

The Martyrdom of the Báb – 9 July

The siege of Zanzan was still in progress when he, dispensing with an explicit order from his sovereign, and acting independently of his counsellors and fellow-ministers, dispatched his order to Prince Hamzih Mirza, the governor of Adhirbayjan, instructing him to execute the Báb. Fearing lest the infliction of such condign punishment in the capital of the realm would set in motion forces he might be powerless to control, he ordered that his Captive be taken to Tabriz, and there be done to death. Confronted with a flat refusal by the indignant Prince to perform what he regarded as a flagitious crime, the Amir-Nizam commissioned his own brother, Mirza Hasan Khan, to execute his orders. The usual formalities designed to secure the necessary authorization from the leading mujtahids of Tabriz were hastily and easily completed. Neither Mulla Muhammad-i-Mamaqani, however, who had penned the Báb's death-warrant on the very day of His examination in Tabriz, nor Haji Mirza Baqir, nor Mulla Murtada-Quli, to whose houses their Victim was ignominiously led by the farrash-bashi, by order of the Grand Vizir, condescended to meet face to face their dreaded Opponent.

Immediately before and soon after this humiliating treatment meted out to the Báb two highly significant incidents occurred, incidents that cast an illuminating light on the mysterious circumstances surrounding the opening phase of His martyrdom. The farrash-bashi had abruptly interrupted the last conversation which the Báb was confidentially having in one of the rooms of the barracks with His amanuensis Siyyid Husayn, and was drawing the latter aside, and severely rebuking him, when he was thus addressed by his Prisoner: "Not until I have said to him all those things that I wish to say can any earthly power silence Me. Though all the world be armed against Me, yet shall it be powerless to deter Me from fulfilling, to the last word, My intention." To the Christian Sam Khan -- the colonel of the Armenian regiment ordered to carry out the execution -- who, seized with fear lest his act should provoke the wrath of God, had begged to be released from the

duty imposed upon him, the Báb gave the following assurance: "Follow your instructions, and if your intention be sincere, the Almighty is surely able to relieve you of your perplexity." Sam Khan accordingly set out to discharge his duty. A spike was driven into a pillar which separated two rooms of the barracks facing the square. Two ropes were fastened to it from which the Báb and one of his disciples, the youthful and devout Mirza Muhammad-'Ali-i-Zunuzi, surnamed Anis, who had previously flung himself at the feet of his Master and implored that under no circumstances he be sent away from Him, were separately suspended. The firing squad ranged itself in three files, each of two hundred and fifty men. Each file in turn opened fire until the whole detachment had discharged its bullets. So dense was the smoke from the seven hundred and fifty rifles that the sky was darkened. As soon as the smoke had cleared away the astounded multitude of about ten thousand souls, who had crowded onto the roof of the barracks, as well as the tops of the adjoining houses, beheld a scene which their eyes could scarcely believe. The Báb had vanished from their sight! Only his companion remained, alive and unscathed, standing beside the wall on which they had been suspended. The ropes by which they had been hung alone were severed. "The Siyyid-i-Báb has gone from our sight!" cried out the bewildered spectators. A frenzied search immediately ensued. He was found, unhurt and unruffled, in the very room He had occupied the night before, engaged in completing His interrupted conversation with His amanuensis. "I have finished My conversation with Siyyid Husayn" were the words with which the Prisoner, so providentially preserved, greeted the appearance of the farrash-bashi, "Now you may proceed to fulfil your intention." Recalling the bold assertion his Prisoner had previously made, and shaken by so stunning a revelation, the farrash-bashi quitted instantly the scene, and resigned his post. Sam Khan, likewise, remembering, with feelings of awe and wonder, the reassuring words addressed to him by the Báb, ordered his men to leave the barracks immediately, and swore, as he

