

# Bahá'u'lláh's Life: Mission of Peace In the Wilderness

## 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 (Édirne), 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.

**W**hat do you do when faced with a troubling challenge? You can talk to someone you trust. Or you can pray and reflect for a while.

Bahá'u'lláh spent time in the wilderness, praying and meditating. He had arrived in Baghdád, Iraq, in 1853, after being banished from Iran by Muslim authorities who felt threatened by a new, growing faith.

Bahá'u'lláh followed the teachings of a Messenger of God known as the Báb ("the Gate" in Arabic), who taught that another Messenger would soon come to guide humanity to peace. The Báb was executed in 1850, and His followers, called Bábís, were persecuted.

Many Bábís looked to Bahá'u'lláh for leadership. But Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother, Mírzá Yahyá, grew jealous. He began spreading lies about Bahá'u'lláh, creating confusion and division.

This deeply saddened Bahá'u'lláh. He didn't want to be part of anything that caused disunity. So on April 10, 1854, He left for the mountains of Kurdistán. He

dressed like a dervish—a poor, devout man who focuses on prayer. He walked about 200 miles from Baghdád and lived simply, with little food. He said, "I shunned all else but God, and closed Mine eyes to all except Him, that . . . the fire of hatred may die . . ."

One day, Bahá'u'lláh went to a village and saw a sad boy sitting alone and crying. Bahá'u'lláh asked him what was wrong. The boy said he had no copy of calligraphy



Bahá'u'lláh retreated to the mountains of Kurdistán. At times He lived in a cave or a simple stone shelter.

to use for practicing his writing. He was afraid to return to school.

Bahá'u'lláh kindly told the boy to dry his tears. Then He wrote some words and showed him how to copy them. The boy went happily back to school. When the instructor saw Bahá'u'lláh's exquisite

handwriting, he knew it was not the penmanship of an ordinary dervish. Bahá'u'lláh had learned the art of calligraphy as a child, like many who grew up in noble families.

People began to seek out the mysterious hermit who lived in the mountains. Scholars at a nearby school grew to admire His wisdom.

Finally, after about two years away, Bahá'u'lláh returned to Baghdád, bringing joy to His family and friends.



Bahá'u'lláh used this reed pen and ink spoon when writing calligraphy.

“The one object of Our retirement was to avoid becoming a subject of discord among the faithful . . . or the cause of sorrow to any heart.” — Bahá’u’lláh

Bahá’u’lláh inspired unity and devotion in the Bábí community. He uplifted countless hearts in Baghdád with His compassion. Still, officials exiled Him again in 1863. Bahá’u’lláh departed Baghdád with dignity, while Mírzá Yahyá fled the city in disguise. Before He left, Bahá’u’lláh made the announcement that He was the promised Messenger of God foretold by the Báb. That day marked the birth of the Bahá’í Faith, which now has over five million followers around the globe.



Bahá’u’lláh spent 12 days in a garden on the banks of the Tigris River in Baghdád, where He announced His mission as a Messenger of God.

**B**ahá’u’lláh revealed His holy writings in Persian and Arabic. These languages are written in calligraphy, a widely admired art form. Traditionally, the pen (*qalam*) is made from a dried reed. Its flexibility allows the writer to make graceful, sweeping lines. Today, many people use a calligraphy marker with a slanted tip. Practice writing the Arabic word *salam* (peace). Arabic is read from right to left, so start at the right side of the page. Hold the pen very gently in your hand, and follow the numbered arrows.

