

Additional Notes for *Black Pearls,* by Abu'l-Qasim Afnan

EDITOR'S NOTE for the second and third edition of *Black Pearls*, by Abu'l-Qasim Afnan (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1988) note by Anthony A. Lee, ed.

Slavery & Religion

Few historical institutions are more repugnant to our modern sensibilities than that of slavery. Other forms of injustice and oppression continue to flourish, of course. But, the right of one human being to own another as property, once recognized by every nation in the world, is now universally repudiated and outlawed.

Nowhere is this feeling of repugnance for slavery stronger than in the United States, where slavery is associated--in a way that it is no where else--with racist theories and ideas of superiority of white over black. Africans were brought as slaves to the New World within a few years of Columbus's discovery. But they did not enter the American colonies until 1619, more than one-hundred years later. Nonetheless, it was in North America that the most virulent notions of white supremacy were to take root and grow, bearing their bitter fruit in ways that we continue to experience today.

Certainly slavery was an ugly fact of life for centuries in the Caribbean, in Mexico, and in the Central and South American colonies of Spain and Portugal. Taken together, ten times as many Africans were transported to Latin America as were brought in chains to the United States. And they were brutally, inhumanly mistreated. Yet, racism never took hold in areas to the south in quite the same way as it did in the United States, for reasons that have never been adequately explained.

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Martin Luther King, Jr. Walk

The day is Sunday, January 15

We gather at the YMCA downtown south side (Bijou) from 5 PM to 5:15
A 15 minute program starts at 5:15 with the march to Shove Chapel on the Colorado College Campus starting at 5:30

Helpers are needed to:

1. bring small deserts (cookies, donuts etc), coffee, hot chocolate, tea.
2. people to help serve

Those that want to serve and or bring things please call Tony Goggans (495-3194) a week or so prior to the day, so I will know if I have enough people; then meet me at the downtown YMCA (Nevada and Bijou) by 4:40 so we can set up.

We need people to march with us. If you just want to march please be there by 5 pm

Iranian Bahai dies after 10 years in prison

Mon Dec 19, 2005 4:50 PM ET165

By Irwin Arieff

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - An Iranian of the Bahai faith has died in his jail cell of unknown causes, 10 years after being imprisoned by Tehran for abandoning Islam, the Bahai International Community said on Monday.

Zabihollah Mahrami, 59, had been sentenced to death by Iran's Revolutionary Court in January 1996, but the sentence was later commuted to life in prison following an international outcry.

"His death comes amidst ominous signs that a new wave of persecutions has begun" in Iran, the group's UN office said in a statement. At least 59 Bahais have been arrested, detained or imprisoned so far this year, up sharply from the last several years, it said.

The Bahai faith, an offshoot of Islam, originated in Iran 150 years ago. It claims five million members in 191 countries world-wide, including thousands in Iran where it is officially considered "a misleading and wayward sect."

Mahrami died in his cell last Thursday in a government prison in Yazd, where he had been forced to perform arduous physical labor and was the regular target of death threats, said Bani Dugal, Bahai's principal representative to the United Nations. She did not say where her information came from.

"In this light there should be no doubt that the Iranian authorities bear manifest responsibility for the death of this innocent man, whose only crime was his belief in the Bahai faith," Dugal said.

Mahrami was a civil servant who, like many other Bahais, lost his job following Iran's 1979 revolution. More than 200 Iranian Bahais have been killed and hundreds more imprisoned since 1978, the group said.

He was earning a living installing Venetian blinds when arrested in 1995 on charges of "apostasy," a term used in Iran to denote abandoning Islam.

He was sentenced to death in January 1996, triggering protests from the European Parliament and numerous governments including Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Britain and the United States.

Iranian officials later said he had been sentenced to death for spying for Israel rather than following the Bahai faith. His death sentence was in any case quietly dropped in 1999.

