

*A study guide
to the*

Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

developed by

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Overview of this study guide to the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

Introduction

Any study of Bahá'u'lláh's writings requires the use of several approaches. In this study you will read the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf from beginning to end; look for major themes; investigate the meaning of many references Bahá'u'lláh makes to the Qur'án and to people, places, and events in His life; and explore the importance of what Bahá'u'lláh has to say in this, the last major tablet of His revelation. The goals of this study guide are to:

- Increase your knowledge of the historical context of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation
- Give you greater insight into Bahá'u'lláh's identity, His purpose, and the proofs that validate His claims
- Promote a deeper understanding of His teachings
- Improve your ability to teach His Cause
- Stimulate action based on the knowledge gained through this study

The study guide is composed of six sessions, each of which covers approximately thirty pages of the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf. There are two parts to each session: "Individual Work" and "Group Work." The purpose of the "Individual Work" sections is to help you to identify major themes and ideas, to understand the meaning of certain references, and to prepare you for exploring the broader issues addressed in "Group Work." The purpose of the "Group Work" sections is to build unity of understanding within a group and to discuss the broad implications of Bahá'u'lláh's message for individuals and for society. If you do not have access to a study group, you should complete the "Group Work" sections on your own. Both the "Individual Work" and "Group Work" sections follow a four-part study process that includes (1) preparing, (2) reading, (3) reflecting, and (4) acting upon new understandings.

Passages from the book *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* are often cited by page and line number—for example, the notation *Epistle* 18:1–20 means page 18, lines 1 through 20. All editions of this book published by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust (or Committee) of the United States since 1941 have the same content on the same numbered pages.

A deep study of Bahá'u'lláh's writings takes time and effort. Bahá'u'lláh promises, however, that the benefits to be gained from such study stand in direct proportion to the eagerness and effort of the student. Because the "Group Work" sections build on the knowledge and insight gained from completing the "Individual Work" sections, the entire study will be most effective when you do the "Individual Work" before tackling the "Group Work."

Overview of the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf was the last major work to flow from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh. Written about one year before His death in 1892, it marks the end of forty years of divine revelation. In the Epistle, Bahá'u'lláh quotes "some of the most characteristic and celebrated passages" from His own revelation and proclaims to the world clearly and without hesitation Who He is and why He has come. Thus the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf offers an extraordinary model of how to use the writings of Bahá'u'lláh to teach the Bahá'í Faith—a model provided by Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

In Islam, as in other religions, the clergy holds a certain influence over the Muslim believers. During Bahá'u'lláh's time, the clergy's power was very great. In Iraq and Iran, members of the clergy were responsible for much of the persecution the followers of Bahá'u'lláh suffered. Bahá'u'lláh wrote the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf in response to the tyranny of a particular cleric—Shaykh Muhammad Taqí-i-Najafí in Isfahan. This Shaykh's father, Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir, also a powerful cleric, was a confirmed enemy of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Many outstanding Bahá'ís were persecuted and a number martyred at his command. For his viciousness, Bahá'u'lláh named him "the Wolf." When he died, his son, whom Bahá'u'lláh called the "Son of the Wolf," assumed his position of power and continued the same course of persecution.

In the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Bahá'u'lláh tries to convince the Shaykh to recognize his wrongdoing, to beg God's pardon and mercy, to mend his ways, and to recognize the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause. In exchange, Bahá'u'lláh promises that the Shaykh will receive a generous share from the ocean of God's forgiveness and bounty.

In the course of His epistle, or letter, Bahá'u'lláh proclaims that the source of His revelation is God. He describes the circumstances surrounding His revelation and repeats basic truths set forth elsewhere in His own teachings. He restates His identity and advances arguments that prove the truth of His Cause.

Unfortunately, Bahá'u'lláh's compelling proofs fell on deaf ears. But even though the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf is ostensibly addressed to Shaykh Muhammad Taqí-i-Najafí, Bahá'u'lláh has another audience as well. He speaks to all of humanity, reminding us that God's great mercy and grace await those who heed the call of the "Supreme Mediator," the "Lord of the Day of Reckoning," and arise to serve His mighty Cause. For a detailed summary of the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, see Adib Taherzadeh's *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: Mazra'ih & Bahjí 1877–92* (Vol. 4), pp. 368–412. For a description of the odious deeds of the "Wolf" and of the "Son of the Wolf," see Shoghi Effendi's *God Passes By*, pp. 200–201.

Notes: This guide is reproduced and edited from a version printed in the pages of *The American Bahá'í*, February through April 1991. In references to the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf purely as a scriptural work, as with other sacred writings of Bahá'u'lláh and scriptures of other Revelations of God, the title appears in regular type. However, when the reference is specifically to the published book *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; especially when page numbers are cited, the title appears in *italic type*.

SESSION 1: Pages 1:1–30:15

Individual Work

Preparing for Study

Materials: a copy of *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; a dictionary; a copy of this study guide; 5x7-inch note cards or a spiral notebook.

Optional but helpful: Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*; Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: Mazra'ih & Bahjí: 1877–92* (Vol. 4).

Spiritual Preparation: Read the following passage from *Epistle* p. 2, and take a few moments to meditate on it: “Purify thou, first, thy soul with the waters of renunciation, and adorn thine head with the crown of the fear of God, and thy temple with the ornament of reliance upon Him.”

Overview of pages 1:1–30:15: The themes of Bahá'u'lláh's entire letter are sounded with great clarity in the opening pages of the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*. Stated directly and interwoven in prayers revealed especially on the Shaykh's behalf are Bahá'u'lláh's pronouncements that:

1. God is the source of His Revelation.
2. The Word of God is the proof of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause.
3. Through Bahá'u'lláh unity and oneness have been revealed to humanity.
4. He is the Most Exalted Pen, the Supreme Mediator, as well as the dawning-place of the names and the dayspring of the attributes of God.
5. Humans were created to remember God, to glorify Him, to recognize His Manifestation, to be steadfast, and to aid His Cause.
6. One's response to God's new revelation has consequences.

In the prayers revealed on the Shaykh's behalf (see *Epistle* pp. 3–9, 9–10, 18), Bahá'u'lláh lays bare the cleric's sins and describes the spiritual consequences of his actions. Despite the seriousness of the Shaykh's transgressions,

God's forgiveness is always at hand (6). However, an act of will is needed. The Shaykh must acknowledge his wrongdoing and ask God for forgiveness. Then he must embrace Bahá'u'lláh's Cause and arise to promote it (7–9).

Bahá'u'lláh asks God to aid the Shaykh to be fair and equitable in his judgment. Without the practice of equity and justice there can be no order and tranquillity in the world (28–29). Bahá'u'lláh further advises the Shaykh to quench, by “the power of wisdom and the force of” his “utterance,” the “enmity and hatred” existing in the world (12). To assist him, Bahá'u'lláh restates certain teachings about justice and equity and about the purpose of the Manifestations of God and religion (12–17).

Bahá'u'lláh suggests that if the Shaykh were to listen to His voice, he would cast away his possessions and follow Him (19). Bahá'u'lláh describes the circumstances surrounding the birth of His revelation in the Síyáh-Chál dungeon of Tehran. He tells how waywardness and folly among His followers were changed, through the power of His Word and God's grace, into piety and understanding and how weapons were converted to instruments of peace (20–21).

Throughout the first section of the *Epistle*, but especially in the closing pages of that section (29:1–30:15), Bahá'u'lláh speaks beyond the Shaykh and addresses the Bahá'ís. He encourages them to “Strive that haply the tribulations suffered by this Wronged One and by you, in the path of God, may not prove to have been in vain” (29). As the “shepherds of mankind,” they have a duty to “liberate” their “flocks from the wolves of evil passions and desires, and adorn them with the ornament of the fear of God” (29). He reminds them of the value of virtuous character and upright conduct and teaches that the exercise of justice and mercy are expressed in how we treat our neighbors (30).

Reading

Reading for Meaning:

1. Read and reflect, asking yourself, “What is Bahá’u’lláh saying?” Reread if necessary.
2. Read for patterns. Try to recall other places where Bahá’u’lláh addresses the topics found in pp. 1–30. What else does He say about them?
3. The following explanations of terms are provided to aid your understanding of the text.

page/line

1:8–9

“the standard of the Most Exalted Word”

In addressing the leaders of religion, Bahá’u’lláh states (*The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh to the Kings and Leaders of the World*, p. 73) that “the Book itself is the unerring balance established amongst men. In this most perfect balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed. ...” See also *Epistle* p. 128. Bahá’u’lláh has said (*The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 3–4) that “unless and until” humankind “ceases to regard the words and deeds of mortal men as a standard for the true understanding and recognition of God and His Prophets,” “man can never hope to attain unto the knowledge of the All-Glorious, can never quaff from the stream of divine knowledge and wisdom, can never enter the abode of immortality, nor partake of the cup of divine nearness and favour. ...”

11:17–18

“I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch....”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá (*Some Answered Questions*, pp. 85, 86) explains the meaning of these words: “This is the state of manifestation: it is not sensible; it is an intellectual reality, exempt and freed from time, from past, present and future; it is an explanation, a simile, a metaphor and is not to be accepted literally; it is not a state that can be comprehended by man. Sleeping and waking is passing from one state to another. Sleeping is the condition of repose, and wakefulness is the condition of movement. Sleeping is the state of silence; wakefulness is the state of speech. Sleeping is the state of mystery; wakefulness is the state of manifestation. ...”

“Before declaring their manifestation, They are silent and quiet like a sleeper, and after Their manifestation, They speak and are illuminated, like one who is awake.”

13:18

“He is the Subtile” Keenly perceptive, penetrating, discerning.

14:10

“the war that hath involved the two Nations” The war referred to is the holy war declared by

the clergy, during the reign of Fath-‘Alí Sháh (1797–1834), which involved Persia and Russia and in which Persia was defeated.

15:4–6

“We spoke in the language of the lawgiver; at another in that of the truth-seeker and the mystic” As lawgiver, Bahá’u’lláh revealed the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, the Book of Laws. In *The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys*, Bahá’u’lláh addresses the Sufis, Persian mystics, in the Old Persian style.

17:14

“Hill and ... Haram” See the glossary in *Epistle*, p. 187.

17:25

“Kaaba” See the glossary in *Epistle*, p. 188.

18:21–23

“the seal of the Choice Wine hath ... been broken” The reference to choice, sealed wine comes from the Qur’án (83:22–26). The word “seal” alludes to the fact that the meaning of the sacred texts of former dispensations was not disclosed until the advent of Bahá’u’lláh. The breaking of the seal of the Choice Wine signifies the disclosure to all of humanity a new revelation of the Word of God, bringing new teachings and new laws.

19:4

“a mere fisherman” A reference to Peter, a fisherman who abandoned his trade to follow Christ, becoming one of His twelve disciples.

19:5

“Abú-Dhar, the Shepherd” See the glossary in *Epistle*, p. 183.

19:29

“vindicating” Clearing of accusation or blame with supporting proof.

20:10

“the attempt upon the life of His Majesty”

For an explanation of this event, see Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 61–71.

20:20–21

“the dungeon of Tíhrán” The Síyáh-Chál, an old water reservoir under the city of Tehran that was used as a prison during the time of Bahá’u’lláh. Also known as the Black Pit. For a description of Bahá’u’lláh’s experience in the Síyáh-Chál, see Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 71–72, and Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: Baghdad, 1853–63* (Vol. 2), p. 1:7–11.

21:22

“victorious by Thyself and by Thy Pen”

The Manifestations of God are sent by God to bring spiritual enlightenment to humanity through Their words and deeds as well as through the power of the names and attributes of God that radiate from Their own person. In *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* (p. 105), Bahá’u’lláh says, “The

first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self. Next to this testimony is His Revelation. For whoso faileth to recognize either the one or the other He hath established the words He hath revealed as proof of His reality and truth.”

26:13, 21–22 **“Ishráq,” “Ishráqát,” “Tajallí,” “Tajallíyát”**
 These tablets are found in *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (pp. 101–134, 47–54).

Reading for Insight:

1. Keep track of some of the Epistle’s major themes on 5x7-inch note cards, using one card for each theme. The following are some of the many that can be found on pp. 1:1–30:15. On each card list specific examples of the theme and any other information you want to include. (See the examples that follow for suggestions.)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Directives to the Shaykh (2, 9, 11, 12, 17, 18, 28)

<u>page</u>	<u>Directive</u>	<u>Promised Result</u>
2	Listen to God.	You will draw closer to God.

Bahá’u’lláh’s General Teachings and Directives (3, 5–6, 9–10, 12, 13–14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29)

<u>page</u>	<u>Teaching/Directive</u>	<u>Promised Result</u>
12	God has sent Divine Messengers.	They will promote the knowledge of God and further human unity and fellowship.

13–14	To the Bahá’ís: Strengthen your efforts to promote Bahá’u’lláh’s revelation.	Religious dissension and strife will be obliterated.
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Bahá’u’lláh’s Directives to the Kings and Leaders (28)

<u>page</u>	<u>Directive</u>	<u>Reason</u>
28	Uphold religion.	It is the chief instrument for establishing order and tranquillity in the world.

Bahá’u’lláh’s Identity (2, 9, 12, 15, 17, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29)

<u>page</u>	<u>Description</u>
28	Bahá’u’lláh is the “Pen of the Divine Expounder.”

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mission (1, 2, 9, 11, 13, 14, 18, 21, 24)

<u>page</u>	<u>Mission</u>
15	Bahá’u’lláh’s supreme purpose and highest wish has always been to disclose the glory and sublimity of unity.

God as the Source of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation (1, 2, 9, 11–12, 13, 18, 21, 22, 24)

<u>page</u>	<u>God as the Source of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation</u>
9	Bahá’u’lláh does not speak from mere impulse. God has “given Him a voice” (that is, made Him speak).

The Nature and Effect of the Word of God (1, 14, 19, 21, 22, 25)

<u>page</u>	<u>The Nature and Effect of the Word of God</u>
19	The Word of God transforms people. (Bahá’u’lláh refers to the transformation of Adam, Peter, and Abú-Dhar through the Word of God.)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Suffering and His Response (17, 20, 22, 23)

<u>page</u>	<u>Bahá’u’lláh’s Suffering</u>	<u>His Response</u>
17	The <u>Shaykh</u> has turned many people against Bahá’u’lláh and encouraged persecution of many Bahá’ís.	Whatever happens to Him in the path of God is the beloved of His soul and the desire of His heart. He is not afraid.

