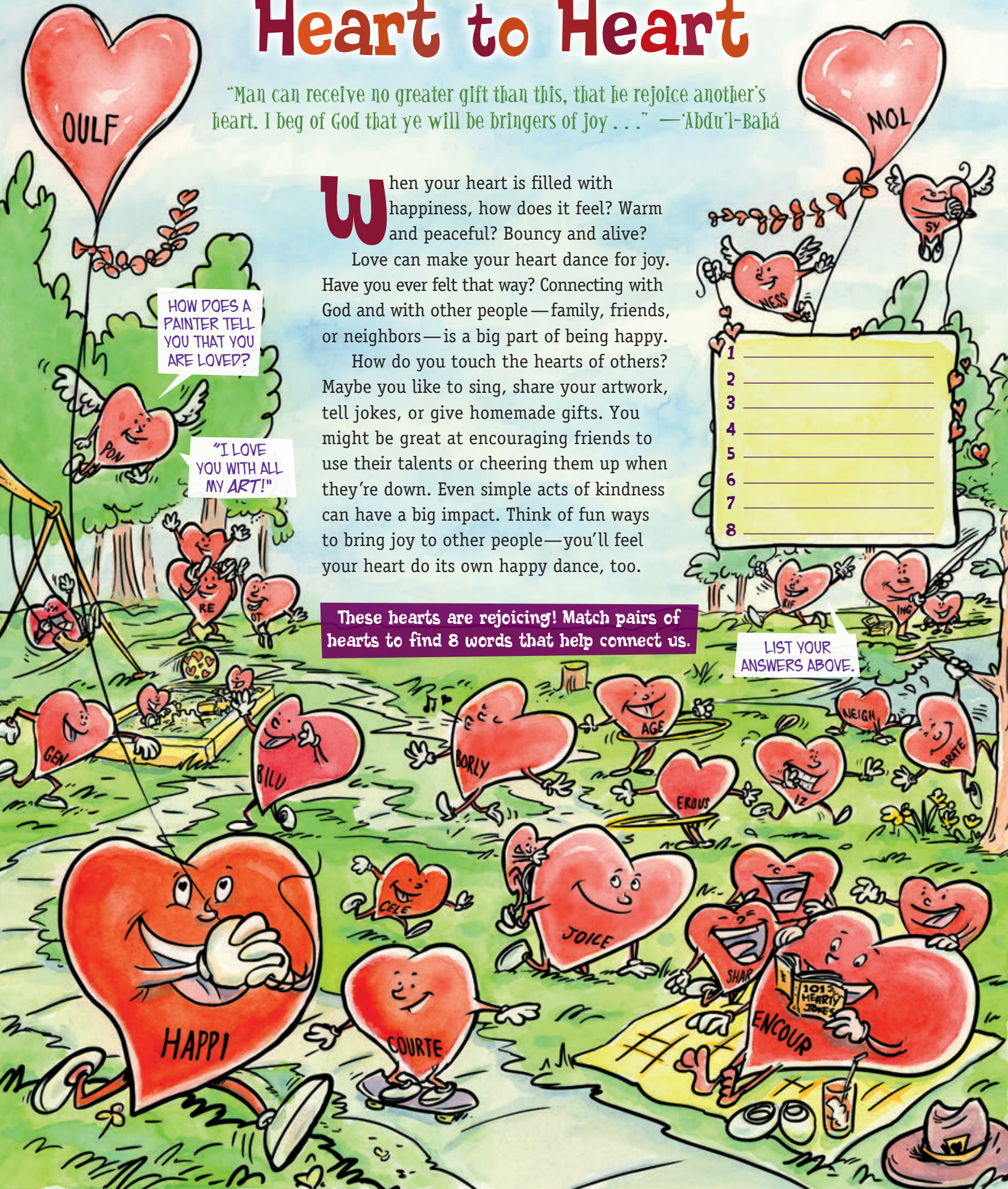
These hearts are rejoicing! Match pairs of hearts to find 8 words that help connect us.

LIST YOUR ANSWERS ABOVE.

HOW DOES A PAINTER TELL YOU THAT YOU ARE LOVED?

"I LOVE YOU WITH ALL MY ART!"

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	





RILEY'S RAINFOREST

"Send down... from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing..." —Bahá'u'lláh

Shy About Sharing?

What do roller coaster rides, pop quizzes, and talking about your faith have in common? They can all make you *nervous*!

Sharing your beliefs about your faith—or any topic that's important to you—can feel scary. What if you don't know the answer to a question? What if people think you and your religion are weird? What if you do a bad job of explaining? When you talk about something close to your heart, you might feel pressure to do it perfectly.

That pressure can cause stress. When you feel stressed, your body releases hormones such as **adrenaline**. That can make your heart beat faster and make you sweat—or feel cold. Your body sees worry as a sign of danger and prepares you to respond. If you get too anxious, it can be hard to think straight.

The good news is that you can ease your worries by being prepared.



First, pray for assistance. Then ask for help from your parents or elders in your community. They may have tips for answering questions without feeling too nervous. Study your faith and practice talking about it, so you feel ready when the time comes. Replace worrisome thoughts with positive ones, and imagine yourself speaking with ease and confidence.

Finally, when you start to get nervous, remember that you don't have to be perfect. It's okay to say that you don't have all the answers. Relax. Share what you love about your faith. When you let go of worries, you can feel confident about sharing.

Canopy of Questions

What do you want to know about staying healthy and happy? Health can involve your body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Send your questions to brilliant@usbnc.org. Responses are given by a health professional.

“How can I teach the Bahá'í Faith at school?”

—Domani, age 10, and Dyami, age 12

Dear Domani and Dyami,

Religion is a tool for knowing what God wants us to do in each age of humanity. In *this* age, God has given us a new set of values as tools to benefit all people—such as loving all humanity, no matter what their color, class, nationality, or belief. We are asked to be compassionate to all, not just to those who are near and dear to us, to serve all humanity, to be happy under all conditions, and to treat women and men as equal, instead of treating women as inferior. We are told that science and religion should work hand in hand to help all mankind.

Teaching your Bahá'í beliefs requires more than talking about it. You have to be a living example of Bahá'í values, such as being a cause of peace and harmony at home and in school. 'Abdu'l-Bahá shows the way, saying, “Be a friend to the whole human race.” In stories of the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, you can see his example of service. When you live your values, you teach your values.

Wishing you joy,
Keyvan Geula
Licensed Family Therapist

Explore & Soar: Relaxation Station

When nerves come knocking, try these tips to keep calm:

- ☑ Smile. It helps reduce stress!
- ☑ Silently repeat a positive word or phrase. (Try “Alláh-u-Abhá,” meaning “God the All-Glorious” in Arabic.)

- ☑ Shake it off—literally. Shake your hands, arms, or legs to release tension.
- ☑ Breathe deeply. Count to 10 as you inhale and exhale.



Peace It Together

"The people of this world are thinking of warfare; you must be peacemakers." —'Abdu'l-Bahá

Puzzled about world peace? Is peace even possible?

Sometimes wars and conflicts make it seem like a far-off dream. Problems like racism, religious prejudice, greed, and lack of education have led to a lot of suffering. Some people even think war will never end.



