**Ruhi Grade 4 Lesson 7**

**Baha’u’llah Has the Power to Transform Souls**

*Slightly modified from original content*

**Reciting and Memorizing Prayers**

*Begin the class with opening prayers, and then review with the children the prayer they have been memorizing over the previous three lessons “O my Lord! O my Lord! This is a lamp lighted…” You can then help them to memorize the first few lines of the prayer below, which they should be able to learn in its entirety in four class periods. Remember to explain to them the difficult words and phrases.*

**“O my Lord and my Hope! Help Thou Thy loved ones to be steadfast in Thy mighty Covenant, to remain faithful to Thy manifest Cause, and to carry out the commandments Thou didst set down for them in Thy Book of Splendors; that they may become banners of guidance and lamps of the Company above, wellsprings of Thine infinite wisdom, and stars that lead aright, as they shine down from the supernal sky. Verily, art Thou the Invincible, the Almighty, the All-Powerful.”** –Abdu’l-Baha

Steadfast- firmly fixed in place; not subject to change

Thy mighty Covenant- Covenant is a pact or promise between two or more parties. God has made a Covenant with humanity. God’s part of the Covenant is that He will never leave us alone and without guidance. In each age, He sends a Messenger to make God’s Will known and to show us how to advance spiritually and materially. Our part is to seek truth in the age in which we live, to recognize the Manifestation of God, and to abide by His laws and teachings.

Manifest- clear, something that can be seen and known

Thy Book of Splendors- splendor means something that is brilliant, magnificent, glorious; this may be referring to the book of laws of Baha’u’llah called the Kitab-i-Aqdas

Banners of guidance- a flag that bears a message; like if you see a flag that has stars and stripes on it with blue and red and white- you know it is a flag representing the USA; we should be like banners of God’s guidance- can talk together about how to do that

Lamps of the Company above- a lamp holds light- we should be like lamps that shine forth with the light of the Kingdom and those holy souls in the realms beyond!

Wellsprings- a source of continual supply- my teacher was a wellspring of encouragement and information; we should be wellsprings of God’s infinite (which means unending) wisdom- sharing with others the Word of God

Supernal sky- supernal means heavenly, we should be like stars that guide people aright in the darkness, shining from the heavens- lofty, high, and heavenly

Invincible- too powerful to be defeated or overcome

**Introduction to the Lesson**

*In this class, you will contribute to the children’s understanding of Baha’u’llah’s Station by speaking to them about His power to transform souls. Below are a few ideas that may help you introduce this theme to your students.*

We already know that the Manifestations of God manifest all of God’s names and attributes to humankind. One of the attributes is His infinite love for every human being. Baha’u’llah has told us that God created us out of His love for us. If we were to be deprived of God’s love, even for a moment, we would perish and be no more. God’s love permeates the entire creation. It is because of His all-embracing love that the sun shines, that the plants grow, that animals give birth to their offspring and that human beings receive blessings with every breath of their lives. Our love for each other, the kindness we give and receive, the tenderness we feel in our heart for so many people, are all but a reflection of God’s love for His creatures. This love is manifested today by Baha’u’llah. And His love has the power to transform us.

The word “transform” means to change from one condition to another. For example, a caterpillar wraps itself in a cocoon and later emerges as a beautiful butterfly. The caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly. After a period of drought, the rains come and transform the barren ground into lush meadows and prairies. Likewise, from Baha’u’llah shine the rays of the Divine love that bring life to the universe. His teachings have the power to transform our souls. Through prayer, the study of His Writings and constant effort, we can fill our hearts with His love. His Words have the power to enlighten our minds and hearts and create in us the capacity to perform great deeds in service to humankind.

When you think of Baha’u’llah, then, remember always His immense love for you. Regard Him as a most loving Father, Whose teachings and counsels will guide you and make firm your steps. Become dependent on His love. Let His love give you courage so you will not be afraid of change. Let His Words change you and make you grow.

**Questions**

* What do Manifestations of God manifest to humanity? (to manifest means to reveal what was not known before)
* Why did God create us?
* What are some of the signs of God’s love?
* What would happen to us if God’s love did not reach us?
* Where does our love for each other come from?
* Who manifests God’s love for humanity today?
* What does the word “transform” mean?
* Can you give a few examples from the physical world of one thing transforming into something else?
* What do Baha’u’llah’s teachings have the power to do?