Colorado East Baha'i Winter School

Where: St. Malo Conference Center, Allenspark, Colorado (New Location!) <http://www.saintmalo.org/>

When: January 27-29, 2006

Theme: "A System the Like of Which Mortal Eyes Have Never Witnessed"

For registration form contact Registrar:

Charlotte Rickert (charlotte.rickert@configuresoft.com)

Our Speakers:

- Dr. Duane Troxel -
"Overview: Two Arms of the Administrative Order"
"Individual Believers and Institutions"

Optional class during the recreation period

- Carol Brooks - "The Role of the Regional Baha'i Councils"
- Kathy Staller - "The Art of Consultation (All Ages)"
- Khalil Dana - "Institution of the Counselors"

Optional class in Farsi during the recreation period

Features:

- The rooms are very nice - most have two double beds and some have a single queen bed and their own bath
- a few Suites are available as well
- Meals are prepared in a commercial kitchen by the St. Malo Staff and served cafeteria style in a separate dining room
- There are many meeting areas and they are separate from the dining area and rooms
- We will have the facility to ourselves
- Located between Lyons and Estes Park

For those of you who are planning ahead:

Colorado East Baha'i Summer School

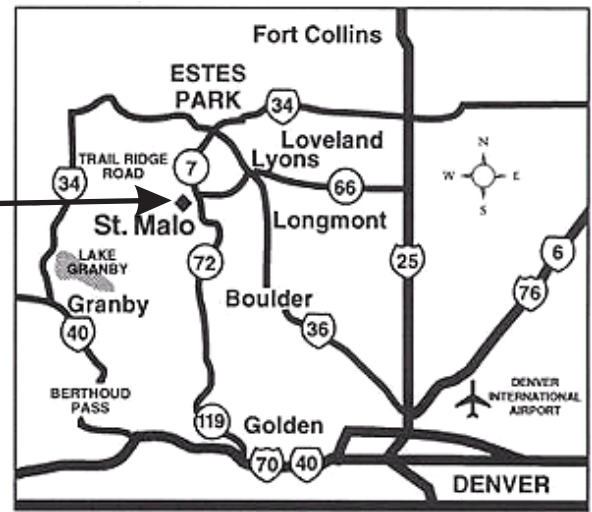
Where: Camp Colorado, Sedalia, Colorado <http://campcolorado.org/>

When: July 11-16, 2006

Are you interested in making our Summer and Winter Schools the best they can be? Contact the CENBSC to see how you can help at charlotte.rickert@configuresoft.com.

Note: The Colorado East Baha'i School Committee is sponsored by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States

John Bolz



Bahá'í Connection

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Submissions

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Articles are edited for size, clarity and relative value to the readers. Photographs and artwork are encouraged, however it is best to avoid having us return the images.

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Despite our modern abhorrence, any student of history must realize that slavery as an institution was an accepted part of all human societies throughout most of history. It was only in the middle of the last century that it began to disappear. Before that, slavery was such a basic part of social life in most places that it was hardly even questioned. As such, it was sanctioned by both custom and religion.

The followers of Christ bought and sold slaves from the earliest days of Christianity. Certain passages in the Bible clearly approved the practice. Paul wrote:

Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ... (Ephesians 6:5)

Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. (Colossians 4:1)

These and other biblical passages were quoted often by Christian slave owners in America to justify the morality of their position, right up to the Civil War.

Likewise, slavery was practiced in Muslim societies, and deemed legal and acceptable by orthodox Muslims. The slave ('abd), especially the Muslim slave, had an accepted position in society. While certain passages in the Qur'an sought to improve the condition of slaves and encourage manumission, the institution itself was implicitly sanctioned:

And we have guided him to the two roads of Good and Evil. Yet he made no attempt to ascend the good. And what shall teach you about how to ascend? It is the freeing of a slave; Or feeding an orphan who is your kin, Or a poor man lying in the dust, In time of famine. (Qur'an 90:11-17)

The First Prohibition by a Religion

The first and only world religion which insists on the prohibition of slavery in its Sacred Texts is the Baha'i Faith. Slavery is here, for the first time, categorically and unambiguously forbidden to all believers. Baha'u'llah, in His famous epistle to Queen Victoria (1869), praised the British monarch for her efforts to abolish the slave trade:

We have been informed that thou has forbidden the trading in slaves, both

men and women. This, verily, is what God hath ordained in this wondrous Revelation. God hath, truly, destined a reward for thee, because of this. He, verily, will pay the doer of good his due recompense . . . (The Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, pp. 33-34)

In His Most Holy Book, the Kitab-i Aqdas (1873), Baha'u'llah has written:

It is forbidden you to trade in slaves, be they men or women. It is not for him who is himself a servant to buy another of God's servants, and this hath been prohibited in His Holy Tablet. Thus, by His mercy, hath the commandment been recorded by the Pen of justice. Let no man exalt himself above another; all are but bondslaves before the Lord, and all exemplify the truth that there is none other God but Him. (The Kitab-i Aqdas, p. 45, x72)

Thus, slavery is forbidden by Baha'u'llah on the grounds that it is incompatible with the principle of the equality of all people before God, the oneness of humanity.

