

## **Birth of Bahá'u'lláh – Holy Day Program**

By Susan Gammage <sup>1</sup>

Let's start with this [beautiful, meditative slide show](#); created to celebrate the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh.

When hatred and animosity, fighting, slaughtering, and great coldness of heart were governing this world, and darkness had overcome the nations, Bahá'u'lláh, like a bright star, rose from the horizon of Persia and shone with the great Light of Guidance, giving heavenly radiance and establishing the new Teaching. (Abdu'l-Baha, Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 27)

### **Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh on the Birth of the Greatest Name**

This Tablet is one of the several Tablets revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in commemoration of His birthday. The Bahá'í World Centre has no information about the circumstances surrounding the revelation of these Tablets, and no authorized translations are available. However, they are being considered in connection with a new volume of translations. (Universal House of Justice, 14 July 2004)

He is God! O concourse of the lovers of God! By the righteousness of the Almighty! This, verily, is a night the like of which hath never been manifested in the world of creation. Truly, this bounty is from God, the All-Powerful, the Beneficent.

On this night, the Spirit spoke with a voice that threw into commotion the realities of men: "Rejoice, O Concourse on high in the inmost essence of Paradise!" Thereupon, God cried out from behind the Holy Veil of divine bestowals: "This, truly, is a night during which the Reality of the All-Merciful hath been born and the meaning of every eternal decree hath been divulged by the Pen of the All-Glorious." Therefore, rejoice and exult, O people of the Bayán!

During this night, the Nightingale lifted up Its voice upon the boughs and branches, proclaiming: "Rejoice, O denizens of Paradise!"

Say: This night the veils of glory concealing the light of certitude were rent in twain and the Dove of Heaven chanted and sang in the midmost heart of Paradise. Therefore, rejoice O Temples of Holiness dwelling in the city of time! On this night, God revealed His light through every exalted Name. Moreover, He hath been established upon every pure and radiant heart. So rejoice, O ye people of the Bayán!

During this night, the oceans of forgiveness have surged and the breezes of divine bestowals were wafted. Therefore, rejoice with exceeding gladness, O companions of

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by David Bowie (2023) for posting, with permission of author, at [https://bahai-library.com/gammage\\_holy\\_day\\_programs](https://bahai-library.com/gammage_holy_day_programs)

the All-Merciful! On this night, all the sins of mankind have been forgiven. This is a joyous message unto all created things!

Say: This, verily, is a night during which a pre-ordained measure of bounty and grace hath been decreed in the Scrolls of celestial glory and certitude, so that sorrow may be dispelled from all created things forever more. Therefore, rejoice in thy hearts, O ye who hath entered the realms of being and creation!

At this, the Herald of the Spirit crieth out in the midmost heart of eternity — the center of transcendent glory and sublimity. This is by the grace of God, the Omnipotent, the Beneficent!

By God! The Hand of Power, endowed with ascendant sovereignty, hath opened the musk-scented seal. Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

Through the Beauty of the All-Glorious, the hand of the Divine Joseph hath borne round the cup of pomegranate wine. Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

Therefore, O peoples of the world, hasten and partake of this Salsabil of everlasting life. Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

Say: O concourse of the lovers of God! The unveiled and naked Beauty of the Beloved hath shone forth. Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

O concourse of the loved ones of God! The Beauty of the Best-Beloved hath risen above the Horizon of Holiness. Therefore, bestir yourselves and arise, O people of the Bayán! Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

The Testimony and the Proof hath appeared, for the Resurrection hath come to pass through God's Manifestation of His own Self, the Ancient of Days. Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

The ages have persisted, the cycles have repeated, and the Lights have rejoiced, for God hath shed the splendor of His effulgent glory from the branches of every Tree. Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

Bestir yourselves, O chosen ones of God, for the spirits have emerged, the divine winds have been diffused, the likenesses of God have been torn asunder, and the Tongues of Eternity have sung upon the boughs of every Tree. Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

By God! The veils have been rent asunder, the dense coverings have been consumed by fire, the abstruse allusions have been unveiled, and the subtle signs have been

unrevealed by Him Who is endowed with Power and Omnipotence. Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

Rejoice and silently conceal this secret and hidden Symbol, lest your foes learn of that which ye have quaffed from this wine of rapturous joy. Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

O people of the Bayán! I swear by God! The favour of God is fulfilled, His mercy perfected, and the light of the divine Countenance hath shone forth with exultation and rapture. Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

Drink ye, O concourse of people and assemblage of God's loved ones, from this effulgent and radiant Salsabil! Verily, this bounty is from God, the Exalted, the Beneficent!

