

THE LORD OF HOSTS IS HIS NAME

A Dramatised Reading  
of the  
Story of Bahá'u'lláh

(by H.M. Balyuzi)

Prologue

It is not given to mortal man to portray in its full glory the Life of a Manifestation of God. In Him dwells the Spirit of God and what man can bring within the measure of his vision, the power and the majesty of the Ancient of Days. Yet man can utter the praise of his Lord, and here is such praise. Halting it is. Halting it must be. No tongue and no pen is adequate to the theme.

(Long pause)

Voice

"O Son of Man! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty." (The Hidden Words)

Prologue

God created man in His own image, and He made a covenant with man.

Voice

"O Son of Man! I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life." (The Hidden Words)

Prologue

God revealed Himself to man through His Manifestations. They came down the ages, holding aloft the torch of guidance, leading man step by step, stage by stage to a destined summit of attainment.

Voice

"O Son of Being! With the hands of power I made thee and with the fingers of strength I created thee; and within thee have I placed the essence of My light. Be thou content with it and seek naught else, for My work is perfect and My command is binding. Question it not, nor have a doubt thereof." (The Hidden Words)

Prologue

Never was man bereft of guidance. Never was man bereft of light. And to him was given a promise - clear, bright, irrefutable.

Voice of Praise

(Psalm XXXIII)

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous for praise is comely to the upright.  
Sing unto Him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.  
For the word of the Lord is right; and all His works are done in truth.  
He loveth righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.  
The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations.  
Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance.  
Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy.  
Our soul waiteth for the Lord: He is our hope and our shield.

1st Voice of Prophecy (Bhagavad Gita)

When there is decay of Righteousness  
And there is exaltation of unrighteousness,



Then I, Myself, come forth  
For the protection of the Good,  
For the destruction of evil.  
I am born from age to age.  
The foolish regard Me not, when clad in human semblance,  
Being ignorant of My supreme Nature, the Great Lord of Being.

Voice of Praise (Psalm LXXXIV)

*Brian*  
How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O lord of Hosts.  
Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be  
still praising Thee.  
They go from strength to strength, everyone of them in Zion  
appeareth before God.  
O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee.

*Brian*  
2nd Voice of Prophecy (Qur'an - Chapter 39: 67-69)

And the earth shall be illumined with the light of its Lord, and  
the Book shall be laid open, and the prophets and the witnesses shall be  
brought up, and judgment shall be given between them, and they shall not be  
dealt with unjustly.

Voice of Praise (Psalm LXXXIX)

*Brian*  
I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever; with my  
mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all  
generations.  
For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: Thy  
faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens.  
I have made a Covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David  
my servant,  
Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up Thy throne to  
all generations.

3rd Voice of Prophecy (Isaiah, Chapter 11)

*Hanner*  
And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a  
Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest  
upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and  
might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.... With righteous-  
ness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the  
earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the  
breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the  
girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also  
shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and  
the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall  
lead them... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for  
the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the  
sea.

Voice of Praise (Qur'an - Chapter III)

*Brian*  
O Lord, cause not our hearts to swerve from truth after Thou hast  
directed us; and give us from Thee mercy, for Thou art He who giveth.  
O Lord, Thou shalt surely gather mankind together unto a day of resurrection.

4th Voice of Prophecy (St. Luke - Chapter 21)

*Brian*  
And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;  
and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves  
roaring. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those  
things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be  
shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power  
and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up,  
and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Voice of Praise (from the Lord's Prayer)

*Brian*  
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.



5th Voice of Prophecy (St. John)

When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.

6th Voice of Prophecy (Isaiah)

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

7th Voice of Prophecy (Isaiah - Chapter 47)

As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is His Name, the Holy One of Israel.

Music (majestic, slowly rising to a climax)

Voice of Despair

Hope is gone and the world is lost. Greed, apathy, jealousy, selfishness - everywhere selfishness. Neighbour distrusts neighbour, nation distrusts nation. Words are vain and action is vain. Action and thought are poles apart. Moral values no longer guide. Expediency leads man to its doom. This is your twentieth century.

