

Bahá'u'lláh “The Glory of God”

Bahá'ís are followers of Bahá'u'lláh and we believe He is the Promised One of all ages. The traditions of almost every people include the promise of a time when peace, justice, and harmony will be established on the earth and humanity would live in prosperity. We believe that the Promised Hour has come and that Bahá'u'lláh is the Leading Light Whose Teachings will enable humanity to build a new world.

Bahá'u'lláh came from a noble family whose lineage includes the Persian Sasanian Kings and the Kings of Judah, which inculcate ancestry through Keturah and Sarah, two wives of Abraham.¹

The Bahá'í Faith originated from an Islámic “Messianic” movement in the midst of the 19th century AD (13th century AH²) who were known as “Shaykhís”. The Shaykhí sect was founded by Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsá'í (1753-1829 AD) and his leading disciple Sayyid Kázim ar-Raḥtí (1789-1843 AD). Their teachings emphasized the symbolic and spiritual aspect and meaning of the Qur'án and Aḥádíth, as well as the decadence of Islámic society. They also recognized and promulgated the imminent appearance of the long awaited Hidden Imám, al-Qá'im al-Mahdí.

After the death of Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kázim their disciples, at their behest, dispersed in order to search out and find the Promised One Whom, according to them, was alive and awaiting to be recognized. After a period of fasting and prayer, an eminent disciple by the name of Mullá Ḥusayn chose to follow in his search the pilgrimage steps of Shaykh Aḥmad which led him to the Persian town of Shiráz. In Shiráz he encountered a remarkable soul by the name of Siyyid 'Alí Muḥammad³. Captivated by this Luminous Soul he was guided to His home wherein he spent the night in the upper room listening to Siyyid 'Alí Muḥammad recite a commentary on the Súrah of Joseph⁴. Mullá Ḥusayn immediately recognized Siyyid 'Alí Muḥammad as the One for Whom he had been searching. Shortly thereafter seventeen others came to recognize Siyyid 'Alí Muḥammad, Whom they addressed as the Báb, of their own volition, each in a unique way. Together these nineteen Souls, known as the Letters of the Living, set out to announce to humanity the dawning of the long awaited “Day of God”.

The followers of the Báb became known as Bábís, and this movement spread throughout Persia like wildfire inevitably arousing the suspicions of a fanatical and superstitious clergy who arose to extinguish this fire by any means necessary. This led

¹ [Lignée des prophètes et grands Messagers divins de l'humanité](#)

² Anno Hijra 622 AD (Islámic Calendar)

³ Evening and morning of May 22-23, 1844 AD (1260 AH)

⁴ Chapter 12 of the Holy Qur'án

to the persecution, imprisonment, and martyrdom of several thousand men, women, and children. Not even Siyyid 'Alí Muḥammad physically survived this heavy persecution, and after spending the majority of His short seven year Ministry imprisoned or led captive from one Province to the next, was twice executed by an execution squad of seven-hundred and fifty soldiers in Tabríz on July 9th, 1850 AD (Sha'ban 28, 1266 AH).

During His Ministry the Báb wrote and dictated numerous Treatises and Books said to number some five-hundred thousand Verses which focused primarily on spiritual matters including interpretations of the Qur'án and Aḥádíth, social behavior, and prayers and homilies. Amongst the major themes He presented, the main focus was on the appearance of another Luminous Soul Who would far surpass His own Self in every respect Whom He stylized as "He Whom God shall make Manifest". In a mystical sense the Báb exhibited a similar role to that of John the Baptist appearing in the power and spirit of Elijah to call the remnant back to the Straight Path and pave the way for the Promised One of all ages, the Lord of Hosts.

Following Mullá Ḥusayn's initial encounter with the Báb and after spending some time under His tutelage, he was directed to deliver a message to an especially spiritually minded Soul in Ṭihrán Whom the Báb particularized as a Buried and Hidden Treasure. The Báb described to him the noble qualities and characteristics of this Soul and directed him to search out His nobility. Upon reaching Ṭihrán Mullá Ḥusayn entered a Masjid⁵ and met an individual to whom he described the noble qualities that had been relayed to him by the Báb and to his surprise this fellow remarked that he knew such a man who possessed those qualities.