Bahá'u'lláh was born on 12 November 1817 to a prominent family in Tehran, Iran. His given name was Mirzá Husayn Ali, but He identified Himself as Bahá'u'lláh, which means the "Glory of God," a title bestowed on Him by His Forerunner, the Báb.

Bahá'u'lláh showed unusual brilliance and spiritual insight from an early age although He wasn't formally schooled. He also demonstrated extreme devotion to helping the poor. He was exiled for 40 years and died in the Holy Land in 1892.

David Merrick has compiled many stories on Bahá'u'lláh's childhood and early life; and graciously allowed them to be shared. There are too many to include here, so I urge you to read them all for yourself.

### **Stories of Bahá'u'lláh's Childhood and Early Life**

Bahá'u'lláh's father had seven wives, and a great many children through them. At dawn, on the second day of the Islamic Year, on 12 November 1817, his wife Khadijih Khánum gave birth to the eldest of her surviving sons.

At that very same moment, Shaykh Ahmad, who announced the coming of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, was found fallen upon his face, repeating in wrapt devotion the words, 'God is Great!' and saying, 'That which I have been announcing to you is now revealed. At this very hour the light of the Promised One has broken, and is shedding illumination upon the world.'

From His birth, Bahá'u'lláh never cried, always remaining in a most remarkable state of peacefulness. His mother was completely astonished, and before long it became obvious to everyone around, that her Child was entirely different from other children.

Bahá'u'lláh was brought up on the outskirts of Tihran, but most summers were spent in His father's great mansion in their ancestral village of Takur, on the shores of the sea.

Bahá'u'lláh as a child displayed a purity of character quite extraordinary, and a wonderful, innate wisdom and knowledge. He greatly loved outdoor life, spending most of His time in the garden or fields.

Extremely kind and generous, He had an incredible power of attraction, which was felt by all. People always crowded around Him, children were devoted to Him, and the ministers and people of the Court would gather about Him.

As He grew up, Bahá'u'lláh desired no schooling. He received a little customary education at home, in riding, using a sword or gun, good manners, calligraphy, poetries, and the ability to read out the words of the Qur'án.

Despite a lack education, Bahá'u'lláh shone forth in wisdom and ability, and all who knew Bahá'u'lláh were astonished. It was usual for them to say, that such a child will not live beyond maturity.

To His aunt, when still so young in years, the Child Bahá'u'lláh wrote this remarkable and most literate letter:

"He is the Well-Beloved! God willing you are abiding restfully beneath the canopy of Divine mercy, and the tabernacle of His bounty. Although to outward seeming, I am little and cannot write, yet because this Illiterate One is clinging to the Divine Lote tree, He can read without knowledge and write without being taught. And this fact is clear and evident in the spiritual realm to those endowed with insight. Those who are outside have been, and still are, unaware of this mystery."

One night Bahá'u'lláh appeared to his father in a dream, which was so very vivid, it awakened him. In the dream, Bahá'u'lláh was in a garden; great birds flew overhead; they attacked Him, yet they were powerless to harm Him. He was bathing in the sea, and began to swim in a vast, limitless ocean; His body shone out, and illuminated the sea! Above the waters, His long, jet-black locks, stood forth, floating in great profusion above the waves in all directions. Large numbers of fish gathered around Him, each fish holding fast to the end of a hair with its mouth. There were every kind of fish: large fish, small fish, white and black: and wherever He swam, they followed the light of His face. Such a vast number of fish clinging so tightly, caused no damage: not even a hair was lost from His head. Free and unrestrained, Bahá'u'lláh moved above the waters, with all the fish following His light.

His father was stunned by this dream, and with the Shah's permission, laid it before his well-known seer. The seer, swept away with amazement, explained how the garden and its birds, and the limitless ocean with its fish, were the world of existence, and its people, and that Bahá'u'lláh would single-handedly triumph over it, unhindered and alone; yet, he declared himself quite unable to imagine how it could ever come to pass. So His father took him to see Bahá'u'lláh, who was just a Child of five, and his praise and admiration of Bahá'u'lláh was so profuse, and so great his concern that He be protected, that His father became yet more passionately devoted to Him.

