

Commemoration and Proclamation of the Twin Holy Birthdays

(Single Program or Combined)

The Birth of the Báb, to be celebrated (varies yearly)

Opening of the Twin Festivals

Narrator:

Today we begin commemoration of two events unique in all of human history. At the times of their occurrence, very few in the world noted these two singular events: the Births of the Twin Manifestations of God. For the first time in the story of mankind, two Manifestation of God would grace the planet physically at the same time.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TIMES: The World of 1816

Narrator:

A quick look back to what the world was like in 1816, will offer insight into gauging what importance these blessed events had on the world we live in today. On the spiritual side Islam had fallen into such a state of waywardness that Baha'u'llah himself stated:

Baha'u'llah:

“Justice is, in this day, bewailing its plight, and Equity groaneth beneath the yoke of oppression. The thick clouds of tyranny have darkened the face of the earth, and enveloped its peoples.”¹

Narrator:

In many passages of His Writings, Bahá'u'lláh describes this perversity of the people, especially the Islamic clergy. He ascribes the cause of their deprivation and ignorance of the Faith of God to punishment for the deeds they had committed. He further invokes the wrath of God for those who rise up against His Cause and are determined to put out its light. He asserts the futility of their efforts and declares that in reality their inner beings deride their own selves for their foolish deeds.

Baha'u'llah: *“It is clear and evident that whenever the Manifestations of Holiness were revealed, the divines of their day have hindered the people from attaining unto the way of truth. To this testify the records of all the scriptures and heavenly books. Not one Prophet of God was made manifest Who did not fall a victim to the relentless hate, to the denunciation, denial, and execration of the clerics of His day! Woe unto them for the iniquities their hands have formerly wrought! Woe unto them for that which they are now doing! What veils of glory more grievous than these embodiments of error! By the righteousness of God! to pierce such veils is the mightiest of all acts, and to rend them asunder the most meritorious of all deeds! May God assist us and assist you, O*

¹ Bahá'u'lláh, Tablet of the World (Lawh-i-Dunyá), quoted in Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XLIII.

*concourse of the Spirit! that perchance ye may in the time of His Manifestation be graciously aided to perform such deeds, and may in His days attain unto the Presence of God.”*²

Narrator:

Referring to the nation of Persia at the time, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá once called their degradation “the tragedy of a people”. Shoghi Effendi writes:

Shoghi Effendi:

(‘At the time when the Báb declared His Mission, the government of the country was, in Lord Curzon’s phrase, “a Church-State.” Venal, cruel, and immoral as it was, it was formally religious. Muslim orthodoxy was its basis and permeated to the core both it and the social lives of the people. But otherwise there were no laws, statutes, or charters to guide the direction of public affairs. There was no House of Lords nor Privy Council, no synod, no Parliament. The Sháh was despot, and his arbitrary rule was reflected all down the official scale through every minister and governor to the lowliest clerk or remotest headman. No civil tribunal existed to check or modify the power of the monarch or the authority which he might choose to delegate to his subordinates. If there was a law, it was his word. He could do as he pleased. It was his to appoint or to dismiss all ministers, officials, officers, and judges. He had power of life and death without appeal over all members of his household and of his court, whether civil or military. The right to take life was vested in him alone; and so were all the functions of government, legislative, executive, and judicial. His royal prerogative was limited by no written restraint whatever.

*Descendants of the Sháhs were thrust into the most lucrative posts throughout the country, and as the generations went by they filled innumerable minor posts too, far and wide, till the land was burdened with this race of royal drones who owed their position to nothing better than their blood and who gave rise to the Persian saying that “camels, fleas, and princes exist everywhere.”*³

Narrator:

On the material side mankind did not yet have electrical lighting, sewer treatment or mechanical means of travel. Women were little more than property, superstition and dogma ran rampant among the people, societies looked on those from other tribes or nations with total suspicion, and people in the East and in the West still worked under the yoke of slavery fully sanctioned by religious authority.

² Bahá’u’lláh, “The Book of Certitude” (Kitáb-i-Íqán), Part Two, p. 152 ff. (para. 177).

³ Shoghi Effendi, in the introduction to Nabíl-i-A’zám, “The Dawn-Breakers: Nabíl’s Narrative”, p. xxvi.

Pause

The Dawn of a New Day

Narrator:

The joy and beauty of a baby's birth is shared in every part of the world. To the births of these two holy Souls we joyfully dedicate our commemorations. Today we celebrate the birth of the Báb, Siyyid `Alí Muḥammad Shírází, born in Shiraz, Persia, on 20 October 1819, 1 Muharram 1235 and the birth of Bahá'u'lláh, Mírzá Ḥusayn-`Alí Núrí, born in Tehran, Persia: 12 November 1817, 2 Muharram 1233.

Devotions

The Beginning: The Fragrance of Nearness

Narrator:

The Universal House of Justice presented 3 newly translated Tablets written by "The Supreme Pen", Baha'u'llah, for the celebrations of the Twin Holy Birthdays. Here is one of those Tablets in which Baha'u'llah writes:

Baha'u'llah:

'In the name of the One born on this day, Him Whom God hath made to be the Herald of His Name, the Almighty, the All-Loving!