But the Bahá'í Faith says that people are noble beings who can choose to live in harmony. We've achieved amazing things—and we will achieve world peace, too. Countries work together in science, technology, business, and the arts. We help each other during natural disasters and other times of need. We know how to collaborate.

To live in peace, we need to see humanity as one family. When we truly feel connected as sisters and brothers, we have an easier time being patient, respectful, and fair. That helps to resolve differences between people *and* countries.

You have the power to help. Your choices every day can build peace in your family, school, and community. And that can make a *world* of difference!

How peaceful are you in everyday life? Take this quiz to find out.

- 1 I treat others as I would like to be treated.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 2 I like to make friends with people from different backgrounds.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 3 I think about how I can be of service to the world in my future career.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 4 I donate my time, money, or stuff to those in need.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 5 I use calm words to share my feelings, even if I'm upset.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 6 I listen and learn when people have opinions that are different from mine.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 7 When there's a misunderstanding, I'm forgiving and don't hold grudges.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 8 If I see kids being bullied, I speak up for them or ask an adult to help.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 9 With siblings and friends, I take turns, share, and work things out peacefully.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 10 I treat girls and boys with equal respect and keep an open mind about everyone's different strengths and interests.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 11 If I get angry or frustrated, I take deep breaths to calm down, so I don't take it out on others.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1
- 12 I pray and read sacred writings every day.
Often=3 • Sometimes=2 • Rarely=1



MY SCORE:

- 36-28 points** You're a true peacemaker. Keep up the great work! Your skills will help the world.
- 27-19 points** You often build peace and unity. Check out the tips in the quiz to add to your skills.
- 18-12 points** You've started sorting out your peacemaking skills. Try using more of the tips above.





WE CAN SOAR

"Humanity has two wings—one is women and the other men. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly." —'Abdu'l-Bahá

Birds swoop through the skies with amazing speed, flying incredible distances. Some can dive at over 186 miles per hour (300 kph), and others migrate for thousands of miles each year. But they wouldn't get very far with only one wing.

Humanity is like a bird, with a male wing and a female wing. To fly, both wings need to be strong—with equal rights and opportunities. It takes all of our strengths and skills to carry the world forward.

In some places, women are presidents of their countries. They run companies, earn college degrees, and travel to outer space. In other areas, millions of girls can't even go to school. Many women can't get good jobs, own property, travel, or even decide whom to marry.

Bahá'is around the globe work to help women and girls achieve new heights of justice and equality. One day, we'll all soar in freedom.

Near the Bahá'í Temple in New Delhi, India, help these nature lovers find a match for each labeled bird.



WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER

INDIAN PEACOCK

RED AVADAVAT

GOLDEN ORIOLE

HOUSE SPARROW

THIS BAHÁ'Í TEMPLE IS ONE OF SEVEN IN THE WORLD SO FAR.

OTHERS ARE IN AUSTRALIA, GERMANY, PANAMA, SAMOA, UGANDA, AND THE U.S.

ALEXANDRINE PARAKEET

BROWN-HEADED BARBET

HOOPOE

INDIAN ROBIN

EXPLORE AND PROTECT THE EARTH AND ITS CREATURES

"All the members of this endless universe are linked one to another." —Bahá'í Writings

WE
ARE
ONE

EARTH-SAVING TIP

Find energy thieves.

Many products still use power when they're off—if you keep them plugged in. That wasted standby power can add up to 5–10% of your home's electricity use!

WOW, REALLY?

No matter what you look like, the DNA of all human beings is about 99% the same.

OUR CONNECTIONS



From coral reefs to mountain peaks, the wonders of Earth are breathtaking. Nature's diversity keeps us healthy, too, by providing vital food and medicine. But pollution and other human activities harm animals, crops, soil, water, and air. Nearly 21,000 species are currently threatened with extinction! Some scientists say we're seeing Earth's sixth mass extinction—similar to what wiped out dinosaurs 65 million years ago. Everyone can do something to help Earth! What will you do?

PROTECTING OUR PLANET

Dr. Richard Alley, who studies polar ice, discovered that the last Ice Age ended abruptly—and says future climate change may be just as rapid. He's a Professor of Geosciences in Pennsylvania, and his honors include a 2011 Heinz Award. He says, "Of the many challenges we face ... the biggest is to get along with each other ... We can't get where we want to go unless we go together."



WHERE IN THE WORLD?



The Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel is a place of pilgrimage for Bahá'ís. With 19 garden terraces, it's a UNESCO World Heritage site visited by over 750,000 people annually. *Unscramble the letters to find its location:*

I A F H A ,
R L I S A E

□ □ □ □ □
□ □ □ □ □

AMAZING ANIMALS



This raptor's feathers are sacred to some American Indians. It can have a wingspan of 8 feet (2.4 m) and fly 10,000 feet (3 km) high. It symbolizes victory, freedom, and strength. *Fill in the blanks to find its name:*

□ A L □ E □ □ L E

RADIANT STARS

Getting to know kids who shine

Connect with kids around the world!
How are they like you? How are they different? Each of us has a unique story to tell. What's yours?

Shoghi K.

Age: **11**

I live in: **Colorado, U.S.**

I want to be: **My own boss**

Best quality or virtue:
Friendliness and courageousness

Hobbies or sports:
Football and basketball

The coolest thing about being a Bahá'í:
Having examples of how to get closer to God

Three words that describe the Bahá'í Faith:
Service, love, peace



If someone weren't sure there is a God, I would: **Recommend that he observe nature and reflect on how perfect it is, and then ask if so many perfect things could be created from nothing.**

To help religions get along, I would: **Host a monthly inter-faith BBQ cookout. Food is the way to everyone's heart, and getting to know people over food is the first step to peace.**

What I appreciate most in my life is: **Being with my family**

If I could be of service anywhere in the world, I would: **[Go to] Kenya, where my mother was born. I would like to be involved in helping children to read and ... to attend school.**

Yasmin B.

Age: **12**

I live in: **California, U.S.**

I want to be: **Lawyer, veterinarian, pro soccer player, or teacher**

Best quality or virtue: **Perseverance, compassion. My mom says humility :)**

Something I like about me that makes me unique: **I'm half Persian, half African American; my sense of humor and creativity. I like school.**

Favorite Bahá'í activities: **Service projects**

Place I'd love to visit: **Hawaii**

The coolest thing about being a Bahá'í: **Having junior youth groups at your house**

Something that helps me feel close to God: **Prayer and ... nature**

Three words that describe the Bahá'í Faith: **Unifying, loving, unique**

To help religions get along, I would: **Tell them to express tolerance for one another and to really LISTEN to each other.**

I like to help people by: **Making them laugh when they are sad, and celebrating their accomplishments**

If I could be of service anywhere in the world, I would: **Help victims of poverty in Africa by providing them with basics of physical and spiritual life**

The coolest thing about being a Bahá'í: **Knowing that the Bahá'í writings can help the world ... deal with problems**

Three words that describe the Bahá'í Faith: **Virtues, fun, and friendly**

If someone weren't sure there is a God, I would: **Invite them to a Bahá'í gathering, like my junior youth group**

To help religions get along, I would: **Ask President Obama to work on ending injustices ... including the persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran. I would tell him how my grandma Shidrukh was killed in Iran for her Faith and how much I love and miss her, even though I never had a chance to meet her.**

Tia B.