left the courtyard, never again, even at the cost of his life, to repeat that act. Aqa Jan-i-Khamsih, colonel of the body-guard, volunteered to replace him. On the same wall and in the same manner the Báb and His companion were again suspended, while the new regiment formed in line and opened fire upon them. This time, however, their breasts were riddled with bullets, and their bodies completely dissected, with the exception of their faces which were but little marred. "O wayward generation!" were the last words of the Báb to the gazing multitude, as the regiment prepared to fire its volley, "Had you believed in Me every one of you would have followed the example of this youth, who stood in rank above most of you, and would have willingly sacrificed himself in My path. The day will come when you will have recognized Me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you." Nor was this all. The very moment the shots were fired a gale of exceptional violence arose and swept over the city. From noon till night a whirlwind of dust obscured the light of the sun, and blinded the eyes of the people. In Shiraz an "earthquake," foreshadowed in no less weighty a Book than the Revelation of St. John, occurred in 1268 A.H. which threw the whole city into turmoil and wrought havoc amongst its people, a havoc that was greatly aggravated by the outbreak of cholera, by famine and other afflictions. In that same year no less than two hundred and fifty of the firing squad, that had replaced Sam Khan's regiment, met their death, together with their officers, in a terrible earthquake, while the remaining five hundred suffered, three years later, as a punishment for their mutiny, the same fate as that which their hands had inflicted upon the Báb. To insure that none of them had survived, they were riddled with a second volley, after which their bodies, pierced with spears and lances, were exposed to the gaze of the people of Tabriz. The prime instigator of the Báb's death, the implacable Amir-Nizam, together with his brother, his chief accomplice, met their death within two years of that savage act.

(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By)

The Day Star of the Bayán

Give ear, O My servant, unto that which is being sent down unto thee from the Throne of thy Lord, the Inaccessible, the Most Great. There is none other God but Him. He hath called into being His creatures, that they may know Him, Who is the Compassionate, the All-Merciful. Unto the cities of all nations He hath sent His Messengers, Whom He hath commissioned to announce unto men tidings of the Paradise of His good pleasure, and to draw them nigh unto the Haven of abiding security, the Seat of eternal holiness and transcendent glory. Some were guided by the Light of God, gained admittance into the court of His presence, and quaffed, from the hand of resignation, the waters of everlasting life, and were accounted of them that have truly recognized and believed in Him. Others rebelled against Him, and rejected the signs of God, the Most Powerful, the Almighty, the All-Wise. Ages rolled away, until they attained their consummation in this, the Lord of days, the Day whereon the Day Star of the Bayán manifested itself above the horizon of mercy, the Day in which the Beauty of the All-Glorious shone forth in the exalted person of Ali-Muhammad, the Báb. No sooner did He reveal Himself, than all the people rose up against Him. By some He was denounced as one that hath uttered slanders against God, the Almighty, the Ancient of Days. Others regarded Him as a man smitten with madness, an allegation which I, Myself, have heard from the lips of one of the divines. Still others disputed His claim to be the Mouthpiece of God, and stigmatized Him as one who had stolen and used as his the words of the Almighty, who had perverted their meaning, and mingled them with his own.

The Eye of Grandeur weepeth sore for the things which their mouths have uttered, while they continue to rejoice upon their seats. "God," said He, "is My witness, O people! I am come to you with a Revelation from the Lord, your God, the Lord of your fathers of old. Look not, O people, at the things ye possess. Look rather at the things God hath sent down unto you. This, surely, will be better for you than the whole of creation, could ye but perceive it. Repeat the gaze, O people, and consider the testimony of God and His proof which are in your possession, and compare them unto the Revelation sent down unto you in this Day, that the truth, the infallible truth, may be indubitably manifested unto you.

Follow not, O people, the steps of the Evil One; follow ye the Faith of the All-Merciful, and be ye of them that truly believe. What would it profit man, if he were to fail to recognize the Revelation of God? Nothing whatever. To this Mine own Self, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-Wise, will testify." The more He exhorted them, the fiercer grew their enmity, till, at the last, they put Him to death with shameful cruelty. The curse of God be upon the oppressors! A few believed in Him; few of Our servants are the thankful. These He admonished, in all His Tablets -- nay, in every passage of His wondrous writings -- not to give themselves up in the Day of the promised Revelation to anything whatever, be it in the heaven or in the earth. "O people!" said He, "I have revealed Myself for His Manifestation, and have caused My Book, the Bayán, to descend upon you for no other purpose except to establish the truth of His Cause. Fear ye God, and contend not with Him as the people of the Qur'án have contended with Me. At whatever time ye hear of Him, hasten ye towards Him, and cleave ye to whatsoever He may reveal unto you. Naught else besides Him can ever profit you, no, not though ye produce from first to last the testimonies of all those who were before you." And when after the lapse of a few years the heaven of Divine decree was cleft asunder, and the Beauty of the Báb appeared in the clouds of the names of God, arrayed in a new raiment, these same people maliciously rose up against Him, Whose light embraceth all created things. They broke His Covenant, rejected His truth, contended with Him, cavilled at His signs, treated His testimony as falsehood, and joined the company of the infidels. Eventually, they determined to take away His life. Such is the state of them who are in a far-gone error! And when they realized their powerlessness to achieve their purpose, they arose to plot against Him. Witness how every moment they devise a fresh device to harm Him, that they may injure and dishonor the cause of God. Say: Woe be to you! By God! Your schemings cover you with shame. Your Lord, the God of mercy, can well dispense with all creatures. Nothing whatever can either increase or diminish the things He doth possess. If ye believe, to your own behoof will ye believe; and if ye believe not, ye yourselves will suffer. At no time can the hand of the infidel profane the hem of His Robe.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh)

