

Meeting Bahá'u'lláh

“The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it.”

—Edward Granville Browne



Edward Granville Browne was a well-known scholar of Persian culture.



Persian men in Bahá'u'lláh's time often wore a tall hat called a táj and a cloak called an 'abá, as shown in this illustration.

On an April day in 1890, Edward Browne waited quietly in Bahá'u'lláh's home (the Mansion of Bahjí) in Israel. Edward could hardly believe where he was. He had spent years studying the Arabic and Persian languages and learning about the Bahá'í Faith. He had traveled to many countries from his home in England. Now he was about to meet Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

One of Bahá'u'lláh's sons came to Edward's room. Edward followed him through the mansion. They came to a large hall. A curtain hung over a doorway. Edward took off his shoes to show respect. Then he walked past the curtain.

He stood in a large room with a long, low sofa. In the corner of the room sat Bahá'u'lláh. Edward bowed before Him. Later he wrote, “The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; . . .”

A Portrait in Words

Edward met with Bahá'u'lláh four times that April. He was the only person from the West to ever meet Him. Edward wrote several books about the Bahá'í Faith. In one of them, he gave the only description of Bahá'u'lláh's looks. He said that Bahá'u'lláh wore a táj—a tall felt hat—with a white turban wound around its base. He described the luxurious, jet-black hair and beard that flowed almost to His waist, and the deep lines on His forehead and face. He said he felt “wonder and awe” in Bahá'u'lláh's presence.

The Power of His Presence

Bahá'u'lláh's name means “the Glory of God.” He was a Messenger sent by God to show us how to live in peace. He taught that all people are part of one human family.

Many who met Bahá'u'lláh—even those who did not believe He was a Messenger of God—felt His power. Some were unable to speak around Him.

Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, a heroic teacher of the Bahá’í Faith who met with Bahá’u’lláh many times, wrote about His effect on visitors: “Although He showed much compassion and loving-kindness, and approached anyone who came to His presence with tender care and humbleness, and often used to make humorous remarks to put them at ease, yet in spite of these, no one, . . . was able to utter ten words in His presence in the usual everyday manner.”

When Bahá’ís were invited into Bahá’u’lláh’s home, they were often filled with so much joy that they would run inside. Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí recalled that visitors were “so thrilled at that moment” that they were unable to recognize their friends or hear people speaking to them.

Sometimes children had the honor of meeting Bahá’u’lláh. One boy named Rúhu’lláh, which means “Spirit of God,” met Bahá’u’lláh when he was eight years old.

Bahá’u’lláh asked the boy what he had learned about religion. He was so happy with Rúhu’lláh’s knowledge that He often called him, “His honor, the Bahá’í teacher.” Rúhu’lláh also wrote beautiful poetry that showed his love for Bahá’u’lláh.

Meeting Bahá’u’lláh Today

Bahá’u’lláh passed on to the next world 112 years ago, in 1892. We cannot have the blessing of meeting Him in person, but we can read His Writings to learn about Him.

Bahá’u’lláh wrote more than 100 books, often called Tablets, in Arabic and Persian. He wrote some of them with His own pen.

Most of the time, His words were written down as He spoke by His secretary, Mírzá Áqá Ján. Bahá’u’lláh’s words flowed so quickly that sometimes Mírzá Áqá Ján could not keep up with Him. He wrote with a reed pen on large sheets of paper. The ink of the first word was barely dry before the page was full.

Copies of the Tablet were made by hand and shared with Bahá’ís. Bahá’u’lláh’s Son, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, helped with this work.

Years later, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s grandson, Shoghi Effendi*, translated many of Bahá’u’lláh’s Writings into English. Today these Holy Words can be found in more than 800 languages.

Bahá’u’lláh encouraged us to read His Writings daily and think about what they mean. He said, “Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths.” ✨



Its vast amount of Sacred Writings is one thing that makes the Bahá’í Faith unique.



As children, Rúhu’lláh Varqá and his three brothers received Tablets revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in their honor. The young Rúhu’lláh explained the Bahá’í Faith to religious leaders with wisdom and courage.

* Learn more about Shoghi Effendi in the November/December 2000 issue of **Brilliant Star**, *The Guardian*