

**Áqá Buzurg**  
**Entitled Badí “The Wonderful”**

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## 1 - Áqá Buzurg

Bahá'í youth can be proud to be heirs to a valuable spiritual legacy, drawing on the example of the generations of young Bahá'ís from the early years of the Faith of God.

Indeed, the youth within the Bahá'í Community have consistently demonstrated a remarkable capacity and potential for triumphs and great victories. Endowed with the unique attributes of that age, such as “the adventurous spirit which they possess, and the vigor, the alertness, and optimism they have thus far so consistently shown” <sup>1</sup> the Bahá'í youth have shone like stars in the firmament of love for Bahá'u'lláh.

Examples of this principle are many: The Báb was twenty-five years old when He declared His mission. Quddús, His highest-ranking disciple, was twenty-two when he embraced the Faith. Likewise, we see the sacrifice of Mírzá Mihdí, the Purest Branch, at twenty-two years of age in the Most Great Prison. Rúḥu'lláh, the child prodigy of the Bahá'í Faith, who gave up his life at the age of twelve, preferring to die in this world rather than recant his Faith. Similarly, Badí—with whom we will deal in this account—did not recant at seventeen, being later designated as one of the nineteen Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh.

Mullá Ḥusayn, the first Letter of the Living, is another excellent example, as well as the young Nabíl, destined to be the Poet Laureate, chronicler and indefatigable disciple of Bahá'u'lláh, who embraced and served the Faith since he was sixteen years old.

'Abdu'l-Bahá —the Centre of the Covenant— rendered invaluable services to his Father during the successive banishments he suffered while he was still young. Shoghi Effendi, assumed the high office of Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith at twenty-four when he was still a student at Oxford University in England.

Many others come to mind, among them Ashraf, Anís and the young Zaynab. The list would be incomplete without mention of the recent martyrdoms of brave young Bahá'ís who were unwilling to deny their beloved Faith. The Bahá'í youth have also in Bahíyyih Khánum, the daughter of Bahá'u'lláh, a great example of self-sacrificing Bahá'í service beginning at a young age.

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<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 70.

Bahá'u'lláh has referred to the invaluable divine confirmations conferred upon the Bahá'í youth who arise to serve God and humanity.

*Blessed is he who in the prime of his youth and the heyday of his life, will arise to serve the Cause of the Lord of the beginning and of the end and adorn his heart with His love. The manifestation of such a grace is greater than the creation of the heavens and earth. Blessed are the steadfast, and well is it with those who are firm.* <sup>2</sup>

Bahá'í youth would be well-served to reflect on these profound words of the Blessed Perfection and strive to follow the example of those devoted youth who have arisen to teach the Faith with such vigour and courage.

One of these unique souls was Áqá Buzurg of Khurásán, better known by the name given to him by Bahá'u'lláh, *Badí* ('the Marvelous' or 'the New One').



*Figure 1: Badí – Source: Bahá'í Media*

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<sup>2</sup> Bahá'í World Centre. *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. II, pp. 415-440.

Badí's father was an enlightened believer and a prosperous owner of a turquoise mine near Níshápúr, where they lived. His name was 'Abdu'l-Majíd, but his friends in Persia who admired and respected him called him Ábá-Badí, Father of Badí. Regrettably, there is no information available about his mother.

Badí was a restless, disobedient, and even rebellious boy towards his father as a teenager. He gave no visible sign of following in the footsteps of his progenitor. His deplorable character and indifference towards the Faith had made everyone lament about him and lose hope of ever bringing him to the right path.

Such was the state of affairs when the notable Nabíl passed through the town of Níshápúr. As indicated above, Nabíl was a devoted Bahá'í intoxicated with the wine of God's love. He was dedicated to travelling from place to place, and years later would be the author of the prized volume "The Dawnbreakers". Upon reaching that town in the province of Khurásán, he went to the house of his old friend Ábá-Badí. He learns of Badí's difficulties and then asks that Badí be brought to him, and seeing in his heart the traces of a latent but undiscovered spiritual purity, he quotes some moving passages in which Bahá'u'lláh speaks of His own tribulations.

Nabíl later recounts the time when he finds out about the young man's behaviour:

I said, "Send for him to come, I wish to see him." He was sent for and he came. I saw a tall, gangling youth, who, instead of physical perfections, had merely a simple heart, and I told his father to make him my host and leave his case to God ... Then, I mentioned matters, very moving, which would melt a heart of stone.' ...

