Bahá'u'lláh's Life: Mission of Peace
The Ridván Garden

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.

What if you loved the outdoors, but had to go almost 10 years without seeing nature? This happened to Bahá'u'lláh when He was a prisoner in 'Akká from 1868 to 1877. He loved the outdoors and described the country as "the world of the soul . . ." But when He was imprisoned because of His Faith, He was forbidden from seeing any of the natural beauty that He loved so much.

Certain that Bahá'u'lláh would be released from 'Akká, His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, rented a garden and began preparing it for Him. When Bahá'u'lláh was finally allowed to leave 'Akká and move to the nearby countryside, He visited the garden often, especially from spring through early autumn.

To help the garden flourish, friends brought in rich soil for the flower beds. When Bahá'ís from other countries visited, some would travel for months, carrying unique plants from their homelands. Their journeys were often dangerous, but they took great care to ensure that the plants arrived safely. They were so happy to have the opportunity to bring a beautiful gift to Bahá'u'lláh.

With great love, dedication, and care, the garden was filled with vibrant plants of all kinds, making it a truly refreshing and joyful place. It was surrounded by two streams, and a bubbling fountain in the center provided water for the plants. Weeping willow and fruit trees offered shade on warm days. Friends could rest on benches beneath large mulberry trees while the sweet smell of flowers perfumed the air. The diverse flowers created such beauty and peace that Bahá'u'lláh called it the Ridván Garden, meaning "Paradise."



In one passage, Bahá'u'lláh referred to the Ridván Garden as "Our Green Island" and said, "We beheld its streams flowing, and its trees luxuriant, and the sunlight playing in their midst."

Whenever Bahá'u'lláh visited the Ridván Garden, it was cause for tremendous joy and excitement. Bahá'ís would gather and sometimes share a feast to celebrate. Bahá'u'lláh's granddaughter, who was a child at the time, later said, "Only those who were present there could realize in any degree what it meant to be surrounded by such profusion of flowers, their colors and their scents, after the dull walls and unfragrant odours of the prison city. I remember well the greatest of our joys was to go with Bahá'u'lláh for the occasional picnics to the Ridván."

During this time, Bahá'u'lláh revealed many tablets, sharing His teachings of peace and justice. He said, "That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race." He encourages us to eliminate prejudice so diversity can bloom like the colorful flowers of the Ridván Garden. Then we can build real unity for all of humanity.

Image: © Bahá'í International Community

"O FRIEND! In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love . . ." —Bahá'u'lláh

Connect with Friends

Celebrate the diverse beauty of nature with these games and crafts!

Nature Hunt

Give each friend a blank 4 x 4 grid. On each square, ask them to draw a picture of a sight or sound from nature (such as a squirrel or chirping birds). Ask friends to trade grids, then grab a pencil and go on a nature walk. See who can be the first to find four items in a row on their sheet. Try to continue until everyone finds all the items.



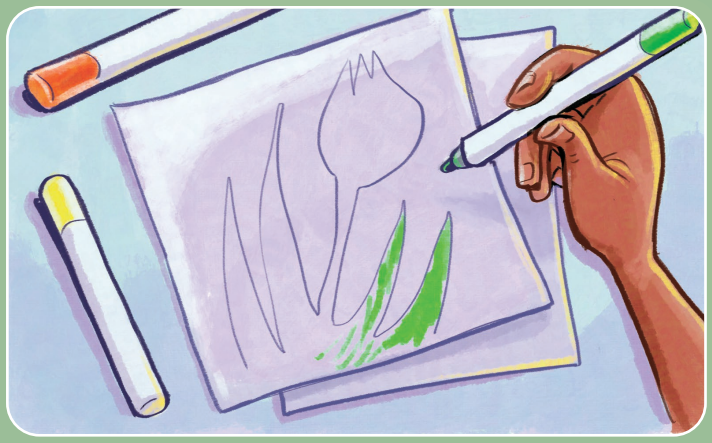
Nature Frames

Ask everyone to draw a simple shape, like a heart or tree, on a piece of cardboard. Cut out the center of the shape, leaving a border of about 1" (2.5 cm). Take turns holding the frames up to different colors and textures (like grass or tree bark) while a friend takes a photo.



Community Garden

Give each friend a 4" x 4" (10 x 10 cm) square of paper with the outline of a flower on it. Everyone uses markers to decorate their flower, adding vibrant colors and designs. Tape the squares to a large sheet of paper to form a larger shape, such as a circle or a heart, creating a colorful garden mural.



ABC's of Nature

Sit in a circle and choose a category (such as flowers or animals). One person says a word from the category that starts with "A" (such as antelope). The next person finds a word that starts with "B," and so on around the circle. If a player can't think of a word, ask a friend to help. Continue until you reach "Z," then pick a new category.