**Memorizing Quotations**

*Having explored the concept of transformation with the children, ask them to memorize the passage below.*

**“Be constantly attached to and seek always the confirmations of Baha’u’llah for these turn the drop into a sea and convert the gnat into an eagle.”**

What are confirmations? Comes from the word “confirm”. Confirm means for something to receive approval, to make firmer and to show that something is true. We receive confirmations from God when we act that show us whether we are on the right path or not. What are some of those confirmations? Through the power of the Holy Spirit, our efforts can be confirmed and we receive a much greater strength than what we can achieve alone. They make a drop into a sea and a gnat into an eagle. Through the power of God, we can achieve all things. He will strengthen us through His unfailing assistance.

*Create movements and a chant with the children to go with this short quote.*

**Songs**

* We Are The People of Baha
* The Source of Courage
* I Have Found Baha’u’llah
* Yes I Believe You
* I’ll Walk the Path
* The Promise

These songs are from <http://www.ruhi.org/resources/songs.php>

Lyrics and songs also available at [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson.

**Historical Episodes**

*There are countless stories in the history of the Faith that illustrate the power of Baha’u’llah to transform souls. Two such stories are provided here. The first is about the outstanding believer, Nabil-i-Akbar, and the second about a prominent man in the city of Akka (Shaykh Mahmud), who lived there at the time of Baha’u’llah’s exile. You will need to decide before the class whether you will present one or both of the stories in their entirety or summarize them for your students, highlighting the key parts.*

Every day, around the world, more and more people come to know about Baha’u’llah and His teachings. As the fire of His love is kindled in their hearts and His Words fill their souls, they are able to gradually cast away the habits of an old world and to acquire the qualities of a people worthy of the task to which humankind is being called today: to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

During Baha’u’llah’s lifetime, those whose spiritual eyes were open had a special privilege. AS they entered into His Divine presence, they caught a glimpse of such tenderness and love, combined with such grandeur and majesty, that their souls were transformed. They became new creations. Today I will tell you the story of one such individual, Nabil-i-Akbar.

**Story of Nabil:**

Nabil-i-Akbar was a great scholar who possessed a vast knowledge of many fields. Few could match him in his eloquence. It is said that he once spoke to a group of academics in a far-off city who had not been told his identity. His listeners were lost in admiration. “Who could be so knowledgeable and present such illuminating explanations?” they wondered. “This is indeed a most exceptional man.” The only one who could possibly rival him, they all agreed, was the famous Nabil-i-Akbar. Such was the widespread recognition of his intellectual accomplishments.

After embracing the Faith of the Bab, Nabil-i-Akbar became a highly respected figure among his fellow believers. It was six years after his acceptance of the new religion when, while in Baghdad, he visited Baha’u’llah. At that time, Baha’u’llah had not yet openly declared His Mission, and hardly any of the Babis were aware of His Station. Nabil-i-Akbar was received warmly at Baha’u’llah’s house and was invited to stay in one of the rooms reserved for the reception of guests.

Soon after his arrival, he observed a learned and highly dignified Babi throw himself at the feet of Baha’u’llah. This act of extreme reverence, although sincere, did not please Baha’u’llah, who asked him to rise immediately. Nabil-i-Akbar felt Baha’u’llah certainly deserved respect, but he could not understand why such a prominent Babi would worship Him so. He decided to watch Baha’u’llah carefully to find out whether He was endowed with special power. But he saw only humility and servitude in Baha’u’llah, and the more he observed Him the more convinced he became of his own intellectual superiority. So he began to think that he himself was in every way greater than Baha’u’llah.

One afternoon, Baha’u’llah arranged a meeting in His house. Nabil-i-Akbar occupied the seat of honor, while Baha’u’llah sat among the friends and served them tea with His own hands. During the meeting, someone asked a question. Nabil-i-Akbar began to speak immediately, thinking that no one else would be able to answer the question well. All the friends were silent, except Baha’u’llah who occasionally, while agreeing with Nabil-i-Akbar’s explanation, would make a few comments on the subject. As Nabil-i-Akbar heard these comments, he gradually became silent and listened more and more carefully to Baha’u’llah’s Words. He was awed by the depth of their meaning. After a while, he could no longer hear what was being said. He felt deeply ashamed that he was occupying the seat of honor. Once Baha’u’llah stopped talking, he got up and went outside the room, and there he hit his head hard against the wall three times, furious with himself for not having seen the real grandeur of Baha’u’llah.