Hearing these divine themes, the colour of the visage of that youth reddened. His eyes welled with tears, and the sound of his lamentation rose high. I calmed his agitation, but throughout that night, his enamourment and attraction kept sleep away from the eyes of Shaykh Muḥammad<sup>3</sup> and myself. Until the light broke we read and recited from the holy script. In the morning, when he prepared the samovar for tea, and went out to fetch milk, his father came and said: "I had never heard my son weep. I thought that nothing could move him. Now, what is the spell cast on him to make his tears flow and to cause him to cry out, to make him afire with the love of God?" I said: "In any case he is no longer in command of himself, and you must give him up." And his father said: "This manner of losing one's self is

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<sup>3</sup> Tutor of Badí

exactly what I desired. If he remains firm in the Cause of God, I myself shall serve him."

Áqá Buzurg<sup>4</sup> was insistent that he should accompany me to Mashhad. However, his father said: "I brought Shaykh Muḥammad here, specifically to be his tutor, so that he might learn reading and writing within a short time, and study the Íqán<sup>5</sup> under Shaykh Muḥammad's tuition, and make a copy of the book. Should he do these, then I undertake to provide him with a steed and all his expenses."

Subsequent to my departure from Khurásán and arrival at Tīhrán, Shaykh Fání<sup>6</sup> reached Níshápúr and mentioned that he was on his way to Bandar-i-'Abbás, so as to go to Baghdád, and ultimately to the Land of Mystery [Adrianople], and was permitted to take one person with himself. Jináb-i-Ábá-Badí [the Father of Badí] provided his dear son with a steed and money, so that he might catch up with me at Baghdád, and we might travel together to the abode of the Beloved.

Badí had accompanied the Shaykh up to Yazd, and there had parted company with him, and giving the Shaykh all that he possessed, and all alone, had set out on foot to walk all the way to the Dáru's-Salám —the Abode of Peace [Baghdád].

After his arrival at Baghdád, Áqá 'Abdu'r-Rasúl was martyred, and Badí stepped in to replace the martyr, carrying Áqá 'Abdu'r-Rasúl's water-skin over his shoulders, and served as the water-carrier of the companions there. And when the companions were rounded up, to be taken to Mosul, that illumined youth, although wounded in several places by rascally men, betook himself to Mosul, and reached that city before the arrival of the captives, where, once again, he engaged in carrying water for them. Later he set his steps towards the Holy Land, and attained the presence of the Abhá Beauty.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Original name of Badí

<sup>5</sup> The Kitáb-i-Íqán, the *Book of Certitude*, revealed by Bahá'u'lláh

<sup>6</sup> A Bahá'í.

<sup>7</sup> Hasan Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh The King of Glory*, pp. 294-9 S



*Figure 2: Village of Níshápúr — Source: Bahá'í Media*

In this way, Badí walked the long journey and finally set foot in the prison city of 'Akká, which served as a penal colony at the time. In those years, 'Akká was a fortress surrounded by solid, impenetrable walls, with a single access door by land, through which passers-by were controlled. The city consisted of a labyrinth of crowded narrow dirty streets with a pestilential atmosphere and no source of fresh water. Within its confines was the prison or stronghold where Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned by order of the Sultán of Turkey.

It was 1869, the second year of Bahá'u'lláh's imprisonment, and the rigour was still firmly maintained. Any Bahá'í pilgrim that was discovered by the authorities ran the risk of being thrown out of the city, if not severely ill-treated.

Badí entered dressed as a water carrier; thus, no one suspected his being a believer. His heart longed intensely to see his Lord, of whom he had heard wonderful things. This longing strengthened his fearless youthful courage at every moment, sustaining him in that almost impossible undertaking. Passing through the narrow winding streets of the prison-city, he was desperate to find any Persians exiled there.

He longed to find a clue that would lead him to them, but he could not ask anyone because he would immediately give himself away. Oppressed by this anguish, he went to the mosque and prayed, releasing the depths of his heart and begging for divine assistance. Hours passed, and suddenly 'Abdu'l-Bahá entered surrounded by some believers, all in Persian garb.

It was the time of sunset. Badí, although irrepressible in his emotion, knew to control himself and wait for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to finish. Silently he handed the Master a piece of paper on which, without identifying himself, he wrote a few words indicating his status as a Bahá'í. 'Abdu'l-Bahá made the necessary arrangements so that that same night, Badí could enter the interior of the barracks disguised as a water carrier with his implements. In this way, he entered the presence of Bahá'u'lláh.

The incomparable blessing of a one-on-one interview with the Manifestation of God was bestowed twice on this seventeen-year-old youth.

## 2. The Tablet to the Sháh (Lawḥ-i-Sulṭán)

The successive banishments of Bahá'u'lláh, ordered by two powerful monarchs of the East, removed Him from His native land of Persia first to Baghdád, then Adrianople and Constantinople and finally to the shores of the Holy Land (Israel), to 'Akká, the “Most Great Prison”.

While in Adrianople, where He suffered the cruel fate of ostracism, the Blessed Beauty revealed very significant Tablets addressed to the world's prominent kings, rulers and religious leaders who at that time were responsible for the orderly lives of their subjects and, therefore, the majority of humanity.

These momentous Tablets were written in language with which the King of Kings addresses His vassals, announcing the coming of the Day of God and warns them with severe admonitions as to the nature of the tests and consequences they would face if they reject the Messenger of God and His Word. These singular and historical documents also contained teachings for those rulers admonishing them to exercise justice in governing their territories. These proclamations and messages were continued during Bahá'u'lláh's twenty-four-year sojourn in 'Akká as a Prisoner of the Ottoman government.

The news of the existence of these Tablets soon spread throughout Asia and Europe, in newspapers and intellectual circles of the time, and many anticipated the realisation of the prophecies contained in these proclamations.

As foretold by the Supreme Pen, the events and the falling of potentates like shooting stars became evident to all and the fame of Bahá'u'lláh grew like a brilliant morning sunrise.

Bahá'u'lláh has said of these Tablets written to the "crowned heads" of the world:

Each one of them hath been designated by a special name. The first hath been named 'The Rumbling,' the second, 'The Blow,' the third, 'The Inevitable,' the fourth, 'The Plain,' the fifth, 'The Catastrophe,' and the others, 'The Stunning Trumpet Blast,' 'The Near Event,' 'The Great Terror,' 'The Trumpet,' 'The Bugle,' and their like, so that all the peoples of the earth may know, of a certainty, and may witness, with outward and inner eyes, that He Who is the Lord of Names hath prevailed, and will continue

to prevail, under all conditions, over all men.... Never since the beginning of the world hath the Message been so openly proclaimed....<sup>8</sup>



*Figure 3: The Prison of 'Akká - Source: Bahá'í Media*

Among the recipients of the Sacred Epistles were:

- Queen Victoria of England.
- Emperor Napoleon III of France.
- Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany.
- Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz of the Turkish Empire.
- Tsar Alexander II of Russia.
- Emperor Franz Joseph of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
- The Presidents of the Republics of America.
- Pope Pius IX.
- The religious leaders of the Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Zoroastrian faiths.
- The Sháh of Persia, Náşiri'd-Dín Sháh.

The Tablet to the Sháh of Persia, in particular, is the most extensive that was addressed to an individual sovereign. It is better known as Lawḥ-i-Sulṭán (Tablet to the King). Its volume is equivalent to a book and is a rich treasure of wisdom and divine rebukes.

Náşiri'd-Dín Sháh means the "Defender of the Faith", but his cruelty and tyranny towards Bahá'u'lláh, and towards the believers in general, prompted the Tongue of Power and

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<sup>8</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Has Come*, p. 46-47

Strength to stigmatize him as the “*Prince of Oppressors.*”<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Bahá'u'lláh warned that he would soon become “*an object-lesson for the world.*”<sup>10</sup>

This despot was responsible for the torture and massacre of thousands of believers in the Cradle of Faith and for the successive banishments of the Blessed Perfection to Baghhdád, Constantinople, Adrianople and finally to 'Akká. During the fifty years of his reign, he plunged the nation into the deepest chaos, bankruptcy and oppression. He allied himself with the opponents of the Faith and the Sultán of Turkey, trying to uproot the Cause of God with all the means his vast power allowed him. This sovereign never knew Bahá'u'lláh personally but earlier when he was still the heir to the throne had met the Báb and was eventually responsible for His martyrdom in 1850. Apparently, he had not read any of the Holy Writings as his information regarding the Faith came from the prejudiced religious leaders of his court, on whom he always relied.

