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Wahid Bab -
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Some Episodes in the LIFE of

or UMMU'S-SALAMAH
FATIMAH SALAMEH

Also known as "Tahirih" - the "Pure One", name given by the
Bab.

"Qurratu⁶-~~al~~-Ayn²" - "Solace of the Eyes and
Joy of the heart".

"Zarrin-Taj¹-~~al~~" - "Crown of Gold".

From notes given by some Persian friends,
who had an intimate knowledge of the sub-
lime life and tragic death of

"The beautiful Saint-Poetess of Qasvin".

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Arranged { or
(and edited) by

Sitarh Khānum.

FATIMAH b. MUHAMMAD-SALAMAH

Fatimeh Salameh, daughter of a learned Mulla, Muhammad Saleh.

She was not only beautiful, but endowed with a logical and fearless mind.

Her father was proud of her talents, and taught her much more than was the custom to allow to Persian girl children, at that time.

He was indulgent to his gifted daughter, and permitted her to listen, behind a curtain, to many conversations with his learned friends.

Her comment upon them afterwards, showing her clear-sighted intelligent grasp of the various matters discussed, and her keen sense of humour delighted and interested her father.

These unusual advantages enabled her to develop to an extraordinary degree, and she grew up into a lovely girl, majestic, gentle, with that charming quality we call magnetism. She wrote poetry, unequalled in its own particular way, artistic to a high degree - this she read or chanted to her friends in a most fascinating voice, which produced a thrilling effect on all who heard her, such talents being rare in a woman of Persia.

When she was very young she was married to her cousin Mulla Muhammad, son of Mulla Taqi, Mujtahid.

Her husband loved her in his way, but was too conventionally orthodox, and too tightly wrapped up in a narrow ecclesiastism, to be able to appreciate the unusual and original personality of his wife. One never-to-be-forgotten day, she was turning over some books and papers in the library of a more enlightened cousin, when she found a little leaflet, the first words attracted her attention, she read on and on, she became more and more interested - then thrilled and excited!

"Who wrote this?" she cried to her cousin who came in.

"What have you there? what has happened? why are you so agitated?"

"But you must tell me who wrote this?"

She showed the leaflet to him. Then it was his turn to be agitated.

"You have found that, where? Oh I cannot tell you about it, you should never have seen it! it is a very secret matter! it should have been securely and carefully concealed."

"Now that I have seen it", and her voice shook with excitement, "You must tell me about it, my cousin".

"He still hesitated, but at last yielding to her enthusiasm - he said -

SHAYKH AHMAD +
SIYYID KASIM

"It is written by Sheikh Siyyid Kasim - keep it a secret, closely guarded - the risk of a terrible danger would attend its discovery!"

"So this wonderful pamphlet is by Siyyid Kasim Rashti and ^{AHSA'I} Shaykh Ahmad Asaiyeh? and this is what they teach their disciples? but it is the Truth, every shining word of it!"

"So these are the ^{SHAYKHIS} Shekhis who are persecuted!"

She realised quickly with her marvellous spiritual intuition that the self-seeking and the grasping of the professors of religion, those who should have welcomed the Truth, but did not investigate it, were in fear of its purity, therefore they agreed to suppress it, and persecute its believers!!

"I know that at heart I am a follower of these brave enlightened ^{ay} Sheikhis -

Tell me more of their teaching, my cousin!"

He told her all he knew, gave her another pamphlet, re-iterating the need for the most strict secrecy.

She read and re-read the illumined words, became entirely, enthusiastically convinced of their Truth - and wrote to (Sheikh) Siyyid Kasim; he was rejoiced to receive her enlightened poetic letter, so full of spiritual understanding, and, in his reply, he gave her the name of Qurat-ul-Ain, literally "Consolation of the eyes" (so great was her beauty of Spirit, Mind and Person).

QURRATUL AYN

✠ A Sect which followed those two great teachers, who "prepared the way" for the Báb.

KARBALA

She determined to journey to Kerbala to see him - but how to set about it? the plan was fraught with difficulty! Persian ladies did not travel unattended by husband or father - and these would have been hopeless companions of her quest!

At length she joined a party of pilgrims to the Shrine of the martyred Husayn at Kerbala, a pilgrimage she had long wished to make.

After visiting the sacred place, she thought to carry out her desire, to speak with the (Sheikh.) Siyyid

Alas! when she arrived at Kerbala, she found that the much desired interview was not to be, for the revered Siyyid Kasim-Rashti had passed from the life of earth six days before!!

"Who is now to lead us? Who is to teach us henceforth? What shall we do"? she said.