When Bahá'u'lláh was still a child, His father arranged for one of His older brothers to marry. The festivities lasted for seven days and nights, and on the final day, there was a puppet show. A large number of princes, dignitaries, and notables gathered from the capital for the occasion, and Bahá'u'lláh was sitting in one of the upper rooms of the building, watching. A tent was pitched in the courtyard, and from it soon some tiny human-like figures emerged, crying, "His Majesty is coming! Arrange the seats at once!" Other figures came out, engaged in sweeping and sprinkling of water, and then the chief town crier bade the people assemble for the audience with the king. Several groups began to arrive and take their places, the first wearing hats and sashes, the second wielding battleaxes, and the third of footmen and executioners with batons. Finally, the king himself appeared in majesty and splendour, crowned with a royal diadem, bearing himself with unspeakable superiority and grandeur. Advancing with pauses, he proceeded with great seriousness to his throne. As he sat upon his throne, a surge of shots were fired, and trumpets sounded; the king and the tent were enveloped in a great pall of smoke. As it cleared, the king was seen upon his throne surrounded by a suite of ministers, princes, and dignitaries standing to attention. A thief was brought before the king, and ordered to be beheaded. The chief executioner cut off his head, with blood flowing from him. News was brought in of a rebellion, and the king reviewed and despatched several regiments and artillery. Cannons began booming from behind the tent, and the battle was announced.

The royal scene came to an end; the curtain was drawn down, and twenty minutes later, a man emerged from behind the tent carrying a box under his arm.

Bahá'u'lláh asked him about the box, and he replied that all the lavish display was now contained within that box. Bahá'u'lláh experienced the world as an impermanent and inconsequential puppet display, and marvelled how men should pride themselves upon the vain and fleeting things around them.

During His childhood, Bahá'u'lláh witnessed three confrontations between His father, and a very unjust tax collector, who was cruelly demanding payment. Incensed, Bahá'u'lláh, though merely seven, mounted His horse, and rode for two days to Tihiran, where He sought the dismissal of the arrogant tax collector. He succeeded in obtaining the necessary papers ordering his dismissal, and returned successful to His parents.

By the time he was thirteen, Bahá'u'lláh was renowned for His ability to discuss any matter, and resolve any problem presented before Him.

He was always courteous and patient, and only the disrespectful reference to a Messenger or Chosen One of God was able to arouse His displeasure; even then, He would address the offender with kindness and calm.

He appeared before large gatherings in discussions with the leading clergy, resolving intricate religious questions, whilst everyone paid deep attention and interest, and His explanations became the authoritative word on every matter.

Despite these abilities, the kulah on His head and the locks flowing over His shoulders meant no one ever suspected a person of such a class would become the fountain of a new Truth and revitalising Spirit.

When Bahá'u'lláh was nearly fifteen, His elder sister was married. The man she married had a younger, only sister, whose name was Ásíyih Khánum. She was an endearing, vivacious and very beautiful young woman, tall, slender and graceful, with dark blue eyes and a wonderful intelligence. She was most considerate and gentle with everybody, her actions overflowing with loving-kindness springing from a pure heart. Her very presence enfolded everyone in the fragrance of her good spirits. When He was eighteen, Bahá'u'lláh's sister asked their father if he would seek Ásíyih for Bahá'u'lláh: and so their marriage took place in October 1835. Bahá'u'lláh later named her Navvab, and bestowed upon her the unique distinction of being His everlasting companion in all the worlds of God.

Ásíyih came from a noble and wealthy family; her wedding treasures were so extensive, forty mules were needed to carry them to His home. For six months before the marriage, a jeweller worked at her home, preparing jewellery - even the buttons of her garments were gold, set with precious stones. These two marriages roused much interest in the land, the people seeing great wealth adding to more wealth.

Yet the wealth they inherited, they spent on charitable ends. Taking part as little as possible in State functions, social ceremonies, and the luxurious habits of high-placed and wealthy families, they treated worldly pleasures of no worth, and occupied themselves instead in caring for the poor, and for all who were unhappy or troubled. From their doors nobody was ever turned away, and a welcoming table was spread for all who might come. The poor women flowed constantly to Ásíyih, pouring out their stories of woe, and were comforted and consoled by her love and helpfulness.

Bahá'u'lláh was called "the Father of the Poor," whilst Ásíyih was named "the Mother of Consolation."

As Bahá'u'lláh was walking one day, and His parents were watching Him, His mother happened to comment upon His shortness. His father immediately rejoined that such things had no importance: "Just look how intelligent He is!" he said: - "What a wonderful mind He has!"