This is a Tablet We have addressed unto that night wherein the heavens and the earth were illumined by a Light that cast its radiance over the entire creation.

Blessed art thou, O night! For through thee was born the Day of God, a Day which We have ordained to be the lamp of salvation unto the denizens of the cities of names, the chalice of victory unto the champions of the arenas of eternity, and the dawning-place of joy and exultation unto all creation.

Immeasurably exalted is God, the Maker of the heavens, Who hath caused this Day to speak forth that Name whereby the veils of idle fancy have been rent asunder, the mists of vain imagining have been dispelled, and His name "the Self-Subsisting" hath dawned above the horizon of certitude. Through Thee the choice wine of everlasting life hath been unsealed, the doors of knowledge and utterance have been unlocked before the peoples of the earth, and the breezes of the All-Merciful have been wafted over every region. All glory be to that hour wherein the Treasure of God, the All-Powerful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, hath appeared!

O concourse of earth and heaven! This is that first night, which God hath made to be a sign of that second night whereon was born He Whom no praise can befittingly extol and no attribute describe. Well is it with him who reflecteth upon them both: Verily, he will find their outer reality to correspond to their inner essence, and will become acquainted with the divine mysteries that lie enshrined in this Revelation, a Revelation through which the foundations of misbelief have been shaken, the idols of superstition have been shattered, and the banner hath been unfurled which proclaimeth, "No God is there but Him, the Powerful, the Exalted, the Incomparable, the Protector, the Mighty, the Inaccessible."

On this night the fragrance of nearness was wafted, the portals of reunion at the end of days were flung open, and all created things were moved to exclaim: "The Kingdom is God's, the Lord of all names, Who is come with world-embracing sovereignty!" On this night the Concourse on high celebrated the praise of its Lord, the Exalted, the Most Glorious, and the realities of the divine names extolled Him Who is the King of the beginning and the end in this Revelation, a Revelation through whose potency the mountains have hastened unto Him Who is the All-Sufficing, the Most High, and the hearts have turned towards the countenance of their Best-Beloved, and the leaves have been stirred into motion by the breezes of yearning, and the trees have raised their voices in joyful reply to the call of Him Who is the Unconstrained, and the entire earth hath trembled with longing in its desire to attain reunion with the Eternal King, and all things have been made new by that concealed Word which hath appeared in this mighty Name.

O night of the All-Bountiful! In thee do We verily behold the Mother Book. Is it a Book, in truth, or rather a child begotten? Nay, by Myself! Such words pertain to the realm of names, whilst God hath sanctified this Book above all names. Through it the hidden Secret and the treasured Mystery have been revealed. Nay, by My life! All that hath been mentioned pertaineth to the realm of attributes, whereas the Mother Book standeth supreme above this. Through it have appeared the manifestations of "There is no God but God" over them all. Nay, while such things have been proclaimed to all people, in the estimation of thy Lord naught but His ear is capable of hearing them. Blessed are those that are well assured!

Whereupon, dumbfounded, the Pen of the Most High cried out: "O Thou Who art exalted above all names! I adjure Thee by Thy might that encompasseth the heavens and the earth to exempt me from mentioning Thee, for I myself have been called into being by virtue of Thy creative power. How, then, can I depict that which all created things are powerless to describe? And yet, I swear by Thy glory, were I to proclaim that wherewith Thou hast inspired me, the entire creation would pass away from joy and ecstasy, how much more then would it be overwhelmed before the billows of the ocean of Thine

utterance in this most luminous, most exalted and transcendent Spot! Absolve, O Lord, this faltering Pen from magnifying so august a station, and deal mercifully with me, O my Possessor and my King. Overlook then my trespasses in Thy presence. Thou, verily, art the Lord of bounty, the All-Powerful, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.”⁴

Remarkable Child

Preceding Revelation

Narrator:

When the Bab was a mere child, Nabil recounts the following story shared by Shaykh Abid:

Nabil:

‘Shaykh Abid, known by his pupils as Shaykhuna, was a man of piety and learning. He had been a disciple of both Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kázim.

Shaykh Abid:

“One day,” ... “I asked the Báb to recite the opening words of the Qur’án: ‘Bismi ’lláhi ’r-Rahmáni ’r-Rahím.’⁵ He hesitated, pleading that unless He were told what these words signified, He would in no wise attempt to pronounce them. I pretended not to know their meaning.

Bab:

‘I know what these words signify,’

Shaykh Abid:

observed my pupil;

The Bab:

‘by your leave, I will explain them.’

