

# TEACHING BAHÁ'Í HISTORY IN SCHOOLS: RESOURCE MATERIAL

**Theme:** When did the Bahá'í Faith Begin? How did it spread?

**Topic:** History of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Learning Experience:**

Teacher reads the slides of the presentation *The History of the Bahá'í Faith*.

Students discuss the following questions in class:

- Where and when the Bahá'í Faith was born?
- Why the Báb was called the "Gate"?
- What does the word Bahá'u'lláh mean?
- Describe the dream of Bahá'u'lláh's father.
- What influence did Bahá'u'lláh have on people's lives?
- Why Bahá'u'lláh was exiled and banished to so many places?
- What were Bahá'u'lláh's main teachings?

**Extension activities:**

Copies of the slides (four slides per sheet) are distributed to groups of 4 or 5 students.

Students complete a timeline indicating the main events in the lives of the Báb and

Bahá'u'lláh. A timeline template is provided. The historical landmarks are given below:

- Bahá'u'lláh is born
- The Báb is born
- The Báb declares His Mission
- The Bab is imprisoned
- The Báb is killed
- Bahá'u'lláh is arrested
- Bahá'u'lláh declares His mission
- Bahá'u'lláh is sent to the prison of Akka
- Bahá'u'lláh passes away in Akka

**Resources:**

- Slides presentation: *History of the Bahá'í Faith*\*
- Timeline sheet

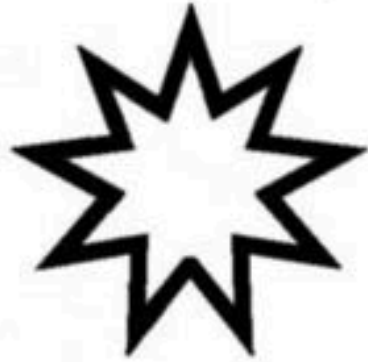
**Further information:**

*The Life of Bahá'u'lláh: A Photographic Narrative* available at <http://www.bahauallah.org/>

*The Story of Bahá'u'lláh* video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O12Me7D4XDc>

\*Adapted from Ruhi Institute

# History of the Bahá'í Faith



The Bahá'í Faith began in Iran, in 1844.

It was founded by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh  
whom Bahá'ís consider to be Messengers of  
God.

According to the Bahá'í Faith, the Báb's mission  
was to prepare the way for the coming of  
Bahá'u'lláh.

In this lesson we are going to learn first about the lives of Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

These stories show that they not only endured great suffering but also had a tremendous influence on the hearts and minds of people.

# The Báb

The Herald of the New Day





The Báb was born on the 20th of October 1819 Shiraz, a city of Iran. He was still a child when His father passed away. He was raised by His uncle, who placed Him in school at an early age.

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The Báb's teacher quickly recognized His great capacity and realized that he was incapable of teaching such an extraordinary child. According to the Bahá'í Faith, the Báb was endowed by God with innate knowledge.



At that time the people of Iran were awaiting the coming of a new Messenger of God. They prayed that He would soon be made manifest, bringing with Him a period of peace and justice on earth. Many left their homes in search of the Promised One.





On the eve of the 23rd of May 1844, a young man arrived in Shiraz in search of the Promised one. The Báb met him outside the gates of the city and invited him to his home to refresh himself after his long journey. There the Báb declared that He was the One Whose coming the people were so eagerly awaiting.

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The word “Báb” means gate or door. The Báb announced that soon another Messenger of God would appear Who would unite all the peoples of the world in one family. The Báb was like a door leading humanity to a new and glorious future.

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The number of the Báb's followers quickly grew. Throughout all of Iran, they began to spread the new teachings revealed by Him.



But soon the government authorities and the clergy rose up against the new religion. In 1847, they imprisoned the Báb in a fortress in a remote part of the country, far away from His followers.



The Báb's followers suffered the most cruel persecution. They were attacked, beaten and thrown into prison. Thousands were put to death, yet the Báb's religion continued to spread.



In the year 1850 the Báb was killed. At the order of the government, He was suspended in a courtyard together with one of His followers and shot by a regiment of soldiers. The Báb was only 31 years old.