On another occasion, Bahá'u'lláh was sitting with this same man, along with other scholars and divines. They asked Bahá'u'lláh to resolve a question, as they had been unable to answer it themselves with any satisfaction. How could Fátimih, they wondered, be the best of all women, except the one born of Mary, when Mary had no daughter? Bahá'u'lláh replied that this was simply in praise of there being no woman comparable to Fátimih. The teacher held a stern silence, and the next day rebuked his disciples for letting an unturbaned youth solve a matter which they, with all their years of training, were unable to resolve.

Bahá'u'lláh's father made plans to retire to 'Iraq; however, death intervened, and he passed away, in 1839. Bahá'u'lláh, though still a youth, was left responsible for His younger brothers and sisters, and the management of the extensive family estates.

With His father's passing, the Government was eager for Bahá'u'lláh to succeed His father in the Ministry. Bahá'u'lláh was held in the highest regard by all levels of society, yet He showed no desire for the splendid ranks and positions opening out everywhere before Him; the Prime Minister himself had even offered Him a post in the government. All these very things His ancestors pursued and cultivated, and His relatives held out great hopes for Him. His lack of interest in such things of importance was therefore a cause of great surprise and frequent comment. Bahá'u'lláh declined this custom, and so the Prime Minister left Him to pursue the higher-minded aims He clearly sought, and continued to show Bahá'u'lláh the utmost consideration, visiting Him in His home, and addressing Him as his own son.

Whilst declining such wealthy position and income, Bahá'u'lláh showed astonishing generosity. The doors of His home were open to all, and He always had many guests, giving abundantly to all in need. He was a refuge for every weak one, a shelter for the fearful one, kind to the destitute, and lenient and loving to all creatures. This unbounded generosity amazed everyone, as He did not use it to promote His position; rather, it was clear to everyone that such free generosity would quickly cause His wealth to disappear entirely. The more spiritually-minded saw in these acts His attraction to the celestial realm of God and a great destiny to come.

As Bahá'u'lláh grew from an infant into adulthood, He astounded all who encountered Him, and would later change the face of history.

### **Newly Translated Tablet**

*He is the Most Holy, the Most Exalted, the Most Great.*

The Birthday Festival is come, and He Who is the Beauty of God, the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling, the All-Loving, hath ascended His throne. Well is it with the one who in this Day hath attained His presence and towards whom the gaze of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, hath been directed. Say: We have celebrated this Festival in the Most Great Prison at a time when the kings of the earth have risen against Us. Yet the ascendancy of the oppressor can never frustrate Us, nor can the hosts of the world dismay Us. Unto this doth the All-Merciful bear witness in this most august station.

Say: Should the quintessence of assurance be dismayed before the clamour of the peoples of the world? Nay, by His beauty, which sheddeth its radiance upon all that hath been and all that shall be! This, verily, is the majesty of the Lord that hath encompassed the entire creation, and this is His transcendent power that hath pervaded all them that see and all that is seen. Take fast hold of the cord of His sovereign might and make mention of your Lord, the Unconstrained, at this dawning whose light hath laid bare every hidden secret. Thus hath the tongue of the Ancient of Days spoken on this Day wherein the choice wine

hath been unsealed. Take heed lest the vain imaginings of them that have disbelieved in God perturb you, or their idle fancies deter you from this outstretched path.

O people of Bahá! Soar upon the wings of detachment into the atmosphere of the love of your Lord, the All-Merciful. Arise then to render Him victorious, as bidden in the Preserved Tablet. Beware lest ye contend with any of My servants. Bestow upon them the sweet savours of God and His holy utterances, for through their potency all men will be enabled to turn unto Him. They that remain heedless of God in this Day are in truth lost in the drunkenness of their desires and perceive it not. Well is it with the one who, with lowliness and humility, hath set his face towards the Dayspring of the verses of his Lord.

It behoveth you to arise and acquaint the people with that which hath been sent down in the Book of their Lord, the Almighty, the Unconstrained. Say: Fear ye God and pay no heed to the vain imaginings of them that walk in the ways of doubt and iniquity. Turn ye with radiant hearts towards the throne of your Lord, the Possessor of all names. He, verily, shall aid you through the power of truth. No God is there but Him, the Almighty, the Most Bountiful.