The martyrdom of the Báb took place at noon on Sunday, July 9, 1850 A.D. thirty-one lunar years, seven months, and twenty-seven days from the day of His birth in Shiraz.

On the evening of that same day, the mangled bodies of the Báb and His companion were removed from the courtyard of the barracks to the edge of the moat outside the gate of the city. Four companies, each consisting of ten sentinels, were ordered to keep watch in turn over them. On the morning following the day of martyrdom, the Russian consul in Tabriz, accompanied by an artist, went to that spot and ordered that a sketch be made of the remains as they lay beside the moat.

I have heard Haji Ali-'Askar relate the following: "An official of the Russian consulate, to whom I was related, showed me that same sketch on the very day it was drawn. It was such a faithful portrait of the Báb that I looked upon! No bullet had struck His forehead, His cheeks, or His lips. I gazed upon a smile which seemed to be still lingering upon His countenance. His body, however, had been severely mutilated. I could recognize the arms and head of His companion, who seemed to be holding Him in his embrace. As I gazed horror-struck upon that haunting picture, and saw how those noble traits had been disfigured, my heart sank within me. I turned away my face in anguish and, regaining my house, locked myself with my room. For three days and three nights, I could neither sleep nor eat, so overwhelmed was I with emotion. That short and tumultuous life, with all its sorrows, its turmoils, its banishments, and eventually the awe-inspiring martyrdom with which it had been crowned, seemed again to be re-enacted before my eyes. I tossed upon my bed, writhing in agony and pain."

(Shoghi Effendi, The Dawn-Breakers)

EXTRACTS FROM AN EPISTLE TO MUHAMMAD SHAH

THE substance wherewith God hath created Me is not the clay out of which others have been formed. He hath conferred upon Me that which the worldly-wise can never comprehend, nor the faithful discover ... I am one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God. Whosoever hath recognized Me, hath known all that is true and right, and hath attained all that is good and seemly; and whosoever hath failed to recognize Me, hath turned away from all that is true and right and hath succumbed to everything evil and unseemly.....

...By My life! But for the obligation to acknowledge the Cause of Him Who is the Testimony of God... I would not have announced this unto thee... All the keys of heaven God hath chosen to place on My right hand, and all the keys of hell on My left... I am the Primal Point from which have been generated all created things. I am the Countenance of God Whose splendour can never be obscured, the Light of God Whose radiance can never fade. Whoso recognizeth Me, assurance and all good are in store for him, and whoso faileth to recognize Me, infernal fire and all evil await him... I swear by God, the Peerless, the Incomparable, the True One: for no other reason hath He -- the supreme Testimony of God -- invested Me with clear signs and tokens than that all men may be enabled to submit to His Cause...

.... God beareth Me witness, I was not a man of learning, for I was trained as a merchant. In the year sixty [1260 A.H.] God graciously infused my soul with the conclusive evidences and weighty knowledge which characterize Him Who is the Testimony of God -- may peace be upon Him -- until finally in that year I proclaimed God's hidden Cause and unveiled its well-guarded Pillar, in such wise that no one could refute it. 'That he who should perish might perish with a clear proof before him and he who should live might live by clear proof.'

In that same year [year 60] I despatched a messenger and a book unto thee, that thou mightest act towards the Cause of Him Who is the Testimony of God as befitteth the station of thy sovereignty. But inasmuch as dark, dreadful and dire calamity had been irrevocably ordained by the Will of God, the book was not submitted to thy presence, through the intervention of such as regard themselves the well-wishers of the government.....

