**Grade 4 Lesson 2**

**Humanity is Being Awakened by the Call of Baha’u’llah and the Influence of His Teachings is Creating a New World**

*Slightly modified from Ruhi Grade 4 Book*

**Opening Prayers**

**Memorization of New Prayer:**

After opening prayers have been recited, you can continue to memorize the prayer introduced in the last lesson:

**“Glorified art Thou, O God of all names and Creator of the heavens! I render Thee thanks that Thou hast made known unto Thy servants this Day whereon the river that is life indeed hath flowed forth from the fingers of Thy bounty, and the springtime of Thy revelation and Thy presence hath appeared through Thy manifestation unto all who are in Thy heaven and all who are on Thy earth.”**

–Baha’u’llah

See [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under Grade 4 Lesson 1 for this prayer in a 4 x 6 format.

**Introduction to the Lesson:**

*It is hoped that in this lesson, the children will gain an understanding that humanity is being awakened by the Call of Baha’u’llah and that the influence of His teachings is creating a new world. The following ideas are provided to assist you in explaining this theme to them:*

Please pay close attention as I will be asking you some questions on what I share with you afterwards.

Baha’u’llah came at a time when humankind was moving farther and farther away from God. The vast majority of people were, and continue to remain, unaware of their spiritual nature, lost in a sleep of negligence. With the appearance of the Sun of Truth, those who have inner eyes to see wake from their slumber. They recognize Baha’u’llah and become filled with a new life. As the number of those who are illumined by His teachings increases, this world will gradually change: suffering will be replaced by prosperity, sadness will turn into joy, ignorance will give way to knowledge. Oppression will be overcome by justice. Truthfulness, righteousness and peace will appear, and union, love and fellowship will rule the hearts of people everywhere.

Then there are those who are blinded by their own corrupt desires. No matter how brilliant the rays of the Sun of Truth shining on them, they persist in their negligent ways and try to keep others back from the radiance of His glory. But they will never succeed, and every day more and more souls become illumined with the light of Baha’u’llah’s love. And in time we will see the Kingdom of God established on earth (when humanity is following the wishes of God as voiced by the Messenger of God for this day) as His teachings continue to spread far and wide, influencing the thoughts and actions of all people.

**Questions:**

-What does it mean that people are “lost in a sleep of negligence”? (negligence means that you fail to take proper care of something or you fail to do something- sometimes resulting in damage or injury) They are failing to take care of their spiritual self.

-Who is the “Sun of Truth”?

-When the Sun of Truth appears, what happens to those who have inner eyes to see?

-What happens to those whose inner eyes are closed?

-What will happen to the world as more and more people accept Baha’u’llah?

**Memorization of Quotation:**

*In the quotation below that the children will memorize, Baha’u’llah calls on the people of the world to wake from their slumber and to turn to God. This they can do by recognizing His Manifestation for today and following His teachings.*

**“The peoples of the world are fast asleep. Were they to wake from their slumber, they would hasten with eagerness unto God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”**

–Baha’u’llah

**Songs:** Here are some options…

* **Sing a New Song** by Phyllis Day
* **There’s a New Wind Blowin’** by Phil Lucas and Russ Garcia
* **Yes I Believe You** by Nicolas Tchamegni
* **Soon Will All That Dwell On Earth**
* **Rise Up and Sing**
* **Baha’u’llah, the Glory of God** by Pat Morrissey
* **I Have Found Baha’u’llah** by Nosisana Velem

Please see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for the songs and lyrics.

