

Sulaymán Khán-i-Tunúkábání

Sulaymán Khán was the emigrant and settler who was given the title of Jamáli'd-Dín. He was born in Tunúkábán, into an old family of that region. He was cradled in wealth, bred to ease, reared in the comfortable ways of luxury. From his early childhood he had high ambitions and noble aims, and he was honor and aspiration personified. At first he planned to outdistance all his fellows and achieve some lofty rank. For this reason he left his birthplace and went to the capital, Tìhrán, where he hoped to become a leader, surpassing the rest of his generation.

In Tìhrán, however, the fragrance of God was borne his way, and he listened to the summons of the Well-Beloved. He was saved from the perturbations of high rank; from all the din and clatter, the glory, the poms and palaces, of this heap of dust, the world. He threw off his chains, and by God's grace, discovered peace. To him, the seat of honor was now no different from the place where people removed their slippers at the door, and high office was a thing soon gone and forgotten. He was cleansed from the stain of living, his heart was eased, for he had burst the shackles that held him to this present life.

Putting on the garments of a pilgrim, he set out to find his loving Friend, and came to the Most Great Prison. Here for a time he rested, under the protection of the Ancient Beauty; here he gained the honor of entering the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, and listened to momentous teachings from His holy lips. When he had breathed the scented air, when his eyes were illumined and his ears attuned to the words of the Lord, he was permitted to make a journey to India, and bidden to teach the true seekers after truth.

Resting his heart on God, in love with the sweet savors of God, on fire with the love of God, he left for India. There he wandered, and whenever he came to a city he raised the call of the Great Kingdom and delivered the good news that the Speaker of the Mount had come. He became one of God's farmers, scattering the holy seed of the Teachings. This sowing was fruitful. Through him a considerable number found their way into the Ark of Salvation. The light of Divine guidance was shed upon those souls, and their eyes were brightened with beholding the mighty signs of God. He became the focal point of every gathering, the honored guest. To this day, in India, the results of his auspicious presence are clear to see, and those whom he taught are now, in their turn, guiding others to the Faith.

Following his Indian journey, Sulaymán Khán came back to Bahá'u'lláh, but when he arrived, the ascension had taken place. Continuously, he shed his tears, and his heart was a thurible for sorrow. But he remained loyal to the Covenant, well rooted in Heaven.

Not long before His passing, Bahá'u'lláh had said: "Should someone go to Persia, and manage to convey it, this message must be delivered to Amínu's-Sultán:ⁱ 'You took steps to help the prisoners; you freely rendered them a befitting service; this service will not be forgotten. Rest assured that it will bring you honor and call down a blessing upon all your affairs. O Amínu's-Sultán! Every house that is raised up will one day fall to ruin, except the house of God; that will grow more massive and be better guarded day by day. Then serve the Court of God with all your might, that you may discover the way to a home in Heaven, and found an edifice that will endure forever.'" After the departure of Bahá'u'lláh, this message was conveyed to Amínu's-Sultán.

In Ádhirbayján the Turkish clerics had brought down Áqá Siyyid Asadu'lláh, hunted him down in Ardabíl and plotted to shed his blood;

but the Governor, by a ruse, managed to save him from being physically beaten and then murdered: he sent the victim to Tabríz in chains, and from there had him conducted to Tīhrán. Amínu's-Sultán came to the prisoner's assistance and, in his own office, provided Asadu'lláh with a sanctuary. One day when the Prime Minister was ill, Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh arrived to visit him. The Minister then explained the situation, and lavished praise upon his captive; so much so that the Sháh, as he left, showed great kindness to Asadu'lláh, and spoke words of consolation. This, when at an earlier time, the captive would have been strung up at once to adorn some gallows-tree, and shot down with a gun.

After a time Amínu's-Sultán lost the Sovereign's favor. Hated, in disgrace, he was banished to the city of Qum. Thereupon this servant dispatched Sulaymán Khán to Persia, carrying a prayer and a missive written by me. The prayer besought God's aid and bounty and succor for the fallen Minister, so that he might, from that corner of oblivion, be recalled to favor. In the letter we clearly stated: "Prepare to return to Tīhrán. Soon will God's help arrive; the light of grace will shine on you again; with full authority again, you will find yourself free, and Prime Minister. This is your reward for the efforts you exerted on behalf of a man who was oppressed." That letter and that prayer are today in the possession of the family of Amínu's-Sultán.

From Tīhrán, Sulaymán Khán journeyed to Qum, and according to his instructions went to live in a cell in the shrine of the Immaculate.ⁱⁱ The relatives of Amínu's-Sultán came to visit there; Sulaymán Khán inquired after the fallen Minister and expressed the wish to meet him. When the Minister learned of this, he sent for Sulaymán Khán. Placing all his trust in God, Sulaymán Khán hastened to the Minister's house and, meeting him in private, presented the letter from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Minister rose, and received the letter with extreme respect. Then addressing the

Khán he said: “I had given up hope. If this longing is fulfilled, I will arise to serve; I will preserve and uphold the friends of God.” Then he expressed his gratitude, indebtedness and joy, and added, “Praise be to God, I hope again; I feel that by His aid, my dream will come true.”

In brief, the Minister pledged himself to serve the friends, and Sulaymán Khán took his leave. The Minister then desired to give him a sum of money to defray the expenses of his journey, but Sulaymán Khán refused, and despite the Minister’s insistence, would accept nothing. The Khán had not yet reached the Holy Land on his return journey when Amínu’s-Sultán was recalled from exile and immediately summoned to the Premiership again. He assumed the position and functioned with full authority; and at first he did indeed support the believers, but toward the end, in the case of the Yazd martyrdoms, he was neglectful. He neither helped nor protected the sufferers in any way, nor would he listen to their repeated pleas, until all of them were put to death. Accordingly he too was dismissed, a ruined man; that flag which had flown so proudly was reversed, and that hoping heart despaired.

Sulaymán Khán lived on in the Holy Land, near the Shrine which the Exalted Assembly circle about. He kept company with the believers until the day of inescapable death, when he set out for the mansions of Him Who liveth, and dieth not. He turned his back on this heap of dust, the world, and hurried away to the country of light. He broke out of this cage of contingent being and soared into the endless, placeless Realm. May God enfold him in the waters of His mercy, cause His forgiveness to rain down upon him, and bestow on him the wonders of abounding grace. Salutations be unto him, and praise.

ⁱThe Prime Minister.

ⁱⁱQum is the shrine city of Fátimih, “the Immaculate.” Sister of the eighth Imám, Imám Riḍá, she was buried here in 816 A.D.