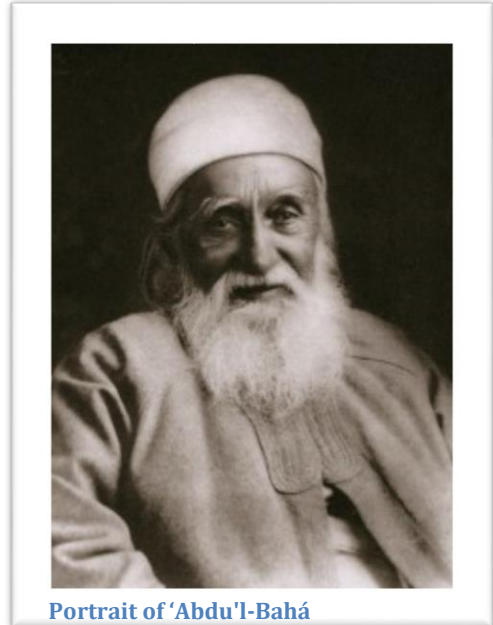


The Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

'Abdu'l-Bahá was born in Tehran, Persia, on the same night that the Báb, the herald of Bahá'u'lláh, declared His mission. This marked the first year of the Bahá'í era in 1844. He was the eldest son of Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. Although 'Abdu'l-Bahá is not considered a Prophet of God, He holds a unique station in the Bahá'í Faith as the primary interpreter of His father's teachings and as the Perfect Exemplar of His Faith. His life was 'a living example of self-sacrifice, of preferring the good of others to one's own'.

'Abdu'l-Bahá spent most of His life as a prisoner with His family exiled successively to Baghdad, Constantinople, Adrianople, and finally to the prison city of Akká. The government and religious leaders of the Ottoman Empire tried to limit the spread and influence of His father's Faith, but over time, He and His father earned the utmost respect from the Governor of Akká and its populace.



Portrait of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Shortly before His passing, Bahá'u'lláh appointed 'Abdu'l-Bahá as His successor and as the Centre of His Covenant for His followers – the Centre to which all Bahá'ís should turn for guidance, thereby maintaining the unity of the Faith. After being released from imprisonment in 1908, and despite being advanced in age, 'Abdu'l-Bahá set out upon a number of major travels from 1911 to 1913 to the West, including to Great Britain and North America, to spread Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and strengthen the early Bahá'í communities in these countries. He returned to Haifa before the start of the First World War. In 1920 the British government awarded Him a knighthood in recognition of His efforts to curb wartime starvation by feeding the people grain from his stores.

Aged 77, 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed away peacefully at His home in Haifa on 6 Qawl^[10] in the Bahá'í year 81 which was the Gregorian year 1921. The next day a funeral was held the like of which Haifa had never seen, as thousands of mourners of many ethnic and religious backgrounds gathered and nine speakers paid tribute to His life of service.



House of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

To commemorate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing on 6 Qawl,^[10] Bahá'ís come together to reflect upon the distinguishing aspects of His life, share prayers and seek inspiration to follow His example, walking a spiritual path with practical feet.

^[10] 27 November when Naw-Rúz is 20 March and 28 November when Naw-Rúz is 21 March.