....I swear by God! Shouldst thou know the things which in the space of these four years have befallen Me at the hands of thy people and thine army, thou wouldst hold thy breath from fear of God, unless thou wouldst rise to obey the Cause of Him Who is the Testimony of God and make amends for thy shortcomings and failure. While I was in Shiraz the indignities which befell Me at the hands of its wicked and depraved Governor waxed so grievous that if thou wert acquainted with but a tithe thereof, thou wouldst deal him retributive justice. For as a result of his unmitigated oppression, thy royal court hath become, until the Day of Resurrection, the object of the wrath of God. Moreover, his indulgence in alcohol had grown so excessive that he was never sober enough to make a sound judgement. Therefore, disquieted, I was obliged to set out from Shiraz with the aim of attaining the enlightened and exalted court of Your Majesty. The Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih then became aware of the truth of the Cause and manifested exemplary servitude and devotion to His chosen ones. When some of the ignorant people in his city arose to stir up sedition, he defended the divine Truth by affording Me protection for a while in the privacy of the Governor's residence. At length, having attained the good-pleasure of God, he repaired to his habitation in the all-highest Paradise. May God reward him graciously...

Following his ascension to the eternal Kingdom, the vicious Gurgin, resorting to all manner of treachery, false oaths and coercion, sent Me away from Isfahan with an escort of five guards on a journey which lasted seven days, without providing the barest necessities for My travel (Alas! Alas! for the things which have touched Me!), until eventually Your Majesty's order came, instructing Me to proceed to Mah-Ku... I swear by the Most Great Lord! Wert thou to be told in what place I dwell, the first person to have mercy on Me would be thyself. In the heart of a mountain is a fortress [Mah-Ku] ... the inmates of which are confined to two guards and four dogs. Picture, then, My plight... I swear by the truth of God! Were he who hath been willing to treat Me in such a manner to know Who it is Whom he hath so treated, he, verily, would never in his life be happy. Nay -- I, verily, acquaint thee with the truth of the matter -- it is as if he hath imprisoned all the Prophets, and all the men of truth and all the chosen ones...

When this decree was made known unto Me, I wrote to him who administereth the affairs of the kingdom, saying: 'Put Me to death, I adjure thee by God, and send My head wherever thou pleasest. For surely an innocent person such as I, cannot reconcile himself to being consigned to a place reserved for criminals and let his life continue.' My plea remained unanswered. Evidently His Excellency the Haji, is not fully aware of the truth of our Cause. It would be far more heinous a deed to sadden the hearts of the faithful, whether men or women, than to lay waste the sacred House of God. Verily, the One True God beareth Me witness that in this Day I am the true mystic Fane of God, and the Essence of all good. He who doeth good unto Me, it is as if he doeth good unto God, His angels and the entire company of His loved ones. He who doeth evil unto Me, it is as if he doeth evil unto God and His chosen ones. Nay, too exalted is the station of God and of His loved ones for any person's good or evil deed to reach their holy threshold.....

In brief, I hold within My grasp whatsoever any man might wish of the good of this world and of the next. Were I to remove the veil, all would recognize Me as their Best Beloved, and no one would deny Me. Let not this assertion astound Your Majesty; inasmuch as a true believer in the unity of God who keepeth his eyes directed towards Him alone, will regard aught else but Him as utter nothingness. I swear by God! I seek no earthly goods from thee, be it as much as a mustard seed.... In this mountain I have remained alone, and have come to such a pass that none of those gone before Me have suffered what I have suffered, nor any transgressor endured what I have endured! I render praise unto God and yet again praise Him. I find Myself free from sorrow, inasmuch as I abide within the good-pleasure of My Lord and Master. Methinks I am in the all-highest Paradise, rejoicing at My communion with God, the Most Great. Verily this is a bounty which God hath conferred upon Me; and He is the Lord of unbounded blessings.... Through the grace of God nothing can frustrate My purpose, and I am fully conscious of that which God hath bestowed upon Me as a token of His favour. I implore pardon of God for Myself and for all things related to Me and affirm, 'Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds'.