Human Responses to Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation and Their Consequences (3–4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19)

<u>page</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Consequences</u>
5	Remembered and protected the <u>Shaykh</u> .	God’s Human Response: The <u>Shaykh</u> turned away from Bahá’u’lláh.	The <u>Shaykh</u> ’s integrity and honor are destroyed.

2. To improve your ability to “recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 200) and increase the effectiveness of your teaching, copy several short passages for memorization and meditation.

Reflecting and Reviewing

Reflecting: Spend a few moments at the end of every reading session reflecting on what you have just read. Summarize in your mind what you have read, and try to relate it to what you already know. What spiritual insights have you gained?

Checking Your Recall of the Facts:

1. For what purpose was the Shaykh and, by extension, every person, called into being? (3, 4, 6) For what purpose were the senses created? (2, 7)

2. What were the results of the Shaykh’s decision to turn away from God? (5)
3. What effects do the twin guardians—justice and equity—have on the world? (13)
4. What does Bahá’u’lláh mean by the phrase “thick clouds of oppression”? (14–15)
5. What advice does Bahá’u’lláh give for presenting truth? (15)
6. What does Bahá’u’lláh mean by “divines”? How does He describe such people? (15–16)

7. How is the value of the arts and sciences to be judged? (19, 26–27)
8. Of what value is knowledge? (26, 27)
9. In what two ways will Bahá'u'lláh be rendered victorious? (21)
10. What is to take the place of swords in this Day? (24, 25)
11. What actions will lead to the victory of the Cause of God? (26)
12. To whom is the responsibility of upholding religion given? (28)
13. Name the chief cause of the protection of mankind. (27)
14. Name the chief instrument for the establishment of order in the world. (28)
15. How does one practice justice and mercy? (29–30)

Action

Read the following passage from *Epistle* (p. 12), and underline or highlight the directives it contains. How can you act on them?

“Now is the moment in which to cleanse thyself with the waters of detachment that have flowed out from the Supreme Pen, and to ponder, wholly for the sake of God, those things which, time and again, have been sent down or manifested, and then to strive, as much as lieth in thee, to quench through the power of wisdom and the force of thy utterance, the fire of enmity and hatred which smouldereth in the hearts of the peoples of the world.”

Memorizing: Choose one of the passages you copied for memorization, and memorize it. How can you act on it? Find or create an opportunity to use it in teaching.

Group Work

Preparing for Study

Materials: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*; *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*; *The Hidden Words*; *The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys*; 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*; a copy of this study guide; notes from “Individual Work” section.

Spiritual Preparation: Read aloud the prayer found on *Epistle* 18:1–20. If you are working with a group, spend a few moments sharing insights. If you are working alone, write down your insights.

Reading and Reflecting

Reviewing and Sharing:

- Share with your group the answers to the questions from the “Individual Work” section. If you are working alone, review your answers.
- Discuss any ideas that were of particular interest. If you are working alone, write down the ideas that were of particular interest to you.
- Share the results of your efforts to memorize and act on a passage from the *Epistle*. If you are working alone, you may wish to keep a journal of such efforts and their results.

Discussion: The purpose of this section is to come to a group consensus on answers to the questions that follow. For some questions, multiple page numbers are listed as aids to answering. Assign one page to each member of your group (or to several members if your group is large) to read and report on. Then, as a group, consult upon and formulate a response to each question. If your group's time is limited, consult about which questions you will cover together and which questions individuals should complete on their own. If you are working alone, write a short essay in response to each question.

1. What is the Greater Covenant? What is every individual's responsibility to that Covenant? What benefits

- result from fulfilling that responsibility? How do the first nine pages of the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* relate to the Greater Covenant? Be sure to consider the purpose of human existence and the results of fulfilling that purpose. Cite pages when answering.
2. How does the practice of justice and equity lead to the establishment of order and tranquillity? Think of an international problem, and consider solutions based on your understanding of the principles of justice and equity. See *Epistle*, pp. 11, 28–29, 30.
3. In the opening paragraph of the *Epistle*, Bahá'u'lláh states that the Word of God is a standard for the world and a demonstration of the truth of His revelation. How does the Word of God fulfill these roles? See *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 43, 104–105, 109, 120.
4. Bahá'u'lláh spends several pages explaining to the *Shaykh* what He has taught His followers. List some of those teachings (consult the cards on which you listed major themes). What is the primary focus of the teachings cited? Why do you think Bahá'u'lláh focuses on these particular teachings in the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*?
5. How would you define “a goodly character and praiseworthy deeds”? How are they a proof of the power of

the Word of God? What effects do they have on the progress of the Cause of God? On the world at large? See *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 36, 57, 257; *The Hidden Words*, Persian, no. 69; and *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 46, 60, 98–99.

6. What is “the fear of God”? Why should people fear God? Consider the following phrase from *The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys*, p. 58: “... all things fear him who feareth God.” See also *Epistle*, pp. 27–28, and *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 93, 121, 155.

Action How can you, as a group or as an individual, act on the following directive from *Epistle* (p. 25)?
“It is incumbent upon thee to summon the people, under all conditions, to whatever will cause them to show forth spiritual characteristics and goodly deeds, so that all may become aware of that which is the cause of human upliftment, and may, with the utmost endeavor, direct themselves towards the most sublime Station and the Pinnacle of Glory.”

Assignment: To prepare for Session 2, read *Epistle*, pp. 30:16–62:22.

SESSION 2: Pages 30:16–62:22

Individual Work

Preparing for Study

Materials: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*; *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*; Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*; Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, Vols. 1, 3, 4; a dictionary; a copy of this study guide; 5x7-inch note cards or a spiral notebook.

Spiritual Preparation: Read the following passage from *Epistle*, p. 33, and take a few moments to meditate on it: “This is the day whereon the wise should seek the advice of this Wronged One, and ask Him Who is the Truth what things are conducive to the glory and tranquillity of men.”

Overview of pages 30:16–62:22: In the section of the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* covered in this session, Bahá'u'lláh restates His claim that God is the source of His revelation and offers proofs for the claim. He quotes extensively from His tablets to the kings and rulers so that the *Shaykh* “mayest know of a certainty that whatever hath been mentioned hath come from God” (39). Bahá'u'lláh also expresses His hope that the *Shaykh* will be touched by the “breezes of Revelation” and will arise to aid the Cause of God (59). By quoting such passages, Bahá'u'lláh reveals to the *Shaykh* the purpose of His revelation: to impart to the kings and rulers of the world “that which is the cause of the well-being, the unity, the harmony, and the reconstruction of the world, and of the tranquillity of the nations” (45). In the passages quoted, Bahá'u'lláh proclaims His identity and states His mission. He summons various kings and rulers to recognize Him

and to arise to aid His Cause. He informs them of the rewards and punishments that will be meted out to them according to their response to His Cause and gives them specific advice regarding the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the treatment of their subjects. He also recounts His sufferings, noting their similarity to the sufferings of previous Manifestations of God; describes His joy at being able to offer His life in the pathway of God; and affirms His power to prevent anyone from thwarting His mission.

Bahá'u'lláh also discusses the subject of His own divinity. The clergy has accused the Bábís of believing that Bahá'u'lláh is God. Bahá'u'lláh denies the charge and explains the paradoxical station of the Manifestations of God. He defines “Divinity” and explains the nature of His station (41).

Exhortations and warnings to the Bahá'ís appear throughout. Bahá'u'lláh cautions them against treachery, bloodshed, unfair judgments, and dissension (54–56). During Bahá'u'lláh's stay in Constantinople, His jealous and unfaithful half-brother Mírzá Yahyá (also known as Subh-i-Azal) and his followers (known as Azalís) tried in various deceitful ways to stir up trouble for Bahá'u'lláh and the other Bahá'ís. The warnings in the *Epistle* against treachery are aimed at those believers who may be taken in by Yahyá's scheming and plotting (54–56). At the same time, Bahá'u'lláh counsels His followers to practice trustworthiness and generosity, to use wisdom to subdue people's hearts, and to conceal the sins of others (55).

Reading and Reflecting

Reading for Meaning:

1. Read and reflect, asking yourself, “What is Bahá'u'lláh saying?” Reread if necessary.
2. Read for patterns. Try to recall other places where Bahá'u'lláh addresses the topics found in pp. 30–62. What else does He say about them?
3. The following explanations of terms are provided to aid your understanding of the text.

page/line

30:21

“Lesser Peace” The first stage of world peace in which the political unity of the nations will be achieved. It will involve fixing every nation's boundaries, strictly limiting the size of their armaments, setting down the principles underlying the relations of governments

toward one another, and ascertaining all international agreements and obligations.

- 32:11–12** **“a knowledge which, when applied, will largely, though not wholly, eliminate fear”** According to Shoghi Effendi, in a letter dated Jan. 5, 1948, written on his behalf to Charles S. Krug and published in *Bahá’í News*, Aug. 1948, this knowledge was never disclosed by Bahá’u’lláh (see *Bahá’í Education: A Compilation*, pp. 7–8).
- 32:22** **“Crimson Book”** Refers to Bahá’u’lláh’s Book of the Covenant, the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd (see *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 217–223, for the text).
- 35:19–20** **“such as have broken Thy Covenant and Thy Testament”** A reference to Bahá’u’lláh’s treacherous half-brother, Mírzá Yahyá, and his followers, known as Azalís. (Mírzá Yahyá had been appointed by the Báb as leader of the Bábís until “He Whom God shall make Manifest”—Bahá’u’lláh—appeared. Unfortunately, Mírzá Yahyá refused to recognize Bahá’u’lláh as the One promised by the Báb. He was extremely jealous of Bahá’u’lláh and spent a large part of his life, despite Bahá’u’lláh’s kindness to him, trying to destroy Bahá’u’lláh.) Some of Bahá’u’lláh’s followers were also involved. Together, these groups created a great deal of mischief in Constantinople in trying to discredit Bahá’u’lláh and the resident Bahá’ís. Their treachery and dishonor caused Bahá’u’lláh far greater suffering than the physical hardships imposed on Him by the government. For further information on the activities of the Azalís, see *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: Mazra’ih & Bahjí* (Vol. 4), pp. 391–406.
- 36:18–19** **“Fear not the tempestuous gales, O Mariner!”** A reference to the Tablet of the Holy Mariner, a mystical poem by Bahá’u’lláh in which He foreshadows the suffering He was to sustain in the course of His life. See Bahá’í Prayers for the text of this Tablet; also see *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: Baghdad* (Vol. 1), pp. 228–244.
- 38:13–14** **“Sinai hath smiled at Him Who conversed upon it”** Bahá’u’lláh indicates in numerous places that His is the voice Moses heard in the Burning Bush (42, 65, 146). In a letter dated Oct. 19, 1947, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer (in *Lights of Guidance: A Bahá’í Reference File* [1988], p. 471), it is explained that “Bahá’u’lláh is not the Intermediary between other Manifestations and God. Each has His own relation to the Primal Source. But in the sense that Bahá’u’lláh is the greatest Manifestation to yet appear, the One Who consummates the Revelation of Moses; He was the One Moses conversed with in the Burning Bush. In other words, Bahá’u’lláh identifies the Glory of the Godhead on that occasion with Himself. No distinction can be made amongst the Prophets in the sense that They all proceed from One Source, and are of One Essence. But Their stations and functions in this world are different.”
- 38:15** **“Sadrah”** See the glossary in *Epistle*, p. 191.
- 38:28** **“dissimulation”** Hiding one’s true feelings or intentions under false pretenses.
- 41:7** **“Súrih of Tawhíd”** The first súrih of the Qur’án. It explains the oneness of God.
- 41:18** **“Sadrah of Utterance”** A reference by Bahá’u’lláh to Himself, for it is Bahá’u’lláh Who spoke to Moses from the burning bush (129).
- 41:26–28** **“Siyyid of Findirisk,” “Abú-Nasr,” and “Abú-‘Alí Síná”** See the glossary in *Epistle*, pp. 192, 183.
- 43:10** **“Seal of the Prophets”** A reference to Muhammad, Who was to be the last Manifestation of the Prophetic Cycle before the advent of the Day of God.
- 43:16** **“those other stations which the Abhá Pen hath disclosed”** For an explanation of the various stations of the Manifestations of God, see *Gleanings* pp. 51–56, 66–67, or *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 152–53, 176–81.
- 45:27** **Tablet to Napoleon III** See *The Promised Day Is Come*, pp. 49–52; *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: Adrianople* (Vol. 2), pp. 368–69; *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: ‘Akká, The Early Years* (Vol. 3), pp. 109–115; or *The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh to the Kings and Leaders of the World*, pp. 17–23.
- 48:21–22** **“The stars of the heaven of knowledge have fallen”** Bahá’u’lláh explains the meaning of this symbolic statement in *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 41: “... by the words ‘... and the stars shall fall from heaven’ is intended the waywardness of the divines, and the annulment of laws fully established by divine Revelation. ...”
- 51:27–28** **“‘We were in ‘Iráq, when the hour of parting arrived.’”** Bahá’u’lláh had been in

Baghdad, Iraq, for nearly ten years when He was summoned to Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey) in 1863.

52: 10–11 **“the Most Great Prison”** The prison-city of ‘Akká.

56:28 **“Tablet ... to ... the Czar of Russia”** See *The Promised Day Is Come*, pp. 33–35; *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh* (Vol. 3), pp. 118–23, or *The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 27–30.

57:2–3 **“ ‘turn thou unto Paradise’ ”** “Paradise” is the recognition of the Manifestation of God (Bahá’u’lláh) and submission to His will (see *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 82–83, 102). Bahá’u’lláh says that paradise is reunion with God and the attainment of His pleasure (see *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 118, 189; and Hidden Word no. 6 from the Arabic). Paradise is realized through love of Bahá’u’lláh and His good-pleasure and is experienced in both this world and the next (see *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 189, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 223).

58:2–3 **“Be thou not of them who called upon God by one of His names”** “Names” refers to the Manifestations of God. An admonition to those who recognize only one of the Manifestations.

59:7–8 **“the Tablet of Her Majesty, the Queen”** See *The Promised Day Is Come*, pp. 35–36; *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh* (Vol. 3), pp. 123–128; or *The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 33–35 for passages from the tablet Bahá’u’lláh sent to Queen Victoria.

60:14 **“Mosque of Aqsá”** The name of the mosque built on the site of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem and the name by which the Temple of Solomon is referred to in the Qur’án.

Reading for Insight:

1. Keep track of some of the Epistle’s major themes on the 5x7-inch note cards you started using in Session 1. The following are some examples found on pp. 30:16–63:12. On each card list specific examples of the theme and any other information you want to include.