The Báb gave His life to prepare the way for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. Several years later, Bahá'u'lláh began His teaching emphasising that *“earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.”*

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# Bahá'u'lláh

The Glory of God







Bahá'u'lláh means “The Glory of God” in Arabic. He was born in 1817 in Tehran, capital of Iran. From his childhood He showed signs of greatness. Bahá'u'lláh received some instruction at home, but did not need to attend school, He was also endowed with innate knowledge.



One night, His father had a dream in which He saw Bahá'u'lláh swimming in an ocean. The light radiating from His body illuminated the waters. His long black hair floated in all directions, and a multitude of fish followed Him, each holding onto the end of one hair. He moved freely and unhindered. This dream was one of the many indications of the great destiny that awaited Bahá'u'lláh.

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Later when He was a young man, Bahá'u'lláh was offered a high position in the court of the King, but He refused it. He wished to dedicate His time to helping the oppressed, the sick and the poor, and to champion the cause of justice.



When He was 27 years old, Bahá'u'lláh received a scroll of Writings from The Báb. Bahá'u'lláh accepted the Báb's Message and became one of His most enthusiastic supporters.



The authorities, unwilling to accept the teachings proclaimed by the Báb, set out to persecute those who believed in Him, and thus began the sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh. In the year 1852, he was arrested and put in chains in one of the most dreadful prisons of Tehran.

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Bahá'ís believe that in this prison God revealed to Bahá'u'lláh that He was the One promised by the Báb and all the religions of the past.



After four months of imprisonment and being yoked by heavy chains, Bahá'u'lláh was banished to Baghdad in Iraq. The journey made during the bitter cold of winter along with His family.





In Baghdad, the fame of Bahá'u'lláh's wisdom spread in all directions. People of every background crowded to His home, seeking His help and advice. The government then decided to banish Him even farther.





Before leaving Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh spent twelve days in a garden outside the city, where streams of visitors came to bid Him farewell. In this garden, Bahá'u'lláh declared that He was the Messenger of God announced by the Báb.



Sultan 'Abdu'l-'Aziz  
of the Ottoman Empire



Nicholas Alexander II,  
the Czar of Russia



Francis Joseph,  
the Austrian Emperor



Napoleon III, the  
Emperor of the French



Nasir'u-Din Shah  
of Persia



Pope Pius IX

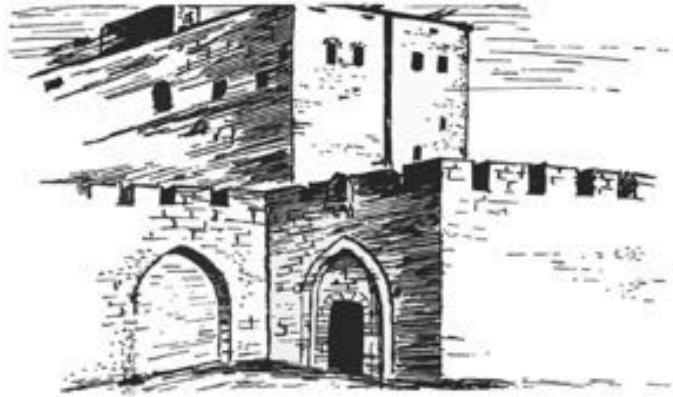


Queen Victoria  
of England



William I,  
King of Prussia

Bahá'u'lláh's next places of exile were Istanbul and Adrianople. From that city, Bahá'u'lláh, sent letters to the kings and rulers of the world bidding them to uphold justice and to use their power to put an end to misery and war.



When Bahá'u'lláh fame spread among the inhabitants of the region, the government again decided to banish Him even farther away to the prison-city of Akka, now in Israel, in 1868. This was the prison to which the worst criminals and agitators were sent.



Some of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh travelled great distances to Akka, but were not allowed to enter His presence. They could only catch a glimpse of Him from afar as He waved to them from the window of His prison-cell.

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Gradually conditions improved as the power of Bahá'u'lláh's words and deeds conquered the hearts of high and low alike. During the last years of His life, Bahá'u'lláh revealed lived outside the city walls where volumes of guidance for humanity where written.



In May 1892 Bahá'u'lláh passed away still as a prisoner.  
His mission was to unite all the races and peoples in  
one universal Cause and one common Faith.

## History of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh (in years CE/AD)