Age: **12**

I live in: **Bologna, Italy**

I want to be: **An architect or interior designer. Or maybe a tap dancer on Broadway!**

Best quality or virtue: **Caring and creative**

Place I'd love to visit: **Caribbean islands**

I like to help people by: **Caring for them, including those who are sick or hurt**



Serene K.

Age: 11

I live in: **Xiamen, China**

I want to:

Work with little kids who have mental disabilities, and help people who have deformed faces ... [and] swim in the Olympics ...

Best quality or virtue:

I'm really friendly and outgoing.

Favorite Bahá'í activities:

Doing home visits, organizing devotionals, inviting friends over, and going to Bahá'í summer schools

The coolest thing about being a Bahá'í:

You're free from smoking, drinking, [and] drugs, and you help to spread the Bahá'í Faith with everyone.

Three words that

describe the Bahá'í Faith:

Unity, justice, and love

Something that helps me feel close to God:

Saying prayers and writings and reading ... *Prayers and Meditations* by Bahá'u'lláh that my dad gave me

If someone weren't sure there is a God, I would:

Tell them about the Manifestations of God and how They came

What I appreciate most in my life is:

My parents, because they teach my sister and I how to live a better life ...



"God has crowned you with honor and in your hearts has He set a radiant star; verily the light thereof shall brighten the whole world!" — 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Lauren D.

Age: 10

I live in: **Florida, U.S.**

I want to be:

A drafter, artist, author, reporter, U.S. pilot, and a shop owner. (I really can't decide.)

Best quality or virtue:

Generosity

Hobbies or sports:

Percussion, gymnastics, and surf[ing]

Favorite Bahá'í activities:

I love Ayyám-i-Há! My family and I always play games and do other fun things.

The coolest thing about being a Bahá'í:

We ... personally investigate the truth.

If someone weren't sure

there is a God, I would:

Say ... believing in something gives you hope in troubled times.



Believing in something can change people.

Three words that describe the Bahá'í Faith:

Education, equality, and justice

To help religions get along, I would:

[Tell them] Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Let no man pull you low enough to hate him." ... [There] is no excuse to make someone feel that they are unworthy ...

What I appreciate most in my life is:

My family, friends, nature, and ... the military people who lay down their lives ...

Thomas G.

Age: 7

I live in: **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

I want to be: **A soccer player or a long-distance runner**

Best quality or virtue:

Love, unity, and making people laugh

Something I like about me that makes me unique:

I have friends from every continent, except Antarctica.

Favorite Bahá'í activities:

Ayyám-i-Há* parties

Something that helps me feel close to God:

Being thankful, helping people, and saying prayers

If someone weren't sure there is a God, I would:

[Tell them] I feel that whenever I say a prayer, the thing that I am saying a prayer for comes true mostly, if it is what God wants.

To help religions get along, I would:

Tell them, "Say prayers, and prayers will help you to be friends and get along."

If I could be of service anywhere in the world, I would:

Be a soccer coach and help people learn soccer all over the world.



How to be a Radiant Star:

1. If you're age 7-14, go to www.brilliantstarmagazine.org and choose "Explore," "Bahá'ís & Friends in Action," then "Radiant Stars." Click "Apply Now" and fill out the form. Or e-mail us at brilliant@usbnc.org. Include your name, age, birth date, mailing address, and phone number.
2. When it's your turn to shine, we'll send you questions and a form for you and your parents to sign.
3. Answer the questions and send them to us with the signed form, along with at least two good-quality, close-up photographs of your smiling face. Photos should be in sharp focus and show your eyes clearly. Please don't send color copies, low-resolution digital images, or copyright-protected images (like school portraits).

*Ayyám-i-Há is February 26–March 1, days of hospitality, charity, gift giving, and preparing for the Bahá'í Fast.

MESSAGE OF LOVE

“The essential foundations of the divine religions are unity and love.”
—Bahá’í Writings



HINDUISM
2000 BCE



JUDAISM
1250 BCE



BUDDHISM
528 BCE

Hinduism is one of the world’s oldest faiths, emerging in India around 2000 BCE. Hindus honor many gods and goddesses, who are often considered to be aspects of one God, or Brahman.



Krishna is one of the most widely known Hindu deities. He is sometimes portrayed as a child, a flute player, or a wise warrior. In a book called the Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna shares moral teachings.



Hindus see good deeds as bringing happiness in this life and the next. After death, they believe a person’s soul is reincarnated—it returns to Earth in another form. Hindus seek *moksha*, or freedom from the cycle of death and rebirth. Such actions as following laws, study and meditation, or worship can lead to *moksha*.



Varanasi, a sacred city to Hindus, is on the banks of the holy Ganges River.

Judaism is based on the teachings of Abraham and Moses, Messengers of God from the Middle East. Abraham, born about 1800 BCE, taught that there is one God.

Moses was born around 1400 BCE. When the Jewish people were slaves of the Egyptian pharaoh, Moses led them out of Egypt.



The Western Wall in Jerusalem, Israel, is one of the holiest places in Judaism.

Moses revealed many Jewish laws—613 in all. Among them are basic moral laws, sometimes called the Ten Commandments, which are part of many faiths. They include not harming others and having respect for your parents.



Jewish people gather to worship in synagogues, and services are often led by a rabbi. They believe that a wise leader called the Messiah will one day bring peace to the world.

The Founder of Buddhism was a Hindu prince known as Siddhartha Gautama, Who lived around 563–483

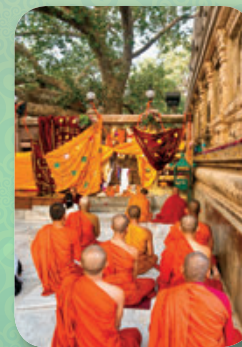
BCE in India and what is now Nepal. He attained divine knowledge around 528 BCE and became



known as Buddha (“Enlightened One”).

Buddha’s main teachings are called the *dharma*. He taught that human suffering is caused by our desire for material and temporary things. Suffering can be overcome by following the Eightfold Path, which includes kindness, honesty, effort, mindfulness, and meditation.

Buddhists seek *nirvana*—freedom from suffering and from the cycle of ongoing reincarnation of the soul.



Buddhist monks at the Bodhi tree, the site of Buddha’s enlightenment, at the Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhi Gaya, India.

What is the purpose of religion? Why are there so many different faiths? How can we all get along? The world's major religions have different names. But Bahá'ís believe that they all come from one God, Who sends Messengers through the ages to help humanity. These divine Educators all teach key truths of peace and unity. They encourage us to treat others with kindness and to be of service to the world. When we focus on our shared beliefs, we can build friendship and respect. Here are some of the faiths that guide humanity, as part of God's unfolding message of love.



CHRISTIANITY

26 CE

Christianity was founded by Jesus, Who was born into a Jewish family. He lived in the Middle East about 2,000 years ago, known as the start of the Common Era. He was about 30 years old when He began to preach. He taught that God is the Heavenly Father, and we are all His children. He urged us to show love, mercy, and compassion to one another. Because of His teachings, authorities executed Jesus by hanging Him on a cross.



St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City is one of the most important churches in Christianity.

Jesus was known as "Christ," which is Greek for "Messiah." Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah expected by the Jews. Many also believe that Jesus will return one day and establish a peaceful kingdom on Earth.



ISLAM

622 CE

Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, lived in what is now Saudi Arabia from about 570–632 CE. He began to proclaim His faith when He was about 40. In 622 CE, He moved from Mecca to Medina, and the Muslim community grew.



Muhammad taught that God, or Allah, is the All-Powerful Creator. He urged people to treat others with kindness. Muslims believe the holy book, the Qur'án, contains the words Allah revealed to Muhammad. Muslims also recognize Prophets such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

Five duties, known as the pillars of Islam, are important for Muslims: stating their faith in God and Muhammad, praying five times daily, giving to the poor, fasting, and pilgrimage.



Pilgrims at the Kaaba in Saudi Arabia



BAHÁ'Í FAITH

1844 CE

In 1844, in what is now Iran, a Messenger of God known as the Báb ("the Gate") announced that a new Messenger would follow Him. Soon, Bahá'u'lláh ("Glory of God")

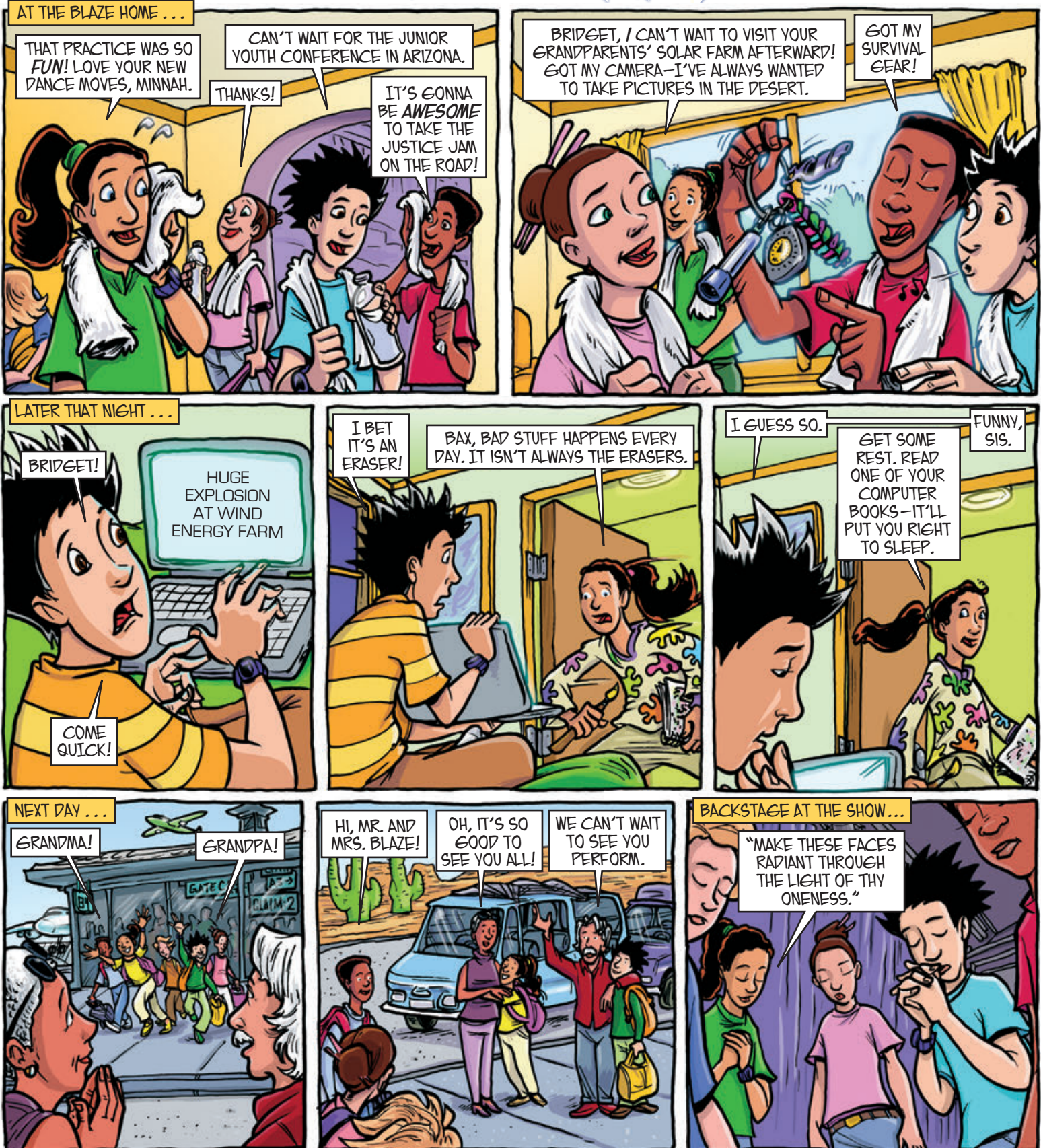


The Shrine of the Báb in Haifa, Israel

founded the Bahá'í Faith and taught that all major religions are part of one eternal faith from God. Bahá'ís believe that Bahá'u'lláh is the Promised One foretold by the Messengers of God through time.

Bahá'u'lláh lived from 1817–1892. He was imprisoned and exiled because of His Faith. He taught that we are all part of one human family. He urged us to build peace and justice and to be of service to others. His teachings also include the equality of women and men, the end of poverty and prejudice, and education for all. He envisioned a glorious future for humanity when the "Most Great Peace" will be established on Earth.

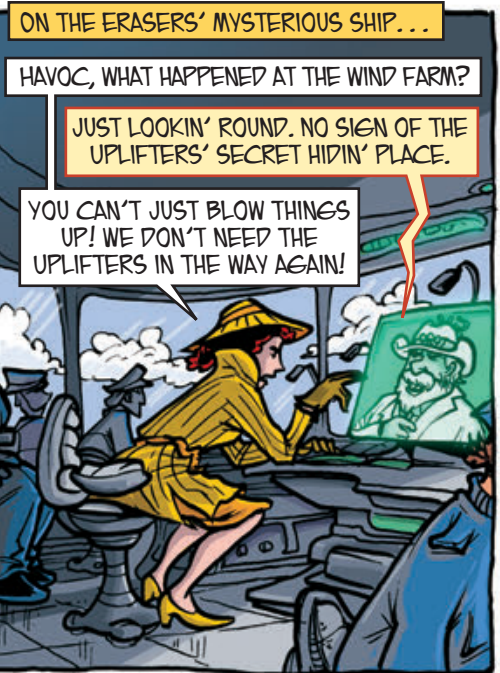






ALL PEOPLE ARE
ONE FAMILY.

WE CAN LIVE
IN PEACE
WHEN WE END
PREJUDICE!



ON THE ERASERS' MYSTERIOUS SHIP...

HAVOC, WHAT HAPPENED AT THE WIND FARM?

JUST LOOKIN' ROUND. NO SIGN OF THE
UPLIFTERS' SECRET HIDIN' PLACE.

YOU CAN'T JUST BLOW THINGS
UP! WE DON'T NEED THE
UPLIFTERS IN THE WAY AGAIN!



WE SPENT A FORTUNE ON FURY'S
STUPID ICE TRICKS IN THE ARCTIC.
THE COMMANDER DEMANDS RESULTS!

RELAX, AVARICE. FURY SAID A LONG
TIME AGO THAT THE UPLIFTERS ARE
HIDIN' SOMETHIN' BIG. I WILL FIND IT!



HUGO, WHAT
D'YA THINK
THE UPLIFTERS
ARE HIDIN'?

A WEAPON,
FOOL. WHEN I
FIND IT, I'LL
CONTROL THE
WORLD-AND
THE ERASERS!

BUT-THE
COMMANDER-

I'LL BE
THE NEW
COMMANDER!



TWO DAYS LATER ...

HERE
IT IS!

WOW. WE'RE REALLY
OUT IN THE DESERT.

THREE HOURS TO
THE NEAREST TOWN.

WHAT?!

NO WORRIES. WE'RE
ALL STOCKED UP.



THIS IS AWESOME!

TOMORROW,
WE'LL DO THE
BIG TOUR.

GRANDPA,
ARE THERE, UH,
SCORPIONS
OUT THERE?

YEP! JUST
STEER CLEAR
OF THEM.



LATER THAT NIGHT ...

MINNAH, DID YOU
NOTICE THAT BAX
IS KINDA TENSE?

COLIN, HE
DOESN'T LIKE
SCORPIONS-
ME NEITHER.

SOMETHING'S
UP. KEEP AN
EYE OUT FOR
ERASERS.

NOT THIS AGAIN.
THEY'RE NOT
UPLIFTERS...



... GO TO BED AND DREAM
UP SOMETHING LESS CRAZY!



9-Pointed Super Stars

When you're at a Bahá'í temple or Bahá'í center, how many nine-pointed stars can you spot? Look closely and you may see this symbol in the architecture and design. Bahá'í temples around the world all have nine sides. You'll also find nine-pointed stars on prayer books, in art, and on jewelry.

Bahá'ís often use the nine-pointed star as a symbol of their Faith, because the number nine is significant. In the Arabic alphabet, each letter has a numerical value. The letters in "Bahá," meaning "Glory," (and the first part of the name "Bahá'u'lláh") add up to nine. Also, since nine is the highest single-digit number, it represents completeness or perfection.



CREATE YOUR OWN COOL STARS. FIRST, GO TO WWW.BRILLIANTSTARMAGAZINE.ORG

- 1 Click **IMAGINATION STATION** icon at bottom right of Home page.
- 2 In COLOR TOOLBAR, select solid or gradient color.

- 3 In main toolbar, choose purple STAR tool. In STAR menu, drag SIDES slider to "9." Place your cursor on the canvas, then click and drag to make nine-pointed stars! Voila!
- 4 Now it's time to experiment! Use OPACITY slider to change transparency. Play with angle of star's points with SLOPE slider.
- 5 Fun, right? Use black arrow SELECT tool to move or delete a star, or change color, size, or rotation. Click HELP for tips.



- 6 Create an awesome background with paint bucket FLOODFILL tool. Use STAMP tool for fun brushes and textures. Try SPIROGRAPH tool to add patterns.
- 7 Select blue disc FILE tool to save your design. Click green NEW FILE tool to start a new one.
- 8 Share your designs by clicking PLAY in top banner and choosing GALLERY. Click "Submit Your Art" and fill out form. Then watch for your art on the website!

Arts in Action

Do you love to draw, drum, or dance? Do you ever think of these activities as prayer? They are! The Bahá'í Faith says that expressing yourself through the arts is a form of worship. When we use our creative talents, we praise our Creator.

The arts also add joy to the community. At Bahá'í schools, friends and families learn and worship together—especially in summer. They might do skits to tell a story, put sacred words to music, or make crafts that illustrate virtues. People of all faiths are welcome at these fun events that happen throughout the year.

In Bahá'í communities around the world, the arts are used to bring creativity and devotion to most classes and gatherings. Whether you use a canvas, camera, or clarinet, your imagination helps you express your unique spirit. What arts will you share with your community?

Find the items named for virtues that can help you express your faith in unique ways.



Brave Beads



Devoted Drum



Respectful Ruler



Confident Crayons



Inventive Ink



Scissors of Service



Creative Clay



Patient Paintbrush



Wise Wire

"In this wonderful new age, art is worship. The more thou strivest to perfect it, the closer wilt thou come to God." —'Abdu'l-Bahá





MUSIC CAFÉ

“Music, sung or played, is spiritual food for soul and heart.” —Bahá’í Writings

MY JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP IS PLANNING AN AWESOME PRAYER GATHERING.

IT'S ALL MUSIC—YAY! AND WE'RE SINGING SOME OF MY FAVORITE PRAYERS FROM DIFFERENT RELIGIONS. WE'RE GOING TO MEET IN THE GARDEN NEXT TO THE CAFÉ. SO FIRST, WE'LL SING . . .

IN THE GARDEN OF THY HEART

Text from Bahá'u'lláh • Music by Ana Bridges

Sheet music for the song "In the Garden of Thy Heart". The music is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody is in treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes. The music includes various chords (C#m, G#7) and musical notations such as rests, beams, and triplets.

O FRIEND! In the gar-den of thy_ heart plant naught but the
 rose of love O FRIEND! In the gar - den of thy_ heart
 plant naught but the rose of love In the gar - den of thy_
 heart In the gar-den of thy_ heart In the gar-den of thy_ heart plant
 naught but the rose of_ love_ O Ooo oo-oo oo-oo-oo
 Ooo ooo oo-oo-oo Ooo oo-oo oo-oo-oo Ooo oo oo-oo-oo ooo
 Ooo oo-oo oo-oo-oo Ooo ooo oo-oo-oo
 Ooo oo-oo oo-oo-oo Ooo ooo oo-oo-oo

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

When something is important to you, you want to tell people about it. Talking with others about your faith can start great conversations. And learning about traditions or places of worship in other faiths can build friendship and understanding.

But sometimes questions about spirituality and religion can be hard to answer. Others may not understand your beliefs, or they may think you're just wrong. If someone disagrees with you, what do you say? How do you share your beliefs with respect and peace?



I THINK PRAYER IS POWERFUL. WHEN I'M SAD OR WORRIED, PRAYING HELPS ME FEEL BETTER.

PRAYING IS LIKE TALKING TO GOD, ANYWHERE AND ANY TIME. I THINK THAT'S COOL!

OR

WRITE WHAT YOU WOULD SAY:



THERE ARE SO MANY RELIGIONS, AND LOTS OF THEM ARE FIGHTING.

DOESN'T RELIGION JUST CAUSE PROBLEMS?

GOD CREATED RELIGION TO BUILD PEACE. IT'S SAD THAT PEOPLE START FIGHTS ABOUT IT.

RELIGIONS CAN GET ALONG PEACEFULLY. WE HAVE TO FOCUS ON THE THINGS WE HAVE IN COMMON.

OR

WRITE WHAT YOU WOULD SAY:



MY DAD SAYS YOU CAN ONLY GET TO HEAVEN IF YOU FOLLOW OUR RELIGION.

I DON'T THINK HEAVEN BELONGS TO JUST ONE RELIGION. THERE ARE DIFFERENT PATHS TO HEAVEN AND TO GOD.

THE WAY TO HEAVEN IS DIFFERENT FOR MANY PEOPLE. TO ME, IT'S BEING A GOOD PERSON AND HELPING OTHERS.

