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no

Hoshi

No. 263

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*"The Ancient Beauty is
shining resplendent from
the most exalted
Horizon."*

Baha'u'llah



“Come on guys!” Shahla, running into the bedroom, shouted to the other four children.

“Daddy is going to tell us a ‘mukashi banashi’ (Japanese Folktale) ! The children all threw down what they were doing and ran into the tatami room, they loved when Daddy told them the stories that he had learned from his childhood.

“Well”, began Father after the children were settled. “What I am going to tell you is a ‘mukashi banashi’(literally, ‘old story’), but it started long, long, long before there even was a Japan!”

“Wow!” said Riaz excitedly. “When does it start?”

“Before there was a ‘when’ or before there was a ‘where’”, laughed Father.

The children all looked at each other in surprise.

“The Creator of the Universe loved Man, and decided to create the earth, to give Man a place to be. ***“I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee...”***”

“Isn’t that backwards,” asked Riaz, “Don’t you create something and then love it?”

“Daddy and I loved all of you, that is why we made you!” said Mother, smiling from the doorway.

Father continued, “God created the earth, which at first was just a big ball of fire, then after millions of years it cooled and became a big ball of water. When the earth was full of all the right nutrients and was just the right temperature, it was finally ready, God created the spark of life that was the beginning of all life on earth and the first ancestors of the animals were created. Then, when the time was just right, God prepared a creature that had something special.....a kind mirror that had the ability to reflect the soul of Man. That was the beginning; as the soul and body combined the first human came to be. At first, Man may have looked like a one celled animal, but, he had a soul, just like you do.”

“I know”, said Mona, “like the baby in the womb of its mother, it may look like a glob of nothing, but it has a soul, right?”

“Well, sighed Mother from behind the children, “ ‘a glob’ is not how I would have described any of you the first time I saw



you on the ultra- sound machine, but, that is the idea.”

Father went on, “So Man changed and developed and eventually came up out of the ocean and started walking on two legs, and finally started to speak.”



“Wow, that does sound like a baby developing!” put in Asma, and the other children nodded in agreement.

Father continued, “That was probably about the time Man needed to start his education. So the first Manifestation of God was sent to teach Man the difference between right and wrong. We refer to Him as Adam.”

Mona thought a moment and said, “For a baby the first teacher is the mother, she teaches the baby, ‘No!’, so does that mean that Adam was like the Mother?”

“That is an interesting idea.” said Father, and then he continued. “Down through the ages, Man and Civilization, (they always progress together) grew and matured, Manifestations of God would continually be sent to educate each group of people, so that they would know how to love and serve each other.”

“Like Christ and Moses to Israel.” said Mona.

“And Buddha and Krishna to Asia.” put in Riaz.

“Mohammad and Zoroaster to the middle East.” added Shahla not wanting to be left behind.

“But what is ‘man-fist-ton’?” asked little Anisa.

“A Manifestation of God, Anisa, is like a perfect mirror reflecting all the Light of God, and He tells us what God wants us to know.” explained Asma.

“You see,” Asma continued in his best imitation of Father’s teaching voice. “God can’t come down to earth and talk to us, it would be like the sun coming down to earth, the sun is a huge fireball and earth is a teeny, tiny ball. So the sun sends its rays of light to earth to make things grow, and God sends the Manifestations to teach us and help us grow.”

“Yes, very well put, Asma.” continued Father.

“Baha’u’llah tell us that, ***‘The supreme cause for creating the world and all that is therein is for man to know God.’*** That is why God made the world and then sent us the Manifestations of God to teach us. So, now





we come to an age where all the different groups of people and all the cultures, each worshipping through their own Manifestation of God, can interact and get to know each other. The problem comes in because each group is quite sure that their Teacher is the only and best Teacher from God.”

“Yeah, that has sure caused a lot of trouble!” said Riaz, “Look at how the Muslims, Christians, Jews, have all been fighting each other.”

“Even in Japan, in the olden days with the Christians and Buddhists and Shintos, fighting and killing each other.” added Mona.

“That is why people don’t like religion now days, they think it only causes trouble.” put in Asma.

Father continued dramatically, “The world had become very dark, just like midnight, and then, the Light of the Universal Manifestation of God, Baha’u’llah, shone out upon the world! He came to bring all the warring races, cultures and religions together into the light of unity. After millions of years, Man has finally reached the age of maturity.” “Yeah!!” clapped the children, getting into the story.

“That means Man is all grown up now?” asked Shahla.

