Bahá'u'lláh's Life: Mission of Peace

Companions in Exile

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
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.

At noon on May 3, 1863, Bahá'u'lláh mounted His red roan stallion and set out from Baghdád for Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey). He was being banished once again because of His faith. The people of Baghdád who had grown to love Him crowded His path, eager to see Him one last time. With tears streaming down their cheeks, many raced forward to touch His stirrups and bow their heads to Him.

Bahá'u'lláh was joined by 54 family members and friends. They were overjoyed to stay close to Him, even in exile. They traveled with mules and horses and were escorted by a mounted guard of 10 soldiers. Officials and villagers from nearby towns rushed to greet Him along the way.

It was a long and exhausting journey that lasted over three months. But the exiles worked together to ease the hardships and lift each other's spirits. Some people sang songs and chanted prayers. Others served coffee, water, and tea. Some pitched the tents at night or cared for the animals.

At 19 years old, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the eldest son of Bahá'u'lláh, was generous and eager to be helpful. He often rode ahead to prepare the campsite. When supplies ran low, he traveled to nearby towns at night to find food. Each day, he rode by his father's side.

Two friends, Áqá Ridá and Mírzá Mahmúd, were especially devoted. They prepared and served all the meals and looked out for everyone's comfort. The group traveled long distances every day, sometimes up to 30 miles (48 km).



Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was a young man during the journey to Constantinople. He offered valuable service to his father and their companions.

If the heat became too intense, they would stop to rest, then hike through the night. When they reached camp, many would fall asleep from exhaustion. Yet Áqá Ridá and Mírzá Mahmúd would still make food. After everyone ate and went to sleep, these two men stayed awake, cleaning up from the meal.

Áqá Ridá and Mírzá Mahmúd made the entire journey on foot, often chanting prayers as they went. Sometimes they were so tired that they slept while walking! But they were devoted to Bahá'u'lláh and His mission of peace.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "They served with rare faithfulness. Indeed no human being had the fortitude to bear cheerfully all this heavy labor. But . . . they performed all these services with greatest happiness."*

*Source: *Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory*, by H.M. Balyuzi

Photo © Bahá'í International Community

"We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity . . ." —Bahá'u'lláh

These friends stayed with Bahá'u'lláh for the rest of their lives, serving with radiance and love.

After 110 days, Bahá'u'lláh and His companions finally reached the Black Sea and boarded a ship to Constantinople (now Istanbul). From that city, Bahá'u'lláh wrote to Sultán 'Abdu'l-Azíz, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire, proclaiming His divine mission. The text of that communication is unknown.

In the years to come, He would write to leaders around the world, announcing His station as a Messenger of God and urging them to establish global peace. Bahá'u'lláh inspired people from many walks of life to embrace His message of love and justice.



Constantinople (now Istanbul), shown in this 19th century photograph, was Bahá'u'lláh's home for just four months before He was exiled yet again.

Find 18 words related to the cooperation among Bahá'u'lláh's followers on their long journey. Search up, down, forward, backward, and diagonally.

M	A	U	C	H	E	E	R	F	U	L	Y	A	E	I
F	S	X	K	A	D	N	A	S	N	A	U	C	D	F
P	I	H	S	D	N	E	I	R	F	X	I	O	U	A
T	G	E	E	M	E	K	T	E	U	F	S	K	T	I
N	E	N	C	V	E	T	C	A	I	I	U	R	I	T
A	A	R	I	M	O	I	A	R	C	L	Q	L	T	H
I	G	L	Z	P	V	L	C	C	C	I	Z	I	R	F
D	E	H	O	R	L	A	G	P	H	O	D	R	O	U
A	R	B	E	L	S	E	A	F	R	E	C	E	F	L
R	T	S	O	C	N	O	H	H	S	A	D	Z	D	E
E	M	Y	D	E	T	O	V	E	D	X	Y	Z	H	P
J	A	G	R	J	O	Y	F	U	L	Q	J	E	P	H
L	Q	O	Y	T	I	N	U	A	V	C	E	F	R	K
L	U	D	K	R	A	E	C	M	H	P	R	Q	Q	N
S	Y	Q	E	M	V	B	E	Z	A	O	J	M	M	R

Cheerful
Detached
Dedicated
Devoted
Eager
Faithful
Fortitude
Friendship
Generous
Helping
Joyful
Love
Loyal
Prayer
Radiant
Sacrifice
Service
Unity

Photo: ilbusca