

**Téma:** *Sajjid Alí Muhammad - Báb a jeho vystoupení. Bábismus a jeho role při vzniku Bahá'í*

The religious system which we are about to consider is deserving of an attentive examination for several reasons. It is no mere local superstition confined to a few families or tribes; neither is it a national religion, whereof the origin is lost in the mists of antiquity; nor yet is it a scheme of philosophy born in the sanctum of the student, and moving in a sphere of abstract thought far remote from the active world. Seventy years ago<1820> its founder was an infant only a few months old; fifty years ago< ;1840> his summons was yet unspoken and his doctrine yet unformed; forty years ago<1850> he terminated a prophet's life with a martyr's death, leaving behind him as his legacy to mankind a faith which now numbers its adherents not by hundreds but by thousands, which reckons its martyrs not by scores but by hundreds, and which, whatever its actual destiny may be, is of that stuff whereof world-religions are made. And to this rank does it lay claim, demanding nothing less than universal acceptance and undisputed sway, not only in Persia, where it was first preached and where it underwent that baptism of blood which was the terror and wonder even of those who proscribed and persecuted it, but throughout the whole world. A mighty claim indeed, but a claim which, if devotion even unto death and fervour which neither fire nor sword can quell go for aught, has at least established its right to be heard.

Before proceeding further in the examination of the history and doctrine of this new world-religion, it is necessary to glance briefly at the spiritual condition of the country which gave it birth. Persia, it is almost needless to state is a Muhammadan country. Other religions are, indeed, represented: there are a good many native Christians, either Armenians or Syrians; there are a considerable number of Jews; and there are a remnant who still, after the lapse of twelve centuries, hold firm to the fallen faith of Zoroaster. Relatively to the sum-total of the population, however, these are a mere handful, and the nation as such is a Muhammadan nation. But the Muhammadanism of Persia is a very different thing from that which prevails elsewhere. The Roman Catholic differs less from the Protestant than does the Persian Shí'ite from the Turkish or Egyptian Sunní. It is neither necessary nor possible to consider here in detail all these differences; one feature only of Shí'ite belief - the doctrine of

the Imámate - demands notice. To the Sunní, the caliph, or visible head of the Muhammadan Church, is nothing more than a defender of the faith, elected by the suffrage of the majority for the safe-guarding of the temporal and spiritual interests of Islám. His appointment is human rather than divine, and his function is that of an administrator of the laws rather than that of a prophet or inspired teacher. Not so does the Shi'ite regard the Imáms, whom he recognises as the sole successors of the prophet. The Imám is divinely called to his lofty office; with his selection and appointment the choice of men has nothing to do; he is endowed with supernatural powers and virtues; his decision is in all things absolutely authoritative; and, in a word, he is an open channel of grace between God and mankind. Abú Bekr, 'Umar and 'Othmán, the first three caliphs of the Sunnís, are in the eyes of the Shi'ites detestable usurpers, who snatched from 'Ali, the lawful Imám, a power to which they had no right and a position which they were not qualified to hold. They, and the Ommayad and 'Abbásid caliphs, who persecuted and slew the lawful Imáms of the family of 'Ali whom they had first despoiled and disputed, are solemnly cursed by every true Shi'ite. The Imáms of the race of 'Ali are, on the other hand, loved, revered, almost adored; they are given a rank hardly inferior to that of the prophet himself, nay, hardly short of divinity; and the well-being of mankind is made dependent on their existence.

These Imáms were twelve in number. The eleventh, Hasan 'Askarí, died in the year A.D. 874, and was succeeded by his son, who is generally known as the "Imám Mahdí," "the Proof," or "the Absent Imám." This Imám Mahdí was from the first involved in mystery, and communicated with his followers only indirectly through certain chosen and trusty representatives, who were called "Gates" or "Doors" (*Abwáb*, pl. of *Báb*). Of these "Gates" or "*Bábs*" there were four successively. When the last of them died, no one was appointed to succeed him, and then began that period of the "Greater Occultation," in which, as the Shi'ites believe, we now are. But the Imám Mahdí though no longer accessible to his Church did not die. He disappeared from the eyes of men in the year A.H. 329 (A.D. 940-941), but he still lives, hidden in the mysterious city of Jábulká, whence, in the fullness of time, when faith waxes weakest and the world is full of woe and oppression, he will issue forth to restore the true religion, fill the earth with justice, and inaugurate the millennium. For this long-expected day do all Shi'ites wait and watch eagerly and anxiously, and ever when they mention the sacred name of the Imám they add thereto the prayer, "May God hasten his glad advent!"

It is in the year A.H. 1260 (A.D. 1844), exactly one thousand years after the Imám Mahdí's first retirement into seclusion, or "Lesser Occultation," that the history of the religion which we are about to consider properly begins. Before we proceed to speak of this, however, let us glance briefly at the meagre details which have reached us of the early life of its founder. Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad, afterwards known as the *Báb* or "Gate" (from which title his followers derive the name of *Bábí* which they bear), was born at Shíráz in southern Persia on October 9th, A.D. 1820. His father, Mírzá Rizá, was by trade a cloth seller; but, though in comparatively humble circumstances, he enjoyed that respect which is almost invariably accorded in Persia to a *seyyid*, or reputed descendent of the prophet. Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad was in the ordinary course of things sent to school, but he seems not to have remained there long. His removal thence may have been occasioned by the cruelty of his teacher, at whose hands he seems to have suffered much. He never forgot the unhappiness of his childhood, and when in later days he was framing the ordinances of his religion, he insisted most strenuously on the duty of treating children with the utmost tenderness and consideration, enacting heavy fines against such as should cruelly beat or ill-use them. "The object of these commands," he says, "is that men may not bring sorrow on that Spirit from the ocean of whose bounty they enjoy existence; for the teacher knoweth not Him who is his own and all men's teacher."

On his removal from school Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad was for a while engaged in helping his father Mírzá Rizá in his business. He was still but a boy, however, when his father died. and thenceforth he was taken under the care of his maternal uncle, Háji Seyyid 'Alí. After a while, but at what precise date we cannot say, he left Shíráz and took up abode at Bushire on the Persian Gulf, where he still carried on the trade for which he was destined. So far there was nothing specially noticeable in him save a gravity unusual at his years, a remarkable purity of life, a somewhat dreamy temperament, and a sweetness of manner which attracted all with whom he came in contact. At the age of twenty-two he married, and by this marriage he had one son named Ahmad, who died in infancy.

