



THE MARTYRDOM OF THE BÁB

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It would indeed be no exaggeration to say that nowhere in the whole compass of the world's religious literature, except in the Gospels, do we find any record relating to the death of any of the religion-founders of the past comparable to the martyrdom suffered by the Prophet of Shíráz. So strange, so inexplicable a phenomenon, attested by eye-witnesses, corroborated by men of recognized standing, and acknowledged by government as well as unofficial historians among the people who had sworn undying hostility to the Bábí Faith, may be truly regarded as the most marvelous manifestation of the unique potentialities with which a Dispensation promised by all the Dispensations of the past had been endowed. The passion of Jesus Christ, and indeed His whole public ministry, alone offer a parallel to the Mission and death of the Báb, a parallel which no student of comparative religion can fail to perceive or ignore. In the youthfulness and meekness of the Inaugurator of the Bábí Dispensation; in the extreme brevity and turbulence of His public ministry; in the dramatic swiftness with which that ministry moved towards its climax; in the apostolic order which He instituted, and the primacy which He conferred on one of its members; in the boldness of His challenge to the time-honored conventions, rites and laws which had been woven into the fabric of the religion He Himself had been born into; in the role which an officially recognized and firmly entrenched religious hierarchy played as chief instigator of the outrages which He was made to suffer; in the indignities heaped upon Him; in the suddenness of His arrest; in the interrogation to which He was subjected; in the derision poured, and the scourging inflicted, upon Him; in the public affront He sustained; and, finally, in His ignominious suspension before the gaze of a hostile multitude—in all these we cannot fail to discern a remarkable similarity to the distinguishing features of the career of Jesus Christ.

It should be remembered, however, that apart from the miracle associated with the Báb's execution, He, unlike the Founder of the Christian religion, is not only to be regarded as the independent Author of a divinely revealed Dispensation, but must also be recognized as the Herald of a new Era and the Inaugurator of a great universal prophetic cycle. Nor should the important fact be overlooked that, whereas the chief adversaries of Jesus Christ, in His lifetime, were the Jewish rabbis and their associates, the forces arrayed against the Báb represented the combined civil and ecclesiastical powers of Persia, which, from the moment of His declaration to the hour of His death, persisted, unitedly and by every means at their disposal, in conspiring against the upholders and in vilifying the tenets of His Revelation.

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The Báb, acclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh as the “Essence of Essences,” the “Sea of Seas,” the “Point round Whom the realities of the Prophets and Messengers revolve,” “from Whom God hath caused to proceed the knowledge of all that was and shall be,” Whose “rank excelleth that of all the Prophets,” and Whose “Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones,” had delivered His Message and discharged His mission. He Who was, in the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the “Morn of Truth” and “Harbinger of the Most Great Light,” Whose advent at once signalized the termination of the “Prophetic Cycle” and the inception of the “Cycle of Fulfillment,” had simultaneously through His Revelation banished the shades of night that had descended upon His country, and proclaimed the impending rise of that Incomparable Orb Whose radiance was to envelop the whole of mankind. He, as affirmed by Himself, “the Primal Point from which have been generated all created things,” “one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God,” the “Mystic Fane,” the “Great Announcement,” the “Flame of that supernal Light that glowed upon Sinai,” the “Remembrance of God” concerning Whom “a separate Covenant hath been established with each and every Prophet” had, through His advent, at once fulfilled the promise of all ages and ushered in the consummation of all Revelations. He the “Qá’im” (He Who ariseth) promised to the Shí’ahs, the “Mihdí” (One Who is guided) awaited by the Sunnís, the “Return of John the Baptist” expected by the Christians, the “Ushídar-Máh” referred to in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the “Return of Elijah” anticipated by the Jews, Whose Revelation was to show forth “the signs and tokens of all the Prophets”, Who was to “manifest the perfection of Moses, the radiance of Jesus and the patience of Job” had appeared, proclaimed His Cause, been mercilessly persecuted and died gloriously.

GOD PASSES BY

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Reflect, O Shaykh, upon the Shi'ih sect. How many the edifices which they reared with the hands of idle fancies and vain imaginings, and how numerous the cities which they built! At length those vain imaginings were converted into bullets and aimed at Him Who is the Prince of the world. Not one single soul among the leaders of that sect acknowledged Him in the Day of His Revelation! Whenever His blessed name was mentioned, all would say: "May God hasten the joy His coming will bring!" On the day of the Revelation of that Sun of Truth, however, all, as hath been observed, have exclaimed, saying: "May God hasten His chastisement!" He Who was the Essence of being and Lord of the seen and unseen they suspended, and committed what made the Tablet to weep, and the Pen to groan, and the cries of the sincere to break forth, and the tears of the favored ones to flow.

EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF



That which thou hast heard concerning Abraham, the Friend of the All-Merciful, is the truth, and no doubt is there about it. The Voice of God commanded Him to offer up Ishmael as a sacrifice, so that His ppl steadfastness in the Faith of God and His detachment from all else but Him may be demonstrated unto men. The purpose of God, moreover, was to sacrifice him as a ransom for the sins and iniquities of all the peoples of the earth. This same honor, Jesus, the Son of Mary, besought the one true God, exalted be His name and glory, to confer upon Him. For the same reason was Husayn offered up as a sacrifice by Muḥammad, the Apostle of God.

No man can ever claim to have comprehended the nature of the hidden and manifold grace of God; none can fathom His all-embracing mercy. Such hath been the perversity of men and their transgressions, so grievous have been the trials that have afflicted the Prophets of God and their chosen ones, that all mankind deserveth to be tormented and to perish. God's hidden and most loving providence, however, hath, through both visible and invisible agencies, protected and will continue to protect it from the penalty of its wickedness. Ponder this in thine heart, that the truth may be revealed unto thee, and be thou steadfast in His path.

GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

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O THOU Remnant of God! I have sacrificed myself wholly for Thee; I have accepted curses for Thy sake, and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love. Sufficient witness unto me is God, the Exalted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days.

OQurratu'l- 'Ayn! The words Thou hast uttered in this momentous Call have grieved Me bitterly. However, the irrevocable decision resteth with none but God and the decree proceedeth from none save Him alone. By My life, Thou art the Well-Beloved in the sight of God and His creation. Verily, there is no power except in God, and sufficient witness unto Me is your Lord, Who is, in very truth, the Omnipotent Avenger.

THE BÁB



PRAYER FOR MARTYRS AND THEIR FAMILIES

He is God!

O Lord my God! O Thou Helper of the feeble, Succorer of the poor and Deliverer of the helpless who turn unto Thee.

With utmost lowliness I raise my suppliant hands to Thy kingdom of beauty and fervently call upon Thee with my inner tongue, saying: O God, my God! Aid me to adore Thee, strengthen my loins to serve Thee; assist me by Thy grace in my servitude to Thee; suffer me to remain steadfast in my obedience to Thee; pour forth upon me the liberal effusions of Thy bounty, let the glances of the eye of Thy loving-kindness be directed towards me, and immerse me in the ocean of Thy forgiveness.

Grant that I may be confirmed in my allegiance to Thy Faith, and bestow upon me a fuller measure of certitude and assurance, that I may wholly dispense with the world, may turn my face with entire devotion towards Thy face, be reinforced by the compelling power of proofs and testimonies, and, invested with majesty and power, may pass beyond every region of heaven and earth. Verily Thou art the Merciful, the All-Glorious, the Kind, the Compassionate. O Lord! These are the survivors of the martyrs, that company of blessed souls. They have sustained every tribulation and displayed patience in the face of grievous injustice. They have forsaken all comfort and prosperity, have willingly submitted to dire suffering and adversity in the path of Thy love, and are still held captive in the clutches of their enemies who continually torment them with sore torment, and oppress them because they walk steadfastly in Thy straight path. There is no one to help them, no one to befriend them. Apart from the ignoble and the wicked, there is no one to associate and consort with them.

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O Lord! These souls have tasted bitter agony in this earthly life and have, as a sign of their love for the shining beauty of Thy countenance and in their eagerness to attain Thy celestial kingdom, tolerated every gross indignity that the people of tyranny have inflicted upon them.

O Lord! Fill their ears with the verses of divine assistance and of a speedy victory, and deliver them from the oppression of such as wield terrible might. Withhold the hands of the wicked and leave not these souls to be torn by the claws and teeth of fierce beasts, for they are captivated by their love for Thee, entrusted with the mysteries of Thy holiness, stand humbly at Thy door and have attained to Thine exalted precinct.

O Lord! Graciously reinforce them with a new spirit; illumine their eyes by enabling them to behold Thy wondrous evidences in the gloom of night; destine for them all good that aboundeth in Thy Kingdom of eternal mysteries; make them as brilliant stars shining over all regions, luxuriant trees laden with fruit and branches moving in the breezes of dawn.

Verily, Thou art the Bountiful, the Mighty, the Omnipotent, the Unconstrained. There is none other God but Thee, the God of love and tender mercy, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Forgiving.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