Name of the religion: The Bahá'í Faith. 'Bahaïsm' is incorrect.

Origins: The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion. It is not a sect or denomination of Islam or any other religion.

Terminology: A member is called a Bahá'í (plural: Bahá'ís). It is also correct to say that someone is a "member of the Bahá'í Faith," a "follower of the Bahá'í Faith," a "follower of Bahá'u'llah," or a member of the Bahá'í community of a given locality.

Founder of the Bahá'í Faith: Bahá'u'llah – the name is Arabic for "Glory of God" – was born in 1817 in Tehran, Iran, and passed away in 1892 in Acre in the Holy Land. The coming of Bahá'u'llah was announced by the Báb, in Arabic, "The Gate" (1819-1850), who is also considered by Bahá'ís to be a divine Messenger.

Year of founding: 1844. The first announcement by the Báb of the new religion came in 1844.

Year of arrival in Switzerland: 1903.

Administration: There is no clergy in the Bahá'í Faith. There is an administrative order elected democratically.

- Internationally: The Universal House of Justice, a nine-member institution elected every five years with its seat at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel.
- Nationally: The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Switzerland and Leichtenstein, a nine-member body elected annually, oversees the affairs of the Bahá'í Faith in these two countries.
- Locally: 18 annually elected Local Spiritual Assemblies oversee local affairs throughout Switzerland.

Elections are conducted according to guidelines that prohibit nominations and campaigning, and instead require those casting ballots to vote, with a prayerful attitude, for individuals "of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognised ability and mature experience."

Decision making: Contention is avoided in favour of a consensus decision making process called consultation. There is no clergy. There are no rituals, robes or special clothing.

Funds: Bahá'í activities and properties are supported by the voluntary contributions of registered Bahá'ís only.

Statistics:
Number of Bahá'ís in the world: more than 5 million
Number of Bahá'ís in Switzerland: approximately 1200
Number of Local Spiritual Assemblies and groups in Switzerland: 35+

Description of the religion and key beliefs: The Bahá'í Faith is a modern, independent, monotheistic religion established in virtually every country of the world. A central theme of the Bahá'í Faith is that humanity is one family, bound together in a common destiny under one Creater. Bahá'ís believe that the world's major religions represent unfolding chapters in God's teachings for humankind, and that the writings of Bahá'u'llah represent God's guidance for this age of humanity.

Key Bahá'í principles:

- *Oneness of Humanity:* The fundamental belief that all humans belong to a single, global family, cited in the Bahá'í Writings as "leaves of one tree", "the waves of one sea", or "the flowers of one garden".
- *Independent Investigation of Truth:* Each individual must search for truth for themselves, rather than blindly following tradition or dogma.

- *Elimination of Prejudice:* Actively overcoming all forms of bias, including racial, national, religious, and class-based prejudices.
- *Harmony of Science and Religion:* Science and religion cannot contradict each other, as they are two complementary systems of knowledge.
- *Equality of Rights of Women and Men:* Women and men are equal, cited in the Bahá'í Writings as the "two wings" upon which humanity can soar.
- *Universal Education:* Education is a universal necessity, and compulsory education is encouraged.
- *Universal Auxiliary Language:* Adoption of a universal secondary language to facilitate global communication and unity.
- *Abolition of Extreme Wealth and Poverty:* Promoting economic justice and reducing the disparity between the rich and poor.
- *Religion as a Source of Unity:* Religion should promote harmony; if it causes discord, it is not serving its true purpose.
- *Establishment of World Peace:* Advocating for a global, sustainable peace system."

Some Bahá'í laws:

strict obedience to the laws of the land
no participation in partisan politics
encouragement of community and religious harmony
prohibition of using alcohol and other mind-altering drugs
prohibition of backbiting (gossip)

Daily life:

- Daily prayer.
- Fasting by adults for 19 days in March from sunrise to sunset.
- Meeting regularly at the Nineteen Day Feast (the term refers to a spiritual "feast" of prayers, consultation and fellowship). In most communitieis, Bahá'ís gather in members' homes.
- Observing nine holy days during the calendar year on which work should be suspended.
- Participating in community building activities: public devotional gatherings, children's classes, empowerment programs for youth, and study circles."

Worldwide:
The spiritual and administrative centre of the Bahá'í Faith is permanently established in the Acre-Haifa area of northern Israel, in accordance with the instructions of Bahá'u'llah, who arrived as an exile in the Holy Land in 1868.

The Bahá'í Faith is established in virtually every country of the world.

The Bahá'í International Community has been registered with the United Nations as a non-governmental organisation since 1948.

There are eight continental Bahá'í Houses of Worship – in Australia, Chile, Germany, India, Panama, Samoa, Uganda, and the United States.

The country with the most Bahá'ís is India, with over a million Bahá'ís.

In Iran, where the Bahá'í Faith originated, there are now about 300,000 Bahá'ís, constituting the largest non-Muslim religious minority in that country.