

NOTES on Tablet of Ahmad (Arabic) by Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 2, p. 107-36)

The Lawh-i-Ahmad (Tablet of Ahmad) is one of the best known Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, translated into English and many other languages. It was revealed around 1282 A.H. (1865) in honour of Ahmad, a native of Yazd. A cursory glance at the original Tablet makes it clear that Bahá'u'lláh wrote this before He was poisoned by Mirza Yahya.[1]

[1 See chapter 7.]

The life story of Ahmad is very interesting. An account of his life is recorded in the annals of the Faith prepared by the Bahá'í community of Ishqabad. According to this account he lived to be one hundred and died in the year 1320 A.H. (1902). In his unpublished 'History of the Faith in the Province of Yazd', Haji Muhammad-Tahir-i-Malmiri has also written a brief account of Ahmad's life. In it he states that Ahmad died at the age of one hundred and thirteen!

Probably one of the reasons for this discrepancy is that in an Islamic community, people often did not know the date of their birth. There was no such thing as public registration of births; some parents used to record the birth of their children privately, but the individual did not care about the date. He did not attach importance to his birthday, nor did he ever celebrate it. This attitude was due to the teachings of Islam which taught man to be self-effacing and not to glory in himself. The only person whose birthday merited celebration was the Prophet of God.

Ahmad was born into a rich and influential family in Yazd. From his early days, when he was still in his teens, he felt a great attraction towards mysticism. At that age he often [108] secluded himself in a room in order to commune with God. His greatest hope in life was to come face to face with the promised Qá'im (Promised One of Islam). He listened to any person who would show him the way, and often sat at the feet of ascetics and dervishes who claimed to possess the divine light within them.

However, his father and the family, who were orthodox Muslims, were perturbed by the way Ahmad was inclined towards mendicancy and asceticism. They brought much pressure upon him to relinquish his ideas, but Ahmad's indomitable spirit could not be fettered by orthodoxy. Knowing that the atmosphere of his homeland was not conducive to his spiritual development, Ahmad took the unusual step of leaving his home. In those days it was a rare occasion for a young person to leave his native town, especially without the consent of his parents. But Ahmad was driven by an irresistible force to find the essence of Truth and attain the presence of the Qá'im.

Pretending that he was going to the public bath, one morning Ahmad took a bundle of clothes and disappeared. He travelled towards the south until he reached India where he hoped he might find a clue leading him to his Beloved. This was possibly around 1242 A.H. (1826), some twenty years before the Declaration of the Báb.

According to Haji Muhammad-Tahir-i-Malmiri, Ahmad was over twenty years of age when he left Yazd. He writes:

I was with him [Ahmad] for about four years during the latter part of his life when he lived in Munj-i-Bavanat [in the province of Fars]. He was twenty years of age during the reign of Fath-'Ali Shah when Prince Khanlar Mirza was the Governor of Yazd. He was then leading an ascetic life, spending his time in prayer and meditation. He was inclined to be a dervish, and left Yazd for India in the garb of a dervish. On his way, in Bushihr [Bushire] he came in contact with a baker, and he remained there for some time. He used to recount some stories about this baker, saying that he [the baker] had a great station in the spiritual realms, was aware [109] of divine presence and was reputed to be undergoing spiritual experiences. However, Ahmad left Bushihr for Bombay where he continued his ascetic life and was engaged in prayer and meditation.(1)

Ahmad had said that throughout these journeys he came in contact with many mystics, Sufis and other leaders of thought. But he became disappointed and disillusioned. In spite of imposing upon himself a rigorous self-discipline, and carrying out many prayerful exercises such as prostrating himself and repeating a certain verse of the Qur'án twelve thousand times, he did not find the object of his quest in India.

Dismayed and disheartened, he retraced his steps to Persia. He made his home in Kashan where he married and worked as a hand-weaver. The following is an extract from his spoken chronicle to some believers.

Some time passed, and the news of the Báb from Shiraz reached many areas including Kashan. A strong urge was created in me to investigate this message. I made enquiries through every channel, until one day I met a traveller[1] in the caravanserai. When I enquired of him, he said 'If you are a seeker of truth proceed to Mashhad[2] where you may visit a certain Mulla Abdu'l-Khaliq-i-Yazdi who can help you in your investigations.'

[1 This traveller must have been a Bábí himself.]

[2 The distance between Kashan and Mashhad (Meshed) is approximately 500 miles.]

After hearing this, I set off on my journey early next day. I walked all the way to Tihran and from there to Mashhad. However, upon my arrival I became ill and had to convalesce for two months in that city. On recovering, I called at the home of Mulla Abdu'l-Khaliq and informed the servant that I wished to meet his master. I met the Mulla and acquainted him with my quest. On hearing this, he became very angry with me and threw me out. However, I called again the next

day, cried aloud and implored him to guide me. When he saw I was earnest and steadfast in my search for truth, he then told me to meet him that night in the mosque of [110] Gawhar-Shad where he would put me in touch with someone who could tell me the whole truth.[1]

I went to the mosque in the evening, but after attending the prayers and listening to him preach, I lost him because of the crowds. The next morning, I arrived at his house and explained what had happened. He instructed me to go to the mosque of Pir-Zan that evening and promised that he would send someone there to meet me and take me to the appointed place. Guided by the man who met me in the mosque, after walking some distance I passed through a corridor into the courtyard of a house and went upstairs into a room. I saw a venerable figure who occupied the seat of honour. Mulla Abdu'l-Khaliq, who was standing at the door, intimated to me that this great man was the one he wanted me to meet. This was no less a person than Mulla Sadiq-i-Khurasani.[2]

After attending a few meetings I was enabled to recognize and acknowledge the truth of the Message of the Báb. Afterwards, Mulla Sadiq instructed me to return to my wife and

family in Kashan and resume my work. He also advised me not to teach the Faith unless I found a hearing ear.

Thereupon, I returned to Kashan and soon discovered that Haji Mirza Jani of Kashan was also a believer. The two of us were the only Bábís in that city.

When the Báb was conducted from Isfahan to Tihran, Haji Mirza Jani paid the sum of two hundred tumans[3] to the officers [in charge of conducting the Báb to Tihran] who allowed him to entertain the Báb in his house where He stayed for two nights.[4] Haji Mirza Jani also invited me to go there and attain the presence of our beloved Lord.(2)

[1 In those days, the believers were very careful not to disclose their Faith indiscriminately to the public. They taught the Faith only to those who were truly sincere.]

[2 One of the outstanding followers of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. For more information about him refer to *The Dawn-Breakers, Memorials of the Faithful and The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, vol. I.]

[3 This was considered a very large sum of money in those days.]

[4 The Báb actually stayed three nights in Kashan. Some historians have stated that one of the reasons that Haji Mirza Jani gave to the officers for entertaining the Báb in his

house, was that the two of them were merchants and Haji Mirza Jani was anxious to clear up his accounts with Him.] [111]

Ahmad then describes his meeting with the Báb and talks about His majesty, dignity and beauty as He conversed with a few of the divines of Kashan. Soon after this the number of believers in Kashan increased and persecutions started. Ahmad continues his story:

One day, a number of ruffians attacked the believers and took all our possessions, they even broke all doors and windows. I hid myself in the wind tower[1] of the house and remained there for forty days. The friends brought me food and water in secret.

[1 Most old houses in central Persia had a huge ventilation shaft which looked like a tall tower. In the summer hot air would rise through it and cause a natural draught which helped cool part of the house. These were the wind towers which puzzled Marco Polo as he travelled through that part of the world.]

Since it became difficult to live in Kashan, I set off for Baghdad. It was about five years since Bahá'u'lláh had taken up residence in that city. On the way, I met a stranger who was also travelling. Both of us indicated that our destination was Karbila.[1] Throughout the journey we conducted ourselves as Muslims and prayed according to Muslim rites. On

our arrival in Baghdad, I walked in the direction of the house of Bahá'u'lláh. I found that my friend was also going in the same direction, and soon I discovered that he was also a Bábí! We had both dissimulated our faith.[2]

[1 A holy city to which the followers of Shí'ah Islam go on pilgrimage. Since Baghdad in those days was the focal point for the Bábís, people became suspicious, if someone set off for Baghdad, and often accused him of being a Bábí.]

[2 Dissimulation of one's faith which is a form of lip-denial had been practised among Shí'ah Muslims for centuries and was regarded as justifiable at times of peril. The Bábís often resorted to it also. It is, however, against the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to dissimulate one's faith.]

After being admitted to the house of Bahá'u'lláh, I attained His presence. He turned to me and said 'What a man! He becomes a Bábí and then goes and hides in the wind tower!'[1] I remained in Baghdad for six years and worked as a [112] hand-weaver. During this period my soul was bountifully nourished from His glorious presence and I had the great honour to live in the outer apartment of His blessed house.

[1 Not to be taken as the exact words of Bahá'u'lláh. However, they convey the sense of what He said. (A.T.)]

One day, they brought the news of the death of Siyyid

Isma'il of Zavarih.[1] Bahá'u'lláh said: 'No one has killed him. Behind many myriad veils of light, We showed him a glimmer of Our glory; he could not endure it and so he sacrificed himself.'[2] Some of us then went to the bank of the river and found the body of Siyyid Isma'il lying there. He had cut his own throat with a razor which was still held in his hand. We removed the body and buried it.

[1 See vol. I, pp. 101-3.]

[2 Not to be taken as the exact words of Bahá'u'lláh. However, they convey the sense of what He said. (A.T.)]

However, I was basking in the sunshine of Bahá'u'lláh's presence until the Sultan's decree for Bahá'u'lláh's departure to Constantinople was communicated. It was thirty-one days after Naw-Ruz that the Blessed Beauty went to the Garden of Najib Pasha. On that day the river overflowed and they had to open the lock gates to ease the situation. On the ninth day the flooding subsided and Bahá'u'lláh's family left the house in Baghdad and went to the Garden. Immediately after their crossing, however, the river began to swell again and the lock gates had to be re-opened. On the twelfth day Bahá'u'lláh left for Constantinople. Some of the believers accompanied Him and some including this servant had to remain

in Baghdad. At the time of His departure, all of us were together in the Garden. Those who were to remain behind were standing on one side. His blessed Person came to us and spoke words of consolation to us. He said that it was better that we remain behind. He also said that He had allowed some to accompany Him, merely to prevent them from making mischief and creating trouble.

One of the friends recited the following poem of Sa'di in a voice filled with emotion and deep sorrow:

'Let us shed tears as clouds pour down in the spring;
Even the stones wail when lovers part.'

Bahá'u'lláh responded, 'These words were truly meant for today.'^[3+]F2

[113]

These few stories of Bahá'u'lláh which Ahmad has left to posterity, together with this brief account of his own life, constitute the major part of his spoken chronicle. In it he has not described in detail the tremendous impact which his attaining the presence of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh had upon him. Nor has he spoken about those six glorious years that

he lived in such close proximity to Bahá'u'lláh. But we know that there were very few among the companions of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad who acquired such faith and spiritual insight as Ahmad did. He was vivified by the potency of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and had the capacity and worthiness to acquire from Him such great spiritual magnetism and radiance that they dominated his being throughout his long life.

Of him, Haji Muhammad-Tahir-i-Malmiri writes:

Ahmad stayed in Baghdad for some years and attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh there. He became the recipient of His bounties and favours. Once he told me that he had beheld the innermost Beauty of the Blessed Perfection.[1] He was speaking the truth, because he had a Tablet in the handwriting of Bahá'u'lláh which testified that Ahmad had gazed upon His hidden Beauty.(4)

[1 Bahá'u'lláh. (A.T.)]

After Bahá'u'lláh's departure for Constantinople, Ahmad remained in Baghdad and served the Faith in that city with great devotion. However, in his heart he was longing to attain the presence of His Lord again. After some time, he could no longer bear to stay away and so he set off for Adrianople. When he arrived in Constantinople, Bahá'u'lláh sent him a Tablet which is now universally known as The Tablet of Ahmad. On reading this Tablet, Ahmad knew what was expected of him. He surrendered his own will to

Bahá'u'lláh's and instead of completing his journey to Adrianople and attaining the presence of His Lord, he returned to Persia with the sole purpose of teaching and propagating the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the Bábí community. [114]

Following the example of Munib and Nabil-i-A'zam who were sent by Bahá'u'lláh to teach His Cause, Ahmad travelled extensively throughout Persia and gave the glad-tidings of the coming of 'Him Whom God shall make manifest' to many of the Bábís. Through his dedicated efforts a great many recognized the station of Bahá'u'lláh and became His ardent followers. The Bábí community at that time was in such a state of deprivation and perversity that sometimes the Bábís showed hostility towards Bahá'í teachers. In his spoken chronicle Ahmad has recounted one such incident in Khurasan. He says:

I left Tihran for Khurasan and spoke to many concerning the advent of 'Him Whom God shall make manifest'. I went to Furugh[1] (Province of Khurasan) in the garb of a dervish, and spoke about 'Him Whom God shall make manifest' to Mulla Mirza Muhammad[2] and his brothers. In the course of our discussions they became aggressive and fiercely assaulted me. In the struggle which ensued they broke my tooth. When the fighting had stopped and emotions subsided, I resumed my discussion, saying that the Báb had specifically mentioned that 'Him Whom God shall make manifest'

would appear by the name of Baha. They promised to accept the claims of Bahá'u'lláh should I be able to verify my statement.

