

by Jaine Toth

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Our title for today's program is taken from a newspaper headline for an article announcing the execution by hanging of ten Iranian Bahá'í women on June 18, 1983. On this, the 35th anniversary of that infamous event, we thank you for joining us to pay tribute to those ten women who willingly accepted execution rather than deny their Faith.

It isn't easy to listen to tales of suffering and persecution, but as important as it is to honor the past, we need also be aware of conditions in the present. Just as the Jewish people so wisely insist as regards The Holocaust, NEVER FORGET and NEVER AGAIN, we commemorate past events and will also briefly address the current status of the situation in Iran. Therefore, you are to be commended for coming.

During this presentation we'll make mention of two of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith, so for those of you unfamiliar with them, they are [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 2 Mírzá Husayn-‘Alí, Prophet-Founder of the Bahá’í Faith, Whose title, [CLICK] “Bahá’u’lláh.” means [CLICK] The Glory of God. [CLICK]

SLIDE 3 Bahá’u’lláh taught Oneness: [CLICK]

The Oneness of God, [CLICK]

There is only one God, though He is called by many names. [CLICK]

The Oneness of His Prophets, [CLICK]

and the Oneness of all the peoples of the world.

[CLICK]

SLIDE 4 ‘Abbás Effendi, eldest son of Bahá’u’lláh, who

Bahá’u’lláh designated in His Will and Testament as [CLICK]

- the sole interpreter of His Words and Writings, and [CLICK]
- the head of the Bahá’í Faith after Bahá’u’lláh’s passing.

[CLICK]

SLIDE 5 His chosen title, [CLICK]

- “‘Abdu’l-Bahá,” means: [CLICK]
- The Servant of Bahá. [CLICK]

SLIDE 6 [Blank]

On the 18th of June, 1983, ten Bahá'í women were hanged in the city of Shíráz, Írán. Despite a variety of trumped up charges, the real crime was their refusal to recant their faith.

Like Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and thousands of their spiritual antecedents, they were persecuted for their beliefs.

Since its inception in 1844, believers in this Faith have been vilified by clergy who even today intentionally spread misinformation and outright lies about the Bahá'ís due to their unwarranted fear that this new religion could undermine their own authority. Clerics incited — and still today incite — attacks by the populace and arrests by government officials which lead to long imprisonments and executions, the most notorious among them the hanging of these innocent women.

This subject affects me deeply not only because I myself am a Bahá'í, but also because as an actress, I portrayed some of these people, and that made the reality of their situation all the more real for me — more personal. I also met and became friendly with Rúhí Jahanpour, a young woman who escaped Írán following her release from prison, and whose mother I portrayed in 1992 at the Bahá'í World Congress in New York City.

At the World Congress close to 6,000 youth from around the

globe attended the world premiere of the play *When the Moment Comes*, written by Canadian playwright Ann Boyles following numerous interviews with Rúhí. The play opens with Rúhí telling us:

I had read about the heroes of the Bahá'í Faith in the history books. Back in Írán, when I was very small, my parents told me all the stories...and they would say to me, *Rúhí, you must grow up to be strong and brave like them.* But to me — they were all history — it seemed that the time for that kind of martyrdom and heroism was over. I thought:

It's the 20th century. We're beyond that sort of bloodshed. This is the time to live for the Faith. We can go anywhere we want, do anything we want. Oh, conditions aren't ideal...but things are a lot better for us than they were for those early Bahá'ís. Gone are the days of "persecutions."

Well, that's what I thought! Then in 1979 the revolution happened." [CLICK]

SLIDE 7 With the 1979 Islámic Revolution in Írán came: [CLICK]

· A resurgence of animosity and hatred towards Bahá'ís which had been somewhat controlled under the Sháh's regime. [CLICK]

- And a new constitution, which created an Islámic state, giving limited rights to Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians, but according none to their nation’s largest minority, the Bahá’ís.

[CLICK]

SLIDE 8 Here are some examples of actions taken against the Bahá’í community of Írán [CLICK]

- In August 1983, an order by Írán’s Prosecutor General effectively banned all organized Bahá’í religious activities, deeming them “criminal” acts; thereby providing “the legal basis on which the regime can move against all Bahá’ís in Írán if it chooses to do so.”ⁱⁱ The Bahá’ís have suffered: [CLICK]
- Loss of Jobs [CLICK]
- Loss of pensions [CLICK]
- Loss of rights, for example: to marriage, divorce, burial, visas and passports, and even education [CLICK]
- Confiscation of property, like homes, schools, hospitals, and cemeteries [CLICK]
- and the desecration of property, such as [CLICK]

SLIDE 9 uprooting graves and destroying headstones [CLICK]

SLIDE 10 and the razing of Bahá'í holy sites in Írán [CLICK]

SLIDE 11 [Blank] **Some youth recalled:**

They wouldn't allow us to go to school. So we started our own schools. I suppose I was like a lot of other young people before the Revolution. I took education for granted. In fact, I remember a lot of mornings when I would have liked to stay in bed rather than get up and go to school. We thought it was boring; we'd rather be spending time with our friends, listening to music, talking...

It's funny how that all changed as soon as they told us we were WEREN'T ALLOWED to go to school anymore. I'd get together with some of my friends and we'd find ourselves talking about math, chemistry, even calculus! We never talked much about those things outside class before!

Some of us began to teach the little children, so they wouldn't fall too far behind. It seems crazy to think that they arrested Muná for teaching little five year olds how to read and say prayers. But, of course, nothing that happened after the Revolution made any real, logical sense to anybody.ⁱⁱⁱ [CLICK]

SLIDE 12 Criminal acts against Bahá'ís can be committed by
Íránian citizens with impunity: [CLICK]

- A Tihrán court held that a Muslim driver found guilty of manslaughter in the death of a Bahá'í did not have to compensate the survivors because the “victim was a member of the misguided and misleading Bahá'í community, and is considered as an unprotected infidel.”^{iv} [CLICK]
- A court denied a Bahá'í widow life insurance benefits when her husband died, because a contract with a “heretic” was not valid and enforceable.” [CLICK]
- Many suffered imprisonment, sometimes without charges. And many charges seem incomprehensible, such as, [CLICK]

SLIDE 13 Teaching classes [CLICK]

- Women had received higher education [CLICK]
- Claims that they were members of SAVAK, the Sháh's secret police [CLICK]
- Allegations that they were spies for Israel [CLICK]

SLIDE 14 [Blank] When asked about life in the prison, Rúhí explained

"...on the practical level, things were very bad. Oh they fed us — but only when they wanted to, not at regular meal times. We were only allowed to shower once a week, and even then our time in the bath was limited to a few minutes. We could have visitors, but often the guards wouldn't even allow us the full ten minutes permitted.