Their Stories

The enormous evil of slavery and the fact that it has now passed from civilized society should not, however, blind us to the history of those millions of men and women who lived their entire lives in bondage. Slaves were devalued by their position in society--a position that Baha'u'llah has outlawed and rejected--but that does not mean that their lives were unimportant or that they have no story to tell.

Indeed, quite the opposite. Since we today believe that slavery was wrong, we should be eager to affirm in history the dignity and significance of the lives of individual slaves. We should hope to recover the stories, the sayings, the culture, and the biographies of slaves, in the same way that we would seek to reconstruct the personal histories of those whose stations in life were more fortunate. We should certainly guard against the danger of shifting the stigma of slavery onto the victims of the system, assuming that since bondage is distasteful so must be the lives and history of those who suffered under it.

Sadly, the latter view has most often prevailed. Because the lives of slaves--and of women, of the poor, and of others with low status in society--were accorded no value, their history has most often also been accorded no value as well--and so never recorded or deliberately forgotten. Such people are made invisible to history in this way, and it is easy for those who come after to conclude that they were unimportant, or

perhaps did not exist at all.

For example, a survey of the volumes of history that have been written on African-American history in the United States will show that little has been written about the individual lives of ordinary slaves. Even the history written by African Americans themselves tends to focus on the free, the rich, the powerful, and the famous--the "talented tenth," perhaps, of the black population who were, through heroic struggle, able to lift themselves above the rest and distinguish themselves with outstanding achievement. Or, the focus is on resistance and revolt, singling out those very few slaves (and others) who lashed out violently against the evil of their oppression. Serious attention given to the life of an ordinary slave is rare. Partially, of course, this is because information is sparse. But more seriously, it is because historians have pursued a path of "redemption" for black history--seeking to balance the horror of slavery with more positive images of African-American life.

But, to refuse to consider the life of the individual slave as a worthy subject for history implicitly rejects the idea that slaves claim a human dignity equal to their masters, and to all others. It inadvertently accepts the notion that slaves have no social value, that they were absent from history, and that they are objects unfit for study. We all must be proud of black heroes, of course, but we must not allow ourselves to forget those whose lives were not marked by extraordinary acts of defiance or outstanding achievement. This majority struggled against impossible odds to live their lives with dignity and purpose, and their lives are not without importance and meaning.

The writing of Baha'i history has, of course, barely begun. In future decades and centuries, Baha'i historians will no doubt fill whole libraries with the life stories of Baha'i heroes and ordinary believers. The Baha'i history books that we have today are mostly concerned with events associated with the Central Figures of the Faith and the lives of prominent believers. And, this is quite naturally so. Every Baha'i will find deep meaning in *The Dawn-Breakers*, Nabil's chronicle of early Babi history, or in *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi's summary of the first one-hundred years of Baha'i history. But the brilliance of this early work should not blind us to the fact that there are also other stories to tell.

Edward G. Browne, in the early part of this century, lamented the lack of information about Tahirih found in Persian Baha'i histories. Products of their culture, the Persian men who first recorded Baha'i history were reluctant to discuss the details of the life of a woman. Such discussion was

continued next page

regarded as highly improper in the Muslim society in which they lived. As a result, the information that we have today about many Babi and Baha'i heroines is scanty.

Only recently have Baha'is sought to recover the early history of women in the Faith in any systematic way. The publication of *Khadijih Bagum: The Wife of the Bab, by Hand of the Cause Mr. H. M. Balyuzi* (George Ronald, 1981) was a beginning. This was followed by a small volume of the writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha's wife, *Munirih Khanum: Memoirs and Letters* (Kalimat Press, 1986) and *Baharieh Rouhani Ma'ani's Asiyih Khanum: The Most Exalted Leaf* (George Ronald, 1993). In a similar way, *Black Pearls* seeks to tell the stories of the early believers who acted as servants in the households of the Bab and Baha'u'llah. Here is recorded a small portion of the oral tradition of the Afnan family, the relatives of the Bab. The author, Abul Qasim Afnan, a grand-nephew of the Bab, embodies today all of the dignity, the tradition, the spirituality, and the memory of that honored family.

