

INTRODUCTION TO THE BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS

A Ten-Lesson Study Course
By Mamie L. Seto

Bahá'í Publishing Committee
110 Linden Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois

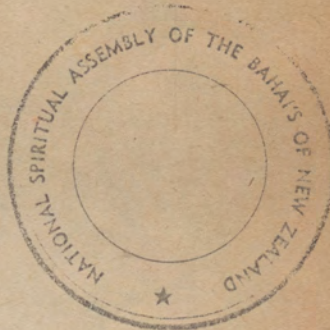
Printed in U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS

A Ten-Lesson Study Course
By Mamie L. Seto

Approved by Baha'í Reviewing Committee

1943



Baha'í Publishing Committee
110 Linden Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois

Printed in U.S.A.

FOREWORD

This Outline has been prepared at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly, and is intended to meet a special need.

The need has been for a simplified introductory course giving the basic Bahá'í teachings, based upon references to not more than two Bahá'í works both of which will be in print and available at all times at slight cost, and arranged in not more than ten lessons.

The material presented in the following pages is intended for study class or personal use, and provides subject matter and references for a course of not more than ten weeks.

Where a Bahá'í teacher is available, the Outline can be adapted to the type of class being conducted, whether of confirmed Bahá'ís who wish to review the basic teachings, or of new friends being prepared for enrollment.

Where it is used by an individual student or a group lacking an experienced teacher, the questions listed in each lesson will provide subjects for discussion after the references have been read and studied by each member of the group prior to the meeting.

In addition to its use for study and class discussion, the Outline will assist speakers in the preparation of public talks on many important Bahá'í subjects.

Only two reference books are needed: the set of three pamphlets containing Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and of Shoghi Effendi, and the book entitled "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era," by J. E. Esslemont.

To facilitate the use of this Outline in connection with the intensive teaching of the Faith throughout the United States and Canada at this time, the Bahá'í Publishing Committee has arranged to sell the Outline and the reference books either separately or as a unit at a special price.

The Outline, the three pamphlets and the book by Dr. Esslemont, postpaid, 75¢. (If Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era is wanted with fabrikoid cover, the cost is \$1.00)

Price of Outline, per copy, 15¢. Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, paper cover 50¢, fabrikoid, 75¢; Selected Writings, three pamphlets 25¢.

THE NEW AGE

REFERENCES: Baha'u'llah and the New Era, pages 1-8

Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pages 5-6

Selected Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 13-17
25-27, 32, 43

Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi, page 15

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the evidences that the world of humanity is undergoing a reformation?
2. How does a Prophet differ from other men?
3. How does a Prophet influence the progress of the human world?
4. State ten teachings of Bahá'u'lláh that are especially applicable to the New Age.
5. How do the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh seem to justify the claim that He is the divine Messenger of this age?
6. What has been the result of man's continued refusal to accept the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh?
7. What great change will come to mankind as a result of the manifestation of spiritual forces?
8. Name the seven candles of unity that will shed their light in this New Age.
9. How will the coming civilization compare with those of past ages?
10. How does Bahá'u'lláh compare this Revelation with those of past dispensations?

LESSON 2

ONENESS OF MANKIND

- REFERENCES: Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pages 196-197,
254-255, 328
- Selected Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 14, 21-22,
30, 31
- Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi, pages 36-39

- QUESTIONS:
1. How does the Bahá'í doctrine of the unity of mankind strike at one fertile cause of war?
 2. What is implied in the following words uttered by Bahá'u'lláh: "Ye are all the leaves of one tree?"
 3. What strong bond underlies all humanity? Elaborate on the subject.
 4. What will be the beneficent results of spiritual brotherhood?
 5. Does God make any distinction between men because of the differences in their color?
 6. What is our duty in aiding the world to become united?
 7. What important place does the principle of oneness occupy in the Bahá'í Faith?
 8. What is the purpose of the world-wide law of Bahá'u'lláh?
 9. Enumerate the Bahá'í social teachings and show how each is based on the fundamental idea of the oneness of mankind.

LESSON 3

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

REFERENCES: Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era pages 90-109, 110-123,
145-147.

Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pages 29-31

Selected Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 7-8,
9-10, 17-18, 43-44

QUESTIONS:

1. Can human nature change? Discuss.
2. How would you reconcile the two commands of independent investigation of truth, and obedience?
3. What are the Bahá'í Teachings on faultfinding and backbiting?
4. What do you understand by the term "the Bahá'í life?"
5. What is the relation between love of God and love of one's fellows?
6. What is prayer and how does it operate?
7. Why is it necessary to worship God through a Mediator?
8. What are the purposes and results of mediation?
9. What is the cause of individual or group calamities?
10. Discuss the progress of the soul.