Shaykh Abid:

He spoke with such knowledge and fluency that I was struck with amazement. He expounded the meaning of ‘Alláh,’ of ‘Rahmán,’ and ‘Rahím,’ in terms such as I had

⁴ Bahá’u’lláh, “Days of Remembrance”, Ayyam-i-Tis’ih, pp. 12–15

⁵ “In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.” – the opening verse of the Holy Qur’an

neither read nor heard. The sweetness of His utterance still lingers in my memory. I felt impelled to take Him back to His uncle and to deliver into his hands the Trust he had committed to my care. I determined to tell him how unworthy I felt to teach so remarkable a child. I found His uncle alone in his office. 'I have brought Him back to you,' I said, 'and commit Him to your vigilant protection. He is not to be treated as a mere child, for in Him I can already discern evidences of that mysterious power which the Revelation of the Sáhibu 'z-Zamán⁶ alone can reveal. It is incumbent upon you to surround Him with your most loving care. Keep Him in your house, for He, verily, stands in no need of teachers such as I.'

Nabil:

Háji Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí sternly rebuked the Báb.

Haji Mirza Siyyid:

'Have You forgotten my instructions?' ... 'Have I not already admonished You to follow the example of Your fellow-pupils, to observe silence, and to listen attentively to every word spoken by Your teacher?'

Shaykh Abid:

Having obtained His promise to abide faithfully by his instructions, he bade the Báb return to His school. The soul of that child could not, however, be restrained by the stern admonitions of His uncle. No discipline could repress the flow of His intuitive knowledge. Day after day He continued to manifest such remarkable evidences of superhuman wisdom as I am powerless to recount."

Nabil:

*At last His uncle was induced to take Him away from the school of Shaykh Abid, and to associate Him with himself in his own profession. There, too, He revealed signs of a power and greatness that few could approach and none could rival.'*⁷

(Music and Dramatic Interlude)

Prophecy

Narrator:

⁶ "The Lord of the Age," one of the titles of the promised Qá'im.

⁷ Nabil-i-A'zám, "The Dawn-Breakers: Nabil's Narrative", Chapter III, pp. 75-76.

Hand of the Cause William Sears wrote:

William Sears:

'On May 24, 1844 in Washington D. C., Mr. Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, stepped to the keyboard of his new instrument. He was about to send the first official telegram in history flashing across the wires from Washington to Baltimore. The press had heralded this day as a modern miracle. By this invention the world would soon be united physically in the twinkling of an eye, they said. The scholars of Scripture asked:

Christian Scholar:

Is this not still another proof that the hour has come for Christ's appearance? Is it not written in the book of Job that only God can send "lightnings that they may go and say unto thee here we are!" Was not this electric telegraph of Morse the "lightnings" spoken of by which the "Word" would go?

William Sears:

Morse put his hand to the keyboard and tapped out the message. It was a message chosen from the Bible, from the Book of Numbers:

Christian Scholar:

"What hath God wrought?"

William Sears:

The evening before, May 23, 1844 in Shiraz, Persia, the Bahá'í Faith began. The Bab proclaimed Himself to Mulla Husayn as the One foretold in all the holy Books of the past. This day, He said, was the beginning of the fulfillment of all the holy Scriptures. The Bab arose in a Muslim country, whose people in their holy writings had the unmistakable prophecy which said that the Messenger of God would come when by...

Muslim Cleric:

"beating the iron upon the iron, you will hear the news from a far distance."

William Sears:

The Bab was a descendent of Abraham. He was of the "seed" which would "inherit the earth." The message of Morse had quoted only a part of the verse from Numbers. The full

verse is: "According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel what hath God wrought?"⁸

Revelation

The Báb: The Dawn

Narrator:

Mulla Husayn, the first to believe in the Bab, recounts that fateful night...

Mulla Husayn:

*"He took up His pen and with incredible rapidity revealed the entire Súrih of Mulk, the first chapter of His commentary on the Súrih of Joseph. The overpowering effect of the manner in which He wrote was heightened by the gentle intonation of His voice which accompanied His writing. Not for one moment did He interrupt the flow of the verses which streamed from His pen. Not once did He pause till the Súrih of Mulk was finished. I sat enraptured by the magic of His voice and the sweeping force of His revelation."*⁹

The Bab:

*"All praise be to God Who hath, through the power of Truth, sent down this Book unto His servant, that it may serve as a shining light for all mankind.... Verily this is none other than the sovereign Truth; it is the Path which God hath laid out for all that are in heaven and on earth. Let him then who will, take for himself the right path unto his Lord. Verily this is the true Faith of God, and sufficient witness are God and such as are endowed with the knowledge of the Book. This is indeed the eternal Truth which God, the Ancient of Days, hath revealed unto His omnipotent Word—He Who hath been raised up from the midst of the Burning Bush. This is the Mystery which hath been hidden from all that are in heaven and on earth, and in this wondrous Revelation it hath, in very truth, been set forth in the Mother Book by the hand of God, the Exalted...."*¹⁰

The Báb: The Gate

Narrator:

⁸ William Sears, "Release the Sun", pp. 192-3.

⁹ Nabil-i-A'zám, "The Dawn-Breakers: Nabil's Narrative", p. 61, as recounted by Mullá Husayn in describing his first meeting with the Báb.

¹⁰ The Báb, "Selections from the Writings of the Báb", "Excerpts from the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'", p. 41.

