

THAT HIGH NOON IN MIDSUMMER

A Script written for the
Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Bab
(July 9th, 1950)

by

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1st Narrator

This day a hundred years ago men brought a Manifestation of God to a public square. They hoisted Him on a pillar and shot Him dead. They had gathered in their thousands to see Him die. They jeered. They laughed. They rejoiced. They saw Him shot and they were happy.

2nd Narrator

A high noon in midsummer, and how closely it resembled another noon, another noon in a more distant age. Then too men had gathered in their thousands to see the death of a Manifestation of God. Then too they jeered. Then too they laughed. Then too they rejoiced. Then too they saw Him die, die on a Cross, and then too they were happy.

1st Narrator

Today, high above the blue of the Mediterranean Sea, in the heart of Carmel - the Mountain of God - rises the shrine of the Martyr Prophet Who died a hundred years ago in the public square of Tabriz.

2nd Narrator

At the foot of the Mountain of God, where the mountain meets the sea, stand - sentinel of centuries - trees that saw as young saplings the Person of that Manifestation of God Who died nineteen hundred and seventeen years ago.

1st Narrator

It was the Bab - the Gate - the Gate of Salvation - that died on the ninth day of July 1850 in the public square of Tabriz. And when scores of bullets riddled His frame, men dragged His mangled remains through the streets, to the moat outside the walls of their city.

2nd Narrator

And the Evangelist says of Jesus: "They that passed by railed on Him, wagging their heads: Ah, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself and come down from the Cross."

1st Narrator

And when the night fell, faithful hands rescued the body of the Martyr Prophet, and carried it to a silk factory in that neighbourhood. There it was embalmed and laid in a wooden casket. The wooden casket was hid amongst the bales of silk.

2nd Narrator

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathæa an honourable Counsellor, which also waited for the Kingdom of God, came and went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if He were already dead: and calling unto him the Centurion, he asked him whether He had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the Centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen, and took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen, and laid Him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled the stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

1st Narrator

The silk factory in the village of Milan - there rested the body of the Báb - for a while. From Milan it began a wandering of forty nine years. From place to place it was borne to keep it from the malice of the foe. And at last it reached its destined abode - the Mountain of God.

2nd Narrator

It reached the Land that God had decreed, the Land that witnessed the Passion of Christ, the Land whereto the Lord of Hosts came a Prisoner and Exile, where He, the Lord of Hosts, dwelt and left the world. To this Land, the Holy Land, was brought the remains of the Martyr Prophet, in a wooden casket.

1st Narrator

As prophesied of old, the Temple of the Lord was raised on the Mountain of God. On the spot indicated by Bahá'u'lláh - the Lord of Hosts Whose advent the Báb came to herald - on the spot indicated by Bahá'u'lláh, His Son 'Abdu'l-Bahá built the Shrine of the Martyr Prophet.

2nd Narrator

And far, far away in Rangoon, the followers of the Faith prepared a marble sarcophagus and sent it to the Holy Land.

1st Narrator

He, the Herald of the Day of God, the Breaker of the Dawn, the Primal Point, died in the public square of Tabriz. For forty-nine years, His earthly temple - riddled and shattered - remained in hiding, borne from place to place. At the end of its long journeys, lay the Shrine on the Mountain of God.

2nd Narrator

On the 21st day of March 1909, the Festival of Naw-Rúz, well-nigh sixty years after that day when He - the Báb was shot in the public square of Tabriz, the sarcophagus prepared by the Bahá'ís of Rangoon, was in place in the vault of the Shrine raised by the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant - the Centre of the Covenant of the Lord of Hosts, the Master - 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