The Lawh-i-Sultán was revealed during the Adrianople period, several years before Badí's pilgrimage to the Most Great Prison. It is written in classical Arabic form, a common mode used by scholars.

On the cover of this Epistle, Bahá'u'lláh revealed the verses that follow in the next section, which were addressed to Badí and known as the Badí Tablet, even though Badí had not yet been openly selected as the deliverer of the message—that would take place several years later.

In this Tablet, the Blessed Beauty asks the sovereign to call Him to the Royal Court in order to explain and defend His teachings to the sovereign and his religious dignitaries. Furthermore, Bahá'u'lláh tells the monarch that He is willing to show produce any evidence or proof to demonstrate the truth from falsehood.

It is interesting to note that previous Messengers of God were always reluctant to perform any miracle or sign, but in the Lawh-i-Sultán, Bahá'u'lláh accepts any challenge of this nature.

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<sup>9</sup> Shoghi Effendi. *God Passes By*, p. 197.

<sup>10</sup> Shoghi Effendi. *The Promised Day Has Come*, p. 288.



*Figure 4: The Cell of Bahá'u'lláh in the Prison of 'Akká - Source: Bahá'í Media*

Once the Sháh received this Epistle, he no longer had any pretext to argue before the throne of God or the judgement of history.

In this Tablet, among other points, Bahá'u'lláh tells the monarch:

*Look upon this Youth, O King, with the eyes of justice; judge thou, then, with truth concerning what hath befallen Him. Of a verity, God hath made thee His shadow amongst men, and the sign of His power unto all that dwell on earth.*

*O King! Wert thou to incline thine ear unto the shrill voice of the Pen of Glory and the cooing of the Dove of Eternity ... thou wouldst attain unto a station from which thou wouldst behold in the world of being naught save the effulgence of the Adored One, and wouldst regard thy sovereignty as the most contemptible of thy possessions, abandoning it to whosoever might desire it, and setting thy face toward the Horizon aglow with the light of His countenance.* <sup>11</sup>

*We fain would hope, however, that His Majesty the Sháh will himself examine these matters, and bring hope to the hearts. That which We have submitted to thy Majesty is indeed for thine highest good.* <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*. Bahá'í Reference Library at: [www.bahai.org/r/395082245](http://www.bahai.org/r/395082245)

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Has Come*, p. 42

### 3. Tablet to Badí from Bahá'u'lláh

*He is God, exalted is He.*

*We ask God to send one of His servants, and to detach him from Contingent Being, and to adorn his heart with the decoration of strength and composure, that he may help his Lord amidst the concourse of creatures, and, when he becometh aware of what hath been revealed for His Majesty the King, that he may arise and take the Letter, by the permission of his Lord, the Mighty, the Bounteous, and go with speed to the abode of the King. And when he shall arrive at the place of his throne let him alight in the inn, and let him hold converse with none till he goeth forth one day and standeth where he [i.e. the King] shall pass by. And when the Royal harbingers shall appear, let him raise up the Letter with the utmost humility and courtesy, and say, "It hath been sent on the part of the Prisoner." And it is incumbent upon him to be in such a mood that, should the King decree his death, he shall not be troubled within himself, and shall - hasten to the place of sacrifice saying, "O Lord, praise be to Thee because that Thou hast made me a helper to Thy religion, and hast decreed unto me martyrdom in Thy way! By Thy Glory, I would not exchange this cup for [all] the cups in the worlds, for Thou hast not ordained any equivalent to this, neither do Kawthar and Salsabil<sup>13</sup> rival it!" But if he [i.e. the King] letteth him [i.e. the messenger] go, and interfereth not with him, let him say "To Thee be praise, O Lord of the worlds! Verily I am content with Thy good pleasure and what Thou hast predestined unto me in Thy way, even though I did desire that the earth might be dyed with my blood for Thy love. But what Thou willest is best for me: verily Thou knowest what is in my soul, while I know not what is in Thy soul; and Thou art the All-knowing, the Informed." <sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Rivers of the paradise, symbolically referred to in the Qur'án.

<sup>14</sup> Cited in Hasan Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh The King of Glory, p. 299.