This new willingness to look beyond the traditional story of Babi history and to explore the history of women and servants in the early days of the Faith has already, at first blush, yielded the most startling discovery: that women and black people were participants in the earliest and most sacred events of Baha'i history. In *The Dawn-Breakers*, it is recorded that on the evening of May 22, 1844, Mulla Husayn and the Bab were greeted at the door of the Bab's house by his "Ethiopian" servant. The traditions of the Afnan family inform us that it was the duty of this black servant, Mubarak, to remain awake and attentive to the needs of his Master throughout the night, and that his room was adjacent to that of the Bab. Munirih Khanum, moreover, has related that Khadijih Bagum, the Bab's wife, likewise remained awake throughout that fateful night, listening to the conversation from the upstairs apartments of the house:

What an extraordinary night that was! The Bab said to me: "Tonight we will entertain a dear guest." His whole being was ablaze. I was most eager to hear what He had to say, but He turned to me and told me: "It is better if you go and sleep." I did not wish to disobey Him, but I remained awake all night and could hear His blessed voice until the morning, conversing with the Babu'l-Bab [Mulla Husayn], chanting the verses, and presenting proofs and arguments. (Munirih Khanum, p. 34)

And so we learn that the first night of the Revelation, the Declaration of the Bab, was witnessed not only by one man--but also by a woman and an African servant. Although the customs of a Muslim society did not allow these two to sit in the room as the Bab revealed Himself and initiated a new era of

religious history, yet they were present at the event. They heard the Great Announcement, though the conventions of society dictated that they had to remain in their separate quarters as they heard it.

That the presence of these two silent witnesses to the Declaration of the Bab was overlooked by the first chroniclers of Baha'i history is understandable. Their social positions made them invisible to everyone but the Manifestation of God. They served quietly and invisibly in the roles allotted to them by the unjust customs of Iranian society--customs which were soon to be swept aside in the whirlwind of a New Era. Their only contribution was service.

In the Baha'i teachings, however, service is recognized as the highest expression of faith. Service to others, and certainly to the Manifestation of God, is the highest condition that a human being can achieve. So important is this concept of servitude that the Center of Baha'u'llah's Covenant, His eldest son and chosen successor, chose for himself the title of 'Abdu'l-Baha--meaning servant (or slave) of Baha'u'llah. Choosing this title, 'Abdu'l-Baha places himself--precisely and literally --in the same condition as the subjects of this book, a servant to the Center of the Faith. This, 'Abdu'l-Baha insisted, was his real honor, his highest station.

Some Baha'is in America felt uncomfortable with this title, as did some Persian believers. These Americans preferred to think of 'Abdu'l-Baha as the return of Christ and some continued to refer to him in those terms. In reply he wrote:

You have written that there is a difference among the believers concerning the 'Second Coming of Christ.' Gracious God! Time and again this question hath arisen . . . My name is 'Abdu'l-Baha. My qualification is 'Abdu'l-Baha. My reality is 'Abdu'l-Baha. My praise is 'Abdu'l-Baha. Thralldom to the Blessed Perfection is my glorious and refulgent diadem, and servitude to all the human race my perpetual religion . . . No name, no title, no mention, no commendation have I, nor will ever have, except 'Abdu'l-Baha. This is my longing. This is my greatest yearning. This is my eternal life. This is my everlasting glory. (quoted in *World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p. 139)

Here 'Abdu'l-Baha forcefully rejects any station except the station of service, a station which is available to all people equally.

Both the Bab and Baha'u'llah lived in the closed Muslim society of nineteenth-century Iran. Naturally, they spoke the languages of the people and had no choice but to observe the customs of the time. For families of means who lived in the cities of Iran, the seclusion of the women of the household was a supreme necessity. Lower class women and female slaves could conduct business in

public, but all others were expected to remain at home. Even their houses were walled compounds, enclosing trees and pools, and divided into two sections--sometimes two separate houses. One section was for men, the *biruni*; the other for women, the *andarun*. The women of the household were more or less restricted from the male quarters, though they might enter them wearing the veil. Here if male visitors might be found, the public part of the house.