Voice of Certitude

Yes, this is our twentieth century. But know you not the prophecies of old? Know you not that the old world is dying unwept, that the new world, the world as its Maker meant it to be, is being born? Man - the world of your dreams, the world which your fairest minds beheld in their visions is being born. Man, the new world is being born.

Voice of Despair

Away with your roseate dreams. The abyss gapes wide and threatening. Man stands on its brink and in it is nothing, nothing I tell you, but torture - tortures of the mind, tortures of the frail wilting body, tortures of the spirit, and extinction. Ah! blissful extinction!

Voice of Certitude

Yes extinction, but not of Man. Extinction of the mean and the small - the small in mind, the small in sympathy, the small in love. Extinction of greed, gnawing, racking greed. Extinction of lust, lust for power, lust for gain, lust for dominion.

Voice of Despair

And all that is Man. Today Man is greed and lust and tyranny and selfishness.

Voice of Certitude

Today yes, but not tomorrow. The sun of Faith will shine once more upon the brows of men and the real man, the glorious, eternal child of the spirit will emerge. Not in a distant age, but in this day of this century. For the Lord of Hosts is come.

Voice of Despair

The Lord of Hosts! That name rings familiar in my ears. But alas! Man has gone far on the way to perdition.

Voice of Certitude

Yet Man will be saved. For the Lord of Hosts is come.

Voice of Despair (Incredulous)

"As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is His Name. The Lord of Hosts is His Name!"



Voice of Certitude

The Word is renewed. The world is renewed. That which God promised is fulfilled. Listen to the story of fulfilment. Listen, listen, listen.

(Music - Triumphant)

The 1st Narrator

One day in the latter part of the year 1844, a young man, eager and zealous, arrived at the capital city of Írán with a great mission to fulfil. History knows him as Mullá Husayn. He was once a student of theology and metaphysics and had gathered immense knowledge. Now he had found a knowledge beside which all the rest paled and dwindled away.

The 2nd Narrator

Yes, Mullá Husayn had recognized in the Person of a young merchant of Shíráz that "Lord of the Age" whose advent the world of Islám ardently awaited. He was the very first to believe in the Báb - the youthful merchant of Shíráz now wielding the sceptre of divine authority. And the Báb had sent His first believer on a great, a very great mission. There in the capital city, the Báb had told him, dwells an exalted Being Whose rank excelleth all. Go and find Him and give Him a message from Me. Such was the mission entrusted to Mullá Husayn by his Master.

The 1st Narrator

Beyond this Mullá Husayn had no intimation regarding the identity of Him Whom he sought. For a while his diligent search brought him no nearer to his goal, until ...

The 2nd Narrator

A certain midnight when he had a visitor - a learned man who had observed his conduct and his speech, and had felt impelled to pay his respects to him.

Mullá Muhammad

"He did not expect me, but I knocked at his door, and found him awake, seated beside his lamp. He received me affectionately, and spoke to me with extreme courtesy and tenderness."

The 1st Narrator

Mullá Husayn gave his visitor the tidings that the Lord of the Age had at long last come to the world. And finding him receptive, ventured with a question.

Mullá Husayn

"Tell me, is there today among the family of the late Mírzá Buzurg-i-Núrí, who was so renowned for his character, his chaím, and artistic and intellectual attainments, anyone who has proved himself capable of maintaining the high traditions of that illustrious house?"

Mullá Muhammad

"Yea, among his sons now living one has distinguished Himself by the very traits which distinguished His father. By His virtuous life, His high attainments, His loving-kindness and liberality, He has proved Himself a noble descendant of a noble father."

Mullá Husayn "What is His occupation?"

Mullá Muhammad "He has none apart from befriending the poor and the stranger."

Mullá Husayn "What is His Name?"



*Good*  
Mullá Muhammad

"Husayn-'Álī."

*Husayn*  
Mullá Husayn

"How does He spend His time?"

*Good*  
Mullá Muhammad

"He roams the woods and delights in the beauties of the countryside."

*Husayn*  
Mullá Husayn

"I presume you often meet Him?"

*Good*  
Mullá Muhammad

"I frequently visit His home."

*Husayn*  
Mullá Husayn

"Will you deliver into His hands a trust from me? Should He deign to answer me, will you be kind enough to acquaint me with His reply?"