*Figure 5: Násiri'd-Dín Sháh. Source: Bahá'í Media*

#### 4. The Pride of the Martyrs of the Bahá'í Faith

Even until the last year of His life, Bahá'u'lláh recalls the sacrifice of Badí:

*Call thou to mind his honor Badí, who was the bearer of the Tablet to His Majesty the Sháh, and reflect how he laid down his life. That knight, who spurred on his charger in the arena of renunciation, threw down the precious crown of life for the sake of Him Who is the Incomparable Friend.<sup>15</sup>*

Several prominent believers, aware of the existence of the Epistle, had asked to be deserving of the honour of acting as its bearer, knowing in advance the fatal fate with which the mission would end. However, Bahá'u'lláh waited and accepted none of them and mentioned to the believers that the messenger would soon arrive. The Blessed Beauty, knowing the difficulties and the danger implied in approaching that arrogant man, chose and entrusted Badí to be the messenger to deliver it to the presence of the Sháh.

As noted earlier, Badí was honoured with two private audiences with Bahá'u'lláh. During a meeting where some Bahá'ís were present, Bahá'u'lláh seized the Lawḥ-i-Sulṭán and asked: "Who will be the one to take it to the Sháh of Persia?"<sup>16</sup> Badí jumped from his seat and, bowing before the Messenger of God, said, "I will carry this Tablet."<sup>17</sup> The Blessed Beauty repeated the question, and the young pilgrim begged for this honour. Again, He asked the same question, and Badí again begged to be considered for that mission.

It was in the course of these two meetings that Bahá'u'lláh conferred on him his new name of Badí. The Blessed Perfection related that He recreated the spirit of the boy for the second time. "We took a handful of dust, mixed it with the waters of might and power and breathed into it the spirit of assurance".<sup>18</sup>

"In a Tablet revealed in honour of the father of Badí," Adib Taherzadeh wrote, "who was also martyred a few years later, the Pen of the Most High, in great detail, portrays the manner in which this new creation came into being. He describes that when the appointed time had arrived the Tongue of Grandeur uttered "one word" which caused his whole being

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<sup>15</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, *The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 73.

<sup>16</sup> Jináb-i-Fádl, "The Glory of Deeds. *The Bahá'í Magazine, Star of the West*, Vol. 14, September, 1923 -No. 6, p. 174

<sup>17</sup> Jináb-i-Fádl, "The Glory of Deeds". In *The Bahá'í Magazine, Star of the West*, Vol. 14, September, 1923 -No. 6, p. 174

<sup>18</sup> *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. XV. p. 771.

to tremble, and that were it not for God's protection he would have been dumbfounded. Then the Hand of Omnipotence began creating the new creation, and "breathed into him the spirit of might and power". So great had been the infusion of this might, as attested by Bahá'u'lláh, that, single and alone, Badí' could have conquered all that is on earth and in heaven. Bahá'u'lláh observed that when this new creation came into being, Badí' had smiled in His presence and manifested such steadfastness that the Concourse on high was deeply moved and uplifted ...In the same Tablet, referring to the loftiness of the station of Badí', He states that no Tablet can convey its significance nor any pen describe its glory".<sup>19</sup>

Given the danger to which believers were subjected, Badí went to Haifa to collect the Tablet. There, on Mount Carmel, he prepared himself in prayer and waited until Hájí Akhund, the Trustee of Bahá'u'lláh, came and gave him both the Lawḥ-i-Sultán and the Tablet addressed to him.

The instructions were that Badí had to make the journey without company and not contact anyone. Hájí Ákhúnd, Hand of the Cause of God, later recounted the final moments of Badí's stay in the Holy Land:

I was given a small box, the length of which was one and a half spans, its width was less than one span and its thickness was one-quarter of a span, and I was told to deliver it to him [Badí'] in Haifa together with a few pounds. I did not know what was in the box. I met him in Haifa and gave him the good news that a favour had been bestowed upon him and I was entrusted with its delivery. And so we went outside the town, onto Mount Carmel, and I delivered the box to him. He held it with both hands and kissed it, then he prostrated himself. There was also a sealed envelope for him which he took from me. He walked some twenty or thirty paces away from me and, turning towards the place of Bahá'u'lláh's imprisonment, he sat down and read it. He then prostrated himself again and his face was radiant with joy and ecstasy. I asked him whether I could also have the honour of reading the Tablet which he had received but he replied: "There is no time." I understood that it was a matter which could not be divulged. What was it? I had no idea at all of the significance of what was happening, nor of the importance of the task with which he had been commissioned.