Her relief was great, and her joy profound when she heard the directions of the venerated teacher - to be carried out after his passing from the world.

"Disperse throughout the length and breadth of the land - seek for the Chosen, the Awaited One.

"First keep the fast, and pray in retreat for forty days - then will you be able to recognise him when found! and when you have attained that Meeting, then "Let all the world know"!

He, Siyyid Kásim-Rashti, had given explicit signs by which this promised one could be known without possibility of mistake.

^{QAYN}Qurat-ul-Ayni remained, waiting for news at ^{KARBILÁ}Kerbala.

In a short time, the first disciple of the youthful Qaim, the Bál-el-Báb, wrote to her of the wonder, the success of his quest!

He enclosed a Tablet, written by the Báb.

She was profoundly impressed as she read, and the Truth she found therein took possession of her soul.

She arose, feeling that she knew this was the Qaim, the Imám Máhdi, the promised One.

Henceforth her life was devoted to his service.

She wrote a letter to him, whom she accepted as Master, enclosing five beautiful poems.

This is
doubtful

Qurat-ul-Ayni
had already sent
a letter to the Báb,
by the hands of her
kinsman, Hingá
Muhammad Ali-i-
Kazvini.

Her consecration to the Service was not merely an acceptance of ^{an} interesting truth - it was dynamic!

She left all the things of her former life, father, husband, children and wealth, honours, comfort and luxury; willingly did she forfeit the esteem of her uncomprehending family and friends!

Nothing was of any importance to her, from this moment to the woefully tragic but glorious martyrdom, through the door of which her gallant spirit fled from the cage of earth into the garden of Transfiguration.

This took place some years later.

Meanwhile she served the Cause with a courage and wisdom remarkable at any time, but, in the land of Persia in the fifth decade of the Nineteenth Century, the people thought her a miraculous being.

She remained at ^{KARBILA} Kerbala for three years.

She took two houses side by side - one, in which she had her own rooms - the other she devoted to the reception of those friends who flocked to hear her remarkable voice, giving forth explanations of Prophecies, and the teaching of the Preparation, and above all, proclaiming the appearance of the Divinely sent Qáim, the Imám Māhdi.

She had arranged a room where the friends assembled, there was an inner room, across the door of which a

SHAYKHI

curtain was hung - from behind this curtain she usually addressed her audience. Many of her constant hearers were of the Sheikh-i sect, but others were orthodox; attracted, learned Mullas and often strangers came.

When her particular friends, the Sheikh-i-s only, were present she spoke from the doorway of the inner room, before which the curtain was withdrawn - her beautiful voice ringing out in enthusiastic burning words, charged with forceful meaning, as she told of the great event of the "Coming".

Many women came to hear, these she received in her inner room; men listened from the outer room. So great was the fascination of her unique personality that her followers increased in numbers, some were prepared to follow her even unto death!

Those Mullas, who remained bigoted and fanatical, styling themselves orthodox, as of old, opposed the purity of the new teaching! they besieged the Governor of Kerbalā with stories of how this woman was 'guilty of speaking to an audience of men, sometimes with her face unveiled'!!!

Could there be a more heinous offence?

And she the daughter of a Mujtahid! and the wife of a learned and distinguished Mulla! Surely this disgrace to her family and her religion deserved the most severe punishment!

The Governor became alarmed at these charges, and commanded her to discontinue her teaching.

She answered him: "I am not doing wrong, I am but proving the Truth of God - let us reason together. You can summon the most scholarly of the Mullās, both Shia and Sunni, to meet me in discussion - in this way can the right or the wrong of this cause be made manifest to you; is not this a just and fair request?"

The Governor was much troubled in his mind, and he replied:- "I cannot do this without the consent of my chief, the Governor of Bagh^hdad".

This was a device to gain time.

The Governor did not wish to be unduly harsh to one, whom the people might arise to protect!

Neither was he brave enough to defy the Mullās, whose influence was so vast a power in the land.

He was only in a difficult position.

His temporising took this form:-

QURRATUL-^SA/^N ~~Qurat-ul-Ayni~~ was entirely forbidden to teach, and was under strict surveillance, whilst awaiting the consent of the Governor of Bagh^hdad to her just request.

This was so long delayed that she decided to leave secretly for Bagh^hdad. Arrived there she went to the house of

SHAYKH Sheikh Muhammad.

Note. (Grandfather of Doctor Zia Bagh^hdadi).

When the Governor heard that she had come to this City, he commanded her to stay at the house of ^{SHAYKH} Sheikh Alusi.

