

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

## 'Akká, the Prison-City

### 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 Tihrán, Iran

#### 1844

Recognizes the Báb as a new Messenger of God

#### 1852

Imprisonment in the "Black Pit" of Tihrán

#### 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 being sent to a prison within a filthy, walled city. To get there, you have to cross the sea in a sailboat. There is almost no wind, and the blazing August sun beats down on you during an eight-hour journey.

That's what Bahá'u'lláh and about 70 companions, including His family, endured in 1868. Though He had committed no crime, Muslim authorities felt threatened by Bahá'u'lláh's religious teachings. They thought that by sending Him to 'Akká, in what is now Israel, they could stop the Bahá'í Faith from spreading.

When the exiles arrived at the sea gate in 'Akká, they waded through the water to enter the city. The men were ordered to carry the women on their backs, but Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, insisted that the women be treated with dignity. He managed to get a chair, and each woman was carried respectfully over the water.

'Akká was a desolate prison-city of about 9,000. It was said that birds flying over the city would drop dead from the stench. 'Akká's inhabitants had been told that Bahá'u'lláh and His followers were evil criminals who deserved cruel treatment. When the exiles entered the city, they were met with jeers from the crowd.

The Bahá'ís were led to an old army barracks that served as their prison. Conditions were dire. It was so hot and foul-smelling that Bahá'u'lláh's daughter, Bahíyyih Khánum, fainted. There was no clean water to drink, and their only food was a few loaves of salty bread. All but



Bahá'u'lláh and His companions arrived at the sea gate in 'Akká in 1868.

two of them became ill. Three men died, including two brothers who died in each other's arms.

Bahá'u'lláh said of the imprisonment in 'Akká, "None knoweth what befell Us, except God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing . . . From the foundation of the world until the present day a cruelty such as this hath neither been seen nor heard of."

Three days after their arrival, the judgment from the Ottoman ruler, Sultán 'Abdu'l-Azíz, was read at the mosque. Bahá'u'lláh was sentenced to life imprisonment. The Bahá'ís were not allowed to associate with anyone.

However, despite the vicious rumors about the Bahá'ís, some citizens of 'Akká recognized Bahá'u'lláh's noble character. One man among the hostile crowd, Khalil Ahmad 'Abdú, said he could see in Bahá'u'lláh's face signs of greatness, majesty, and truthfulness. He said that the people of 'Akká should be thankful to God for Bahá'u'lláh's presence in their city. Another man, 'Abdu'lláh Tuzih, saw radiance, power,

“Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony,  
with friendliness and fellowship.” — Bahá’u’lláh

and glory in Bahá’u’lláh. He later became a Bahá’í.

In time, others grew to respect Bahá’u’lláh and the Bahá’ís. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá became known for his care and concern for others, especially those who were poor or sick. Bahá’u’lláh’s strength and integrity impressed the authorities, and they gradually eased the harsh restrictions. He was eventually given the freedom to leave the prison-city and live in the nearby countryside.

Bahá’u’lláh spent His final years at Bahjí, near ‘Akká. After His passing, a shrine was built at His resting place. Bahá’ís around the world consider it the holiest spot on Earth.



Bahjí, the home where Bahá’u’lláh spent the final years of His life, is near ‘Akká, Israel.

Bahá’u’lláh urged us to live together in peace. Use the key to decode His words.

“T\_e well- ein\_ o\_ \_n\_ in\_, its pe\_ e

\_n\_ se\_ urit\_, re un\_ tt\_ in\_ le unless

\_n\_ until its unit\_ is\_ ir\_ l\_ est\_ lis\_ e\_.”