I asked them to bring the Writings of the Báb to me.

They made an opening in the wall and took out all the Writings which were hidden for fear of the enemy.[3] As soon as I opened one of them, we found a passage which indicated that 'He Whom God shall make manifest' would bear the [115] name of Baha. They happily embraced the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and I left them and travelled to other towns.(5)

[1 Bahá'u'lláh has designated new names for certain towns and villages in the Province of Khurasan: Furugh (Brightness) for Dugh-Abad; Madinatu'r-Ridvan (City of Paradise) for Nishapur; Madinatu'l-Khadra (the Verdant City) for Sabzivar; Faran (Paran) for Tun; and Jadhba (Ecstasy) for Tabas. Bahá'í writers use the new designations in their writings.]

[2 A survivor of the struggle of Shaykh Tabarsi, he became an ardent follower of Bahá'u'lláh.]

[3 To protect the Holy Writings as well as their own lives, the early believers often kept the Writings in containers which were hidden in the walls or under the ground.]

It is interesting to note that these brothers in Furugh became outstanding Bahá'ís, especially Mirza Mahmud-i-Furughi, the son of Mulla Mirza Muhammad. He was an heroic soul, an embodiment of faith and courage, and the indefatigable defender of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.

Concerning Ahmad and his latter days, Haji Muhammad-Tahir-i-Malmiri has written the following:

For some time Ahmad lived and worked in Kashan. The Tablet of Ahmad (Arabic) was revealed in his honour and he used to carry with him the original Tablet which is in the handwriting of the Blessed Beauty. However, his wife died in Kashan and his daughter[1] was married to a man who held the post of Saqqa-Bashi [water supplier] to the court of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh in Tihran. Soon after this he went to Shiraz and then to Nayriz where he married again and lived in that area for about twenty years. He also spent some time at Sarvistan (province of Fars). He was a very simple man, pure and truthful. The reason for his coming to Munj was that he wanted to go to Tihran. His daughter ... had written repeatedly to Aqay-i-Bashir-i-Ilahi,[2] requesting him to arrange for her aged father to go to Tihran, as she longed to see him once again. However, Ahmad was not much inclined to go. He was ninety-six years of age when he arrive in Munj, but was in the utmost health and vigour. He spent most of his time in reading the Holy Writings, especially his own Tablet which he chanted very often. He stayed for four years in Munj until the Afnan[3] arranged for him to

travel to Tihran in the care of his trusted servant. He stayed for some time in Tihran and went for a visit to Qazvin.(6)

[1 Soon after Ahmad became a Bábí he lost his only son who was survived by a younger boy named Jamal, the grandson of Ahmad. Later Ahmad took Jamal under his care and protection and Jamal remained a steadfast Bahá'í all his life.]

[2 A believer of wide repute in Shiraz. Mirza Muhammad-Baqir-i-Afnan.] [116]

The Tablet of Ahmad is endowed with a special potency, and for this reason the believers often recite it at times of difficulty or trouble. Although a short Tablet, it contains all the verities of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and may be regarded as a charter setting out the requirements of faith and servitude for the individual.

In it Bahá'u'lláh refers to Himself as the 'Nightingale of Paradise', the 'Most Great Beauty' and the 'Tree of Life' and proclaims His august station to those who are pure in heart; He announces the advent of the Day of God and clearly indicates that he who attains His presence has entered the presence of God.

In the opening passages of this Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh announces the exalted nature of His Revelation. The terms He has used are such as to leave no doubt, for the followers of the Báb, that He was unmistakably declaring Himself to be 'Him Whom God shall make manifest', the Promised One of the Bayan. He also makes it clear that only those who are sincere and detached from everything may approach His court of holiness.

The fact that Bahá'u'lláh, in this and many other Tablets, emphasizes sincerity as a prerequisite for recognition of His station is in itself one of the proofs of the authenticity of His Message. In the presence of God there is no room for hypocrisy and deceit. In the same way that light dispels darkness, the power of truth rejects falsehood.

However, through His mercy God shows forbearance in order that the unfaithful may have the opportunity to mend their ways. For years Bahá'u'lláh tolerated the companionship of some insincere and perfidious men, with such magnanimity and grace that they all felt at ease in His presence. Haji Mirza Haydar-'Ali, in his soul-stirring book or reminiscences, the *Bihjatu's-Sudur* (The Delight of the Hearts), has recorded what Bahá'u'lláh said on this subject in 'Akká:

...He [Bahá'u'lláh] then said 'If people had eyes to see, they would not confuse the signs of God with those of [117] others. By observing the unseemly conduct of some of those who circle around Me, they would be enabled to realize, to a greater extent, the glory, the majesty, the greatness, the power and the ascendancy of God, the All-Sufficient, the Sin-Coverer, the Forgiving, the Merciful, He Who is patient and forbearing. We hear lies, but We conceal them and remain silent. Then the people who lie think that We have believed their words and that they have managed to confuse the issue in Our presence.'[1](7)

[1 These are not the exact words of Bahá'u'lláh. They are the recollections from memory of Haji Mirza Haydar-'Ali, as no one would be capable of taking notes in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and in any case this would have been considered disrespectful in such a holy atmosphere, except when He revealed Tablets and his amanuensis took them down.]

In a Tablet to a certain Muhammad-'Ali, Bahá'u'lláh reveals the following:

I swear by the beauty of the Well-Beloved! This is the Mercy that hath encompassed the entire creation, the Day whereon the grace of God hath permeated and pervaded all things. The living waters of My mercy, O Ali, are fast pouring down, and Mine heart is melting with the heat of My tenderness and love. At no time have I been able to reconcile Myself to the afflictions befalling My loved ones, or to any trouble that could becloud the joy of their hearts.