*Alma*  
The 2nd Narrator

Thus the Báb's faithful disciple fulfilled his mission. The young Nobleman of Núr, the Son of a minister of the crown, who had abandoned the vanities of the court to minister to the poor and the wronged, heard the Call of the Báb and gave it His allegiance.

*Tam*  
The 1st Narrator

He - Baha'u'llah, "the Glory of God", was then in His twenty-seventh year.

( M u s i c )

*Tam*  
1st Narrator

Soon the land of Írán was full of commotion. Indeed the entire world was full of commotion.

*Betty*  
Voice 1

O people! We bring you the tidings for which your souls have yearned. Arise, O people, arise! Arise for the Lord of the Age is come. Arise from your deathlike slumber.

*John*  
Voice 2

O people! These heretics are foul, foul and vile. Uproot them, wipe them out. Have no pity for them. Think of the Faith of your forefathers. Think of your heritage, for they would rob you of it.

*Donald*  
Voice 3

Which way am I to follow? To which voice am I to listen? Shed your light on these matters, O God. Guide us to the straight path.

*Husayn*  
Voice 4 This is no concern of mine.

*Betty*  
Voice 1 Awake to the truth of your Lord, O people.

*John*  
Voice 2 Their own tongue testifies to their guilt. Destroy them.

*Alma*  
2nd Narrator

The whole land was aflame. A decadent court, a decadent state, a decadent priesthood, a people ignorant, exploited by their selfish, self-indulgent masters, incited to murder and violence, hurled their combined power against the new Faith. Harrassed and hounded, the Bábis gathered at the hamlet of Badasht to take counsel together.

*Tam*  
1st Narrator

To that hamlet in the North-East of Írán came many of the stalwart and heroic adherents of the Faith. There came the noble, learned and youthful



Quddús - the last of the conclave of the Báb's disciples whom He had called the Letters of the Living; the last but the foremost in spiritual rank. There came Tahirih the Pure - the young, brilliant, fearless poetess of Qazvin, another of the disciples, the only one of them who never met the Báb and yet gave Him her allegiance with all her heart and with all her soul.

2nd Narrator

And there was Bahá'u'lláh - the shield and the defender of the poor and the oppressed, in Whom the Báb had foreseen the Promised One of all Scriptures, the Deliverer, the Redeemer of mankind.

1st Narrator

And that which happened at the Conference of Badasht shook the Bábís to the core. They saw clearly and plainly what their Faith meant, and He who unfolded the truth before their eyes was Bahá'u'lláh.

2nd Narrator

Quddús and Tahirih clashed at the Conference of Badasht.

Tahirih

I deem him a pupil whom the Báb has sent me to edify and instruct. I regard him in no other light.

Quddús

She is the author of heresy and they who follow her lead are victims of error.

2nd Narrator

One day, Tahirih appeared unveiled amongst men.

Tahirih

I am the Word which the Qá'im is to utter, the Word which shall put to flight the chiefs and nobles of the earth.

1st Narrator

The Bábís were dumbfounded by Tahirih's audacious gesture. Her action was symbolic of emancipation, but people regarded it as shameful and disastrous.

Tahirih

You, Quddús, have failed to promote the best interests of the Faith which you profess.

Quddús

I am not subject to the will and pleasure of my fellow-disciples. I am free to follow the promptings of my own conscience.

Voices

Shame, eternal shame, we are covered with shame.

1st Narrator

Matters had reached a climax. The half-hearted could no longer bear the tension, and broke away.

Tahirih

This day is the day of festivity and great rejoicing, the day on which the fetters of the past are burst asunder. Let those who have shared in this great achievement arise and embrace each other.

Voices

We shall never outlive these humiliations... The past is dead... The future holds nothing for us... A new Faith demands a new outlook... Patience, friends, patience.

Tahirih

Verily amid gardens and rivers shall the pious dwell in the seat of truth, in the presence of the potent King.

2nd Narrator

Then Bahá'u'lláh spoke. He showed them the truth of their Faith. They had to accept a new world and a new age. They had to grow out of the fear, and the superstitions and the prejudices of the past. And there came to the Bábís a new vision and a new resolve.

Voice

Verily, amid gardens and rivers shall the pious dwell in the seat of truth, in the presence of the potent King.

