

# *History of the Baha'i Faith*

*The Baha'i Faith is an independent monotheistic religion with its own sacred scriptures, its own laws, calendar, and holy days. It has no clergy and its affairs are administered by freely elected governing councils that operate at the local, national, and international levels. The chronology below follows the history of the Baha'i Faith from its birth in mid-19th century Persia (now Iran) to its emergence as a world religion with more than five million adherents from virtually every nation and ethnic group on earth.*

*23 May 1844*

*Siyyid Ali-Muhammad, a 25-year-old merchant in the city of Shiraz, Persia, announces that He has been sent by God to prepare humanity for a new age and the imminent appearance of another Messenger even greater than Himself. He takes the title of the Bab (meaning "Gate" in Arabic).*



*1844-1850*

*Early Babis imprisoned in Persia*

*The Bab's religious teachings spread rapidly and are viewed as heretical by the clergy and government of that time. The Bab is imprisoned and more than 20,000 of His followers, known as Babis, perish in a series of violent massacres throughout the country.*

*9 July 1850*

*The Bab is publicly executed in the city of Tabriz, Iran. Some 10,000 citizens are present to observe the execution.*

*Baha'is recognize the Bab as both an independent Messenger of God and the Forerunner of Baha'u'llah (meaning "the Glory of God" in Arabic), the Founder of the Baha'i religion. Born in Tehran on 12 November 1817, Baha'u'llah was a member of a noble family that traced its lineage to imperial Persia's Sassanian dynasty. In His mid-20s, He declined a life of wealth and privilege to pursue humanitarian goals. Baha'u'llah embraced the Babi religion in its earliest days and became one of the leading disciples of the Bab.*

1852

*Baha'u'llah is arrested, beaten, and thrown into a pestilential underground dungeon known as the Black Pit. While in the darkness of the dungeon, Baha'u'llah receives the Revelation that He is the Messenger foretold by the Bab. Baha'u'llah is released after four months and exiled to Baghdad.*

1863



*Map of Baha'u'llah's exile Baha'u'llah is banished a second time, to Constantinople (Istanbul). On the eve of His departure from Baghdad, Baha'u'llah announces that He is the long-awaited Messenger of God promised by the Bab. Thereafter, the religion is known as the Baha'i Faith. Baha'is recognize Baha'u'llah as the most recent in a line of Messengers of God that includes Abraham, Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, Muhammad and the Bab.*

1863-1892

*Baha'u'llah reveals numerous volumes of Sacred Scripture, outlining His Teachings, answering difficult theological questions, and establishing the laws and institutions of His faith. Baha'u'llah is a unique world religious figure in that He establishes in writing the future pattern of the organization of His faith. He also writes letters to the kings and rulers of His day, informing them of the advent of His Revelation.*

1868

*Baha'u'llah arrives in the Holy Land with about 70 family members and followers, sentenced by the Ottoman authorities to perpetual confinement in*

*the penal colony of Acre. The order of strict confinement was never lifted, but due to the growing recognition of the eminence of His character, He eventually moves outside the walls of the Old City of Acre to a nearby estate called Bahjí.*



*29 May 1892*

*Abdu'l-Baha*

*Baha'u'llah passes away and is interred at Bahjí. For Baha'is, His Shrine is the holiest place on earth and a place of pilgrimage. At His instruction, the spiritual and administrative center of His Faith is permanently fixed in the Haifa/Acre area.*

*For the first time in history, a world religion founder leaves a written Will. Baha'u'llah appoints His eldest son, `Abdu'l-Baha (1844-1921), as the head of the Faith and authorized interpreter of His Teachings. The name, `Abdu'l-Baha, means "Servant of Baha."*

*1893*

*The first public mention of the Baha'i Faith in North America is made at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago.*

*9 July 1907*

*The Chicago Baha'i Assembly incorporates, becoming the first local Baha'i community in the world to acquire legal status. The American Baha'i community, then numbering about 1,000 members, begins building the first Baha'i House of Worship in the West on the shores of Lake Michigan.*

*1911-1913*

*Following the Young Turk Revolution, `Abdu'l-Baha's imprisonment under the Ottoman Turks is ended. He then journeys throughout Europe and North America to encourage nascent Baha'i communities and to proclaim Baha'u'llah's teachings to the general public.*



1921

*Shoghi Effendi*

*'Abdu'l-Baha passes away, leaving a will designating His eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi (1896-1957), as His successor and conferring upon him the title of Guardian of the Baha'i Faith.*

1927

*The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada, is incorporated. Its charter document, the Declaration of Trust and Bylaws, subsequently serves as the model for the formation of more than 180 National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world.*

1953

*The Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, IL is dedicated for public worship.*

1957

*Shoghi Effendi passes away. During his ministry, the Faith spread around the world and its local and national administrative institutions were established. The Guardian translated Baha'i scriptures from Arabic and Persian into English, wrote several major works, carried on a voluminous correspondence, and gave great impetus to the development of the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa. With the passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957, the line of hereditary leaders of the Baha'i Faith came to an end.*



1963

*The Seat of the Universal House of Justice*

*Following Baha'u'llah's instructions, Baha'is elect the Universal House of Justice, the world governing body of the Baha'i Faith. Elections for the Universal House of Justice are held every five years. Endowed by Baha'u'llah with the authority to legislate on all matters not specifically laid down in the Baha'i scriptures, the Universal House of Justice keeps the Baha'i community unified and responsive to the needs and conditions of an evolving world.*



*Today—2008*

*Baha'is of Today*

*The Baha'i community now has more than five million members from over 2000 ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Baha'i communities are established in more than 230 countries and dependent territories, with elected national administrative institutions in 182 countries.*

*Reference: the genuine website of the Baha'is in the United States of America*