Bahá’u’lláh’s General Teachings and Directives (30–31, 32, 33, 38, 41, 44–45, 46, 47, 48, 49–50, 55, 57, 61, 62)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Directives to the Kings and Rulers (30–31, 40, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50–52, 53, 54–56, 57–58, 58–59, 61)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Identity (38, 39, 43, 46–48, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mission (33, 34, 36, 38, 45, 46, 56)
God as the Source of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation (39, 41, 45–46)

The Nature and Effect of the Word of God (41, 42–43)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Suffering and His Response (32–33, 34, 35–36, 37–38, 45, 52–53, 59)

Human Responses to Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation and Their Consequences (42, 43, 44, 46–47, 48, 49, 60, 61)

2. To improve your ability to “recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 200) and increase the effectiveness of your teaching, copy short passages for memorization and meditation.

Reflecting and Reviewing

Reflecting: Spend a few moments at the end of every reading session reflecting on what you have just read. Summarize in your mind what you have read, and try to relate it to what you already know. What spiritual insights have you gained?

Checking Your Recall of the Facts:

1. What is the greatest means for ensuring the tranquility of the nations? (30)
2. What proof does Bahá’u’lláh offer that this Revelation came from God and not Himself? (39–40)
3. If the Shah were to heed Bahá’u’lláh’s call, what would be the result? (40–41)
4. What does Bahá’u’lláh mean by the term “Divinity”? (41)
5. What is the source of humanity’s prosperity and wealth? What attitude should knowing this evoke? (44)

6. In the Tablet to Napoleon III, Who does Bahá’u’lláh say He is? (46–48)
7. What does Bahá’u’lláh tell the monks to do? (49)
8. What punishment does Bahá’u’lláh promise to Napoleon III for his actions? (51)
9. What was Bahá’u’lláh’s response to the tribulations He suffered? (34, 35–36, 37–38, 45, 52–53, 59)
10. What does Bahá’u’lláh mean by “the world”? (54)
11. What should you do when you become aware of another’s sin? Why? (55)
12. In the Tablet to the Czar, Who does Bahá’u’lláh announce Himself to be? (57–58)
13. Why does Bahá’u’lláh quote His own tablets in addressing the *Shaykh*? (39, 45–46, 59)
14. For what purpose did Bahá’u’lláh come? (33, 34, 36, 46)
15. For what actions is Queen Victoria praised? (60–61)

Action Read the following passage from *Epistle* (p. 55):
 “If ye become aware of a sin committed by another, conceal it, that God may conceal your own sin.”
 How can you put this advice into action? Imagine a situation in which you become aware of another’s transgressions. Mentally rehearse, or write about, how you might handle it.

Memorizing: Choose one of the passages you copied for memorization, and memorize it. How can you act on it? Find or create an opportunity to use it in teaching.

Group Work

Preparing for Study **Materials:** *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*; a copy of this study guide; notes from “Individual Work” section.

Spiritual Preparation: Read aloud the prayer found in *Epistle*, pp. 37:4–38:8. If you are working with a group, spend a few moments sharing insights. If you are working alone, write down your insights.

Reading and Reflecting **Reviewing and Sharing:**

- Share with your group the answers to the questions from the “Individual Work” section. If you are working alone, review your answers.
- Discuss any ideas that were of particular interest. If you are working alone, write down the ideas that were of particular interest to you.
- Share the results of your efforts to memorize and act on a passage from the *Epistle*. If you are working alone, you may wish to keep a journal of such efforts and their results.

conducive to its glory and tranquillity? How might one of “the wise”—or anyone—follow through with this directive? Identify some teachings of Bahá’u’lláh that promote the glory and tranquillity of humanity.

3. Bahá’u’lláh states that His purpose is “to abolish, through the force of Our utterance, all disputes, war, and bloodshed, from the face of the earth” (p. 34). How does the force of utterance work to accomplish such a goal? How might this principle apply in countries where some feel that fighting injustice with weapons is justified? Before answering these questions, consider Bahá’u’lláh’s injunction to “Subdue the citadels of men’s hearts with the swords of wisdom and of utterance” (p.55). See also *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 198–99.
4. Bahá’u’lláh laments that His followers, who were created to aid His Cause and exalt His Word, have helped His enemies (pp. 36–38). How might the servants of God aid the enemies of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh? Think about what has happened in the past, and consider what can happen in the present and in the future.
5. How do Bahá’u’lláh’s interactions with the kings and rulers prove His identity? As “the dawning-place of His most excellent names and the dayspring of His most exalted attributes” (2), how did Bahá’u’lláh exercise the attributes of power and sovereignty? (pp. 39–40, 45, 48, 51; see also *Promulgation* pp. 202–203, 224, 432–433.)
6. Explain the difference between believing in the existence of God and believing in the unity and Oneness of God.

Discussion: The purpose of this section is to come to a group consensus on answers to the questions that follow. For some questions, multiple page numbers are listed as aids to answering. Assign one page to each member of your group (or to several members if your group is large) to read and report on. Then, as a group, consult upon and formulate a response to each question. If your group’s time is limited, consult about which questions you will cover together and which questions individuals should complete on their own. If you are working alone, write a short essay in response to each question.

1. How does Bahá’u’lláh answer the accusation that He claims to be God (p. 41)? Explain the paradox that Bahá’u’lláh is, and yet is not, God.
2. Bahá’u’lláh says, “This is the day whereon the wise should seek the advice of this Wronged One, and ask Him Who is the Truth what things are conducive to the glory and tranquillity of men” (p. 33). How is humanity learning to seek such advice and discovering what is

Action How can you, as a group or as an individual, act on the directives in the following passage from *Epistle* (p. 55):
 “O people of Bahá! Subdue the citadels of men’s hearts with the swords of wisdom and of utterance. . . . Say: The sword of wisdom is hotter than summer heat, and sharper than blades of steel, if ye do but understand. Draw it forth in My name and through the power of My might, and conquer, then, with it the cities of the hearts of them that have secluded themselves in the stronghold of their corrupt desires.”

Assignment: To prepare for Session 3, read *Epistle*, pp. 62:23–92:5.

SESSION 3: Pages 62:22–92:5

Individual Work

Preparing for Study

Materials: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: Mazra'ih & Bahjí, 1877–92* (Vol. 4); a dictionary; a copy of this study guide; 5x7-inch note cards or a spiral notebook.

Spiritual Preparation: Read the following passage from *Epistle*, p. 65, and take a few moments to meditate on it: “... Purge and sanctify your breasts, and your hearts, and your ears, and your eyes with the living waters of the utterance of the All-Merciful, and set, then, your faces towards Him. By the righteousness of God! Ye shall hear all things proclaim: ‘Verily, He the True One is come. Blessed are they that judge with fairness, and blessed they that turn towards Him!’ ”

Overview of pages 62:22–92:5: In the section of the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* covered in this session, Bahá'u'lláh restates His identity. He is the “skilled, ... all-powerful, and Inspired Physician” (62–63), the “‘World Reformer’ ” (63). His purpose in coming is to heal humanity’s ills by quickening the world and uniting all of its peoples into “one universal Cause, one common Faith” (62, 63). Like previous Manifestations of God, He is accused of being “ ‘a fomenter of discord’ ” (63) and is prevented from applying His remedy. And like other Manifestations, He is the object of lies, calumnies, and charges of falsehood (64–70). In Bahá'u'lláh’s case, it is Mírzá Yahyá and his friends, some of whom are Bahá’ís, who stir up trouble (70). In the course of several pages, Bahá'u'lláh proclaims that His actions have been “known and evident unto all” (69) and that He has “aimed and striven to exalt and advance the interests of both the government and the people, not to elevate His own station” (69–70).

To prove His intentions and His power to effect change in the world, Bahá'u'lláh describes the noble actions of His followers—their patience and fortitude under trials and their willingness to be killed rather than to kill.

Bahá'u'lláh briefly recounts the stories of several illustrious believers who suffered martyrdom in the pathway of God (71–77).

Bahá'u'lláh indirectly denounces the *Shaykh*’s acceptance of tyranny by quoting extensively from the *Lawh-i-Burhán* (Tablet of the Proof) (79–96)—a tablet written to the *Shaykh*’s father and referring to the *Imám-Jum‘ih* of Isfahán—both of whom were responsible for the persecution of many Bahá’ís. In the passages cited Bahá'u'lláh assures these tyrants that, had they realized what they had done, they would have cast themselves into the fire or would have fled into the mountains rather than exulting in their deeds (80). He also admonishes them to judge fairly and to recognize that they are condemning Him with the same proofs divines have used in ages past to condemn previous Manifestations of God (81). Regardless of their actions and their responses to His plea, He does not fear their cruelty (84–85). He assures us that “from the first day whereon the voice of the Most Sublime Pen was raised betwixt earth and heaven We offered up Our souls, and Our bodies, and Our sons, and Our possessions in the path of God. ...” (84–85). Neither troubles nor the repudiations of the divines can weaken Him or still His voice (85).

In the final pages of the section (89–91) Bahá'u'lláh refers to the Shah of Persia, an enemy of the Cause who has closed his eyes to the suffering imposed on the Bahá’ís by the Muslim clergy (77–78). Bahá'u'lláh proclaims that it is now the Shah’s duty to treat the Bahá’ís with “loving-kindness and mercy” (89). He promises that “this people [the Bahá’ís] will show forth nothing that can in any way conflict with the world-adorning views of His Majesty” (89). Finally, Bahá'u'lláh describes the position of sovereign rulers, explaining that they are the manifestation of God’s power, grandeur, and majesty and, as such, must be obeyed and honored (89).

Reading

Reading for Meaning:

1. Read and reflect, asking yourself, “What is Bahá’u’lláh saying?” Reread if necessary.
2. Read for patterns. Try to recall other places where Bahá’u’lláh addresses the topics found in pages 62–92. What else does He say about them?
3. The following explanations of terms are provided to aid your understanding of the text.

page/line

- 64:15 “**‘stratagem’**” A trick or scheme for outwitting or deceiving an opponent.
- 64:28 **calumniate** To make maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about; to slander.
- 65:24–25 “**‘He said: “Did We not rear thee among us when a child?”**’ ” “He” refers to the Pharaoh of Egypt. Moses was raised in the household of the Pharaoh (see Exodus 2).
- 70:14–15 “**‘Siyyid Muhammad’**” Refers to Muhammad-i-Isfahání, whom Shoghi Effendi called “the Antichrist of the Bahá’í Revelation” (*God Passes By*, p. 164).
- 70:17–18 “**‘And there befell Me at the hands of both of them’**” For an account of what befell Bahá’u’lláh in Constantinople at the hands of Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad, see *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh* (Vol. 4), pp. 391–402.
- 72:5 “**‘his honor, Hájí Nasír’**” See Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: Adrianople, 1863–68* (Vol. 2), pp. 245–247.
- 72:19 “**‘Hasan and Husayn’**” See the glossary in *Epistle*, p. 186, and the explanation for 79:23 below.
- 73:19–20 “**‘We have kept both Bahá and the khún-bahá (bloodmoney)!’**” This is a play on words. *Khún* means “blood.” *Bahá* in Arabic means “glory” and in Persian, “value.” “Bloodmoney” refers to the reward Najáf-‘Alí will receive for being a martyr in the path of God. In ransoming his life to become a martyr, the true value of the bloodmoney has been realized.
- 75:13–14 “**‘the ban which the Pen of Glory hath ... chosen to impose’**” A reference to the ban on killing imposed by Bahá’u’lláh.
- 76:6 “**‘he that was chosen to be slain was but one person’**” A reference to God’s request that Abraham sacrifice his son Ishmael. (According to the Qur’án it was Ishmael, not Isaac, who was to be sacrificed, contrary to what is written in the Old Testament. See Qur’án 37:100 and Genesis 22:2.)
- 76:19–21 “**‘Balal, the Ethiopian, ... ‘sín’ ... ‘shín’**” See the glossary in *Epistle*, p. 184.
- 77:2–3 “**‘the prison of the Land of Mím’**” A reference to Bahá’u’lláh’s imprisonment in Ámul. See Nabíl, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 368–376.
- 77:8–9 “**‘those two chains, ... Qará-Guhar ... and ... Salásil’**” Two very heavy chains, one or the other of which was placed around Bahá’u’lláh’s neck at all times during His imprisonment in the Síyáh-Chál of Tehran. For four months He was chained to five other Bábís. So heavy were the chains that He bore their scars for the rest of His life. See *God Passes By*, p. 72.
- 78:14 “**‘perspicuous’**” Plain to the understanding, especially because of clarity and precision of presentation.
- 78:26–27 “**‘At one time I found Myself on the heights of mountains’**” A reference to the mountains of Sulaymáníyyih in the province of Kurdistan, to which Bahá’u’lláh retreated for two years a little over a year after His release from the Síyáh-Chál and banishment to Baghdad.
- 79:12–13 “**‘a Voice was raised from the direction of Hijáz’**” Hijáz is a western province of Arabia where Mecca (the birthplace of Muhammad) and Medina are located; hence Bahá’u’lláh is referring to the voice of Muhammad.
- 79:23 “**‘Following upon the death of some of the martyrs’**” The martyrs referred to are the brothers Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan and Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, also called the King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs, respectively. They were well-known for their generosity, trustworthiness, kindness, and piety (see *God Passes By*, pp. 200–201).
- 79:24 “**‘Lawh-i-Burhán (Tablet of the Proof)’**” Following the martyrdom of the King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs, Bahá’u’lláh addressed this tablet to Shaykh Muhammad Báqir (whom He denounced as the “Wolf”). In the tablet Bahá’u’lláh also addresses Mír Muhammad-Husayn, the Imám-Jum’ih of Isfahán, who was Shaykh Muhammad Báqir’s accomplice in persecuting the Bahá’ís. For the text of the Lawh-i-Burhán, see *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 205–216. For a discussion of the Lawh-i-Burhán, see *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh* (Vol. 4), pp. 91–102.

80:28–29 “**Thou hast torn in pieces a remnant of the Prophet Himself**” The martyred brothers were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad.

83:25–26 “**the Veil of Divinity was rent asunder ... and the She-Camel was hamstrung**” To “rend the Veil of Divinity” means to commit a sacrilegious act, which, Marzieh Gail says in the introduction to *Epistle*, p. xv, is “symbolized by tearing the veil of the tabernacle in which was the Shekinah,—the Dwelling, the Glory of God—emblem of the Divine Presence.” The reference to hamstringing the “She-Camel” is an allusion to the Qur’án (see 7:71, 11:67, and 54:27). Gail explains, “The She-Camel was a sign of God, the proof of the Prophet Sálíh’s mission” (p. xv). The allusion symbolizes an act of blasphemy.

