

## **Holy Day Celebration for the Martyrdom of the Báb**

By Susan Gammage <sup>1</sup>

"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." (Selections from the Writings of The Báb, p. 77)

### **The Martyrdom of the Báb**

The Báb was very gentle and kind. In 1844 when He declared His mission He was only 25 years old. From that time on He was treated very badly, tortured and imprisoned, and finally, six years later, executed because of the claim He made to be a Messenger from God.

This is the astonishing, but true, story of His martyrdom.

The guards took away the green turban and the sash which The Báb wore to show He was descended from Muhammad. Along with one of His followers, Siyyid Husayn, He was made to walk to the barracks where He was to be executed. The streets were filled with people trying to get a glimpse of Him as He passed by.

Suddenly, a young man pushed through the crowds of onlookers, and threw himself down at The Báb's feet. He begged and begged The Báb to allow him to be His companion. Very kindly and gently The Báb told him to rise and that he would be allowed to accompany Him. The Báb gave this devoted young man the name 'Anís', which means 'Companion'.

Two other followers of the Báb were among the crowd, and they too pushed through and begged The Báb to be allowed to stay with Him. All five were taken to the barracks and locked in a cell together. The Báb knew that He was to die the next day, and He was filled with joy.

Early the next morning the guards came to take The Báb away. He was still speaking of important things with His companion, Siyyid Husayn, when the guards interrupted Him. The Báb said to the guard, "Not until I have said to him all those things that I wish to say can any earthly power silence Me."

The guard took no notice and led The Báb and Anis away. Iron collars were put round their necks and manacles around their wrists. The two young men were led by a long rope tied to their collars, and taken through the streets of the town. People in the crowds jostled with each other to get a look at the prisoners, and even climbed on each other's shoulders. The

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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)

officials tried everything to make Anís give up his Faith, but he refused. He begged to be allowed to stay with his Beloved, The Báb.

Eventually they were taken to the barracks square, where still Anís wept and begged to stay with The Báb.

The Báb and Anís were tied together and hung by a rope from a nail in the barracks wall. A great crowd of people gathered to see the execution, climbing onto the rooftops all around the square. Seven hundred and fifty riflemen in three lines took up their positions to shoot The Báb and Anís.

The soldiers took aim and fired. The crowds were deafened by the explosions. They strained and peered to see what had happened, but the square was dark with gunshot smoke. Gradually the smoke cleared and the crowd was able to see. They stared in amazement. Standing beneath the broken rope, with a smile on his face, was Anís. Of The Báb there was no sign. He had gone.

A frantic search began. Eventually The Báb was found by the same guard who had come for Him that morning. He was in the cell where He had spent the night. Calmly and quietly He was finishing the important conversation with Siyyid Husayn which had been so rudely interrupted early that morning.

The Báb said to him, "I have finished My conversation with Siyyid Husayn." The guard was so astonished and frightened that he left the barracks and resigned from his post. The leader of the regiment felt the same. He ordered his men out and would have nothing more to do with the business of shooting The Báb. Another regiment had to be brought in.

Again The Báb and Anís were tied to a rope and hung from the nail. Anís rested his head upon the Báb's chest in a vain attempt to protect Him from the bullets.

The Báb spoke to the crowds crammed around the square, "Had you believed in Me, O wayward generation, every one of you would have followed the example of this youth. ... The day will come when you will have recognised Me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you."

Once again the deafening explosions of rifle fire rang out. At the same time a great wind swept over the city, bringing a whirlwind of blinding dust so dense that it completely shut out the light of the sun. This was followed by a violent storm, and the darkness continued for the whole of the rest of the day.

This time The Báb and Anís had been hit by the bullets. Their bodies were completely blended together by their force. All except the face of The Báb, which was completely unmarked, and was calm and serene.

<https://www.dayspring-magazine.org.uk/pdf/dayspring-199607.pdf>

In a turn of fate that has often characterised Bahá'í history, the people who harmed the Báb's Faith came to sorry ends themselves. The officers of the regiment who carried out the

execution together with a third of its soldiers died in an earthquake the same year, when a wall collapsed on top of them. The other two-thirds of the regiment were all executed in front of a firing squad in Tabriz, just like the Báb, after a failed mutiny a few years later. Interestingly, the details surrounding the execution are well-documented in the official report of a military officer who watched the events.