During the day she would find opportunities of visiting the house of her friend, ^{AY} Sheikh Muhammad, where she, as at ^{KARBILÁ} Kerbalá, spoke to the people from behind a curtain.

In this hospitable house she met many friends - the sister of the Báb-ul-Báb - and Khurshid Bāgum, the mother-in-law of Siyyid Hassan, he, who became long years afterwards the "King of the Martyrs".

He was martyred at Isphahán.

His son, Mirza Jalal, married Róuḥá Khānum, daughter of Abdull-Báha.

Husayn and Hassan, the two martyred brothers of Isphahán -

"The Beloved Martyr", and the "King of the Martyrs".
So named by Bahá'u'lláh.

Her occasional unveiling shocked not only the orthodox Mullas and those whom they influenced, but even some of the Babi friends themselves.

The Báb received letters of complaint of her action from some of these friends to whom he sent this reply:-

"What can I say of that woman to whom God gives the name of 'Tāhīrih' (the pure one)?" *(Quotation is not exact. It is in Persian - thirah)*

She continued to request the Governor that which she had asked from his subordinate at Kārbilā - i.e. to summon a Convocation of Mullas, both Shia and Sunni, to discuss the teaching of the Báb with her - "At any time I am ready to meet them".

The Governor, fearing the defeat of the 'Ulama' in this discussion, if allowed, and, moreover, having received certain orders from Constantinople and from Tihiran, came and said that he thought it would be wiser to have this Conference arranged in her own country.

He would himself escort her to the frontier of Persia.

Accordingly she arrived at Khaniqān a village ^{on} across the border, thence she went to Karand village, staying three days and teaching the important persons of the place.

She then came to Kermanshāh, where again she took two houses, side by side, one for her own home, and the other for the teaching.

This is very doubtful. It is generally agreed that the first time Qurratūl 'Ayn unveiled herself was at Bad ashir. This followed the Conf. at Bad ashir.

"Consumed with the fire of the love of God", she rested not day nor night.

She requested ^{AY}Sheikh Sâlih, one of the most devout of the Bâbis, to read to the assembled friends in public the explanation of the Sura of ^{KAWTHAR}Koser, this was revealed by the Bâb for the Siyyid Yâhyâ Darâbi.

A profound impression was made on many of the hearers, not yet Bâbis: her influence grew and increased, many of the people, ignorant and learned, heard her with joy and gladness!

She now made plans to journey to Tihran, her purpose was to state the great event, and what led up to it, to no less a personage than Muhammad Shah himself.

What might not have taken place, had she been able to carry out her courageous project, who can say?

Muhammad Shah was not himself a cruel enemy - But it was not to be, for her ever watchful opposers, fearing the outcome of this interview, warned her father of her intention.

HÂJÍ MULLÂ TAQÍ, THE MUJTAHID

He and her uncle, Mujtahid Taqi, consulted together, and promptly sent a confidential friend to make certain representations to the Military chief of Kermanshâh, and to beg of him to have her secretly arrested and brought back to her home in Qazvin.

The frustrations of her plans, rapidly succeeding each other, had no effect on her flaming ardour.

Her friends, ^{ay}Sheikh Muhammad, his son Muhammad ^{6'}Mustapha and the faithful ^{ay}Sheikh Sâlih followed her to Qazvin - some ladies also determined to continue near her.

When she reached her father's house, he kept his intrepid daughter practically a prisoner.

Her husband now sent a magnanimous offer to her:-

"If you entirely give up your teaching, promising
"never to teach again - If you ask my pardon and come
"back to me - I will receive you, and forgive you -
"You shall also have your freedom"!!

This serene, dignified disciple sent a characteristic reply:-

"No longer art thou my husband, seeing that alas!
thou art an enemy to my faith:
Thou art outcast henceforth from my life!
That thou wilt become Mujtahid, rich, important, means
nothing to me! neither ease nor comfort, nor any worldly
honour, neither luxury nor great position, nor even
freedom have any power to tempt me!
My devotion to my faith and my service to the cause of
my God is my only life"!

She was feeling more and more that the Great Light which had shone forth out of the darkness was the One Reality: all else was indistinct, blurred, of no longer any importance to her.

Her father, in his refusal even to try to comprehend - Her husband in his blinded way, teaching his children to regard her as an infidel - keeping them away from her, bringing them up in a narrow orthodoxy! thinking it possible to lure her back into the "comfortable things" of an important worldly position - caring nought for the Truth - which his duty should have compelled him to investigate and, being a religious leader, he should have proclaimed it to the World!!

Such conduct she could only scorn!

In this Truth was, for her, the only real live, all else, all her past belongings, her family and her self-seeking friends were merely illusions.