86:3–5 “**Present thyself before Me that thou mayest hear the mysteries which were heard by the Son of ‘Imrán (Moses)’**” What was previously told only to Moses is now revealed by Bahá’u’lláh for all to hear.

86:28 “**Mírzá Hádí Dawlat-Ábádí**” A follower of Mírzá Yahyá. See the glossary in *Epistle*, p. 189.

86:28 “**Sád-i-Isfahání**” Mírzá Murtidá, the Sadru’l-Ulamá of Isfahán, a clergyman who became a follower of Mírzá Yahyá.

88:12–13 “**... Who despatched that which was delivered unto the Herald—the Primal Point!**” The Báb writes (*Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 104), “And know thou of a certainty that every letter revealed in the Bayán is solely intended to evoke submission

unto Him Whom God shall make manifest, for it is He Who hath revealed the Bayán prior to His Own manifestation.”

88:26–28 “**Zanján ... Nayríz ... Tabarsí**” For accounts of the upheavals that occurred in Zanján, Nayríz, and Tabarsí, see *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 527–580, 465–495, and 324–414.

Reading for insight:

1. Keep track of some of the Epistle’s major themes on the 5x7-inch note cards you started using in Sessions 1 and 2. The following are some examples found on pages 63:22–92:5. On each card list specific examples of the theme and any other information you want to include.

Bahá’u’lláh’s General Teachings and Directives (62, 63–65, 83, 88, 89, 90)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Directives to the Kings and Rulers (77–78, 89–90)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Identity (63, 65)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mission (63, 69–70, 71, 77, 88)

The Nature and Effect of the Word of God (75–76, 77)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Suffering and His Response (63–64, 70–71, 76–77, 78–79, 85–86)

Proofs of Bahá’u’lláh’s Station (71–76, 85, 87)

Human Responses to Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation and Their Consequences (73, 74, 79, 80–81, 82, 84, 88)

2. To improve your ability to “recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 200) and increase the effectiveness of your teaching, copy short passages for memorization and meditation.

Reflecting and Reviewing

Reflecting: Spend a few moments at the end of every reading session reflecting on what you have just read. Summarize in your mind what you have read, and try to relate it to what you already know. What spiritual insights have you gained?

Checking Your Recall of the Facts:

1. Name the “mightiest instrument for the healing of the world.” (62)
2. What charge has been leveled at every “World Reformer” Who has come? (63)
3. Why did Bahá’u’lláh commend the man who was responsible for His exile to ‘Akká? (69)
4. Name two of Bahá’u’lláh’s enemies. (70)
5. With what, rather than weapons, did the believers of Mázindarán gird themselves? Why? (74)
6. What caused so many believers to demonstrate such forbearance that they allowed themselves to be killed rather than to kill? (74–75)

7. Name two reasons for which Bahá’u’lláh suffered. (76–77)
8. Describe Bahá’u’lláh’s attitude toward His suffering. (76–77, 78–79, 85–86)
9. What would have been the Shaykh’s response if he had realized what he had done to Bahá’u’lláh and His followers? (80)
10. What do the Shaykh, the Jewish doctors who condemned Christ, and the rabbis and idolatrous priests who denied Muhammad have in common? (81)
11. What qualifications must one meet to be considered “truly learned”? What are the rewards? (83)
12. For what purpose did Bahá’u’lláh quote the passages from “the Tablets to the kings and others”? (87)
13. What should be our attitude toward government and its rulers? (89–90)
14. What station does Bahá’u’lláh give to the sovereigns of the earth? (89, 90)
15. What was Bahá’u’lláh’s purpose? (62–63, 69–70, 71, 76–77, 88)

Action Read the following passage from *Epistle* (p. 88), which is addressed to the Shaykh but applies to all people: “Exert thyself, O Shaykh, and arise to save this Cause. The Sealed Wine is disclosed in this day before the faces of men. Seize it in the name of thy Lord, and quaff thy fill in remembrance of Him Who is the Mighty, the Incomparable.”

Underline or highlight the directives it contains. How can you act on them?

Memorizing: Choose one of the passages you copied for memorization, and memorize it. How can you act on it? Find or create an opportunity to use it in teaching.

Group Work

Preparing for Study

Materials: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*; *The Hidden Words*; a copy of this study guide; notes from “Individual Work” section.

Spiritual Preparation: Read aloud the following passage from *Epistle*, p. 88: “Whoever gazeth this day on My signs will distinguish truth from falsehood as the sun from shadow, and will be made cognizant of the goal. God is aware and beareth Me witness that whatever hath been

mentioned was for the sake of God, that haply thou mayest be the cause of the guidance of man, and mayest deliver the peoples of the world from idle fancies and vain imaginings.”

If you are working with a group, spend a few moments sharing insights. If you are working alone, write down your insights.

Reading and Reflecting

Reviewing and Sharing:

- Share with your group the answers to the questions from the “Individual Work” section. If you are working alone, review your answers.
- Discuss any ideas that were of particular interest. If you are working alone, write down the ideas that were of particular interest to you.
- Share the results of your efforts to memorize and act on a passage from the Epistle. If you are working alone, you may wish to keep a journal of such efforts and their results.

Discussion: The purpose of this section is to come to a group consensus on answers to the questions that follow. For some questions, multiple page numbers are listed as aids to answering. Assign one page to each member of your group (or to several members if your group is large) to read and report on. Then, as a group, consult upon and formulate a response to each question. If your group's time is limited, consult about which questions you will cover together and which questions individuals should complete on their own. If you are working alone, write a short essay in response to each question.

1. In *Epistle*, pp. 1 and 67, Bahá'u'lláh says that the Manifestations of God come to humanity with the “standard” or “banner” of “He doeth whatsoever He willeth” “ ‘and ordaineth what He pleaseth.’ ” What does this statement mean? What should be our response to it? Reconcile the following related statement with the concept of free will: “None hath the right to ask why or wherefore, and he that doth so,

hath indeed turned aside from God, the Lord of Lords” (67). How does such an assertion relate to the principle of independent investigation of truth? See *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 51, 78, 108.

2. In the assigned reading for Session 3, Bahá'u'lláh cites the qualities, actions, and goals of the believers as a major proof of the transforming power of His revelation (71–76, 78, 84–85). Name those qualities, actions, and goals. How do they prove the validity of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause and aid the Bahá'ís to gird themselves “to reconstruct the world”?
3. Bahá'u'lláh says that the “truly learned”—those who have acknowledged and immersed themselves in His Revelation—are “even as an eye unto mankind, and as the spirit of life unto the body of all creation” (83). Explore what it means to be “an eye unto mankind” and “the spirit of life unto the body of all creation.”
4. Discuss the meaning of the following passage: “This is the day whereon all peoples should shed the light of unity and concord. In brief, the pride and vanity of certain of the peoples of the world have made havoc of true understanding, and laid waste the home of justice and equity” (76). Remember that Bahá'u'lláh links justice and equity with protection and the establishment of order and tranquillity. For passages that discuss justice and equity, see *Epistle*, pp. 11, 13, 28.
5. Compare and contrast Bahá'u'lláh's statements about obedience to government with American views of obedience (89, 90). Why is obedience to government important?

Action How can you, as a group or as an individual, act on the directives in the following passage from *Epistle* (p. 76)?
“Occupy thyself, during these fleeting days of thy life, with such deeds as will diffuse the fragrance of Divine good-pleasure, and will be adorned with the ornament of His acceptance.”

Assignment: To prepare for Session 4, read *Epistle*, pp. 92:6–121:23.

SESSION 4: Pages 92:6–121:23

Individual Work

Preparing for Study

Materials: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*; Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: Mazra'ih & Bahjí, 1877–92* (Vol. 4); a dictionary; a copy of this study guide; 5x7-inch note cards or a spiral notebook.

Spiritual Preparation: Read the following passage from *Epistle*, p. 65, and take a few moments to meditate on it: “Blessed is the man that hath, on the wings of longing, soared towards God, the Lord of the Judgment Day.”

Overview of pages 92:6–121:23: In the section of the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* covered in this session, Bahá'u'lláh continues to offer proofs of the truth of His Cause to Shaykh Muhammad Taqí-i-Najafí, the “Son of the Wolf.” He suggests that if the Shaykh were to consider the events of the past and of recent times, he would turn away from his possessions toward things that are of God and would become an instrument for “the exaltation of His Word” (92). The Shaykh would also realize that none of the Manifestations of God was accepted or acknowledged at the time of His appearance and that all of the Manifestations suffered grievously to establish Their Cause (92). Bahá'u'lláh, too, has suffered dire peril, yet He finds the sweetness of His life comes from the tribulations that have touched Him “in the path of God,” and for those tribulations He is grateful (94).

The remaining passages of the *Lawh-i-Burhán* (Tablet of the Proof) are quoted (96–103; for earlier passages, see 79–86) with the aim of drawing the Shaykh closer to God so that he may arise to aid the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh (96–97). In the passages studied in Session 4 Bahá'u'lláh describes the characteristics of this Day of God and recites the basic principles of His Faith: God is “One in His Essence, One in His Attributes. . . . He hath sent forth His Messengers, and sent down His Books, that they may announce unto His creatures the Straight Path” (98).

Though the *Lawh-i-Burhán* was originally addressed to the Shaykh's father, it carries a grave warning to the son as well: Without repentance, retribution is at hand (101–103). Abasement of the people, subversion of the Islamic Faith, and acts of cruelty against the “children of the Apostle of God” (the King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs) all deserve God's punishment (101).

Bahá'u'lláh reminds the Shaykh that he has been enabled to “hear the melodies of the Nightingale of Paradise” and to see “the signs which God . . . hath sent down,” so that his “eye might be cheered” and his “soul be well-assured” (103). Bahá'u'lláh warns him that those who have stirred up mischief and sedition “have been, and will be, afflicted with the retribution which their acts must entail” (106). Bahá'u'lláh then describes some activities of those who have sought to create opposition to the Cause (106–108).

Those who have turned away from Bahá'u'lláh have done so out of attachment to their “own idle words” and have thereby shown their “objections to Him Who is the Truth” (111). Bahá'u'lláh discusses the meaning of “Divinity” and “Divine Presence,” explaining how He is a manifestation of both in terms of Islamic traditions (111–119). Those who neither believe in nor hope to attain God's presence are in error and will suffer in recompense (117). Nevertheless, those who repudiate or oppose Bahá'u'lláh have been unable to prevent the “Sun of Truth” from shining (119). Bahá'u'lláh tells the Shaykh that he cannot be excused any longer: he must either recognize Bahá'u'lláh, “or—God forbid—arise and deny all the Prophets!” (119). The section ends with the following climactic statement from Bahá'u'lláh (121): “Who else but Bahá can speak forth before the face of men, and who else but He can have the power to pronounce that which He was bidden by God, the Lord of Hosts?”

Reading

Reading for Meaning:

1. Read and reflect, asking yourself, “What is Bahá’u’lláh saying?” Reread if necessary.
2. Read for patterns. Try to recall other places where Bahá’u’lláh addresses the topics found in pp. 92–121. What else does He say about them?
3. The following explanations of terms are provided to aid your understanding of the text.

page/line

- 94:5** **“one of My Branches (Sons)”** The son referred to is Mírzá Badí’u’lláh, who became a Covenant-breaker. See *The Will and Testament of Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 20–21.
- 96:19** **“malice”** Ill will; the desire to harm others or to see others suffer.
- 97:14–15** **“We have not sought to spread disorder in the land”** A reference to the many upheavals that occurred as the Cause spread.
- 97:9–103:12** **“Peruse thou the Kitáb-i-Íqán. . .”** to **“Praised be God, the Lord of the worlds!”** A long passage quoted from the Lawh-i-Burhán (Tablet of the Proof). See the explanation in Session 3, for p. 79:24.
- 106:6–9** **“In the Great City (Constantinople) they have roused a considerable number of people to oppose this Wronged One”** A reference to the malicious scheming of Mírzá Yahyá and others who attempted to discredit Bahá’u’lláh and His Cause. See *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh* (Vol. 4), pp. 392–402.
- 107:21** **“‘Subtile’ ”** Keenly perceptive, penetrating, discerning.
- 108:6** **“Akhtar”** Literally, “The Star”: a Persian reform-oriented newspaper published in Constantinople and controlled for a number of years by an enemy of the Bahá’í Faith, Mírzá Áqá Khán (one of Mírzá Yahyá’s accomplices). During that time it published a number of false and harmful statements about the Faith.
- 110:19** **“perfidious”** Of, relating to, or characterized by disloyalty, treachery, or faithlessness.
- 111:28** **“Imám-‘Alí”** The first Imám of Shí‘ah Islam. He was Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law.
- 112:17, 29; 113:9** **“Mufaddal,” “Abú-Ja‘far-i-Túsí,”** and **“Jábir”** Compilers of *hadíth* (the entire body

of Islamic traditions) handed down from Ja‘far-i-Sádiq, the sixth Imám.

- 114:27–28** **“the Lote-Tree beyond which there is no passing”** An expression that comes from the Arabic “Sadratu’l-Muntahá” which means, literally, “the Divine Lote Tree, the Tree beyond which there is no passing.” It symbolizes the Manifestation of God. See “Sadratu’l-Muntahá” in the *Epistle* glossary, p. 192.
- 115:15–16** **“verses concerning the Divine Presence”** Marzieh Gail points out in the introduction to *Epistle*, pp. xv–xvi, that verses on this topic “are numerous in the Qur’án. Among them are these: Súrih 39:69: ‘And the earth shall shine with the light [núr] of her Lord, and the Book shall be set, and the prophets shall be brought up, and the witnesses . . . and none shall be wronged.’ 89:22–23: ‘. . . when the earth shall be crushed with crushing, crushing, And thy Lord shall come and the angels rank on rank . . .’ 83:6: ‘The day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds.’ 20:107, 110: ‘On that day shall men follow their summoner . . . and low shall be their voices before the God of Mercy, nor shalt thou hear aught but the light footfall . . . And humble shall be their faces before Him that Liveth. . .’”
- 116:1–2** **“mounted His throne, and imposed laws on the sun and moon”** While this verse can be taken literally in an astronomical sense, it can also be interpreted symbolically. In *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 33–42, Bahá’u’lláh explains three interpretations of the terms “sun” and “moon.” These terms can represent the Manifestations of God, the Divines who “hold the reins of religion in their grasp,” and the laws and teachings “established and proclaimed in every Dispensation.”
- 118:27** **“Vicerent”** One appointed by a king or other ruler to act in his place or carry out certain administrative functions—in this case, God’s representative—the Manifestation of God. (*Note:* “Vicerent” is a misprint that appeared in some pre-1991 editions of *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*.)
- 119:4–6** **“there hath been revealed in the Kitáb-i-Íqán (Book of Certitude) concerning the Presence and Revelation of God”** See *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 138–143, for a discussion of three of the meanings of “Divine Presence.”
- 120:1** **“Him Who is the Prince of the world”** A reference to the Báb.