Respectable women could seldom venture from the *andarun*. They left their houses only occasionally, heavily veiled from head to toe, usually at night to reduce the possibility of being seen; and then only to visit the house of a relative. Any other destination could easily raise rumors of impropriety, unchastity, or worse. Women of this class were expected to have no contact at all with men, beyond their husbands and immediate relatives, such as fathers or sons.

In such a society, domestic slaves were absolutely necessary to carry on the normal business of any household. Strict Muslim practice forbade the women of the family from even answering a knock at the door. Manservants could enter the *andarun*, as could other close male relatives, and so they could attend to the needs of the women of the house. They took care of the daily shopping, conducted the public business of the family, and handled other routine affairs outside the *andarun*. Domestic slaves were usually purchased at a very young age, trained and trusted as members of the family. They generally took their duties seriously and exhibited fierce loyalty to their households. They were never sold, of course. This book is a first attempt to recover the histories of the servants in the households of the Bab and Baha'u'llah.

Editor's Note, plus an excerpt from the book for the third edition of *Black Pearls*, by Abu'l-Qasim Afnan (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 199?) [note by Anthony A. Lee, ed.]

"This new willingness to look beyond the traditional story of Babi history and to explore the history of women and servants in the early days of the Faith has already, at first blush, yielded the most startling discovery: that women and black people were participants in the earliest and most sacred events of Baha'i history. In *The Dawn-Breakers*, it is recorded that on the evening of May 22, 1844, Mulla Husayn and the Bab were greeted at the door of the Bab's house by his "Ethiopian" servant. The traditions of the Afnan family inform us that it was the duty of this black servant, Mubarak, to remain awake and attentive to the needs of his Master throughout the night, and that his room was adjacent to that of the Bab. Munirih Khanum, moreover, has related that Khadijih Bagum, the Bab's wife, likewise

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Haji Mubarak

"Records indicate that both sides of the family of the Bab (paternal and maternal), in keeping with their social position and the customs of the time, owned black slaves. The behavior of both families toward their slaves, however, was reputed to have been exceptional. They were failing in their generosity and kindness, and it was often said of them that they treated their servants just as members of their own families. In 1842, upon His return to His home in Shiraz from a six-year sojourn in Bushihr and Karbala, the Bab as was the custom acquired a young Ethiopian slave. The man was nineteen years old and was named Mubarak (meaning, blessed). The bill of purchase, which still exists among the Bab's business accounts, is dated 1842 and indicates that the price paid was fourteen tumans (about twenty-eight dollars). Haji

Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, the brother-in-law of the Bab, had purchased Mubarak from slave traders when he was a child of only five years and had adopted him into his own family. The education and upbringing that Mubarak received was exemplary. The Bab, approving of his instruction and his abilities, purchased him and brought him to the holy household. His quarters were arranged in the southern courtyard of the Bab's house.

I vividly remember that my grandmother, the daughter of Haji Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, would often recall Mubarak's extreme modesty and politeness. She would say that, while intelligent, quick of understanding, and possessing a great capacity to learn, he nonetheless displayed the utmost meekness and humility and showed kinness to all. She would describe his manners and demeanor as being regal, and would remark that they well befitted his service in the holyhouse. More than anything else, though, she remembered him as a loyal and faithful servant of the Bab and His mother.

By the time of His return to Shiraz in 1842, the Bab had largely discontinued His commercial activities. Those business affairs that remained were attended to at the offices of His uncle. Here, Mubarak was of assistance. He was entrusted with the task of settling the Bab's outstanding accounts, and he discharged his duties with superb competence. More importantly, it was Mubarak who had the signal distinction, on the afternoon of May 22, 1844, of receiving and welcoming into the home of the Bab with his unique warmth and affection his Master and Mulla Husayn, who that night would become the first believer in the new Revelation. Nabil-i A'zam, the Baha'i historian, recounts in *The Dawn-Breakers* how the Bab, met Mulla Husayn that day outside the city of Shiraz and invited him to His home. Mulla Husayn continues:

"We soon found ourselves standing at the gate of a house of modest appearance. He [the Bab] knocked at the door, which was soon opened by an Ethiopian servant. "Enter therein in peace, secure," were His words as He crossed the threshold and motioned me to follow Him. His invitation, uttered with power and majesty, penetrated my soul. I thought it a good augury to be addressed in such words, standing as I did on the threshold of the first house I was entering in Shiraz, a city the very atmosphere of which had produced already an indescribable impression upon me. Might not my visit to this house, I thought to myself, enable me to draw nearer to the Object of my quest?"