For work, we had to clean all the toilets in the prison, or if we were told to wash the dishes, we were only allowed to scrape the food off them and apply the soap; somebody else had to rinse and dry them, because we were 'unclean'...

We Bahá'í prisoners weren't allowed to do any crafts like knitting. Perhaps they thought we would start a riot armed with our knitting needles! And we weren't allowed any books, except Moslem ones, to read.^v

Harassment and torture were utilized in an effort to force them to recant. They were told that if they would deny their Faith and embrace Islám, not only would all rights, privileges and properties be returned — they would also be honored and rewarded. In the play, *When the Moment Comes*, the women prisoners explain:

Learn from the Master of Love in the schoolhouse of oneness, Bahá'u'lláh says in The Seven Valleys. That prison was our schoolhouse. We learned lessons of love and patience from the Bahá'í women we met there. We learned the Writings by heart from each other, sharing what we had memorized over the collective years of our lives.

And we were tested, too, on everything we had learned."There were three kinds of tests. The first was written; always the same questions:"

Are you a Bahá'í?

Are you willing to recant your faith?

Who are the other members of your Bahá'í community?

Who serves on your committees?

We always gave the same answers. And there was a misunderstanding about the grading. You see, they thought we always failed the test when we said we would not recant, but we knew that was the right answer. So, when we passed the first test...

There was the second, the oral exam. Sometimes they would blindfold us. They'd put us in a room with our interrogators and question us for hours.

Your parents have recanted. They are waiting for you right now, this very moment, at the mosque. Just sign the paper, and you can be with them.

My parents are strong. They would not do that.

No you are wrong, they have recanted.

Then I no longer believe in my parents! In what language do you want me to tell you? Why don't you leave me alone. My whole being is Bahá'u'lláh! My love is Bahá'u'lláh! My heart is dedicated to Bahá'u'lláh!

The judge was infuriated. He shouted, *Then I will pull out your heart from your chest.*

And when I replied, *Then my heart will call and cry out, "Bahá'u'lláh! Bahá'u'lláh!"* he could think of nothing else to say, and he stormed out of the room.

And then there was the third kind of test. ...this was the most difficult...We all prayed for strength to get through it. They took us — after the mental torture session — when we were exhausted and disoriented, making sure we wore only a single layer of clothing, so the pain would not be dulled. We were blindfolded again, and tied, face down on a bed. Then they spoke to us, calmly, almost gently:

Why are you doing this to yourself? It would be so easy for you to get up and walk away from all this...All you have to do is tell us you no longer believe in Bahá'u'lláh.

And while they were saying this in their soft voices, there would be a strange sound in the background. The first time I didn't know what it was right away.

And then I realized that the guard was whirling a wire cable around and around in the air — for what seemed like hours. My body would grow more and more tense in anticipation of the first strike — waiting for it — waiting for it. It was a good thing we were tied down or our bodies would have hit the ceiling after the first blow — when it finally came — we were so tense.

They were allowed to flog us on our backs and on the soles of our feet. Seventy four blows; that was the prison rule — but — they would flog us first for about 25 strokes, until the flesh was raw and the nerves were numb, and then they'd pause, wait for the feeling to return, and then start over — counting again from number one.

I don't know how we survived it. Physical strength, endurance — these weren't enough; the pain was too intense. When that is happening to you, you think, *I cannot bear this. This is too much, Bahá'u'lláh. Why are they doing this to me? Why me? I can't stand it anymore.*

And you can't bear the pain by yourself. Somewhere in the middle of all of it you realize that. And you know that you have a simple choice to make. The guards, they want you to deny your faith. That is the only reason they are doing this to you. And if you deny your faith, the pain will stop. But then you realize, *My faith is my life; I'm not going to give it up. What would my life be without Bahá'u'lláh?*

So you can't bear the pain anymore, but you're not willing to do the thing that will stop the pain. Really, then, there's only one way you can deal with what's happening: you begin to pray.

You turn your thoughts away from your body, away from the pain, to Bahá'u'lláh. And as you pray, something very strange happens.

Somehow, you enter a place where there is no pain. Oh, your body is there on the bed, enduring it — but your spirit isn't in that body. It's somewhere else. It's hard to explain. But back in the cells we would speak about it, and all of us had that out-of-body experience as we prayed during flogging.^{vi}

Rúhí explains where and how some of them achieved that knowledge, that strength:

We didn't go into that prison as perfect beings, and we weren't always strong. Sometimes we were lonely, or depressed, or angry. But something happened to us in there. In that prison we made a journey — a spiritual journey that each of us must make, no matter where we live or under what conditions. And in that journey you sacrifice yourself — ...you become like the moth, and you sacrifice yourself to the flame of the love of God.^{vii}

Executions became commonplace. Killed were men, women, teenagers. At first it was mostly members of administrative institutions, but it soon engulfed the entire Bahá'í community.

One judge proclaimed: **[CLICK]**

SLIDE 15 *The Islámic nation, God-willing, will fulfill the prayer mentioned in the Qur’án, ‘Lord, leave not a single family of infidels on earth.’^{viii} [CLICK]*

SLIDE 16 [Blank] My interpretation of that passage is far different from his. The way to “leave not a single family of infidels on earth” should be to imbue them with the love of God by spreading their faith through positive actions.

A few prisoners recanted under the weight of the torture and/or the pressures brought to bear, like threats against their families, but most went willingly to their deaths in the firm belief that their lifeblood would be the seed from which verdant plants of spirituality and oneness would soon spring forth to replenish the earth.

Those blessed souls truly understood these words from Bahá’u’lláh: [CLICK]

SLIDE 17 *I have breathed within thee a breath of My own spirit, that thou mayest be my lover.^{ix} [CLICK]*

SLIDE 18 [Blank] To be God’s lover! — the aim of every Bahá’í. To have God as your closest companion, most intimate friend,

your Peerless Belovéd, in Whose presence is fullness of joy! The Bahá'í prisoners knew they were going to be with their Lover, and went gladly, joyously, expectantly, to that reunion.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, offered a supplication for the suffering believers. It reads in part: [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 19 *O God! Thou beholdest Thy lovers in Írán in the clutches of hate and enmity. I beg of Thee, by Thy mercy which hath preceded the contingent world, to raise up from the earth those who will be moved to aid and protect them, and to preserve their rights and the restitution due to them...*^x [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 20 [Blank] To love God means to love everything and everybody, for all are part of His Creation. The true Bahá'í will be the perfect lover. He will love everyone with a pure heart. He will hate no one. He will despise no one, for he will have learned to find His traces everywhere and to see the face of the Belovéd in every face — even his persecutors.