I said to him, "Come with me into Haifa for I have been instructed to deliver a sum of money to you." He replied, "I won't come into the town with you, you go and bring

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<sup>19</sup> *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. XV. p. 771.

the money." I went and returned but could not find him anywhere - he had departed. I wrote to Beirut that they should give him the money there but they had not seen him. I had no further news of him until I heard reports of his martyrdom from Ṭihrán. Then I realized that in that box had been the Lawḥ-i-Sultán, and in the envelope had been a Tablet bearing tidings of the martyrdom of that essence of steadfastness and constancy...

The late Ḥájí 'Alí, brother of Ḥájí Aḥmad of Port Sa'íd, used to recount: "From Trebizond<sup>20</sup> to Tabríz (Iran) I was in his [Badí's] company for some of the stages of the journey. He was full of joy, laughter, gratitude and forbearance. And I only knew that he had been in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and was now returning to his home in Khurásán. Time and again I observed that, having walked a little more or less than one hundred paces, he would leave the road and, turning to face 'Akká, would prostrate himself and could be heard to say: 'O God, that which you have bestowed upon me through Your bounty, do not take back through Your justice; rather grant me strength to safeguard it.'" <sup>21</sup>

After four months of travelling on foot from Haifa, Badí arrived in Tehran and once there, he kept a three-day fast while finding out where the Sháh was located.



*Figure 6: The Bay of Haifa - Source: public domain*

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<sup>20</sup> Turkish city on the Black Sea

<sup>21</sup> Hasan Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh The King of Glory*, pp. 298-9

Dressed entirely in white, Badí then made his way nearby one of the Sháh's summer residences and seated himself on a small hill overlooking it. Due to the strict vigilance and security kept around the Monarch, Badí could not immediately approach him in close proximity.

In this manner, Badí remained for four days. As the Sháh was preparing to go hunting, he noticed probably through his binoculars the strange attire and attitude of that youth. Perhaps he thought within himself that it could be one of his subjects desiring a favour or in need of justice, a rare gesture from that despot.

The Sháh ordered his guards to discover the stranger's intention. They approached Badí and he explained that he had a very important Letter for the Sháh. The guards attempted to get Badí to give them the Tablet, but he refused and did not give in. The guards returned and explained to the King who immediately ordered them to bring him into his presence.

Badí with the "greatest humility and courtesy" approached him with the Tablet. The reverent and dignified appearance of this young man most certainly attracted the attention of Náşiri'd-Dín Sháh. With a resolute and solemn voice, Badí said:

"O King, I have come unto thee from Sheba with a weighty message!" (Qu'rán 27:22)

From the tone of those words, the monarch deduced that Badí was a follower of the Prisoner of 'Akká and ordered the sacred Epistle to be taken from him.

The Sháh then requested seven of Tehran's leading and eminent clerics to prepare a reply. However, finding themselves unable to comply with the King's order, they attempted to evade the issue by offering to provide explanations to his Majesty to dispel any doubts he had regarding the Tablet. The Sháh was intensely dissatisfied with their attitude and lamented their inability to respond to the Message despite the trust he had accorded them for so long.

Subsequently, the sovereign dispatched the Tablet to his Ambassador to the Turkish Government in Constantinople, Mushíru'd-Dawlih, to intervene and increase the severity of the imprisonment of Bahá'u'lláh, His family and friends in 'Akká.

In this way, Náşiri'd-Dín Sháh filled a black chapter of his darkest life and plunged again into the swamps of the most horrendous sin to persecute a Divine Messenger.

The royal authority failed at that time to accept the opportunity that he was benevolently offered. Instead of listening to the words of Bahá'u'lláh, Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh preferred to take vengeance on the person of that innocent boy, incapable as he was of restraining the hatred of his soul and laying his wolf's claws on the Prisoner of 'Akká.

The Sháh then ordered his officers to arrest Badí and extract from him the names of his companions. Badí did not respond as demanded because, truthfully, he had not associated himself with any Bahá'í on his journey according to the wisdom of Bahá'u'lláh's instructions.

- "Give us a complete account of all this," they demanded.
- "Who gave you this letter?"
- "Where did you get it from?" - "How long?"
- "Who are your companions?"

Badí answered all the questions except the last one.