It was none other than Mubarak who, throughout that night the night of the revelation of the Bab's station waited, sleepless and vigilant, outside the chamber, ready to serve when called upon. In *The Dawn-Breakers*,

Nabil records Mulla Husayn as having said:

"During those days I was, on several occasions, summoned by the Bab to visit Him. He would send at nighttime that same Ethiopian servant to the masjid [the mosque where Mulla Husayn resided], bearing to me His most loving message of welcome. Every time I visited Him, I spent the entire night in His presence. Wakeful until dawn, I sat at His feet fascinated by the charm of His utterance and oblivious to the world and its cares and pursuits."

It was also Mubarak who was found by Mulla Husayn, at the hour of dawn, standing outside the gates of the holy house, waiting to greet the arrival of the second Letter of the Living, Mulla 'Aliy-i Bastami. Mulla Husayn had been charged by the Bab to reveal His station to no one. Eighteen disciples, the Bab had promised, each independently, unwarned and uninvited, would find Him. Nabil tells the story of the second disciple: . . . whilst wrapt in prayer, Mulla 'Aliy-i Bastami had a vision. There appeared before his eyes a light, and, lo! that light moved off before him. Allured by its splendour, he followed it, till at last it led him to his promised Beloved. At that very hour, in the mid-watches of the night, he arose and, exultant with joy and radiant with gladness, opened the door of his chamber and hastened to Mulla Husayn. He threw himself into the arms of his revered companion. Mulla Husayn most lovingly embraced him and said: "Praise be to God who hath guided us hither! We had not been guided had not God guided us!" That very morning, at break of day, Mulla Husayn, followed by Mulla 'Ali, hastened to the residence of the Bab. At the entrance of His house they met the faithful Ethiopian servant, who immediately recognised them and greeted them in these words: "Ere break of day, I was summoned to the presence of my Master, who instructed me to open the door of the house and to stand expectant at its threshold. 'Two guests,' He said, 'are to arrive early this morning. Extend to them in My name a warm welcome. Say to them from Me: "Enter therein in the name of God.'""

Throughout the eventful months which followed, Mubarak dedicated himself to serving the Letters of the Living and the other believers who journeyed to Shiraz. He served them both in the holy house and in the home of Haji Mirza Sayyid 'Ali, later known as Khal-i A'zam, the uncle of the Bab who eventually would die a martyr's death. So trusted was Mubarak that the Bab, during this time, committed numerous Tablets and verbal instructions some addressed to the Letters of the Living to his care for safe delivery. When the number of the Letters of the Living was complete when all eighteen of the first disciples had found Him the Bab

continued next page

summoned each of them and assigned to each a mission intended to proclaim the new Faith. As for the Bab Himself, He prepared to embark on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The only believers who were given the privilege of accompanying Him were Quddus, the first in rank among the Letters of the Living, and Mubarak.

Throughout the whole of that strenuous journey, Mubarak never parted from his Master. He continually received the Bab's blessings and expressions of appreciation. On one occasion, en route to the pilgrimage, as related by Nabil, a saddlebag containing many of the Bab's Tablets and holy Writings was stolen. This account of the incident was narrated by Mubarak himself:

At dawn, His Holiness broke His journey near a well. I unpacked the loads from the backs of the camels and prepared to settle down. Just as the Bab began to pray, a bedouin appeared as swift as lightning, snatched the saddlebag filled with the papers of the Bab, and fled. I immediately gave chase, hoping to apprehend him and retrieve the documents. In the midst of His prayers, however, the Bab motioned me to desist, and after His prayers were completed, He showed much affection and kindness upon me, assuring me that God would grant my recompense, as all goodly deeds are rewarded by Him. He continued to speak, saying that, had I pursued him, the Arab could not have escaped. But Divine Providence intended that these papers would, by means of his actions, come to reach such persons as would not otherwise be possible. Then addressing me, He said: "Grieve not at his action, for this was decreed by God, the Ordainer, the Almighty."