We find a glimpse of this reality in Roger White's poem, *Sweetmeat*, written for Mr. Mihdí Anvarí, aged 57, who was executed on March 17, 1981 for refusing to give up his allegiance to the Bahá'í Faith.

In his last will and testament Mr. Anvari requested his family to —distribute sweets among his executioners. [CLICK]

SLIDE 21 Was my ecstasy Belleville, remote as Bethlehem;
my present anguish incomprehensible as Auschwitz?
I would welcome contempt above indifference.

Mourn with me now these martyrs.

History, that cocky jaywalker,

may yet trespass on your complacent lawn.

See how my brother brings sweets to the murderer,
succumbs to his shot with a careless ease.

Might we not think he knew a rare confection;

could have taught us more than how to die? ^{xi} [CLICK]

SLIDE 22 [Blank] Musician Grant Hindin Miller composed songs dedicated to these precious souls and Penny Filias created a video to go with one called *Graveyards of Írán* [CLICK]

SLIDE 23 [video - (3:58)]

SLIDE 24 [Blank] The ten women whose plight so moved people around the world by reason of their being hanged one

after the other on June 18, 1983, ranged in age from mid-teens to mid-50s. It is our honor now to introduce them: [CLICK]

SLIDE 25 'Izzat Jánamí, age 57, was arrested along with her husband, 'Ináyat Ishráqí, and her daughter, Ru'yá. "Izzat was no stranger to imprisonment. She and Ru'yá had both been imprisoned previously, simply for being Bahá'ís, but had been released.

Rather than try to leave for a safer location, the family chose to remain in Shíráz in order to be of service to others. They opened their house as a shelter those made homeless due to the continuing persecutions.

During her interrogations, 'Izzat was sometimes blindfolded, which made movement difficult. To an interrogator's taunt,

Are you so blind that you cannot walk?

she boldly responded,

I am merely outwardly blind, but you are inwardly

blind.^{xii}

Not free to attend the wedding of her other daughter, Ruzita, 'Izzat asked Mrs. Mahmúdnizhád, another Bahá'í prisoner who was being released, to please attend, and take with her red carnations to represent each of the women prisoners. [CLICK]

SLIDE 26 Twenty-three year-old, Ru'yá Ishraqi, 'Izzat's daughter, was in her second year of veterinary school at the time of her second arrest. Ru'yá loved to be active and enjoyed sports. Her physical pursuits included mountain climbing. One of the most beloved of the prisoners, Ru'yá was usually the center of attention and activity: "...possessed of beauty and a radiant personality; she was one of the most popular Bahá'í youth of Shíráz."^{xiii}

Once, when Ru'yá and her father were being interrogated together, the deep bond between them didn't go unnoticed. The judge exhorted them to give in, saying:

What a pity. You put yourselves through this agony only for one word; just say you are not a Bahá'í and I'll see that the three of you are released, and payment of the pension of your father resumed.

Your honour,

Ru'yá replied,

the love of father and mother for their daughter is a natural sentiment, but my love for my Lord and my attachment to His Cause must take precedence over my love for my parents. I will not exchange my faith for the whole world.^{xiv}

Two days after her father's execution, which took place on the

same day she became betrothed, Ruzita went to the prison to inform her mother and sister. Ru'yá exclaimed

Thank God!

while a calm 'Izzat quietly intoned,

I knew, I knew, I knew.^{xv}

"Asked ... if she would insist on saying she is a Bahá'í even until the moment of her execution, Ru'yá replied that she hoped to remain firm in her belief and steadfast in her love of the Blessed Beauty to the end of her life.

"As a child of five or six, she had dreamed one night that she was lost in a wheatfield among stalks so high that she could not find her way home, and was rescued and taken home by two men of brilliant countenance on horseback, one of whom was Bahá'u'lláh and the other 'Abdu'l-Bahá."^{xvi}

They were surely there to welcome her to her new life in the next world.

Ru'yá, forced to witness her own her mother hanging from the gallows, maintained a serene countenance.

It is said that after Ru'yá's final breath had been squeezed out of her by the noose, her eyes remained wide open. What must she have seen as she danced at the end of that rope?

Poet Roger White, lamenting the loss of one so young

and innocent, wrote: [CLICK]

SLIDE 27 Not I shall sing your praises, Ru'yá,

but someone braver,

one steeled to tell the tale from

your young heart's chamber out to

the cord's abrasive kiss

on your slender throat.

Your mystery won't admit me.

I circumambulate your immaculacy of faith

lusting to know if when you put away your dolls

you foresaw that death would attend your debut,

envisioned yourself the orphaned maid

made matron by torture.

Child, child, what had your mother dreamed for you?

Do fathers dower heroines?

Not I shall sing your praises, Ru'yá.

Though umbilical metaphors suggest themselves.

I have no breath for them

but leave your song to others

for now you bind yourself to all of us.

One will unknot his throat

to speak of your demure entrance,
debutante of other dominions.
Let him tell how, even as you curtsied
under your mother's approving glance,
a flush rising in your cheek,
the King as in the fairy tale
marked you for his own.^{xvii} [CLICK]

SLIDE 28 Nusrat Yalda'i, a mother of three sons and one daughter, was executed for — her hospitality!

In 1983, 46 year-old Nusrat was an elected member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Shíráz. She enjoyed offering her home as a center of activity for the Bahá'í community. Her neighbors, prejudiced against the Bahá'ís and upset about their gatherings, harassed Nusrat and her family and finally filed a complaint with the police on the pretext that they were "disturbing the peace."