In this Tablet, The Bab reveals His station as “The Gate” through which the Promised One would pass. The name, “Qurratu’l-‘Ayn”, used here can be translated as “Solace of the Eyes” or “Consolation of the Eyes” and is in reference to the Báb Himself.

The Bab:

“The angels and the spirits, arrayed rank upon rank, descend, by the leave of God, upon this Gate¹¹ and circle round this Focal Point in a far-stretching line. Greet them with salutations, O Qurratu’l-‘Ayn¹², for the dawn hath indeed broken; then proclaim unto the concourse of the faithful: “Is not the rising of the Morn, foreshadowed in the Mother Book, to be near at hand?¹³ ...”

O Qurratu’l-‘Ayn! Turn Thou eagerly unto God in Thy Cause, for the peoples of the world have risen in iniquity, and but for the outpouring of the grace of God and Thy mercy unto them, no one could purge even a single soul forevermore.¹⁴ O Qurratu’l-‘Ayn! The life to come is indeed far more advantageous unto Thee and unto such as follow Thy Cause than this earthly life and its pleasures. This is what hath been foreordained according to the dispensations of Providence....

O Qurratu’l-‘Ayn! Say: Verily I am the “Gate of God” and I give you to drink, by the leave of God, the sovereign Truth, of the crystal-pure waters of His Revelation which are gushing out from the incorruptible Fountain situate upon the Holy Mount. And those who earnestly strive after the One True God, let them then strive to attain this Gate.¹⁵ Verily God is potent over all things....

O peoples of the earth! Give ear unto God’s holy Voice proclaimed by this Arabian Youth Whom the Almighty hath graciously chosen for His Own Self. He is indeed none other than the True One, Whom God hath entrusted with this Mission from the midst of the

¹¹ cf. Qur’án 78:38.

¹² This name, “Qurratu’l-‘Ayn”, can be translated as “Solace of the Eyes” or “Consolation of the Eyes”. The use of the name here may be seen as referring to the Báb Himself. Shoghi Effendi writes concerning the Báb in “The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 127, quoting the Báb: “I am the Mystic Fane,” the Báb thus proclaims His station in the Qayyúmu’l-Asmá, “which the Hand of Omnipotence hath reared. I am the Lamp which the Finger of God hath lit within its niche and caused to shine with deathless splendor. I am the Flame of that supernal Light that glowed upon Sinai in the gladsome Spot, and lay concealed in the midst of the Burning Bush.” “O Qurratu’l-‘Ayn!” He, addressing Himself in that same commentary, exclaims, “I recognize in Thee none other except the ‘Great Announcement’—the Announcement voiced by the Concourse on high. By this name, I bear witness, they that circle the Throne of Glory have ever known Thee.”

¹³ cf. Qur’án 11:83.

¹⁴ cf. Qur’án 24:21.

¹⁵ cf. Qur’án 83:25–26.

Burning Bush. O Qurratu'l-'Ayn! Unravel what Thou pleasest from the secrets of the All-Glorious, for the ocean is surging high¹⁶ at the behest of the incomparable Lord. ”¹⁷

(Music and Dramatic Interlude)

Covenant

From God to God

Narrator:

Referring to the Báb's prophecies, Baha'u'llah explains His fulfillment of them and wrote:

Baha'u'llah:

“O Pen of the Most High! Move Thou upon the Tablet at the bidding of Thy Lord, the Creator of the Heavens, and tell of the time when He Who is the Dayspring of Divine Unity purposed to direct His steps towards the School of Transcendent Oneness; haply the pure in heart may gain thereby a glimpse, be it as small as a needle's eye, of the mysteries of Thy Lord, the Almighty, the Omniscient, that lie concealed behind the veils. Say: We, indeed, set foot within the School of inner meaning and explanation when all created things were unaware. We saw the words sent down by Him Who is the All-Merciful, and We accepted the verses of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, which He¹⁸ presented unto Us, and hearkened unto that which He had solemnly affirmed in the Tablet. This We assuredly did behold. And We assented to His wish through Our behest, for truly We are potent to command.

“O people of the Bayán! We, verily, set foot within the School of God when ye lay slumbering; and We perused the Tablet while ye were fast asleep. By the one true God! We read the Tablet ere it was revealed, while ye were unaware, and We had perfect knowledge of the Book when ye were yet unborn. These words are to your measure, not to God's. To this testifieth that which is enshrined within His knowledge, if ye be of them that comprehend; and to this the tongue of the Almighty doth bear witness, if ye be of

¹⁶ Qur'án 52:6.

¹⁷ The Báb, “Selections from the Writings of the Báb”, “Excerpts from the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá’”, Chapter XXIV, pp. 50-51.