Mullá Ḥusayn was led to the presence of Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí Who, with a mélange of descent from both the ancient kings of Judah and Persia, was unmatched in the qualities and characteristics in which Mullá Ḥusayn humbly sought. As he was being guided to this remarkable Soul, Mullá Ḥusayn prepared himself with fasting and prayer, and as he entered into the presence of Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí he immediately recognized Him as the One Whom the Báb had directed him to locate. He quickly delivered the message the Báb had entrusted him to deliver and upon reading it Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí at once recognized the Authorship and declared it to be tantamount with the Authorship of the Glorious Qur'án, and He immediately embraced the Bábí Faith.

On account of His noble qualities and His surpassing influence over the minds and souls of all He encountered, Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí became a prominent component and torchbearer of the new movement. Dedicated to spreading the new Message of God throughout Persia, utilizing His immense spiritual and material endowments, He arose as an eminent leader within the new Faith and inevitably became the focus of the attacks by the jealous clergy and ignorant fanatics of the standing religion of Islám in Persia. Yet

⁵ Mosque

he miraculously survived the violent onslaught of persecutions the Bábís endured. However, in autumn of 1852 (1268 AH), two years after the execution and martyrdom of the Báb, Mírzá Ḥusayn ‘Alí (now surnamed Bahá’u’lláh by the Báb) was arrested following a careless attempt by two estranged and feeble-minded Bábís to assassinate the Shah of Persia.

During His arrest and mock trial (there was no trial) He remained imprisoned in a modified underground reservoir called the Síyáh Chál (the Black Pit) where He and several other fellow Bábís found themselves surrounded by notorious criminals for four months in which they ate and drank scantily. While they lingered in the darkness of the pit, however, Bahá’u’lláh led the Bábís in prayer and chantings of the Báb’s works. It was during this confinement in the pit that Bahá’u’lláh heard the Call of God and had the intimations of His own Ministry. He later described this experience, ‘One night in a dream, these exalted words were heard on every side: “Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee, neither be Thou afraid, for Thou art in safety. Ere long will God raise up the treasures of the earth- men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name, wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognized Him.”...During the days I lay in the prison of Ṭíhrán, though the galling weight of chain and the stench-filled air allowed Me but little sleep, still in those infrequent moments of slumber I felt as if something flowed from the crown of My head over My breast, even as a mighty torrent that precipitateth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of My body would, as a result, be set afire. At such moments My tongue recited what no man could bear to hear.’⁶

Cleared of any malcontent by prominent members of the Russian Consul in Persia, Bahá’u’lláh was released from the Black pit though He was to be banished from Persia, His home land. In the early months of 1853 AD He chose Baghdád as His place of ostracism. Following His exile and during His stay in Baghdád a small community of Bábís gathered around Him, and He took upon His shoulders the weight of leadership until there arose several claimants contending for leadership and succession to the vacuum of power left amongst the Bábís subsequent to the martyrdom of the Báb. Not wishing to be the source of division within the community, Bahá’u’lláh withdrew Himself from the Bábís and lived a life of seclusion in the mountains of Sulaymáníyih for two years.

Upon His return He became once again a prominent component of the Bábí Faith and proved instrumental in uniting the disagreeable elements into a dissoluble entity. This aroused a fresh fanaticism and envy from the decadent Islámic theological clergy. Several prominent leaders among the Shi’ah clergy plotted against the Bábís and

⁶ Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pg. 21-22

members of the Persian Consul in Baghdád appealed to the Ottoman government, of which 'Iráq was at that time a province, to remove Bahá'u'lláh and His inner circle of Bábís away from their sacred pilgrimage sites in and around Baghdád.

During this period in Baghdád (1852-1863 AD) Bahá'u'lláh had kept private His Divine Call heard in the Síyáh Chál, though it had been alluded to in His Writings and understood by His closest companions. With the appeals of the several fanatical clergy members and at the instigation of the Persian Consul, the Ottoman government made an appeal to Bahá'u'lláh to journey to the Capitol (Istanbul) in order to set forth His arguments in defense of the denunciations made against Him and His adherents. Bahá'u'lláh chose this time to announce Himself openly to the Bábís as the One Whom the Báb proclaimed as Him Whom God shall make Manifest. Before departing for Istanbul as preparations were made for Him, His family, and His closest companions, Bahá'u'lláh received guests during a twelve day period in the Garden of Ridván wherein He revealed Tablets and proclaimed to the Bábís His position as "Him Whom God shall make Manifest". Shortly thereafter He, His family, and seventy-two of His companions made the journey to Istanbul by way of horseback and through the Black Sea.

