

Riḍván Means Paradise

Arise, and proclaim unto the entire creation the tidings that He Who is the All-Merciful hath directed His steps towards the Riḍván and entered it. Guide, then, the people unto the garden of delight which God hath made the Throne of His Paradise. We have chosen thee to be our most mighty Trumpet, whose blast is to signalize the resurrection of all mankind.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 30

Wert thou to reflect upon that which We have revealed unto thee, thou wouldst undoubtedly grasp Our purpose in this utterance and discover that which We have desired to impart unto thee within this paradise. Perchance thine eyes may rejoice in beholding it, thine ears take delight in hearing that which is recited therein, thy soul be enthralled by recognizing it, thy heart illumined by comprehending it, and thy spirit gladdened by the fragrant breezes that waft therefrom. Haply thou mayest attain unto the pinnacle of divine grace and abide within the Riḍván of transcendent holiness.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 44

The inebriation of Thy presence, O Well-Beloved of all worlds, hath seized and possessed me.

Suffer me not, O my Lord, to be deprived of the knowledge of Thee in Thy days, and divest me not of the robe of Thy guidance. Give me to drink of the river that is life indeed, whose waters have streamed forth from the Paradise Riḍván in which the throne of Thy Name, the All-Merciful, was established, that mine eyes may be opened, and my face be illumined, and my heart be assured, and my soul be enlightened, and my steps be made firm.

Thou art He Who from everlasting was, through the potency of His might, supreme over all things, and, through the operation of His will, was able to ordain all things. Nothing whatsoever, whether in Thy heaven or on Thy earth, can frustrate Thy purpose. Have mercy, then, upon me, O my Lord, through Thy gracious providence and generosity, and incline mine ear to the sweet melodies of the birds that warble their praise of Thee, amidst the branches of the tree of Thy oneness.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 4

God hath, likewise, as a bounty from His presence, abolished the concept of "uncleanness", whereby divers things and peoples have been held to be impure. He, of a certainty, is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous. Verily, all created things were immersed in the sea of purification when, on that first day of Riḍván, We shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of Our most excellent Names and Our most exalted Attributes. This, verily, is a token of My loving providence, which hath encompassed all the worlds. Consort ye then with the followers of all religions, and proclaim ye the Cause of your Lord, the Most Compassionate; this is the very crown of deeds, if ye be of them who understand.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 47

This is a reference to the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh and His companions in the Najibiyyih Garden outside the city of Baghdad, subsequently referred to by the Bahá'ís as the Garden of Riḍván. This event, which took place thirty-one days after Naw-Ruz, in April 1863, signalized the commencement of the period during which Bahá'u'lláh declared His Mission to His companions. In a Tablet, He refers to His Declaration as "the Day of supreme felicity" and He describes the Garden of Riḍván as "the Spot from which He

shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of His Name, the All-Merciful". Bahá'u'lláh spent twelve days in this Garden prior to departing for Istanbul, the place to which He had been banished.

The Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh is celebrated annually by the twelve-day **Riḍván** Festival, described by Shoghi Effendi as "the holiest and most significant of all Bahá'í festivals" Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 212

In God We put Our trust, and to Him We cry for help, that haply there may flow from this pen that which shall quicken the souls of men, that they may all arise from their beds of heedlessness and hearken unto the rustling of the leaves of Paradise, from the tree which the hand of divine power hath, by the permission of God, planted in the **Riḍván** of the All-Glorious.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 19