About this time, there dwelt and taught at Kerbelá, a spot most hallowed in the eyes of every Persian Shi'ite by reason of the martyrdom of Huseyn, the third Imám, which there took place, a certain Háji Seyyid Kázim of Resht, the disciple and successor of Sheykh Ahmad of Ahsá, who had founded a new school or sect called after him *Sheykhis*. Of the Sheykhís' doctrine the most notable feature was the extreme veneration - remarkable even amongst the Shi'ites - in which they held the Imáms, and the eagerness wherewith they awaited the advent

of the Twelfth Imám or Imám Mahdí. One day the circle of those who sat at the feet of Seyyid Kázim was augmented by a fresh arrival. The new comer, who took his seat modestly by the door in the lowest place, was none other than Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad, who, impelled by a pious desire to visit the Holy Shrines, had left his business at Bushire to come to Kerbelá. During the next few months the face of the young Shírází became familiar to all the disciples of Seyyid Kázim, and the teacher himself did not fail to notice and appreciate the earnest but modest demeanour of the youthful stranger. Then all of a sudden Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad departed as unexpectedly as he had come, and once more returned to Shíráz, his native city. Not long after this Seyyid Kázim died without nominating any successor. To some of his disciples whom he had seen weeping over his approaching death he had said, "Do you not then desire that I should go, so that the Truth may become manifest?" How this Truth should be revealed was a matter whereat he had but darkly hinted, and so it was that his disciples, distressed and doubtful, met together after his death to fast and pray. Then they dispersed, each in his own way, to seek what they desired and await what they expected.

Amongst these disciples was one, Mullá Huseyn by name, of Bushraweyh in Khurásán, who had enjoyed a special intimacy with the departed teacher, and who had been regarded by many as likely to succeed him. On the dispersal of the Sheykhís to which I have just alluded, this Mullá Huseyn went to Shíráz, and on his arrival there he remembered that Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad, his former fellow-student, dwelt in this city. Anxious to renew his acquaintance with one whose amiable disposition had exercised over him a singular charm, he inquired after and soon discovered the man in person, and when the first greetings were over the two fell to talking of Seyyid Kázim and his recent death. At first it was Mullá Huseyn who spoke, detailing the events of Seyyid Kázim's last days, and the hopes and fears which occupied the minds of his followers. But soon it was Mullá Huseyn's turn to listen in amazement to a declaration which Mírzá' Alí Muhammad now for the first time made, to wit, that he himself was the promised guide and teacher, the "Truth" foretold by the departed Seyyid, the channel of a new outpouring of Divine Grace; in a word, the *Báb* or Gate whereby men might once again commune with the Imám from whom for a thousand years they had been separated. The amazement and incredulity which this declaration first evoked in Mullá Huseyn's mind was soon changed by further conversation with Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad (or to give him the title to which he had now laid claim, the *Báb*) into a belief whereof the sincerity was attested by every subsequent action of this first convert to the new faith.

In spite of the absence of many facilities of communication which we enjoy in Europe, news travels fast in the East; and no great while had elapsed since the "manifestation" (which took place on May 23rd, 1844) ere the Báb was surrounded by a considerable number of eager disciples. Amongst these were included many of the late Seyyid Kázím's followers, who, apprised by Mullá Husayn of what had taken place, hastened with all speed to Shíráz. The zeal of the little band of believers was great. In the circles of their own assemblies they read with eagerness and rapture the *Commentary on the Súra of Joseph*, the *Ziyárat náma* or "Book of Visitation," and the few other works which the Báb had then composed; while from time to time each one of them was privileged to listen to the words of the Master himself as he depicted in vivid language the worldliness and immorality of the *mullás*, or Muhammadan clergy, and the injustice and rapacity of the civil authorities, or spoke with a conviction which compelled belief of the era of justice and happiness now at hand and the certain triumph of the new truth which he was commissioned to proclaim. Already the Báb's fame was in every one's mouth and the Bábís were beginning to attract general attention (an attention which, in the case of the government authorities and the clergy, was largely mixed with suspicion and dislike), when the young prophet once more left Shíráz secretly, accompanied only by one intimate disciple, and set out to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca.

When the Báb returned from Mecca and again landed at Bushire, in August 1845, the complexion of affairs was considerably altered. On the one hand, his ideas had doubtless become more clearly defined; on the other hand, the government and the clergy had decided that this new movement was altogether dangerous to them and must at once be checked as sharply as possible. Accordingly, when some of the Báb's disciples, who had preceded him to Shíráz, entered the city, they were seized by the governor Husayn Khán, bastinadoed, and forbidden to preach. To ensure the effectiveness of this prohibition, one or two of them were hamstrung, so that they should be unable to quit their houses. Horsemen were also despatched to Bushire to arrest the Báb, who was brought in to Shíráz in the latter part of September, 1845. He was examined before the governor by some of the chief clergy, who declared him to be a heretic, and ordered that he should be punished with the bastinado and then confined in the house of 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Khán, the *dár ighá*, or chief constable. In spite of these measures, however, the new faith continued to spread rapidly, for many of the Báb's disciples were scattered throughout all parts of Persia engaged in teaching his doctrine, while those who remained in Shíráz did not fail to find means of approaching him even in his confinement. The chief constable, indeed, seems to have submitted to the charm of his prisoner's gentle and

amiable manner, and, according to one of the Bábí historians, he was actually brought to believe in the divine mission of the captive, to whose prayers he considered himself indebted for the recovery of his son from a mortal sickness. At all events, when, in the spring of 1846, Manúchihr Khán, the governor of Isfahán, anxious to see one of whom he had heard so much, sent messengers to Shíráz to discover whether he could by any means deliver the Báb from his captivity and bring him to Isfahán, the chief constable connived at, if he did not actually assist, the escape of his prisoner, who at once set out in company with two of his disciples for the latter city, where he arrived about May, 1846.

For nearly a year the Báb remained at Isfahán, and during this period he enjoyed the last days of comparative peace and security allotted to him. He was under the protection of the most powerful nobles of the time, who was both able and willing to protect him from the malice of his enemies, amongst whom the clergy were most malignant. But early in 1847 his protector died, and Gurgín Khán, who succeeded to the government of Isfahán, not sharing the feelings of his predecessor, at once sent the Báb off under an armed escort to Teherán, that the then-reigning King Muhammad Sháh and his ill advised minister Hájí Mírzá Ákásí might deal with the reformer as they pleased. The King would seem to have desired to see the Báb; but the minister, fearful lest his sovereign should yield to the potent influence of the young prophet, vigorously combated this proposal, pointing out the impudence of allowing one whose doctrines had already made such progress amongst all classes to enter the capital and be seen by its inhabitants. The minister's advice finally prevailed, and orders were issued for the transference of the Báb to the remote frontier-fortress of Mákú, whereof the governor, 'Alí Khán, was a creature of the minister, wholly devoted to his interests. Thither accordingly was the Báb conveyed, but such was the sympathy of the people with him and their anxiety to behold him, that it was found necessary to avoid as much as possible all towns and large villages, and even amongst the escort appointed to guard him several conversations took place.