As part of the ritual of Muslim pilgrimage, while in Mecca, the Bab sacrificed nineteen lambs nine in His own name, seven in the name of Quddus, and three for Mubarak, securing for him too the full rites of pilgrimage. The Bab remained in Mecca for twenty-seven days and then spent the same length of time in Medina. Afterwards, He and His companions embarked for Muscat by way of Jidda. The Bab had earlier, on his journey to Mecca, become acquainted with the Sultan of Muscat and had received an invitation to stay at his home on the return journey. There are documents to indicate that the Bab remained in Muscat for a month and a half, for all of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani and the first half of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval. During His sojourn, voluminous writings emanated from His pen and the newborn Faith was proclaimed to the chief clergymen of Najaf, Karbala, Bushihr, and Muscat. The recipient of one of His epistles was the erudite Shaykh Sulayman, the mujtahid of Muscat. On Friday, the seventh of Jamadiyu'th-Thani (June 4, 1845), the Bab arrived in Bushihr on the last leg of His jour-

ney home. He remained only a few days, and on the afternoon of Wednesday, the nineteenth of the same month, He departed for Shiraz, accompanied by Mubarak. A cousin of the Bab, Haji Mirza Muhammad Taqi, Vakilu'd-Dawlih, has recorded in a letter the story of that departure:

Despite repeated imploring by my father [Haji Mirza Sayyid Muhamad] that the Bab extend His stay in Bushihr, his request was not granted, and the Bab departed on the appointed day. His uncle was despondent on account of the Bab's leaving and wished that his nephew had remained. But later it became known that horsemen had been sent from Shiraz to arrest the Bab. He had refused to delay his departure, and therefore He encountered the soldiers enroute. Otherwise His beloved uncle would have had to witness the sad events destined to befall Him. Once He had left Bushihr, the haste with which He departed was soon diminished. The distance between Bushihr and Kirar-Takhtih, which is no more than fifty kilometers, took five days to cover. It was while the Bab was in the latter village that the horsemen dispatched from Shiraz by Husayn Khan-the governor, arrived. Throughout the remaining distance to Shiraz, the soldiers escorting the Bab were served and cared for by Mubarak with the thoroughness and courtesy that distinguished his every action. Later on in that same journey, Mubarak broke away from the company of his Master to arrive in Shiraz some two hours earlier than the Bab and His guards. He was able to alert the Bab's uncle, Haji Mirza Sayyid 'Ali, to the imminent arrival of the Bab and the circumstances surrounding it. As a result, the uncle was able to be present when his nephew was conducted into the presence of Husayn Khan, the governor of Fars. The next twenty-eight months of the Bab's residence in Shiraz were difficult times for all in the Bab's household. Mubarak shared fully in the anxieties and tensions of those trying months. His Master was placed under house arrest, and Haji Mirza Sayyid 'Ali was pledged to insure His seclusion. Therefore, the Bab took up residence in the house of His uncle. An interior door leading to the house of the mother of the Bab, however, was kept secret. Through this door, the Bab was accessible. During this period, Mubarak would guide the believers who were to be granted an audience through the adjacent house into His presence. When the Bab left Shiraz for Isfahan, He committed the care of His mother and His wife to Mubarak and to Fiddih, the maidservant of the household. He expressed the wish that they would endeavor to the best of their abilities to comfort them in His absence. So, despite his own intense attachment to the Bab and the suffering he had to endure in his separation from his Lord, Mubarak found himself in the position of having to console

and cheer the mother, the grandmother, and the wife of the Bab.

The Bab was martyred in Tabriz on July 9, 1850, but the news of these dire events was kept from the women and the servants of the holy household. Naturally, as was the custom in wealthy families, the women lived secluded in their houses, except for visits to the homes of friends and relatives. It was more than a year after the martyrdom when circumstances came to the point that the secret could be kept no longer. Now, the women of the family learned of both the martyrdom of the Bab and that of his uncle, Haji Mirza Sayyid 'Ali, in Tehran, at the same time. The mother of the Bab was beside herself with grief. To these calamities were added the spiteful words and malicious attitude of certain ill-wishers and mischief-makers within the family in Shiraz who had always been hostile to the Bab. Unable to bear these injuries any longer, the mother and the grandmother of the Bab decided to transfer their residence to Karbala. They selected a number of loyal and devoted believers to accompany them. Faithful Mubarak was asked by the mother of the Bab to join the entourage on the journey to Iraq. Even until the time of his death, Mubarak was not told of the Bab's martyrdom. Likewise, the other servants of the household remained in ignorance of these events. The family wanted neither to distress them nor to allow their servants, who were the only ones of the house who were regularly seen in the marketplace, to become the source of delusive news or rumors. Both Mubarak and Fiddih were told that the Bab had voyaged to India to manage his mercantile affairs and would eventually return. While in Karbala, Mubarak longed for the return of his Master. He made a broom to which he attached a green handle. Green is the color of Muhammad's lineage: since the Bab was a descendant of the Prophet, Mubarak's broom was made in remembrance of Him. Every morning at the hour of dawn, Mubarak would use the broom to sweep the courtyard around the sanctuary of the Shrine of Imam Husayn. He vowed to perform this pious deed every day until the Bab would return. After completing this exercise, he would then proceed to procure the provisions required by the household and complete his other duties. Mubarak was about forty years old when he came to Karbala with the mother of the Bab. Not long after this, however, he passed away, leaving his mistress deeply grieved. He was buried on the grounds of the Shrine of the Imam Husayn. It is his everlasting honor that his Lord was pleased with his deeds and services."