- 1st Narrator And He, the Centre of the Covenant, was there to put in that sarcophagus the wooden casket that contained the shattered human temple of a Manifestation of God.
- 2nd Narrator One solitary lamp lit that scene. There in the vault of the Shrine on the Mountain of God stood the Centre of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh with bare head and bare feet, to consign the remains of the Martyr Prophet to their abiding rest.
- 1st Narrator And there stood behind Him believers from the East and from the West, with heads bowed, with brows furrowed, contemplating the significance of that awe-inspiring scene enacted before their eyes.
- 2nd Narrator There was the sarcophagus made by loving hands in far-off Rangoon, and there was the wooden casket to be placed within that sarcophagus.
- 1st Narrator And within that wooden casket was the riddled body of the Báb embalmed and enshrouded by loving, adoring, trembling, aching hands, well-nigh sixty years before.
- 2nd Narrator On the shroud there was a withered bunch of small violets. The Master - 'Abdu'l-Bahá saw that offering of love and knew by whose hands it had been offered.
- 1st Narrator By the hand of that gallant, brave youth - the intrepid Sulayman Khan, he who had dared and risked all, at the command of Bahá'u'lláh to rescue the remains of his martyred Prophet.
- 2nd Narrator Sulayman Khan, who in the dead of night took away the body of the Báb from the moat of Tabriz. Sulayman Khan, who but two years later met his own death for the sake of his Lord. Sulayman Khan, who was led through the streets of the Capital City of Tehran with candles flickering in gaping holes cut through his flesh.
- 1st Narrator Candles flickered in his wounds, but smiles played round his lips and the praise of his Lord was on his tongue. And to the taunts of his tormentors he replied.
- 3rd Narrator Clasping in one hand the wine-cup, in one hand the Loved One's hair; thus my doom would I envisage, dancing through the market-square.
- 2nd Narrator 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant - knew that the hands of that gallant youth had laid those violets on the broken chest of the Manifestation of God.

1st Narrator

He "bent low over the still open sarcophagus, His silver hair waving about, His head and His face transfigured and luminous, rested His forehead on the border of the wooden casket, and, sobbing aloud, wept with such a weeping that all those who were present wept with Him. That night He could not sleep, so overwhelmed was He with emotion".

2nd Narrator

Thus on Naw-Rúz day 1909, the body of the Martyr Prophet was laid to its final rest. On that very day the first Convention of the Bahá'ís of the Western World was held on the American Continent.

1st Narrator

And thus wrote the Master - 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

3rd Narrator

"The most joyful tidings of this, the holy, the luminous body of the Báb after having for sixty years been transferred from place to place, by reason of the ascendancy of the enemy, and from fear of the malevolent, and having known neither rest nor tranquillity has, through the mercy of the Abhá Beauty, been ceremoniously deposited, on the day of Naw-Rúz, within the sacred casket, in the exalted Shrine on Mt. Carmel By a strange coincidence, on that same day of Naw-Rúz, a cablegram was received from Chicago, announcing that the believers in each of the American Centres had elected a delegate and sent to that city and definitely decided on the site and construction of the Mashriq'ul-Adhkár."

2nd Narrator

On the very day that Carmel - the Mountain of God - received in its bosom the earthly Temple of the Martyr Prophet, on the other side of the globe plans were made for the building of the first Bahá'í Temple of the Western World.

1st Narrator

There on Mt. Carmel, set against the background of tall Cypress Trees, under which the Lord of Hosts had pitched His tent, a modest six-roomed building enshrined the body of the Báb.

2nd Narrator

Here was the land, the Holy Land, from which came the call of Christ, in which He suffered the fate that was to befall eighteen hundred years later the Prophet of Shiraz.

1st Narrator

Christ was opposed and crucified. The Báb was opposed and shot. Man has always pitted his strength against the strength of God. Man has always tried to extinguish the Light of His Lord.

2nd Narrator

He strikes at the Light. He strikes at Those who acknowledge the Light. From the Holy Land the Light of Christ crossed the sea to the seat of Imperial Rome. Those who recognized the Light kept it bright in dungeons and catacombs. And from those catacombs the rays of the Sun of Truth penetrated a whole continent.

