

SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

ZAYNAB: HEROINE OF ZANJÁN

In Persia (now Iran) in the middle of the 1800s, many people became followers of a new Messenger of God. He was called “the Báb,” which means “the Gate.” The Báb declared that He was the Promised One of Islam. One of the most important parts of the Báb's Mission was to prepare people for the coming of the next Messenger of God — Bahá'u'lláh.

Those who believed in the Báb were called Bábís. Many who did not believe in Him thought that the Báb was dangerous and was leading people away from Islam. They wanted to end His life and the lives of His followers.

One of the Báb's most courageous followers was Zaynab. She was a peasant girl who lived near the city of Zanján in northern Persia. In Zaynab's time, women were oppressed. They were not expected to go to school or have opinions about the world outside of their homes. They were expected only to cook, clean, manage servants, and bear children. But Zaynab wanted to do more.

When the city officials of Zanján persecuted the Bábís, they gathered in a fort to defend themselves. Although women were not allowed to fight in battle, Zaynab cut her long hair and dressed like a

male warrior. She fastened a sword to her waist, and grabbed a musket and shield. She bravely joined the defenders against the thousands of men brought to destroy them. The first time the call came to leave the fort in battle, she drew her sword and cried out, asking God to help her. She was so fearless that the enemies fled from her like deer before a lion.

Zaynab was always in the front lines of battle. She was the first to challenge the attackers behind their barricades. When she slept,

she used her shield as a cover and rested her head on her sword.

After five harsh months, Zaynab died defending the Bábí Faith, which she loved above all else. In a time when women were hidden in houses and behind veils, she took her place as a spiritual warrior. Her life and death inspired 20 women from her village to become Bábís. They knew that she was more than a peasant girl — she was a courageous servant of the Báb and His mission to prepare the way for Bahá'u'lláh. ✨