**Historical Episode:**

*Today you will relate to the children the events surrounding Baha’u’llah’s stay in Baghdad. The story of His declaration in the Garden of Ridvan, just prior to His departure for Constantinople, will be reserved for the next lesson. In whatever manner you choose to narrate this historical episode, you should* ***make sure that the children get a glimpse of the influence that Baha’u’llah’s teachings have on humanity****.*

Baha’u’llah was imprisoned in the Siyah-Chal for four months. Finally He was released and exiled with His family to Baghdad, a city in the Ottoman Empire. At the beginning, His life in Baghdad was filled with difficulties. After the Bab and so many of the Babis were martyred, His remaining followers became confused and lost. They did not know where to turn or which direction to take. And unfortunately, some of them began to forget the high standards to which the Bab had called them. They quarreled and became a very disunited people. The greatest cause of difficulty was Baha’u’llah’s own half-brother, Mirza Yahya, and ambitious and cowardly man who was jealous of the influence Baha’u’llah had on everyone that came into contact with Him. Working with a partner more shameless than himself, Mirza Yahya tried to turn the believers against Baha’u’llah. The situation grew worse daily, and Baha’u’llah’s soul was filled with sadness.

A year after their arrival in Baghdad, Baha’u’llah’s family woke one morning to find that He was gone. He had left the city without telling anyone where He was going or why. Seeing that Mirza Yahya was creating so much disunity, Baha’u’llah had chosen to retire to the mountains of Kurdistan, northeast of Baghdad. “The one object of Our retirement”, He Himself has later said, “was to avoid becoming a subject of discord among the faithful, a source of disturbance unto Our companions, the means of injury to any soul, or the cause of sorrow to any heart.”

In the wilderness, at some distance from the town of Sulaymaniyyih, Baha’u’llah lived alone. He was content with little food. At times He received some milk from the shepherds in the surrounding area and, occasionally, visited the town to obtain the minimum necessities of life. The conditions were extremely harsh, but He was happy to be in communion with God. Here is how He describes those days of physical hardship:

“We betook Ourselves to the wilderness, and there, separated and alone, led for two years a life of complete solitude. From Our eyes there rained tears of anguish, and in Our bleeding heart there surged an ocean of agonizing pain. Many a night We had no food for sustenance, and many a day Our body found no rest. By Him Who hath My being between His hands! Notwithstanding these showers of afflictions and unceasing calamities, Our soul was wrapt in blissful joy, and Our whole being evinced an ineffable gladness.”

As you can well imagine, Baha’u’llah’s greatness could not be kept hidden from people’s eyes for long. One day, for example, He saw a young student sitting by the road crying. He asked the reason for this sadness and was told that the other boys at the school had each received from their teacher a sample of penmanship to practice their handwriting but that the did not have a copy. Baha’u’llah offered with tenderness and kindness to write a sample for him. When the young boy showed the sample to his teacher at school, everyone was astonished at the beauty and excellence of Baha’u’llah’s penmanship and the news of this spread throughout Sulaymaniyyih.

Gradually, more and more of the inhabitants of Sulaymaniyyih came to know of Baha’u’llah and to respect Him. Some of the wise leaders of the city sought His presence and requested Him to explain to them difficult spiritual questions. Baha’u’llah’s Words had on these people their usual effect. Many a heart was transformed by His love and many a mind was illumined by His knowledge. His fame began to spread to the neighboring areas. News of a man of extraordinary wisdom and eloquence living in that region of Kurdistan finally reached Baghdad. The family, realizing that this Personage could be none other than Baha’u’llah, sent a trusted believer to beg Him to return. Baha’u’llah accepted their request, thus ending His two-year voluntary withdrawal.

During those two years of Baha’u’llah’s absence from Baghdad, the fortunes of the Babis had gone from bad to worse. Mirza Yahya had shown his total incompetence and done nothing to stop this rapid decline. Baha’u’llah set out to educate the Babis and to renew in them the spirit of faith they had once possessed. Over the years, through His love and wisdom, and the power of His Words, He changed the behavior of the followers of the Bab. Under His guidance, the Babis became, once again, righteous people who were the well-wishers of humankind. They put aside conflict and became promoters of unity and peace.

As time passed, the Babi community was spiritually revived, and admiration for Baha’u’llah grew. He was loved and respected by the inhabitants of Baghdad. During this period, those who were near Him were tasting the fruits of paradise. They were surrounded by His love and immersed in the sea of His Words. This is how Nabil, the great historian of the Bahai Faith, has described those days:

“Many a night, no less than ten persons subsisted on no more than a pennyworth of dates. No one knew to whom actually belonged the shoes, the cloaks, or the robes that were to be found in their houses. Whoever went to the bazaar could claim that the shoes upon his feet were his own, and each one who entered the presence of Baha’u’llah could affirm that the cloak and robe he then wore belonged to him. Their own names they had forgotten, their hearts were emptied of aught else except adoration for their Beloved…O, for the joy of those days, and the gladness and wonder of those hours!”

How fortunate are human beings when they can immerse themselves in the ocean of God’s mercy and become united through the love of His Manifestation! How powerful is the Word of God to transform the souls that are awakened by the glad-tidings of the dawn of a new Day. Yet, although those close to Baha’u’llah enjoyed the bounties of His presence and the people of Baghdad were attracted by His nobility and wisdom, some of their leaders were blinded to His greatness because of their own ambition and pride. They saw Baha’u’llah’s growing prestige as a threat to their power. And so opposition to the new Cause steadily increased.

In one instance, a group of religious leaders decided to send a learned man to Baha’u’llah and to submit to Him a number of questions in order to test Him. When Baha’u’llah replied to all the questions satisfactorily, the learned man accepted, on behalf of the group, the vastness of His knowledge. Then he presented the group’s request that Baha’u’llah perform a miracle to convince them of His extraordinary powers.

“Although you have no right to ask this,” Baha’u’llah replied, “for God should test His creatures, and thy should not test God, still I allow and accept this request.” He told the man that first the group should choose one miracle and in writing declare that, after it had been performed, they would no longer have any doubts about Him and would all recognize Him and accept the truth of the Cause. They should seal the document and bring it to Him. The man was profoundly struck by this clear and challenging reply. He instantly arose, kissed the knee of Baha’u’llah and departed. He delivered Baha’u’llah’s message to the group. For a few days these power-hungry men discussed how they should respond, but they could not come to any decision. Finally, they had no other choice but to drop the matter. Alas! They had come so close to being awakened by the light of knowledge that Baha’u’llah shed upon all. But their ambition and fear were like a veil that kept them from recognizing the Sun of Truth.

**Facts:**

* Baha’u’llah was exiled from…Persia in 1853.
* Baha’u’llah’s very difficult journey from Persia to Baghdad took about... three months.
* Baha’u’llah left Baghdad for…Kurdistan in April 1854.
* Baha’u’llah spent a total of ten years in Baghdad, including…two years in Sulaymaniyyih.
* During Baha’u’llah’s stay in Baghdad, the Babi community was revived through…His love and wisdom and the power of His Words.

**Drama:**

There are at least two possible options for this part of the class today. You might ask the children to think about what it was like for the believers to live in the presence of Baha’u’llah during the period of His stay in Baghdad and to be so immersed in His love that one forgets all else. To help them, you could explain again how Nabil described that period. Then have them act out a scene that shows what life would have been like for those early believers.

Another possibility would be for them to reenact the scene in the classroom when the young student shows the sample of Baha’u’llah’s penmanship to his teacher.

Whatever other possibilities you may think of, it is best that the children not be asked to assume the roles of the corrupt leaders of Baghdad plotting against Baha’u’llahs, as this would not be conducive to their spiritual upliftment.

**Drawing:**

Encourage the children to **draw a picture of a person waking to the dawn of a new day** to strengthen their understanding of the concepts presented in this lesson. You could, of course, think of some other useful images as well.

**Review:**

**“Say: O ye lovers of the One true God! Strive, that ye may truly recognize and know Him, and observe befittingly His precepts.”**

-Baha’u’llah

**Closing Prayers**