(The Báb, Selections from the Writings of the Báb)

EXCERPTS FROM THE PERSIAN BAYÁN

It is better to guide one soul than to possess all that is on earth, for as long as that guided soul is under the shadow of the Tree of Divine Unity, he and the one who hath guided him will both be recipients of God's tender mercy, whereas possession of earthly things will cease at the time of death. The path to guidance is one of love and compassion, not of force and coercion. This hath been God's method in the past, and shall continue to be in the future! He causeth him whom He pleaseth to enter the shadow of His Mercy. Verily, He is the Supreme Protector, the All-Generous. There is no paradise more wondrous for any soul than to be exposed to God's Manifestation in His Day, to hear His verses and believe in them, to attain His presence, which is naught but the presence of God, to sail upon the sea of the heavenly kingdom of His good-pleasure, and to partake of the choice fruits of the paradise of His divine Oneness.

(The Báb, Selections from the Writings of the Báb)

THERE is no paradise, in the estimation of the believers in the Divine Unity, more exalted than to obey God's commandments, and there is no fire in the eyes of those who have known God and His signs, fiercer than to transgress His laws and to oppress another soul, even to the extent of a mustard seed. On the Day of Resurrection God will, in truth, judge all men, and we all verily plead for His grace.

(The Báb, Selections from the Writings of the Báb)

Excerpts from the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'

O QURRATU'L-'AYN! We have, verily, dilated Thine heart in this Revelation, which stands truly unique from all created things, and have exalted Thy name through the manifestation of the Báb, so that men may become aware of Our transcendent power, and recognize that God is immeasurably sanctified above the praise of all men. He is verily independent of the whole of creation.

(The Báb, Selections from the Writings of the Báb)

THE angels and the spirits, arrayed rank upon rank, descend, by the leave of God, upon this Gate and circle round this Focal Point in a far-stretching line. Greet them with salutations, O Qurratu'l-'Ayn, for the dawn hath indeed broken; then proclaim unto the concourse of the faithful: 'Is not the rising of the Morn, foreshadowed in the Mother Book, to be near at hand? ...

O Qurratu'l-'Ayn! Turn Thou eagerly unto God in Thy Cause, for the peoples of the world have risen in iniquity, and but for the outpouring of the grace of God and Thy mercy unto them, no one could purge even a single soul for evermore.

O Qurratu'l-'Ayn! The life to come is indeed far more advantageous unto Thee and unto such as follow Thy Cause than this earthly life and its pleasures. This is what hath been foreordained according to the dispensations of Providence...

O Qurratu'l-'Ayn! Say: Verily I am the 'Gate of God' and I give you to drink, by the leave of God, the sovereign Truth, of the crystal-pure waters of His Revelation which are gushing out from the incorruptible Fountain situate upon the Holy Mount. And those who earnestly strive after the One True God, let them then strive to attain this Gate. Verily, God is potent over all things...

O peoples of the earth! Give ear unto God's holy Voice proclaimed by this Arabian Youth Whom the Almighty hath graciously chosen for His Own Self. He is indeed none other than the True One, Whom God hath entrusted with this Mission from the midst of the Burning Bush. O Qurratu'l-'Ayn! Unravel what Thou pleasest from the secrets of the All-Glorious, for the ocean is surging high at the behest of the incomparable Lord.

(The Báb, Selections from the Writings of the Báb)

I am the Mystic Fane which the Hand of Omnipotence hath reared. I am the Lamp which the Finger of God hath lit within its niche and caused to shine with deathless splendour. I am the Flame of that supernal Light that glowed upon Sinai in the gladsome Spot, and lay concealed in the midst of the Burning Bush.

(The Báb, Selections from the Writings of the Báb)

All majesty and glory, O my God, and all dominion and light and grandeur and splendor be unto Thee. Thou bestowest sovereignty on whom Thou willest and dost withhold it from whom Thou desirest. No God is there but Thee, the All-Possessing, the Most Exalted. Thou art He Who createth from naught the universe and all that dwell therein. There is nothing worthy of Thee except Thyself, while all else but Thee are as outcasts in Thy holy presence and are as nothing when compared to the glory of Thine Own Being. Far be it from me to extol Thy virtues save by what Thou hast extolled Thyself in Thy weighty Book where Thou sayest, "No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision. He is the Subtile, the All-Perceiving." Glory be unto Thee, O my God, indeed no mind or vision, however keen or discriminating, can ever grasp the nature of the most insignificant of Thy signs. Verily, Thou art God, no God is there besides Thee. I bear witness that Thou Thyself alone art the sole expression of Thine attributes, that the praise of no one besides Thee can ever attain to Thy holy court nor can Thine attributes ever be fathomed by anyone other than Thyself.

