

The Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated from Persian



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Question: On what date did the dawning of the Sun of Truth and the advent of the Blessed Beauty take place?

Answer: From the beginning of His childhood Bahá'u'lláh was possessed of such astonishing qualities, signs, and utterances as to amaze every soul. All the dignitaries of Persia would say: "This youth is wrought of a rare substance", and everyone, even the enemies and the envious, bore witness to His knowledge, grace, wisdom, understanding, intelligence, and perception. Among other things, it was acknowledged by all that He had neither entered a school nor received a religious education. Nonetheless, His knowledge and perfections were well recognized. The learned men of Persia would submit to Him the difficult questions that perplexed their minds, and He would resolve them. To this day, and in spite of their hostility, the dignitaries of Persia bear witness to this matter.

In sum, no one, whether in Persia or even throughout the East, denies Bahá'u'lláh's knowledge, perfection, greatness, and ability. At most they claim that this Man subverted the foundations of the Law of God, that by means of His shrewdness, intelligence, knowledge, wisdom, eloquence, and sagacity He led astray a vast multitude, and that He thus undermined the perspicuous religion of God. But they do not deny His greatness.

Thus, from the very beginning of the Revelation of the Báb, the believers were humble and lowly before Bahá'u'lláh, looked to Him for guidance, and were drawn to Him with a heartfelt attraction. But at Badasht the greatness and majesty of Bahá'u'lláh were manifested to a further degree. There, a number of believers developed a particular devotion and became wholly attracted to Him. Whoever met Him and heard His words would be transformed and enthralled, and could do naught but surrender his will and become aflame with the fire of the love of God.

During His final days in Tīhrán, prior to the journey to Baghdád, some of the believers, such as Muḥammad Taqí Khán, Sulaymán Khán, Jináb-i-'Azím, Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad, Mullá 'Abdu'l-Fattáh, and Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb—all of whom were to be later martyred—as well as Mírzá Ḥusayn Kirmání and many other souls, perceived that Bahá'u'lláh occupied a transcendent station and became convinced that He was a Manifestation of God. Bahá'u'lláh had composed an ode from which the fragrance of a heavenly station could be perceived, the opening of which reads: "Tis from Our rapture that the clouds of realms above are raining down." All the friends would recite that ode with the utmost fervour and attraction, and all accepted its purport—not a soul voiced an objection. That ode was indeed most enthralling.



TRANSLATION

The first person who recognized the sublimity and holiness of Bahá'u'lláh and became certain that He would manifest a momentous Cause was Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Qazvíní, whom the Báb had named Mírzá Aḥmad. He was the intermediary between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh and was aware of the truth of the matter.¹⁸

After coming to Baghdád from Persia, Bahá'u'lláh declared to a certain extent the nature of His mission in the ninth year after the appearance of the Báb, and became known among the friends as the appearance of Ḥusayn. For the people of Persia believed that the appearance of the promised Mahdi must be followed by that of Ḥusayn, that is, of Imám Ḥusayn the martyr, to whom they are indeed most attached and bear the greatest allegiance.

Now, in all His Books and Scriptures, the Báb heralded that which was to transpire in the year nine. Among them, there abound expressions such as: "In the year nine ye shall attain unto all good." And such statements as "In the year nine ye shall ...", and "Then ye shall ...", and "Then ye shall ..." are numerous. Likewise, He says: "Wait thou until nine will have elapsed from the time of the Bayán. Then exclaim: 'Blessed, therefore, be God ...'" In sum, the tidings of the Báb regarding the year nine are such as to defy all description. Nevertheless, certain souls faltered, among them Mírzá Yaḥyá, Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Iṣfahání, and a few others. The Sermon of Salutations (Khuṭbiy-i-Ṣalavát) was revealed in the year nine, and likewise the commentary on the verse of the Qur'án "All food was allowed to the children of Israel except what Israel forbade itself" (Lawḥ-i-Kulluṭ-Ṭa'ám) issued forth in that same year.

Perceiving the covert rebellion of Mírzá Yaḥyá and others, Bahá'u'lláh journeyed alone to Sulaymáníyyih and was absent for two years. During that time, Mírzá Yaḥyá was acting with utmost caution behind a veil of concealment and, fearing the attention of the General Consul of Persia in Baghdád, disguised himself, took the name of Ḥájí 'Alí, and engaged in selling shoes and plaster in Baṣrah and in Súqu'sh-Shuyúkh in the vicinity of Baghdád. The Cause became entirely quiescent, the Call ceased to be heard, and all name and trace thereof well-nigh vanished.

During His sojourn in Sulaymáníyyih, Bahá'u'lláh penned a number of works, among them certain prayers of which copies are still extant, and certain epistles on mystical wayfaring addressed to the doctors and the learned men of Islam, which are likewise still extant. In those epistles certain teachings are expounded, among them words to this effect: "Were it not contrary to the perspicuous Law of God, I would have given my would-be murderer to be my heir. But what am I to do—I have no worldly possessions, nor hath it been thus decreed by His sovereign will."

In any event, all the doctors and learned men of Sulaymáníyyih attested to the knowledge, attainments, and perfections of Bahá'u'lláh and developed an affection for His person; that is, they would say that this Man was unique and ranked among the chosen ones of God.

When Bahá'u'lláh returned from Sulaymáníyyih, He illumined Baghdád with His light: The call of God was raised anew and a tumult arose in Persia. In Baghdád Bahá'u'lláh stood firm before all peoples. The government of Persia was extremely hostile in those days, and all were seeking by every means to cause Him suffering and to bring Him to harm. At last the Persian government, having grown alarmed at His influence, said: "Baghdád is close to Persia and is a place of

passage for the Persians. Thus, in order to put out this fire Bahá'u'lláh must be banished to a distant land." The Persian government then petitioned the Ottoman government, and Bahá'u'lláh was as a result transferred with all due honour out of Baghdád. Leaving the city, Bahá'u'lláh went to the garden of Najíb Páshá and resided there for twelve days. During that time many people, both high and low, and even the Governor and a number of other officials, attained His blessed presence. These are the twelve days of Ridván.

In any event, it was by means of hints and allusions that Bahá'u'lláh first declared His mission during those twelve days. Certain among the friends grasped His intent, but others did not fully understand. At last Bahá'u'lláh came to Constantinople and the Súrih of pilgrimage was revealed, wherein the instruction is given to circumambulate the House of Baghdád. In that Súrih the Cause is openly manifest, but the phrase "He Whom God shall make manifest" does not appear.

Subsequently, the Persian government caused Bahá'u'lláh to be further banished to Adrianople. From there numerous Tablets were revealed day and night to the effect that "Since We have been expelled from our homeland and banished from Baghdád to a remote place, that the fire of the love of God might be quenched, the lamp of guidance extinguished, the banner of God hauled down, and the call of the True One silenced, We have therefore chosen to fully reveal the Cause, manifest the proof, raise the call, and hoist the banner of the Cause of God, that all may see that this persecution, enmity, banishment, and exile has only deepened the influence of the Word of God, that the fame of the Cause has been noised abroad, and that the tidings of the advent of the Kingdom of God have reached unto both East and West." This universal declaration took place in the year 1280. All the friends, with the exception of Yahyá and a few of his followers, became firm and devoted believers, and from Adrianople Tablets would ceaselessly flow to Persia.

This is an account, in summary form, of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh.