

Declaration of the Báb¹

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Streaking across the heavens in 1843, a great comet alarms many, and validates the belief of others, that the Second Coming of Christ is imminent. In that same year, poet James Russell Lowell writes in *The Crisis*:

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Once to every man and nation
comes the moment to decide
Some great Cause,
God's new Messiah. **CLICK**

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The early to mid-nineteen century witnesses a world gripped by a millennial zeal as biblical scholars across the globe deduce from their studies and mathematical calculations, based on Scripture, that Christ will return sometime during the mid-1840s; several determine 1844 to be the precise year. Reactions to these millennialists vary; some are excommunicated from their churches, some committed to mental institutions, some ridiculed, while some gain respect and listeners. **CLICK** Harriet Livermore preaches Christ's return on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. Great followings grow into new religious denominations.

¹ See related documents online at https://bahai-library.com/toth_declaration_bab_presentation.

such as the Millerites, which evolves into the Seventh Day Adventists who refer to 1844 as the year of the "Great Disappointment." [CLICK](#)

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One group from Germany, the Templars, moves to Palestine and establishes a community at the base of Mount Carmel in Haifa to await His Coming. They inscribe above their doors, "Der Herr ist Nahe" (The Lord is Near). [CLICK](#)

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In the year 1844, an official of the U.S. Patent Office pens a report recommending the closure of that office because, he believes, everything that is worthwhile has already been invented. [CLICK](#)

In that very year, on the 24th of May, Samuel F. B. Morse sends out the first telegraphic communication, tapping out a text from the Bible, "What hath God wrought?" This invention, hailed by the press as a modern miracle, causes scholars of Scripture to ask, "Is this not still another proof that the hour has come for Christ's appearance? Is it not written in the Book of Job that only God can send "lightnings that they may go and say unto thee, here we are?"

On May 23, 1844, just one evening prior to Morse's historic telegraph message, half a world away in Persia, Siyyid 'Alí-Muhammad lays claim to a direct Revelation from God, that He is the One they expect, and avows, "I am the Promised One." [CLICK](#)

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Play Song: *The Promised One*, by Joe Crone [CLICK](#)

The events detailed earlier, relating to the anticipation of the return of Christ are similarly occurring in Shí'ih Islam, with some scholars fervently expecting the coming of the Qá'im, literally "He Who shall arise." This promise also refers to the return of the Twelfth Imám and the Mihdí, who is to return in the fullness of time and bring a reign of righteousness to the world. [CLICK](#)

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Those who believe the time for His appearance is imminent are referred to as the Shaykhí Sect, which is founded by Shaykhí Ahmad-i-Ahsá'í and led, after his passing, by his pre-eminent pupil, Shaykh Kázim-i-Rashtí. As his own death nears, Shaykh Kázim encourages his followers to disperse and seek the Qá'im, the Promised One. Mullá Husayn, enters into a forty-day retreat to pray and then sets off on his quest. Wondering how he can be sure the One he encounters will, in fact, be the Qá'im, Mullá Husayn decides he will ask for a commentary on the Súrih, or chapter, of Joseph from the Qur'án "in a style and language entirely different from the prevailing standards of the time." [CLICK](#)

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Without understanding why, he feels drawn to the city of Shíráz. Soon after entering the city gate, he is approached by a young man Who introduces Himself as Siyyid 'Alí-Muhammad. [CLICK](#)

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The youthful Siyyid invites Mullá Husayn to His home; the invitation is accepted, and history is made. [CLICK](#)

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During that visit, which lasts throughout the night, his host astounds Mullá Husayn. Before the guest ever voices his request, Siyyid ‘Alí-Muhammad declares, “Now is the time to reveal the commentary on the Súrih of Joseph.” [CLICK](#)

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“He took up His pen,” Mullá Husayn relates, “and with incredible rapidity revealed the entire first chapter of His commentary on the Súrih of Joseph. The overpowering effect of the manner in which He wrote was heightened by the gentle intonation of His voice which accompanied His writing. Not for one moment did He interrupt the flow of the verses which streamed from His pen. Not once did He pause till the Súrih of Mulk was finished. I sat enraptured by the magic of His voice and the sweeping force of His revelation.”

A portion of the description Mullá Husayn gave of that night is highlighted in a video titled *Divine Tapestry*. [CLICK](#)

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Although Siyyid ‘Alí-Muhammad brings His own religion and His own Holy Book, yet His entire purpose, He says, is to prepare the way for the coming of an even greater Revelation, admonishing His followers to watch for “Him Whom God will make manifest.” From that moment, He chose the title of, and is still referred to as “the Báb,” which means “The Gate.”

