



cution, Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in the notorious Edward G. “Bábism.” In *Religious Systems of the World: A Contribution to the Study of Comparative Religion*, edited by William Sheow- ring and phetic destiny. He was released, but banished—exiled Conrad W. Thies, 333–353. London: Swann successively to Baghdad (1853–1863), Constantino- Eschraghi, Sonne- ple/Istanbul (1863), Adrianople/Edirne (1863–1868), of Armin. ““Undermining the Foundations and finally to the prison-city of ‘Akká, considered the Orthodoxy’: Some Notes on the Báb’s Shar’ah (Sacred vilest penal colony of the Ottoman Empire. In 1892, Law).” In *A Most Noble Pattern: Essays in Bahá'u'lláh passed away in Bahjí, near ‘Akká in Pal- the Study of the Writings of the Báb*, edited by Todd Lawson. estine (now Israel). Oxford: George Ronald, forthcoming. In his article on “Bábism” published that same year, Professor Browne wrote: “I say nothing of the Time and the Baha’i Era: A Study of the mighty influence which, as I believe, the Bábí faith Calendar. Oxford: George Ronald, 2008. Badí’ will exert in the future, nor of the new life it may per- Gate of the Heart: Understanding the Saiedi, Nader. chance breathe into a dead people; for, whether it suc- the Báb. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Writings of ceed or fail, the splendid heroism of the Bábí martyrs Laurier University Press, 2008. Birth/Ascension of is a thing eternal and indestructible.” The “Bábí faith” Walbridge, John. “The Birthday of the Báb.” In Sacred that Browne spoke of evolved into the Baha’i Faith, Acts, Sacred Space, Sacred Time, 217– 218. Oxford: which has since spread worldwide to become the most George Ronald, 1996. Birth/Ascension of widely diffused world religion next to Christianity, ac- cording to the 2001 World Christian Encyclopedia. Birth/Ascension of Today, Baha’is accept the Báb as a John the Baptist Bahá'u'lláh The figure, whose words and actions heralded the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh. However, unlike John the Baptist, the Báb The Baha’i Faith was founded by Mírzá Husayn-’Alí Núrí, known by revealed much in substance, both in terms of doctrine his spiritual title, Bahá'u'lláh (1817– 1892), and by and religious laws, that was subsequently revoiced and

Sayyid ‘Alí-Muhammad of Shíráz  
 reenacted, with certain revisions, by Bahá’u’lláh.  
 (1819–1850), better known as the Báb (the “Gate”),

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who claimed to be the Qá’im (Ariser/Resurrector), the on the  
 evening of May 22, 1844 (but is dated May 23 since, in the  
 messianic figure expected in Shia Islam, the majority Baha’i calendar, the new day begins at  
 faith in Iran. Throughout his six-year ministry, the Báb sunset the  
 previous day). heralded “Him Whom God Shall Make Manifest,” The  
 birthdays of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh fall on whose advent was imminent. Most of the Bábís (fol-  
 consecutive days in the Islamic lunar calendar. “The two  
 lowers of the Báb) came to accept Bahá’u’lláh as that Birth of  
 the Abhá Beauty [Bahá’u’lláh],” Bahá’u’lláh wrote, “was  
 messianic figure. Most current Baha’i laws, in fact, the month of  
 at the hour of dawn on the second day of were originally instituted by the Báb and were subse-  
 Muharram, the first day of which mar- keth the  
 quently selectively ratified and revised by Bahá’u’lláh Birth of His Herald [the Báb]. These two days  
 and set forth in the preeminent Baha’i scripture, The are accounted  
 as one in the sight of God.” The expla- nation for this  
 Most Holy Book (Kitáb-i-Aqdas). The birth of calendar,  
 statement is that, in the Muslim lunar Bahá’u’lláh and the birth of the Báb are therefore  
 the birth of the Báb was on the first day of the month of  
 closely linked. Muharram 1235 AH (October 20, 1819),  
 Bahá’u’lláh was born on November 12, 1817, in while the birth  
 of Bahá’u’lláh took place on the sec- ond day of  
 Tehran, Persia (now Iran). As a young nobleman, he While the  
 Muharram 1233 AH (November 12, 1817). present Baha’i calendar (of 19 months  
 became a prominent figure in the Bábí religion. In of 19 days, plus  
 1852, while in prison during the unrest that followed the Báb’s execution in 1850, Bahá’u’lláh experienced  
 intercalary days) is solar and roughly conforms to the Common Ear calendar), Baha’is in  
 the Báb’s execution in 1850, Bahá’u’lláh experienced many countries  
 conforms to the Common Ear calendar), Baha’is in  
 a series of visions and accepted his role as the Prom- Baha’i Holy  
 of the Middle East observe these two Days according to the country’s Islamic  
 ised One foretold by the Báb and in the messianic texts lunar calendar  
 Days according to the country’s Islamic  
 of all religions.

(which is incidentally how they were observed by

By imperial decree, Bahá'u'lláh was subsequently observed by Bahá'u'lláh himself), while Baha'is of the West and elsewhere (such as among the Baha'is in Syria and Adrianople (1863–1868), then to 'Akká (Acre) in Palestine (1868–1892), where he would spend the rest of his life in custody, although the last years were in relation to the Universal House of Justice (the institution that provides comfort under house arrest. Bahá'u'lláh died on May 29, 1892, in Bahjí, Palestine. Today, members of these “Twin Days” will be celebrated on a solar or lunar basis. There is no prescribed ceremony or service for celebrating the anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh and his predecessor, the Báb, are often referred to as the “Twin Manifestations,” and the occasions of worship and fellowship, often through devotional meetings or musical programs. These programs are open to all who would like to attend. But it is lective tional

In the Most Holy Book (Kitáb-i-Aqdas), Bahá'u'lláh and ascension of Bahá'u'lláh are considered major as well as school activities. The birth of Bahá'u'lláh passed away at 3:00 a.m. on May 29, 1892, in Bahjí, near 'Akká, in Palestine (now Israel). A Festival of Ridván [Paradise] from April 21 to May 2 immediately dispatched to Ottoman Sultan (commemorating Bahá'u'lláh's initial proclamation of Abdul-Hamíd II (r. 1876–1909), with a request for permission to his prophetic mission in Baghdad, April 21–May 2, bury Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí, which was

1863), and the Declaration of the Báb, which occurred the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, his eldest

granted. After

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son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844–1921), was appointed, pursuant to Bahá'u'lláh's will and testament and to provisions of the Most Holy Book, as the appointed "Centre of the Covenant" (successor to Bahá'u'lláh), as the Sacred Acts, Sacred Space, Sacred Time, perfect exemplar of Baha'i ethics and virtues, and as the infallible expounder of his father's teachings.

Momen,

"The Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh."

Oxford:

Local Baha'i communities worldwide will therefore gather at that time (3:00 a.m.) to commemorate their founder with Baha'i prayers and scriptures, usually culminating in the chanting in Arabic, or recitation in translation, of what is known as the "Tablet of Visitation," a special prayer reserved for the commemoration of the Báb as well as Bahá'u'lláh. Some Baha'is arrange, through the Office of Pilgrimage at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa, Israel, to schedule or her initials, H.P.B., was the primary theorist of their pilgrimages around the time of the birth or ascension of Bahá'u'lláh.

Walbridge, John.

In

242–244.

Oxford: George Ronald, 1996.

Walbridge, John.

"The Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh."

In Sacred Acts,

231–232.

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Blavatsky,

Helena P.

1831–1891  
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Helena Petrovna

Madam Blavatsky

mary theoretician

herself, Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907),

founded by

During their pilgrimage, Baha'is visit the shrine of the Báb in Haifa, and the shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí, near Acre, where Bahá'u'lláh lived the last years of his life. (On July 8, 2008, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] World Heritage Committee designated the shrine of the Báb

and William Quan

City in

become one

of the most influential Western Esoteric organizations of the 20th century. It facilitated the movement of birth to numerous

organizations of

entific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] World

movement of

Eastern religions to the West and gave

birth to numerous

Heritage Committee designated the shrine of the Báb

additional Esoteric groups.

on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel, and the shrine of  
born Helena Hahn, July 30, 1832,

Bahá'u'lláh, located near Old Acre on Israel's north-  
Ekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk), Ukraine. She  
ern coast as World Heritage sites—the first modern  
affluent Russian family and came of age

religious edifices to be added to the UNESCO List.) A  
was spreading through segments of

large gathering was held there in 1992 on the cente-  
As a teenager, she was involved in

nary of Bahá'u'lláh's passing, following which the  
spiritual experiences, including automatic writ-

Universal House of Justice, the international govern-  
years were spent with her grandfather

ing body of the global Baha'i community, declared the  
home following her mother's death in

period from April 1992 to April 1993 as the second  
16 when she married a much older

“Baha'i Holy Year” to mark both the centenary itself  
N. V. Blavatsky. The marriage proved an

and the inauguration of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh in  
experience for the young woman, and aban-

November 1892. doning her  
husband, she moved to Constantinople. She

J. Gordon Melton and Christopher Buck stayed in Turkey only a  
relatively short time. She pre-

ferred travel and took the opportunity to roam through  
See also: Baha'i Faith; Bahá'u'lláh; Birth of the Báb;

Asia and Europe. She traveled around the world twice  
Pilgrimage; Temples—Baha'i Faith.

during the 1850s, and in 1856, while in India, made a  
References clandestine

attempt to get into Tibet, then forbidden

Bahá'u'lláh et al. *Twin Holy Days: Birthday of* territory to  
outsiders. Whether she succeeded in her

Bahá'u'lláh, *Birthday of the Báb: A Compilation.* quest remains a  
debatable topic. In any case, investi-

Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1995. gating paranormal  
phenomena during her travels oc-

Keil, Gerald. *Time and the Baha'i Era: A Study of the* cupied much of  
her time. She became a medium and in

Badí' *Calendar.* Oxford: George Ronald, 2008. 1871, in Cairo, she  
founded a Spiritualist society. The

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