Glory be unto Thee, Thou art exalted above the description of anyone save Thyself, since it is beyond human conception to befittingly magnify Thy virtues or to comprehend the inmost reality of Thine Essence. Far be it from Thy glory that Thy creatures should describe Thee or that anyone besides Thyself should ever know Thee.

I have known Thee, O my God, by reason of Thy making Thyself known unto me, for hadst Thou not revealed Thyself unto me, I would not have known Thee. I worship Thee by virtue of Thy summoning me unto Thee, for had it not been for Thy summons I would not have worshiped Thee.

(The Báb, Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers)

Vouchsafe unto me, O my God, the full measure of Thy love and Thy good-pleasure, and through the attractions of Thy resplendent light enrapture our hearts, O Thou Who art the Supreme Evidence and the All-Glorified. Send down upon me, as a token of Thy grace, Thy vitalizing breezes, throughout the daytime and in the night season, O Lord of bounty.

No deed have I done, O my God, to merit beholding Thy face, and I know of a certainty that were I to live as long as the world lasts I would fail to accomplish any deed such as to deserve this favor, inasmuch as the station of a servant shall ever fall short of access to Thy holy precincts, unless Thy bounty should reach me and Thy tender mercy pervade me and Thy loving-kindness encompass me.

All praise be unto Thee, O Thou besides Whom there is none other God. Graciously enable me to ascend unto Thee, to be granted the honor of dwelling in Thy nearness and to have communion with Thee alone. No God is there but Thee. Indeed shouldst Thou desire to confer blessing upon a servant Thou wouldst blot out from the realm of his heart every mention or disposition except Thine Own mention; and shouldst Thou ordain evil for a servant by reason of that which his hands have unjustly wrought before Thy face, Thou wouldst test him with the benefits of this world and of the next that he might become preoccupied therewith and forget Thy remembrance.

(The Báb, Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers)

Glory be unto Thee, O Lord, Thou Who hast brought into being all created things, through the power of Thy behest. O Lord! Assist those who have renounced all else but Thee, and grant them a mighty victory. Send down upon them, O Lord, the concourse of the angels in the heaven and earth and all that is between, to aid Thy servants, to succour and strengthen them, to enable them to achieve success, to sustain them, to invest them with glory, to confer upon them honor and exaltation, to enrich them and to make them triumphant with a wondrous triumph. Thou art their Lord, the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of all the worlds. Strengthen this Faith, O Lord, through the power of these servants, and cause them to prevail over all the peoples of the world; for they, of a truth, are thy servants who have detached themselves from aught else but Thee, and Thou, verily, art the protector of true believers.

Grant Thou, O Lord, that their hearts may, through allegiance to this, thine inviolable Faith, grow stronger than anything else in the heavens and on the earth and in whatsoever is between them; and strengthen, O Lord, their hands with the tokens of Thy wondrous power that they may manifest Thy power before the gaze of all mankind.

(The Báb)

O Lord! Provide for the speedy growth of the Tree of Thy divine Unity; water it then, O Lord, with the flowing waters of Thy good-pleasure, and cause it, before the revelations of Thy divine assurance, to yield such fruits as Thou desirest for thy glorification and exaltation, thy praise and thanksgiving, and to magnify thy Name, to allude the oneness of Thine Essence and to offer adoration unto Thee, inasmuch as all this lieth within Thy grasp and in that of none other. Great is the blessedness of those whose blood Thou hast chosen wherewith to water the Tree of Thine affirmation, and thus to exalt Thy holy and immutable Word.

(The Báb, Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers)

Entombment of the Báb's Remains on Mt. Carmel

'Abdu'l-Bahá's unexpected and dramatic release from His forty-year confinement dealt a blow to the ambitions cherished by the Covenant-breakers as devastating as that which, a decade before, had shattered their hopes of undermining His authority and of ousting Him from His God-given position .

Within a few months of the historic decree which set Him free, in the very year that witnessed the downfall of Sultan Abdu'l-Hamid, that same power from on high which had enabled 'Abdu'l-Bahá' to preserve inviolate the rights divinely conferred on Him, to establish His Father's Faith in the North American continent, and to triumph over His royal oppressor, enabled Him to achieve one of the most signal acts of His ministry: the removal of the Báb's remains from their place of concealment in Tihrán to Mt. Carmel.