Reading for Insight:

1. Keep track of some of the Epistle's major themes on the 5x7-inch note cards you started using in Sessions 1–3. The following are some examples that can be found on pp. 92:6–121:23. On each card list specific examples of the theme and any other information you want to include.

Bahá'u'lláh's Directives to the Shaykh (120)
Bahá'u'lláh's General Teachings and Directives
(scattered throughout)
Bahá'u'lláh's Identity (114)

The Nature and Effect of the Word of God (93, 110, 114–115)
The Day of God (94, 97, 101, 107)
Bahá'u'lláh's Suffering and His Response (94–95, 105–108)
Proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's Station (105, 115, 119)

2. To improve your ability to “recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it” (*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 200) and increase the effectiveness of your teaching, copy the passage on 93:7–94:4 (or any other passages) for memorization and meditation.

Reflecting and Reviewing

Reflecting: Spend a few moments at the end of every reading session reflecting on what you have just read. Summarize in your mind what you have read, and try to relate it to what you already know. What spiritual insights have you gained?

Checking Your Recall of the Facts:

1. Malice affects the individual in whose heart it lives. What are the effects? (96)
2. Why does Bahá'u'lláh tell the Shaykh to read *The Kitáb-i-Íqán* and the tablet sent to Napoleon III? (97)
3. To what truths does Bahá'u'lláh bear witness? (98)
4. What does Bahá'u'lláh say are some of the characteristics of this Day? (101, 107)
5. What retribution is promised to the Imám-Jum'ih, the

“She-Serpent”? (100–102)

6. What is Bahá'u'lláh's response to the troubles surrounding Him in Constantinople? (94–95, 105–108)
7. Why did Hájí Shaykh Muhammad 'Alí take his own life? (108–110)
8. What is meant by the “Divine Presence”? (118)
9. What will happen to those who believe neither in the signs of God nor in the possibility of attaining His Presence? (116, 117)
10. What argument does Bahá'u'lláh use to prove that God can have no likeness? (118–119)
11. What God revealed to Moses is now revealed for all. What did God say to Moses? (117)
12. What is Bahá'u'lláh's criticism of the Shí'ah sect of Islam? (119–120)

Action

Read the following passage from *Epistle* (p. 115):

“Such a one as thou must needs in this day arise to serve this Cause. ... Strive thou, that haply thou mayest achieve a deed the fragrance of which shall never fade from the earth.”

Underline or highlight the directives it contains. How can you act on them?

Memorizing: Memorize all or part of the passage on 93:7–94:4, or any other passage you copied for memorization. How can you act on your chosen passage? Find or create an opportunity to use the passage you chose in teaching.

Group Work

Preparing for Study

Materials: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; a copy of this study guide; notes from “Individual Work” section.

Spiritual Preparation: Read aloud the prayer found in *Epistle*, p. 95:1–29. If you are working with a group, spend a few moments sharing insights. If you are working alone, write down your insights.

Reading and Reflecting**Reviewing and Sharing:**

- Share with your group the answers to the questions from the “Individual Work” section. If you are working alone, review your answers.
- Discuss any ideas that were of particular interest. If you are working alone, write down the ideas that were

of particular interest to you.

- Share the results of your efforts to memorize and act on a passage from the Epistle. If you are working alone, you may wish to keep a journal of such efforts and their results.

Discussion: The purpose of this section is to come to a group consensus on answers to the questions that follow. For some questions, multiple page numbers are listed as aids to answering. Assign one page to each member of your group (or to several members if your group is large) to read and report on. Then, as a group, consult upon and formulate a response to each question. If your group's time is limited, consult about which questions you will cover together and which questions individuals should complete on their own. If you are working alone, write a short essay in response to each question.

1. In the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Bahá'u'lláh cites events from the lives of previous Manifestations to prove the truth of His Cause (52, 58, 62–67, 81). In what ways are the events of Bahá'u'lláh's life and Cause similar to those of previous Manifestations? How do such similarities prove Bahá'u'lláh's claims are true? (12, 81, 92, 120)
2. Bahá'u'lláh exhorts us (93) to: "Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man and show all meekness to all men." How might you apply these directives in your job? What difficulties might you encounter in practicing them? What effects would you expect such changes to have on you and your co-workers?
3. List some of the actions for which the Shaykh and other divines such as the Imám-Jum'ih were held responsible. What were the consequences of their actions for the people, for Bahá'ís, for Bahá'u'lláh, and for themselves? (94, 98, 99–100, 100–103, 105–107) How does this relate to the fear of God?
4. One of the characteristics of this Day, Bahá'u'lláh says, is that what was hidden is now revealed, and that "whatsoever lieth hid in the souls and hearts of men will be disclosed" (107). Furthermore, "God will bring everything to light, though it were but the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and hidden in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth. ..." (107). What types of new knowledge that were hidden in times past are now coming to light?
5. Several pages are given to discussing those who doubt the presence of God, who do not hope to attain His presence, and who find their satisfaction in worldly pursuits (115–119). What does Bahá'u'lláh mean when He says they "doubt the presence of their Lord" (116)? Why is it important to believe that we can meet our Lord? How would you convince someone that the presence of God can be attained and that it is important to do so? What signs are given so that humans might believe?

Action

How can you, as a group or as an individual, act on the following directive from *Epistle*, p. 111?

"It is incumbent upon thee, in this day, to arise with celestial power and dissipate, with the aid of knowledge, the doubts of the peoples of the world, so that all men may be sanctified, and direct their steps towards the Most Great Ocean and cleave fast unto that which God hath purposed."

Assignment: To prepare for Session 5, read *Epistle*, pp. 121:24–151:16.

SESSION 5: Pages 121:24–151:16

Individual Work

Preparing for Study

Materials: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá*; Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: Mazra'ih & Bahjí, 1877–92* (Vol. 4); a dictionary; a copy of this study guide; 5x7-inch note cards or a spiral notebook.

Spiritual Preparation: Read the following passage from *Epistle*, p. 142, in which Bahá'u'lláh sets forth for the Shaykh the spiritual conditions needed for reciting the words of the Báb, and take a few moments to meditate on it. (By implication, the conditions listed in the passage apply to Bahá'u'lláh's words as well.) “With a detached heart, and a dilated breast, and an utterly truthful tongue, recite thou these sublime words. ...”

Overview of Pages 121:24–151:16: The section of the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* covered in this session opens with Bahá'u'lláh's lamenting that “On every side the flame of oppression and tyranny can be discerned” (122). In Tehran believers have been arrested (122). In Constantinople and other lands they have been accused of “theft and larceny” and made the target of false and slanderous statements (123). Bahá'u'lláh compares and contrasts the behavior and intentions of the Bahá'ís (the “loved ones” [122]) and of those who are trying to exterminate them (122–124). Despite the difficulties surrounding Him and the believers, He reaffirms that whatever occurs in the path of God is nothing but “manifest glory and a supreme attainment” (125), for suffering is the means by which God's true lovers are recognized and their station revealed (125).

Bahá'u'lláh poses a problem for the Shaykh to ponder: “... why is it that the Shí'ih sect, which regarded itself as the most learned, the most righteous, and the most pious of all the peoples of the world, hath turned aside in the Day of His Revelation, and hath shown a cruelty such as hath never been experienced” (126), despite the fact that the divines have been summoned repeatedly to “obtain their portion of the ocean of the utterance of Him Who is the Desire of the world” (127). Bahá'u'lláh reminds the Shaykh that in most of His tablets He has exhorted the

divines to recognize His station (128). He has also warned them not to weigh “the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst” them (128) and has taken them to task for allowing their learning to prevent them from recognizing “Him Who is the Object of all knowledge” (129). He offers further proofs of the validity of His station: He has not entered any school nor read any scholarly dissertations, yet none can equal Him in “vision or insight” (129). Through Him “every hidden thing hath been revealed” (129).

In answer to protests voiced against Him, and in order to offer people another opportunity to accept Him, Bahá'u'lláh has revealed “perspicuous verses” (131; see *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pp.117–119, for full text of the tablet)—verses of clarity and penetrating vision. In these verses, which are filled with rich allusions to earlier scriptures, He names some of the veils that have precluded people from recognizing and “turning towards the Horizon of Certitude” (131): vague fancies, vain imaginings, capriciousness, and lack of understanding (131). The verses appear in the form of a dialogue between voices of protest, which question the fulfillment of signs that signal the Day of God, and the Voice of God, which answers that the signs have, indeed, been fulfilled (131–134).

Departing very briefly from directly addressing the Shaykh, Bahá'u'lláh turns His attention to the “loved ones” (135)—the Bahá'ís. He admonishes them to “fear God” and to adorn themselves with “trustworthiness and piety” and “goodly deeds and a praiseworthy character” (135), and He forbids “dissension and conflict” (135). He explains the station and value of trustworthiness as “the most great ornament of the people of Bahá” and “the supreme instrument for the prosperity of the world” (137).

Bahá'u'lláh resumes addressing the Shaykh and takes up the subject of what will exalt Persia's station (137–139), a theme to which He returns later (148–149). But the major thrust of Bahá'u'lláh's address in this section is His

invitation to the Shaykh to “Seek ... the shore of the Most Great Ocean” (139), to “enter the ocean of the unity of God” (140), and to “Give ear unto that which the Tongue of Might and Power hath spoken in the Books of God” (140). To acquaint the Shaykh with things of which he was “wholly unaware” (140), Bahá’u’lláh relates numerous passages from the Báb (141–143), the Gospel (143), Muhammad (143), and Old Testament prophets (143, 144–146, 147), all of which prophesy or allude to Bahá’u’lláh’s coming. He then reminds the Shaykh of Jesus’ saying that “He Who is the Promised One will reveal the things which are to come” (148) and quotes

from His own writings to validate that claim (148–150). Bahá’u’lláh assures the “concourse of the fair-minded” that “All that hath been sent down hath and will come to pass, word for word, upon earth. No possibility is left for anyone either to turn aside or protest” (150). Returning to the ocean imagery He used at the beginning of the section, He asks God that He “Debar not” His “servants from turning their faces towards the light of certitude” nor deprive them of the “ocean” of His “signs” (151) and that He take the “hands of such as have drowned in the sea of idle fancies, and deliver them” by His “power” and “sovereignty” (151).

Reading

Reading for meaning:

1. Read and reflect, asking yourself, “What is Bahá’u’lláh saying?” Reread if necessary.
2. Read for patterns. Try to recall other places where Bahá’u’lláh addresses the topics found in pages 121–151. What else does He say about them?
3. The following explanations of terms are provided to aid your understanding of the text. Many were prepared with help from Robert McLaughlin’s *These Perspicuous Verses* (George Ronald, 1982).

page/line

- 121:25** “**Rawdih-khání**” Traditional ritualistic lamentation for the martyred Imám Husayn. After the advent of the Báb, Bábís believed that the time of mourning had come to an end. Thus Táhirih, the outstanding heroine of the Bábí Dispensation, refused to wear the traditional mourning garb on the anniversary of Husayn’s martyrdom, openly defying the people of Karbilá.
- 121:28** “**Qá’im**” “He Who Shall Arise,” the Promised One of Islam. Refers to the Báb.
- 122:11–12** “**Our loved ones have been arrested in the land of Tá (Tihrán)**” A reference to the imprisonment in 1891 of the Hands of the Cause of God Hájí Mullá ‘Alí-Akbar and Hájí Amín in Qazvín. This reference also suggests when the Epistle was revealed.
- 123:2** “**obliterate**” To destroy every trace, indication, or significance of.
- 123:10–12** “**Consider now what hath befallen the trusted ones of God in every land. ... accused of theft and larceny**” A reference to the activities of the enemies of the Faith in Constantinople, where several Bahá’ís had a successful trading company. Certain Azalís who were jealous of the Bahá’ís’ reputation as honest and trustworthy merchants began a campaign to defame and discredit them. False accusations against particular members of the

trading company were brought before the Persian embassy, and lies about cheating and theft of monies were published in a newspaper. (For a fuller account of the episode, see *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh* [Vol. 4], pp. 391–402.)

- 123:13** “**calumniated**” Slandered; maligned.
- 128:13–16** “**‘O people of Shin (Shíráz)! Have ye forgotten My loving-kindness ...?’**” A reference to the Báb’s revelation in Shiraz.
- 130:11–12** “**‘The heedless ones have hamstrung Thy white She-Camel’**” An allusion to a story in the Qur’án. Sálíh, a Prophet of God Who appeared before Abraham, called the people of Thamúd to worship the one true God rather than idols. When people refused to respond to Sálíh’s call, God produced a white she-camel as a sign of Sálíh’s station. Sálíh asked the people to care for the she-camel and to drink her milk. Instead, they hamstrung (crippled by cutting the leg tendons) and killed her. When the sign from God had no effect on the people of Thamúd, an earthquake destroyed all except Sálíh and his followers. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has explained that the she-camel symbolizes the holy spirit of Sálíh. The hamstringing of the she-camel represents the suffering inflicted upon Sálíh by the people of Thamúd. For a fuller account, see *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh* (Vol. 4), pp. 425–428.
- 130:13** “**Crimson Ark**” The Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.
- 131:3–4** “**Wings that are besmirched with mire can never soar**” For an elaboration of this metaphor, see *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 326–327.
- 131:16** “**perspicuous**” Clear; evident.
- 131:26** “**caprices**” Sudden, impulsive changes of mind.