OR

WRITE WHAT YOU WOULD SAY:

Dr. Hoda Mahmoudi



What if you moved to a new country where you didn't know anyone *and* you didn't speak the language? That's what Hoda Mahmoudi experienced at age 10, when she left Iran for Utah, U.S., with her family. She loved learning English and finding out about new cultures. Hoda's interest in diversity led her to study sociology at the University of Utah. Since then, she has won honors as a college professor and dean. Now she's the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland.

Hoda brings professors, writers, and students together to answer big questions, such as, "How can we create world peace?" She gives talks and writes about steps we can take toward peace, such as protecting human rights and ending prejudice. She encourages people to "reflect and think more about the kind of world we want to have . . ." Hoda currently lives in Washington, D.C.

Q: What's your favorite childhood memory?

A: I have a brother who is six years older than me. And at our home in Tihrán, he would have his youth group meet . . . They started to enact [episodes from the Bahá'í history book] *The Dawn-Breakers* . . . [such as the heroine] Táhirih removing the veil [to show her equality] . . . And I remember how exciting it was because I was . . . see[ing] these young people enacting this . . . It was just the most memorable thing in my childhood . . . [They played orchestral music in the background], and from then on, I fell in love with classical music.



Hoda (front) with her family in Iran in 1957. They moved to the U.S. in 1959, and Hoda started school in Utah at about age 10 (right).



Q: What was one of the most challenging experiences for you when you were a kid, and how did you handle it?

A: I was almost afraid of school . . . When I came to the U.S., I was amazed at how different the school system was . . . You had boys and girls in the classroom, and I had gone to an all-girls school in Iran . . . I didn't know [English]—French was my second language . . . I was put into fifth grade and told that I would pick up English. And I always had anxiety about that . . .

Q: How did you decide you wanted to be a sociologist and a professor?

A: At the university, the world opened up to me . . . I just fell in love with that academic environment . . . I got my master's [degree] in counseling psych[ology] . . . But sociology was more suitable to my view of the world. I was always interested . . . in other countries, other people, other cultures . . . So I got my Ph.D. in soc[iology] . . .



Q: What do you do as the Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland?

A: I have fun . . . What I do here is try to . . . [increase] our knowledge about the very complex topic of peace . . . I am . . . looking for those professors, academics, [or] practitioners who in their research are providing amazing solutions or . . . forecasting what is happening . . . [with] various issues, such as [the] equality of women and men, racism, the environment, the economy . . . prejudice, anything that is an impediment to peace . . . I want to invite these professors, these thinkers, to come and present their ideas . . . and then to publish these wonderful ideas . . .

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: Classical music is my biggest . . . I love the arts. I used to dabble in photography, stamp collecting, wildflower collections . . . hiking every single mountain: Vail, the Wasatch Mountains, skiing . . . Nature is extremely important for me.

Left: The 2013 Bahá'í Chair for World Peace Annual Lecture celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Chair. Gender equality was a one of the focuses of the event.

Right: Hoda talks to students and professors about humanity's path to peace.

Q: Are there certain strengths you see that kids and junior youth can use to contribute to peace?

A: Oh, there's tons . . . They can be examples to their friends about how they don't bully other children, how they embrace children from any background, culture, class . . . The manner in which they approach their education, that they are serious about doing well . . . understanding that eventually when they do [well] in school, they are going to be a very positive force in the world . . . From these small steps, big things are going to happen.

Q: What would you say to someone who thinks that war and violence are part of human nature and can't be stopped?

A: I would not disagree with them. But . . . human nature has two sides. We can be quite ugly as human beings . . . We have enough examples of that. I think, equally, we have enough examples of the positive things . . . As much energy as we [put into] planning and organizing for war, if we put that much energy into planning and organizing for peace, I think it would be interesting . . . Everyone can draw from values that . . . [make] human beings more tolerant of each other . . . more willing to do good for the common good.

Q: What is one of the biggest barriers to peace, and how can we overcome it?

A: 'Abdu'l-Bahá . . . said most conflicts stem from prejudice . . . We have so many prejudices that we're almost unconscious of them. Whether it's national, class, race, gender . . . And I think wars, injustices, economic inequalities, all of these other issues stem from prejudice.

Q: If you had one wish for *Brilliant Star* readers, what would it be?

A: That they take the knowledge from this magazine and find ways to apply it to their daily actions.

TO BE, OR NOT TO BE DIFFERENT?

BY ANISA P., AGE 13



It's the day before winter break, and kids are full of cheer, only wishing the holiday would arrive sooner. With all of your classmates asking each other what they wanted for Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa, being the only Bahá'í at school can sometimes feel quite lonely. You may wonder why you don't exchange gifts like your friends do. Though you can take this opportunity to think about all the great things you will receive on Naw-Rúz (New Year) and Ayyám-i-Há. Ayyám-i-Há is a time of charity, service, and gift giving.

It may seem that being the only Bahá'í at your school is "weird," but really you are just like any other student. You just believe in a newer religion.

The Bahá'í Faith was founded by Bahá'u'lláh, the latest Manifestation from God for today. Bahá'u'lláh was from Persia (now known as Iran). He emphasized the spiritual unity between everyone, where people see eye to eye. This religion allows people to look at each other from their inner attributes, rather than their peripheral aspects. That

basically means that people can look at each other for who they really are, rather than judging them based on their looks.

You have probably watched the news—whether it was for a homework assignment or you wanted to broaden your knowledge about the daily events in the world. The majority of the time, the news discusses horrific events that happened, involving murder, robbery, or kidnapping.

"The essential message of Bahá'u'lláh is unity between everyone..."

This Faith focuses more on developing a peaceful and safe world, where people can actually watch the news to hear about good deeds rather than serial killers.

Right now you still may feel different, but there are more than five million Bahá'ís, living in nearly every country around the world.

The essential message of Bahá'u'lláh is unity between everyone, regardless of gender, race, or religion.

Wouldn't it be nice for everyone to live in a peaceful world where they could leave their doors unlocked and be able to go outside without worrying about being robbed or even killed?

In life, someone may ask you to explain about the Bahá'í Faith. First you may feel awkward, or even out of place. Sometimes it may seem hard to explain the Faith. But you can practice first, by pretending you're the other person. Some questions you might be asked include: "What do you believe in? Where did the Bahá'í Faith begin? Where or when do you gather with other members? Do you believe in one or many Gods?"

In my school, we had a world religions class. We explored many of the religions to get a general understanding that they are alike in many ways. The goal of the class was to see how religious understanding can reduce conflict in our society today. Sure, I was the only Bahá'í when we wrote down what religion we each were. But I didn't feel shy or weird at all, because I learned that being unique isn't necessarily a bad thing. Being different is great.

Changing the World

"Divine assistance is promised to all those who arise to serve humankind in response to the galvanizing call of Bahá'u'lláh." —Bahá'í Writings

Ready to help change the world? Around the globe, Bahá'ís invite kids of all faiths to gather for study and service. In cities, towns, and villages, kids ages 12–15 join junior youth groups. Along with mentors, they study workbooks, do art, and play games. It's a fun way to explore your spiritual self and learn new skills.

Kids in each group decide what their community needs are—then they put their skills into action. Some pick up trash, visit senior centers, collect

donations, create inspiring videos, or make lunches for the homeless. In Katuyola, Zambia, where deforestation is a big problem, kids and youth started planting trees to help the environment. The project grew, and the whole community got involved.