*Figure 7: Badí being tortured: Source: Bahá'í Media*

When the officers were convinced they would not get the answers the sovereign wanted, they offered to intercede for him if he would only recant his faith. Badí was firm as ever, more solid than a mountain. He knew from the beginning of the mission of his ultimate

destination. His heart was filled with love for his Lord. Would there then be a place to harbour love for this world?

His executioners began torturing him in an attempt to extract more information from him, for example, using the punishment of the bastinado<sup>22</sup> until his feet were bleeding, treating him most violently. For three days, they continued their torture. Nevertheless, Badí was already the personification of "strength and serenity." Like the ancient apostles, he had sublimated the sharpness of pain by the inextinguishable forces of love for God, the latter being the fruit of self-denial. Unaware of himself and the atrocities that befell him, he was smiling to the astonishment of the executioners. They burned his chest with red hot irons and he asked them to do the same on his back, to see if he could feel the fire of suffering for his whole being.<sup>23</sup> They did so, but due to no change in any way in Badí's composure their marvel and astonishment only increased and they came to think they had someone other than a human before them.

They hurried to the Sháh and reported to him that which they had done and seen. The sovereign ordered a photograph of Badí to be taken and brought to him but not to be shown to anyone else for fear of their becoming a Bahá'í. In this photo, we see a completely transformed Badí, forged with a fibre of absolute calm. At an order from Nášíri'd-Dín Sháh, Badí was finally killed by having his skull smashed, literally to a pulp, with a rifle butt.

Until the last moment of his life, Badí offered thanks to his Lord for allowing him to serve him with the greatest loyalty and remain firm in his Cause, winning for himself the glory of martyrdom.

His mutilated body was dressed in his white garment, thrown into a hole and covered with stones and dirt in a place called Galan Duak. It was the month of July 1869.

Upon his death, Bahá'u'lláh extolled his memory as the "Pride of Martyrs". Ábá Badí, upon learning of his son's fate, fell into the depths of misery that he could not repress or lessen. From the Most Great Prison of 'Akká, Bahá'u'lláh wrote an Epistle to him stating:

*"Dost thou think that he is dead? No, by the Revealer of Signs! Through him the spirit of life joyfully moveth in the hearts of the universe."* In this same Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh

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<sup>22</sup> The bastinado consisted of a long pole with a rope hanging from its ends. These ends were in the shape of knots where the victim's feet were placed and then adjusted. Two people held each side of the stick, while a third strongly whipped the soles of the feet of the victim until they bled.

<sup>23</sup> According to the account in Balyuzi, "Bahá'u'lláh, the King of Glory" (p. 305), Kazím Khán ordered the further branding.

says that in Badí "*the spirit of might and power was breathed*"; that ..."*should We have commanded him, he would have subdued all in heaven and upon the earth.*" That "*Joy overtook him,*" and that he went to his death "*with power and authority, advancing with such strength as to overturn the Supreme Concourse and the denizens of the Cities of Names.*"<sup>24</sup>

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith wrote: "For a space of three years Bahá'u'lláh continued to extol in His writings the heroism of that youth, characterizing the references made by Him to that sublime sacrifice as the '*salt of My Tablets*'".<sup>25</sup>



*Figure 8: Badí being tortured: Source: Bahá'í Media*

Shoghi Effendi also wrote: "Mention should, moreover, be made of the devastating famine which, about a year after the illustrious Badí had been tortured to death, ravaged Persia and reduced the population to such extremities that even the rich went hungry, and hundreds of mothers ghoulishly devoured their own children."<sup>26</sup> Bahá'u'lláh later affirmed that this was divine punishment for the death of His young disciple and that if it had not been for the Bahá'ís living on Persian soil, the entire nation would have been annihilated.

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<sup>24</sup> Cited in Bahá'u'lláh, *The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, Introduction by Marzieh Gail, p. iii.

<sup>25</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 199,

<sup>26</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 233.

A Bahá'í wrote a supplication to the Manifestation of God, on behalf of his people asking for forgiveness, and He mercifully granted it. Then, the never-before-seen drought ended.

In 1896, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his ascension to the throne, Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh declared a national holiday and was preparing a magnificent celebration never seen hitherto by the public and was assassinated the day before the event by a revolutionary Muslim.