When the police suggested to her that the problem with the neighbors would go away if she'd simply quit hosting Bahá'í functions, "she refused on the grounds that it was her religious obligation to be hospitable and to open her doors to friends and strangers alike."^{xviii}

Nusrat followed this injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: [CLICK]

SLIDE 29 *Make your home a haven of rest and peace. Be ye hospitable and let the doors of your home be open to the faces of friends and strangers. Welcome everyone with a smiling face and let them all feel that they are in my home.*^{xix} [CLICK]

SLIDE 30 In spite of a lack of formal education—she hadn't gone to high school but had studied the Bahá'í teachings — Nusrat developed excellent public speaking skills, which she made good use of as a Bahá'í travel teacher. Thus, the prison guards accused her of lying about her lack of education. She obviously embodied this admonition from Bahá'í scripture: [CLICK]

SLIDE 31 *May your faces, being steadfastly set towards the Divine Light, become so luminous that all your thoughts, words and actions will shine with the Spiritual Radiance dominating your souls ...*^{xx} [CLICK]

SLIDE 32 In prison, Nusrat was subjected to almost constant torture. Twice she endured beatings consisting of as many as 200 lashes:

"Those who saw her after those beatings testified that the strips of her blood-soaked clothing were embedded in the weals that covered her body. Her wounds, an eyewitness recounted, were still visible after she was hanged."^{xxi}

The authorities' attempts to coerce Nusrat into a public recantation of her belief in Bahá'u'lláh, and their vain hope that she would then encourage her fellow prisoners to follow her example, were all for naught. Nusrat unequivocally refused, telling them:

I am but a drop compared to the ocean of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Do you think that you can stop the sun from shining? Do you think I was a member of the Bahá'í Assembly when this religion was established? You should understand that the light of the Cause of God will not disappear even if I and others were to recant."^{xxii} [CLICK]

SLIDE 33 A pediatric nurse by profession, Táhirih Sívávushí, age 30, was fired from her position—the sole reason being that she was a Bahá'í. Táhirih endeavored to serve the children of humanity, faithfully following the Bahá'í teachings: [CLICK]

SLIDE 34

Few are those who have been freed from this darkness, who have ascended from the world of nature to the world of man, who have followed the divine Teachings, have served the world of humanity, are resplendent, merciful, illumined and like unto a rose garden. Strive thine utmost to become godlike, characterized with His attributes, illumined and merciful, that thou mayest be freed from every bond and become attached at heart to the Kingdom of the incomparable Lord. This is Bahá'í bounty, and this is heavenly light.^{xxiii} [CLICK]

SLIDE 35 Arrested for her Bahá'í beliefs, Táhirih went was jailed. During her incarceration, Táhirih spent some of her prison time "...held in solitary confinement where the cells have no bathrooms or toilets—facilities the prisoners may use only three times in twenty-four hours, at the discretion of the prison guards."^{xxiv}

When that didn't break her, the guards threatened to torture her husband, Jamshíd, also a Bahá'í prisoner. Still she could not be persuaded to set aside her faith.

Prison authorities had her nurse other inmates, including her husband who had been severely tortured and ended up being

executed two days before she and her nine companions kept their own date with the noose.

After being informed of her death sentence, Táhirih assured her family that she in fact felt a sense of relief. She told them she was truly happy. When she and her father had their last meeting, Táhirih said to him: *Look at how beautiful I am. Look at me well,*^{xxv} and she laughed.

"...a Bahá'í who had been imprisoned with her but who was later freed, brought to the [Bahá'í] World Centre a pair of grey heavy cotton ankle-length socks which had belonged to Táhirih, and which she insisted her fellow prisoner wear when the latter was taken away to be whipped on the soles of her feet, in order to provide a greater degree of protection, as she had only thin stockings. When the prisoner spoke of her intention, if released, of presenting the socks to the Universal House of Justice, Táhirih wished her the fulfillment of her heart's desire.

"If you are released, it will be with honour. Leave Írán and tell the world what we suffered, what the enemies did to us. And tell the Bahá'ís, too, so they will utterly detach themselves from material things, will not be content with the glitter and illusions of this contingent world, and will devote their lives to service to the Cause."^{xxvi}

Táhirih believed deeply that this world is not the only plane of existence — that we all have beautiful, immortal souls destined to traverse all the worlds of God. She understood that her beauty came from within, and would therefore last forever. She harbored no fear of death, because she knew that the death of the body actually frees the soul. [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 36 A graduate of the University of Shíráz, 28 year-old Mashid Nírúmand was ridiculed by her interrogator. He taunted her with the fact that here was he, who lacked even a high school education, interrogating her despite her university education.

What an education! A graduate in physics!

he laughed, as if to say,

And what good has it done you?^{xxvii}

Although Mashid did graduate with the requisite grades and credits necessary for a degree in physics, the school denied her the actual diploma since she was a Bahá'í.

Due to the ignorance of which he seemed proud, the interrogator was woefully unaware that: [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 37

"... allegiance to the essential foundation of the divine religions is ever the cause of development and progress,

whereas the abandonment and beclouding of that essential reality through blind imitations and adherence to dogmatic beliefs is the cause of ... debasement and degradation."^{xxviii}

[CLICK]

SLIDE 38 Prior to her imprisonment, Mashid had been a youth advisor and a member of several Bahá'í service committees. She remained very strong throughout her stay in prison and encouraged everyone to remain steadfast in their faith. She had a calming influence on others. Food in prison was not plentiful, yet Mashid often shared hers with other prisoners.

She fulfilled her part of this core Bahá'í teaching: [CLICK]

SLIDE 39

It is Our wish and desire that every one of you may become a source of all goodness unto men, and an example of uprightness to mankind. Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbors.^{xxix} [CLICK]

SLIDE 40 Not one for "small talk," when she did speak, Mashid's profound understanding of the Bahá'í teachings was evident. To one of her interrogators Mashid asserted,

I have found the path to Divine Reality and I am not

prepared to abandon it. Therefore, I am willing to abide by the court's verdict.^{xxx}

In describing the bodies of the ten women after their executions, it was reported that Mashid seemed to be in a deep, peaceful sleep while Muná, the youngest, laid alongside, her head resting on Mashid 's shoulder — so apt for one who had been such a source of strength for her imprisoned friends.

Mashid obviously learned more than the physics of the universe during her short life on Earth — she also learned, deeply and profoundly, the physics of the spiritual reality by attending the university of God. [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 41 Prior to her imprisonment, Zarrín Muqímí, age 28, made regular visits to the Bahá'ís who had been jailed in Adelabad prison. Each time, on returning home, she wrote of the spiritual strength and courage of the prisoners in terms that proved prophetic of her own experience, which was destined to occur just one year later: [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 42

I have come tonight from Adelabad. What can I write and how can I pen a description of that place? In what tongue

can I portray the sort of world it is? Which words and what story can contain what I beheld with my humble, earthly eyes? I blink ... to see whether I have experienced a vision or been fully awake. Is it a sweet dream or bitter reality?

