

Tragedy and Triumph

THE BÁB'S FINAL YEARS

The Bábí Faith caused great excitement in Iran. Though the Báb was in prison, His Faith quickly attracted many people. Some religious leaders wanted desperately to stop the Faith. Hoping to discredit Him in public, they brought the Báb to the city of Tabríz in July 1848.

A large audience had gathered to watch the meeting. The Báb announced with power and dignity, "I am, I am, I am the Promised One!"

The leaders were so angry that they punished the Báb with the *bastinado*—a beating on the soles of His feet. Then they sent Him back to prison.

Following the Báb's announcement, many religious leaders encouraged people to attack the Bábís, insult them, and steal their property. Struggles broke out all over Iran. The Bábís did their best to defend themselves.

In the midst of the chaos, the *sháh* (king) died. His son, the 17-year-old prince, became *sháh*. He left the fate of the Bábís in the hands of his new Prime Minister, the cruel Mírzá Táqí *Khán*.

Heroes of God

In eastern Iran, 313 Bábís took refuge in a shrine called *Shaykh* Tabarsí. Knowing they were in danger, they built a fort around the shrine. The Prime Minister sent 12,000 soldiers to fight them. The Bábís defended themselves with weapons, which was common in Iran at that time. They had no way to reach the Báb and ask Him for guidance.

The Bábís were greatly outnumbered, and many were killed during the battle. But because of their strong faith and determination, some of the Bábís survived for seven months. Finally, the leader of the army swore on the Qur'án that he would end the battle in peace. But he did not keep his promise. When the Bábís surrendered, they were either sold as slaves or killed.

The Báb was heartbroken at the fate of His friends, including Mullá Husayn and Quddús, the brave Letters of the Living. He refused to see anyone for nine days, and six months passed before He again revealed the Word of God.

Later, more fierce battles raged in the cities of Zanján and Nayríz. Thousands of Bábís were martyred. Rather than discouraging the Báb's remaining followers, these tragic events only strengthened their loyalty.

Miracle and Martyrdom

The Prime Minister decided that executing the Báb would end the Bábí Faith. He ordered the Báb to be brought back to Tabríz and shot.

As the Báb was led to the army barracks, a young Bábí named Muhammad-'Alí threw



himself at the Báb's feet and begged to join Him. Two other Bábís did the same. They were put in a cell with the Báb and His secretary.

July 9, 1850, was the date set for the Báb's execution. About ten thousand people gathered to watch. The Báb and Muhammad-'Alí were suspended from ropes, and 750 men fired at them. When the smoke cleared, the crowd was shocked to see Muhammad-'Alí standing before them, alive and unharmed. The Báb had disappeared!

After a frantic search, the Báb was found in His cell, calmly talking with His secretary. The commander of the soldiers, Sám Khán, was so moved by these events that he refused to do anything to harm the Báb. He ordered his men to leave the barracks.

Again, the Báb and Muhammad-'Alí were hung from ropes. It was noon when a second group of 750 soldiers fired their rifles. This time the Báb and His companion were killed. Astonishingly, their faces were nearly untouched by the bullets from all 750 rifles. A violent dust storm then fell on the city. Fierce winds blew and the skies were darkened until night.

The extraordinary events of that afternoon were reported by eye-witnesses. These accounts were supported by noted historians and officials. "A veritable miracle," proclaimed a French scholar. A Christian government official described it as "extraordinary" and "unique in . . . the history of humanity."



Triumph of Love

The Bábís hid the remains of the Báb and Muhammad-'Alí. Over the years, the Bábís continued to be persecuted. Later, Bahá'u'lláh and His followers were also persecuted and imprisoned. Because of the danger, the Báb's remains were secretly

moved several times.

Almost 60 years after the Báb's death, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Son of Bahá'u'lláh, finally had the freedom to place His remains in a simple Shrine on Mount Carmel in Israel. Bahá'u'lláh had chosen the exact spot for the Shrine.

Forty years later, a structure with a glorious golden dome was built to crown the Shrine. Today the Shrine of the Báb (above) stands among 19 lush terraces with gardens and fountains. In the words of the Universal House of Justice, the governing body that guides the Bahá'ís around the world, it is "a monument to the triumph of love over hate."

A Prayer by the Báb

Say this prayer by the Báb in times when you are troubled or in need:

"Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding!"