LESSON 4

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION AND TRUE RELIGION

REFERENCES: Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pages 142-163
Selected Writings of 'Abdu-l-Bahá, pages 7-13, 43-44
Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi, pages 11-15

- QUESTIONS:
1. What is meant by progressive revelation?
 2. What determines the message brought by a Prophet?
 3. What are the two parts of each divine revelation?
 4. Give the purpose of true religion.
 5. In what ways have the former religions declined?
 6. Upon what basis can the present world religions be united?
 7. Why are the Manifestations of God called Collective Centers?
 8. Discuss the Prophet as the Divine Physician.
 9. What do you consider the outstanding diseases of the modern world, and what remedy has Bahá'u'lláh prescribed for each?
 10. In what ways does Esslemont consider the Bahá'í Faith "unprecedented and unique among the faiths of the world?"
 11. How does the Bahá'í Faith view the religions of the past?

LESSON 5

GOD AND HIS MANIFESTATIONS

REFERENCES: Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pages 51-57, 245-248, 258, 259

Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pages 9-13

Selected Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 11-12

Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi, pages 11-12

- QUESTIONS:
1. Why can we never understand the Essence of God?
 2. How and to what extent can we know God?
 3. Reconcile the plurality of the Manifestations with the oneness of God.
 4. What are the two stations which the Manifestations of God possess?
 5. What is the relationship of the Manifestations to God?
 6. In what way may we say that the Manifestations are God?
 7. Describe the unity which exists among the Prophets of God.
 8. In what way does the revelation of one Prophet differ from that of another?
 9. What is God's purpose in sending His Prophets to men?
 10. When did God's Prophets first appear upon earth, and when shall they cease to come?

LESSON 6

T H E B Á B

REFERENCES: Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pages 14-29
Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi, pages 8, 21-22

- QUESTIONS:
1. Describe the social and religious conditions in Persia in the middle of the nineteenth century.
 2. Describe the life of the Báb up to the time of the declaration of His Station.
 3. What is the significance of the Báb's claim to be the Mahdi and His assumption of the title "Primal Point?"
 4. Describe the progress of the Movement and the martyrdom of the Báb.
 5. What was the central theme of His writing?
 6. State His social and ethical teachings.
 7. Define the rank, power and rights of the Báb as the inaugurator of the Bábi Dispensation.
 8. Describe the Báb's twofold station.
 9. What is written regarding the brevity of the Báb's Dispensation?

LESSON 7

B A H Á ' U ' L L Á H

REFERENCES: Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pages 30-63, 261-265

Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pages 20-21

Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi, pages 20-21

- QUESTIONS:
1. Describe the early life of Bahá'u'lláh up to the declaration of the Báb.
 2. Relate His career as a follower of the Báb.
 3. Describe His announcement in the Garden of Ridván.
 4. Where did the public announcement of Bahá'u'lláh's mission take place, and what was the effect upon the majority of the Bábis?
 5. Describe the imprisonment in 'Akká.
 6. Tell the story of Bahá'u'lláh's removal to Bahjí.
 7. Describe Bahá'u'lláh's utterances when He speaks from the station of Deity, and His utterances when He speaks as man.
 8. What was His mission?
 9. What does Bahá'u'lláh write regarding the priceless privilege of accepting Him?
 10. Is Bahá'u'lláh the incarnation of God?

LESSON 8

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

REFERENCES: Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pages 64-89
Selected Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 3-4
Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi, pages 23-25

- QUESTIONS:
1. Give the important dates in the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
 2. Describe His relations with Bahá'u'lláh.
 3. In what way did Bahá'u'lláh indicate that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was to be His successor?
 4. Describe the simplicity and service of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's daily life.
 5. In what ways did 'Abdu'l-Bahá spread the Bahá'í Message throughout the world?
 6. Mention valuable services rendered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during the last world war.
 7. How did His life express the true Bahá'í life?
 8. What unique function and station does 'Abdu'l-Bahá occupy in the Bahá'í Faith?
 9. What are 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own words regarding His true station in the Bahá'í Revelation?

LESSON 2

BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION

REFERENCES: Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pages 218-220, 314-334

Selected Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 16-17,
42-43

Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi, pages 27-29

- QUESTIONS:
1. (a) What is the authority back of the Bahá'í Administration?
(b) What part did 'Abdu'l-Bahá contribute to the Administrative Order?
 2. Who is the Guardian of the Cause and how was he appointed?
 3. Who are the "Hands of the Cause" and what is their function?
 4. What is the underlying purpose of Bahá'í Administration?
 5. How does a Bahá'í community differ from other social groups?
 6. How is a local Spiritual Assembly formed and what are its duties?
 7. How are National Assemblies and Universal Assemblies formed and what are their functions?
 8. What is the fundamental difference between this administrative order and that which any previous Prophet established?
 9. Why did Bahá'u'lláh appoint a Center for His Covenant? Elaborate on the subject.
 10. What is the purpose of the Bahá'í Convention? What are the duties of the assembled body of delegates?

