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Journal of the Bahá'í Community of the United
Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Volume 19, No.2 – June, 2002 / 159BE

 LARGE PRINT / Standard Print.The Martyrdom of the Báb

The Martyrdom of the Báb

The rescue of the Báb's Remains from Tabriz

AT NIGHTFALL the bodies of the Báb and Anís were dragged through the streets of Tabriz and thrown out on the edge of the moat that surrounded the city. There is a tradition in Islám which states that the human remains of a Messenger of God will never be eaten by wild animals. The divines intended that wild dogs should consume the bodily remains of the Báb so that the people's faith in Him would be destroyed. Four companies of soldiers, each consisting of ten sentinels, were posted to keep watch and to prevent any Bábís from attempting to retrieve the bodies for decent burial.

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*THE BARRACK-SQUARE IN TABRÍZ, WHERE THE BÁB SUFFERED
MARTYRDOM. PILLAR ON THE RIGHT MARKED X IS THE PLACE
WHERE HE WAS SUSPENDED AND SHOT.*

Late the next day a Bábí named Hájí Sulaymán Khán arrived in Tabriz. He was a prominent figure in Persia and had intended to rescue the Báb from His impending execution. Hearing that he had come too late, Hájí Sulaymán Khán went straight to the mayor of Tabriz who was a personal friend of his. He told the mayor that he planned to make a surprise attack on the soldiers and carry away the bodies but the mayor told Hájí Sulaymán Khán that he had a better plan. He contacted a certain man named Hájí Alláh-Yár who had carried out a number of unusual commissions for him.

Hájí Alláh-Yár disguised himself as a madman and rescued the remains of the two bodies from the edge of the moat as the soldiers were keeping a careless watch. In the morning the soldiers reported that the remains of the bodies had been eaten by wild animals. Hájí Alláh-Yár refused to accept payment for what he had done and delivered the remains of the bodies to Sulaymán Khán who had them moved to a silk factory owned by a Bábí in the town of Mílán. On the third day after the execution they were sealed inside a casket and taken to a safe hiding-place.

Bahá'u'lláh directed the Bábís to transfer the casket secretly to Tihrán. It was kept hidden in several places in and around the city for almost fifty years. In 1898 Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'u'lláh's son and His chosen successor, instructed the Bahá'ís to take the casket to the Holy Land and it was carried secretly through Isfáhán, Kirmánsháh, Baghdád and Damascus to Beirut. It was then taken by ship to 'Akká and reached the prison-city on 31 January 1899.

In 1890, just two years before His ascension, Bahá'u'lláh had shown Abdu'l-Bahá the exact spot on Mount Carmel where the remains of the Báb and Anís should be buried. It was a rocky hillside on the central slope of the mountain which rises above the bay of Haifa. It was ten years before 'Abdu'l-Bahá was able to begin to carry out the instructions of Bahá'u'lláh.

During those years the casket was kept hidden in ‘Akká while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá managed, with very great difficulty, to obtain the land on Mount Carmel and build a road to the site. When the foundations were laid for the building, He was once again, as a result of the activities of the Covenant-breakers, imprisoned in ‘Akká. During His imprisonment work at the site continued and a simple stone building was erected to receive the casket. In 1908 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was released from prison and on March 21, 1909 He Himself laid the precious casket within a marble sarcophagus in a vault beneath the building.

Forty years and two world wars later, Shoghi Effendi, the great- grandson of Bahá’u’lláh and the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith, began to direct the building of a befitting superstructure for the Shrine of the Báb. Bahá’ís from all around the world contributed funds for the building of the white marble superstructure which was completed in 1953.

The Shrine of the Báb is now a place of light and purity, of strength and breathtaking beauty. It is capped with a golden dome and stands in a beautiful garden overlooking the bay and facing towards ‘Akká and Bahjí. In the daytime sunlight gleams on the goldtiled roof which can be seen far out at sea and at night the shrine glows like a jewel with light from the eighteen tall windows, one for each of the Letters of the Living.

Bahá’ís from all around the world come in increasing numbers to the shrine to pray and to give thanks for the life of the Báb, Who gave His own life to proclaim the coming of Bahá’u’lláh.

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