“Well,” said Mother, “for a person, the age of maturity is about 15 years old, not really a grown up, but not a child anymore. At that age they are still capable of some pretty silly behavior, just like the world now days!” laughed Mother.

Father continued, “Baha’u’llah, the newest Manifestation of God, is known as the Ancient Beauty, because it is the same Reflection of God that was seen from ancient times, shining out from each of the Manifestation of God; Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, Mohamed, and all the other Ones we never knew of because Their stories were never written down.



Through the Mirror of Baha’u’llah, we see the Beauty, Splendor, and Glory, of God. And through the teaching of Baha’u’llah we learn what God wants us to do so that our souls will grow, and so that we can serve humanity and help bring about a great new world civilization. ‘Abdu’l-Baha’ said, *‘Out of this pitch blackness there*

dawned the morning splendor of the Teachings of Baha'u'llah."

After Father finished Asma spoke up,

"I have heard that we were created in the image of God, that doesn't mean

we look like God does it, some people think that."

"No, you are right Asma." explained Father, "The rest of the quotation I mentioned in the beginning of this 'mukashi banashi' goes like this: *'I knew my love for thee; therefore I created thee, and have engraved upon thee My image.'* That is

talking about the special mirror that God gave the very first human so that Man could reflect the Light

of God. It is only like a tiny mirror, and cannot reflect all of the Light of God perfectly, as the Manifestations of God do. Every human gets that special mirror as soon as our bodies are created inside the womb of our mothers. So, even though our bodies are just like an animal's body, we are able to reflect the Light from God, this reflection is our true self, our soul...though we often cover it up with our animal side. All the time we are here on this earth we have to constantly work to uncover and polish those mirrors, so our soul can reflect that Light, that is what God sent us here to do."

"Just like what you said to us when we were born...Mommy told us that thing you said, Daddy!" put in Shahla.

Father smiled as he remembered that pleasant task.

"Baha'u'llah said that when a baby is born, the father's first words to that baby should be *'Verily thou hast come by the Command of God, thou hast appeared to speak of Him, thou hast been created to serve Him who is the Dear the Beloved.'* "

"Say it in real words, I don't understand that talk." said Anisa shaking her head.

"It is the father telling the baby why he has come and what he is supposed to do with his life. That is pretty neat!" exclaimed Riaz.

Mona explained further, "God brought the baby here, and the baby has to remember to talk about God, that must mean prayer and telling people about God... and then....ahhh, oh yeah, the baby must serve God, which means serving mankind. Right, Dad?"

"Wow! What a wise daughter I have!" Father said smiling.



Asma added, “It sound just like that prayer, the Obligatory prayer, that everyone is supposed to say after they turn 15.”

“Yes, the age of maturity,” said Father, “Like we were talking about the age that humanity is right now. So, when the baby is born, the father tells him why he was created, and then when that baby reaches the age of maturity, everyday he is supposed to remind himself why he was created, and what he is supposed to do. Asma, have you memorized the prayer yet?” asked Father.

“I am only 12!” said Asma defensively.

“Mona?” asked Mother.

“I am going to today, So I will be ready when I turn 15!” said Mona enthusiastically.

Father quoted, ***“I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.”***

“It is almost the same as the baby’s one, only the last part, the grown-ups have to say that they are poor and weak and only God has everything....I guess it is easy for grown-ups to forget that they don’t have all the power...we kids already know that WE don’t!” said Riaz.

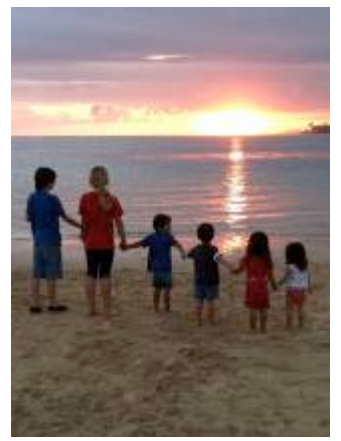
Father and Mother both laughed at that bit of wisdom.

“So, to finish this ‘mukashi banashi’, God created this world to be like a classroom for our souls. Our bodies are the clothes we wear to class. So we can’t get so concerned about what clothes we are wearing to school, that we forget to study. That means we shouldn’t think so much about how many toys we have, or how many sweets we can eat.”

“Or grown-ups worry about how much money they have!” put in Riaz.

“So,” added Mother, “Baha’u’llah, the Universal Manifestation of God, teaches us how to grow our souls, and that our purpose here





in this classroom of earth, is to help our soul go closer to God, and we can only do that by praying and meditating, (talking and listening to God), and by serving mankind, and making a better civilization for everyone.”