Would ye hasten towards a mere pond, whilst the Most Great Ocean is stretched out before your eyes? Turn ye wholly unto it, and follow not in the footsteps of every faithless deceiver. Thus doth the Bird of Eternity warble upon the branches of Our divine Lote-Tree. By God! A single one of its melodies sufficeth to enrapture the Concourse on high, and beyond them the dwellers of the cities of names, and beyond them those who circle round His Throne at morn and eventide.

Thus have the showers of utterance rained down from the heaven of the will of your Lord, the All-Merciful. Draw nigh unto them, O people, and renounce those who idly dispute the verses that God hath revealed, and who have disbelieved in their Lord when He came invested with proof and testimony. (Bahá'u'lláh, *Ayyám-i-Tis'ih*, pp. 45–47, <https://www.bahaiprayers.io/prayer?id=301110#:~:text=The%20Birthday%20Festival%20is,%20Subsisting%20hath%20been%20directed>)

### **Tablet of Visitation**

The praise which hath dawned from Thy most august Self, and the glory which hath shone forth from Thy most effulgent Beauty, rest upon Thee, O Thou Who art the Manifestation of Grandeur, and the King of Eternity, and the Lord of all who are in heaven and on earth! I testify that through Thee the sovereignty of God and His dominion, and the majesty of God and His grandeur, were revealed, and the Daystars of ancient splendor have shed their radiance in the heaven of Thine irrevocable decree, and the Beauty of the Unseen hath shone forth above the horizon of creation. I testify, moreover, that with but a movement of Thy Pen Thine injunction "Be Thou" hath been enforced, and God's hidden Secret hath been divulged, and all created things have been called into being, and all the Revelations have been sent down.

I bear witness, moreover, that through Thy beauty the beauty of the Adored One hath been unveiled, and through Thy face the face of the Desired One hath shone forth, and that through a word from Thee Thou hast decided between all created things, caused them who are devoted to Thee to ascend unto the summit of glory, and the infidels to fall into the lowest abyss.

I bear witness that he who hath known Thee hath known God, and he who hath attained unto Thy presence hath attained unto the presence of God. Great, therefore, is the blessedness of him who hath believed in Thee, and in Thy signs, and hath humbled himself before Thy sovereignty, and hath been honored with meeting Thee, and hath attained the good pleasure of Thy will, and circled around Thee, and stood before Thy throne. Woe betide him that hath transgressed against Thee, and hath denied Thee, and repudiated Thy signs, and gainsaid Thy sovereignty, and risen up against Thee, and waxed proud before Thy face, and hath disputed Thy testimonies, and fled from Thy rule and Thy dominion, and been numbered with the infidels whose names have been inscribed by the fingers of Thy behest upon Thy holy Tablets.

Waft, then, unto me, O my God and my Beloved, from the right hand of Thy mercy and Thy loving-kindness, the holy breaths of Thy favors, that they may draw me away from myself and from the world unto the courts of Thy nearness and Thy presence. Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou, truly, hast been supreme over all things.

The remembrance of God and His praise, and the glory of God and His splendor, rest upon Thee, O Thou Who art His Beauty! I bear witness that the eye of creation hath never gazed upon one wronged like Thee. Thou wast immersed all the days of Thy life beneath an ocean of tribulations. At one time Thou wast in chains and fetters; at another Thou wast threatened by the sword of Thine enemies. Yet despite all this, Thou didst enjoin upon all men to observe what had been prescribed unto Thee by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

May my spirit be a sacrifice to the wrongs Thou didst suffer, and my soul be a ransom for the adversities Thou didst sustain. I beseech God, by Thee and by them whose faces have been illumined with the splendors of the light of Thy countenance, and who, for love of Thee, have observed all whereunto they were bidden, to remove the veils that have come in between Thee and Thy creatures, and to supply me with the good of this world and the world to come. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.

Bless Thou, O Lord my Lord, the Divine Lote-Tree and its leaves, and its boughs, and its branches, and its stems, and its offshoots, as long as Thy most excellent titles will endure and Thy most august attributes will last. Protect it, then, from the mischief of the aggressor and the hosts of tyranny. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. Bless Thou, also, O Lord my God, Thy servants and Thy handmaidens who have attained unto Thee, Thou, truly, art the All-Bountiful, Whose grace is infinite. No God is there save Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous. (Bahá'u'lláh, Baha'i Prayers, p. 230-232)

Closing Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv5PHZt4Sis>