- 131:29 “ ‘ **“Hath the hour come?”** ’ ” An allusion to Christ’s and Muhammad’s references to Their return. Regarding the time of His return, Christ said (Matthew 24:36): “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” Muhammad (Qur’án 7:186) made a similar statement about the time of His return: “They will ask thee concerning the last hour; at what time its coming is fixed? Answer, Verily the knowledge thereof is with my Lord, none shall declare the fixed time thereof, except He.” “Lost are they who deny the meeting with God until ‘the Hour’ cometh suddenly upon them! Then will they say, “Oh, our sighs for past negligence of this Hour!’ ” (Qur’án 6:31, Rodwell translation)
- 131:29 “ ‘ **“Hath the Hour come?” “Nay, more; it hath passed”** ’ ” The “Hour” has come and gone. Bahá’u’lláh warns in *Gleanings*, p. 43, “As for them who have disbelieved in Him, they shall be in the shadow of a black smoke. ‘The Hour’ hath come upon them, while they are disporting themselves. They have been seized by their forelock, and yet know it not.” In *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 237, Bahá’u’lláh speaks of the greatness of the “Hour”: “Such is the greatness of this Day that the Hour itself is seized with perturbation, and all heavenly Scriptures bear evidence to its overpowering majesty.” In *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 146, He says, “This is the hour, O my Lord, which Thou hast caused to excel every other hour, and hast related it to the choicest among Thy creatures.”
- 132:1–2 “ ‘ **“Verily, the Inevitable is come”** ’ ” The “Inevitable” appears to refer to both the person of Bahá’u’lláh and an event that occurred at the Conference of Badasht. In a passage in *Gleanings*, p. 43, that discusses the consequences of rejecting His revelation, Bahá’u’lláh says, “The thing that must come hath come suddenly; behold how they [the unbelievers] flee from it! The inevitable hath come to pass; witness how they have cast it behind their backs!” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá records in *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 201, that when Táhirih appeared without her veil at the Conference of Badasht, Bahá’u’lláh directed that the Súrih of the Inevitable be recited (Qur’án 56:1–6). It begins with a symbolic description of a new era and a new Manifestation of God: “When the inevitable day of judgment shall suddenly come, no soul shall charge the prediction of its coming with falsehood: it will abase some, and exalt others. When the earth shall be shaken with a violent shock; and the mountains shall be dashed in pieces, and shall become as dust scattered abroad. ...”
- 132:2–3 **“He, the True One, hath appeared with proof and testimony”** Bahá’u’lláh states in *Gleanings*, p. 105: “The first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self. Next to this testimony is His Revelation. For whoso faileth to recognize either the one or the other He hath established the words He hath revealed as proof of His reality and truth.”
- 132:4–5 **“Earthquakes have broken loose”** In both the Bible and the Qur’án, natural phenomena often foretell or accompany events surrounding the Manifestations of God (see Joel 2:1, Matthew 24:30, and Qur’án 22:1, 27:90, 56:1–4, 73:14, 99:1). Several references prophesy that earthquakes will accompany the “Day of the Lord” or the “Last Hour.” Such events may be interpreted literally or symbolically. In *Some Answered Questions*, p. 55, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains that the earthquake referred to in Revelation 11:13 occurred in Shiraz after the Báb’s martyrdom. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also gives a symbolic explanation of the term “earthquake”: “the earthquake of doubts will take place” (61). Such an explanation fits with Bahá’u’lláh’s statement in *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 48, that “by the term ‘earth’ is meant the earth of understanding and knowledge.”
- 132:7–8 “ ‘ **“The stunning trumpet-blast hath been loudly raised, and the Day is God’s”** ’ ” In both the Bible and the Qur’án the trumpet is associated with the call of revelation (see Exodus 19:14–19; Isaiah 18:3; Matthew 24:30–31; Revelation 1:10–11, 4:1–2, 8, 9, 11; and Qur’án 36:51, 39:68–70, 50:19, 74:8–9, 78:17, 79:6–7). In one sense, the trumpet blast in this passage symbolizes the call of revelation, for its purpose is to “awaken the heart” and quicken the soul (*Íqán*, pp. 196, 119). It causes the spiritually dead “to speed out of their sepulchres of heedlessness and error unto the realm of guidance and grace” (*Íqán*, p. 26). However, it also spreads “confusion ... and fear and trembling” (*Epistle*, p. 147). Thus the “trumpet-blast” here refers to the call of Bahá’u’lláh: “Verily We have sounded the Trumpet which is none other than My Pen of Glory” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 61).
- 132:10–11 “ ‘ **“Is the Resurrection come?”** ’ ” The meaning of the “Resurrection” is a major theme of the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*. Bahá’u’lláh says (*Íqán*, p. 143), “the Day of Resurrection ... is

the Day of the rise of God Himself through His all-embracing Revelation” and that “This is the meaning of the ‘Day of Resurrection,’ spoken of in all the scriptures, and announced unto all people.” Thus “Resurrection” refers to “the rise of the Manifestation of God to proclaim His Cause” (*Íqán*, p. 170).

132:15–16 “ ‘**the mountains have been scattered in dust**’ ” An allusion to several passages in the Qur’án that mention the firmness and, later, the scattering of mountains (see 13:3, 73:14, 20:105, 101:3–4). Bahá’u’lláh (*Epistle*, p. 134) says that the “mountain of knowledge was crushed”; thus “mountains” seems to refer to human knowledge.

132:17 “ ‘**Where is Paradise?**’ ” The Báb (*Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 82–83, 102) describes paradise as the recognition of the Manifestation of God (Bahá’u’lláh) and submission to His will. Bahá’u’lláh describes it as reunion with God and the attainment of His pleasure (Hidden Word no. 6 from the Arabic; *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 118, 189). Paradise is realized through love of Bahá’u’lláh and His good-pleasure and is experienced in both this world and the next (see *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 189; *Some Answered Questions*, p. 223).

132:20–21 “ ‘**We see not the Balance**’ ” The Qur’án (21:48) refers to “Just balances” that will be “set up for the Day of Resurrection.” Bahá’u’lláh refers to the Balance in several different ways. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, para. 99, Bahá’u’lláh refers to it as “the Book” in which “whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed.” In *Gleanings*, p. 281, He refers to it as the “testimony of the Prophets and Messengers of God. ... the sign of God that hath been sent down through the power of truth, through which the validity of His Cause hath been demonstrated unto His creatures.” In *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 255, He refers to the “Balance of divine justice.”

132:23 “ ‘**Have the stars fallen?**’ ” The falling of stars was to be a sign of Christ’s return (see Matthew 24:29). A literal fulfillment of this prophecy occurred in November 1866 during Bahá’u’lláh’s stay in Adrianople, when a large and dramatic meteoric shower occurred. The real significance of this prophecy is explained in the writings of Bahá’u’lláh, in which we learn that references to the falling of stars symbolize the fall of religious leaders who are losing their influence over humanity because

they have refused to recognize the revelation of Bahá’u’lláh. (For further details, see Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: Adrianople* [Vol. 2], pp. 270–272.)

132:25 “ ‘**Adrianople**’ ” For an explanation of the connection between “Land of Mystery” and “Adrianople,” see *Epistle*, p. xvi.

132:26–27 “ ‘**All the signs appeared**’ ” See *Selections from the Writings of Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 15–17, for a list of some of the signs of Bahá’u’lláh’s revelation.

132:28–29 “**Verily, the Crier hath cried out, when the promised time came**” In times past, before there was widespread literacy, widely circulated newspapers, or television, the town crier walked through the streets, calling out announcements. In religious texts the term has been used as a metaphor for the Manifestation of God. The Qur’án (50:40) warns people to “hearken unto the day whereon the crier shall call men to judgment from a near place: the day whereon they shall hear the voice of the trumpet.” Bahá’u’lláh writes (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 12), “Say, did ye not hearken to the Voice of the Crier, calling aloud in the wilderness of the Bayán, beating unto you the glad-tidings of the coming of your Lord, the All-Merciful?”

133:7–8 “ ‘**Darkness hath been chased away by the dawning-light of the mercy of thy Lord**’ ” The Qur’án (14:1) speaks of bringing “men out of darkness into light, into the path of the Mighty, the Glorious.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains (*Some Answered Questions*, p. 84) that light is a symbol of knowledge and that darkness is a symbol of ignorance.

133:13–14 “ ‘**When were the heavens cleft asunder?**’ ” Several Qur’anic passages speak of the cleaving of the heavens (see 25:27, 69:16, 84:1, 77:9, 55:37). According to Bahá’u’lláh (*Íqán*, p. 44), this event is “one of the signs that must needs herald the coming of the last Hour, the Day of Resurrection.” Bahá’u’lláh interprets the meaning of the Qur’anic verse (82:1) “When the heaven shall be cloven asunder” in this way: “By ‘heaven’ is meant the heaven of divine Revelation, which is elevated with every Manifestation, and rent asunder with every subsequent one. By ‘cloven asunder’ is meant that the former Dispensation is superseded and annulled” (*Íqán*, p. 44). He further states (*Gleanings*, p. 45), “The heaven of every religion hath been rent, and the earth of human understanding been cleft asunder. ...”

133:18–19 “ ‘**“Have men been gathered together?”**’ ”

According to the Qur’án (6:12), the gathering together of all men will occur on the Day of Resurrection, when “mankind shall stand before the Lord of all creatures” (Qur’án 83:6). Bahá’u’lláh declares (*Epistle*, p. 46) that He has come to “gather all men around this Table which hath been sent down from heaven.”

In one sense, the gathering together refers to a time of judgment—a Day in which those who have turned away from Bahá’u’lláh will be called to account for their decision (*Gleanings*, p. 143). In another sense, the gathering together is an effect of the Cause of God. “How vast is the tabernacle of the Cause of God! It hath overshadowed all the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and will, ere long, gather together the whole of mankind beneath its shelter” (*Gleanings*, p. 92).

133:26–27 “ ‘**“Yea, by Him that rideth upon the clouds!”**’ ”

Bahá’u’lláh clarifies the meaning of this verse in *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 66–67: “And now, with reference to His words: ‘And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.’ These words signify that in those days men will lament the loss of the Sun of the divine beauty, of the Moon of knowledge, and of the Stars of divine wisdom. Thereupon, they will behold the countenance of the promised One, the adored Beauty, descending from heaven and riding upon the clouds. By this is meant that the divine Beauty will be made manifest from the heaven of the will of God, and will appear in the form of the human temple.”

He further explains (*Íqán*, pp. 71–72): “By the term ‘clouds’ is meant those things that are contrary to the ways and desires of men. ... These ‘clouds’ signify, in one sense, the annulment of laws, the abrogation of former Dispensations, the repeal of rituals and customs current amongst men, the exalting of the illiterate faithful above the learned opposers of the Faith. In another sense, they mean the appearance of that immortal Beauty in the image of mortal man, with such human limitations as eating and drinking, poverty and riches, glory and abasement, sleeping and waking, and such other things as cast doubt in the minds of men, and cause them to turn away. All such veils are symbolically referred to as ‘clouds.’ ”

134:2–3 “ ‘**“Him Who is the Lord of the Day of the Covenant”**’ ”

Bahá’u’lláh claims this title for Himself. Praising God for this Day, He exults, in *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 275, “This is the Day, O my Lord, which Thou

didst announce unto all mankind as the Day whereon Thou wouldst reveal Thy Self. ... Thou hast, moreover, entered into a covenant with them, in Thy Books, and Thy Scriptures, and Thy Scrolls, and Thy Tablets, concerning Him Who is the Day-Spring of Thy Revelation, and hast appointed the Bayán to be the Herald of this Most Great and all-glorious Manifestation, and this most resplendent and most sublime Appearance.”

135:15

“Qayyúm-i-Asmá” The Báb’s first written work, an explanation of the Súrih of Joseph. Its first chapter was revealed to Mullá Husayn on the evening of May 22, 1844. Bahá’u’lláh describes the Súrih of Joseph (*Íqán*, p. 231) as “the first, the greatest and mightiest of all books.”

138:27–28 **“a new language and a new script have been devised”**

According to Marzieh Gail’s introduction to *Epistle*, p. xvi, Bahá’u’lláh never communicated these to anyone. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá indicates (*Lights of Guidance: A Bahá’í Reference File* [1988], p. 340) that Esperanto may not be the universal language alluded to. He says Esperanto “will be spread and universalized to a certain degree, but later on a language more complete than this, or the same language will undergo some changes and alterations and will be adopted and become universal. ...”

140:1

“Kaaba of God” A reference to the cube-like building in the center of the Mosque at Mecca, which Muslim pilgrims circumambulate. As the holiest shrine of Islam, it is the point to which Muslims turn in prayer and is the goal of Islamic pilgrimage.

140:18

“Lote-Tree” Refers to the Manifestation of God. A tree planted by Arabs in ancient times to signal the end of a road. There is no passing beyond the tree.

140:18–19 **“Hearken, now, unto the notes of the Birds of Wisdom”**

Bahá’u’lláh is asking the *Shaykh* to listen to what various Manifestations of God have said. In succeeding paragraphs He quotes from a number of “the Books of God” regarding His own station.

141:1

“My Forerunner” The Báb, Prophet-Herald of the Bahá’í Faith.

141:2

“This Great Announcement” Bahá’u’lláh is referring to Himself and His revelation.

141:5

“allusion” An indirect reference or implication.

- 141:7 “**Bayán**” The chief doctrinal work written by the Báb.
- 141:9–11 “**‘Exalted and glorified is He above the power of any one to reveal Him except Himself, or the description of any of His creatures’**” Bahá’u’lláh (quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 77) indicates that “None among the Manifestations of old, except to a prescribed degree, hath ever completely apprehended the nature of this Revelation.”
- 141:24 “**‘In the year nine’**” The Bahá’í calendar begins with Naw-Rúz 1844, the year in which the Báb declared His mission. Hence the year nine is 1853, the year in which Bahá’u’lláh’s revelation was born.
- 142:10 “**‘Primal Point’**” The Báb.
- 143:13 “**‘But of that Day and Hour’**” Matthew 24:36.
- 143:18–19 “**‘For the Day of the Lord is great and very terrible’**” Joel 2:11.
- 143:26 “**‘The Great Announcement’**” See Qur’án 78:1–2; 38:68.
- 144:14 “**‘Oh, for great is that Day’**” Jeremiah 30:7.
- 144:21–22 “**‘Who will bring me into the Strong City?’**” Psalms 60:9.
- 144:26–27 “**‘Get thee up into the high mountain, O Zion’**” Isaiah 40:9–10.
- 145:4 “**‘A Great City hath descended from heaven’**” Bahá’u’lláh explains (*Íqán*, p. 199), “That city is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation.”
- 145:15 “**‘The Lord will roar from Zion’**” Amos 1:2.
- 145:27 “**‘Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel’**” Amos 4:12–13.
- 145:29–146:1 “**‘He ... that maketh the morning darkness’**” A reference to Subh-i-Azal (Mírzá Yahyá), whose name means “Morning of Eternity.” Shortly after Bahá’u’lláh had declared His station, Mírzá Yahyá made a counter-declaration and announced that he had received an independent revelation to which all peoples were to submit. See Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 166–67.
- 146:12–13 “**‘The Lord alone shall be exalted in that Day.’**” Isaiah 2:11.
- 146:14–15 “**‘Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust’**” Isaiah 2:10.
- 146:21–22 “**‘the splendor of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord’**” Isaiah 35:1–2.
- 147:7 “**‘fear not, behold your God’**” Isaiah 35:4.
- 149:27 “**‘Lawh-i-Fu’ád’**” A tablet revealed by Bahá’u’lláh and addressed to Shaykh Kázim-i-Samandar, in which reference is made to Fu’ád Páshá, foreign minister of the Ottoman Empire, who was responsible in part for the exile of Bahá’u’lláh to ‘Akká. Fu’ád Páshá died in France after being dismissed from his post. The tablet, written after Fu’ád Páshá’s death, declares that his life was taken in punishment and describes the agony his soul faces for inflicting suffering upon the Manifestation of God. For more details about the tablet, see Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: ‘Akká, The Early Years* (Vol. 3), pp. 87-107.
- 150:7–10 “**‘men’s repudiation of the truth hath prevented them from understanding what hath been sent down in truth by Him Who is the Revealer’**” One’s understanding of revelation is affected by belief in the Manifestation of God. Bahá’u’lláh says (*Íqán*, p. 91), “Wert thou to explore the sacred domain of truth, thou wilt find that all things are known only by the light of His recognition, that He hath ever been, and will continue for ever to be, known through Himself.”
- 150:18–22 “**‘Observe and reflect upon ... the ocean of the utterance and knowledge of God, so that ye may testify ... that with Him is the knowledge of all that is in the Book.’**” The Word of God, revealed through Bahá’u’lláh, is a proof of Bahá’u’lláh’s station; thus recognition of His station can come through reading His words. In *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 114, we are assured, in a prayer to God, that He is “the One Who hath unlocked the door of knowledge before the faces of Thy servants that they may recognize Him Who is the Day-Star of Thy Revelation, the Dawning-Place of Thy signs, the Heaven of Thy manifestation and the Sun of Thy divine beauty.” This passage in the Epistle reiterates the same point.

