

Bahá'u'lláh's Life: Mission of Peace Happiness During Hardship

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.

“Those who beheld Him were assured of His great happiness,” ‘Abdu'l-Bahá said of his father, Bahá'u'lláh, who founded the Bahá'í Faith, “for no trace of sadness or sorrow was ever visible upon His face.”

But Bahá'u'lláh's happiness was not a result of an easy, carefree life. Instead, He endured about 40 years of imprisonment and exile by unjust officials who wanted to stop His teachings of unity and peace.

Bahá'u'lláh's intense hardships began in 1852, when authorities put Him in heavy chains and locked Him in a cold, foul-smelling dungeon for four long months. Then He was exiled from His home in Persia (now Iran) and went to Baghdád, Iraq.

In the next 15 years, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled three more times. He and His family traveled through bitter cold and snow without adequate clothing, and through torturous heat. In 1868, Bahá'u'lláh's final exile took Him to the prison-city of 'Akká, in what is now Israel.

Surrounded by stone walls, 'Akká was dirty, with no clean water. Vicious rumors had been spread about Bahá'u'lláh and His followers, and they were met with jeers by the townspeople. For about two years, they were confined to an old army barracks.

But as 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, Bahá'u'lláh “endured all in perfect joy and happiness.” In time, Bahá'u'lláh was transferred out of the barracks and lived in various homes in the city. The people and officials of 'Akká grew to respect Him, His family, and His followers.

One day, Bahá'u'lláh noted that He had not seen any greenery—not a single tree or blade of grass—for nine years! 'Abdu'l-Bahá knew how much Bahá'u'lláh loved nature.

Conditions eased enough for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to venture outside the city walls. He rented a lush garden for Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh called it the Garden of Ridván, which means “Paradise” in Arabic. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also rented a house called Mazra'ih in the countryside near 'Akká.

Although Bahá'u'lláh was still technically a prisoner, He had become so admired that a leading official of 'Akká pleaded with Him to leave the prison-city. In June 1877, Bahá'u'lláh left 'Akká to live at Mazra'ih.



Top left: Bahá'u'lláh entered 'Akká (in what is now Israel) through this sea gate. **Above:** Mazra'ih, Bahá'u'lláh's first home outside the prison-city of 'Akká

Bahá'u'lláh relished the beauty of Mazra'ih after His long confinement. He also enjoyed the Garden of Ridván. In one description, He wrote, “We beheld its streams flowing, and its trees luxuriant, and the sunlight playing in their midst.”

In 1879, Bahá'u'lláh moved to a home known as Bahjí (“Delight” in Arabic). Bahá'u'lláh spent the last years of His life meeting with His followers and writing about His vision of a peaceful world. He wrote, “Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts.”