

Bahá'í Faith

The **Bahá'í Faith** (/bəˈhɑːiː, bəˈhaɪ/; Persian: بهائی *Bahāʾī*) is a religion teaching the essential worth of all religions, and the unity of all people.^[1] Established by Bahá'u'lláh in 1863, it initially grew in Persia (Iran) and parts of the Middle East. The religion has three central figures: the Báb (1819–1850) is considered a herald who taught that God would soon send a prophet in the same way of Jesus or Muhammad and was executed by Iranian authorities in 1850; Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892) claimed to be that prophet in 1863 and faced exile and imprisonment for most of his life; and his son 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844-1921) was released from confinement in 1908 and made teaching trips to Europe and America. Following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in 1921, leadership of the religion fell to his grandson Shoghi Effendi (1897–1957).

Bahá'í teachings are in some ways similar to other monotheistic faiths: God is considered single and all-powerful. However, Bahá'u'lláh taught that religion is orderly and progressively revealed by one God through Manifestations of God who are the founders of major world religions throughout history; Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad being the most recent in the period before the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. At the heart of Bahá'í teachings is the goal of a unified world order that ensures the prosperity of all nations, races, creeds, and classes

Beliefs

The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, form the foundation for Bahá'í belief.^[15] Three principles are central to these teachings: the unity of God, the unity of religion, and the unity of humanity.^[16] Baha'is believe that God periodically reveals his will through divine messengers, whose purpose is to transform the character of humankind and to develop, within those who respond, moral and spiritual qualities. Religion is thus seen as orderly, unified, and progressive from age to age. Bahá'í notions of progressive religious revelation result in their accepting the validity of the well-known religions of the world, whose founders and central figures are seen as Manifestations of God. Religious history is interpreted as a series of dispensations, where each *manifestation* brings a somewhat broader and more advanced revelation. In Bahá'í belief, this process of progressive revelation will not end; it is, however, believed to be cyclical. Bahá'ís do not expect a new manifestation of God to appear within 1000 years of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation. Bahá'í beliefs are sometimes described as syncretic combinations of earlier religious beliefs. Bahá'ís, however, assert that their religion is a distinct tradition with its own scriptures, teachings, laws, and history. While the religion was initially seen as a sect of Islam, most religious specialists now see it as an independent religion, with its religious background in Shí'a Islam being seen as analogous to the Jewish context in which Christianity was established. Muslim institutions consider Bahá'ís to be deserters which has led to Bahá'ís being persecuted.

Through recognition and obedience, service to humanity and regular prayer and spiritual practice, the Bahá'í writings state that the soul becomes closer to God, the spiritual ideal in Bahá'í belief. According to Bahá'í belief when a human dies the soul is permanently separated from the body and carries on in the next world where it is judged based on the person's actions in the physical world. ***Heaven and Hell are taught to be spiritual states of nearness or distance from God that describe relationships in this world and the next, and not physical places of reward and punishment achieved after death.***

Social Principles

- Unity of God
- Unity of religion
- Unity of humanity
- Equality between women and men
- Elimination of all forms of prejudice
- World peace and a new world order
- Harmony of religion and science
- Independent investigation of truth
- Universal compulsory education
- Universal auxiliary language
- Obedience to government and non-involvement in partisan politics
- Elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty
- Prohibition of slavery.

With specific regard to the pursuit of world peace it is necessary that all the people of the world universally unite under a universal Faith. The following principles are frequently listed as a quick summary of the Bahá'í teachings.

- 6.1 Exhortations
- 6.2 Prohibitions
- 6.3 Marriage
- 6.4 Work
- 6.5 Places of worship
- 6.6 Calendar
- 6.7 Symbols
- 6.8 Socio-economic development
- 6.9 United Nations

With specific regard to the pursuit of world peace, Bahá'u'lláh prescribed a world-embracing collective security arrangement for the establishment of a temporary era of peace referred to in the Baha'i teachings as the Lesser Peace. For the establishment of a lasting peace (The Most Great Peace) and the purging of the "overwhelming Corruptions" it is necessary that all the people of the world universally unite under a universal Faith.

Modern times

Bahá'ís around the world annually elect local, regional, and national Spiritual Assemblies that govern the affairs of the religion, and every five years the members of all National Spiritual Assemblies elect the Universal House of Justice, the nine-member supreme governing institution of the worldwide Bahá'í community, which sits in Haifa, Israel, near the Shrine of the Báb. It is estimated to have between 5 and 8 million adherents, known as Bahá'ís, spread throughout most of the world's countries and territories. Since 1963, the Universal House of Justice has been the elected head of the Bahá'í Faith. The House of Justice directs the work of the Bahá'í community through a series of multi-year international plans that began with a nine-year plan in 1964. In the current plan, the House of Justice encourages the Bahá'ís around the world to focus on capacity building through children's classes, junior youth groups, devotional gatherings, and study circles. At local, regional, and national levels, Bahá'ís elect members to nine-person Spiritual Assemblies, which run the affairs of the religion. The latter do not serve as clergy, which the Bahá'í Faith does not have.

The Bahá'í calendar is based upon the calendar established by the Báb. The year consists of 19 months, each having 19 days, with four or five intercalary days, to make a full solar year.^[16] The Bahá'í New Year corresponds to the traditional Iranian New Year, called Naw Rúz, and occurs on the vernal equinox, near 21 March, at the end of the month of fasting. Bahá'í communities gather at the beginning of each month at a meeting called a Feast for worship, consultation and socializing.^[19]

From their website: *Bahá'ís believe the crucial need facing humanity is to find a unifying vision of the future of society and of the nature and purpose of life. Such a vision unfolds in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh.*

For more information on this religion use the links below:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%CA%BC%C3%AD_Faith

<https://www.bahai.org/>