Father continued, “To know what God wants us to do, we have to first recognize Baha’u’llah as the Great Universal Teacher, and then try very hard to obey all His teachings, because they are the teachings of God for this day.”

“But we are very lucky, because we have already recognized Baha’u’llah.” said Mona.

“Ha! Then comes the hard part!” said Riaz, “Doing all that stuff! No telling lies, no backbiting....”

“Think positively Riaz,” broke in Asma, “always tell the truth, only say good things about people....be nice to everyone, even people you don’t know....”

“Show all the virtues, Patience, Obedience, Forgiveness...” added Mona.

“Obedience is the tricky one!” sighed Riaz.

And everyone laughed; they knew it was the hardest for Riaz.

“Well the ‘Mukashi Banashi has come to an end for tonight.” said Father.

“Yes,” Put in Mother, “It is about time to get ready for prayers and bed.”

“Ahhh!” said all the children at once.

“Tell us some stories of Baha’u’llah!” suggested Riaz, trying to delay bedtime.



“Yea!” shouted the other children in support.

“That is a very good idea!” said Mother, “That is what we will do for story time tomorrow night. Everyone find one story about the life of Baha’u’llah, and we will all share them tomorrow night. We can take turns being a ‘mukashi

banashi’ teller.” laughed Mother.

The children all clapped their hands in excitement. As they got ready for bed they talked about where they could find their stories.

*There are several very good children's books on the life of Baha'u'llah. One of them is a wonderful picture book with paintings from Baha'u'llah's life, published in Australia. **'The Incomparable Friend'** Story by Shirin Sabri, Paintings by Sue Podger. There also is **'Stories of Baha'u'llah'** compiled by Ali-Akbar Furutan. Published by George Ronald, Oxford. As well as **"Central Figures"** by the Core Curriculum, at www.bahai bookstore.com. There are other compilations, from different publishing trusts.

Quiz

1. Why were the children so excited at the beginning of the story?

2. What was the story about?

3. Why did God create us?

4. How did God educate us?

5. Who are some of the Manifestations of God (Great Teachers from God)?

6. Who is the Universal Manifestation that has most recently come?

7. What is our purpose on this earth?

8. How can we do that?

9. What are some of the virtues we are suppose to show so we can grow?

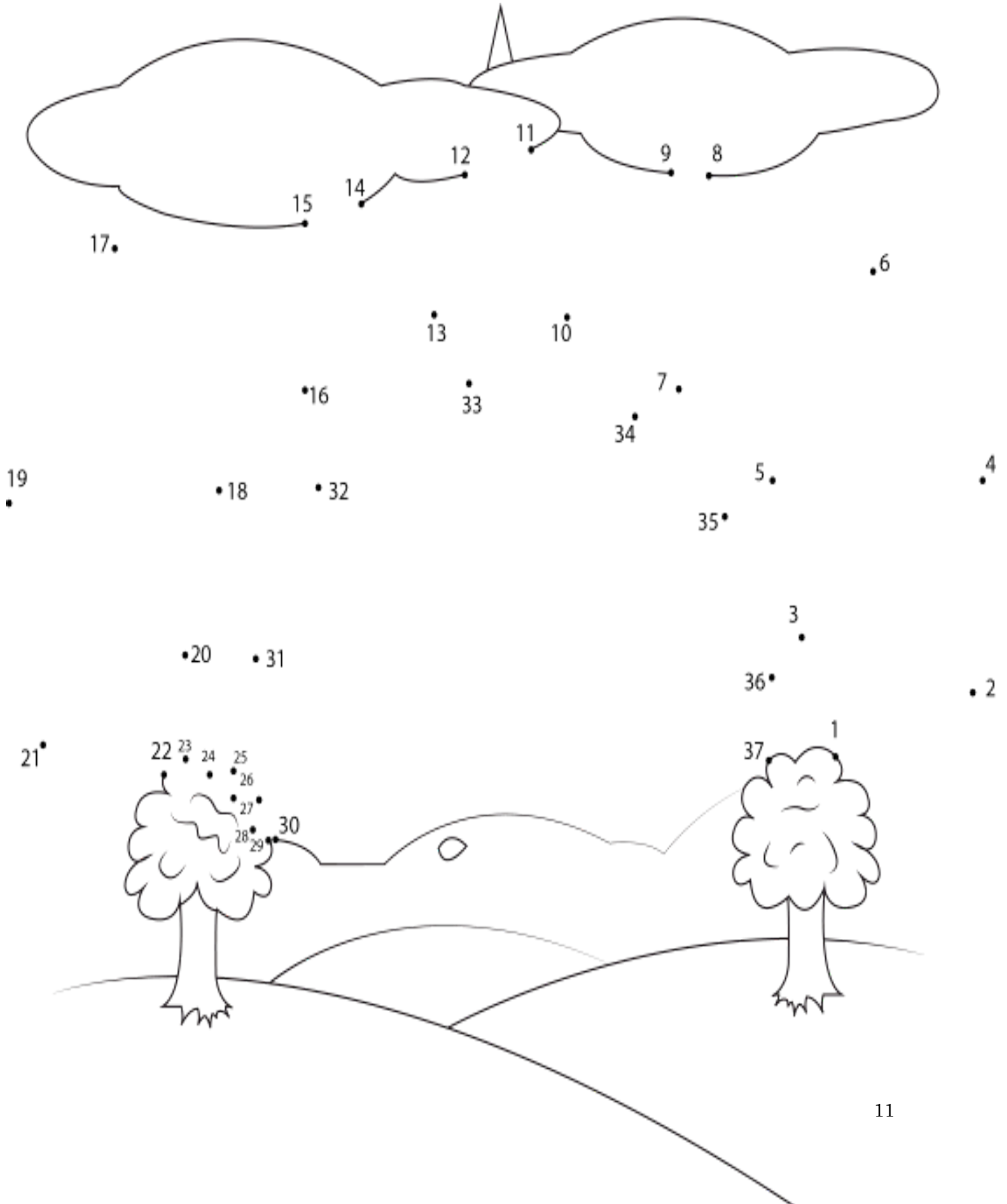
10. Can you find a story of Baha'u'llah to share with your family and friends?