I have come tonight from Adelabad. There is the abode of detached lovers and moths burnt in the flame of the love of God. There, amidst high and heavy walls, souls mightier than these walls are chained up. There each and every stone cries out in wonder and amazement. In amazement at the heroic braves of the kingdom. In amazement at the self-sacrifice of the lovers of the Adored One, the heroes who will create confusion in the ranks of the ungodly and awaken the world.

I have returned tonight from Adelabad. From the...site which, while the most detested and remotest of places, is the holiest spot in this region. I would have liked to ask the walls, *'What have you beheld? Recount it to me. Tell me about the whisperings of love, about the melodies of generosity, about a lover's heartbeat as he walks towards the square! Tell me what they uttered when hurrying to the place of sacrifice! Tell me about*

the melodious murmurs or prayers that can be heard from between the iron bars at the hour of dawn, and the teardrops that slowly fall upon the cheeks!^{xxxii} [CLICK]

SLIDE 43 From her love of reciting poetry as a young child, to being an honor student in high school and then graduating from the University of Tíhrán with a degree in English literature, Zarrín's love of language and excellent writing skills were not sufficient, in the eyes of the authorities, to overcome her being a member of the Bahá'í Faith. The village of Abyanih wished to hire Zarrín as a school teacher, but the authorities would not permit it since she was a Bahá'í. She got a job instead as a translator and accountant for a petrochemical company, but was fired following the Islamic Revolution—again due to her Faith.

During her trial, Zarrín cried out,

How can I make you understand that my being exists solely for Bahá'u'lláh, the object of my hope and love is Bahá'u'lláh, and my heart is also of Bahá'u'lláh?

And at a subsequent court interview, she told her interrogators,

Do you think that I can deny the truth? I told you the first day I would not recant. If you try me for months and years, my response will be the same.^{xxxii}

A poet also gifted with a ringing, melodious voice, Zarrín's talent did not go unnoticed or unremarked. One of her interrogators said that rather than having a degree in language she ought to have been awarded one in public speaking.

Her deep knowledge of her faith, combined with her eloquent delivery, confounded her interrogators to the point where they isolated her rather than conduct her interrogations along with others, which was their common tactic.

Frustrated that they could not dissuade her, they uttered slanderous comments about her religion. She came right back at them insisting,

Whether you accept or not I am a Bahá'í. You cannot take it away from me. I am a Bahá'í with my whole being and my whole heart.^{xxxiii}

Zarrín exemplified the steadfastness and patience Bahá'u'lláh called “the sign of love:” **[CLICK]**

SLIDE 44

*For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.^{xxxiv} **[CLICK]***

SLIDE 45 Akhtar Sabet, aged 25 at her death, was remembered by her instructors as a model pupil. They praised her positive personality and strong character in addition to her academic ability. Akhtar was known to take time from her own work and studies to assist other students with their lessons.

It wasn't unusual for Bahá'ís and their properties to be attacked by an ignorant and prejudiced populace. While yet a teenager, Akhtar's family lost their home in one of those attacks. She worked as well as attending classes in order to financially assist her family. Akhtar even sewed her own wardrobe and was noted for her simple, becoming attire.

Through all the upheaval, she remained determined to finish her education, graduated with a pediatric nursing degree, and went to work in a local hospital. Like so many other Bahá'ís, she lived her life in service to others.

Following her arrest, the hospital administration, loathe to lose Akhtar's services, entreated the government to release her, but they refused to do so unless she agreed to disavow her Faith. She would not.

While in prison, Akhtar did her best to care for her fellow prisoners, treating all equally, whether they were fellow Bahá'ís, criminals, addicts, or prostitutes. She revived one person who

suffered a heart attack. Akhtar's service to others was not limited to her nursing skills; she even did laundry chores for those the authorities considered "unclean."

In some traditions, Akhtar knew, foreigners and people of other faiths and even women were thought of as unclean. She believed deeply in the abolition of that tradition and in the primary Bahá'í principle of the oneness of humanity.

Referring to her own death sentence, Akhtar assured her compatriots,

Never mind, I am not worried. Whatever happens, I am content with the will of God.

And to the interrogator who asked, *Even at the expense of your life do you intend to remain firm in your belief?* she responded,

I hope so, by the grace of God.^{xxxv} [CLICK]

SLIDE 46 Akhtar followed this advice from Abdu'l-Baha: "... keep your faces steadfastly turned to the light, so that ye may be as lighted torches in the dark places of life."

SLIDE 47 Shahin Dalvand, known as Shírín, was only 25 years old when she died. She had earned a graduate degree in sociology from the University of Shíráz—and Shírín's excellent

scholarship was at such a high level that, despite knowing she was a Bahá'í, some professors dared to quote from her thesis.

Shírín loved flowers, and when she was free a single blossom or a green leaf could always be found in her room. She also loved the ocean and visited the beach as often as possible.

Her family lived in England, and repeatedly entreated Shírín to leave Írán and its attendant danger for Bahá'ís and come join them. Despite that awareness and the knowledge that she could be free of the prejudice and persecution in her home country, Shírín chose to remain with her grandparents in Shíráz in order to continue her services to the Bahá'í community. Her thoughtfulness extended to the families of Bahá'í prisoners as well as those who had already been executed. She made every effort to visit all of them often.

Shírín knew that this association with the Bahá'í prisoners would likely result in her own imprisonment and possibly even her execution —but she did not view that outcome as the final calamity others might have, since as a Bahá'í she firmly believed what Baha'ullah taught on the subject: [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 48 *My calamity is My providence, outwardly it is fire and vengeance, but inwardly it is light and mercy.*^{xxxvi} [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 49 As with all the Bahá'í prisoners, Shírín was asked at trial if she was really willing to die for her beliefs. The question didn't faze her. She calmly said that indeed she was ready and that she prayed to God to remain steadfast in her faith if and when she were to be sentenced to death. An eyewitness said that her responses to the interrogator seemed inspired.