Every time My name 'the All-Merciful' was told that one of My lovers hath breathed a word that runneth counter to My wish, it repaired, grief-stricken and disconsolate to its abode; and whenever My name 'the Concealer' discovered that one of my followers had inflicted any shame or humiliation on his neighbour, it, likewise, turned back chagrined

and sorrowful to its retreats of glory, and there wept and mourned with a sore lamentation. And whenever My name 'the Ever-Forgiving' perceived that any one of My friends had committed any transgression, it cried out in its great distress, and, overcome with anguish, fell upon the dust, and was borne away by a company of the invisible angels to its habitation in the realms above. [118]

By Myself, the True One, O Ali! The fire that hath inflamed the heart of Baha is fiercer than the fire that gloweth in thine heart, and His lamentation louder than thy lamentation. Every time the sin committed by any one amongst them was breathed in the Court of His Presence, the Ancient Beauty would be so filled with shame as to wish He could hide the glory of His countenance from the eyes of all men, for He hath, at all times, fixed His gaze on their fidelity, and observed its essential requisites.(8)

In another Tablet(9)He explains that through His attribute 'The Concealer' He has concealed the faults and shortcomings of many deceitful men, who, as a result, have thought that the Manifestation of God was ignorant of their evil deeds. These men did not realize that through the knowledge of God Bahá'u'lláh was fully aware of their wrongdoings, but the sin-covering eye of God had not disclosed their iniquities. Only when they

were about to harm the Cause of God did He expel them from His presence and cast them out from among the 'people of Baha'. This is how, for example, Bahá'u'lláh treated Siyyid Muhammad-i-Isfahani, or Haji Mirza Ahmad-i-Kashani[1] and several others who for many years were associating with Him, Otherwise their insincerity was so obvious that even Bahá'u'lláh's faithful companions had noticed it. Eventually He dismissed these unfaithful souls and they threw in their lot with Mirza Yahya.

[1 See chapter 6.]

There were others who remained in the Faith for several decades, although from the beginning it became clear to many that they were corrupt and sinful men. Notorious among them were Jamal-i-Burujirdi, entitled by Bahá'u'lláh, Ismu'llahu'l-Jamal (The Name of God, Jamal), and Siyyid Mihdiy-i-Dahaji entitled Ismu'llahu'l-Mihdi (The Name of God, Mihdi). For many years these ambitious and deceitful men were foremost among the teachers of the Faith and their fame spread throughout the community. However, their hypocrisy was known to those who were close to them. Bahá'u'lláh concealed their [119] faults, revealed many Tablets for each of them, exhorted them to faithfulness and nobility and with forbearance and magnanimity overlooked their shortcomings. However, He admonished them for some of their actions which were harmful to the Faith.

For example, on one occasion, two outstanding believers, one of whom was later appointed by Bahá'u'lláh as one of the Hands of His Cause, were on their way to the province of Khurasan to meet the believers and teach the Cause. Jamal-i-Burujirdi became highly jealous of these two men. Secretly he warned the friends to keep away

from them and introduced them with a vulgar term as two foreboders of evil. This action evoked the wrath of Bahá'u'lláh. The veil of concealment which for years had protected Jamal in the hope that he would repent, was not rent asunder. The sin-covering eye of God which through loving-kindness had watched over him for so long was withdrawn. In a wrathful Tablet Bahá'u'lláh condemned the actions of Jamal and severely rebuked him for his behaviour. Jamal, however, survived this great blow which for a time shattered his prestige and reputation among the friends. He was a master of hypocrisy and soon managed to regain his position as one of the renowned teachers of the Faith in the community.

After the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, Jamal and Siyyid Mihdi both broke the Covenant and rebelled against 'Abdu'l-Bahá. They and their supporters tried very hard to bring divisions in the Faith, but were utterly confounded by the power of the Covenant, and soon perished.[1]

[1 For more details of their lives see p. 264 ff. and p. 272 ff. respectively.]

In the Tablet of Ahmad Bahá'u'lláh pays a moving tribute to the Báb and affirms that He was the King of Messengers. This statement, which constitutes one of the basic beliefs of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, had a special significance for Bahá'í teachers in those days. For their primary mission was to teach the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh to the members of the Bábí community. [120]

Those who have denied and opposed the Manifestations of God have always resorted to using the two weapons of the weak, namely persecution and the dissemination of false propaganda. Certainly some of the Bábís who had rejected the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh used this second weapon and spread false accusations that the Bahá'ís had no regard for the Báb. Such preposterous claims were designed to poison the minds of simple-hearted people. Bahá'u'lláh, in this Tablet and many others which were revealed in this period, extols the station of the Báb, refers to the Bayan as the Mother Book and enjoins on all to obey its laws and ordinances. However, most of these laws were later abrogated when Bahá'u'lláh formulated the laws and ordinances of His Faith in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (The Most Holy Book) which became the Mother Book of this Dispensation.

One of the most illuminating passages in the Tablet of Ahmad is the following:

O people, if ye deny these verses, by what proof have ye
believed in God? Produce it, O assemblage of false ones.
Nay, by the One in Whose hand is my soul, they are not,
and never shall be able to do this, even should they combine
to assist one another.(10)

In this challenging statement Bahá'u'lláh reaffirms that one of the mightiest proofs of His divine station is His Word. In His writings Bahá'u'lláh states that the first testimony which establishes the truth of the Manifestation of God is His own self. Often it is said

that the proof of the sun is the sun itself. These are the words of Bahá'u'lláh revealed in the Lawh-i-Ashraf:[1]

[1 See chapter 10.]

Say: The first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self. Next to this testimony is His revelation. For whoso faileth to recognize either the one or the other He hath established the words He hath revealed as proof of His reality and truth. This is, verily, an evidence of His tender mercy unto men.(11) [121]

The disciples of Bahá'u'lláh who were endowed with pure hearts and had the inestimable privilege of attaining His presence were similar to those who have seen the sun with their own eyes. They witnessed the glory of His Revelation and were in no need of proofs. The arguments, controversies and doubts are always heard from those quarters which are placed in darkness.