O the pity! that man should deprive himself of this goodly gift, this imperishable bounty, this everlasting life. It behooveth him to prize this food that cometh from heaven, that perchance, through the wondrous favours of the Sun of Truth, the dead may be brought to life, and withered souls be quickened by the infinite Spirit. Make haste, O my brother, that while there is yet time our lips may taste of the immortal draught, for the breeze of life, now blowing from the city of the Well-Beloved, cannot last, and the streaming river of holy utterance must needs be stilled, and the portals of the **Riḍván** cannot for ever remain open. The day will surely come when the Nightingale of Paradise will have winged its flight away from its earthly abode unto its heavenly nest. Then will its melody be heard no more, and the beauty of the rose cease to shine. Seize the time, therefore, ere the glory of the divine springtime hath spent itself, and the Bird of Eternity ceased to warble its melody, that thy inner hearing may not be deprived of hearkening unto its call. This is My counsel unto thee and unto the beloved of God. Whosoever wisheth, let him turn thereunto; whosoever wisheth, let him turn away. God, verily, is independent of him and of that which he may see and witness.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 23

Shall we not flee from the face of denial, and seek the sheltering shadow of certitude? Shall we not free ourselves from the horror of satanic gloom, and hasten towards the rising light of the heavenly Beauty? In such wise, we bestow upon you the fruit of the Tree of divine knowledge, that ye may gladly and joyously abide in the **Riḍván** of divine wisdom.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 38

O my brother! Take thou the step of the spirit, so that, swift as the twinkling of an eye, thou mayest flash through the wilds of remoteness and bereavement, attain the **Riḍván** of everlasting reunion, and in one breath commune with the heavenly Spirits. For with human feet thou canst never hope to traverse these immeasurable distances, nor attain thy goal. Peace be upon him whom the light of truth guideth unto all truth, and who, in the name of God, standeth in the path of His Cause, upon the shore of true understanding.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 43

Great God! When the stream of utterance reached this stage, We beheld, and lo! the sweet savours of God were being wafted from the dayspring of Revelation, and the morning breeze was blowing out of the Sheba of the Eternal. Its tidings rejoiced anew the heart, and imparted immeasurable gladness to the soul. It made all things new, and brought unnumbered and inestimable gifts from the unknowable Friend. The robe of human praise can never hope to match Its noble stature, and Its shining figure the mantle of utterance can never fit. Without word It unfoldeth the inner mysteries, and without speech It revealeth the secrets of the divine sayings. It teacheth lamentation and

moaning to the nightingales warbling upon the bough of remoteness and bereavement, instructeth them in the art of love's ways, and showeth them the secret of heart-surrender. To the flowers of the **Ridván** of heavenly reunion It revealeth the endearments of the impassioned lover, and unveileth the charm of the fair. Upon the anemones of the garden of love It bestoweth the mysteries of truth, and within the breasts of lovers It entrusteth the symbols of the innermost subtleties. At this hour, so liberal is the outpouring of Its grace that the holy Spirit itself is envious! It hath imparted to the drop the waves of the sea, and endowed the mote with the splendour of the sun. So great are the overflowings of Its bounty that the foulest beetle hath sought the perfume of the musk, and the bat the light of the sun. It hath quickened the dead with the breath of life, and caused them to speed out of the sepulchres of their mortal bodies. It hath established the ignorant upon the seats of learning, and elevated the oppressor to the throne of justice. Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 59

To this testifieth that which hath been witnessed in this wondrous and exalted Dispensation. Myriads of holy verses have descended from the heaven of might and grace, yet no one hath turned thereunto, nor ceased to cling to those words of men, not one letter of which they that have spoken them comprehend. For this reason the people have doubted incontestable truths, such as these, and caused themselves to be deprived of the **Ridván** of divine knowledge, and the eternal meads of celestial wisdom. Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 105

Furthermore, how numerous are those peoples of divers beliefs, of conflicting creeds, and opposing temperaments, who, through the reviving fragrance of the Divine springtime, breathing from the **Ridván** of God, have been arrayed with the new robe of divine Unity, and have drunk from the cup of His singleness! Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 112