"Let the dead bury their dead! I am for Life!"
Her friend Khurshid Bagum said of her at this time:-
"She seems to be no longer an ordinary woman, but a denizen of another and holier World".

She succeeded in getting letters, with great caution and secrecy, conveyed to Mirzā Husayn 'Alī Nāri, afterwards Bāhā'u'llāh, and to certain other Bābi friends.

In these days a very sad episode took place:-

Her uncle, Mulla Tāqī ^{the} Mujtahid, had become more and more incensed against the Sheikh ^{ay} sect and their doctrine. Although this was a development of the Shia World - these people were as vehemently hated by them, as by their rivals, the Sunnis.

One fateful day the Mujtahid ascended the pulpit, and spoke as usual against the Sheikh ^{ay}, denouncing them as infidels and enemies of religion: not content with this, he proceeded with the utmost fury and virulence to curse Siyyid Kāzim ^{the} Rashtī!!!

Among the hearers in the Mosque was a youth named ^{SALIH} Taher; he being a devoted disciple of ^{Siyyid} Sheikh Kāzim, was overcome with indignation at the violent cursing of the Master whom he revered!

He conceived it his duty to "Stop that mouth, so full of blasphemy and cursing" - accordingly he determined on a plan:-

He watched at dawn for the Mujtahid, when he was wont to repair to the Mosque for the early prayer - he rushed at him, struck at his mouth with a dagger - he fell the life blood gushing from that mouth which had uttered the blasphemous curses; and so he died.

^{SALIH} ~~Taher~~ fled into hiding.

All who were known to be members of the ^{ay} Sheikh sect in Qazvin were at once arrested, including Qurat⁶ul-Ayn¹ and her friends: about sixteen persons were now thrown into prison.

When ^{SALIH} Taher heard of these arrests, he hastened to the Court saying:-

"I am he, who killed Mujtāhid Taqi; I pray you release these innocent people!"

At first the officials did not believe him, thinking perchance, he wished to sacrifice his life to save the real perpetrator of the crime.

He, however, persisted; "Take me to the Mosque, I will show ~~you~~ where I struck this man down", (to his mind it was not a crime, but a just punishment for his blasphemous curses) - "I will also produce the dagger. You may, in addition, call the old woman who was in the Mosque at the time, she will witness whether I speak the truth or no".

Accordingly being taken to the Mosque, he showed the place where the Mujtāhid fell dead, and the dagger with which he had avenged his master.

This youth was imprisoned; whilst awaiting his trial, he broke his chain and escaped.

He fled to Mazinder^a where he joined those Bābis, who had decided to take up arms in defence of their lives and properties, so ruthlessly attacked.

^SALIH Taher distinguished himself by very conspicuous bravery, and was at length slain in the defence of this stronghold.

To return to Tahirih and her friends, most of the wrongfully accused ^{ay}Sheikh^{id} were set free.

Now her husband, son of Mulla Taqi, had succeeded him as Mujtahid, and being very powerful, was able to indulge his hatred by keeping Tahirih, and a few of the most prominent of her friends in prison; he knew of a certainty that they were absolutely innocent, but he would not permit their release.

One of these was her trusty and devoted friend, ^{ay}Sheikh Salih; he was taken to Tihren, where he was cruelly done to death in the Market Place, before a crowd, who had been incensed by vile calumnies spread against him, and, to the accompaniment of whose yells and execrations, the gallant soul of this first martyr in the path of the Bāb returned to God the Beloved.

To be followed alas! by many, many more, who, counting their lives and their worldly goods of no importance, willingly and joyfully surrendered all things - for the

Cause of the Love of God!

This spirit of willingness, of ecstasy, of joy, of actual longing for the privilege of giving their lives that the "Tree of Life" might be watered by the sacrificial red blood of martyrs - this spirit was the foundation of all their heroic deeds!

To know of the existence of so exalted a spirit, able to inspire human persons, and to come into close touch with some of those so inspired, is to feel one's faith lifted out of the Slough of Despond, and caught up on to a mountain top, whence eyes may see the earth of the future filled with this spirit of Love and joy - it is an experience, which surely must colour all the rest of one's life, and render one impervious to pessimism - for if we are perforce made aware that dishonesty and greed and insincerity exist in commerce and ⁱⁿ politics, and that cruelty and hatred and ruthlessness are rampant on the earth, we can remind ourselves that there is also a recrudescence, now in these sad dark days, of that Spirit of Love and Light, which shall, in a time not very far distant, have so grown and increased! --

"That the World shall become the hoped for
"Delectable Paradise".