A Bahá'í woman who had been imprisoned with her recalled,

Shírín had a generous and sensitive spirit and was calm and content in prison. I remember one day in the prison when we were having a meal together, and Shírín told us that it was her birthday, and that the year before her mother had given her a beautiful new dress as a birthday gift, and that this year her gift was to be a prisoner for Bahá'u'lláh. Since we had nothing else, each of us took a little morsel of food and placed it in Shírín's mouth, and thus celebrated her birthday.^{»XXVII}

Basically shy and sensitive, Shírín's entire character transformed during interrogations. She spoke her mind, unconcerned with the consequences. When asked how long she would resist turning away from her Faith in order to save herself, she said,

Even to death! I hope that God's mercy will enable me to

remain steadfast up to the last breath of my life.^{xxxviii}

She did. [CLICK]

SLIDE 50 Cheerful and loveable, Símín Sábirí was born into a large family with eleven children. Only 24 when she wore the necklace of rope that freed her spirit, she was the youngest of five children from her father's second marriage. Símín had six half-siblings from his first marriage, which ended with the untimely passing of his wife. Símín's father, who came from a Muslim background, and her mother from a Jewish one, found a common faith as Bahá'ís.

Símín studied at secretarial college and then found work with an agricultural firm. But she and her family had to flee when, in November 1978, many Bahá'ís were forced from their homes by marauding mobs seeking to drive them out. Relatives managed to make room for Símín's big family.

Símín's arrest came on October 26, 1982. Like all the others, she had done nothing to deserve her imprisonment — other than being a Bahá'í and believing in the oneness of God, all religions and all humankind.

Fearless in front of her interrogators, Símín was outspoken about her Bahá'í activities and dared to lecture them about the

validity of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. In jail she was known to be strong and resilient and never to have expressed sadness. Her strength amazed her fellow inmates.

Símín attempted to be a source of comfort to the all of the other women prisoners. A Bahá'í imprisoned with her wrote:

Símín was radiant, courageous and swift-thinking. Her whole being was suffused with love of Bahá'u'lláh, and she had a happy and smiling face. Even in prison she did not stop smiling. She was a symbol of absolute detachment, a true lover of the spiritual path and aflame with a desire to serve the Cause of God.^{xxxix}

Símín told others in the prison:

It is not important how they treat us here, but what is important is that our interrogators realize the goal of the Bahá'í Faith and its administrative order. We have unveiled the nature of the Bahá'í administrative order and introduced and proclaimed the Faith. It is important that the truth is being made known to judges all across Írán in order that they might understand that the Bahá'í Faith is a religion, not a political movement.^{xl}

She warned her mother,

Don't expect that I shall be allowed to leave here.

Símín always pleaded with her family to recognize that she was content with the will of God and prayed that they would be able to reconcile themselves to separation from her.

Valiant and joyful to the end of her earthly life, Símín brought happiness, radiance and courage into that dark prison. [CLICK]

SLIDE 51 She was vivacious. She was joyous. She was focused. She dreamed of becoming a doctor. She was a 17-year old high school student. She was Íránian, but she was first and foremost a Bahá'í. She was devoted to God and to her Faith. She loved children; she taught Bahá'í children's classes. She was bold and audacious. She was named Muná — Muná Mahmúdnizhad. Her name will never be forgotten.

It may seem odd, but when I think of Muná , the lyrics of a Beatles' tune runs through my head:

Well, she was just 17. You know what I mean. And the way she looked was way beyond compare.^{xli}

It's just a love song about a boy and a girl, or a man and a woman, you might think. Instead, though, it can be about an inspiration — and those she inspires.

On the 23rd of October 1982, the Revolutionary Guards came to her home and arrested her. "*Well, she was just 17.*" Just a

teenager.

Combining the humility and dignity of a mature Bahá'í and the innocence and purity of a sweet child, Muná was popular with her peers. She understood the importance of education; she herself planned to study medicine. Since Bahá'í children were banned from attending school, Muná taught classes for them. This was the "crime" that sent her to the gallows. It seems unfathomable. *"You know what I mean."*

The green-eyed brunette warmed everyone she met with her wide and seemingly constant smile. When you look at photos of Muná, you'll smile, too. Her effervescence seems to bubble up off the page. *"And the way she looked was way beyond compare."*

In 1982, during a time when persecutions of the Bahá'ís, Írán's largest religious minority, were escalating at an alarming rate, Muná boldly wrote an essay that infuriated school officials. In it she dared demand:

Why in my country are those who are members of my religion abducted from their homes at night and taken to mosques in their nightgowns, and subjected to whipping? As we have recently witnessed in our own city, Shíráz, their homes are looted and set on fire. Hundreds of people leave their homes in fear. Why? Because of the gift of liberty that

Islam has brought? Why am I not free to express my ideas in this society? Why do I not have freedom of speech so that I can write in the newspapers, and express my ideas on the radio and television^{xlii}

A few days after she turned in that essay came the ominous knock on the door of her family's home. Her mother, understandably upset by her husband's arrest, became distraught when she realized that her younger daughter was also being taken.

I can understand that you would want to take my husband with you, but why do you want to take Muná ? She is only a child.^{xliii}

It has been reported that one of them insisted,

Do not call her a child. You should call her a little Bahá'í teacher. Look at this poem. It is not the work of a child. It could set the world on fire. Someday she will be a great Bahá'í teacher.^{xliv}

— a very prescient statement.

Due in great part to her death, Muná has indeed become a great teacher — because her story continues to simultaneously alarm, fascinate and intrigue people. Curiosity about what made this vibrant teenage girl accept, nay welcome, her fate, compels

people to want to investigate the Bahá'í Faith when they might not have otherwise.

Muná admonished her mother:

Why do you beg these people? What offense have I committed? Have I been a bad girl? Do we have smuggled goods in the house? They arrest me just because I believe in Bahá'u'lláh. Mother, this is not going to prison, it is going to Heaven. This is not falling into a pit, it is rising to the moon.^{xiv}

Four times that beautiful girl who would never reach the full flower of womanhood was subjected to lengthy interrogations and tortures: physical, mental, and emotional. During each session Muná was told that if she would just renounce her belief in the Bahá'í Faith, she could go home, return to school, and all would be well with her once again. She refused each time.

'Abdu'l-Bahá once declared, **[CLICK]**

SLIDE 52

*Ask a Bahá'í to deny any of the great Prophets, to deny his faith or to deny Moses, Muhammad or Christ, and he will say: I would rather die ... A Bahá'í denies no religion; he accepts the Truth in all, and would die to uphold it.^{xlvj} **[CLICK]***

SLIDE 53 The website www.iranrights.org informs us Muná:

... was taken to the Sepah Detention Centre, where she was held incommunicado for a month. Her mother was finally given permission to take part in weekly family visits.... Because of her religious beliefs, the prison authorities considered her to be an unbeliever, and thus 'unclean' and she was subjected to humiliating treatment similar to that of atheist political prisoners. Prison wardens refused to have any physical contact with the prisoner even when, for example, they were guiding the blindfolded prisoner to the interrogation room. In such case guards would give her the end of a folded newspaper and hold the other end, avoiding contact.