¹⁸ Refers to the Báb.

those who understand. I swear by God, were We to lift the veil, ye would be dumbfounded.”¹⁹

‘No understanding can grasp the nature of His Revelation, nor can any knowledge comprehend the full measure of His Faith. All sayings are dependent upon His sanction, and all things stand in need of His Cause. All else save Him are created by His command, and move and have their being through His law. He is the Revealer of the divine mysteries, and the Expounder of the hidden and ancient wisdom. Thus it is related²⁰ ... that he spoke these words: “Knowledge is twenty and seven letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof. No man thus far hath known more than these two letters. But when the Qá’im shall arise, He will cause the remaining twenty and five letters to be made manifest.” Consider, He hath declared Knowledge to consist of twenty and seven letters, and regarded all the Prophets, from Adam even unto the “Seal,” as Expounders of only two letters thereof and of having been sent down with these two letters. He also saith that the Qá’im will reveal all the remaining twenty and five letters. Behold from this utterance how great and lofty is His station! His rank excelleth that of all the Prophets, and His Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones.”²¹

The Ultimate Sacrifice

Narrator:

The Bab recounts the tribulations of His Mission and His eagerness to sacrifice Himself for the sake of God:

The Bab:

“THOU art aware, O My God, that since the day Thou didst call Me into being out of the water of Thy love till I reached fifteen years of age I lived in the land which witnessed My birth [Shíráz]. Then Thou didst enable Me to go to the seaport [Búshíhr] where for five years I was engaged in trading with the goodly gifts of Thy realm and was occupied in that with which Thou hast favored Me through the wondrous essence of Thy loving-

¹⁹ Bahá’u’lláh, “The Most Holy Book (Kitáb-i-Aqdas), para. 175.

²⁰ Here Bahá’u’lláh lists the specific sources of the references, viz.: “in the “Biḥáru’l-Anvár,” the “Aválim,” and the “Yanbú” of Šádiq, son of Muḥammad,” “Biḥáru’l-Anvár”, literally “Seas of Lights”, is a compilation of Shi’ih traditions; “Aválim” and “Yanbú” are likewise; Šádiq is the sixth of the Shi’ih Imáms, known also as Abú-‘Abdi’lláh. These specifics may be found at <http://www.miscellanie.com/allthetexts/bahauillah/iqan/index.html> , in the Glossary and Notes.

²¹ Bahá’u’lláh, “The Book of Certitude” (Kitáb-i-Íqán), Part Two, p. 224 (para. 272).

kindness. I proceeded therefrom to the Holy Land [Karbilá] where I sojourned for one year. Then I returned to the place of My birth. There I experienced the revelation of Thy sublime bestowals and the evidences of Thy boundless grace. I yield Thee praise for all Thy goodly gifts and I render Thee thanksgiving for all Thy bounties. Then at the age of twenty-five I proceeded to thy sacred House [Mecca], and by the time I returned to the place where I was born, a year had elapsed. There I tarried patiently in the path of Thy love and beheld the evidences of Thy manifold bounties and of Thy loving-kindness until Thou didst ordain for Me to set out in Thy direction and to migrate to Thy presence. Thus I departed therefrom by Thy leave, spending six months in the land of Šád [Isfahán] and seven months in the First Mountain [Máh-Kú], where Thou didst rain down upon Me that which beseemeth the glory of Thy heavenly blessings and befitteth the sublimity of Thy gracious gifts and favors. Now, in My thirtieth year, Thou beholdest Me, O My God, in this Grievous Mountain [Chihríq] where I have dwelt for one whole year.

“Praise be unto Thee, O My Lord, for all times, heretofore and hereafter; and thanks be unto Thee, O My God, under all conditions, whether of the past or the future. The gifts Thou hast bestowed upon Me have reached their fullest measure and the blessings Thou hast vouchsafed unto Me have attained their consummation. Naught do I now witness but the manifold evidences of Thy grace and loving-kindness, Thy bounty and gracious favors, Thy generosity and loftiness, Thy sovereignty and might, Thy splendor and Thy glory, and that which befitteth the holy court of Thy transcendent dominion and majesty and beseemeth the glorious precincts of Thine eternity and exaltation.”²²

Narrator:

Shortly after the Bab revealed this, Nabil recounts:

Nabil:

“On the morning of July 9, 1850, the Báb was taken to a courtyard filled with nearly ten thousand people wishing to watch his execution. The Báb and Anís (one of His devout followers) were suspended on a wall and the firing squad of 750 rifles prepared to shoot.”²³

Narrator:

²² The Báb, “Selections from the Writings of the Báb”, “Prayers and Meditations”, No. 12.

²³ Sears, W. (1995). “Release the Sun” USA: Bahá’í Publishing Trust. pp. p. 175.

Ultimately this attempt would miraculously fail and another delegation of riflemen would need to be found to carry out the murderous deed.

Pause

Narrator:

And so the calendar of the entire world began anew, its first New Year's Day falling on the vernal equinox preceding the Báb's astonishing Announcement, the day we in the west call March 21, 1844. But this was only the beginning.

-----**End Program (optional Pause)**-----

MUSIC

The Bab's Segment: [28 minutes]

For Combined Program

Transition: from the Bab to Baha'u'llah

Covenant: From God to God

Narrator:

To Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb wrote a pair of Tablets. For the first time in history, one Manifestation of God, The Bab, would pen a tablet to the next, Baha'u'llah. Here is the second of those Tablets:

The Bab:

'A SECOND TABLET ADDRESSED TO "HIM WHO WILL BE MADE MANIFEST"

May the glances of Him Whom God shall make manifest illumine this letter at the primary school.²⁴

HE IS THE MOST GLORIOUS.