During these harassed days of Tāhīrīh's work and imprisonment, Mirzā Husayn 'Alī had been very active; though not yet publicly known as a Bābī, he had incurred some suspicion, because of his efforts to protect Sheikh Salih - these efforts were fruitless, so full of fanatical animosity were those who were busied in encompassing his death.

Mirzā Husayn 'Alī, however, being at the zenith of his prosperity and power, had been successful in getting food taken to him - for prisoners were dependent on whatever was sent to them by friends, as the prison officials were not empowered to feed the prisoners!

Mirzā Husayn 'Alī, hearing that Tāhīrīh was still imprisoned, planned her escape.

A trustworthy messenger was despatched to Qazvin with a letter to her.

Very careful directions were given to him how to proceed on this secret mission.

In answer to certain inquiry of his - Tāhīrīh would come out to speak to him.

She would hasten with him to a place, where he was to have fleet fresh horses in readiness.

They rode night and day, and, on the third evening, she arrived in Tihhrān, where she was received with a loving welcome by Asā'iyeh Khānum, that lovely gentle lady, who

was the adored wife of Mírzá Husayn 'Alí - at the house of this "Father of the Poor" and helper and protector of all who were in need - the fearless Táhírih was able to stay and rest for a short while.

She enjoyed a few days respite, out of the power of her most persistent enemies, her husband and her father.

'Abbás Effendi told the writer that he remembered her very well, though only about six years old at the time. She used to sit in the inner very private room of his mother, Asiyyé Khánum, (into this room not even the maid servants were allowed to enter without permission): she, therefore, found a veritable oasis of peace, which must have been sorely needed by this fearless persecuted lady, always in grave danger.

It was during this visit that Siyyid Yáhya Darábi came to see Mírzá Husayn 'Alí on his return from his interview with the Báb.

Táhírih hearing his questionings - spoke out from behind the curtain, which hung across the open doorway of the inner room in that powerful, fascinating, all-persuading voice of hers.

"Siyyid Yáhya Darábi, this is no longer the time for discussions and arguments, it is the day for work, for deeds (Verse from the Qurán). If you have courage, now is

the appointed time for its manifestation.

If you are a man, show a proof of your manhood by proclaiming day and night,

"The promised One is come! He has come!

"The Qaim has come! He is come!! He is come!!!"

"She used to take me on her knee often and caress me and talk to me, I loved her, she had such a bright pleasant face" - 'Abbás Effendi added.

It was in these days that the Báb, now in the prison of Máh, had sent out by the Báb²ul-Báb, a proclamation to all the Bábís, summoning them to assemble at Khurássán.

This message, which was delivered with great care in absolute secrecy, at length reached those to whom it was sent.

Táhirih determined to obey that summons.

Mírzá Mousá, brother of Mírzá Husayn 'Alí, tells how he was asked to escort her with two other ladies, on horses out of Tihrah - to avoid dangerous risks.

He was to find a comfortable ^{suitable} place, where they might for the moment remain in safety, until further plans could be made.

He accordingly took them to a beautiful garden - where he left them in the protecting care of the old

gardener, whose house was a sufficiently comfortable resting place - the warm welcome and kindness of their aged host made their stay in this lonely garden pleasant:

Táhirih, looking forward with great joy to the Gathering at Khorássán, to which she was, of course, on her way.

Mirzá Husayn 'Alí Núrí was proceeding with his preparations for the journey to Khorássán and for the hospitality to the numbers of friends who should assemble there . The arrangement for the feeding and housing of so many was no slight undertaking, even for one of his position - withal certain secrecy being necessary so as not to unduly alarm the enemy.

He was joined on the way by some Bábis, and by Táhirih with her ladies.

Having arrived at Badasht on their way to their destination the party encamped in three gardens.

1. Mirzá Husayn 'Alí and his friends.
2. Táhirih with some ladies.
3. Jenābe Quddus and his friends.

SINAB-i-

The Bábis began to arrive in secret by one, by twos, by threes, separately - they were received and entertained in one or the other of these three encampments.

Everything was in readiness, having been

prepared by the orders of Mírzá Husayn ^{Ali}, whose noble hospitality included all comers, and who made them heartily welcome.

(?) About three hundred of these guests had arrived from all sides, and everything went well for a time: They excited little comment - a party of pilgrims on a pilgrimage, was no unusual occurrence in Persia.

Táhirih the untiring, the undaunted, began to teach the people in her tent.

(?) She was sometimes unveiled!

This so shocked some of the Bábís, that a few of them left Badásht, and returned to their homes.