In this day, however, in order to recognize the station of Bahá'u'lláh we must turn to His words. For the Word of the Manifestation is endowed with spiritual forces beyond the ken of men. No human being, however accomplished, not even the whole of the human race put together, could ever hope to create such spiritual potency as is released by the Word of God. Indeed, one of the differences between the Word of God and the word of man is that the former derives its power from the worlds of God, is creative and

penetrates deep into the hearts of men; while the latter pertains to the world of creation. It is limited and basically impotent. The word of man has no lasting influence upon society unless it derives its potency from the teachings of God.

History has amply demonstrated the power of the Word of the Manifestations of God. Moses appeared poor and helpless in the eyes of Pharaoh, but His Word had such influence as to defeat the forces of tyranny and transform the children of Israel from a state of bondage into that of sovereignty. Christ was condemned for proclaiming a new Message. The civil and ecclesiastical authorities, hand in hand, crucified Him in order to destroy His Cause. His Word, however, potent and creative, penetrated into the western world, changed the hearts of millions, swept aside the standards of the Roman Empire and reared a new civilization in its place. Likewise Muhammad, often misunderstood in the West, revealed the Word of God as recorded in the Qur'án. His teachings and words shaped the conduct of a multiracial nation for centuries and now after a thousand years the influence of His words and the signs of His sovereignty are discernible among the Muslim communities. [122]

The utterances of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh constitute the Word of God for this age. So tremendous has been the effect of Their words that thousands of men and women have gone to the field of martyrdom and given their lives in order to promulgate Their teachings.

The Old Testament, the New Testament, the Qur'án, the Bábí and Bahá'í Scriptures, all have been the source of guidance, inspiration and spiritual life for many millions. No other book, however exalted its theme -- and there are millions of them -- has had a comparable influence upon the minds and souls of men as these heavenly books.

A careful study of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh will demonstrate that the efficacy and potency of His words are unprecedented in the annals of mankind. We can already witness the creative power of these words of Bahá'u'lláh within the present society. To cite one example, Bahá'u'lláh wrote only a few lines in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas enjoining upon His followers to establish, in every town, a House of Justice[1] (at present known as a Spiritual Assembly). This injunction, written just over a hundred years ago by a prisoner in 'Akká, exerted such an influence upon the hearts that thousands of men and women from all walks of life, of all colours and backgrounds, left their homes, scattered throughout the world, pioneered to the most inhospitable outposts of the globe, suffered many hardships and difficulties, sacrificed their substance and poured out their resources in order to establish these institutions. And they are continuing to carry out this commandment until every locality on this planet has its House of Justice. Such is the creative power of the Word of God uttered by Bahá'u'lláh! The same is true of every other commandment issued by the Supreme Pen.[2]

[1 Not to be confused with the Universal House of Justice, the supreme international body of the Faith.]

[2 Bahá'u'lláh.]

Addressing the unbelieving Arabs, the Voice of God proclaims in the Qur'án: [123]

And if ye be in doubt as to that which We have sent down
to Our Servant,[1] then produce a Surah like it, and summon
your witnesses, beside God, if ye are men of truth.(12)

[1 Muhammad.]

When this verse was revealed, a few learned men among the unbelievers composed some verses and publicized them saying that they were much more eloquent than the words of Muhammad. But they did not realize that their verses could not influence a soul, whereas the Qur'án revolutionized the lives of millions throughout the world, and in its own time created a great civilization embracing many nations.

These words of Bahá'u'lláh in the Tablet of Ahmad 'Produce it, O assemblage of false ones!' echo the words of the Qur'án, but with this greater challenge: 'Nay, by the One in Whose hand is my soul, they are not, and never shall be able to do this, even should they combine to assist one another.'(13)

Another proof of the Manifestations of God is the manner in which They influenced society. This is a unique phenomenon which no man can ever hope to equal. Let us consider some of the ways and means by which a human being can become a leader and establish a following for himself. History shows many examples. For instance, a despotic ruler can rely on his power to subdue millions under his leadership. People will rally

around him as long as he remains in power. Once he is gone, the whole system collapses, and his followers are dispersed. Similarly, a man of wealth and affluence who is willing to bestow his riches upon the people may emerge as a leader. As long as his support is forthcoming there will be many who will cluster around him. A person with social popularity and prestige may find himself becoming the centre of attraction for some admirers. A strong-willed man, by appealing to the lower nature of man, or exciting the people's sentiments, may succeed in bringing about an uprising or a revolution in which he himself becomes the focal point. Another category worth mentioning is the religious leader who leads by teaching his [124] congregation what they already believe. Should he ever decide to teach them something new, and persist in doing this, he is almost bound to be dismissed from office.

In all these examples the leader must rely on some worldly agency in order to succeed in his plans to influence people. Such an agency could be earthly power, or wealth, or social or political prestige, or religious leadership or many more. The Manifestation of God, however, lacks all these material forces.

Let us take the example of Christ. When He appeared and manifested His Cause among the Jews, He did not have earthly power or wealth by which He could influence His followers. Because of the circumstances of His birth He did not have any social standing in the community. He was not promoting His Cause by appealing to the lower instinct of man. Nor was He a religious leader preaching the established religion of the time; on the contrary He was teaching a new faith. During the three years of His ministry He suffered

persecution and in the end was crucified. Yet there was a mysterious power in His Cause which penetrated the hearts of many people who became His followers. And even after the lapse of almost two thousand years, millions still turn to Him in devotion and love. This demonstrates the power of the Holy Spirit and shows the contrast between human enterprise and divine Revelation.

Similarly, the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is spreading and being established throughout the world solely through the power of God. However, being the Supreme Revelation of God, it is endowed with a potency greater than all the Revelations of the past.[1] Though its Author spent forty years of His ministry in exile and imprisonment under the most cruel circumstances, though the forces of two despotic potentates were leagued against Him, yet in the course of that ministry He never sought assistance for the promotion of His Faith from anybody, nor did he try to establish it through compromise, expedient measures or material means. With a meekness that is characteristic of all the Manifestations of God, He submitted Himself to [125] His enemies and bore with resignation and patience the wrongs they inflicted on Him. In spite of bitter opposition, however, the proclamation of His Message from His prison cell reached the ears of the most powerful rulers of the time. The light of His Faith projected itself, during His lifetime, to thirteen countries on the Asiatic and African continents. The light is now diffused over the entire surface of the earth. His teachings have become the Spirit of the Age and the institutions of His World Order, designed to bring about the oneness of the human race on this planet, are rising throughout the world.