Kids of any age can help others. You can make a big difference with your strengths—like creativity, energy, and optimism. You can even start your own group. Grab some friends, make a plan, and get started!

ZAMBIA IS A SAFARI WONDERLAND. WE HAVE ELEPHANTS, RHINOS, LEOPARDS, CROCODILES, MONKEYS, AND AT LEAST 740 SPECIES OF BIRDS!

WE STARTED A COOL TREE-PLANTING PROJECT—WILL YOU HELP?
UNSCRAMBLE THE LETTERS TO SPELL WORDS ABOUT HELPFULNESS.



SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

Bahíyyih Khánum (1846–1932): The Greatest Holy Leaf

The blistering August sun beat down on the weary group of about 70 Bahá'í exiles, drifting on the Mediterranean Sea. A faint wind barely pushed their sails. It was 1868, and Bahíyyih Khánum was about 21 years old. After “eight hours of positive misery,” they reached the filthy prison-city of ‘Akká, Israel. They were marched through the streets, past a jeering crowd, to an old army barracks. Conditions were so foul that Bahíyyih fainted.

The Bahá'ís were crammed into two rooms. At first they had no fresh water, then only salty bread to eat. Bahíyyih and almost all of them fell ill, and three men died. Yet through these trials, Bahíyyih Khánum showed patience and unshakable hope. She had joined her father, Bahá'u'lláh, in exile since she was only six.* Their family was persecuted because officials wanted to stop the Bahá'í Faith. Bahíyyih cheerfully endured hardship and served everyone selflessly. Bahá'u'lláh called her the “Greatest Holy Leaf” and said she had “a station such as none other woman hath surpassed.”

Gentle Authority

In time, conditions eased, and the Bahá'ís moved to homes in the city. The people of ‘Akká came to respect the integrity of the Bahá'ís who followed the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to be just and kind to all.

When Bahá'u'lláh passed away in 1892, Bahíyyih was devastated, but she carried on. Bahá'u'lláh had appointed her brother, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, as head of the Faith. Bahíyyih faithfully supported him and managed his household. When visitors came from afar, she worked tirelessly to make them happy and comfortable.



Bahíyyih Khánum wrote, “Our unity and love must be such as to cause the peoples of the world to join hands in amity . . .”

One woman from the U.S. noted Bahíyyih’s “strong yet gentle quality of authority” and described her “deep understanding eyes shedding the light of the Love of God upon us.”

When ‘Abdu'l-Bahá traveled to the West from 1911–1913, he confidently trusted Bahíyyih to lead the Bahá'ís in the Holy Land—an impressive role at a time when women were not considered as capable as men. She met with officials, encouraged the community, and helped the

poor. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá called her “my honored and distinguished sister” and “the companion of my heart.”

Cheerful Heroine

In 1921, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá passed away. He had named his grandson, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian of the Faith. Again Bahíyyih, despite her grief, was a pillar of strength. Shoghi Effendi said she was his “chief sustainer.” When he traveled, she led the growing, global Faith, corresponding with Bahá'ís around the world.

“It always cheers my heart,” she wrote, “to hear from the dear friends whose hearts are so full of love and devotion . . .” She said, “We can take no greater step toward the Heavenly Kingdom . . . than that of loving service to all mankind.”

On July 15, 1932, at age 86, Bahíyyih Khánum passed away. Shoghi Effendi mourned her deeply. For her lifelong efforts, Bahíyyih Khánum is considered the “outstanding heroine” of the Bahá'í Faith. Shoghi Effendi praised her “cheerfulness that no amount of sorrow could becloud” and her “saintly life . . . endowed with a celestial potency that few of the heroes of the past possessed.”

Hoshi's Adventures:

TREASURE HUNT

Hi, I'm Hoshi. I love traveling on land, in the air, through water, and across space—all on the **Mystic Explorer** at www.brilliantstarmagazine.org.

The **Mystic** is full of fun stuff to do. You can create your own captain's profile and visit incredible places. Make art in the Imagination Station, play games, enter

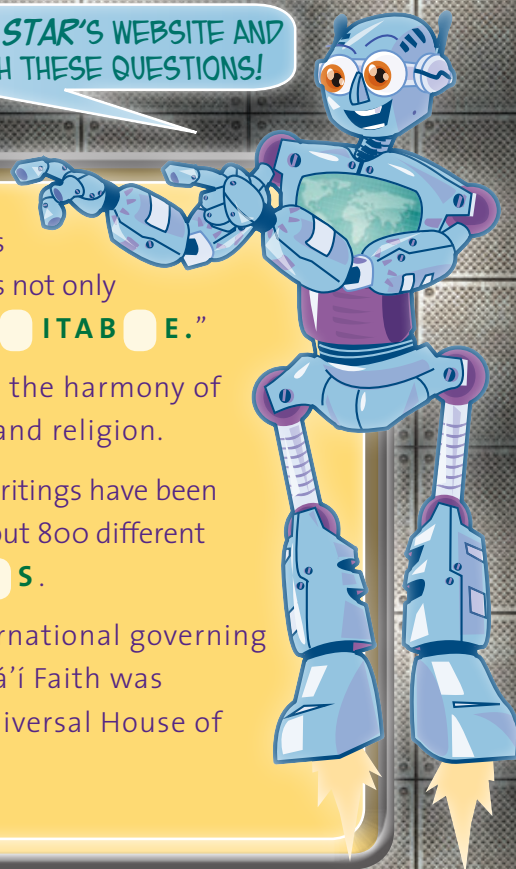
a creativity contest, and read kids' blogs.

In the "**Explore**" section, find out more about Bahá'í beliefs, such as building world peace and ending prejudice. And meet friends who are working to make Earth a better place.

Come aboard the **Mystic Explorer** for some awesome adventures!

READY FOR A TREASURE HUNT? GO TO **BRILLIANT STAR'S** WEBSITE AND CHOOSE THE "**EXPLORE**" SECTION FOR HELP WITH THESE QUESTIONS!

1. Bahá'u'lláh taught that all major **RE** **G** **NS** come from one God.
2. Bahá'u'lláh had a divine vision in a prison known as the "**L** **CK** **P** **T**."
3. One important Bahá'í belief is to seek **R** **U** **H** with an open mind.
4. The Bahá'í **A** **EN** **AR** has 19 months of 19 days each.
5. Every Bahá'í **E** **M** **LE** is circular, with nine sides and nine gardens.
6. At the start of each Bahá'í month, Bahá'í communities gather for **E** **A** **S** .
7. The Bahá'í writings say, "World peace is not only possible but **I** **N** **E** **IT** **A** **B** **E**."
8. Bahá'ís believe in the harmony of **S** **I** **N** **E** and religion.
9. So far, the Bahá'í writings have been translated into about 800 different **A** **N** **U** **A** **G** **S**.
10. In 1963, the international governing body of the Bahá'í Faith was elected—the Universal House of **U** **T** **I** **E**.