Táhirih felt it incumbent on her to explain the teaching to the people, for so few had been able to come into direct contact with the Báb, who was constantly in prison - that the new teaching was very imperfectly known. Hence the killing of the Mujtáhid - the people were ignorant of the laws against any killing whatsoever! also that women were to be freed from their stultified conditions of life.

Táhirih determined to emphasise this new freedom.

One day news came to her that Mírzá Husayn ^{Ali} was ill. She hurried, with two ladies, to his tent to see for herself how he fared.

/ The veil was not covering her face!!
 (?) / Bāhā'u'llāh said, "Why have you come here amongst so many
 / men?"

"I heard you were not well, I had to come and see you".

Majestic and beautiful was this wonderful poetess as she stood, in defiance of the custom of veiling, with her lovely face uncovered to the astonished sight of the assembled friends, unaccustomed to look upon the face of any woman, but of their own relations! And then her fearless eloquence, as her golden voice rang out:

"Do you not understand that now is the appointed time, when all the fettering time-worn customs are broken? This is the Day of Judgment", when the forms of the old religions, with their bigotries, fanaticisms, and prejudices shall be swept away!

This is the Day, when all the women of the world shall arise from their dead lives and be free! and there shall be no more slavery!!

It is the Will of God!

And the voice proclaiming this freedom is a note of that Trumpet blast, which should sound in the Last Days of the old dispensation - awakening all who sleep the sleep of negligence!

For the correct
account of
Tahira's
unfolding self
"De Doubt Breakers"

"Ringing in the Day, when all things shall be made new.
"This is the New Day! the Day of Unity of Service, of Loving
"kindness, of understanding! of the Brotherhood of Man!"
"Arise, arise and serve God and Humanity!"

The effect produced upon those who listened to the triumphant words of her matchless eloquence, and met the direct gaze of her flashing eyes, which seemed to bring them into the close touch with the dynamic power of her vast and steadfast faith - this effect was unprecedented.

Men ran hither and thither in a frenzy of excitement - "It is the Divine voice speaking through her, and calling to us!" not only did she win the minds of those taught by her words of wisdom, but, beyond and above this, she won their hearts also - she kindled their souls with such a fiery enthusiasm, that many were ready to follow her in all things, even unto the martyr's death, which was to her the Crown of Life.

In these days she taught daily in her tent, all who heard her speak were attracted by her deep learning, as she expounded verses from the Quran or explained ^{Had} ^{eths} - much of both she knew by heart - or again she would speak on the prophecies as interpreted by the ^{ay} [!] Shahih ^{is}.

† "Hadⁱ eths: sayings of Muhammad to various people, in diverse places, handed down by tradition - degrees of authenticity.

No dull discourses these, but full of a flaming fire, which stirred the souls of all who came into her presence!

One of Abbas Effendi's daughters, whilst giving me these details concerning Tahirih, written down at the time, told me that she and her sisters remembered an old man, ^{MuHAMMAD-i- HINASAB of ISFAHAN} Agha Mahomet Hannasob of Isphahan, who had been at Badāsht when the Bābis were assembled there.

This old servitor used to attend these young girls when they would walk from Akkā to visit the Shrine of Bahā'u'llāh at ^{BAH JI} Bidje; they encouraged him to speak of that event, which he did with evident reluctance. His account seems worth recording in this place:-

"I remember a feast day, whilst we were at Badāsht, we were in that garden where Tahirih Khānum's tent had been set up.

Suddenly we saw this tent opened, as we looked, wondering at this unusual occurrence, we saw her sitting just within, most beautifully dressed - she spoke to us, smiling, inviting us to come near and shake hands with her.

"We must greet our friends on a feast day".

"It is the day of the New Kingdom - we must be filled "with joy", she said - her face was shining: we could not look at her - wonderful, wonderful, she was"!

"You understand, Khānum, that we were not used to see the face of any lady unveiled; our minds were greatly disturbed".

The old man hesitated, hardly thinking it quite respectful to speak to us sisters of such an unwonted, extraordinary happening.

He continued:-

"I heard her say 'The rules of the old religions are done away; this is the Day of Judgment, the Day of Unity, of Brotherhood, of Love, of Service'!"

Now these energetic and fearless actions of Tahirih had caused much agitation amongst the Bábis themselves for this reason:-

They were not yet fully aware of the extent of the reforms in established customs, religious, and social inaugurated by the Báb.

His constant imprisonments; the frequent destruction of even those Tablets which had, evading seizure, reached the hands of those for whom they were written, militated against the friends being able to study his teaching.

For instance they had not understood that one of his principles was that women should henceforth be free, be released from the fettering rules of the old order.