HE is God, no God is there but Him, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved. All that are in the heavens and on the earth and whatever lieth between them are His. Verily He is the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

This is a letter from God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, unto God, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved, to affirm that the Bayán and such as bear allegiance to it are but a present from me unto Thee and to express my undoubting faith that there is no God but Thee, that the kingdoms of Creation and Revelation are Thine, that no one can attain anything save by Thy power and that He Whom Thou hast raised up is but Thy servant and Thy Testimony. I, indeed, beg to address Him Whom God shall make manifest, by Thy leave in these words: "Shouldst Thou dismiss the entire company of the followers of the Bayán in the Day of the Latter Resurrection by a mere sign of Thy finger even while still a suckling babe, Thou wouldst indeed be praised in Thy indication. And though no doubt is there about it, do Thou grant a respite of nineteen years as a token of Thy favor so that those who have embraced this Cause may be graciously rewarded by Thee. Thou art verily the Lord of grace abounding. Thou dost indeed suffice every created thing and causest it to be independent of all things, while nothing in the heavens or on the earth or that which lieth between them can ever suffice Thee."

Verily Thou art the Self-Sufficient, the All-Knowing; Thou art indeed potent over all things.²⁵

²⁴ Refers to an explanation by 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "...some were misled by this statement and thought that the school referred to was a physical school for the training of unlettered children, whereas it referred to a spiritual school sanctified from the limits of the contingent world." The note also refers the reader to the passage by Bahá'u'lláh that follows in the text here.

The Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, to be celebrated (varies yearly)

Devotions

The Beginning: The Bird of Eternity

Narrator:

Bahá'u'lláh writes in this second of three newly translated Tablets:

Bahá'u'lláh:

“He is the Most Holy, the Most Exalted, the Most Great.

The Birthday Festival is come, and He Who is the Beauty of God, the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling, the All-Loving, hath ascended His throne. Well is it with the one who in this Day hath attained His presence and towards whom the gaze of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, hath been directed. Say: We have celebrated this Festival in the Most Great Prison at a time when the kings of the earth have risen against Us. Yet the ascendancy of the oppressor can never frustrate Us, nor can the hosts of the world dismay Us. Unto this doth the All-Merciful bear witness in this most august station.

Say: Should the quintessence of assurance be dismayed before the clamour of the peoples of the world? Nay, by His beauty, which sheddeth its radiance upon all that hath been and all that shall be! This, verily, is the majesty of the Lord that hath encompassed the entire creation, and this is His transcendent power that hath pervaded all them that see and all that is seen. Take fast hold of the cord of His sovereign might and make mention of your Lord, the Unconstrained, at this dawning whose light hath laid bare every hidden secret. Thus hath the tongue of the Ancient of Days spoken on this Day wherein the choice wine hath been unsealed. Take heed lest the vain imaginings of them that have disbelieved in God perturb you, or their idle fancies deter you from this outstretched path.

O people of Baha! Soar upon the wings of detachment into the atmosphere of the love of your Lord, the All-Merciful. Arise then to render Him victorious, as bidden in the Preserved Tablet. Beware lest ye contend with any of My servants. Bestow upon them the sweet savours of God and His holy utterances, for through their potency all men will be

²⁵ “Selections from the Writings of the Báb”, pp. 6-8, “Tablets and Addresses”

enabled to turn unto Him. They that remain heedless of God in this Day are in truth lost in the drunkenness of their desires and perceive it not. Well is it with the one who, with lowliness and humility, hath set his face towards the Dayspring of the verses of his Lord.

It behoveth you to arise and acquaint the people with that which hath been sent down in the Book of their Lord, the Almighty, the Unconstrained. Say: Fear ye God and pay no heed to the vain imaginings of them that walk in the ways of doubt and iniquity. Turn ye with radiant hearts towards the throne of your Lord, the Possessor of all names. He, verily, shall aid you through the power of truth. No God is there but Him, the Almighty, the Most Bountiful.

Would ye hasten towards a mere pond, whilst the Most Great Ocean is stretched out before your eyes? Turn ye wholly unto it, and follow not in the footsteps of every faithless deceiver. Thus doth the Bird of Eternity warble upon the branches of Our divine Lote-Tree. By God! A single one of its melodies sufficeth to enrapture the Concourse on high, and beyond them the dwellers of the cities of names, and beyond them those who circle round His Throne at morn and eventide.

Thus have the showers of utterance rained down from the heaven of the will of your Lord, the All-Merciful. Draw nigh unto them, O people, and renounce those who idly dispute the verses that God hath revealed, and who have disbelieved in their Lord when He came invested with proof and testimony.”²⁶

[4:01]

(Music and Dramatic Interlude)

Story

Narrator:

When Baha’u’llah was a mere child...