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The Báb is executed a mere six years following His declaration, during which time He and His followers, known as Bábís, are subjected to cruel persecutions, imprisonment and killings. Over 20,000 die in those early years. During His brief ministry the Báb reveals His Holy Book, the Bayán, and also intimates the year of the coming of His successor. [CLICK](#)

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It is notable that this new Faith, which arises within a culture where females have no rights, are purposely uneducated and are considered mere chattel, asserts that this is the time for the emancipation of women.

Unique in religious history, one of the Báb's disciples is indeed a woman, referred to by most as Qurratul-Ayn, which means Solace of the Eyes, and later given the name Táhirih, the Pure One. Against all norms, she travels and teaches the new religion, and like so many of its adherents, forfeits her very life for the Cause in which she believes. [CLICK](#)

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The Báb's brief ministry plays a crucial role in religious history, serving as the link between two distinct cycles: the Prophetic Cycle, which begins with Adam and ends with Mohammed, Who is known as the Seal of the Prophets, and the Cycle of Fulfillment, or the Age of Maturity, which will lead to the Golden Age, the time of the Most Great Peace. It is the coming of age of the human race, ushered in by Bahá'u'lláh, Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Who is *He Whom God will make manifest*. The Báb is the link between the two cycles. [CLICK](#)

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The Báb refers to Himself as the "Primal Point from which have been generated all things." That title is explored in a poem by Roger White,

entitled *Inscription for the Head of a Pin*: White prefaces the poem in part with a quote from Marzieh Gail,

*To Persian mystics all writing emanates from a single calligraphic dot on the page. **CLICK***

One dot: from this all else begot.
Take pains: this sign all else contains.
Grave well: this mark worlds will tell.
Eloquent pin! One dot—infinity within.

Not only the Bábís and Bahá'ís recognize how special He is, even European scholars are moved by His situation and pen appreciations" **CLICK**

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Russian author, dramatist and educational reformer **Leo Tolstoy** writes in a letter to playwright Mme. Isabel Grinevskaya, author of a play about the Báb.

...the teachings of the Báb...inasmuch as they keep to the principal fundamental ideas of brotherhood, equality and love, have a great future before them...I sympathize with Bábism with all my heart inasmuch as it teaches people brotherhood and equality and sacrifice of material life for service to God. **CLICK**

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British Orientalist and Professor of Cambridge University , **Edward Granville Browne**, writes,

His sorrowful and persecuted life; his purity of conduct, and youth; his courage and uncomplaining patience under misfortune; his complete self-negation; the dim ideal of a better state of things which can be discerned through the obscure mystic utterances of the Bayán...all serve to enlist our sympathies on behalf of the young prophet of Shíráz. **CLICK**

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Rev. Thomas Kelly Cheyne, D. Litt., D.D., English Divine and biblical critic, writes in his treatise, *The Reconciliation of Races and Religions*

His combination of mildness and power is so rare that we have to place him in a line with supernormal men...

The gentle spirit of the Báb is surely high up in the cycles of eternity. Who can fail, as Professor Browne says, to be attracted by him? **CLICK**

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French Writer **Henri Antoine Jules-Bois** pens a description:

... Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad, the Báb, or the portal of a new wisdom, a young man, brave, handsome, and tempered like a steel blade, the finest product of his country. **CLICK**

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And British Army Officer, explorer and spiritual writer **Lt. Col. Sir Francis Edward Younghusband, KCSI, KCIE**, offered these observations in his book, *The Gleam* (1923),

The story of the Báb, as Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad called himself, was the story of spiritual heroism unsurpassed ...That a youth of no social influence and no education should, by the simple power of insight, be able

to pierce into the heart of things and see the real truth, and then hold on to it with such firmness of conviction and present it with such persuasion that he was able to convince men that he was the Messiah and get them to follow him to death itself, was one of the splendid facts in human history...This was a true hero...The Báb's passionate sincerity could not be doubted... **CLICK**

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If a young man could, in only six years of ministry, by the sincerity of his purpose and the attraction of his personality, so inspire rich and poor, cultured and illiterate, alike, with belief in himself and his doctrines that they would remain staunch, though hunted down and without trial sentenced to death, sawn asunder, strangled, shot blown from guns; and if men of high position and culture in Persia, Turkey and Egypt in numbers to this day adhere to his doctrines, his life must be one of those events in the last hundred years which is really worth study... **CLICK**

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Bahá'í Holy Day commemorations relating to the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh always include a prayer known as the *Tablet of Visitation*. Tonight, rather than end with it being read aloud by one of us, let's instead watch a video presentation by Penny Filias in which the words will scroll through the images as a moving musical selection plays in the background. **CLICK**

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[Video]