And for this reason it came about that the friends, themselves, frequently disapproved of the action of Táhirih in speaking of the teaching to men, especially with her face unveiled.

Of course the Báb['] did not fail to admire the marvellous courage she displayed whenever she discarded the veil - but they did not always understand that it was an important part of the New Teaching that women should be no longer so entrammelled.

The spread of the Teaching, so impeded, exacted much courage and energy from any disciple capable of explaining it to those who were hungry to know its truths.

Táhirih was possessed with the "spirit of teaching", determined to reach as many as possible.

She reiterated again and again:-

"It is now the Day of preparation for the coming
"of the Kingdom!

"All the old ramparts must be thrown down! the old worn-
"out buildings must be razed to the ground, to make room
"for the erection of the New".

She was before all things dynamic - fearless, giving herself rest neither day nor night, always raising the Call to the Standard of the Great New Messenger, the Báb - the Gate of Wisdom, of Heaven, of Holiness!

She had accepted him at once, her spiritual eyes were opened! she needed no arguments, no discussions! He was to her the "Qaim", awaited by the Shia world - in whose immediate coming she had believed through the preparation of the "Shaykh" interpretations of the prophetic utterances, giving the date of his appearing.

In her soul was one song:-

"He is come! the Qaim! the Herald!

"He is come! "He is come".

Therefore it followed, as the light of day succeeds the dark night, her mind being so direct, her insight so clear, her spirit so intrepid, that nothing in the whole world was of any importance to her, nothing remained for her to do but to enrol herself under his Divine banner -

Had not Siyyid-Kazim directed his students -

"When I shall have returned to God, and my presence is no longer with you - then go forth and seek the Chosen One, and when you shall have attained the Meeting, then "LET ALL THE WORLD KNOW".

She was not willing that there should be any delay in obeying this demand, let the consequences be what they would! From the first moment when she had believed the Truth, and had written to the Bab.

*Better translation
of these lines
in the "Dawn-breakers"*

"The light of thy face is beaming from far,

"The radiance of thy Temple is all shining and
glorious!

"Why hastenest thou not to proclaim aloud

"I am of God, and I call unto you,

Oh my people!

"Behold I will answer unto thy call

"Oh my Master, Here am I! here am I!"

The Báb immediately made her one of the "Letters of the Living".

Had he not said of her -

"Lo! she answered my call, even before I had called her".

This was the source of her fiery zeal which knew no lessening; through all the dangers and persecutions which dogged her footsteps during the rest of her life, she steadfastly set her face to this one task, ignoring all risk!

Thus it came about that she welcomed gladly the opportunity, which the numbers of the Bábis gathered together at Badakht afforded to make them understand the supreme importance of the event which had taken place, and to explain to them some of its great meaning:

therefore it is abundantly clear, that it was no irresponsible impulse, but a bravely-considered high resolve, which prompted her action; well aware of the grave dangers which surrounded her like an atmosphere, and the tragic consequences which might ensue at any moment.

There was not long to wait.

The Mullás⁽⁷⁾ (of Badāsht), loathing the new teaching, fearing the influence of "this woman who travels from place to place, unaccompanied by either husband, or father, or brother, and who even sometimes speaks to men with her face unveiled!"

This was so unprecedented and shocking an event that they were in a turmoil of anger at its horror.

Accordingly they incited the people of the place to arise and scatter the gatherings of Bábís, they themselves leading the mob against those, whose beliefs were anathema to them.

Táhirih, Quddús and some other of the Bábís left Badāsht to proceed to Mázinderán, which was a sort of stronghold refuge for the hunted Bábís.

Her enemies, certain Mullás, however, instigated the Governor of Tihrán to have her waylaid and arrested.

She was brought to Tihrán where she was placed in the house of the Kalántar, a town official, who was made

responsible for her safe custody.

The Kalantar's wife quickly became interested in both her teaching and her personality, she came to look upon her as a sacred and pious person; her two young sons also grew much attached to their beautiful and fascinating guest.

During Tāhīrih's stay in this house a marriage took place.

All the most important ladies of Tihṙān were guests at the festivity.

There was the customary feasting, dancing, and singing in the chief room, where the bride in all her beauty of rich garments and jewels, and with downcast eyes, sat to be admired by her guests.

In the midst of these celebrations, suddenly the "sound of a voice" was heard, speaking in an adjoining room!

Was ever such a voice heard?

The marriage festivities ceased to hold the attention of the astonished guests, who one by one deserted them and gathered round the wonderful voice.

Even the bride herself, came to listen - and the chief bridal room was entirely deserted!

It was Tāhīrih's voice, earnestly telling the won-

drous story of the Great Event, "The Imam has come! the Qaim is here!", she brought proofs of the stupendous truth of her statement by explaining verses from the Qur'an.

The guests listened spell-bound, not only by the magnitude of the event, but also by the magnetic personality of the marvellous woman who spoke.

A profound sensation was caused!

"What is this we hear? Why have not our religious

"Teachers spread these tidings of amazement?

"Where is he? Where doth he abide?"

cried the excited guests.

Tāhīrīh answered sadly:-

"Sheikh Salih alas! has been cruelly martyred for
"proclaiming the news, and a thousand times alas!
"The Qaim himself is imprisoned!!"

An astonished and troubled silence fell - then with one accord they cried "How can such things be? How?"

When these guests spread abroad their accounts of what had taken place at the wedding, the Governor and the Mullas, fearing the effect of the surprising influence she exerted on all, who came within the radius of her unprecedented personality - determined to encompass her death.

When the guests had gone Tāhīrīh called the Kalan-

The Bab had been
martyred by his
time. At any
rate, marriage,
which feast these
prior to 1850, Tāhīrīh's
action here
could not have
led to her
martyrdom.

Tāhīrīh
suffered
martyrdom in
1852, subsequent
to the
attempts on the life
of the Bab, &
at the time
where Bahá'ullah
was imprisoned.

tar's wife to her and said:-

*This episode
is fully treated
in "The Dawabreakers"*

"On a day, shortly to come, I shall be taken away
"from you. After I have gone, one will come to the
"door asking for me - to whom I pray you give this
"handkerchief".

In this were wrapped up her papers, her books, and
her beautiful ^{Kalam-dan} ~~Kalam-dan~~ (pen box).

Three days (the Kalantar's wife related) our beloved
guest stayed in her room chanting prayers - eating little
and seldom.

On the morning of the third day she said to me:-

"Tonight they will come for me".

She then thanked me for all we had done for her, saying
she was sorry to have given so much trouble to us.

She gave to me a bottle of attar of roses, a ring,
and a handkerchief - her only possessions! all she had
left of her former riches, her beautiful treasures!
The comfortable and luxurious things of life, she never
regretted. She was always enwrapped in a curious happi-
ness, marvellous and indescribable!

She sat and waited, dressed in a white robe - so
beautiful she was, I can find no words in which to describe
her!

Chanting prayers she waited, waited, prepared and
ready, for what she knew would come.

That evening they came.

In another account it was written that when the messengers came to take her away, they told her that they were sent to escort her secretly to a place where she would be more safe than here - that a lady, a great friend of hers had arranged this.

She replied "I know why you are come, I am ready and I shall be indeed safe in that place to which I am going".

The Kalantar's wife continued:-

"My elder boy followed our guest, in some hours he came back weeping bitterly.

He told how they had taken her to a garden near the gates of Tih^hran; there were standing about some men of the executioner class.

They knew what was required of them:-

One by one they were commanded to do their fiendish work, which was to first of all fill her mouth with a suffocating handkerchief.

She stood there in her white robe with her hands bound, looking so wonderfully beautiful, as she calmly smiled on them - saying "And you are not afraid to offend God by this work?"

One by one the men rushed shrieking away, refusing to touch "what seemed to them an angelic visitant!"

Being at night, her many friends had no knowledge of her danger, from which they might, and of a certainty would, have rescued her.

Of the last part of this Martyrdom, one account says:-

"When the executioner men had all gone - a Nubian slave, coarse and brutal was given to understand that he would receive his freedom, and be otherwise rewarded if he would kill this woman.

Too coarse and brutal he was to be affected by her angelic face and her sweet voice.

Therefore was he chosen, some alcohol was given to him, and he was led to her! a fit instrument for a deed of darkness, which that day disgraced the Humanity of earth.

There was a deep dry well in that garden, into which it was said she was thrown.

A building at the side of this garden was the prison where Bāhā'u'llāh was afterwards to be in chains!

It is now laid out as a beautiful garden where people "stroll and stare", where children enjoy their play, knowing nothing of that deed of shame.

At this time
great persecution
begged. It was
Bāb's were
martyred.

Not correct
At any rate
Bāhā'u'llāh was
then a prisoner.

Not correct

This garden is called ^{HUSA/NIYYIH} "Huseyniyeh".

In trying to be fair to these men, who accomplished this unspeakable crime in secrecy to make her death sure, we remember that they were religious fanatics, who counted Tahirih an infidel, they feared her influence, which appeared to them magical.

She was to them a dangerous leader, who would bring a new and upsetting condition into the conventional religious and social customs of the land.