Narrator:

“Husayn-‘Ali [later known as Bahá’u’lláh] was born November 12, 1817, at dawn when the birds begin their songs...At that time, Fath-‘Ali Shah ruled Persia, and King George III was King of England. James Monroe was President of the United States, which had only nineteen states, Abraham Lincoln was a boy of eight, living in Indiana, and Frederick Douglass was a baby, born into slavery in the state of Maryland.

²⁶ Ayyam-i-Tis‘ih, pp. 45–47.

“Husayn-‘Ali was the third-born child of the honorable Mirza ‘Abbas Buzurg, a vizier (minister of state) of the shah, and his noble wife Khadijih Khanum. Only later, when the time was right, would He take the title “Bahá’u’lláh,” meaning in Arabic “the Glory of God.”

Early on, His parents recognized that Husayn-‘Ali was an unusual child. His mother often wondered how a baby could be so happy and content all the time. She would exclaim:

Kadijih Khanum:

“This child never cries!”

Narrator:

“But what truly astonished them as they watched their young son grow was His extraordinary knowledge and wisdom. His simple education was no different from that given to other sons of the Persian nobility. Tutors came to His home to teach reading, writing, and Persian culture, just as they did for the other boys. Husayn-‘Ali learned to read the great Persian poets - ‘Attar, Hafez, Rumi - as the other boys did, and to recite from the Koran, the holy book of Islam. He did not study science, for science was viewed with suspicion in nineteenth-century Persia, nor did He study philosophy or religion. Those were left to the mullas and mujtahids—Muslim scholars who spent long years studying the teachings, laws, and traditions of Islam.

“Yet Husayn-‘Ali showed a lively interest in spiritual topics, and from His boyhood He displayed a profound understanding of spiritual truth. His understanding was innate and reached far beyond the knowledge of His teachers. Although Husayn-‘Ali was never arrogant or boastful about the knowledge that came so easily to Him, neither was it something He could hide.”

“As Husayn-‘Ali grew into a youth, His father could find Him, from time to time, deep in conversation with the most learned of men. They welcomed Him into their company despite His young age. His understanding of the Prophets and Their teachings, of the nature of God and the human spirit, added much to their discussions. By the time He was fourteen years old, Husayn-‘Ali’s innate knowledge and wisdom were recognized by all who knew Him.

Mirza Buzurg:

"Such intelligence! And such perception! He is as a flame of fire,"

Narrator:

Mirza Buzurg said,

Mirza Buzurg:

"Even at this young age He surpasses mature men."

Narrator:

"He wondered how his young son could know these things. Did His gift have something to do with the noble ancestors of their family lineage? Through His father, Husayn-‘Ali was a descendant of the great Persian kings of old as far back as Yazdigird the Sassanian. He was also a descendant of two holy Prophets: the Persian Prophet Zoroaster, Who taught His followers about the battle between good and evil; and Abraham, Who taught the Jews to worship one God.

Mirza Buzurg pondered these things about his young son.

"For Himself, Husayn-‘Ali much preferred to mount His horse and ride out of the city gates into the countryside and the mountains beyond.

Baha’u’llah would remark in His later years:

Baha’u’llah:

"The country is the world of the soul,...the city is the world of bodies."

Narrator:

"When Husayn-‘Ali rode out of the city and through the Persian countryside, ... He often ... would stop to talk with the people who lived there and ask about their concerns. How were their families faring? Did they have enough to eat? Was anyone sick, in need of a doctor or medicine?

"Wherever there was a need, He would see to it that help was given. Sometimes a dispute needed mediating or an injustice needed attention. Here, too, Husayn-‘Ali gave assistance. Even as a youth, He was not afraid to speak up at the shah’s courts in defense of the weak and innocent.

...In deed as well as in name, He grew up as the noble son of a noble father."²⁷

²⁷ Excerpt from: Druzelle Cederquist, "The Story of Bahá’u’lláh"

Revelation

Bahá'u'lláh: The Day

Narrator:

Referring to some of the traditions of Islam, Shoghi Effendi summarizes in “God Passes By”:

Shoghi Effendi:

“The attempt on the life of Násiri ‘d-Dín Sháh... was made on the 28th of the month of Shavvál, 1268 A.H., corresponding to the 15th of August, 1852. Immediately after, Bahá'u'lláh [Mirzá Husayn ‘Alí] was arrested in Níyávarán, was conducted with the greatest ignominy to Tíhrán and cast into the Síyáh-Chál. His imprisonment lasted for a period of no less than four months, in the middle of which the “year nine” (1269), anticipated in such glowing terms by the Báb, and alluded to as the year “after Hín” by Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá’í, was ushered in, endowing with undreamt-of potentialities the whole world.”²⁸

Narrator:

There, lying in chains and in darkness underground, Mirzá Husayn ‘Alí experienced utter transformation.

Shoghi Effendi, in his stellar history of the Baha’i Faith, “God Passes By”, recounts Baha’u’llah’s own words:

Baha’u’llah:

“During the days I lay in the prison of Tíhrán,”

Shoghi Effendi:

are His [Baha’u’llah’s] own memorable words,

Baha’u’llah:

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

²⁸ Shoghi Effendi, “God Passes By”, p. 104.