Thou dost witness today how, notwithstanding the radiant splendour of the Sun of divine knowledge, all the people, whether high or low, have clung to the ways of those abject manifestations of the Prince of Darkness. They continually appeal to them for aid in unraveling the intricacies of their Faith, and, owing to lack of knowledge, they make such replies as can in no wise damage their fame and fortune. It is evident that these souls, vile and miserable as the beetle itself, have had no portion of the musk-laden breeze of eternity, and have never entered the **Ridván** of heavenly delight. How, therefore, can they impart unto others the imperishable fragrance of holiness? Such is their way, and such will it remain for ever. Only those will attain to the knowledge of the Word of God that have turned unto Him, and repudiated the manifestations of Satan. Thus God hath reaffirmed the law of the day of His Revelation, and inscribed it with the pen of power upon the mystic Tablet hidden beneath the veil of celestial glory. Wert thou to heed these words, wert thou to ponder their outward and inner meaning in thy heart, thou wouldst seize the significance of all the abstruse problems which, in this day, have become insuperable barriers between men and the knowledge of the Day of Judgment. Then wilt thou have no more questions to perplex thee. We fain would hope that, God willing, thou wilt not return, deprived and still athirst, from the shores of the ocean of divine mercy, nor come back destitute from the imperishable Sanctuary of thy heart's desire. Let it now be seen what thy search and endeavours will achieve. Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 122

Consider how all created things eloquently testify to the revelation of that inner Light within them. Behold how within all things the portals of the **Ridván** of God are opened, that seekers may attain the cities of understanding and wisdom, and enter the gardens of knowledge and power. Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 139

Ponder this in thine heart, that the sweet gales of divine knowledge, blowing from the meads of mercy, may waft upon thee the fragrance of the Beloved's utterance, and cause thy soul to attain the **Riḍván** of understanding. As the wayward of every age have failed to fathom the deeper import of these weighty and pregnant utterances, and imagined the answer of the Prophets of God to be irrelevant to the questions they asked them, they therefore have attributed ignorance and folly to those Essences of knowledge and understanding.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 149

Likewise, these souls, through the potency of the Divine Elixir, traverse, in the twinkling of an eye, the world of dust and advance into the realm of holiness; and with one step cover the earth of limitations and reach the domain of the Placeless. It behooveth thee to exert thine utmost to attain unto this Elixir which, in one fleeting breath, causeth the west of ignorance to reach the east of knowledge, illuminates the darkness of night with the resplendence of the morn, guideth the wanderer in the wilderness of doubt to the well-spring of the Divine Presence and Fount of certitude, and conferreth upon mortal souls the honour of acceptance into the **Riḍván** of immortality. Now, could this gold be thought to be copper, these people could likewise be thought to be the same as before they were endowed with faith.

O brother, behold how the inner mysteries of "rebirth," of "return," and of "resurrection" have each, through these all-sufficing, these unanswerable, and conclusive utterances, been unveiled and unravelled before thine eyes. God grant that through His gracious and invisible assistance, thou mayest divest thy body and soul of the old garment, and array thyself with the new and imperishable attire.

Therefore, those who in every subsequent Dispensation preceded the rest of mankind in embracing the Faith of God, who quaffed the clear waters of knowledge at the hand of the divine Beauty, and attained the loftiest summits of faith and certitude, these can be regarded, in name, in reality, in deeds, in words, and in rank, as the "return" of those who in a former Dispensation had achieved similar distinctions. For whatsoever the people of a former Dispensation have manifested, the same hath been shown by the people of this latter generation. Consider the rose: whether it blossometh in the East or in the West, it is none the less a rose. For what mattereth in this respect is not the outward shape and form of the rose, but rather the smell and fragrance which it doth impart.

Purge thy sight, therefore, from all earthly limitations, that thou mayest behold them all as the bearers of one Name, the exponents of one Cause, the manifestations of one Self, and the revealers of one Truth, and that thou mayest apprehend the mystic "return" of the Words of God as unfolded by these utterances

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 157

We seal Our theme with that which was formerly revealed unto Muhammad that the seal thereof may shed the fragrance of that holy musk which leadeth men unto the **Riḍván** of unfading splendour. He said, and His Word is the truth: "And God calleth to the Abode of Peace:[1] and He guideth whom He will into the right way." [2] "For them is an Abode of Peace with their Lord! and He shall be their Protector because of their works." [3] This He hath revealed that His grace may encompass the world. Praise be to God, the Lord of all being!