LESSON 10

THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

REFERENCES: Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pages 192-212, 328-337
Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi, pages 13, 33-36,
38-41

- QUESTIONS:
1. What are some of the chief causes of war?
 2. How do the Bahá'í Teachings strike at these causes?
 3. How does the Most Great Peace differ from the Lesser Peace?
 4. What is the relationship of the Bahá'í Administration to the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh?
 5. How has Bahá'u'lláh provided for a Divine Economy?
 6. Give Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic words regarding the disintegration of present day civilization.
 7. What force is at work to hasten the emergence of this new World Order?
 8. Describe humanity's social evolution to its consummation into a world community.
 9. (a) Give the need for a world super-state and an international executive.
(b) How shall members of a world parliament be elected?
(c) Give the function of a supreme tribunal.
 10. Describe world conditions as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh when world unity is established.

BNE = Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era
 SWB = Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh
 SWAB = Selected Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
 SWSE = Selected Writings of Shoghi Effendi

LESSON 1

1. BNE Pages 3-5
2. " " 2
3. " " 5-6
4. " " 7
- SWAB " 13-17
5. BNE " 7-8
6. SWB Sec. 2, par. 2,3
7. SWAB " 22
8. " " 23, par. 2
9. " " 37
10. SWSE " 4, par. 3

LESSON 2

1. BNE Page 196
2. SWAB Sec. 11, par. 2
3. " " 20, " 1, 2
4. " " 20, " 3
5. " " 21, " 1
6. " " 28, " 3
7. SWSE " 15, " 4, 5, 6
8. " " 15 " 1, 2
9. None

LESSON 3

1. BNE Pages 145-147
2. " " 93-94, 98-100
3. " " 104-105
- SWAB Sec. 17
4. BNE Pages 90-109
- SWAB Sec. 38
5. BNE Page 96
6. " " 110-111, 120-121
7. " " 113-114
8. SWAB Sec. 16
9. BNE Pages 117-119
- SWAB Sec. 15
10. SWB " 29

LESSON 4

1. BNE Pages 149-150, 152
- SWSE Sec. 2
2. BNE Pages 151-154
- SWSE Sec. 2, par. 3
- " " 3, " 1
3. BNE Page 151
- SWAB Sec. 6
4. SWAB " 4
5. " " 38, par. 1
6. BNE Pages 149-150
7. SWAB Sec. 7, 8
8. SWAB " 10
- BNE Page 153
9. None
10. BNE Pages 157-163
11. SWSE Sec. 2

LESSON 5

1. BNE Pages 245-246
2. " " 245-248
3. " " 51-52
4. " " 51-57
5. " " 52
6. " " 52-57
7. SWB Sec. 6, par. 1
8. " " 6, " 2
9. " " 6, " 3
10. SWSE " 2, " 2

LESSON 6

1. BNE Pages 14-16
2. " " 16-18
3. " " 20-21
4. " " 21-23
5. " " 25
6. " " 27-28
7. SWSE Sec. 7, par. 1
8. " " 7, " 2
9. " " 7, " 3

LESSON 7

1.	BNE	Pages	30-31
2.	"	"	31-33
3.	"	"	38-39
4.	"	"	39-40
5.	"	"	42-44
6.	"	"	46-47
7.	"	"	54-57
8.	"	"	57-59
9.	SWB	Sec.	17
10.	SWSE	Sec.	6

LESSON 8

1.	BNE	Pages	64, 65, 70, 75, 76, 82
2.	"	"	65-67
3.	"	"	69
	SWAB	"	3-4
4.	BNE	"	71-72
5.	"	"	75-76
6.	"	"	79-80
7.	"	"	88
8.	SWSE	Sec.	8, par. 1, 2, 3
9.	"	"	8, " 4

LESSON 9

1.	BNE	Pages	317-328 (a)
	"	"	314-315 (b)
2.	"	"	315-316
3.	"	"	316-317
4.	"	"	317-318
5.	"	"	318-319
6.	"	"	319-322
7.	"	"	324-327
8.	SWSE	Sec.	9, par. 6
9.	SWAB	"	11, " 13
	"	"	36
10.	BNE	Page	322-323

LESSON 10

1.	BNE	Pages	194-199
2.	"	"	192-212
3.	"	"	204-205
	SWSE	Sec.	13, par. 2, 3
4.	BNE	Pages	332-333
5.	"	"	328
6.	"	"	334
7.	"	"	332
8.	"	"	334
	SWSE	Sec.	3, par. 2
	"	Sec.	15, par. 4-6
	"	Sec.	17, par. 1
9.	BNE	Page	330
10.	"	"	334-337