- 1st Narrator And when the time came to build a beautiful edifice around and over the Shrine of the Martyr Prophet, it was from Italy, the land which cradled the Cause of Christ, that the stone was shipped to the Holy Land.
- 2nd Narrator Eight hundred tons of carved marble came by sea, from Italy to Israel. A new State was being born in the Holy Land, there were dangers around, but the work went on.
- 1st Narrator And on Naw-Rúzday 1950, the Guardian of the Cause of God sent out the tidings:
- 3rd Narrator "Announce (to the) friends (the) completion (on the) eve (of) Naw-Rúz, (of the) erection (of) parapet crowning (the) eastern facade (of) Holy Shrine one year after placing (the) first threshold stones upon (the) foundation (of the) arcade. (The) beauty (and) majesty (of the) finely carved panels surmounting (the) soaring arches spanning (the) rosy monolith columns, emblazoned with emerald green and scarlet mosaic symbolizing (the) Báb's lineage and martyrdom, (is) strikingly revealed. (The) original pearl-like structure raised by (the) hands (of the) Centre (of the) Covenant, enshrining (the) remains (of the) Martyr Prophet (of the) Faith, acquiring, through construction (of the) shell designed (for) its embellishment (and) preservation, additional height by one-third, additional width by one-fifth, enhancing (the) massiveness (of the) edifice embosomed (in the) Mountain of God, heralding (the) erection (of the) lofty, gilded dome that will eventually shine forth in solitary splendour from its heart."
- 1st Narrator And on this day, the Ninth day of July, Nineteen hundred and fifty, the arcade and the parapet of the outer edifice of the Shrine are completed.
- 2nd Narrator To herald the erection of the lofty gilded dome that will eventually shine forth in solitary splendour from the heart of the Mountain of God.
- 1st Narrator Carmel, Tabriz, Shiraz - there it was that the Báb on the momentous evening of May 22nd, 1844, revealed His divine mandate to a seeker. There the youthful Bab declared to Mullá Husayn that He was the Lord of the Age. And the seeker who searched for his Lord with all his heart and all his soul, felt a joy that no other human soul could at that moment possess.
- 3rd Narrator "Excitement, joy, awe, and wonder stirred the depths of my soul. How feeble and impotent, how dejected and timid, I had felt previously. Now, however, the knowledge of His Revelation had galvanised my being. I felt possessed of

such courage and power that were the world, all its peoples and its potentates, to rise against me, I would, alone and undaunted, withstand their onslaught. The universe seemed to be a handful of dust in my grasp. I seemed to be the Voice of Gabriel personified, calling unto all mankind. 'Awake, for lo! The morning Light has broken. Arise, for His Cause is made manifest. The portal of His Grace is open wide; enter therein, O peoples of the world! For He Who is your promised One is come!'"

2nd Narrator

"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said: 'Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased.' And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age."

1st Narrator

Mullá Husayn found the One Whom he was seeking. So did sixteen others whose souls were afire with their longing for the promised Lord of the Age. They all reached Shiraz as if attracted by a magnet, and attained the presence of the Báb. But there was one who never travelled in search of the Lord - one who believed in Him from afar - who sent with a kinsman setting out in search, this message:

3rd Narrator

The effulgence of Thy face flashed forth,
And the rays of Thy visage arose on high.
Then speak the word, "Am I not your Lord?"
And "Thou art, Thou art," we will all reply.

1st Narrator

This was the beautiful, the stout-hearted, the brave poetess - Tahirih the Pure. She survived her Lord by two years, but in bondage. Then she too fell - a martyr.

2nd Narrator

"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

1st Narrator

A day came when the Báb bade farewell to His first disciples His letters of the Living, and sent them out to teach His Faith.

3rd Narrator

"My beloved friends! You are the bearers of the name of God in this Day. You have been chosen as the repositories of His mystery. It behoves each one of you to manifest the attributes of God, and to exemplify by your deeds and words the signs of His righteousness, His power and glory. The very members of your body must bear witness to the loftiness of your purpose, the integrity of your life, the reality of your faith, and the exalted character of your devotion."

1st Narrator

He told them to "ponder the words of Jesus addressed to His disciples, as He sent them forth to propagate the Cause of God!"

3rd Narrator

In words such as these He bade them arise and fulfil their mission: "Ye are even as the fire which in the darkness of the night has been kindled upon the mountain top. Let your light shine before the eyes of men You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"

1st Narrator

They went out. They served their Lord. They gave up their lives in His Path. And the Báb became a Prisoner. Of His 73 months of Ministry, barely twelve saw Him free. He suffered indignities, as the Divine Figures preceding Him had suffered. He was bastinadoed. He was carried in bondage from one remote, desolate fortress to another.