Not long after, He attended another meeting at which Baha’u’llah was present. This time, as he listened to Him, he discovered His Words to be as priceless gems compared to which all his past learning appeared worthless. He then wrote to Baha’u’llah and received a Tablet from Him, which assisted him in recognizing the full glory of Baha’u’llah’s Station.

When his eyes were opened to the light of Divine guidance, Nabil-i-Akbar became like a flame. He could rest no longer. He returned to Persia at Baha’u’llah’s instruction and began to teach the Faith. In his hometown, he led numerous souls to recognize their Lord. Even the Prince of the city was captivated by his eloquence, knowledge and accomplishments. Again, he became known far and wide, but this time as a follower of Baha’u’llah. The enemies of the Faith grew envious. Their false accusations were brought to the attention of the King, whose anger terrified the Prince. He began to attach Nabil and turned the people of the city against him. But Nabil could not be silenced. At last they drove him out of the city. He went to Tihran. There, too, he was exposed to danger at all times. But he continued to spread the Faith and became a guiding lamp to many souls. He then left for Ishqabad and Bukhara where, teaching the Cause of God to his last breath, he died in 1892. Abdu’l-Baha has written of him: “It is true that in this swiftly passing world he was the target of countless woes; and yet, all those generations of powerful clerics,…all of them will disappear without a trace. They will leave no name behind them, no sign, no fruit. No word will be passed down from any of them; no man will tell of them again. But because he stood steadfast in this holy Faith, because he guided souls and served this Cause and spread its fame, that star, Nabil, will shine forever from the horizon of abiding light.

Nabil-i-Akbar is one of the outstanding early believers of our Faith, and when you get older, you will probably learn more about his life and deeds.

*Today I will tell you another story about an individual transformed by Baha’u’llah.*

**Story of Shaykh Mahmud:**

As you know from our earlier classes, upon their arrival in Akka, Baha’u’llah and His companions were publicly denounced by the enemies of the Faith. (remember what the people had been told about the band of exiles?) Believing these false accusations, many of the inhabitants of the city were extremely unhappy about their arrival. Among them was Shaykh Mahmud, a well-respected citizen who was outraged that the government had sent such a people to his city and wanted to get rid of them. At one point, Shaykh Mahmud even felt that he would be justified in killing Baha’u’llah!

Shaykh Mahmud had forgotten about a vision he had been told as a ten-year-old boy by an elderly friend of his father. According to the vision, someday, the Promised One of All Ages would arrive in Akka. He would speak Persian and would live in a room at the top of a long flight of stairs. The old man had counseled the boy to remain vigilant so that he would recognize the Promised One. But these words had faded from his mind as he grew up.

One day Shaykh Mahmud hid a weapon under his coat and went to the army barracks where Baha’u’llah was imprisoned. He told the guards that he wanted to see Baha’u’llah and, because he was a well-respected citizen, they granted him permission to enter. However, when the guards announced the visitor to Baha’u’llah, He said, “Tell him to cast away the weapon and then he may come in.” Upon hearing this from the guards, Shaykh Mahmud became so confused that he left and went home.

After a while he returned to the army barracks, still determined to kill Baha’u’llah. He was a strong man and decided to use his bare hands. Again he went to the guards and requested permission to enter. But this time, when they told Baha’u’llah that Shaykh Mahmud wanted to see Him, He said, “Tell him to purify his heart first and then he may come in.” This left him even more surprised than the previous time, and he went off in a state of confusion.

Later he had a dream in which his father and his friend, the old man, reminded him to be attentive, otherwise he would be deprived of recognizing the Promised One. The dream had a striking effect on him. He returned to the army barracks and asked to speak to Abdul-Baha. As he listened to the Master’s words, his hatred was washed away. Now he could be accepted into the presence of Baha’u’llah. With reverence he entered into His presence and allowed his heart to be filled with His love.

**Facts**

Since there are no specific fats in today’s lesson for the children to learn, it is suggested that you review wit them the facts they have studied in earlier classes.

**Drama**

Choose an appropriate method for the children to reenact either one or the other of the stories you recounted in the lesson.

**Drawing**

Referring back to your introduction, you could ask the children to draw a caterpillar being transformed into a butterfly, or you could give another example from the physical world of one thing transformed into something else.

**Review**

“Say: O children of dust! He Who is the Spirit of Purity saith: In this glorious Day whatsoever can purge you from defilement and ensure your peace and tranquility, that indeed is the straight Path, the Path that leadeth unto Me.”

**Closing Prayers**