Mystic Explorer



www.brilliantstarmagazine.org



DOWN

1. Shoghi Effendi loved _____ in the Swiss Alps. (p. 5)
3. When you feel nervous, replace worrisome thoughts with _____ ones. (p. 8)
5. People are _____ beings who can choose to live in harmony. (p. 9)
6. Hoshi loves traveling on an amazing ship called the _____ Explorer. (p. 27)
7. 'Abdu'l-Bahá always looked out for the comfort of his fellow _____. (p. 4)
8. "The essential foundations of the divine religions are _____ and love." (p. 14)
10. Anisa says being _____ is great. (p. 24)
11. Thomas and Lauren love this Bahá'í festival. (p. 13)
14. Shoghi and Serene use this word to describe the Bahá'í Faith. (pp. 12–13)
15. Yasmin and Thomas want to be _____ players. (pp. 12–13)

ACROSS

2. Both _____ and religion work together to help us find solutions to Earth's problems. (p. 6)
4. Simple acts of _____ can have a big impact. (p. 7)
9. The _____ we do on Earth lasts beyond our lifetimes. (p. 29)
12. Zambia is a _____ wonderland. (p. 25)
13. There are seven Bahá'í _____ in the world so far. (p. 10)
16. Dr. Hoda Mahmoudi, the Bahá'í Chair for World _____, loves finding out about new cultures. (p. 22)
17. Number representing completeness or perfection in the Bahá'í Faith (p. 18)
18. Bahíyyih Khánum was the outstanding _____ of the Bahá'í Faith. (p. 26)
19. Expressing yourself through the _____ is a form of worship. (p. 19)

FROM OUR MAILBOX

[Brilliant Star] helps me because it makes me feel more spiritual. I like the songs. When I read about 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Bahá'u'lláh, I start to realize what to do in situations and that I should try to act like them.

—Layla H., age 11, Virginia, U.S.



ANSWERS

KEY: T=Top, C=Center, B=Bottom, L=Left, R=Right

Page 5: notable services

Page 7: Celebrate, courtesy, encourage, generous, happiness, neighborly, rejoice, sharing

Page 10: Alexandrine parakeet at TL, Brown-headed barbet at BC, Golden oriole at TR, Hoopoe at TL, House sparrow at TR, Indian peacock at BC, Indian robin at CL, Red avadavat at TR, White-throated kingfisher at BL

Page 11: Haifa, Israel; Bald Eagle

Page 19: Beads at BL, crayons at CL, clay at CR, drum at TR, ink at CR, paintbrush at C, ruler at C, scissors at BL, wire at TR

Page 25: 1) service, 2) caring, 3) justice, 4) unity, 5) humor, 6) focus, 7) love, 8) trust, 9) zeal

Page 27: 1) religions, 2) Black Pit, 3) truth, 4) calendar, 5) Temple, 6) Feast, 7) inevitable, 8) science, 9) languages, 10) Justice

Mystic Journey

Imagine you're on a thrilling quest through wondrous, mystical worlds. As you steer your ship across the cosmos, you gain strength and wisdom, leading you closer to your destination.

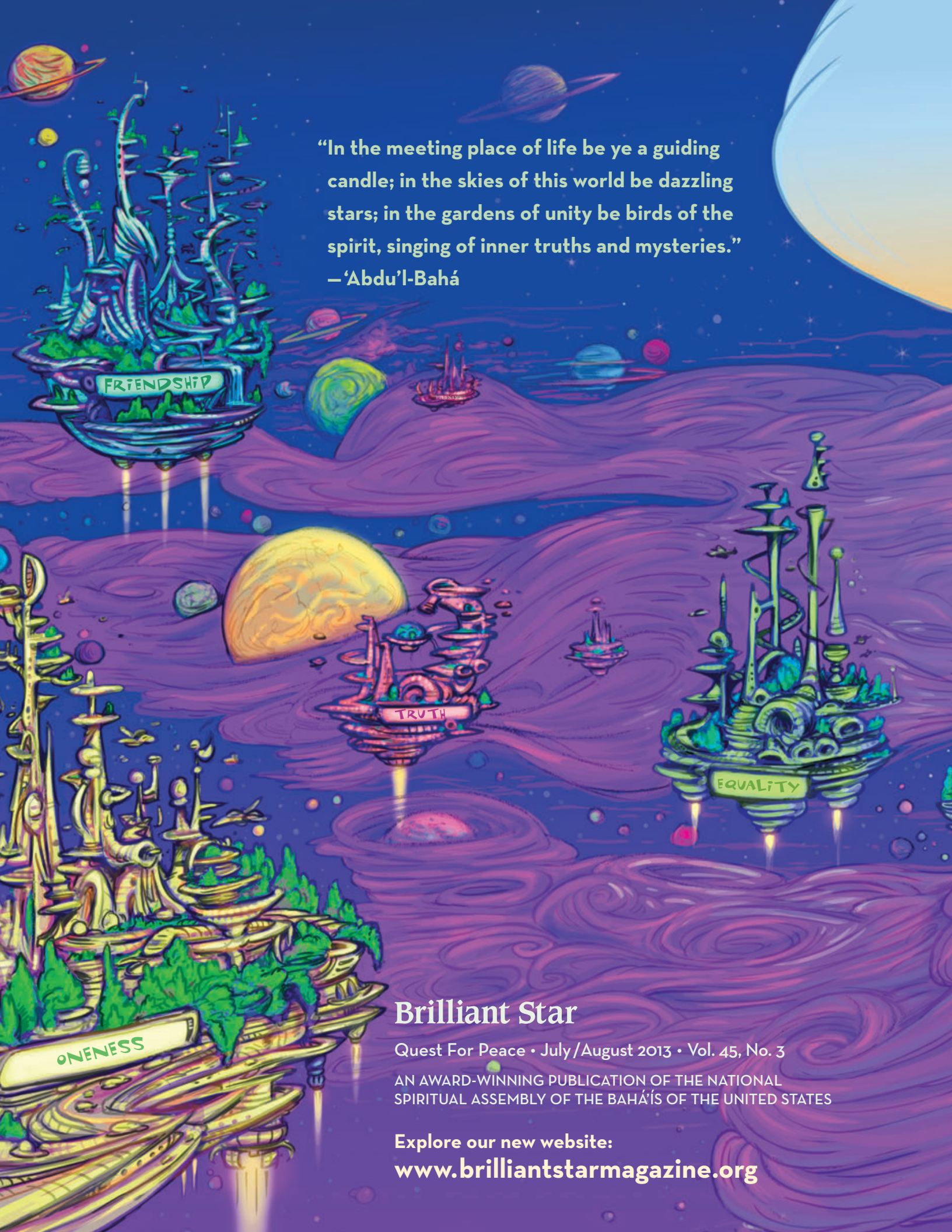
Each of us really *is* on an amazing journey—a spiritual quest. As we travel through life, we face challenges that help us develop our spiritual qualities—such as honesty and compassion. The virtues we strengthen help us grow closer to God.

Bahá'ís believe humanity is on a journey, too. Together, we're exploring how to create unity on Earth. We have to overcome obstacles, such as prejudice and negativity. Bahá'u'lláh's teachings of justice and equality can guide us to peace.

These spiritual explorations are never-ending. Even after we leave this world, our souls continue to grow closer to God. And the good we do on Earth lasts beyond our lifetimes, too. Where will *your* journey take you?

Board the **Mystic Explorer**
and go to the **Pathway to Peace**.





“In the meeting place of life be ye a guiding
candle; in the skies of this world be dazzling
stars; in the gardens of unity be birds of the
spirit, singing of inner truths and mysteries.”
— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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