How did you do? Did you get them all right? The answers are on the Parents' Page.



From 1 to 2...then 2 to 3...follow the dots...and what do you see?

Now color it nicely!





3-D Paper 9 pointed Stars

Materials:

Star template

Crayons, sparkle glue

Scissors

Tape

Scissors

Method

*Print copies of the Star template (5 or 9 little squares)

*Color, or sparkle the front and back of the Star template papers (or leave white).

*Cut out 9 squares, (or 5 for a 5-pointed star).

*Fold each square together diagonally where the lines come together.

* Cut each of the four lines until it comes to the open space.

* Unfold and tape the insides of the inner square (A).

* Turn it over, and tape the second (B) square's tips together.

* Turn it over, and tape the third(C) square's tips together over the (A) tips

* Turn it over, and tape the fourth (D) square's tips over the (B) tips.

* Turn it over, and tape the last square's (E) tips together over the (C) tips

* The first point of the star is finished. Do this with each square.

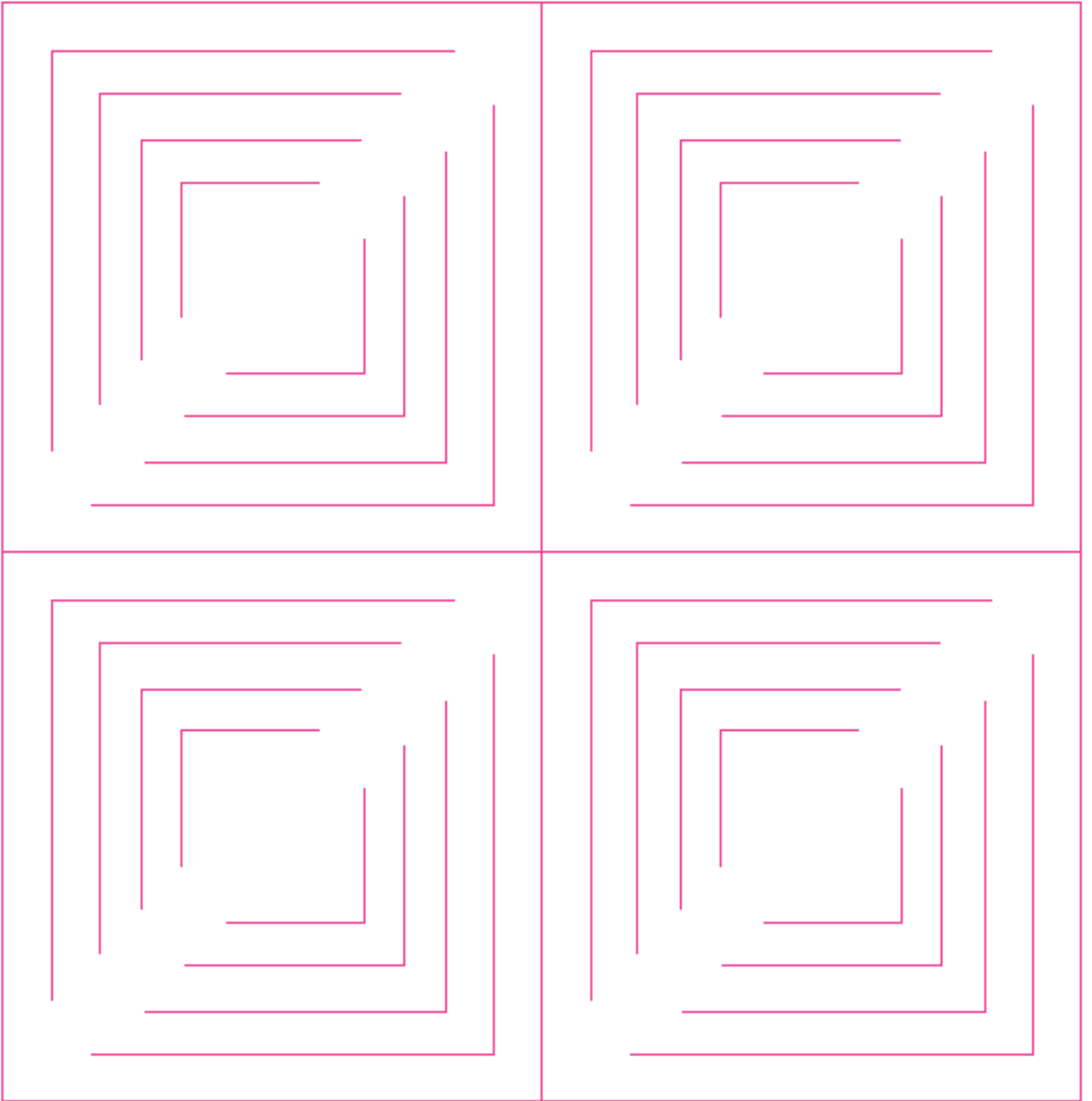
*Tape the ends and middles of each point together with the other ones, to make a star.

*Put double sided tape on the back of the Star and tape it to a window!



Online tutorial How About Orange

<http://howaboutorange.blogspot.jp/2006/12/lacy-snowflake-tutorial.html>





Photopage



Parents Page

For the theme of this issue, let us meditate and discuss the following words of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha.

“The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His glory, and this cannot be attained save through the knowledge of His Divine Manifestations.”

Baha'u'llah

“These Mirrors will everlastingly succeed each other, and will continue to reflect the light of the Ancient of Days. They that reflect their glory will, in like manner, continue to exist for evermore, for the Grace of God can never cease from flowing.” Baha'u'llah

