

**"LAY NOT ON ANY SOUL A LOAD THAT YOU WOULD NOT WISH TO BE LAID UPON YOU,  
AND DESIRE NOT FOR ANYONE THE THINGS YOU WOULD NOT DESIRE FOR YOURSELF."**

— BAHÁ'U'LÁH (1817-1892)

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## **BAHÁ'Í — An Overview**

**Inception:** Baha'u'llah (1817-1892 CE). Bahá'í began as a sect of Islam that emphasized a basic unity in all religious truth, and that all the prophets have had a partial message of the one God.

**Adherents:** 7 Million [EBI Estimate]

**Primary Value Proposition:** Unity

**The Word of (about and/or attributed to) God:**

- All-praise to the unity of God, and all-honor to Him, the sovereign Lord, the incomparable and all-glorious Ruler of the universe, Who, out of utter nothingness, hath created the reality of all things, Who, from naught, hath brought into being the most refined and subtle elements of His creation, and Who, rescuing His creatures from the abasement of remoteness and the perils of ultimate extinction, hath received them into His kingdom of incorruptible glory. Nothing short of His all-encompassing grace, His all-pervading mercy, could have possibly achieved it.
- How wondrous is the unity of the Living, the Ever-Abiding God--a unity which is exalted above all limitations, that transcendeth the comprehension of all created things....
- How lofty hath been His incorruptible Essence, how completely independent of the knowledge of all created things, and how immensely exalted will it remain above the praise of all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth!
- Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that Most Great Light....

**Core Beliefs:** Three core principles establish a basis for Bahá'í teachings and doctrine: the unity of God, the unity of religion, and the unity of humankind. From these postulates stems the belief that God periodically reveals his will through divine messengers, whose purpose is to transform the character of humankind and 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 most of the world's religions, 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, suited for the time and place in which it was expressed. Specific religious social teachings (e.g., the direction of prayer, or dietary restrictions) may be revoked by a subsequent manifestation so that a more appropriate requirement for the time and place may be established. Conversely, certain general principles (e.g. neighbourliness, or charity) are seen to be universal and consistent.

Bahá'í adherents believe religion must work in harmony with science and education to build a peaceful world order.