The publication, *Bahá'í World*, reports that during her detention, Muná was *lashed on the soles of her feet with a cable, and forced to walk on her bleeding feet.*

Challenged by her interrogator,

Young girl, what do you know about religion?

Muná replied:

Is there a better proof of my faith than the fact that I was taken out of school to be brought here and undergo long

hours of trials? Can't you see that it is my belief that has given me the confidence to stand in your presence and answer your questions?^{xlvii}

Muná, who had twice dreamt of making this ultimate sacrifice, requested she be the final victim executed in order to pray for the strength of each one hanged before her. Attorney and human rights defender Payam Akhavan recalled:

I was a contemporary of Muná, and her extraordinary courage left a deep and lasting impression on my generation. Reports emerged from sympathetic prison guards that, after severe torture, when she was being insulted and spat upon by those that were about to hang her, she put the noose around her own neck and smiled in a final act of defiance. Her torturers had not managed to break her. Hers was a triumph of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable cruelty.^{xlviii} [CLICK]

SLIDE 54 [Blank] Moved by the death of one so young, Canadian singer/ songwriter Doug Cameron composed *Mona with the Children* which has made the list of the “Greatest Protest Songs of the 1980s.” It was turned into a music video. [CLICK]

SLIDE 55 [Video - (6:14)] [CLICK]

SLIDE 56 [Blank] Rúhí mused,

Who can say why, but I was released. And I never saw my beloved friends again. But I heard about them. Ten of them were hanged together. Do you think they were sad, the day they were taken to be executed? Were they crying? No! They were singing in the bus all the way to the place of the execution! The bus driver couldn't believe it; he asked them, "Do you know where I am taking you?"

Their reply:

Yes, that is why we are so happy!

They must have been "gazing on the face of the Belovéd" and have forgotten all else.^{xlix}

Stunned on reading the newspaper headline, *Now They Are Hanging Women*, Roger White took pen to paper and wrote, *Assurances*. [CLICK]

SLIDE 57

The children of the wind-tossed wave
go singing into silence, and, silent, dance;
so light of step, these lovelies, that

their feet don't brush the ground.

No prince to partner them.

Who will applaud their aerial pirouette,
their assured leap toward freedom?

More than an ocean away a million Cinderella's
arise and attack the day heroically,
their hours unsung,

shoo children to school in ritualized skirmish,
arm-wrestle the Hoover,
gorge the insatiable Maytag.

Beds tamed by ten, they earn a coffee break,
a peek at the news:

White Sale at Bloomingdale's.

David Niven Failing.

Now They Are Hanging Women.

History, too, gets on with her housework.

From the pages of *Cosmopolitan*

a beaming model whose cancer will be low-tar
fatuously consoles:

You've come a long way, baby! [CLICK]

SLIDE 58 [Blank] There have been non-political efforts on behalf of the Bahá'ís of Írán. Around the world, Bahá'í communities and individuals have tried in different ways to ensure their persecuted brothers and sisters are not forgotten, moreover to make their sufferings count and not be for naught, including, **[CLICK]**

SLIDE 59 [CLICK] Donations in their memories to Bahá'í funds and to charitable organizations. **[CLICK]**

- **[CLICK]** Projects dedicated to them, like the award-winning *Children's Theater Company*, formed in 1989 by Mehr Mansuri and dedicated to the youngest of the ten women, Muná, who believed that children could be the force for positive change. **[CLICK]**
- and The Mona Foundation, a non-profit organization in Muná's memory that supports the education of girls around the world. **[CLICK]**
- Acts of service and charity performed in their names. **[CLICK]**
- Poetry, drama, paintings and other arts created in their honor. **[CLICK]**

· And we can, each of us, examine the lives of these ordinary human beings who were forced to make extraordinary choices and use them as an example of what each of us is capable of achieving. [CLICK]

SLIDE 60 [Blank] That's the premise of *To Be as These*, by Shelly Pittman: [CLICK]

SLIDE 61 As gazelles go in grace
 over heated, sandy plains,
 moving to unquestioned havens,
As delicate blossoms dawn
 briefly upon the vine and fall
 in oblation to greater life,
As artists move beyond knowing
 wield their brush and stroke divine
 lines descending to their rising,
As lovers seem to others
 to wander in drunken illusions
 yet stray never from their fixed gaze,
They leave this simile of earth
 with memories that beckon ever
 for us to be as these.^{li} [CLICK]

SLIDE 62 [Blank] Janet McGrath, wrote a poem she simply titled with a date, probably the date she wrote it: *June 18, 1996*, which was the 13th anniversary of the tragic loss of these ten women **[CLICK]**

SLIDE 63 As hearts throb around the world,
your innocent lives are not forgotten.
A burning light
is your example of Faith,
....a blazing torch in this dark night.
Joyfully, without regret,
you yielded last breaths
at an enemy's bidding.
With gratitude and dignity,
alone, you made your choice.
Each one, single file,
keys rippling across a piano,
you sang a song for all of humanity.

With complete devotion
and rapture,

you died as you had lived.

Courage from another realm

stung your persecutors with

shame and rage....

The fragrance of your sacrifice

perfumes our very lives...

what honour, precious honour

can I do your memory each day?

What breath of service can I draw

to keep your song alive?

Over ten years have gone,

and a century is closing,

closing, closing,

...how many human candles

will be snuffed

by the whirlwinds of oppression,

before the light of justice

calms the storm?

I ask for joy and peace for each of you,

the beauty of your lives lingers sweet....

with pure devotion,

I call out to our Creator,
somehow find me worthy
just to kneel down at their feet... [CLICK]

SLIDE 64 [Blank]

It is not for us to shed our blood, but to believe, and believing, to act — to live our lives consciously, deliberately — to create bonds of friendship, trust, and unity — to sacrifice not our physical lives but rather our time and energy for the benefit of our fellow human beings — and to dedicate our material resources toward this end.