The night of the execution, the mangled remains of the two victims were taken outside the city gates and dumped by the moat where they would be eaten by wild animals. To prevent the Bábis removing the bodies and giving them a dignified burial, a total of 40 soldiers kept watch by the bodies outside the city. But one of the Bábis, Haji Sulaymán Khan, who was staying with a local mayor, was so determined to rescue the bodies and risk his life that the mayor enlisted one of his assistants for the job instead. In the middle of the night, the mayor's assistant took the bodies from under the guards' noses while they slept, and laid them in a specially-made wooden casket in a safe hiding place nearby. When Bahá'u'lláh heard about this development he instructed Haji Sulaymán Khan to bring the bodies to a local shrine in Tehran and there they were hidden.

From then on, the Báb's remains had to be kept a close secret to keep them out of the hands of the Faith's enemies. Whenever danger threatened or word got out about their whereabouts, Bahá'u'lláh, or later 'Abdu'l-Bahá, would have the casket moved to a new location. It was a full sixty years before the Báb's body was finally laid in the ground. In that time the bodies were moved around over a dozen hiding places: under the floorboards of a shrine; between the walls of an abandoned temple; concealed within various Bahá'ís' houses – a secret from even the Bahá'í community – until at last they were laid to a proper rest in Haifa in 1909, by a tearful 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'Abdu'l-Bahá pictured a string of terraced gardens leading up the mountain to a shrine for the Báb and beyond to the mountaintop. Just under 50 years ago, Shoghi Effendi finished building the golden-domed shrine that now houses the Báb's remains, and in May this year after ten years of work, the terraced gardens were finished. (adapted from Shoghi Effendi's *God Passes By*, Chapters 4 and 8; and *The Dawnbreakers*, Chapter 23)

Send down Thy blessings, O my God, upon the Tree of the Bayán, upon its root and its branch, its boughs, its leaves, its fruits, and upon whatsoever it beareth or sheltereth. Cause this Tree then to be made into a magnificent Scroll to be offered to the presence of Him Whom Thou wilt make manifest on the Day of Judgement, that He may graciously allow the entire company of the followers of the Bayán to be restored to life and that He may, through His bounty, inaugurate a new creation.

Indeed all are but paupers in the face of Thy tender mercy, and lowly servants before the tokens of Thy loving-kindness. I beg of Thee, by Thy bounty, O my God, and by the outpourings of Thy mercy and bestowals, O my Lord, and by the evidences of Thy heavenly favours and grace, O my Best Beloved, to watch over Him Whom God shall make manifest that no trace of despondency may ever touch him. (Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 172)

Lauded be Thy Name, O Lord our God! Thou art in truth the Knower of things unseen. Ordain for us such good as Thine all-embracing knowledge can measure. Thou art the sovereign Lord, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved.

All praise be unto Thee, O Lord! We shall seek Thy grace on the appointed Day and shall put our whole reliance in Thee, Who art our Lord. Glorified art Thou, O God! Grant us that which is good and seemly that we may be able to dispense with everything but Thee. Verily, Thou art the Lord of all worlds.

O God! Recompense those who endure patiently in Thy days, and strengthen their hearts to walk undeviatingly in the path of Truth. Grant then, O Lord, such goodly gifts as would enable them to gain admittance into Thy blissful Paradise. Exalted art Thou, O Lord God. Let Thy heavenly blessings descend upon homes whose inmates have believed in Thee. Verily, unsurpassed art Thou in sending down divine blessings. Send forth, O God, such hosts as would render Thy faithful servants victorious. Thou dost fashion the created things through the power of Thy decree as Thou pleasest. Thou art in truth the Sovereign, the Creator, the All-Wise.

Say: God is indeed the Maker of all things. He giveth sustenance in plenty to whomsoever He willeth. He is the Creator, the Source of all beings, the Fashioner, the Almighty, the Maker, the All-Wise. He is the Bearer of the most excellent titles throughout the heavens and the earth and whatever lieth between them. All do His bidding, and all the dwellers of earth and heaven celebrate His praise, and unto Him shall all return. (Selections From the Writings of The Báb, pp. 210-211)

Ordain for me, O my Lord, and for those who believe in Thee that which is deemed best for us in Thine estimation, as set forth in the Mother Book, for within the grasp of Thy hand Thou holdest the determined measures of all things.

Thy goodly gifts are unceasingly showered upon such as cherish Thy love, and the wondrous tokens of Thy heavenly bounties are amply bestowed on those who recognize Thy divine Unity. We commit unto Thy care whatsoever Thou hast destined for us, and implore Thee to grant us all the good that Thy knowledge embraceth.

Protect me, O my Lord, from every evil that Thine omniscience perceiveth, inasmuch as there is no power nor strength but in Thee, no triumph is forthcoming save from Thy presence, and it is Thine alone to command. Whatever God hath willed hath been, and that which He hath not willed shall not be.