[1 See vol. I, pp. 64-7.]

All these achievements, foreshadowing the future triumph of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and its establishment in the fullness of time as the all-encompassing religion for mankind, have come about through the power of Bahá'u'lláh which is born of God, while the forces of this world work against Him.

Every religion has a period of validity during which it exerts a great influence upon humanity and brings about spiritual and material development, especially for those who have embraced it. The Word of the Founder of that religion influences the hearts of the people and His teachings can be put into practice. But when a new Manifestation of God appears the former religion becomes ineffective. Its influence wanes and its creative power diminishes. Its message no longer moves the heart and its teachings cease to be practical. For God has imparted to the new Revelation the validity, inspiration and influence which will lead humanity to a further point in the course of its development. The following verse in the Qur'án clearly indicates that for every religion there is a time of birth and a time of death:

Unto every nation^[1] there is a prefixed time; therefore when their term is expired, they shall not have respite for an hour, neither shall they be anticipated.(14)

[1 The word 'nation' is a translation of the Arabic word 'ummat' which also means religious community.]

In this day, the power of God and His mighty Revelation animates the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, endowing it with a world-vitalizing [126] spirit which, unaided by any earthly agency, diffuses its light over the entire surface of this planet, and builds the foundations of a universal order for the advancement and spiritualization of the entire human race.

In the Tablet of Ahmad, Bahá'u'lláh reveals:

...verily, he who turns away from this Beauty[1] hath also turned away from the Messengers of the past and showeth pride towards God from all eternity to all eternity.(15)

[1 Bahá'u'lláh.]

This statement reaffirms one of the fundamental verities of the Faith of God, that divine Revelation is progressive, the latest Manifestation of God embodying within His Revelation the essence of all past Revelations. This is similar to a human being who contains within himself at every stage in his life those qualities and attributes which he had previously acquired.[1]

[1 See vol. I, p. 65.]

Through the potency and inspiration of His words Bahá'u'lláh instilled in Ahmad a tremendous power of faith and detachment. He conferred upon him the capacity and strength to become as 'a flame of fire' to His enemies and 'a river of life eternal' to His

loved ones. Water and fire have different characteristics. Water gives life, enabling things to grow; whereas fire, while burning away objects which are perishable, creates warmth and incandescence in solid materials. The love of Bahá'u'lláh, once implanted in the heart of the believer, needs to be nourished and watered. On the other hand, the evils of hate and animosity which have been imbedded in the hearts of the enemies must needs be consumed with the fire of the love of God, so that those who are sincere may acquire the radiance and warmth of faith. Ahmad and other distinguished teachers of the Faith who travelled throughout the land performed this function. They enthused the believers, raised their spirits and vivified their souls with the life-giving waters of the Cause of [127] God. On the other hand, they appeared as a 'flame of fire' to the enemies of the Cause.

Bahá'u'lláh has made similar exhortations in other writings. For example, in a Tablet(16) to Umm-i-'Attar (Mother of Attar), He counsels her not to associate with those who have denied His Cause and risen against Him. But if ever she met them, she should appear as the 'fire of God' so that they might feel the warmth of her love towards her Lord. In another Tablet,(17) he urges a certain believer to burn, with the fire of the Word of God, the hearts of those who have denied Him and turned aside from His Cause.

Statements such as these should not be taken literally. Bahá'u'lláh never taught His followers to act aggressively towards others. But there is an invisible power, a spiritual dynamism in the Cause of God which removes every obstacle in its path and shatters the forces of its enemies. Some of Bahá'u'lláh's disciples were endowed with this power. Their tongues were as swords tearing asunder those hearts which were filled with

animosity towards the Blessed Beauty. Through the potency and fire of their utterance these heroic souls burned away the veils of prejudice and hatred and overwhelmed the forces of the unfaithful who had risen to subvert the edifice of the Cause of God.

In a Tablet which was revealed for Haji Mirza Ahmad of Kashan,[1] Bahá'u'lláh exhorts his servants in these words:

[1 See chapter 6.]

Be ablaze as the fire, that ye may burn away the veils of heedlessness and set aglow, through the quickening energies of the love of God, the chilled and wayward heart. Be light and untrammelled as the breeze, that ye may obtain admittance into the precincts of My court, My inviolable Sanctuary.(18)

Faith in God and steadfastness in His path are relative terms. The strength of a weak person is considered weakness for a strong man. To the saint, the love and devotion of the insincere [128] towards God is nothing but profanity. Therefore the measure of faith varies with the individual. Bahá'u'lláh in His Tablet has summoned Ahmad to attain the highest degree of faith. His exhortations to him are designed to lead him and others to the summit of steadfastness and courage. It is difficult to visualize that God may require a higher degree of steadfastness and faith than that demanded by Bahá'u'lláh in these words:

And be thou so steadfast in My love that thy heart shall not waver, even if the swords of the enemies rain blows upon thee and all the heavens and the earth arise against thee.(19)

These words of Bahá'u'lláh may well serve as a criterion by which the individual may determine whether he has said this Tablet with 'absolute sincerity'. The sign of sincerity is that the believer rises to such heights of faith and steadfastness that his heart does not waver even if he finds himself faced with martyrdom at the hand of the enemy. The fact that Bahá'u'lláh has established this exalted standard of faith is in itself a proof that many people will arise and achieve it. For the words of Bahá'u'lláh are creative, and the moment He uttered them, He instilled a new spirit of courage into the hearts of those who had truly recognized Him. Not only had Ahmad become endowed with the power of faith, but many others reached the loftiest heights of certitude and heroism. These souls completely banished every trace of trepidation and doubt from their hearts, remained steadfast as a mountain in the Cause of God and fearlessly faced their executioners.

To cite one example, let us recount some of the events leading to the martyrdom of one of the outstanding followers of Bahá'u'lláh, Haji Abdu'l-Majid-i-Nishapuri, who became the embodiment of faith and detachment. He was the father of Aqa Buzurg entitled Badi', who at the age of seventeen attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in the barracks of 'Akká, delivered the Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh and was consequently put to death by his men. [129]

Haji Abdu'l-Majid, addressed by Bahá'u'lláh as Aba Badi' (Father of Badi') embraced the Faith during the ministry of the Báb. He was among those early believers in the province of Khurasan taught by Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i.[1] He took part in the struggles at Shaykh Tabarsi[2] and was one of the survivors of that bloody upheaval.