2nd Narrator

"And Jesus saith unto him, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.'"

1st Narrator

They who opposed the Manifestation of God, held a mock trial and hauled Him before an assemblage that had gathered not to find the Truth but to reject it. To their questions the Báb replied:

3rd Narrator

"I am, I am, I am, the Promised One! I am the One Whose name you have for a thousand years invoked, at Whose mention you have risen, Whose advent you have longed to witness, and the hour of Whose Revelation you have prayed God to hasten. Verily I say it is incumbent upon the peoples of both the East and the West to obey My Word and to pledge allegiance to My person."

2nd Narrator

"Jesus answered him: 'I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them; behold they know what I said.' And when He had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying: 'Answerest Thou the High Priest so?'"

1st Narrator

The Báb was bastinadoed after His trial and returned to prison. And as calamities mounted and His able and faithful lieutenants, His beloved disciples fell one by one before the fury of the foe, the Báb knew that His own Hour was approaching.

3rd Narrator

"In the Kitáb-I-Panj-Sha'n, one of His last works, He had alluded to the fact that the sixth Naw-Rúz after the

declaration of His mission would be the last He was destined to celebrate on earth."

2nd Narrator

"I have yet many things to say unto You, but ye cannot hear them now. Howbeit when He, the spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth A little while, and ye shall not see Me: a little while, and ye shall see Me no more, because I go to the Father Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

1st Narrator

In the prison-fortress, bitter news came in the wake of bitter news, long, long agony. But He, the Báb, knew that His task was done, that He had prepared the way for the coming of the Day of God, for the advent of "Him Whom God would manifest".

3rd Narrator

"Out of utter nothingness, ^O a great and omnipotent Master, Thou hast, through the celestial potency of Thy might, brought me forth and raised me up to proclaim this Revelation. I have made none other but Thee my trust; I have clung to no will but Thy will O Thou Remnant of God! I have sacrificed myself wholly for Thee; I have accepted curses for Thy sake, and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love."

2nd Narrator

"Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

1st Narrator

Then came the day when they took the Báb to the public square of Tabriz. With Him was a disciple whom even the sight of his infant son had not led to abjure his faith. The two - the Master and the disciple - were hoisted on a pillar. Seven-hundred-and-fifty rifles shot out their bullets. But bullets only severed the ropes with which the Báb and His disciple were bound. They found Him in a room close by, finishing His instructions to His amanuensis, that had been interrupted earlier in the day. Again the Master and the disciple were raised on the pillar.

2nd Narrator

"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

1st Narrator

People had gathered to see the death of the Bab and to rejoice. To them whom He had come to save, He said:

3rd Narrator

"Had you believed in Me every one of you would have followed the example of this youth, who stood in rank above most of you, and would have willingly sacrificed himself in My path. The day will come when you will have recognized Me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you."

- 2nd Narrator "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said: 'Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit.' And having said thus, He gave up the ghost."
- 1st Narrator Shots were fired. All that remained of the Master and His disciple was a mass of mangled flesh.
- 2nd Narrator It was impossible to separate them. To this day they are together.
- 1st Narrator The body of the Bá'b was torn and shattered, but no bullet touched His face.
- 2nd Narrator That high noon in midsummer - July 9th, 1850. A great storm arose and enveloped the city. From noon till nightfall dust was blowing over Tabriz, the light of the sun was obscured, and men's eyes were blinded.
- 1st Narrator Down in the South - in Shiraz, where the Bá'b saw the light of the day, and where His Light broke upon the world, earthquakes shook the town.
- 2nd Narrator That high noon in midsummer.
- 3rd Narrator "The day will come when you will have recognized Me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you."

N O T E S

1. This script should be presented in a very simple manner. It is a sequence of readings arranged in a dramatic way. No attempt should be made at acting or staging.
2. It should so start as to end at 2 minutes before 1 p.m. If found to be too long, cuts should be made at the beginning of the script.
3. There should be silence immediately after the script.
4. Soon after 1 p.m. silence should end with the reading of the "Tablet of Visitation", while all present ought to stand facing South-East.