Soon after his arrival at Mákú, the Báb was summoned to Tabríz and again examined concerning his doctrine by a number of the chief clergy, presided over by the present Shah of Persia, then Crown-Prince. Concerning what passed there we have only the Muhammadan accounts; but even from these, partial and one-sided as they are, we can clearly perceive that, so far from there being any attempt at serious investigation, the proceedings were characterized throughout by the most shameful levity and unfairness. "If you are the 'Gate of

Knowledge." they said to him, "you must of course be able to answer any questions we choose to ask you"; and thereupon they fell to interrogating him about the technicalities of medicine, grammar, philosophy, logic and the like. To these senseless and insolent questions, the Báb, perceiving that he had been brought thither, not to be judged but to be mocked, returned no answer; and his persecutors, wearying of their sport, ordered him to be beaten and sent back to his prison at Mákú. Significant of the sympathy towards him which animated the common people, is the fact that the priests could find no one willing to execute their mandate, and were finally compelled to inflict the punishment themselves.

So far from suffering himself to be discouraged by this harsh treatment, the Báb continued to write down and codify his doctrines and ordinances with unabated diligence. Two brothers, Siyyid Huseyn and Siyyid Hasan, of Yezd, shared his captivity. The former of these was continually occupied in transcribing and arranging his master's words; and, in spite of the strict injunctions of the Prime Minister, means were found to convey these precious writings into the hands of the faithful. The Báb's doctrines, too, underwent considerable development. He declared that he was not merely the "Gate" leading to the Imám Mahdi, but the Imám himself; that he was indeed the "Point" or Primal Truth once more revealed in man, and that what in previous revelations had been set forth darkly and in riddles he now proclaimed openly and without reserve. At the same time he claimed no finality for his revelation, declaring that after him one yet greater (whom he named "He whom God shall manifest") should appear for the perfecting of that which he had begun. In the books composed by the Báb at this time it is curious to perceive that his chief anxiety was not for his own fate, but for the reception which should be accorded by his followers to "Him whom God shall manifest." Again and again, almost in every page, he entreats these not to behave in the next manifestation as the Muhammadans have behaved in this, and to remember that no revelation is final, but only represents the measure of truth which the state of human progress has rendered mankind capable of receiving. For about six months the Báb remained at Mákú, and then the Government, perceiving that his disciples still succeeded in gaining access to him, transferred him to the closer imprisonment of Chihrik. Here he was only by means of letters concealed in walnuts, or sewn up in waterproof and sunk in milk, and the like, that correspondence between the Báb and his followers was any longer possible.

We must now leave the Báb for a while, and turn our attention to the efforts of his disciples to spread the new faith, and the tragic events wherein these efforts culminated.

Mullá Huseyn, whom I have already mentioned as the first to believe, was conspicuous, even amongst the devoted missionaries who went forth into every quarter of Persia, for his fiery energy and indomitable spirit. Night and day, now on Ispahán, now in Káshán, now in Teherán, now in Mash-had, was he occupied in persuading inquirers, confirming waverers, and encouraging the faithful. Weariness and despair were alike unknown to the ardent spirit which animated that fragile-looking frame. Expelled from Teherán, he went to Mash-had; arrested there by Hamzé Mírzá, one of the uncles of the present Sháh, he nevertheless succeeded in effecting his escape, and, in company with a small but ever-increasing band of followers, again set out westwards, intending, as it would appear, to proceed to Mákú and attempt to liberate the Báb. Now at length the enmity between the Muhammadans and the Bábís threatened to break out in open warfare, and at the village of Sháhrúd a serious collision seemed inevitable, when suddenly a messenger arrived announcing that Muhammad Sháh had breathed his last. This was in September, 1848.

When a king dies in Persia, a period of anarchy and lawlessness ensues, to which European countries are fortunately strangers. The local authorities, uncertain of the continued tenure of their offices, hasten to the capital to make favour with the new government, or else employ the days of disorder for their own ends. The mechanism of the State is for the time being unhinged and thrown out of gear, laws are practically suspended, plunder and rapine are rife, and life and property are imperilled. Such was the state of things which Mullá Huseyn was called upon to confront. It demanded all his judgement and all his energies; for if on the one hand there was a hope that the new government might prove more favourably disposed towards the Báb than its predecessor had been, there was on the other hand great immediate danger to be apprehended from the unrestrained lawlessness of the ill-disposed, from which almost ever check had for the present been removed. Mullá Huseyn accordingly pushed on rapidly to the village of Badasht, situated near the borders of the province of Mázandarán, and there effected a junction with another band of his co-religionists under the leadership of Mullá Muhammad `Alí of Bárfurúsh. Amongst these was one person so remarkable as to merit at least a passing notice.

Rarely indeed does it happen in a Muhammadan country that a woman attains distinction and fame. Yet if ever a woman deserved not fame only but immortality, that woman was *Zarrín- Táj* the daughter of Hájí Mullá Muhammad Sálíh of Kazvín, better known by the name of *Kurralu'l-`Ayn* ("Freshness" or "Delight" of the Eyes"), which the Bábís



bestowed on her. Endowed with rare beauty and yet rarer intellectual gifts, she was well versed in Arabic, the Kur'án, the traditions, and philosophy, besides which she was in her own language eloquent beyond measure, and a poetess of no mean order. Indescribably galling to such a woman must have been the condition of dependence and intellectual stagnation in which her sex are doomed by the ordinances of Islám to dwell; and it was probably on learning that the Báb sought amongst other social reforms to raise women to the rank of equality with men that she became first attracted towards his teaching. Once persuaded of its truth, she embraced the new doctrine with all the vehemence of an enthusiastic nature; and began, in spite of the violent opposition of her relatives (almost all of whom belonged to the clerical or priestly class), to profess and preach the Bábí faith. Compelled finally by circumstances which it would take too long to detail to fly from her native town of Kazvín, she now appears amongst the Bábís in council in Badasht.

It was decided that to this beautiful, courageous, and eloquent woman should be committed the task of encouraging the faithful and confirming the lukewarm by an address delivered from a rude pulpit, hastily constructed of stones and logs heaped together. Every other sound was hushed and every ear was strained as that clear sweet voice began to speak of the new dispensation inaugurated upon earth, of the reign of universal justice and love which was at hand, of the approaching downfall of tyranny, bigotry, and oppression. As she proceeded, exhorting them not to stand back at this most critical moment, not to allow a craven fear to keep them aloof from the glorious enterprise, not to fail in the coming struggle for faith and freedom, the silence was broken by sobs of heartfelt emotion and cries of "*Ey Ján!*" ("O my life!"), "*Ey Táhira!*" ("O pure one!"), "*Kurbánat gardam!*" ("May I be thy sacrifice!"), and the like. The most listless and apathetic were roused; the wavering became assured, strong men wept. No hesitation or half-heartedness now; all were resolved to stand firm even to the death, and their later deeds bore abundant testimony to the unshakeable firmness of their purpose. And now let Kurratu'l-'Ayn, having wrought her great work, depart for a while to wander in the highlands of Núr, and to be betrayed into the hands of her ruthless foes. We shall meet her once again on that terrible day in 1852 when the storm of fire and steel and tortures not to be described or imagined broke impotent against a courage and steadfast endurance which has made the very name of Bábí a word which no Persian can utter without a certain involuntary awe and admiration.

It would take far more time than we have at our disposal to follow in detail the occurrences of those eventful days. Let us therefore pass on quickly to the ultimate fate of Mullá Huseyn and his companions. Eight months or so have elapsed since the events above recorded, and it is now the summer of 1849. You must try to picture yourselves a flat fenny country covered with tall reeds and grasses or occasional swampy rice-fields, and sparingly traversed by narrow, muddy paths. To the north, dim and grey, lies the Caspian Sea. To the south, fen passes gradually into forest, which slopes upwards towards the vast black wall formed by the Elburz mountains. Just where the fens end and the forest begins, isolated amidst swamps and thickets, stands the tomb of Sheykh Tarbarsí, a holy man of bygone days. The little building which marks the site of the tomb stands in the midst of a grassy sward about 100 yards long and 70 yards wide. This enclosure contains a few wild pomegranate trees, and is surrounded by rude earthworks and palisades. These, as well as the buildings of the shrine, are riddled with shot and stained with gore, while the grassy sward is marked with many a freshly-made grave. The forms of men emaciated to skeletons with drawn faces and sunken eyes (wherein nevertheless still glows the light of an enthusiasm which neither privation nor suffering can quench) pass occasionally across the enclosure. These are the remnants of the Bábís whom we last saw at Badasht hanging on the words of Kurratu'l-'Ayn, and this is their last retreat. Here for eight weary months have they held at bay the royal army, and, by dint of courage and skill incredible in men trained for the most part to peaceful avocations, again and again inflicted on it defeats and losses which had caused even the less sanguine amongst the besieged to hope for ultimate victory. But now at length the end has come. Their brave leader, Mullá Huseyn, is dead, killed in the very moment of an heroic exploit by a stray bullet fired from some hidden ambush. Their provisions are all used up. A few days previously a desperate but unsuccessful attempt had been made to cut through the ever-tightening cordon of troops. To give them strength for this final effort, they had been compelled to exhume the bones of the horse which had carried their gallant leader through his last fray, and from these to make a sort of broth which might at least serve to keep body and soul together. Absolute starvation now stares them in the face and further resistance appears impossible. Yet, in spite of their miserable plight, so great is the dread with which their valour has inspired the royal troops, that even at this eleventh hour a message has come from the royalist officers promising them life and liberty if they will yield up their fortress.

To deliberate on this proposal the Bábí leaders are now assembled together in the mausoleum of the departed Sheykh. At length it is decided to accept the terms offered and

evacuate the fortress. A written promise signed by the royalist leaders and confirmed by oaths sworn on the Kur'án lulls all suspicion of treachery; and now at length in slow procession the survivors of the Bábi garrison emerge from their stronghold, and pass through the wondering ranks of the besiegers to the place allotted to them.

At first all seems fair enough. Food is set before the starving Bábi's, and their leaders are invited to take their breakfast with Prince Mahdí-Kulf Mírzá and 'Abbás-Kulí Khán, of Láriján, the royalist generals. As the meal proceeds, the latter artfully turn the conversation on to religious topics. The unsuspecting Bábis speak freely and boldly of that which is nearest their hearts. The prince listens attentively, smiling now and then a false and cruel smile as he marks the success of his stratagem. Suddenly he springs to his feet, claps his hands, and cries out that his guests have uttered blasphemy, in that they make the Báb not only equal to but greater than Muhammad. Promises plighted to infidels are not binding, and shall not avert the vengeance of outraged orthodoxy. The soldiers rush in and seize the unarmed and helpless Bábi chiefs. Another party of soldiers fall suddenly upon the other Bábis, who, in the quarters assigned to them, have scarce as yet stretched out their hands to taste the first good food they have seen for many weeks. The captives are dragged before the royalist generals, and, at their command, cast down on the ground and cut open with knives. Five or six of the chief Bábis only are reserved from the massacre to grace the prince's triumphal entry into Bárfurúsh; and, bearing with them these and the heads of the slain set on spears, the victorious army sets out with beating drums and blowing trumpets for the town. On their way thither they are met by deputations of the Mullás, who congratulate them on their prowess and clamour loudly for the blood of the few remaining prisoners. The royalist generals had entertained the idea of carrying these with them to Teherán, that they might show to the young Sháh those who had dared for so long to withstand his armies. The *Mullás*, however, are importunate; the point is yielded; and Hájí Mullá Muliammad 'All and his four or five surviving comrades are handed over to their inveterate foes, who tear them limb from limb in the market-place of Bárfurúsh. They meet death unflinchingly, as brave men should, and night settles down over the blood-stained and mangled remains of the last survivors of Sheykh Tabarsí.

The temporary lull which followed the suppression of the Mázandarán insurrection was soon broken by a similar struggle at Zanján in the north-west of Persia. Into the details of this struggle it is impossible to enter here. The scene is changed from fens and forests to the narrow, tortuous, mud-walled streets of a Persian town, lying, amidst pleasant poplar-gardens,

which mark the course of a little river, in the stony, sun-baked table-land of central Persia. But though the scene is changed, the incidents of the struggle are otherwise much the same. There is the same desperate and indomitable courage on the part of the Bábís; the same carelessness, cowardice, and mismanagement on the part of the besiegers. The Bábí women cut off their long hair to bind round the crazy guns which have begun to gape and crack under the constant firing, and are continually on the ramparts encouraging their husbands and brothers in the attempt to avert the inevitable doom. But soon, as at Sheykh Tabarsí, the attack by storm is succeeded by the blockade, and the horrors of famine stare the besieged in the face. Then come the same treacherous promises, resulting in a surrender followed, as before, by a perfidious massacre of the too confiding Bábís.

This summer Of 1850 was marked by other events not less fateful. While the siege of Zanján was still in progress, another Bábí rising took place at Níríz far away in the south of Persia. The Government, thoroughly alarmed, determined on a measure which, as it believed, could not fail to deal a death-blow to the Bábí movement. The Báb, who had now been subjected for more than three years to a rigorous imprisonment, could not, indeed, be considered as directly responsible for the attitude of armed resistance assumed by his followers; nevertheless the Government, regarding him as the fountain-head of those doctrines which had convulsed the whole Persian empire, determined that he should die. With his death, as they imagined, the whole movement must collapse. Had they been better acquainted with the Báb's doctrine, they might have hesitated before taking a step which could have no 'Certain result save that of exasperating his followers beyond all measure. For, as a matter of fact, the Báb had striven to render his religion as far as possible independent of his personality in two ways. First of all, as we have already seen, he had declared that it was in no sense final, and had foretold the coining of " Him whom God shall manifest " to complete and perfect the religion which he had founded. Secondly, he had not centred the spiritual authority even during his lifetime in himself alone, but in what he called the " Unity " — a sort of hierarchy consisting of himself, " the Point," and eighteen other persons called " Letters of the Living." Why the number nineteen was chosen as the sacred number and employed as such, not only here, but in all the relations of life, it would take too long to explain. Suffice it to say that certain curious facts connected with the numerical values of the letters composing certain words indicating Divine attributes seemed to the Báb to point it out as a number essentially sacred, mysterious, and worthy of being made the basis whereon all things should be arranged. Now this " Unity " was in its very nature permanent; for, when any

one of the " Letters " composing it died, the grace and virtue inherent in him passed to some other Bábí, who thereupon became incorporated in the " Unity," which in this way remained constant. After the 11 Point ', (i.e. the Báb) the two chief " Letters" of the " Unity " had been Mullá Huseyn and Mullá Muhammad 'Alí. Both of these having been killed at Sheykh Tabarsí, a youth named Mírzá Yahyá, and entitled by the Bábís "*Subh-i-Ezel*" ("the Morning of Eternity"), now occupied the highest rank in the Unity after the Báb himself. Of this, however, as of all else appertaining to the Bábí doctrine, the Musulmán's were quite ignorant, and they confidently expected that the new faith would expire with its founder, on whose destruction they were now bent.

The Báb, therefore, was haled from Chihrik to Tabriz, and once more arraigned before judges whose sentence was a foregone conclusion. The trial which he now underwent was nothing but a protracted series of insults and indignities. One result, however, his tormentors were anxious to attain, and that was to induce the Báb formally to renounce the doctrine which he had taught. This, however, they were unable to accomplish. In reply to all their threats and promises, he continued to assert that in him was fulfilled what they understood by the coming of the Imám Mahdí. They scoffed at his pretensions, and told him that the Imám they expected was that same Imám who had disappeared more than twelve centuries ago in Surra-man-ra'a, and that when he came he would come as a mighty conqueror to slay and subdue the infidels, and establish the faith of Islám throughout the world. "Through just such vain superstitions," he replied, " did all former peoples reject and slay the prophets sent unto them. Did not the Jews profess to be expecting their promised Messiah when Jesus the Son of Mary appeared in their midst? And did not they reject and slay Him who was indeed their Messiah, because they falsely imagined that the Messiah must come as a great Conqueror and King to re-establish the faith of Moses, and give it currency throughout the world? Now the Muhammadans were acting as the Jews had acted, because, like them, they clung to their own vain superstitions, refusing to see that the kingdom and the victory spoken of were spiritual and not material."

The fatal sentence was pronounced by the civil and ratified by the religious authorities, and Mírzá `Alí Muhammad was led back to prison. His last night on earth was not spent in solitude. With him were Aká Seyyid Huseyn, of Yezd, his amanuensis, and a young merchant of Tabríz, named Aká Muhammad 'Alí, who was his devoted disciple. The latter belonged to a good family, by whom every effort was made to induce him to save his life by renouncing his

master. The following letter, written by him the very night before his martyrdom, contains his reply to a last appeal of this nature addressed to him by his elder brother:

" My condition, thanks be to God, hath naught of ill, and 'to every trouble succeedeth rest.' You wrote that this matter hath no end. What matter, then, hath any end? We, at least, have no discontent therein, and, indeed, cannot fitly express our thankfulness. The end of this matter is, to be slain in God's cause and what happiness is this! The will of God will be accomplished on his servants, nor can any human being avert the Divine decree. What God wills comes to pass, and there is no power and no strength save in God. O brother, the end of the world is death ; 'every soul tasteth of death.' Should the appointed fate which God (mighty and glorious is He !) hath decreed overtake me, then God is the Guardian of my family, and thou art mine executor. Behave in whatever way is agreeable to God's good pleasure, and pardon whatever has been wrought by me which seemeth lacking in courtesy, or contrary to the demands of that respect due to you from your younger brother, and ask pardon for me from all my family, and commit me to God. God is my portion, and how good is He as a Guardian ! "

Little by little the night ebbed away, and the sky grew bright with the dawn of July 9th, 1850. Ere the prisoners were led out, all Tabríz was astir, and when at length they were brought forth by their executioners, every street and lane through which they were to pass teemed with crowds of expectant onlookers. Of these, some were attracted by sympathy, or a hope that even now some opportunity for effecting a rescue might arise; others, drawn merely by curiosity to behold one so famous, were moved to pity by the pale gentle face, white delicate hands, and simple but spotless raiment of the sufferer ; but the brutal rabble, urged on by the malignant and implacable clergy, cast stones and mud at the helpless captives, and gave vent to shouts of joy whenever a missile took effect. For several hours were the prisoners dragged thus through the endless streets and bazaars of Tabríz, until at length Seyyid Huseyn, his powers of endurance utterly exhausted, fell to the ground fainting with fatigue and pain. He was dragged to his feet and told that he might yet save his life and gain his freedom if he would renounce and repudiate his Master. And thereupon Seyyid Huseyn, whether impelled by a momentary fear which his exhausted strength could not combat (as asserted by the Muhammadans), or acting on instructions from the Báb, whereof the object was to preserve and convey to the faithful the last writings and injunctions of their prophet (as stated by the Bábís), did that which he was bidden to do, and as the price thereof received his freedom. No

sooner had the crowd passed on than he gathered himself together, and at once set out for Teherán. On his arrival there he at once made his way to his co-religionists, who, whether convinced that he had acted under his master's orders, or moved by his sincere and evident contrition, received him back into their midst. That he was not unworthy of their confidence, he found the opportunity to prove when two years later the cup of martyrdom was for the second time presented to him.

Encouraged by the recantation of Seyyid Huseyn, the executioners made another attempt to induce Aká Muhammad 'Alí to follow his example. His wife and little children were brought before him in the hope that their tears and entreaties might conquer his resolution. Even against this most cruel trial he was proof, and only asked that he might be killed before his master. The soldiers, finding all efforts to move him fruitless, and being wearied to boot, led the two prisoners to the great square by the citadel (called, by a strange coincidence, the " Square of the Lord of the age") and there suspended them with ropes from staples set in one of the walls. As the firing-party took up its position Aká Muhammad 'Alí was heard to say to the Báb, " Master, art thou content with me ? " To this the Báb replied in Arabic, " Verily Muhammad 'Alí is with us in paradise! " Hardly had the words left his lips when the crash of musketry rang out, and for a moment the rolling cloud of smoke hid the bodies of the victims. As it lifted a great cry of wonder and awe rose from the spectators. The lifeless body of the disciple, indeed, riddled with bullets, swung to and fro in the air, but of the Báb no trace nor sign was visible. A murmur arose that this was a miracle, and the authorities perceived with terror that the fickle populace was ready to veer round and declare for one whom but an hour ago they had jeered and pelted. Had it been so, it might well have been that then and there the faith of the Báb would have won a definitive victory over the religion of Muhammad; and for an instant the fate of the Kájár dynasty and the faith of Islám hung trembling in the balance. But not so was it ordained. Ere the crowd had recovered from their first amaze, a soldier perceived the Báb (whose bonds by some strange chance had been cut by the bullets which passed harmlessly by his body) taking shelter in an adjacent guard-house, followed him thither, and made a cut at him with his sword. When the others saw the red blood flow from their unresisting victim, their fear was gone, and they hastened to complete their work of death. The two bodies were dragged through the streets and cast out of the gate to feed the dogs and jackals; but by night came Suleymán Khán, and one or two others, with gold in one hand and a sword in the other, offering the choice between these to the guards appointed to prevent the burial of the bodies. The guards took the gold and

surrendered the bodies, which were wrapped in fine silk, placed in one coffin, and conveyed secretly to Teherán, to be there bestowed in a place of safety. So ended the short and sorrowful but noble career of Mirzá 'Alí Muhammad the Báb. When we reflect on all that he suffered during the six years of his mission, we can well believe that, as he says in the Beyán, "the days of his gladness were the days preceding his manifestation."

The tragedies of this fatal year were not yet ended. On the very day of the Báb's martyrdom the Níríz insurrection, and a few weeks later the Zanján siege, were quenched in streams of blood. Between these two events took place at Teherán the martyrdom of seven Bábís, accused without shadow of proof of harbouring designs against the Prime Minister, Mirzá Takí Khán. Amongst all classes, as we learn from the diary, of an English lady whose husband at that time occupied a responsible position in the British Embassy, their faith aroused general commiseration, and amongst their fellow-believers they received the title of the "Seven Martyrs."

Amongst them was the Báb's uncle, Háji Seyyid 'Alí, to whose care the Báb had been committed on the death of his father. It is worth remarking that in this case the prophet was not without honour in his own country, for amongst his immediate relatives the Báb found some of his staunchest supporters, and even at the present day many of the most influential and devoted Bábís belong to his family. At the last moment, almost as he knelt beneath the knife of the headsman, Háji Seyyid 'Alí received an offer of pardon if he would consent to renounce his faith. This offer he unhesitatingly rejected, concluding his words with this quotation :

"O Zephyr, say from me to Ishmael destined for sacrifice, 'It is not a condition of love to return alive from the street of the Friend.'

Every one of the seven met death with like firmness. Amongst them was an old dervish, named Kurbán 'Alí, who also refused to save his life by recantation. The first blow struck at him by the headsman only wounded his neck slightly and cast his turban to the ground, whereupon he cried out as he stood awaiting the second :

"O happy that intoxicated lover, who at the feet of the Friend Knows not whether it be head or turban which he casts ! "



A year elapsed after this, unmarked by any very noteworthy event, so far as the Bábís are concerned. Persecution went on steadily in all parts of the country; but the general attention was somewhat diverted from the Bábís by the sudden disgrace and fall of Mírzá Takí Khán, the minister by whose advice the Báb had been put to death. >From disgrace to death is for a fallen minister but a short step in Eastern lands, and even the fact that he was married to the Sháh's sister, who continually watched over his safety with loving anxiety, could not save the once powerful noble. He was enticed by a cruel stratagem out of his wife's sight, she being informed that the Sháh had once more taken him into favour; and even while she was rejoicing in his imagined safety his life-blood was flowing slowly from his open veins. That no drop of bitterness might be lacking from the cup, the executioner, whose specious promises had for a moment lulled to rest the unwearying watchfulness of the minister's wife, was one who had been raised to the Sháh's favour solely by him whose fainting soul now realized the meed of those who put their trust in princes, and slay the holy ones of God. So perished Mírzá Takí Khán in the month of January, 1852 ; and we can scarcely wonder that the Bábís see in the fate which overtook him a signal instance of Divine vengeance.

Six months more elapsed, and then, in August, 1852, an event happened which brought down upon the Bábís a persecution fiercer than any which they had yet experienced. A certain youth named Sádik, of Zanján, whose attachment to the Báb had amounted almost to a passion, conceived in his mind a plan of taking vengeance on the tyrant who had slain his beloved master and ruthlessly persecuted all who held the Bábí faith. This plan he communicated to two of his fellow-believers, and, early on the morning of August 15th, the three, armed with pistols charged with shot, stood at the gate of the Sháh's palace of Niyávarán, awaiting the moment when the king, surrounded by his nobles, should go forth to the chase. That moment came at length, and, in the guise of suppliants, the avengers approached. Two successive pistol shots rang out on the air, and then, drawing their knives, the three Bábís rushed on the Sháh and tried to drag him from his horse. Ere they could effect their object the royal attendants were upon them. Sádik was stricken dead to the ground, and his two companions were seized and bound. The Sháh, slightly wounded in the back, had no sooner recovered from his alarm than he was filled with terrible wrath. The two surviving Bábís were put to the torture; but, though they avowed their faith and their object, they refused to disclose the names of any of their co-religionists, or to divulge their places of meeting. Their stubborn reticence was, however, unavailing, for a vigorous search, instituted by the secret police of Teherán, resulted in the capture of some forty Bábís, of whom a large

number were surprised in the house of Suleymán Khán, the recoverer of the Báb's body. Five or six of these, including Behá'u'lláh, who now claims the allegiance of the great majority of the Bábís, were spared, but all the rest were doomed to die. Yet such was the fear in which the new Prime Minister stood of incurring the vengeance of the sect, that he resolved to make all classes partners in the slaughter of the prisoners. To this end he distributed these amongst the different departments of the Government, guilds of tradesmen, and other sections of the community, at the same time hinting to each that the Sháh would be able to judge of their loyalty and orthodoxy by the manner in which they dealt with their victims. The war-office, the secretaries of State, the merchants, the clergy, the dervishes, the pages in waiting, even the students of the University-then recently founded on a European model-each received their allotted prisoner. Terrible were the modes of inflicting death which some of these, impelled either by savage fanaticism, fear of suspicion, or mere love of cruelty, devised. Of the unfortunate Bábís, some were hewn in pieces, some were sawn asunder, some were flayed with whips, some were blown from the mouths of mortars. Suleymán Khán was marked out by his rank, and by the shelter which his house had afforded to the proscribed sect, for tortures yet more horrible. Lighted wicks were inserted in gashes inflicted on his limbs and body, and his teeth were wrenched from his mouth and driven into the crown of his head. Yet even in his anguish he continued to testify such rapturous joy at the thought of his pre-eminence in suffering and martyrdom, that his executioners asked him in bitter mockery why he did not sing. "Sing!" he cried, "and so I will." And thereupon he began to sing, "In one hand the wine-cup, in the other the locks of the Friend, Such a dance in the midst of the market-place is my desire."

Amongst the victims of that terrible day were two with whom we have already become acquainted. One was Seyyid Huseyn of Yezd, who, consumed with the anguish of that day when, in appearance at least, he had renounced his master, met death not only with resignation, but with uncontrollable eagerness. The other was the beautiful and gifted Kurratu- l'Ayn, who, though for more than a year she had been in close confinement, and could not, therefore, have had any part or lot in the conspiracy against the Sháh, was too notable an adherent of the new faith to look for immunity. Dr. Polak, an Austrian physician then in the Sháh's service, actually witnessed her execution, concerning which he writes: "The beautiful woman endured the lingering death with superhuman fortitude." Certain lines in some of the poems attributed to her authorship, and still passionately cherished by the Bábís, would tempt us to believe that she had long foreseen the inevitable doom which awaited her.

The following translation of one of the most celebrated of these poems (of which I received a copy from a Bábí at Yezd in the summer of 1888) will suffice as an illustration. In it I have attempted to preserve the original metre and rhyme, and also to adhere strictly to the sense. Let it be borne in mind that by "the Loved One," "the Darling," and other such terms, the Báb is throughout intended, just as the Sufis in their poems address God as the "Friend," and the "Beloved."

"The thralls of yearning love constrain in the bonds of pain and calamity  
These broken-hearted lovers of thine to yield their lives in their zeal for thee.  
Though with sword in hand my Darling stand with intent to slay, though I sinless be,  
If it pleases him, this tyrant's whim, I am well content with his tyranny.  
As in sleep I lay at the break of day that cruel Charmer came to me,  
And in the grace of his form and face the dawn of the morn I seemed to see.  
The musk of Cathay might perfume gain from the scent those fragrant tresses rain,  
While his eyes demolish a faith in vain attacked by the pagans of Tartary.  
With you, -who contemn both love and wine for the hermit's cell and the zealot's shrine,  
What can I do ? For our faith divine you hold as a thing of infamy.  
The tangled curls of thy darling's hair, and thy saddle and steed are thine only care,  
In thy heart the Infinite hath no share, nor the thought of the poor man's poverty.  
Sikandar's pomp and display be thine, the *Kalanda's* habit and way be mine;  
That, if it please thee, I resign, while this, though bad, is enough for me.  
The country of 'I' and 'We' forsake; thy home in Annihilation make,  
Since fearing not this step to take thou shalt gain the highest Felicity."

Thus far I have traced the progress of the Bábí movement in a fairly continuous manner, although the need of confining myself within certain limits has compelled me to omit much of which I would fain have spoken.

We have now reached a point where the scene and the characters are in great measure changed; and indeed it would hardly be too much to say that we have now entered on a new epoch in the history of the faith. That I should strive to make clear the beginnings of that faith was essential, but space does not permit me to do more than sketch in outline its more recent developments. My desire at present is rather to awaken your interest and sympathy in an heroic struggle, which I do not hesitate to call the greatest religious movement of the century, than to communicate to you the latest results of research.

The centre of the movement, then, is transferred from Persian to Turkish territory ; to be more precise, Baghdad becomes for the next eleven years the abode of such of the Bábí leaders as escaped the terrible devastation of 1852. Thither fled Mirzá Yahyá *Subh-i-Ezel*," who, as I have already mentioned, became, on the death of the Báb, the chief " Letter " of the " Unity." He was soon followed by his half-brother, Behá 'u 'lláh (also a member of the Unity), who, having narrowly escaped death, now found release from the prison into which he had been cast. In Persia persecution continued with varying severity, and continually was the Bábí colony at Baghdad recruited by exiles forced to fly from their own homes. Every effort was made by the Persian authorities to molest and injure the fugitives, who, as a last resource, enrolled themselves as Turkish subjects. By this device they at length obtained some peace and security, for, whatever prejudiced persons may assert to the contrary, the Turkish Government is on the whole both tolerant and just, at all events in comparison with Persia. For twelve years, then, the Bábí leaders dwelt. here, engaged in writing, codifying, and diffusing their religion, and exhorting their followers to refrain from all resistance to the authorities and, by virtuous lives, patient resignation, and kindly dealing with all men, to commend their faith to the whole world. So far did they succeed that from the year 1852 until the present time, the Bábís have patiently and unresistingly submitted to all the persecutions which they have suffered and still do suffer.

In the year 1864, the Persian Government induced the Turkish authorities to transfer the Bábí exiles farther from their frontier-first to Constantinople and then to Adrianople. Now while they were at Adrianople a great event took place, which had the effect of dividing the Bábís into two antagonistic parties. *Subh-i- Ezel*, as I have explained, had hitherto been generally acknowledged as the legitimate successor of the Báb, and the visible head of the Bábí faith. But, as I have also explained, the Báb had declared that his revelation was not final, and that he would, at some future time not specified, be succeeded by " Him whom God shall manifest." It was generally believed that this new manifestation would not take place for at least a thousand years, ere the lapse of which many countries should have accepted the religion of the Báb. At the same time the Báb had laid it down that the time of this promised deliverer's advent was known only to God, that no one could falsely claim to be him, that he would appear suddenly and unexpectedly, and that when he appeared the fullest authority to confirm or annul, to bind or to loose, was his indisputable prerogative. So, when Behá'u'lláh suddenly declared that he was their promised deliverer, whose manifestation they so eagerly expected, and warned all the Bábís not to remain ' veiled," as the Muhammadans had done,

the greater number at once acknowledged his authority, received his words as divinely inspired, and yielded to him an implicit and unqualified submission. So for these Behá'ís, as they are now called, the writings of the Báb became an old testament, and the ordinances of the Beyán an abrogated law. But not all of the Bábís were content to accept this superseding of a law not yet much more than twenty years old. Subh-i-Ezel himself declined to acknowledge Behá'u'lláh's claim, or to abdicate in his favour, and a minority of the Bábís (now called Ezelís) refused to withdraw their allegiance from him or acknowledge another chief. Dissensions naturally arose, which culminated in the interference of the Turkish government and the final separation of the rival heads. Subh-i-Ezel was sent to Famagusta in Cyprus, and Behá'u'lláh to Acre in Syria, and there they remain to the present day, the former surrounded by a very few, the latter by many devoted adherents. Less than a year ago I visited both places, and heard both sides of a long and tangled controversy. But the upshot of the whole matter is, that out of every hundred Bábís probably not more than three or four are Ezelís, all the rest accepting Behá'u'lláh as the final and most perfect manifestation of the Truth.

Having now traced very briefly the later history of the sect, I must add some few words as to the most salient features of their faith. To discuss this fully would need more time than has been allotted to me altogether, and I am therefore forced to enumerate such points as have not already been alluded to in the merest outline. God-one, eternal, incomprehensible-reveals to man so much as he can apprehend of truth by means of an endless but intermittent succession of prophets. The essence of their teaching is, in reality, one and the same; for the same universal wisdom speaks, and the same divine will acts through all of them. But as man advances and evolves his latent potentialities, he needs a fuller light, and can bear a clearer teaching. We tell a child that knowledge is sweet. "Is it sweet like sugar?" it asks. And we, because we wish to teach it to love knowledge, are compelled to speak in that language which it can understand, and which, to it, is the nearest approach to absolute truth attainable, and answer, "Yes; sweet like sugar." So it is with man, for the human race has an infancy, a childhood, a youth, a maturity. And now, in its maturity, those illustrations -sufficient for and adapted to its infancy are no longer suitable. Heaven is true, but it is a state, not a place. "If to-day any one believes in the Beyán," says the Báb, "he is seated on a throne of glory, though he be seated in the dust." So too wherever an unbeliever dwells, there is the `Land of Fire.' There is a resurrection, but it is not that which men have imagined; each "manifestation" of the divine wisdom in human form is the "resurrection" of that which preceded it, wherein the

fruit is reaped of the seed then sown. That is the "judgment," that is the "meeting with God," and the angels are the reapers who go forth to gather in what is ripe and good. And thus it is that, according to whether they are addressing a Muhammadan, a Christian, \*or a Jew, the Bábís say that the Imám Mahdí has come, that Christ has returned, or that Moses has reappeared on earth ; for to them all these phrases signify the same thing. As to the belief in a future life, it is there, but it is not prominent. A universal reign of peace, love, freedom, and unity of belief and effort is the thing primarily aimed at ; for Bábíism, in spite of the mystic enthusiasm which pervades it, differs from Sufiism. in the essentially practical objects which it has in view. A material resurrection is denied, and the immaterial future of the spirit must not divert our thoughts from the work of regenerating the world. War must cease, nations must mingle in friendship, justice must become universal, all men must be as brothers. "Ye are all the fruit of one tree," says Behá, "and the leaves of one branch. Walk, then, with perfect charity, concord, affection, and agreement, for I swear by the Sun of Truth that the light of agreement shall brighten and illumine the horizons." So again he says, "Pride is not for him who loveth his country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world." As for those who commit sin and cling to the world," he says elsewhere, they are assuredly not of the people of Behá"

Religious hatred and rancour is a world-consuming fire," we read in another place, "and the quenching thereof most arduous, unless the hand of Divine Might give man deliverance from this unfruitful calamity." People of all creeds are to be associated with in a fair and friendly spirit, not shunned as unclean or treated as foes. Persuasion may be used to gain converts, but the employment of force is hateful to God. "If ye be slain, it is better for you than that ye should slay." The diffusion of knowledge is a most laudable thing, for, says Behá, "I he who educateth his son, or one of the sons of another, it is as though he had educated one of my sons." But studies like logic and philosophy, which conduce only to disputation, are discouraged. The study of living languages is, on the other hand, encouraged, since it conduces to the closer union of diverse peoples. It is, however, recommended that in course of time one language (either one of those at present existing, or a new universal language) and one writing be chosen by the assembled representatives of the different nations, and that these be taught to every one, so that thenceforth there may be no obstacle to the free intercourse of all mankind.

I trust that I have told you enough to make it clear that the objects at which this religion aims are neither trivial nor unworthy of the noble self-devotion and heroism of the Founder and his followers. It is the lives and deaths of these, their hope which knows no despair, their love which knows no cooling, their steadfastness which knows no wavering, which stamp this wonderful movement with a character entirely its own. For whatever may be the merits or demerits of the doctrines for which these scores and hundreds of our fellow-men died, they have at least found something which made them ready to

"leave all things under the sky,  
And go forth naked under sun and rain,  
And work and wait and watch out all their years."

It is not a small or easy thing to endure what these have endured, and surely what they deemed worth life itself is worth trying to understand. I say nothing of the mighty influence which, as I believe, the Bábí faith will exert in the future, nor of the new life it may perchance breathe into a dead people; for, whether it succeed or fail, the splendid heroism of the Bábí martyrs is a thing eternal and indestructible.

He whose soul by love is quickened never can to death be hurled  
Written is their life immortal in the records of the world."

But what I cannot hope to have conveyed to you is the terrible earnestness of these men, and the indescribable influence which this earnestness, combined with other qualities, exerts on any one who has actually been brought in contact with them.