[1 The first person to believe in the Báb. For further information see *The Dawn-Breakers*.]

[2 See *The Dawn-Breakers*.]

On his way to that fortress, Aba Badi', who was a wealthy man, was also the first to obey the exhortation of Mulla Husayn calling on his companions to discard their earthly possessions and leave behind everything except their swords and horses. He flung by the roadside a satchel full of turquoise which was worth a fortune. When the news of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh reached him, Aba Badi' joyously acknowledged His station and with great devotion spent his days in serving His Cause. In 1876, at an advanced age, longing to attain the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, he travelled to 'Akká where he basked in the sunshine of His glory. He has left to posterity the following spoken chronicle concerning one of his memorable interviews with Bahá'u'lláh:

One day I had the honour to be in the presence of the Blessed Beauty when He was talking about Badi' who had attained His presence, carried His Blessed Tablet to Tihran [for Násiri'd-Dín Sháh] and won the crown of martyrdom. As He was speaking, my tears were flowing profusely and my

beard became wet. Bahá'u'lláh turned to me and said 'Aba Badi'! A person who has already spent three-quarters of his life should offer up the remainder in the path of God...'

I asked 'Is it possible that my beard which is now soaked in my tears may one day be dyed crimson with my blood?' The Blessed Beauty replied 'God willing...'[1](20)

[1 The words attributed to Bahá'u'lláh are not necessarily His exact words. These are the recollections of Aba Badi', but convey the sense of what He said.] [130]

Aba Badi' returned to his native land of Khurasan, his heart glowing with the fire of the love of Bahá'u'lláh and his soul radiant with the light of His glory. He used to attend the gatherings of the friends at Mashhad where he enthused and encouraged them to steadfastness in the Cause of God and also read to them passages from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the first copy of which he had brought to Khurasan. One of the subjects he often discussed was the then imminent fulfilment of the prophecy of Bahá'u'lláh concerning the downfall of Sultan Abdu'l-'Aziz mentioned in the Tablets of Ra'is and Fu'ad.[1] He spent most of his time transcribing the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh.

[1 These Tablets will be discussed in vol. III.]

The enthusiasm with which Aba Badi' taught the Faith soon aroused the animosity of the enemies of the Cause. Foremost among them were his own brother and sister who reported his activities to a certain mujtahid, Shaykh Muhammad Taqiy-i-Bujnurdí. They informed him that their brother, a Bábí for many years, had been one of the disciples of

Mulla Husayn and had fought at Shaykh Tabarsi, and that his son had been put to death by order of the Shah. They disclosed all his activities including his recent visit to Bahá'u'lláh and his open teaching of the Bahá'í Faith. The mujtahid was alarmed by these reports and despatched two of his men to question Aba Badi' who openly spoke to them about his beliefs and proclaimed the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to them. This open confession of faith meant that there was no difficulty then in issuing his death warrant. This was in 1877, one year after Aba Badi' had attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká. He was then eighty-five years of age.

As the machinations of the clergy and the people were beginning to bear fruit, an implacable enemy of the Cause, Shaykh Muhammad-Baqir of Isfahan, stigmatized by Bahá'u'lláh as 'Wolf',^[1] arrived in Mashhad, and played a major part in this heinous crime. At first he ordered that Aba Badi' appear before him. When the latter did not pay any attention to his orders, he joined hands with the fore-mentioned Shaykh Muhammad-Taqi [131] and a certain Shaykh Abdu'r-Rahim who was foremost among the divines of Khurasan. These three mujtahids sent a petition to Prince Muhammad-Taqi Mirza, the Rukni'd-Dawlih, a brother of the Shah and the Governor of Khurasan, demanding the execution of Aba Badi'. The Prince was good-natured and very reluctant to harm the Bahá'ís, but could not resist the enormous pressures which were brought to bear by the clergy. He issued orders for the arrest of Aba Badi' who was taken into custody. But the Rukni'd-Dawlih, unwilling to harm the prisoner, did not pursue the matter any further. The divines became impatient with him and took their complaint to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh.

The King issued orders that the victim should be freed only if he denied allegiance to the new Faith.

[1 See Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Introduction.]

After this, Shaykh Muhammad-Baqir kept on pressing the Prince for execution. He went to the home of the Governor and discussed his evil plans with him. These involved tying Aba Badi' to an airborne balloon which had just been brought to Mashhad as a novelty, and letting him fall to his death. As discussions were proceeding, a tragedy struck the home of the Prince. His young daughter, to whom he was very attached, fell into a pool in the house and was drowned. The grief-stricken Prince left the meeting and Shaykh Baqir's plans had to be abandoned. The wife of the Prince was convinced that the tragic death of her daughter had come about as a punishment from God for inflicting imprisonment upon the aged Aba Badi'. She rebuked her husband very sternly and the only thing he could do was to order the transfer of Aba Badi' to other quarters whose officer in charge was friendly to the Bahá'ís.

Shaykh Muhammad-Baqir, who could no longer tolerate the passive attitude and delaying tactics of the Prince, sent another complaint to the Shah. For the second time, the monarch instructed the Prince to release the prisoner if he recanted, otherwise to deal with him in accordance with the law of religion. The Prince, who was very anxious to save Aba Badi' from execution, sent two prominent men to talk to him and induce him to recant his faith. One was Mirza Sa'id Khan, the [132] former Minister of Foreign Affairs;[1] the other was Prince Abu'l-Hasan Mirza, the Shaykhu'r-Ra'is,[2] who was a

follower of Bahá'u'lláh. These two men pleaded with him on behalf of the Governor, that for his own protection he should make a statement that he bore no allegiance to the Cause. Only then would the Governor be able to defend his case and save his life. They explained to him that there was no other way, because the hands of the Governor were tied and he could do nothing else to avert this situation.

[1 See vol. I, pp. 225-6.]

[2 He was a poet of remarkable talent, a literary man of great eloquence, who because of his rank and personality was able to carry on his public function and at the same time associate with the Bahá'ís. He attained the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Holy Land and has written many moving poems in glorification of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.]