(Music: Joyous)



1st Narrator

And from Badasht the road led to fields of sacrifice and martyrdom. One by one the able lieutenants of the Báb fell in devotion to Him. Bahá'u'lláh set out to join the Bábis who were besieged in the dense forests by the Caspian Sea. He was intercepted and carried before a local governor, with the mob howling at His heels. He suffered grievously in their hands.

2nd Narrator

At last the enemies struck at the person of the Báb, and on a summer day in the year 1850, they shot the Messenger of God, the Lord of the Age, in a public square amidst jeers and cheering.

1st Narrator

Darkness enveloped the fortunes of the new Faith. It seemed as if the enemy had won. The decimated community of the Báb, hovered on the edge of extinction. Gone were its visions, its radiance, its magnetic powers. For at its head stood a nominal leader who was timid and fickle and treacherous. This was a half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh, known as Azal, who dared not lift a finger in support of the Faith that he was expected to protect. His only concern was for his own safety.

2nd Narrator

Indeed the Bábis presented at this juncture of their chequered history, a very sad spectacle to the world. Were these divided, visionless remnants of a once dynamic community the heirs of those heroic martyrs and saints who in the annals of their Faith had written chapter after chapter of glorious achievement with their life-blood? True, Tahirih was still alive, but her days were spent in bondage. True, there were numbers in whose breasts the flame of devotion was kept bright and blazing, but they were for the moment in silent solitude.

1st Narrator

And the land in which such precious blood had flowed freely...

A Voice

This land is sunk in a torpor punctuated by bursts of fanatical frenzy. It is ruled maliciously, tyrannically, incompetently by a king and court that seeks personal gain and cares not for the welfare of the people. Dark, immeasurably dark, is the scene and the setting.

2nd Narrator

And the world.

1st Voice

We have travelled a long way since the dawn of this century. The life of the world has changed beyond recognition.

2nd Voice

We are in the age of the machine. Now it is the machine which counts and not the man. Machine is our master.

1st Voice

Yes, henceforth it is the precision of the machine and its calculable procedure which will determine our views and thoughts and conceptions.

2nd Voice

Machine creates wealth and more wealth - commerce and industry expand. Money will be an idol - money and capital and markets, these will determine our actions.

1st Voice

God will be banished from the mart and the public forum, perhaps from His universe as well. With the machine man will build a new empire of power.

2nd Voice

Power, power, man's power.

(Music - Harsh and strident and forceful)

1st Narrator

Bleak were the prospects for the life of the Spirit.



2nd Narrator

But hope endured; hope for the Kingdom promised by Christ,  
hope for a humanity reborn, hope for a world freed from the  
shackles of selfish pursuit.

A Voice

Ring out a slowly dying Cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

1st Narrator

The Christ that is to be... There in the year 1852, He  
bore on His neck and His feet chains - heavy, ponderous  
chains that galled the flesh. He was consigned to a foul  
dungeon, accused of complicity in attempted murder.

2nd Narrator

Three Bábí youths whose faculties were deranged by the cruel  
death of their Master and the carnage amidst their ranks,  
decided to kill in revenge the Sovereign. They made a poor  
attempt and failed and paid the penalty with their lives.

1st Voice

Their dastardly act has unleashed violet storms. Tornados  
rage around us.

2nd Voice

People! If proof was needed to show the danger in which  
our land and our Faith stands from these base heretics,  
here is proof evident and clear. They must be thoroughly  
uprooted, make no mistake - I say thoroughly uprooted.

1st Voice

Our whole community is branded with this crime. Today they  
paraded Sulaymán Khán in the streets with candles flickering  
in his wounds. They tore holes in his body to place the  
candles.

2nd Voice

And the woman, that sorceress must not be spared. Death to  
the sorceress!

1st Voice

Tahirih, the pure... Tahirih, the bright jewel in the crown  
of her generation, was strangled in the silence of the night  
and her body was thrown into a pit.

2nd Voice

Mirza Husayn-'Alí, the son of the late Núrí minister, was the  
prime mover of this heinous deed. Why is he left in prison?  
He should be turned to the executioner.

