

# Bahá'u'lláh

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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Bahá'u'lláh

November 7th

I will speak to you today of Bahá'u'lláh. In the third year after the Báb had declared his Mission, Bahá'u'lláh, being accused by fanatical Mullás of believing in the new doctrine, was arrested and thrown into prison. The next day, however, several ministers of the Government and other influential men caused him to be set free. Later on he was again arrested, and the priests condemned him to death! The Governor hesitated to have this sentence carried out for fear of a revolution. The priests met together in the Mosque, before which was the place of execution. All the people of the town gathered in crowds outside the Mosque. The carpenters brought their saws and hammers, the butchers came with their knives, the bricklayers and builders shouldered their spades, all these men, incited by the frenzied Mullás, were eager to share in the honour of killing Him. Inside the Mosque were assembled the doctors of religion. Bahá'u'lláh stood before them, and answered all their questions with great wisdom. The chief sage in particular, was completely silenced by Bahá'u'lláh, who refuted all his arguments.

A discussion arose between two of these priests as to the meaning of some words in the writings of the Báb; accusing Him of inaccuracy, they challenged Bahá'u'lláh to defend Him if He were able. These priests were [pg 76] entirely humiliated, for Bahá'u'lláh proved before the whole assembly that the Báb was absolutely right, and that the accusation was made in ignorance.

The defeated ones now put Him to the torture of the bastinado, and more infuriated than before brought Him out before the walls of the Mosque unto the place of execution, where the misguided people were awaiting His coming.

Still the Governor feared to comply with the demand of the priests for His execution. Realizing the danger in which the dignified prisoner was placed, some men were sent to rescue Him. In this they succeeded by breaking through the wall of the Mosque and



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leading Bahá'u'lláh through the opening into a place of safety, but not of freedom; for the Governor shifted the responsibility from off his own shoulders by sending Him to Tīhrán. Here He was imprisoned in an underground dungeon, where the light of day was never seen. A heavy chain was placed about His neck by which He was chained to five other Bábís; these fetters were locked together by strong, very heavy bolts, and screws. His clothes were torn to pieces, also His fez. In this terrible condition He was kept for four months.

During this time none of His friends were able to get access to Him.

A prison official made an attempt to poison Him but, beyond causing Him great suffering, this poison had no effect.

After a time the Government liberated Him and exiled Him and His family to Bagħdád, where He remained for eleven years. During this time He [pg 77] underwent severe persecutions, being surrounded by the watchful hatred of His enemies.

He bore all evils and torments with the greatest courage and fortitude. Often when He arose in the morning, He knew not whether He would live until the sun should set. Meanwhile, each day, the priests came and questioned Him on religion and metaphysics.

At length the Turkish Governor exiled Him to Constantinople, whence He was sent to Adrianople; here He stayed for five years. Eventually, He was sent to the far off prison fortress of St. Jean d'Acre. Here He was imprisoned in the military portion of the fortress and kept under the strictest surveillance. Words would fail me to tell you of the many trials He had to suffer, and all the misery He endured in that prison. Notwithstanding, it was from this prison that Bahá'u'lláh wrote to all the Monarchs of Europe, and these letters with one exception were sent through the post.

The Epistle of Náṣiri'd-Dín Ṣháh was confided to a Persian Bahá'í, Mírzá Badí' Ḳhurásání, who undertook to deliver it into the Ṣháh's own hands. This brave man waited in the neighbourhood of Tīhrán for the passing of the Ṣháh, who had the intention to journey by that way to his Summer Palace. The courageous messenger followed the Ṣháh to his Palace, and waited on the road near the entrance for several days. Always in the same place was he seen waiting on the road, until the people began to wonder why he should be there. At last the Ṣháh heard of him, and commanded his servants that the man should be brought before him.

"Oh! servants of the Ṣháh, I bring a letter, which I [pg 78] must deliver into his own hands", Badí' said, and then Badí' said to the Ṣháh, "I bring you a letter from Bahá'u'lláh!"

He was immediately seized and questioned by those who wished to elicit information which would help them in the further persecutions of Bahá'u'lláh. Badí' would not answer a word; then they tortured him, still he held his peace! After three days they killed him, having failed to force him to speak! These cruel men photographed him whilst he was under torture.<sup>1</sup>

The Sháh gave the letter from Bahá'u'lláh to the priests that they might explain it to him. After some days these priests told the Sháh that the letter was from a political enemy. The Sháh grew angry and said, "This is no explanation. I pay you to read and answer my letters, therefore obey!"

The spirit and meaning of the Tablet to Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh was, in short, this: "Now that the time has come, when the Cause of the Glory of God has appeared, I ask that I may be allowed to come to Ṭihrán and answer any questions the priests may put to Me."

"I exhort you to detach yourself from the worldly magnificence of your Empire. Remember all those great kings who have lived before you — their glories have passed away!"

The letter was written in a most beautiful manner, and continued warning the King and telling him of the future triumph of the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh, both in the Eastern and in the Western World.[pg 79]

The Sháh paid no attention to the warning of this letter and continued to live in the same fashion until the end.

Although Bahá'u'lláh was in prison the great Power of the Holy Spirit was with Him!

None other in prison could have been like unto Him. In spite of all the hardships He suffered, He never complained.

In the dignity of His Majesty, He always refused to see the Governor, or the influential people of the town.

Although the surveillance was unremittingly strict He came and went as He wished! He died in a house situated about three kilometers from St. Jean d'Acre.



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<sup>1</sup> A certain man who was present when Badí' was told he should carry the Epistle to the Sháh saw him transfigured; he became radiant.