## 5. Excerpts from the Lawḥ-i-Sultán, revealed by Bahá'u'lláh

O King! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow. The learning current amongst men I studied not; their schools I entered not. Ask of the city wherein I dwelt, that thou mayest be well assured that I am not of them who speak falsely. This is but a leaf which the winds of the will of thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised, have stirred. Can it be still when the tempestuous winds are blowing? Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all Names and Attributes! They move it as they list. The evanescent is as nothing before Him Who is the Ever-Abiding. His all-compelling summons hath reached Me, and caused Me to speak His praise amidst all people. I was indeed as one dead when His behest was uttered. The hand of the will of thy Lord, the Compassionate, the Merciful, transformed Me. Can anyone speak forth of his own accord that for which all men, both high and low, will protest against him? Nay, by Him Who taught the Pen the eternal mysteries, save him whom the grace of the Almighty, the All-Powerful, hath strengthened.

The Pen of the Most High addresseth Me saying: Fear not. Relate unto His Majesty the Sháh that which befell thee. His heart, verily, is between the fingers of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, that haply the sun of justice and bounty may shine forth above the horizon of his heart. Thus hath the decree been irrevocably fixed by Him Who is the All-Wise.

Look upon this Youth, O King, with the eyes of justice; judge thou, then, with truth concerning what hath befallen Him. Of a verity, God hath made thee His shadow amongst men, and the sign of His power unto all that dwell on earth. Judge thou between Us and them that have wronged Us without proof and without an enlightening Book. They that surround thee love thee for their own sakes, whereas this youth loveth thee for thine own sake, and hath had no desire except to draw thee nigh unto the seat of grace, and to turn thee toward the right hand of justice. Thy Lord beareth witness unto that which I declare.

O King! Wert thou to incline thine ear unto the shrill of the Pen of Glory and the cooing of the Dove of Eternity which, on the branches of the Lote-Tree beyond which there is no passing, uttereth praises to God, the Maker of all names and Creator of earth and heaven, thou wouldst attain unto a station from which thou wouldst behold in the world of being naught save the effulgence of the Adored One, and wouldst regard thy sovereignty as the most contemptible of thy possessions, abandoning it to whosoever might desire it, and setting thy face toward the Horizon aglow with the light of His countenance. Neither wouldst thou ever be willing to bear the burden of dominion save for the purpose of helping thy Lord, the Exalted, the Most High. Then would the Concourse on high bless thee. O how excellent is this most sublime station, couldst thou ascend thereunto through the power of a sovereignty recognized as derived from the Name of God!...

O King of the age! The eyes of these refugees are turned towards and fixed upon the mercy of the Most Merciful. No doubt is there whatever that these tribulations will be followed by the outpourings of a supreme mercy, and these dire adversities be succeeded by an overflowing prosperity. We fain would hope, however, that His Majesty the Sháh will himself examine these matters, and bring hope to the hearts. That which We have submitted to thy Majesty is indeed for thine highest good. And God, verily, is a sufficient witness unto Me....

O would that thou wouldst permit Me, O Sháh, to send unto thee that which would cheer the eyes, and tranquilize the souls, and persuade every fair-minded person that with Him is the knowledge of the Book.... But for the repudiation of the foolish and the connivance of the divines, I would have uttered a discourse that would have thrilled and carried away the hearts unto a realm from the murmur of whose winds can be heard: 'No God is there but He!'...

I have seen, O Sháh, in the path of God what eye hath not seen nor ear heard.... How numerous the tribulations which have rained, and will soon rain, upon Me! I advance with My face set towards Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Bounteous, whilst behind Me glideth the serpent. Mine eyes have rained down tears until My bed is drenched.

I sorrow not for Myself, however. By God! Mine head yearneth for the spear out of love for its Lord. I never passed a tree, but Mine heart addressed it saying: 'O would

that thou wert cut down in My name, and My body crucified upon thee, in the path of My Lord!'...

By God! Though weariness lay Me low, and hunger consume Me, and the bare rock be My bed, and My fellows the beasts of the field, I will not complain, but will endure patiently as those endued with constancy and firmness have endured patiently, through the power of God, the Eternal King and Creator of the nations, and will render thanks unto God under all conditions. We pray that, out of His bounty—exalted be He—He may release, through this imprisonment, the necks of men from chains and fetters, and cause them to turn, with sincere faces, towards His Face, Who is the Mighty, the Bounteous. Ready is He to answer whosoever calleth upon Him, and nigh is He unto such as commune with Him." <sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 57-60.

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