He Himself testified, on more than one occasion, that the safe transfer of these remains, the construction of a befitting mausoleum to receive them, and their final interment with His own hands in their permanent resting-place constituted one of the three principal objectives which, ever since the inception of His mission, He had conceived it His paramount duty to achieve. This act indeed deserves to rank as one of the outstanding events in the first Bahá'í century.

...The mangled bodies of the Báb and His fellow-martyr, Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, were removed, in the middle of the second night following their execution, through the pious intervention of Haji Sulayman Khan, from the edge of the moat where they had been cast to a silk factory owned by one of the believers of Milan, and were laid the next day in a wooden casket, and thence carried to a place of safety. Subsequently, according to Bahá'u'lláh's instructions, they were transported to Tihrán... where they remained hidden until the year 1899, when, in pursuance of directions issued by 'Abdu'l-Bahá', Mirza Asadu'llah, together with a number of other believers, transported them by way of Isfahan, Kirmanshah, Baghdad and Damascus, to Beirut and thence by sea to 'Akká, arriving at their destination on 31 January 1899, fifty lunar years after the Báb's execution in Tabriz.

In the same year that this precious Trust reached the shores of the Holy Land and was delivered into the hands of 'Abdu'l-Bahá', He drove to the recently purchased site which had been blessed and selected by Bahá'u'lláh on Mt.

Carmel, and there laid, with His own hands, the foundation-stone of the edifice, the construction of which He, a few months later, was to commence. About that same time, the marble sarcophagus, designed to receive the body of the Báb, an offering of love from the Bahá'ís of Rangoon, had, at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's suggestion, been completed and shipped to Haifa.

No need to dwell on the manifold problems and preoccupations which, for almost a decade, continued to beset 'Abdu'l-Bahá' until the victorious hour when He was able to bring to a final consummation the historic task entrusted to Him by His Father.

The long-drawn out negotiations with the shrewd and calculating owner of the building-site of the holy Edifice, who, under the influence of the Covenant-breakers, refused for a long time to sell; the exorbitant price at first demanded for the opening of a road leading to that site and indispensable to the work of construction; the interminable objections raised by officials, high and low, whose easily aroused suspicions had to be allayed by repeated explanations and assurances given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá' Himself; the dangerous situation created by the monstrous accusations brought by Mirza Muhammad-'Ali and his associates regarding the character and purpose of that building; the delays and complications caused by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's prolonged and enforced absence from Haifa, and His consequent inability to supervise in person the vast undertaking He had initiated -- all these were among the principal obstacles which He, at so critical a period in His ministry, had to face and surmount ere He could execute in its entirety the Plan, the outline of which Bahá'u'lláh had communicated to Him on the occasion of one of His visits to Mt. Carmel.

"Every stone of that building, every stone of the road leading to it," He, many a time was heard to remark, "I have with infinite tears and at tremendous cost, raised and placed in position." "One night," He, according to an eye-witness, once observed, "I was so hemmed in by My anxieties that I had no other recourse than to recite and repeat over and over again a prayer of the Báb which I had in My possession, the recital of which greatly calmed Me. The next morning the owner of the plot himself came to Me, apologized and begged Me to purchase his property."

On the day of the first Naw-Rúz (1909), which He celebrated after His release from His confinement, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' had the marble sarcophagus transported with great labor to the vault prepared for it, and in the evening, by the light of a single lamp, He laid within it, with His own hands -- in the presence of believers from the East and from the West and in circumstances at once solemn and moving -- the wooden casket containing the sacred remains of the Báb and His companion.

When all was finished, and the earthly remains of the Martyr-Prophet of Shiraz were, at long last, safely deposited for their everlasting rest in the bosom of God's holy mountain, 'Abdu'l-Bahá', Who had cast aside His turban, removed His shoes and thrown off His cloak, bent low over the still open sarcophagus, His silver hair waving about His head and His face transfigured and luminous, rested His forehead on the border of the wooden casket, and, sobbing aloud, wept with such a weeping that all those who were present wept with Him. That night He could not sleep, so overwhelmed was He with emotion.

(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By)

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, Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers)