

## Bicentenary 2019 (KS3 & KS4)

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One of the things which continues to amaze me about the digital age is the way we get news from the world over within hours of it happening, and can 'see' the world from our computer screens. Without travelling from home, I know what the new House of Worship in Chile looks like, I have a beautiful picture in mind of the terraced gardens of the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel in Haifa, and I could follow events of last year's International Convention as they happened.



Bahá'í House of Worship, Chile



The Shrine of the Báb and gardens, Haifa, Israel

It's easy to forget that it wasn't always like this. In 1982, when I was a new adherent of the Bahá'í Faith, news of the British community came through the monthly British Bahá'í Journal; messages from the Universal House of Justice (our world administrative body) came printed on golden-yellow paper, mailed through the letterbox; urgent messages (the passing of a much-loved and respected fellow Bahá'í, for example) came as telegrams to the British National Spiritual Assembly to be included as mail-outs to the Bahá'ís of the country or announced at Feasts and gatherings.

We are so much more closely connected these days, and at a time when society feels increasingly fragmented, these connections are a lifeline.

The events currently dominating the Bahá'í networks are centred around the celebrations for the bicentenary of the Birth of the Báb on October 28th this year. The Báb, Divine Educator and Prophet-Herald to Bahá'u'lláh, was born in 1819 in Shiraz, Persia. 'Báb' is a title which means 'Gate'. Whilst calling the peoples of the world to spiritual reformation, The Báb was preparing the way for a new Manifestation of God: Bahá'u'lláh.

The Báb's story is one of dignity, heroism, and ultimately sacrifice. His short life (He was just 31 when He was executed) was characterised by an innate wisdom, sharp perception and such sweetness of character that people were prepared to give their lives to spread His teachings. He was sentenced to death by the Persian authorities who were unsettled by His demand for a high standard of personal and public behaviour, and by the devotion of rapidly growing numbers of His followers. Several thousands of His followers were put to death in the ensuing years, and yet from these beginnings the Bahá'í Faith was ultimately to grow and be carried around the world.

*"It was His own mission, the Báb declared, to herald the coming of this promised Manifestation of God. The Báb explained that the new Manifestation would usher in an age of peace and justice that was the hope of every longing heart and the promise of every religion. The Báb instructed His followers to spread this message throughout the country and to prepare people for this long-awaited day."*<sup>1</sup>

A newly-launched website, <https://bicentenary.bahai.org/the-bab/> dedicated to celebrating this special Holy day, carries videos, articles and photos, and will be added to over the coming weeks as events happen. The Báb's story can be read in full detail (including accounts from foreign ambassadors and chroniclers of the time who met Him, and who witnessed His execution.) News from every part of the globe of communities gathering to pray, share food and celebrate together feature alongside artworks inspired by the life of the Báb, His teachings and stories of His followers.

The following prayer is one of many revealed by the Báb:

*O Lord! Unto Thee I repair for refuge and toward all Thy signs I set my heart. O Lord! Whether travelling or at home, and in my occupation or in my work, I place my whole trust in Thee.*

*Grant me then Thy sufficing help so as to make me independent of all things, O Thou Who art unsurpassed in Thy mercy! Bestow upon me my portion, O Lord, as Thou pleassest, and cause me to be satisfied with whatsoever Thou hast ordained for me.*

*Thine is the absolute authority to command.*<sup>2</sup>

1. Photos and Bicentenary Logo all "Copyright © Bahá'í International Community" .

See <https://media.bahai.org/> for photos and videos of Bahá'í Holy Places and the world-wide Bahá'í community. "The Bahá'í Media Bank provides photographs for download, intended for non-commercial purposes only. Copyright and terms of use can be found on the Legal Information page."

2. The Báb, Selections from the Writings of The Báb. Hear this prayer put to music at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1I-QXIILOqQ>

### **Further Reading**

RE:ONLINE resource Táhirih -The Pure One (1817 – 1852) speaks about the Táhirih, the Báb's first female disciple

RE:ONLINE resource Bahá'í Holy Day in July: The Martyrdom of the Báb

For a comprehensive account of the early history of the Bábi and Bahá'í Faith:

Nabil, The Dawn-Breakers: Nabíl's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Revelation,

Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1932 Edition

<https://www.bahai.org/the-bab/life-the-bab>

<https://www.bahai.org> has lots more information\_

This resource was written by Debbie Tibbey, one of RE:ONLINE's Email a Believer team. If your class would like to ask a Baha'i representative any questions about their beliefs, or to see answers to previously asked questions please visit <http://pof.reonline.org.uk/people-of-faith/bahai/>