[1 Baghdad.]

[2 Qur'án 10:25.]

[3 Qur'án 6:127.]

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 174

All the things that people required in connection with the Revelation of Muhammad and His laws were to be found revealed and manifest in that **Riḍván** of resplendent glory. That Book constitutes an abiding testimony to its people after Muhammad, inasmuch as its decrees are indisputable, and its promise unfailing. All have been enjoined to follow the precepts of that Book until "the year sixty"[1] -- the year of the advent of God's wondrous Manifestation. That Book is the Book which unfailingly leadeth the seeker unto the **Riḍván** of the divine Presence, and causeth him that hath forsaken his country and is treading the seeker's path to enter the Tabernacle of everlasting reunion. Its guidance can never err, its testimony no other testimony can excel. All other traditions, all other books and records, are bereft of such distinction, inasmuch as both the traditions and they that have spoken them are confirmed and proven solely by the text of that Book. Moreover, the traditions themselves grievously differ, and their obscurities are manifold.

[1 The year 1260 A.H.]

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 200

In like manner, thou beholdest in this day that although spiritual sustenance hath descended from the heaven of divine mercy, and been showered from the clouds of His loving kindness, and although the seas of life, at the behest of the Lord of all being, are surging within the **Riḍván** of the heart, yet these people, ravenous as the dogs, have gathered around carrion, and contented themselves with the stagnant waters of a briny lake. Gracious God! how strange the way of this people! They clamour for guidance, although the standards of Him Who guideth all things are already hoisted. They cleave to the obscure intricacies of knowledge, when He, Who is the Object of all knowledge, shineth as the sun. They see the sun with their own eyes, and yet question that brilliant Orb as to the proof of its light. They behold the vernal showers descending upon them, and yet seek an evidence of that bounty. The proof of the sun is the light thereof, which shineth and envelopeth all things. The evidence of the shower is the bounty thereof, which reneweth and investeth the world with the mantle of life. Yea, the blind can perceive naught from the sun except its heat, and the arid soil hath no share of the showers of mercy. "Marvel not if in the Qur'án the unbeliever perceiveth naught but the trace of letters, for in the sun, the blind findeth naught but heat."

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 207

And now consider how this Sadrih of the **Riḍván** of God hath, in the prime of youth, risen to proclaim the Cause of God. Behold what steadfastness that Beauty of God hath revealed. The whole world rose to hinder Him, yet it utterly failed. The more severe the persecution they inflicted on that Sadrih of Blessedness, the more His fervour increased, and the brighter burned the flame of His love. All this is evident, and none disputeth its truth. Finally, He surrendered His soul, and winged His flight unto the realms above.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 233

Inhale the fragrances of the **Riḍván** from His [refers to 'Abdu'l-Bahá] roses and be not of those who are deprived. Appreciate the bounty of God upon you and be not veiled therefrom - and, verily, We have sent Him forth in the temple of man. Thus praise ye the Lord, the Originator of whatsoever He willeth through His wise and inviolable Command!

Verily, those who withhold themselves from the shelter of the Branch are indeed lost in the wilderness of perplexity; and are consumed by the heat of self-desire, and are of those who perish.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Tablet of the Branch - from Bahá'í World Faith*

Whosoever quickens one soul in this Cause is like unto one quickening all the servants and the Lord shall bring him forth in the day of resurrection into the **Riḍván** of oneness, adorned with the Mantle of Himself, the protector, the mighty, the generous! Thus will ye assist your Lord, and naught else save this shall ever be mentioned in this day before God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Tablet of the Branch - from Bahá'í World Faith*

Inhale the fragrances of the **Riḍván** from His roses and be not of those who are deprived. Appreciate the bounty of God upon you and be not veiled therefrom -- and, verily, We have sent Him forth in the temple of man. Thus praise ye the Lord, the Originator of whatsoever He willeth through His wise and inviolable Command!

Bahá'u'lláh, *Compilations, Bahá'í World Faith, p. 205*

From this imprisoned handmaid.

The Festival of **Riḍván** is come and the splendour of the light of God is shining from the invisible horizon of His mercy. The overflowing grace of the Lord of oneness is pouring down copiously from the unseen world and the glad-tidings of the Kingdom are coming in from all countries. The resplendent morn that betokens the advancement of the Cause of God and heralds the exaltation of His Word is dawning in every region.

Praise be to God that the fame of the Ancient Beauty -- may my life be offered up for His loved ones -- has been noised abroad in the world and the glory of His Cause is spread far and wide throughout the East and the West. These joyous developments will indeed gladden the hearts of His loved ones.

Compilations, *Bahiyih Khanum, p. 112*

So it was that Khurasan became the grove of the lions of God, and a nesting-place for the birds of the **Riḍván** Paradise. The Ancient Beauty singled out that blessed land for special favour, extending to it uncounted blessings and gifts. Now in wondrous and most sweet voice, again with the tracings of His exalted pen, and on the head of each one of the beloved in that bright region, He set a crown of imperishable glory, and He robed each one with His bestowals and grace, and wrapped each one in a mantle of spiritual perfections. Of them all He spoke the highest praise, and to all He gave abundant blessings, as is proved by the text of His scrolls and Tablets. And whenever that sacred King of all the world would speak of Khurasan, His being would stir for joy, and His luminous face would grow still brighter with exceeding gladness. His bounties never ceased, and from clouds of grace His favours continually showered down upon that land.

Compilations, *Bahiyih Khanum, p. 150*

O ye beloved, and ye handmaids of the Merciful! This is the day when the Day-Star of Truth rose over the horizon of life, and its glory spread, and its brightness shone out with such power that it clove the dense and high-piled clouds and mounted the skies of the world in all its splendour. Hence do ye witness a new stirring throughout all created things.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 111*

Shoghi Effendi's description of the first Riḍván:

Twenty-seven days after that mournful Tablet had been so unexpectedly revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, and the fateful communication, presaging His departure to Constantinople had been delivered into His hands, on a Wednesday afternoon April 22, 1863, thirty-one days after Naw-Ruz, on the third of Dhi'l-Qa'dih, 1279 A.H., He set forth on the first stage of His four months' journey to the capital of the Ottoman Empire. That historic day, forever after designated as the first day of the Riḍván Festival, the culmination of innumerable farewell visits which friends and acquaintances of every class and denomination, had been paying him, was one the like of which the inhabitants of Baghdad had rarely beheld. A concourse of people of both sexes and of every age, comprising friends and strangers Arabs, Kurds and Persians, notables and clerics, officials and merchants, as well as many of the lower classes, the poor, the orphaned, the outcast, some surprised, others heartbroken, many tearful and apprehensive, a few impelled by curiosity or secret satisfaction, thronged the approaches of His house, eager to catch a final glimpse of One Who, for a decade, had, through precept and example, exercised so potent an influence on so large a number of the heterogeneous inhabitants of their city.

Leaving for the last time, amidst weeping and lamentation, His "Most Holy Habitation," out of which had "gone forth the breath of the All-Glorious," and from which had poured forth, in "ceaseless strains," the "melody of the All-Merciful," and dispensing on His way with a lavish hand a last alms to the poor He had so faithfully befriended, and uttering words of comfort to the disconsolate who besought Him on every side, He, at length, reached the banks of the river, and was ferried across, accompanied by His sons and amanuensis, to the Najibiyyih Garden, situated on the opposite shore. "O My companions," He thus addressed the faithful band that surrounded Him before He embarked, "I entrust to your keeping this city of Baghdad, in the state ye now behold it, when from the eyes of friends and strangers alike, crowding its housetops, its streets and markets, tears like the rain of spring are flowing down, and I depart. With you it now rests to watch lest your deeds and conduct dim the flame of love that gloweth within the breasts of its inhabitants."

