

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

## 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 Tíhrán, Iran

#### 1844

Recognizes the Báb as a new Messenger of God

#### 1852

Imprisonment in the "Black Pit" of Tíhrán

#### 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.

The summer sun blazed down on Bahá'u'lláh and His companions as their boat inched across the windless bay toward the prison-city of 'Akká (now in Israel). Their miserable journey brought them to the sea gate, where they were met by a jeering crowd. The people of 'Akká thought that the newcomers were criminals, but they were mistaken. The new arrivals were Bahá'ís. Though they had done nothing wrong, they were being imprisoned for their beliefs.

The exhausted travelers made their way through the winding, filthy streets to the prison barracks. At that time, 'Akká had no fresh air or clean water. The aqueduct that once brought water into the city had broken decades before. Water had to be hauled in from springs outside of 'Akká.

At the prison, Bahá'u'lláh was put in an empty room covered in dirt, with a crumbling ceiling. His companions huddled together in another room. The smell was so terrible that Bahá'u'lláh's daughter, Bahíyyih Khánum, fainted.

The prisoners weren't given any food or fresh water on their first night. Their only source of water was a polluted pool used for washing. They had to wait until the next day for water and bread. Nearly everyone got sick, and three people died.

During these hardships, Bahá'u'lláh gave the Bahá'ís hope and assured them that the Faith would not be defeated. He wrote, "Sweeter than honey to Me is the bitterness of such tribulations."

Eventually, Bahá'u'lláh was allowed to leave the prison barracks and live in a series of houses in the city. At first, people were scared of the Bahá'ís. They



This aqueduct once carried water through channels from a source on higher ground down to 'Akká. When Bahá'u'lláh arrived in the city, it had been broken for about 30 years.

believed rumors that had been spread about them. But they saw Bahá'u'lláh and His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, act fairly and treat everyone with respect. Slowly, the citizens' hearts changed, and they began to trust Bahá'u'lláh and His family.

Even the governor admired Bahá'u'lláh and His holy writings. He often sent his son to learn from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. When the governor visited Bahá'u'lláh, he insisted on taking off his shoes before seeing Him, to show respect. One day, he asked Bahá'u'lláh if there was anything he could do to be of service to Him. Bahá'u'lláh didn't ask for anything for Himself. Instead, He thought about the people of 'Akká. He advised the governor to fix the broken aqueduct so fresh water could flow to the city.

The governor agreed. In time, the aqueduct was repaired. When they finally had clean water, the people of 'Akká were so happy, they fired 101 cannon shots to celebrate.

“This Servant hath had no end in view but to promote the betterment and well-being of the world.” — Bahá’u’lláh

Bahá’u’lláh’s act of selfless service changed their lives. Their admiration for Him grew. They said that the transformations they saw in ‘Akká were because of Bahá’u’lláh’s presence, and they called Him their “august leader” or “his highness.”

Bahá’u’lláh stayed in ‘Akká for several more years, sharing His teachings of peace and justice. At times He called these holy words the “Water of Life.” Like fresh, pure water in a garden, His guidance helps world peace and unity to grow and flourish.

In the aqueduct bricks, find 12 words related to community transformation. Search backward, forward, up, down, and diagonally.

CARING  
CHANGE

DIGNITY  
GROWTH

HEARTS  
HELPFUL

INSPIRE  
KINDNESS

LOVE  
RESPECT

SERVE  
TRUST