1st Narrator

Bahá'u'lláh, Whose blood the enemy demanded, lay imprisoned  
in the darksome dungeon of Tihrán. In His own words:

2nd Narrator

"We were consigned for four months to a place foul beyond comparison...  
Upon our arrival, We were conducted along a pitch-black corridor from whence  
We descended three steep flights of stairs to the place of confinement  
assigned to Us. The dungeon was wrapped in thick darkness, and our fellow-  
prisoners numbered nearly one hundred and fifty souls; thieves, assassins and  
highwaymen. Though crowded, it had no other outlet than the passage by  
which We entered. No pen can depict that place, nor any tongue describe its  
loathsome smell... God alone knoweth what befell Us in that most foul-  
smelling and gloomy place."

1st Narrator

Whilst Bahá'u'lláh, upon hearing the news of the attempt on the life of



the Sháh, had on His own accord rode towards the royal camp and refused to go into hiding as His friends entreated Him to do, the timid Azal had left the capital in the guise of a dervish, seeking safety in the wilderness. Whilst Bahá'u'lláh calmly suffered untold agonies in the prison cell, Azal roamed over the plains and the hills with terror in his heart.

2nd Narrator

And it was in the murk and the deep shadows of the prison that Bahá'u'lláh became conscious of the Light of God shining in His own Self. As you now hear His own Words describing those moments of supreme effulgence, remember that you are listening to words unparalleled in the universe of God - they tell you of the advent of the Lord of Hosts...

1st Reader

"One night in a dream these exalted words were heard from every side: 'Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee, neither be Thou afraid, for Thou art in safety. Ere long will God raise up the treasures of the earth - men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name, wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognised Him'.

2nd Reader

"During the days I lay in the prison of Tihrán, though the galling weight of the chains and the stench-filled air allowed Me but little sleep, still in those infrequent moments of slumber I felt as if something flowed from the crown of My head over My breast even as a mighty torrent that precipitatheth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of My body would, as a result be set afire. At such moments My tongue recited what no man could bear to hear.

3rd Reader

"While engulfed in tribulations I heard a most wondrous, a most sweet voice, calling above My head. Turning My face, I beheld a Maiden - the embodiment of the remembrance of the name of My Lord - suspended in the air before Me. So rejoiced was she in her very soul that her countenance shone with the ornament of the good-pleasure of God, and her cheeks glowed with the brightness of the All-Merciful. Betwixt earth and heaven she was raising a call which captivated the hearts and minds of men. She was imparting to both My inward and outer being tidings which rejoiced My soul, and the souls of God's honoured servants. Pointing with her finger unto My head, she addressed all who are in heaven and all who are on earth, saying: 'By God! This is the Best-Beloved of the worlds, and yet ye comprehend not. This is the Beauty of God amongst you, and the power of His sovereignty within you, could ye but understand. This is the Mystery of God and His Treasure, the Cause of God and His Glory unto all who are in the kingdoms of revelation and of creation, if ye be them that perceive."

(Music - Joyous and majestic)

1st Narrator

Eleven more years had to pass before the Sun of Truth could unveil Itself to the gaze of men.

(Long pause)

2nd Narrator

And now to Baghdád, where Bahá'u'lláh was exiled after four months of imprisonment. His property was confiscated, and in the heart of a severe winter, He was sent with His family over the snow-clad peaks of Western Persia into exile. They had scanty means to provide against the ravages of the elements and the fatigues and toils of a long, arduous journey. Enemies hoped that such hardships, coupled with the dire experiences of incarceration, would end the life of Bahá'u'lláh.



2nd Narrator

But men's plottings could not defeat God's design. Bahá'u'lláh survived the perils set in His path. Then treachery and base ambition reared their ugly heads. No sooner had Bahá'u'lláh risen to impart new life and vigour and purpose to the submerged community of the Báb, than Azal, racked by jealousy and goaded by a few adventurers, chose to obstruct His lead... The same Azal who, but a short while before, had abandoned all to save his own paltry life.

Voices

Bahá'u'lláh has left us... The Beloved has left us... Once again we are left stranded in this wide world... Once again darkness has come over us... Bahá'u'lláh has left us... The Beloved has left us.

1st Narrator

Bahá'u'lláh, wishing to avoid further rifts in the ranks of the Bábis, betook Himself to the mountains of Northern Iráq. His self-imposed exile was a clear proof for the friend and the foe alike that He did not seek pomp and power. His aim was not the attainment of a vain leadership, but the regeneration of a lost community.

