

SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

Queen Marie of Romania (1875–1938)

Imagine sending the queen of a country a book that you want her to read. Then imagine she really does read it—and invites you to the palace to talk about it!

Marie Alexandra Victoria was born in England in 1875. As a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, her title was Princess of Great Britain and Ireland, but her family simply called her “Missy.” When she was about 11, her family moved to the island of Malta for three years, where Marie grew to love eastern architecture, flowers, and horseback riding.

In 1893, at age 17, Marie married Ferdinand, the Crown Prince of Romania. They had a family with six children. In 1914, Ferdinand and Marie became King and Queen of Romania.



During World War I, a Russian plot to imprison or assassinate Ferdinand and Marie was uncovered.

Marie’s relatives offered her and her family a safe haven in England, but she refused. Despite the dangers, she chose to stay and help Romania any way she could.

Marie’s three-year-old son, Mircea, died of typhoid fever in 1916.

She comforted herself by imagining him in the next world, welcoming soldiers who had been killed in the war. When World War I ended in 1918, Marie helped with peace negotiations to reestablish Romania’s boundaries.

War and Tragedy

Marie loved people and wanted to help others. From 1913 to 1918, Romania was involved in two wars, including World War I. Marie organized field hospitals and helped care for soldiers. She also wrote a book about life in Romania called *My Country* to raise money for the sick and wounded.

“I was never tired or discouraged,” Marie wrote in her diary. “I would allow no difficulty to beat me, the harder the work the more strength did I find . . .”

A Book and the Bahá'í Faith

Marie, her parents, her husband, and their children all belonged to different Christian churches. Sometimes religious differences caused tension in the royal family, and this frustrated Marie.

In 1926, an American Bahá'í journalist, Martha Root, traveled to Europe to share the Bahá'í Faith. She went to Bucharest, Romania’s capital, hoping to meet Queen Marie. Martha sent the queen a letter and a book called *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* and asked to meet her. To Martha’s great joy, the queen invited her to the palace!

Martha wrote of meeting Marie, "One can understand how all love and adore their Queen, for she possesses beauty and charm of mind and manners, while from her grave blue eyes flashes the light of a great spirit . . ." She described the queen as "daring," "enthusiastic in all that she undertakes," and dedicated to "universal principles of right and justice." Marie thanked Martha for the book—in fact, she had stayed up until three in the morning reading it! She told Martha, "I believe these Teachings are the solution for the world's problems today!"

After Martha's visit, Marie kept studying the Bahá'í teachings. She wrote to a friend, "I have found in . . . Bahá'u'lláh's Message of Faith all my yearning for real religion satisfied."

Sharing with the World

In 1926, Queen Marie wrote an article about the Bahá'í Faith that appeared in many U.S. and Canadian newspapers. "It is a wondrous Message that Bahá'u'lláh and his son 'Abdu'l-Bahá have given us . . ." she wrote. "Search out their Books, and let their glorious, peace-bringing, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine."

Marie wrote several more newspaper



Queen Marie in 1906, with four of her children (left to right): Princess Maria, Princess Elisabeth, Prince Nicholas (seated), and Prince Carol. Below: While visiting the U.S., the queen received a headdress from two American Indian tribes. They also named her "Morning Star" and "Winyan Kipanpi Win," meaning "The Woman Who Was Waited For."

articles sharing Bahá'í teachings. She also exchanged letters with Shoghi Effendi, the leader of the Bahá'í world community at the time.

Martha's friendship with the queen continued, and Marie found joy and comfort in Martha's letters and visits. Though political pressure kept her from officially announcing herself as a member of the Bahá'í Faith, Marie told Martha, "In my heart I am entirely Bahá'í."

Near the end of her life, Marie called the world to Bahá'u'lláh's message: "To those searching for light, the Bahá'í Teachings offer a star which will lead them to deeper understanding, to assurance, peace and good will with all men." When Queen Marie of Romania passed away in 1938, Bahá'ís around the world held memorial meetings in her honor.