And let's not forget the Bahá'ís in Írán today. They still lack basic human rights. Some are imprisoned; some have a death sentence looming over them. Back in the 1980s when a sufficient number of governments and groups, secular and religious, protested the plight of the Bahá'ís, the Íránian authorities eased up on the imprisonments, and executions dwindled. But problems are currently on the increase, for example, [CLICK]

SLIDE 65

- Acts of arson targeting homes and vehicles of the beleaguered Bahá'ís. [CLICK]

- In May 2008, seven Bahá'í leaders were arrested and falsely accused of being involved in subversive activities. They received 20 year sentences, later reduced to 10 years. [\[CLICK\]](#)
- Homes raided, educational materials confiscated and teachers of an underground university system for Bahá'ís imprisoned. [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 66 [Blank] Neither are children spared torment. The video *A Hope and a Prayer* addresses this: [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 67 [video (4:09)] [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 68 Resolutions addressing the plight of the Iranian Bahá'í community have been passed or are under consideration around the world, including the U.S., Canada and the European parliament. [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE 69 A world-wide campaign titled *Education is Not a Crime* endeavors to make people aware of the plight of Bahá'í students in Iran for whom education is forbidden. One of their

efforts is an art movement which has street artists creating murals in countries around the globe. [\[CLICK\]](#)

SLIDE70 Mural in Sydney, Australia

SLIDE71 Mural in Pasadena, CA USA

SLIDE72 Mural in Sao Paulo, Brazil

SLIDE73 Mural in London, England

SLIDE 74 [Blank] In contemplating the fate of those ten devoted, courageous women, Ismael Velasco, wrote:

...these ten women, and their fathers, and husbands and friends who shared their fate call out to us, in that silence that speaks when words avail not, call out insistently, in the manner of their death, to the manner of our lives.

I do not know by what means to fit my feet into their crimson footprints. My spirit breaks with love and inadequacy...I can only hope the heat of their affliction is such as to burn at least some links in the long chain of self-defeat that holds me back from flying as my innermost spirit visions and desires, and that the selfsame heat does make me move, move an inch, a mile, a farsakh...

Likewise, Rúhí, who shared the imprisonment but not the martyrdom with the ten precious souls who willingly, yes, joyfully, gave their lives for their Belovéd, never stops thinking of them and about how their sacrifice affects all of us. It seems appropriate, therefore, to end with Rúhí's words that closed the play, *When the Moment Comes*:

Sometimes I think they were the lucky ones. It's hard to understand why they were put to death, but I know one thing: they were prepared for it, each and every one of them...it was what they most desired. That was the end of their journey. They reached their goal. But for us, the journey goes on. Every day, every minute of our lives we make decisions about the path our journey will take. Our destination is yet to be reached. Which way are you going? I hope I'll see you along the way.^{lii}

◆END◆

Endnotes

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- ⁱ Excerpt from *When the Moment Comes*, by Ann Boyles
- ⁱⁱ *ibid.*
- ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid.*
- ^{iv} The Bahá'ís of Írán: 'Calamities Surround Us,' *The Washington Post*, August 31, 1986
- ^v Excerpt from *When the Moment Comes*, by Ann Boyles
- ^{vi} Excerpt from *When the Moment Comes*, by Ann Boyles
- ^{vii} Excerpt from *When the Moment Comes*, by Ann Boyles
- ^{viii} **Error! Main Document Only.** From remarks made to a U.N. committee on 11/23/83 by Rev. Constantine N. Dombalis, Dean of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Richmond, VA, who was a U.S. public delegate to the U.N.
- ^{ix} Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, from the Arabic, #19
- ^x 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Fire and Light*, p. 14
- ^{xi} Roger White, *Sweetmeat, Occasions of Grace*, p. 4
- ^{xii} Persecution of the Baha'i Community of Iran, 1983-1986, compiled on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, in *Baha'i World*, Volume 19, p. 182
- ^{xiii} *ibid.*
- ^{xiv} *ibid.*
- ^{xv} *ibid.*
- ^{xvi} *ibid.*
- ^{xvii} Roger White, *Ru'yá, Occasions of Grace*, p.
- ^{xviii} *ibid.*
- ^{xix} 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Star of the West*, Volume 6, p. 20.
- ^{xx} 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 98
- ^{xxi} Persecution of the Baha'i Community of Iran, 1983-1986, compiled on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, in *Baha'i World*, Volume 19, p. 186
- ^{xxii} *ibid.* pp. 186-187
- ^{xxiii} Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 206
- ^{xxiv} Persecution of the Baha'i Community of Iran, 1983-1986, compiled on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, in *Baha'i World*, Volume 19, p. 185
- ^{xxv} *ibid.*
- ^{xxvi} *ibid.*, pp. 185-186
- ^{xxvii}
- ^{xxviii} 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 364
- ^{xxix} *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 315
- ^{xxx} ^{xxx} Persecution of the Baha'i Community of Iran, 1983-1986, compiled on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, in *Baha'i World*, Volume 19, p. 184
- ^{xxxi} Excerpt from *When the Moment Comes*, by Ann Boyles
- ^{xxxii} *ibid.*
- ^{xxxiii} *ibid.* p. 183
- ^{xxxiv} Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, from the Arabic, p. 15
- ^{xxxv} Persecution of the Baha'i Community of Iran, 1983-1986, compiled on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, in *Baha'i World*, Volume 19, p. 186
- ^{xxxvi} Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, from the Arabic
- ^{xxxvii} Persecution of the Baha'i Community of Iran, 1983-1986, compiled on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, in *Baha'i World*, Volume 19, p. 182
- ^{xxxviii} <http://bahaichronicles.org/shirin-dalvand/>
- ^{xxxix} Persecution of the Baha'i Community of Iran, 1983-1986, compiled on behalf of the Universal House

of Justice, in *Baha'i World*, Volume 19, p. 185

^{xl} *ibid.*

^{xli} The Beatles, *I Saw Her Standing There*

^{xlii} On the Anniversary of the Execution of Mona Mahmudnizhad, a 17-Year Old Baha'i Teacher, <http://iranpresswatch.org/post/10493/> July 5, 2014 ,

^{xliii} *The Story of Mon*, Baha'i Canada Publications

^{xliv} Persecution of the Baha'i Community of Iran, 1983-1986, compiled on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, in *Baha'i World*, Volume 19, p. 183

^{xlv} *The Story of Mon*, Baha'i Canada Publications

^{xlvi} - 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in London*, p. 56

^{xlvii} *The Story of Mon*, Baha'i Canada Publications

^{xlviii} Iranian regime still fears girl hanged 30 years ago, thestar.com, May 12, 2014

^{xlix} Excerpt from *When the Moment Comes*, by Ann Boyles

^l Roger White, Assurances, in *Occasions of Grace*, p. 10

^{li} Shelly Pittman, To Be as These, *Abiding Silence*, p. 12

^{lii} Excerpt from *When the Moment Comes*, by Ann Boyles