

# Bahá'u'lláh's Life: Mission of Peace

## Finding Light in the Darkness

### A Brief Timeline

### The Life of Bahá'u'lláh

The highlighted area marks the time in which this story takes place.

#### 1817 November 12

Birth of Bahá'u'lláh in Tíhrán, Iran

#### 1844

Recognizes the Báb as a new Messenger of God

#### 1852

Imprisonment in the "Black Pit" of Tíhrán

#### 1853–1863

Exile in Baghdád, Iraq. From 1854–1856, He goes into the mountains to pray in solitude.

#### 1863 April 22

Declares Divine Mission as Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith

#### 1863–1868

Exile in Constantinople (Istanbul), then Adrianople (Edirne), Turkey. Begins writing letters to kings and rulers in 1867, urging world unity

#### 1868

Last exile, to prison-city of 'Akká, Israel

#### 1877

Finally free to live in countryside homes of Mazra'ih and then Bahjí, outside 'Akká

#### 1892 May 29

Bahá'u'lláh passes away at Bahjí.

Imagine a gloomy, filthy dungeon with a horrible stench. Deep underground, it's miserably cold and crawling with vermin, such as insects or rodents. In 1852, Bahá'u'lláh was thrown into such a terrible dungeon in Tíhrán, Persia (now Iran). It was called the *Siyáh-Chál*, or the "Black Pit." Bahá'u'lláh was not a criminal, but a follower of the Bábí Faith, a new religion founded by a Messenger of God known as the Báb.

The Báb taught that another new Messenger of God would soon come. Persian officials wanted to stop the Báb's teachings from spreading, because they believed they were a threat to the Islamic clergy and government. They arrested and executed Him and many of His followers. When some confused Bábí youth attacked the *sháh* (the king) in revenge for the Báb's martyrdom, abuse toward the Bábís increased. Innocent Bábís, including Bahá'u'lláh, were imprisoned in the Black Pit.

Bahá'u'lláh described the prison as "a place foul beyond comparison." Many prisoners, including thieves and murderers, were crowded with Bahá'u'lláh and the other Bábís, most with no clothes or bedding. Bahá'u'lláh's feet were placed in stocks, and at all times He was forced to wear one of two heavy chains around His neck—one weighed about 112

pounds (51 kg)! For three days and nights, He had no

food or drink. Later, some of His food was poisoned by those who wanted to kill Him. The effects caused Him health problems for years.

Through these hardships, Bahá'u'lláh and the other Bábís remained patient. Bahá'u'lláh taught them to sing, "God is sufficient unto me; He verily is the



Prisoners of the "Black Pit" were chained and led through a dark corridor, then deep underground.

All-sufficing! In Him let the trusting trust." The sound of their voices echoed through the dungeon and amazed the *sháh*, who heard them from his palace near the prison.

Each day, guards called the name of a Bábí to be executed. When unchained, he would leap to his feet, embrace Bahá'u'lláh and the other Bábís, and go to his martyrdom with courage.

It was here, in the darkest place imaginable, that Bahá'u'lláh had a wondrous spiritual experience. He said, "I felt as if something flowed from the crown of My head over My breast, even as a mighty torrent . . ." In a vision, He heard a sweet voice, and saw a Maiden who pointed her finger at His head and said, "By God! This is the Best-Beloved of the worlds . . . the Beauty of God . . . the Mystery of God and His Treasure . . ."

Bahá'u'lláh's vision was the birth of a new religion, the Bahá'í Faith.

He was the

Messenger of God promised by the Báb. About 10 years would pass before He would announce His station publicly.

After four long months in the Black Pit, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled from Persia. But He and His teachings endured, and His message of unity and peace spread throughout the world.