“Verily I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face and hear the Voice, of the promised One. The Call of God hath been raised, and the light of His countenance hath been lifted up upon men. It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart, and to gaze, with an open and unbiased mind, on the signs of His Revelation, the proofs of His Mission, and the Tokens of His Glory.”

Baha'u'llah

“These Suns of Truth are the universal Manifestations of God in the worlds of His attributes and names, even as the visible sun that assisteth, as decreed by God, the true One, the Adored, in the development of all earthly things, such as the trees, the fruits, and colours thereof, the minerals of the earth, and all that may be witnessed in the world of creation, so do the divine Luminaries, by their loving care and educative influence, cause the trees of divine unity, the fruits of His oneness, the leaves of detachment, the blossoms of knowledge and certitude, and the myrtles of wisdom and utterance, to exist and be made manifest.”
Baha'u'llah

“From the continual imitation of ancient and worn-out ways, the world had grown dark as darksome night. The fundamentals of the divine Teachings had passed from memory; their pith and heart had been totally forgotten, and the people were holding on to husks. The nations had, like tattered garments long outworn, fallen into a pitiful condition. Out of

this pitch blackness there dawned the morning splendor of the Teachings of Baha'u'llah. He hath dressed the world with a garment new and fair, and that new garment is the principles which have come down from God.”
‘Abdu’l-Baha

Answers to the Quiz: 1) Daddy was going to tell a story, Mukashi banashi. 2) God creating the world. 3) Because He loved us. 4) God sent special Teachers, Manifestations of God. 5) Adam, Moses, Christ, Krishna, Mohammed, Buddha, The Bab. 6) Baha'u'llah. 7) To grow close to God. 8) By praying, obeying God, showing virtues and to serving mankind. 9) Love, Forgiveness, Service, Obedience, Patience.



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