The muezzin had just raised the afternoon call to prayer when Bahá'u'lláh entered the Najibiyyih Garden, where He tarried twelve days before His final departure from the city. There His friends and companions, arriving in successive waves, attained His presence and bade Him, with feelings of profound sorrow, their last farewell. Outstanding among them was the renowned Alusi, the Mufti of Baghdad, who, with eyes dimmed with tears, execrated the name of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, whom he deemed to be primarily responsible for so unmerited a banishment. "I have ceased to regard him," he openly asserted, "as Nasiri'd-Din the helper of the Faith, but consider him rather to be its wrecker." Another distinguished visitor was the governor himself, Namiq Pasha, who, after expressing in the most respectful terms his regret at the developments which had precipitated Bahá'u'lláh's departure, and assuring Him of his readiness to aid Him in any way he could, handed to the officer appointed to accompany Him a written order, commanding the governors of the provinces through which the exiles would be passing to extend to them the utmost consideration. "Whatever you require," he, after profuse apologies, informed Bahá'u'lláh, "you have but to command. We are ready to carry it out." "Extend thy consideration to Our loved ones," was the reply to his insistent and reiterated offers, "and deal with them with kindness" -- a request to which he gave his warm and unhesitating assent. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 148

In the Suriy-i-Sabr, revealed as far back as the year 1863, on the very first day of His arrival in the garden of [Ridván](#), He thus affirms: "God hath sent down His Messengers to succeed to Moses and Jesus, and He will continue to do so till 'the end that hath no end'; so that His grace may, from the heaven of Divine bounty, be continually vouchsafed to mankind."

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 116

Thou didst wish to celebrate the Day of Ridvan with a feast, and to have those present on that day engage in reciting Tablets with delight and joy, and thou didst request me to send thee a letter to be read on that day. My letter is this:

O ye beloved, and ye handmaids of the Merciful! This is the day when the Day-Star of Truth rose over the horizon of life, and its glory spread, and its brightness shone out with such power that it clove the dense and high-piled clouds and mounted the skies of the world in all its splendour. Hence do ye witness a new stirring throughout all created things.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 111

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ridván>

From **Wikipedia**, the free encyclopedia

Ridván Arabic: **ناروضر** transliteration: Riḍwán; Persian transliteration: Riḍván is a twelve-day festival in the Bahá'í Faith, commemorating the commencement of Bahá'u'lláh's prophethood. It begins at sunset on April 20 and continues until sunset, May 2. On the first April 21st, ninth April 29th and twelfth days of Ridván May 2nd, work and schooling is suspended.[1]



"Riḍván" means paradise, and is named for the [Garden of Ridván](#), outside Baghdad where Bahá'u'lláh stayed for twelve days after the Ottoman Empire exiled him from Baghdad and before commencing his journey to Constantinople.[2]

It is the most holy Bahá'í festival, and is also referred to as the "Most Great Festival" and the "King of Festivals".

In 1844 Siyyid `Alí-Muhammad of Shiraz, Iran proclaimed that he was "The Báb" Arabic: "The Gate", after a Shi'a religious concept. His followers were therefore known as Bábís. The Báb's writings introduced the concept of "He whom God shall make manifest", a Messianic figure whose coming, according to Bahá'ís, was announced in the scriptures of all of the world's great religions.[3][4]

Bahá'u'lláh claimed his mission as the Promised One of the Báb was revealed to him in 1853 while imprisoned in the Siyáh-Chál in Tehran, Iran.[3] After his release from the Siyáh-Chál, Bahá'u'lláh was banished from Persia, and he settled in Baghdad, which became the centre of Bábí activity. He did not, however, openly declare this prophetic mandate, and Subh-i-Azal remained the generally-recognized head of the Bábí community. In Baghdad on several occasions, Subh-i-Azal went into hiding from the authorities; increasingly, therefore, Bahá'u'lláh was the leader of the Bábí community.[5]

Bahá'u'lláh's rising attention in the city, and the revival of the Persian Bábí community gained the attention of his enemies in Islamic clergy and the Persian government. They were eventually successful in having the Ottoman government summon Bahá'u'lláh from Baghdad to Constantinople present-day Istanbul.[6]

Najibiyyih garden

Before Bahá'u'lláh left to Constantinople many visitors came to visit him, and thus to allow his family to pack for the trip, he decided to move to the Najibiyyih garden across

the Tigris river from Baghdad and receive visitors. He entered the garden on April 22nd, 1863 31 days after Naw Ruz, which usually happens on March 21 accompanied by his sons `Abdu'l-Bahá, Mírzá Mihdí and Mírzá Muhammad `Alí, his secretary Mirza Aqa Jan and some others, and stayed there for eleven days.[2][7]

After their arrival in the garden, Bahá'u'lláh announced his perceived station for the first time to a small group of family and friends. The exact nature and details of Bahá'u'lláh's declaration are unknown. Bahíyyih Khánum is reported to have said that Bahá'u'lláh stated his claim to his son `Abdu'l-Bahá and four others.[7] While some Bábís had come to the realization that Bahá'u'lláh was claiming to be the Promised One through the many remarks and allusions that Bahá'u'lláh had made during his final few months in Baghdad, it appears that most other Bábís were unaware of Bahá'u'lláh's claim until a couple years later while he was in Edirne.[7]

For the next eleven days Bahá'u'lláh received visitors including the governor of Baghdad. Bahá'u'lláh's family was not able to join him until April 30th, the ninth day, since the river had risen and made travel to the garden difficult. On the twelfth day of their stay in the garden, Bahá'u'lláh and his family left the garden and started on their travel to Constantinople.[7]

Festival

In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, written around 1873, Bahá'u'lláh ordains Riḍván as one of two "Most Great Festivals, along with the Declaration of the Báb. He then specified the first, ninth, and twelfth days to be holy days; these days mark the days of Bahá'u'lláh's arrival, the arrival of his family and his departure to the Riḍván garden.[8]

The Festival of Riḍván is observed according to the Bahá'í calendar, and begins on the thirty-second day of the Bahá'í year, which usually falls on April 21. The festival properly starts at two hours before sunset on that day, which symbolizes the time that Bahá'u'lláh entered the garden. On the first, ninth, and twelfth days, which are Bahá'í Holy Days, work is prohibited. Currently, the three holy days are usually observed with a community gathering where prayers are shared followed with a celebration.[7]

Significance

The time that Bahá'u'lláh spent during the Garden of Riḍván, and the associated festival and celebration, has a very large significance for Bahá'ís. Bahá'u'lláh calls it one of two "Most Great Festivals" and describes the first day as "the Day of supreme felicity" and he then describes the "Garden of Riḍván as "the Spot from which He shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of His Name, the All-Merciful".[9][8]

The festival is significant because of Bahá'u'lláh's public declaration that he was "Him Whom God shall make manifest" and a Manifestation of God, and thus it forms the beginning of the Bahá'í Faith. It is also significant because Bahá'u'lláh left his house in Baghdad, which he designated the "Most Great House", to enter the Garden of Riḍván. Bahá'u'lláh compares this move from the Most Great House to the Garden of Riḍván to Muhammad's travel from Mecca to Medina.[7] Furthermore, during Bahá'u'lláh's first day in the garden, he made a further three announcements: 1 abrogating religious war which was permitted in Islam and under certain conditions by the Báb 2 that there would not be another Manifestation of God for another 1000 years 3 that all the names of God were fully manifest in all things.[7]