

Memorials of the Faithful, Hájí Jafar-i-Tabrízí and His Brothers

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



Hájí Ja'far-i-Tabrízí and His Brothers – Memorials of the Faithful, 'Abdu'l-Bahá

There were three brothers, all from Tabríz: Hájí Hasan, Hájí Ja'far, and Hájí Taqí. These three were like eagles soaring; they were three stars of the Faith, pulsing with the light of the love of God.

Hájí Hasan was of the earlier day; he had believed from the new Luminary's first dawning. He was full of ardor, keen of mind. After his conversion he traveled everywhere, through the cities and villages of Persia, and his breath moved the hearts of longing souls. Then he left for 'Iráq, and on the Beloved's first journey, attained His presence there. Once he beheld that beautiful Light he was carried away to the Kingdom of Splendors; he was incandescent, he became a thrall of yearning love. At this time he was directed to go back to Persia. He was a peddler, a vendor of small wares, and would travel from city to city.

On Bahá'u'lláh's second journey to 'Iráq, Hájí Hasan longed to behold Him again, and there in Baghdád was once more bedazzled by His presence. Every so often he would journey to Persia and then return, his thoughts centered on teaching and furthering the Cause. His business fell apart. His merchandise was carried away by thieves, and thus, as he put it, his load was lifted from him—he was disencumbered. He shunned every worldly tie. He was held fast as by a magnet; he fell hopelessly, madly in love with the tender Companion, with Him Who is the Well-Beloved of both worlds. He was known everywhere for the ecstasy he was in, and experienced strange states of being; sometimes, with utmost eloquence, he would teach the Faith, adducing as proofs many a sacred verse and holy tradition, and bringing sound and reasonable arguments to bear. Then his hearers would comment on the power of his mind, on his wisdom and his self-possession. But there were other times when love suddenly flamed within him, and then he could not remain still for an instant. At those times he would skip, and dance, or again in a loud voice he would cry out a verse from the poets, or a song. Toward the end of his days he became a close friend of Jináb-i-Múníb; the two exchanged many a recondite confidence, and each carried many a melody in his breast.

On the friends' final journey he went to Ádhirbayján, and there, throwing caution to the winds, he roared out the Greatest Name: "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá!" The unbelievers there joined forces with his relatives, and they lured that innocent, that man in his ecstasy, away to a garden. Here, they first put questions to him and listened to his answers. He spoke out; he expounded the secret verities of the Faith, and set forth conclusive proofs that the Advent had indeed come to pass. He recited verses from the Qur'án, and traditions handed down from the Prophet Muḥammad and the Holy Imáms. Following that, in a frenzy of love and longing rapture, he began to sing. It



TRANSLATION

was a shahnáz melody he sang; the words were from the poets, to say that the Lord had come. And they killed him; they shed his blood. They wrenched and hacked his limbs apart and hid his body underneath the dust.

As for Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ja'far, the gently born, he too, like his brother, was bewitched by the Blessed Beauty. It was in 'Iráq that he entered the presence of the Light of the World, and he too caught fire with Divine love and was carried away by the gentle gales of God. Like his brother, he was a vendor of small wares, always on a journey from one place to the next. When Bahá'u'lláh left Baghdád for the capital of Islám, Ḥájí Ja'far was in Persia, and when the Blessed Beauty and His retinue came to a halt in Adrianople, Ja'far and Ḥájí Taqí, his brother, arrived there from Ádhirbayján. They found a corner somewhere and settled down. Our oppressors then stretched out arrogant hands to send Bahá'u'lláh forth to the Most Great Prison, and they forbade the believers to accompany the true Beloved, for it was their purpose to bring the Blessed Beauty to this prison with but a few of His people. When Ḥájí Ja'far saw that they had excluded him from the band of exiles, he seized a razor and slashed his throat. The crowds expressed their grief and horror and the authorities then permitted all the believers to leave in company with Bahá'u'lláh—this because of the blessing that came from Ja'far's act of love.

They stitched up his wound but no one thought he would recover. They told him, "For the time being, you will have to stay where you are. If your throat heals, you will be sent on, along with your brother. Be sure of this." Bahá'u'lláh also directed that this be done. Accordingly, we left Ja'far in the hospital and went on to the 'Akká prison. Two months later, he and his brother Ḥájí Taqí arrived at the fortress, and joined the other prisoners. The safely delivered Ḥájí grew more loving, more ardent with every passing day. From dusk till dawn he would stay awake, chanting prayers, shedding his tears. Then one night he fell from the roof of the caravanserai and ascended to the Kingdom of miracles and signs.

Ḥájí Taqí, born under a fortunate star, was in every sense a true brother to Ḥájí Ja'far. He lived in the same spiritual condition, but he was calmer. After Ḥájí Ja'far's death, he would stay in one room, all alone. He was silence itself. He would sit there, all alone, properly and courteously, even during the night. One midnight he climbed up to the roof to chant prayers. The next morning they found him where he had fallen, on the ground by the wall. He was unconscious, and they could not tell whether this was an accident or whether he had thrown himself down. When he came to himself he said: "I was weary of this life, and I tried to die. Not for a moment do I wish to linger in this world. Pray that I may go on."

This, then, is the life story of those three brothers. All three were souls well-assured; all three were pleased, and pleasing unto God. They were flames; they were captives of the Faith; they were pure and holy. And therefore, cut off from the world, turning their faces toward the Most High Kingdom, they ascended. May God wrap them in the garment of His grace in the realm of forgiveness, and immerse them in the waters of His mercy forever and ever. Greetings be unto them, and praise.