2nd Narrator

There, dressed as a dervish, He dwelt in the caves and the valleys, unknown to the people, a solitary figure Who was always kind and considerate to those He would meet, Who was always ready with a wise counsel, Whom the children loved.

1st Narrator

The learned and the mystic also came to visit this Dervish and found Him excelling them in knowledge. And thus His fame spread far and wide.

2nd Narrator

And at Baghdád, His friends sought Him.

Voices

Two years... Two long years... How can we endure it any longer?... Two long years... Light is gone... Life is gone...

2nd Narrator

Yes, Light had gone out of the community of the Báb. They were sad and desperate and forlorn.

1st Narrator

One day they heard of the wise, learned Dervish Who lived in the mountains. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh, then but ten years old, knew at once that the unknown Dervish could be none except His beloved Father. Messengers were dispatched, and they found Him. To Bahá'u'lláh it was not only the entreaty of the Bábis, but divine Summons. Time had shown without any measure of doubt that Azal was devoid of those qualities required for the station which he was clamouring to arrogate to himself.

Voices

Joy, oh dear joy... Our Master is again with us... He has returned... Our Beloved has returned.

2nd Narrator

He returned and turned a broken community into a community of strength. The Bábis could once again lift their heads to face the world. Harrowing sorrows gave way to ineffable joys.

1st Narrator

And people came from all sides to visit Bahá'u'lláh. Devoted friends, sincere inquirers, savants, princes, divines, men of letters, all came - and enemies took alarm.

2nd Narrator

Kings and divines and governments plotted and ordained yet another exile - to Istanbul.

Voices

O cruel fate... Separation from our Lord is death indeed... Worse than death, my friends, worse than death... What will they do to our Lord? O cruel fate, what will they do to our Lord?



1st Narrator At last the hour struck... the hour which God had promised and man had prayed for.

Voice Thy Kingdom come.

2nd Narrator The hour struck... In the afternoon of April 21st, 1863, in the garden of Ridván, outside the gates of Baghdád.

1st Reader

The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching. Bestir thyself, and magnify, before the entire creation, the name of God, and celebrate His praise, in such wise that all created things may be regenerated and made new.

2nd Reader

Canst thou discover anyone but Me, O Pen, in this Day? What hath become of the creation and the manifestations thereof? What of the Names and their kingdom? Whither are gone all created things, whether seen or unseen? What of the hidden secrets of the universe and its revelations? Lo, the entire creation hath passed away! Nothing remaineth except My Face, the Ever-Abiding, the Resplendent, the All-Glorious.

3rd Reader

This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendour of the Light that shineth from the face of Thy Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful. Verily, We have caused every soul to expire by virtue of Our irresistible, and all-subduing sovereignty. We have, then, called into being a new creation, as a token of Our grace unto men. I am, verily, the All-Bountiful, the Ancient of Days.

(Music - Rising to a triumphant climax)

1st Narrator From Baghdád to Istanbul - from Istanbul to Adrianople - from Adrianople to the Holy Land in August 1868. Thus did the Lord of Hosts suffer banishment in the hands of men. He met with vile treachery, fierce hostility, taunt and ridicule,

2nd Narrator He faced the world, the evil in the world and challenged the evil in the heart of man.

1st Reader "O Befriended Stranger! The candle of thy heart is lighted by the hand of my power, quench it not with the contrary winds of self and passion. The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of Me. Forget it not. Make My love thy treasure and cherish it even as thy very sight and life."  
(The Hidden Words)

2nd Reader "O My Servant! Thou art ever as a finely tempered sword concealed in the darkness of its sheath and its value hidden from the artificer's knowledge. Wherefore come forth from the sheath of self and desire that thy worth may be made resplendent and manifest unto all the world." (The Hidden Words)

1st Narrator From the pestilential barracks of 'Akká where Bahá'u'lláh, His family and many of His followers were incarcerated, from the prison of thieves and assassins, He, the prisoner of a mighty despot, addressed the sovereigns of the world with the majesty of His divine mandate.

Voices The Shah of Irán... The Sultán of Turkey... Pope Pius IX... The Emperor of the French... The Czar of all Russia... The Queen of Britain and the Empire...

