

Teen Murti Haifa Memorial in Delhi, Battle of Haifa and the Bahá'í Faith

'Abdu'l-Bahá, whose Centenary of Ascension is being commemorated by the Bahá'í Community was saved by soldiers of the Jodhpur and the Mysore Lancers in 1918.

Few people in India or outside are aware little-known connection between the bravery of the Indian fighters and the early history of the Bahá'í faith, that it was the Indian soldiers who released the spiritual leader of the Bahá'í religion from the clutches of death under the Ottoman Empire.

'Abdu'l-Baha had been a prisoner of the Ottoman Empire since His childhood. He was freed from incarceration in the prison city of 'Akka in 1908 when the Young Turk Revolution led to the discharge of all religious and political prisoners. The spiritual leader of Bahá'í religion, that began to emerge in the Ottoman empire in the 19th century, lived in Haifa, in present-day Israel.

After the start of World War I in 1914, Haifa city fell to Turkish and German forces. Alarmed by the growing popularity of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his humanitarian and religious activities, the Turkish commander-in-chief threatened to crucify 'Abdu'l-Bahá on Mount Carmel in Haifa and destroy all the shrines of the Bahá'í Faith as soon as the Ottomans won the war.

On September 23, 1918 horse mounted soldiers of the Jodhpur and the Mysore Lancers charged to victory against the Ottoman Turks, despite absence of arsenal of modern machine guns and artillery. After some twenty-four hours' battle, the city was freed of the horrors of war conditions of the Turkish troops and saved the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, leader of the Bahá'í Faith who was threatened with death by the Turkish Commander.

It was under these circumstances that the dramatic Battle of Haifa unfolded, during which two regiments of Indian cavalry soldiers played a critical role in capturing the city from the well-entrenched Turkish and German soldiers.

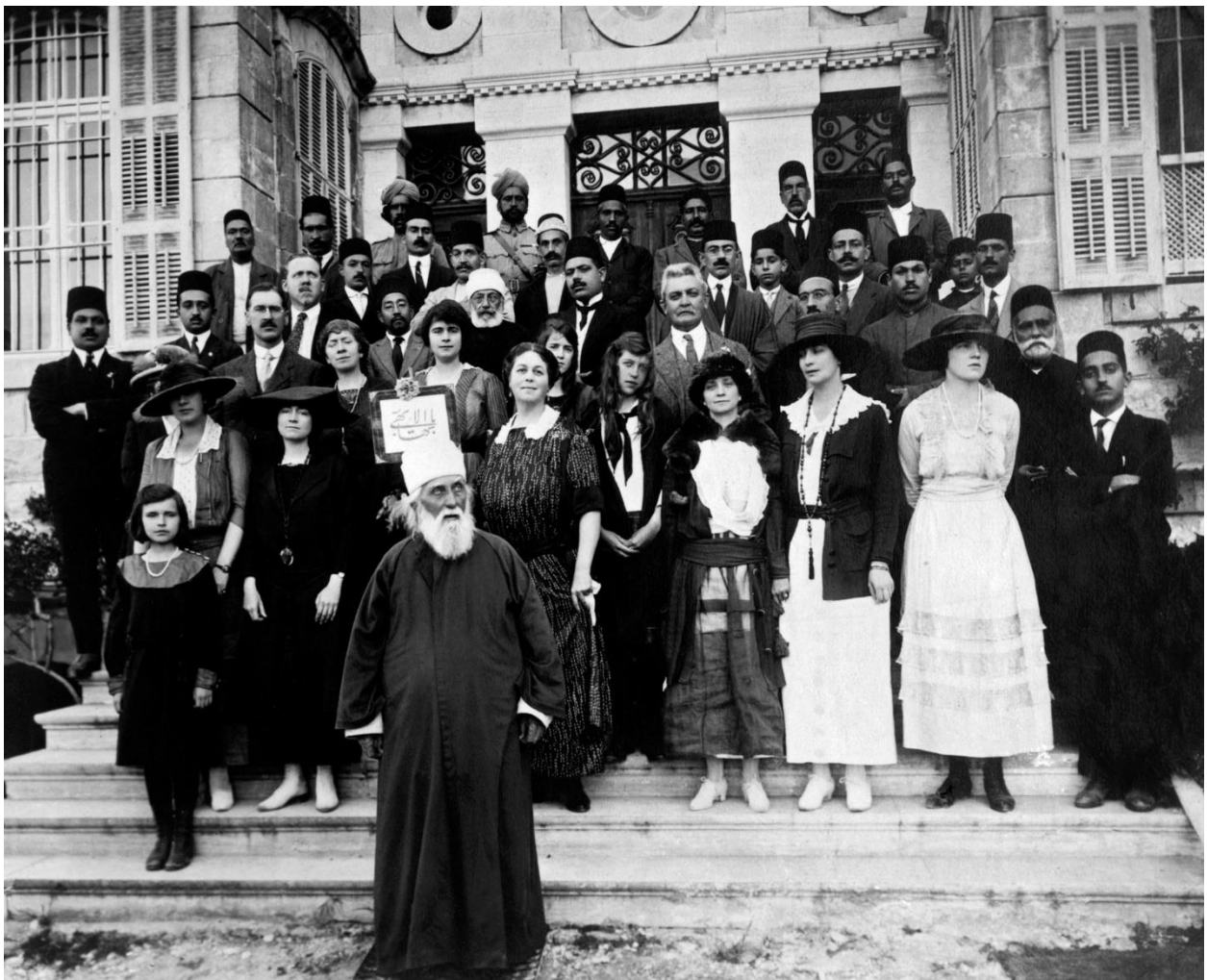
Following the Allied victory in the Battle of Haifa in September 1918 and the rescue of the spiritual leader 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the ties between India and the Bahá'í community also strengthened when a large number of this minority fleeing persecution in their homelands found refuge in India and made it their home.

India is now the largest home of the Bahá'í community in the world. The Bahá'í religion was founded by Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892), father of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. India has been associated with the Bahá'í Faith right from its inception in 1844, as one of the 18 people who recognized and accepted the Báb, the Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, was from India.

The Teen Murti Haifa memorial built in Delhi in 1922 is a tribute to the bravery of the brigade's soldiers.



Horse mounted soldiers of the Jodhpur and the Mysore Lancers entering Haifa



Photograph of Two Indian soldiers with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.



Teen Murti Haifa Memorial, New Delhi