Aba Badi' stood firm and resolute. He could not barter his Faith for this transitory world. The love of Bahá'u'lláh had so magnetized him that there was no fear in his heart. He told them to convey to the Rukni'd-Dawlih that he could neither recant nor dissimulate his Faith, and that he would be prepared to give his life if necessary. The Governor did not give up. He persevered in his plan to induce Aba Badi' to recant. He is reported to have sent about twelve men at different times, all of whom were reckoned among the dignitaries of the Province of Khurasan, to persuade him to change his course of action. But they all failed. One of these men reported that instead of paying heed to the exhortations of the Rukni'd-Dawlih, Aba Badi' was engaged in teaching him the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Eventually the end came. The Prince had no choice but to carry out the wishes of the clergy and therefore issued orders for the execution of Aba Badi'.

One day before his martyrdom, Aba Badi' asked a certain believer, Khadijih Khanum, who used to visit him every day in jail and was a link between him and the believers, not to come again, for he knew that the next day was to be his last in this world. He had a dream that they brought a horse on which to [133] take him away; he mounted the horse, but when he arrived at Maydan-i-Arg (a public square at Mashhad) he fell from the horse. He told Khadijih Khanum that this public square would be the scene of his martyrdom.

The following day, the jailer secretly informed the believers that the fateful hour had arrived and the execution would take place that day. The friends, grief-stricken, gathered in the House of Bábíyyih[1] praying and waiting for news. In the meantime a number of government officials, the executioners and a large crowd of people had gathered outside the prison. After a few hours, the old but imposing figure of Aba Badi' emerged from the prison. His radiant face and white beard gave him a dignified bearing, while the heavy chain around his frail neck made him the very picture of meekness and resignation. He was conducted amid the jeers and insults of a hostile crowd to the court of the Governor. On the way he faced the spectators and, beaming with joy, recited these two lines of a celebrated Persian poem:

[1 An historic house which was once the centre of great activities for the Bábís in Mashhad. See *The Dawn-Beakers*.]

To God's pleasure we are resigned;

A chained lion feels no shame.

To my neck the Beloved's cord is tied;

He leads me whither His will ordains.

In the government house, he appeared before three people: the Governor, the fore-mentioned Mirza Sa'id Khan and Shaykh Muhammad-Baqir. The latter, addressing Aba Badi', said: 'We have no doubt about your being a Bahá'í, but if you are not, you must now execrate and denounce the Founders of this Faith.' Aba Badi' refused to do so. The Shaykh then asked him: 'What was wrong with Islam that you became a Bahá'í?' Aba Badi' spoke about the beliefs of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and concluded his statement by saying that the reality and the essence of Islam was within this Faith. Next the Governor [134] pleaded with Aba Badi' to comply with the Shaykh's orders, but he again reiterated his refusal. The Shaykh insisted that unless he uttered words of execration against Bahá'u'lláh, he must be put to death. Mirza Sa'id Khan, who had previously interviewed Aba Badi' in the prison, was perturbed by the attitude of the Shaykh and stated that he found nothing in the prisoner's statements to indicate that he was an infidel and blasphemous, deserving of death. The Shaykh, angered by these remarks, merely pointed out to Mirza Sa'id Khan that he could not hope to secure the prisoner's freedom with these words, and thus deal a blow to the Faith of Islam. Addressing the Governor, the Shaykh then reiterated his verdict of death and the former ordered his men to carry it out.

Aba Badi' was led by the executioners to Maydan-i-Arg where great crowds had gathered to watch him die. One of the friends pushed his way through the people, until he came

close to him. There he pleaded with him to recant at the last moment, saying it would save his life and would do no harm to his Faith. In reply Aba Badi' recited this Persian poem:

Set thy trap for another bird;

This is the phoenix and it nests high.

The Governor, who was very reluctant to shed the blood of a holy and innocent man, hoped that the fierce scene of execution might frighten Aba Badi' and induce him to recant. Just as the execution was about to take place a special envoy from the Governor arrived at the scene and for the last time pleaded with him in vain to save his own life. But Aba Badi' was the embodiment of steadfastness in the Cause of God. Neither the clamour of the people, their insults and persecutions, nor the dreadful sight of the executioner, who stood dagger in hand beside him, were able to deter him from the path of God. Most probably at the height of his ordeal his soul was communing with Bahá'u'lláh, longing to take its flight to the realms of the spirit. His thoughts must also have been focused on those [135] memorable hours he had spent with His Lord in 'Akká, and the martyrdom of his beloved son at the age of seventeen, 'The Pride of the Martyrs of the Faith'. [1] Surrounded by thousands who were steeped in prejudice and hatred, hurling abuse and curses at him, this great hero, this old man of God glowed with the fire of faith and certitude. He stood serene and calm, unperturbed by the ferocity and brutality of his persecutors.

[1 A title conferred on Badi' by Bahá'u'lláh.]

At last the officer in charge gave the signal and the executioner, dressed in red, stepped forward. He removed Aba Badi's head-dress, shawl and cloak, brought him a bowl of water,[1]turned him to face the Qiblih[2] of Islam and with a powerful stroke of the dagger ripped him open from waist to throat. His head, exposed for the public to see, was placed on a marble slab and his body dragged through the bazaars until it was abandoned at the city morgue. Many ruffians stayed near the corpse and prevented his family from approaching it. His inconsolable daughter (the sister of Badi'), with tears streaming from her face and holding her baby son in her arms, stood for hours at a distance along with her husband in order to visit the battered remains of her illustrious father. But the mob kept on hurling stones at them and she was forced to leave the scene in an agony too heart-rending to describe. The believers, who were watching these developments with great concern, worked out a plan to rescue the remains of Aba Badi'. Since his body was placed in the morgue in front of the mosque of the Sunnis, it was only natural for a Sunni to remove it. So one of the Bahá'ís, dressed in the garb of a Kurd and accompanied by two others, managed to take the body, carry it out of the city gate and bury it in the dead of night at a disused cemetery.

[1 It is a ritual among the Shí'ah Muslims to offer a bowl of water to anyone who is to be put to death. This is because, at the time of his martyrdom, Imam Husayn was thirsty. He had asked for water, but was denied it by the enemy.]

[2 'Point of Adoration' for the Muslims in Mecca, to which they turn in prayer.]

Thus ended the life of one who, till the end, stood firm and [136] immovable as a mountain in the Cause of his Lord, and with his own life-blood testified to its truth. He amply demonstrated the power of Bahá'u'lláh Who, through a single word, had created a new race of men, and instilled into them such faith that they became the embodiments of these words: 'And be thou so steadfast in My love that thy heart shall not waver, even if the swords of the enemies rain blows upon thee and all the heavens and the earth arise against thee.'