There is no power nor strength except in God, the Most Exalted, the Most Mighty. (Selections From the Writings of The Báb, pp. 190-191)

O Lord! Unto Thee I repair for refuge, and toward all Thy signs I set my heart.

O Lord! Whether traveling or at home, and in my occupation or in my work, I place my whole trust in Thee.

Grant me then Thy sufficing help so as to make me independent of all things, O Thou Who art unsurpassed in Thy mercy!

Bestow upon me my portion, O Lord, as Thou pleasest, and cause me to be satisfied with whatsoever Thou hast ordained for me.

Thine is the absolute authority to command. (Selections From the Writings of The Báb, p. 193)

Say: God sufficeth all things above all things, and nothing in the heavens or in the earth but God sufficeth. Verily, He is in Himself the Knower, the Sustainer, the Omnipotent. (Selections From the Writings of The Báb, p. 123)

O my God! There is no one but Thee to allay the anguish of my soul, and Thou art my highest aspiration ... My heart is wedded to none save Thee and such as Thou dost love. I solemnly declare that my life and death are both for Thee. Verily Thou art incomparable and hast no partner ... O my God! I beseech Thee by the evidences of Thy favor, to let me draw nigh to the sublime heights of Thy holy presence, and protect me from inclining myself toward the subtle allusions of aught else but Thee. Guide my steps, O my God, unto that which is acceptable and pleasing to Thee. Shield me, through Thy might, from the fury of Thy wrath and chastisement, and hold me back from entering habitations not desired by Thee. (Selections from the Writings of the Báb, pp. 204-205)

O Lord! Render victorious Thy forbearing servants in Thy days by granting them a befitting victory, inasmuch as they have sought martyrdom in Thy path. Send down upon them that which will bring comfort to their minds, will rejoice their inner beings, will impart assurance to their hearts and tranquillity to their bodies and will enable their souls to ascend to the presence of God, the Most Exalted, and to attain the supreme Paradise and such retreats of glory as Thou hast destined for men of true knowledge and virtue. Verily Thou knowest all things, while we are but Thy servants, Thy thralls, Thy bondsmen and Thy poor ones. No Lord but Thee do we invoke, O God our Lord, nor do we implore blessings or grace from anyone but Thee, O Thou Who art the God of mercy unto this world and the next. We are but the embodiments of poverty, of nothingness, of helplessness and of perdition, while Thy whole Being betokeneth wealth, independence, glory, majesty and boundless grace.

Turn our recompense, O Lord, into that which well beseemeth Thee of the good of this world and of the next, and of the manifold bounties which extend from on high down to the earth below.

Verily Thou art our Lord and the Lord of all things. Into Thy hands do we surrender ourselves, yearning for the things that pertain unto Thee. (Selections from the Writings of The Báb, p. 179)

Glory be to Thee, O God! Thou art the God Who hath existed before all things, Who will exist after all things and will last beyond all things. Thou art the God Who knoweth all

things, and is supreme over all things. Thou art the God Who dealeth mercifully with all things, Who judgeth between all things and Whose vision embraceth all things. Thou art God my Lord, Thou art aware of my position, Thou dost witness my inner and outer being.

Grant Thy forgiveness unto me and unto the believers who responded to Thy Call. Be Thou my sufficing helper against the mischief of whosoever may desire to inflict sorrow upon me or wish me ill. Verily, Thou art the Lord of all created things. Thou dost suffice everyone, while no one can be self-sufficient without Thee. (Selections from the Writings of The Báb, p. 186)

I adjure Thee by Thy might, O my God! Let no harm beset me in times of tests, and in moments of heedlessness guide my steps aright through Thine inspiration. Thou art God, potent art Thou to do what Thou desirest. No one can withstand Thy Will or thwart Thy Purpose. (Selections From the Writings of The Báb, p. 210)

O Lord! Thou art the Remover of every anguish and the Dispeller of every affliction. Thou art He Who banisheth every sorrow and setteth free every slave, the Redeemer of every soul. O Lord! Grant deliverance through Thy mercy, and reckon me among such servants of Thine as have gained salvation. (Selections From the Writings of The Báb, p. 193)

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 laud 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. (Selections From the Writings of The Báb, p. 190)

O Lord! Enable all the peoples of the earth to gain admittance into the Paradise of Thy Faith, so that no created being may remain beyond the bounds of Thy good-pleasure.

From time immemorial Thou hast been potent to do what pleaseth thee and transcendent above whatsoever thou desirest. (Selections From the Writings of The Báb, p. 191)

Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding! (Selections From the Writings of The Báb, p. 217)

#### 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 God, 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. (Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, CLXX, pp. 310-313)