Bahá'í Calendar

2006 • 162-163 B.E.

January

Sharaf (Honor) • Sulṭán (Sovereignty)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

19th Feast of Sulṭán (Sovereignty)

1 - New Year's Day
17 - Martin Luther King Birthday

April

Sulṭán (Sovereignty) • Jalál (Glory) • Jamál (Beauty)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 / ₃₀	24	25	26	27	28	29

9th Feast of Jalál (Glory)
21st April-May 2nd Ridván Feast
21st First day of Ridván (no work)
28th Feast of Jamál (Beauty)
29th Ninth day of Ridván (no work)

24 - Jewish Passover

July

Rahímát (Mercy) • Kálimát (Words)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 / ₃₀	24 / ₃₁	25	26	27	28	29

9th Martyrdom of The Báb (no work)
13th Feast of Kálimát (Words)

4 - Independence Day

October

Mashíyyat (Will) • `Ílm (Knowledge)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

16th Feast of `Ílm (Knowledge)
20th Birth of The Báb (no work)

4 - Rosh Hashanah
13 - Yom Kippur • 10 - Columbus Day • 31 - Halloween

February

Sulṭán (Sovereignty) • Muḷk (Dominion)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

7th Feast of Muḷk (Dominion)
26 Feb-1 Mar Ayyam-i-Ha (Intercalary)

14 - Valentine's Day
21 - President's Day

May

Jamál (Beauty) • `Azamát (Grandeur)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

2nd Twelfth day Ridván (no work)
17th Feast of `Azamát (Grandeur)
23rd Declaration of the Báb (no work)
29th Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh (no work)
5 - Cinco de Mayo
8 - Mother's Day
30 - Memorial Day

August

Kamál (Perfection) • Asmá (Names)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

1st Feast of Kamál (Perfection)
20th Feast of Asmá (Names)

November

`Ílm (Knowledge) • Quḍrát (Power) • Qawl (Speech)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
						4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

4th Feast of Quḍrát (Power)
12th Birth of Bahá'u'lláh (no work)
23rd Feast of Qawl (Speech)
26th Day of the Covenant
28th Ascension of `Abdu'l-Bahá

11 - Veterans Day • 24 - Thanksgiving

March

Muḷk (Dominion) • Alá (Loftiness) • Bahá (Splendor)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

2nd Feast of `Alá (Loftiness)

2nd-20th Fast

21st Feast of Bahá

21st Naw-Rúz (New Year) no work

17 - St. Patrick's Day

24 - Passover

27 - Easter

June

`Azamát (Grandeur) • Núr (Light) • Rahímát (Mercy)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
						2
						3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

5th Feast of Núr (Light)

24th Feast of Rahímát (Mercy)

14 - Flag Day
19 - Father's Day

September

Asmá (Names) • `Izzat (Might) • Mashíyyat (Will)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
						2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

8th Feast of `Izzat (Might)

27th Feast of Mashíyyat (Will)

5 - Labor Day

December

Qawl (Speech) • Masá'il (Questions) • Sharáf (Honor)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
						2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 / ₃₁	31	25	26	27	28	29
						30

12th Feast of Masá'il (Questions)

31st Feast of Sharáf (Honor)

Dec 26 - Jan 2 - Chanukah or Hanukkah (Begins at Sundown*)
25 - Christmas Day
26 - Dec 31 - Kwanzaa



HOLY DAYS

FEASTS



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of Colorado Springs
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January 2006

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