Shoghi Effendi:

‘In His Súratu’l-Haykal (the Súrih of the Temple) He thus describes those breathless moments when the Maiden, symbolizing the “Most Great Spirit” proclaimed His mission to the entire creation:

Baha’u’llah:

“While engulfed in tribulations I heard a most wondrous, a most sweet voice, calling above My head. Turning My face, I beheld a Maiden—the embodiment of the remembrance of the name of My Lord—suspended in the air before Me. So rejoiced was she in her very soul that her countenance shone with the ornament of the good-pleasure of God, and her cheeks glowed with the brightness of the All-Merciful. Betwixt earth and heaven she was raising a call which captivated the hearts and minds of men. She was imparting to both My inward and outer being tidings which rejoiced My soul, and the souls of God’s honored servants. Pointing with her finger unto My head, she addressed all who are in heaven and all who are on earth, saying: ‘By God! This is the Best-Beloved of the worlds, and yet ye comprehend not. This is the Beauty of God amongst you, and the power of His sovereignty within you, could ye but understand. This is the Mystery of God and His Treasure, the Cause of God and His glory unto all who are in the kingdoms of Revelation and of creation, if ye be of them that perceive.’”²⁹

Narrator:

Surviving despite its horrors and the executions of many others, He left that prison as Bahá’u’lláh – the Glory of God.

[3:36]

Baha’u’llah:

“This is the Day whereon the Ocean of God’s mercy hath been manifested unto men, the Day in which the Daystar of His loving-kindness hath shed its radiance upon them, the Day in which the clouds of His bountiful favor have overshadowed the whole of mankind. Now is the time to cheer and refresh the down-cast through the invigorating breeze of love and fellowship, and the living waters of friendliness and charity.”³⁰

(Music and Dramatic Interlude) [“WE ARE ONE” SONG]

²⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

³⁰ From Bahá’u’lláh, “Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh”, V

Bahá'u'lláh: The Glory of God

Narrator:

Baha'u'llah would remain a prisoner the rest of His life. He explains why He submitted to this suffering:

Baha'u'llah:

*"The aim of this Wronged One in sustaining woes and tribulations, in revealing the Holy Verses and in demonstrating proofs hath been naught but to quench the flame of hate and enmity, that the horizon of the hearts of men may be illumined with the light of concord and attain real peace and tranquility."*³¹

Narrator:

Even after all this suffering, The Blessed Beauty would set into motion a new world faith that would encompass the earth.

PAUSE

The Bahá'í Faith is established in **virtually every country** and in many dependent territories and overseas departments of countries. Most nations and a few territories have a National Spiritual Assembly elected by the Bahá'ís of that jurisdiction.

Bahá'ís live in some **100,000 localities** around the globe.

About **2,100 indigenous tribes, races, and ethnic groups** are represented in the Bahá'í community.

Bahá'í writings and other literature by individual Baha'i authors have been translated into more than **800 languages**.

There are currently **seven Bahá'í Houses of Worship** – in Australia, Germany, India, Panama, Samoa, Uganda, Chile and the United States. More than 100 sites for future temples have been acquired.

Bahá'u'lláh authored thousands of letters, tablets, and books that, if compiled, would constitute more than 100 volumes.

³¹ Bahá'u'lláh, "Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas", Page 219-220.

Baha'u'llah has called mankind to recognize:

the Equality of Men and Women, the Oneness of God, the Oneness of Religion, the Oneness of Mankind, the harmony of Science and Religion, the Independent Investigation of the Truth for oneself, the Elimination of all Prejudices, a Universal Peace upheld by a Spiritual World Government, a Universal Compulsory Education, Spiritual solutions to economic problems, the need of a Universal Auxiliary Language.....and more!

[2:00]

PAUSE

Narrator:

Let us close with this Prayer penned by Baha'u'llah:

Reader:

“Many a chilled heart, O my God, hath been set ablaze with the fire of Thy Cause, and many a slumberer hath been wakened by the sweetness of Thy voice. How many are the strangers who have sought shelter beneath the shadow of the tree of Thy oneness, and how numerous the thirsty ones who have panted after the fountain of Thy living waters in Thy days!

“Blessed is he that hath set himself towards Thee, and hastened to attain the Dayspring of the lights of Thy face. Blessed is he who with all his affections hath turned to the Dawning-Place of Thy Revelation and the Fountainhead of Thine inspiration. Blessed is he that hath expended in Thy path what Thou didst bestow upon him through Thy bounty and favor. Blessed is he who, in his sore longing after Thee, hath cast away all else except Thyself. Blessed is he who hath enjoyed intimate communion with Thee, and rid himself of all attachment to anyone save Thee.

“I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by Him Who is Thy Name, Who, through the power of Thy sovereignty and might, hath risen above the horizon of His prison, to ordain for everyone what becometh Thee and beseemeth Thine exaltation.

“Thy might, in truth, is equal to all things.”³²

Baha'u'llah Segment Alone: [19:17]

³² Bahá'u'lláh, “Prayers and Meditations”, XXIX

Total Combined Time: [47:00]