Upon arriving in Istanbul Bahá'u'lláh encountered similar traits and mannerisms amongst the Sunní classes as had been witnessed in the Shi'ah, though they outwardly appeared as seekers of spiritual Truth. Islámic society of this period made sport of exclusive cliques and in receiving favors from the inner circle of the degenerate and corrupt institutions of the Sultán. It was then expected that Bahá'u'lláh would appear in Istanbul and shower gifts upon the influential and powerful ecclesiastical order, appealing for clemency and amnesty. However, He did not feel compelled to do so which offended and annoyed the clerics and aroused the suspicion of the Prelate. In their anger and from further pressure from the Persian Consul, the Ottoman authorities expelled Bahá'u'lláh and His fellow exiles from the Great City after just four months, and extradited them to Adrianople (Irdirne), a remote corner of the Empire, during the most harsh conditions in the midst of winter, 1863 AD.

Bahá'u'lláh remained in Adrianople for four years and during this time He declared His mission openly and publicly, expanding the addressees from the Bábís to the followers and clergy of the world's religions and to the leaders of the governments of the world. In Adrianople the Bábí community was solidified under His Divine guidance and became known as Bahá'ís. This, however, did not transpire without incident amongst the Bábís and a counter-movement led by Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother, Mírzá Yahyá arose which caused many a vexation amongst the Bahá'ís. Bahá'u'lláh survived several attempts on His life and finally won the favor of most of the Bábís near and abroad as the deeds of the opposition were exposed.

From Adrianople He collectively addressed the kings and leaders of the world in a Tablet entitled Súrat'ul-Mulúk addressing them boldly in the Name of God and stylizing

Himself as the Return of Christ, and as the Son of Man in the Glory of the Father. In this Surah Bahá'u'lláh addresses the monarchs of the East and the West, the clergies and members of the standing religions of the day, the scientists and philosophers of the world, and all the peoples of the world declaring Himself to be the Desire of all nations and the Promised One from the Scriptures of all religions. This afforded His enemies an opportunity to denounce Him as a political conspirator and they set out to convince the Ottoman authorities that He and the Bahá'í community posed a serious threat to the stability of the government. Consequently Bahá'u'lláh and His band of exiles were further deported to the prison colony of 'Akká in the District of Palestine⁷ in the hopes that they would perish. They were sent by ship and on the way made a stopover in Alexandria and Port Sa'id in Egypt before landing upon the shores of 'Akká, completing the prophesied journey from 'Iráq to Mount Carmel of the Lord of Hosts from the Prophets of old: 'In that day He shall come to thee from Assyria ('Iráq and Kúrdistán), and from the fortified cities (Istanbul [Constantinople] and Adrianople), and from the fortress (Alexandria) even to the river (Port Sa'id), and from sea to sea (Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea), and from mountain to mountain (the mountains Kúrdistán to Mount Carmel) to dwell solitary in the woodland, in the midst of Carmel('Akká to Bahjí).'⁸

The year was 1868 AD and 'Akká was a pestilent and deplorable place infested with the worst kind of vermin. It has been said that a bird flying over 'Akká would drop dead from the foulness of the atmosphere. When the exiles arrived in 'Akká they were kept in strict confinement and Bahá'u'lláh was separated from the main group of refugees and held in a solitary cell for several years. Several of the exiles died while in strict confinement and even Bahá'u'lláh's second eldest son died when he fell through the roof of the prison while wrapt in prayer and devotion. It was his dying wish that the strict confinement of the Bahá'ís would come to an end. Shortly thereafter, in 1870 AD, a brief respite was granted when the military required use of the barracks where the prisoners were being housed. From that time forward the exiles were confined to houses and other buildings in one quarter or another of the prison colony.

Over time and despite the initial prejudice and cruelty of the population of 'Akká, Bahá'u'lláh and His companions won over the sympathies of the governors and guards stationed there, culminating in the further relaxation of the restrictions imposed upon them by the royal decree. However, renewed invigoration against them was raised which resulted in the slaying of one of their enemies. The effect of this incident was hard felt and the community of exiles were once again severely confined and harassed. It quickly became known that the conspirators were acting alone and Bahá'u'lláh and His companions were cleared of any involvement in the matter, and eventually the restrictions re-imposed upon them were relaxed once again.