2nd Narrator To them all, Bahá'u'lláh gave the tidings of His advent. He called them to the path of peace and justice and righteousness.



1st Reader

"He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds, and the decree hath been fulfilled by God, the Almighty, the Unrestrained... He verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time. Beware that thou dispute not with Him, even as the Pharisees disputed with Him (Jesus) without a clear token of proof."

2nd Reader

"The Word which the Son concealed is made manifest. It hath been sent down in the form of the human temple in this day. Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty."

3rd Reader

"Hearken, O King, to the speech of Him that speaketh the truth, Him that doth not ask thee to recompense Him with the things God has chosen to bestow upon thee, Him Who unerringly treadeth the straight Path. He it is Who summoneth thee unto God, thy Lord, Who showeth thee the right course, the way that leadeth to true felicity, that haply thou mayest be of them with whom it shall be well. He that giveth up himself wholly to God, God shall, assuredly, be with him."

1st Reader

"Overstep not the bounds of moderation, and deal justly with them that serve thee. Bestow upon them according to their needs, and not to the extent that will enable them to lay up riches for themselves, to deck their persons, to embellish their homes, to acquire the things that are of no benefit to them, and to be numbered with the extravagant. Deal with them with undeviating justice, so that none among them may either suffer want, or be pampered with luxuries. Allow not the abject to rule over and dominate them who are noble and worthy of honour, and suffer not the high-minded to be at the mercy of the contemptible and worthless."

2nd Reader

"Lay aside thy desire, and set thine heart towards thy Lord, the Ancient of Days. We make mention of thee for the sake of God, and desire that thy name may be exalted through thy remembrance of God, the Creator of earth and heaven. He, verily, is witness unto that which I say. We have been informed that thou hast forbidden the trading in slaves, both men and women. This, verily, is what God hath enjoined in this wondrous Revelation. God hath, truly, destined a reward for thee, because of this."

3rd Reader

"Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace, hold ye fast unto this the lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents. Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions... Be united, O Kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice."

1st Narrator

But the world made little response to the call of Bahá'u'lláh.

2nd Narrator

And the world suffered grievously. The Lord of Hosts came as promised, and offered the world the cup of life, which the world scorned. And the world suffered grievously.

1st Narrator

They consigned Him to the grim barracks of 'Akká. Thus the Lord of Hosts appeared in the Holy Land, and thus the prophecies of old were fulfilled. And one day, He - the Lord of Hosts - pitched His tent on Carmel - the Mountain of God.

2nd Narrator

And that was what He had foretold whilst still confined by the bars of the prison of 'Akká.



1st Narrator

Those who bore His Name were shunned and despised and hated for His sake. And thousands gave their lives joyously for His sake. Thousands upon thousands accepted untold suffering and humiliation for His sake.

Voices

Had we a thousand lives we would still offer them at His Threshold... O peerless King! This I beg of Thee - *John* confirm me in Thy love at my last breath, O Bahá, Bahá... I walked on foot over peaks and deserts to attain Thy presence and die with peace in my heart. To Thy prison, my Lord, they admitted me not. I stood behind the second moat and dimly saw Thee behind the bars. That glimpse of Thee, my Lord, rent my heart and yet it was a balm to my agonised soul... Happy the day when on the hangman's rope, I sing the praise of my King.

2nd Narrator

Not only devotion did He inspire in the hearts of men. Those hearts He cleansed and purified and united. As His Light shone on the brows of men, they became of the new creation.

1st Narrator

At the evening of His life, the distinguished Orientalist, Edward Granville Browne of Cambridge University, visited Him and later wrote:

Browne

In the corner where the divan met the wall, sat a wondrous and venerable figure... The face of Him on Whom I gazed I can never forget though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow... No need to ask in Whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before One Who is the object of a devotion and love that kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain.

2nd Narrator

Bahá'u'lláh left His mortal temple on May 29th 1892. He, the Lord of Hosts, the Spirit of Truth come in the station of the Father, remained a prisoner of the tyrants of this world, to the end of His life. Such was the measure of man's gratitude to his Redeemer.

The world wronged Him, but His Word it could not efface. His love and His mercy, His grace and His power remain ever abundant to shed glory upon the world.

(Music - Triumphant)