Reading for insight:

1. Keep track of some of the Epistle's major themes on the 5x7-inch note cards you started using in Sessions 1–4. The following are some examples that can be found on pp. 121:24–151:16. On each card list specific examples of the theme and any other information you want to include.

Prophecies Quoted by Bahá'u'lláh about His Advent (141, 142, 143–144, 145, 146, 148)

Bahá'u'lláh's Directives to the *Shaykh* (126, 130)

Bahá'u'lláh's General Teachings and Directives (scattered throughout)

Bahá'u'lláh's Identity (128, 129, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 150)

Bahá'u'lláh's Mission (137)

The Fear of God (135, 136, 147)

The Day of God (126, 132, 133–134, 140, 143, 144, 145, 147)

Bahá'u'lláh's Suffering and His Response (122, 125–126)

Proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's Station (147, 148)

The Nature and Effect of the Word of God (146, 147, 150)

Bahá'ís (122–123, 124, 135)

Goodly Deeds, Trustworthiness, and Piety (135, 136–137)

2. To improve your ability to “recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it” (*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 200) and increase the effectiveness of your teaching, copy the passage on 93:7–94:4 (or any other passages) for memorization and meditation. In this particular section, Bahá'u'lláh recommends (*Epistle*, p. 134) that you memorize “these perspicuous verses” (131:18–134:18).

Reflecting and Reviewing

Reflecting: Spend a few moments at the end of every reading session reflecting on what you have just read. Summarize in your mind what you have read, and try to relate it to what you already know. What spiritual insights have you gained?

Checking Your Recall of the Facts:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the people of Bahá (the Bahá'ís)? (122–123, 124, 135, 137)
2. Why did Bahá'u'lláh's enemies in Constantinople circulate stories about Him? (125)
3. According to Bahá'u'lláh, how are God's true lovers to be recognized? (125)
4. What warning does Bahá'u'lláh give to the leaders of religion regarding the Book of God? (128)
5. To what final end should all learning lead? (129)
6. What bounties is the *Shaykh* promised if he will enter Bahá'u'lláh's presence? (130)

7. What barriers have withheld the people from recognizing Bahá'u'lláh? (131)
8. What is Bahá'u'lláh's response to the following question raised by the voices of protest (132): “ ‘ “Where is Paradise, and where is Hell” ’ ”?
9. What is the “fountain-head of all goodly deeds and virtues”? (135)
10. Describe the station of trustworthiness. (136–137)
11. What benefits does Bahá'u'lláh say will result from the adoption of a world language? (138–139)
12. How does the Báb describe Bahá'u'lláh? How does the Báb describe His relationship to Bahá'u'lláh? (141)
13. What is to be the future of Iran? (148–149)
14. Which of His own prophecies does Bahá'u'lláh quote? (148–150)
15. What are the consequences of humanity's rejection of the truth? (150)

Action

Read the following passage from *Epistle*, p. 135:

“Say: O people of God! Adorn your temples with the adornment of trustworthiness and piety.”

How can you act on this directive?

Memorizing: Memorize all or part of “these perspicuous verses” (131:18–134:18), or choose one of the passages you copied for memorization, and memorize it. How can you act on it? Find or create an opportunity to use it in teaching.

SESSION 6: Pages 151:17–181:17

Individual Work

Preparing for Study

Materials: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: Mazra'ih & Bahjí 1877–92* (Vol. 4); Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*; a dictionary; a copy of this study guide; 5x7-inch note cards or a spiral notebook.

Spiritual Preparation: Read the following passage from *Epistle*, p. 151, and take a few moments to meditate on it: “Behold ye Him with His own eyes. Were ye to behold Him with the eyes of another, ye would never recognize and know Him.”

Overview of pages 151:17–181:17: In the section of the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* covered in this last session of this study guide, Bahá'u'lláh continues His invitation to the *Shaykh* to “Seek ... the shore of the Most Great Ocean” (139), to “enter the ocean of the unity of God” (140), and to “Give ear unto that which the Tongue of Might and Power hath spoken in the Books of God” (140). Speaking through the *Shaykh*, He now addresses the “people of the Bayán” (152), followers of the Báb who, despite His intention that they should recognize and bear allegiance to “Him Who is the Desire of their hearts” (156, 157, 162), have failed to recognize Bahá'u'lláh as the One foretold. Bahá'u'lláh quotes extensively from the Báb's writings (151–162), summoning the Bábís to “Behold ye Him with His own eyes” (151) and “Recognize Him by His verses” (159). He supports the truth of His own revelation by citing the Báb's prophecies and affirmations of His (Bahá'u'lláh's) station and of the power and potency of His revelation. Bahá'u'lláh warns the Bábís not to fall into patterns of the past—refusing even to recognize the Manifestation of God as a believer (157), allowing the proximity of two revelations to veil them from the truth (157), or being of them “who have made mention of the Manifestation of the Cause of God in the daytime and in the night season, and who, when He, through His grace, appeared, ... pronounced against Him such a judgment as hath provoked the lamentations of the inmates of the Kingdom ...” (153–154).

Bahá'u'lláh describes the mystical relationship between the

Báb and Himself, a relationship that existed “before all things were created” (154). He quotes the Báb's proclamation of belief in Bahá'u'lláh “and in His Faith, and in His Book and in His Testimonies, and in His Ways, and in all that proceedeth from Him concerning them” (154). The Báb glories in His kinship with Bahá'u'lláh and prides Himself on His belief in Him (154). Bahá'u'lláh also quotes the Báb's repeated declarations of the subordination of His own station and revelation to that of Bahá'u'lláh: “For all that hath been exalted in the Bayán is but as a ring upon My hand, and I Myself am, verily, but a ring upon the hand of Him Whom God shall make manifest ...” (155).

Bahá'u'lláh reiterates the Báb's announcement that those who recognize God on the “day of His [Bahá'u'lláh's] Revelation” (156) “will have attained the summit of their existence, and will have been brought face to face with their Beloved, and will have recognized, to the fullest extent attainable in the world of being, the splendor of Him Who is the Desire of their hearts” (156). Those who reject Bahá'u'lláh after He reveals Himself are “shut out as by a veil from God” (155).

Among the Bábís who rejected Bahá'u'lláh were a few who sought to do great harm to Him, to His Cause, and to His followers. These included His half-brother Mírzá Yahyá, Siyyid Muhammad (also called the Siyyid of Isfahán and the Antichrist of the Bahá'í revelation), Mírzá Hádí Dawlat-Ábádí (whom Mírzá Yahyá later appointed as his successor), and Bahá'u'lláh's sister (161–177). Bahá'u'lláh discusses some of their deeds at length, hoping to make others aware of what came between “the True One and His creatures” (163). Bahá'u'lláh discloses that those who have turned away from Him “have schemed many a time, and acted deceitfully in divers ways. ... they have seized upon every means in order to repudiate the True One” (161). Moreover, they have included murder among their many shameful acts. Bahá'u'lláh pays homage to several Bahá'ís for whose murders they are responsible (174–176). Despite the wrongdoings of the “heedless,” Bahá'u'lláh prays on their behalf (177).

In the closing pages of the Epistle, Bahá'u'lláh quotes prophecies and traditions “regarding the blessed and honored city of ‘Akká” (177) in order to offer Hádí and others the opportunity to “seek a path unto the Truth, and a road leading unto God” (177). ‘Akká is a city to which God has shown “special mercy” (178). Its shores have been deemed above the merit of all other shores, as was “the merit of Muhammad above that of all other

Prophets” (178). Great rewards are promised to those who visit ‘Akká or visit “the visitor of ‘Akká” (179). Among the rewards promised are blessings, forgiveness of sins, and protection from the terror of the Day of Resurrection (179–180). Clearly it is no coincidence that Bahá'u'lláh mentions such prophecies, for with His arrival in the city of ‘Akká in 1868 and His imprisonment there in the Most Great Prison, the prophecies and traditions were fulfilled.

Reading

Reading for meaning:

1. Read and reflect, asking yourself, “What is Bahá'u'lláh saying?” Reread if necessary.
2. Read for patterns. Try to recall other places where Bahá'u'lláh addresses the topics found in pages 151–181. What else does He say about them?
3. The following explanations of terms are provided to aid your understanding of the text.

page/line

151:21 **“this Most Great Revelation”** The revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, which surpasses in knowledge and potency all revelations of the past and of the future, including the Báb's (see *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 74–75). Regarding the Báb's revelation, Bahá'u'lláh has said (quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 125), “*Knowledge is twenty and seven letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof: No man thus far hath known more than these two letters. But when the Qá'im shall arise, He will cause the remaining twenty and five letters to be made manifest.*” *Behold,* . . . *how great and lofty is His station! His rank excelleth that of all the Prophets and His Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones.*” However, the greatness of the Báb's revelation is surpassed by the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh's. The Báb, Himself, declares (quoted in *Epistle*, p. 151): “*The year-old germ that holdeth within itself the potentialities of the Revelation that is to come is endowed with a potency superior to the combined forces of the whole of the Bayán.*”

154:16–18 **“the Point of the Bayán Himself hath believed in Him Whom God shall make manifest, before all things were created”** A letter written on Shoghi Effendi's behalf dated Jan. 5, 1948, to an individual believer (see *Lights of Guidance: A Bahá'í Reference File* [1988 ed.], p. 504) explains how this is possible: “The Prophets, unlike us, are pre-existent. The Soul of Christ existed in the spiritual world before His birth in this world. We cannot imagine what that world is like, so words are inadequate to picture His state of being.”

155:18–20 **“And whosoever is made a Vicegerent by Him, shall be a Vicegerent in all the worlds, for this is an act of God.”** A vicegerent is one appointed by a king or other ruler to act or to carry out certain administrative functions in his place. (**Note:** “Vicerent” is a typographical error that appeared in some pre-1991 editions of *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*.) This statement from the Báb about Bahá'u'lláh's power appears to foreshadow Bahá'u'lláh's appointment of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant. Shoghi Effendi refers (*God Passes By*, p. 245) to ‘Abdu'l-Bahá as Bahá'u'lláh's “vicegerent on earth, the Executive of His authority.”

156:7, 10 **“mirrors”** The Báb explains (*Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 103): “The One true God may be compared unto the sun and the believer unto a mirror. No sooner is the mirror placed before the sun than it reflects its light.”

156:27–157:1 **“They will even refuse unto that Tree, which is neither of the East nor of the West, the name believer, for were they so to name Him, they would fail to sadden Him.”** The “Tree” referred to is the Manifestation of God, in this case Bahá'u'lláh. The reference to refusing to name the Manifestation of God a believer alludes to a historical pattern. The Báb explains (*Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 78–79) that when Muhammad appeared, people who were “veiled” believed that He was like them and not a Prophet and refused even “to call Him a believer.” The same pattern repeated itself with the Báb. In this passage from the Epistle, the Báb is predicting a similar fate for Bahá'u'lláh, despite the fact that the Báb has “educated all men, that they may recognize this Revelation” (157).

157:16–17 **“For none knoweth the time of the Revelation except God.”** Marzieh Gail explains in the introduction to *Epistle*, p. xvii, that this statement “refutes the disbelievers who claimed that the Advent proclaimed by the Báb to be imminent, would take place only in 2,001, a date arrived at by totalling

- the numerical value of the letters composing the word *Mustagháth*, assigned by the Báb as the limit of time fixed for the coming of the promised Manifestation. *Mustagháth* means 'He Who is Invoked.'
- 158:2–4** **“peruse ... the eighth Chapter of the sixth Váhíd of the Bayán”** This chapter has not been translated into English.
- 159:13** **“this Súrih of the Qur’án”** The súrih referred to is Súrih 109, “The Unbelievers.” Bahá’u’lláh quotes the entire súrih, which Muhammad revealed in response to certain idolatrous Meccans who proposed that if He would worship their gods for a year, they would worship His God for a year.
- 159:24–26** **“The tree of affirmation ... the tree of denial”** To affirm means to attest to the truth of something. The “tree of affirmation” refers to those who acknowledge their belief in God and put their whole trust in Him. The “tree of denial” refers to those who shut themselves out from God and refuse to believe in His signs. Even if a person believes in one Manifestation of God, failure to recognize subsequent Manifestations makes him or her a denier of God’s unity. For a discussion of affirmation and negation, see *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 147.
- 160:25** **“O Mirror of My generosity”** Adib Taherzadeh explains, in *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh* (Vol. 4), p. 438, that the Báb “bestowed the designation ‘mirror’ upon a few of His followers.” The phrase in this passage is “a reference to Hájí Siyyid Javád-i-Karbilá’í, a devoted follower of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh”
- 161:29** **“these stones that can take no imprint”** A reference to unbelievers. The Báb writes (*Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 103): “The unbeliever may be likened unto a stone. No matter how long it is exposed to the sunshine, it cannot reflect the sun. ... Indeed, if God willeth, He is potent to turn the stone into a mirror, but the person himself remaineth reconciled to his state. Had he wished to become a crystal, God would have made him to assume crystal form.”
- 162:10–13** **“It is indeed for the purpose of recognizing this Most Great Cause that they have come ... into the world of being.”** Bahá’u’lláh has clearly explained (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 70): “The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence.”
- 163:8** **“Hádí”** Mírzá Hádí Dawlat-Ábádí, termed by Shoghi Effendi “perfidious” and “notorious” (*God Passes By*, p. 233). He was an Islamic clergyman who became a Bábí in the early days of the Faith and later publicly recanted his belief in the Báb, eventually succeeding Mírzá Yahyá in leading the Azalís (see *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh* (Vol. 4), pp. 174–76).
- 164:15** **“Mawlavís”** An order of whirling dervishes.
- 166:13** **“Mírzá Músá”** A faithful brother of Bahá’u’lláh, “one of ‘the only two persons who,’ according to Bahá’u’lláh’s testimony, ‘were adequately informed of the origins’ of His Faith” (quoted in *God Passes By*, p. 108).
- 166:16-18** **“this Wronged One departed from Baghdád, and for two years withdrew from the world.”** Bahá’u’lláh arrived in Baghdad in 1853 to find that the Bábí community there had virtually disintegrated. It was to be ten years before He made public His station as that of Him Whom God shall make Manifest. In the meantime He immediately set to work revitalizing the Bábí community. Not long after Bahá’u’lláh’s arrival, Mírzá Yahyá, the Báb’s chosen successor, also came to Baghdad. Mírzá Yahyá did nothing to act upon his role as head of the Bábís except to glory in its title. Extremely jealous of the love and reverence shown to Bahá’u’lláh by the Bábís and others, Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad set out to create trouble for Bahá’u’lláh. To “avoid becoming a subject of discord among the faithful” (*The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 251), Bahá’u’lláh fled from Baghdad to the mountains of Sulaymáníyyih, Kurdistan. For a detailed account of Mírzá Yahyá’s role in stirring up discord in Baghdad and of Bahá’u’lláh’s subsequent self-imposed seclusion, see *God Passes By*, pp. 112–126.
- 168:9** **“The Siyyid of Isfahán”** Siyyid Muhammad, the “Antichrist of the Bahá’í revelation” and a native of Isfahán (*God Passes By*, pp. 164, 112). He and Mírzá Yahyá created a great deal of trouble for Bahá’u’lláh and His followers. Shoghi Effendi describes him in *God Passes By*, p. 112, as “The black-hearted scoundrel who befooled and manipulated” Mírzá Yahyá “with consummate skill and unyielding persistence.” Shoghi Effendi adds (*ibid*) that he was “notorious for his inordinate ambition, his blind obstinacy and uncontrollable jealousy” and writes that Bahá’u’lláh later referred to him in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* as “the one who had ‘led astray’ Mírzá Yahyá, and stigmatized him, in one of His

Tablets, as the ‘*source of envy and the quintessence of mischief*.’ ” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (quoted in *God Passes By*, pp. 112–113) has likened the relationship between Siyyid Muhammad and Mírzá Yahyá to that of “ ‘*the sucking child*’ and the ‘*much-prized breast*’ of its mother.”

168:15–17 “carefully look into the communications addressed in his name to the Primal Point”

A careful look at the correspondence of Mírzá Yahyá, who made a claim similar to Bahá’u’lláh’s, will demonstrate the truth, for the words of men can never be compared to the words of the Manifestation of God.

168:29 “the authorship of the Kitáb-i-Íqán” Mírzá Yahyá’s followers had circulated a disgraceful rumor that he was the author of the Kitáb-i-Íqán.

169:5 “Hasan-i-Mázindaráni” One of Bahá’u’lláh’s paternal cousins and a faithful Bahá’í.

169:8 “one of the sisters of this Wronged One” Refers to Sháh Sultán Khánun, also known as Khánun Buzurg, a half-sister of Bahá’u’lláh and follower of Mírzá Yahyá.

170:4–5 “Farmán-Farmá and Hisámu’s-Saltanik” Princes and paternal uncles of Násiri’d-Dín Sháh. See also the *Epistle* glossary, pp. 185, 187.

172:29 “Chihríq” and “Mákú” Two fortresses, both located in the northwestern corner of Iran, in which the Báb was imprisoned.

173:5 “Siyyid Husayn” A native of Yazd, one of the first eighteen disciples of the Báb. He served as the Báb’s amanuensis and companion in Mákú and Chihríq and continued in that capacity until His martyrdom.

173:8–11 “he ... who was continually surrounded by five of the handmaidens of God” An allusion to Mírzá Yahyá, who practiced polygamy. He married eleven wives and had a reputation for lust.

173:18–21 “ ‘How many the fires which God converteth into light through Him Whom God shall make manifest; and how numerous the lights which are turned into fire through Him!’ ” A reference to the power of Bahá’u’lláh’s revelation to transform denial into belief and to distinguish the faithful from the unfaithful. The metaphors of light and fire are common in the Bahá’í writings. In *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 118 and 121, Bahá’u’lláh refers to the “ ‘fire’ ” or “fires” of

unbelief. The Báb (*Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 61, 11, 87) refers to the “Most Great Fire” and “hellfire” as consequences of unbelief and says that “no fire hath been or will be fiercer for them [God’s creatures] than to be veiled from the Manifestation of My exalted Self and to disbelieve in My Words.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains in *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 84 and 224, that light is “the symbol of knowledge” and that “the light of faith” delivers people from the torment of “being veiled from God” and from the “punishment” of “sensual vices, dark qualities, lowness of nature, engrossment in carnal desires.” Fire is often a symbol of unbelief and its consequences.

174:26 “Dayyán” The title the Báb gave to Mírzá Asadu’lláh of Khuy, a devoted and distinguished believer, who was the third person to recognize Bahá’u’lláh’s station before His Declaration. He was murdered in Baghdad by followers of Mírzá Yahyá. See Nabíl-i-A’zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 303–304.

176:1 “Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar” A paternal cousin of the Báb and an intimate friend of Dayyán. Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar was murdered in Baghdad by followers of Mírzá Yahyá on his orders.

176:3–4 “Abu’l-Qásim-i-Káshí” A learned Bábí from Kashan who went to Baghdad and there became an ardent lover of Bahá’u’lláh. He was murdered in Baghdad by followers of Mírzá Yahyá on his orders.

176:11 “Siyyid Ibráhím” Surnamed “Khalíl” by the Báb, he was a Shaykhí from Tabríz who became a deeply trusted disciple of the Báb and received several tablets from Him. Later in Baghdad he recognized the station of Bahá’u’lláh, Who protected him from Mírzá Yahyá’s endeavors to have him killed.

177:3–5 “that which had been done, affecting the honor of the Báb, which hath truly overwhelmed all lands with sorrow” A reference to Mírzá Yahyá’s marrying the Báb’s second wife and then giving her away in marriage to Siyyid Muhammad one month later.

179:17 “God will gather him with Khidr” “Khidr” is the name of a legendary immortal Islamic saint, discoverer and custodian of the fountain of life, and “symbol of the True Guide” (Marzieh Gail, in *Epistle*, p. xviii).

180:12 “supererogation” The act of performing more than is required by duty, obligation, or need.

181:10–11 “betwixt the Rukn and the Maqám” “The Rukn” refers to the Black Stone set in the wall of the Ka’bih, the cube-shaped building in the center of the mosque at Mecca and the main goal of Islamic pilgrimage. “The Maqám,” or Station of Abraham, is situated in front of the Ka’bih’s facade, inside the mosque. The Qur’án refers to “The first Temple that was founded for mankind” (the temple in Mecca) in which “evident signs” are found, among them, “the standing-place of Abraham” (3:90–91) and suggests taking “the station of Abraham for a place of prayer” (2:119), promising that “he who entereth” the temple “is safe” (3:91).

Reading for insight:

1. Keep track of some of the Epistle’s major themes on the 5x7-inch note cards you started using in Sessions 1–5. The following are some examples that can be found on pp. 151:17–181:17. On each card list specific examples of the theme and any other information you want to include.

The Relationship of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh (151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 158, 160, 162, 171, 174)
Bahá’u’lláh’s Directives to the Shaykh (152)
Bahá’u’lláh’s Directives to the Bábís (152, 153–154, 154–155, 158, 159, 160, 162–163, 171, 172)
Bahá’u’lláh’s General Teachings and Directives (scattered throughout)
Bahá’u’lláh’s Identity (177)
Bahá’u’lláh’s Mission (161, 162–163, 166)
The Nature and Effect of the Word of God (151–152, 159)
Proofs of Bahá’u’lláh’s Station (152, 166, 173)
The Power of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation (151, 152, 155)
Prophecies Relating to ‘Akká (177–181)

2. To improve your ability to “recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 200) and increase the effectiveness of your teaching, copy short passages for memorization and meditation.

Reflecting and Reviewing

Reflecting: Spend a few moments at the end of every reading session reflecting on what you have just read. Summarize in your mind what you have read, and try to relate it to what you already know. What spiritual insights have you gained?

Checking Your Recall of the Facts:

1. In general, what advice does Bahá’u’lláh give to the Bábís? Why should they follow it? (Check the references above to “Bahá’u’lláh’s Directives to the Bábís.”)
2. According to the Báb, what are the results of bearing allegiance to the new Manifestation of God “on the day of His Revelation” (156)?
3. How does Bahá’u’lláh refute the disbelievers’ argument that the time has not yet come for a new revelation? (157)
4. How is the Manifestation of God to be recognized? (153, 159)
5. What examples does Bahá’u’lláh cite of deeds that “have been the cause of protest and denial” (163)? (161, 163–164)
6. What claim does Hádí make for himself? Why, according to Bahá’u’lláh, does he make such a claim? (163–164)

7. Who is Siyyid Muhammad, and what did he do? (164; see also the note for 168:9, on “The Siyyid of Isfahán”)
8. What arguments does Bahá’u’lláh use to dissuade Hádí from making his claim and from trying to destroy every copy of the Bayán? (164–166)
9. What Book does Bahá’u’lláh claim is the foundation of His works? (165)
10. What was Bahá’u’lláh’s reaction to the behavior of His sister? (169–171)
11. Bahá’u’lláh reveals the Names and attributes of God through His actions. In His response to the actions of His enemies described in this section, what Names and attributes are revealed? (164, 169, 170, 171, 177)
12. What did the Báb say to ensure that the closeness of His revelation to Bahá’u’lláh’s would not be an obstacle for His followers? (171) Why would closeness be an obstacle to recognition? Why are the Báb’s words effective?
13. Why is Hádí alive while others who have been faithful have suffered martyrdom? (174)
14. What benefits await those who go to ‘Akká? (179–181)
15. What are some specific actions that one takes while in ‘Akká to draw these benefits? (178, 179, 180–181)

Action

Read the following passage from *Epistle*, p. 152:

“The blessed Lote-Tree standeth, in this day, before thy face, laden with heavenly, with new and wondrous fruits. Gaze on it, detached from all else save it.”

How can you act on this directive?

Memorizing: Choose one of the passages you copied for memorization, and memorize it. How can you act on it? Find or create an opportunity to use it in teaching.

Group Work

Preparing for Study

Materials: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*; *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*; *The Hidden Words*; a copy of this study guide; notes from “Individual Work” section.

Spiritual Preparation: Read aloud the following passage from *Epistle*, p. 150 (from Session 5): “Observe and reflect upon the billows of the ocean of the utterance and

knowledge of God, so that ye may testify with your inner and outer tongues that with Him is the knowledge of all that is in the Book. Nothing escapeth His knowledge.”

If you are working with a group, spend a few minutes sharing insights. If you are working alone, write down your insights.

Reading and Reflecting

Reviewing and Sharing:

- Share with your group the answers to the questions from the “Individual Work” section. If you are working alone, review your answers.
- Discuss any ideas that were of particular interest. If you are working alone, write down the ideas that were of particular interest to you.
- Share the results of your efforts to memorize and act on a passage from the Epistle. If you are working alone, you may wish to keep a journal of such efforts and their results.

Discussion: The purpose of this section is to come to a group consensus on answers to the questions that follow. For some questions, multiple page numbers are listed as aids to answering. Assign one page to each member of your group (or to several members if your group is large) to read and report on. Then, as a group, consult upon and formulate a response to each question. If your group's time is limited, consult about which questions you will cover together and which questions individuals should complete on their own. If you are working alone, write a short essay in response to each question.

1. On page 154 Bahá'u'lláh asks, “Whither are gone they who are endued with insight and hearing?” In Session 4 we learned that only “such as are endued with insight” are able to see the “Balance” (*Epistle*, p. 132—see the explanation for 132:20–21). What does Bahá'u'lláh mean by “insight” and “hearing”? How are these powers activated in ourselves and in others? How does a person who is endued with

insight see the world? What are the opposites of these qualities? (See Hidden Words no. 44 from the Arabic and nos. 11 and 12 from the Persian; *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 35, 142, 220, 261.)

2. What is the relationship between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh? What reasoning does Bahá'u'lláh use to persuade the Bábís that He fulfills the Báb's prophecies? Consult your note cards to answer this question.
3. Consider the meaning of the following passage that Bahá'u'lláh quotes from the Báb in *Epistle*, p. 153: “Look not upon Him with any eye except His own. For whosoever looketh upon Him with His eye, will recognize Him; otherwise he will be veiled from Him.” What are the implications of this verse for teaching and deepening in the Bahá'í Faith?
4. The answers to the questions “Who is Bahá'u'lláh?” and “Why did He come?” are two major themes of the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf. If you are working with a large group, divide into smaller discussion groups, and choose one of the major themes you would like to work on. Drawing on individuals' notes from previous exercises, make a list of references, including at least two proofs, and use them to develop a short presentation for a non-Bahá'í audience. The presentation can be written (for example, a pamphlet or news article), visual (for example, a poster or advertisement), or oral (for example, a speech for a fireside or an interview). Share your presentation with the larger group. If you are working alone, select the theme on which you would like to work, and develop your own presentation in one of the three formats.

Action

How can you, as a group or as an individual, act on the following directive from *Epistle* (p. 153)?

“Look not upon Him with any eye except His own. For whosoever looketh upon Him with His eye, will recognize Him; otherwise he will be veiled from Him. Shouldst thou seek God and His Presence, seek thou Him and gaze upon Him.”