⁷ Acre, Israel

⁸ Micah 7:12-14

From 'Akká Bahá'u'lláh renewed His proclamation to the leaders of the world and sent Epistles to individual sovereigns such as, Napoleon III of France, Queen Victoria of Great Britain, Tsar Alexander II of Russia, Náşir'd-Dín Shah of Persia, 'Abdu'l-'Azíz the Khalíf of Islám and Sultán of the Ottomon Empire, and Pope Pius IX were specifically addressed. These Epistles are attached to a lengthy treatise upon the Temple of God as the Manifestation of God called the Súrah of the Temple. This Súrah fully discloses Bahá'u'lláh as the Temple or Manifestation of God and calls upon the sovereigns of the world to lay aside their sectarian differences, their worldly wealth and extravagance, and unite in one common Faith. They were also called upon to reduce their armaments, organize a world tribunal in order to arbitrate international affairs, establish an international language, form a unified compulsory educational system, fix the standards for an international system of weights and measurements creating and equalizing a global economic system, curtail expenditures on useless militaries and expend them on scientific endeavors and social welfare, and to devise a framework for a governmental system federating the nations and harmonizing the institutions of the republican and monarchical systems of governance. Should they refuse this summons they were strictly warned that calamities would assail them on all sides until such a time that they would accept it.

Following the full proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh to the world, He turned his close attention to the molding and shaping of the Faith that would stylize His Dispensation and bring about His world order. The latter half of His forty year ministry was spent focusing upon His devoted followers and instilling in them the embryonics of His vision for the future and the world civilization that was inevitably to be thrust upon humanity. Amongst the principles He revealed were the Oneness and Unity of God and of His Religion, the unity of the human race, the balance and equanimity between men and women, the independent and unfettered search for truth, the spiritual purpose and evolution of society, the elimination of all forms of prejudice and superstition, the harmony between science and religion, the development of a universal language, the advancement of a universal educational system, economic justice, and the promise of a lasting peace.

The foremost teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is that the long awaited and anticipated Day of God has commenced. Shoghi Effendi, great grandson of Bahá'u'lláh and Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith wrote, "The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, whose supreme mission is none other but the achievement of this organic and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations, should, if we wish to be faithful to its implications, be regarded as signaling through its advent the coming of age of the entire human race. It should be viewed...as marking the last and highest stage in the stupendous evolution of man's collective life on this planet. The emergence of a world community, the consciousness of world citizenship, the founding of a world civilization and culture....should, by their very nature, be regarded, as far as this planetary life is concerned, as the furthestmost limits in the organization of

human society, though man, as an individual, will, nay, must indeed as a result of such a consummation, continue indefinitely to progress and develop.”⁹

Bahá'u'lláh's mission came to an end on May 29th, 1892 AD, after forty years of ministry, exile, torture, and disregard. His teachings comprise more than one-hundred volumes Holy Scripture which embraces in its subjects spiritual matters and commentaries of various themes from Holy Books and Traditions, principles governing human affairs on social, political, and philosophical levels including foundational laws and ordinances for a future world society, exhortations on human nature and the Revelation of the Divine Will and Expression in the world and in the afterlife, the formation of social and administrative institutions with strictly defined authority and comprehensive duties, devotional prayers and meditations, mystical and philosophical outlines of human thought and progress, treatises on the progressive spiritual nature of human history and religious thought, prophecies on the development of human society, and inspiration for the maturation of scientific endeavors to the point of elemental transfiguration.

The members of the Bahá'í Faith comprise the most diverse organized body of individuals in the world comprising a fellowship of believers from virtually every race, nation, tribe, culture, and religious background. As the world's organizations compete to enforce their own agendas and continue to fracture and whither away through countless causes the Bahá'í Faith offers the only organized solution free from the divisive constraints of dissension and prejudicial charisma on a global scale to alleviate the world's dilemmas. In time, the people of the world will come to recognize this Promise validated in the Bible, Qur'án, and other Holy Scriptures from the past and find their consummation today in the organization and arrangement in the ideal system proliferating from the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

⁹ The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pg 163