

NOW THEY ARE HANGING WOMEN

COMMEMORATION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

EXECUTION OF TEN BAHÁ'Í WOMEN IN ÍRÁN

ON JUNE 18, 1983



The Báb

'Alí-Muhammad,
Prophet-Founder
of the Bábí religion

Whose title

The Báb

means:

The Gate



Shrine of the Báb
Mt. Carmel, Haifa, Israel

Bahá'u'lláh

Mírzá Husayn-'Alí,
Prophet-Founder of the
Bahá'í Faith

Whose title
Bahá'u'lláh
means:

The Glory of God



‘Abdu’l-Bahá



‘Abbás Effendi, eldest son of Bahá’u’lláh

Named in His Will & Testament as the

**Center of the Covenant
The Sole Interpreter
(after Bahá’u’lláh’s passing)
of His Writings**

His chosen title, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, means:

The Servant of Bahá



With the 1979 Islámic Revolution in Írán Came:

- **A resurgence of animosity and hatred towards Bahá'ís which had been somewhat controlled under the Shah's regime.**
- **And a new constitution which created an Islámic state, giving limited rights to Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians but according none to their nation's largest religious minority: the Bahá'ís.**

Examples of Actions Taken Against the Bahá'í Community in Írán

- **A ban on all organized Bahá'í religious activities. This deems them “criminal” acts and provides “the legal basis on which the regime can move against all Bahá'ís in Írán**
- **Loss of Jobs and Loss of pensions**
- **Loss of rights e.g., to marriage, divorce, burial, visas and passports and even education**
- **Loss of property, e.g., homes, schools, hospitals, holy places, cemeteries**
- **Desecration of property, e.g.,**

- **uprooting graves**




- and razing the House of the Báb





Criminal Acts Can Be Committed Against Bahá'ís By Citizens And Companies With Impunity

- A Tihrán court held that a Muslim driver found guilty of manslaughter in the death of a Bahá'í did not have to compensate the survivors because the “victim was a member of the misguided and misleading Bahá'í community, and is considered an unprotected infidel.”
- A court denied a Bahá'í widow life insurance benefits when her husband died, because a contract with a “heretic” was not valid and enforceable.”
- Imprisonment, sometimes without charges. And many charges seem incomprehensible:

- 
- Teaching classes
 - Women had received higher education—and eventually any Bahá'í who attended university
 - Claims that they were members of SAVAK (the Sháh's secret police)
 - Allegations that they were spies for Israel



Swim-Knowing

by Joan Imig Taylor

Does the salmon
start screaming
with a change of wind,
or when the water turns black?
Born out of sea-knowledge,
his choice is swim,
spawn, die.

Earth-knowing
belongs to coyotes,
waiting foxes —

grass-knowing
to sunflowers,
dahlias, daisies,
zeroed in on growing.

Air-knowing
is man-knowing —
freedom to love,
die, in the act of knowing
loving, swim-knowing
carried to perfection
from salmon to man.”



“The Islámic nation, God-willing, will fulfill the prayer mentioned in the Qur’án,

“Lord, leave not a single family of infidels on earth.”

From remarks made to a U.N. committee on 11/23/83 by Rev. Constantine N. Dombalis, Dean of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Richmond, VA, who was a U.S. public delegate to the U.N.





***“I have breathed within thee
a breath of My own spirit,
that thou mayest be my lover.”***

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, #19 (from the Arabic)



“O God! Thou beholdest Thy lovers in Írán in the clutches of hate and enmity. I beg of Thee, by Thy mercy which hath preceded the contingent world, to raise up from the earth those who will be moved to aid and protect them, and to preserve their rights and the restitution due to them...”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Fire and Light, p. 14



“The true Bahá’í will be the perfect lover. He will love everyone with a pure heart...”

He will hate no one. He will despise no one, for he will have learned to find His traces everywhere and to see the face of the Beloved in every face — even his persecutors.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in J.E. Esslemont, Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era



Sweetmeat

by Roger White

Was my ecstasy Belleville, remote as Bethlehem;
my present anguish incomprehensible as Auschwitz?
I would welcome contempt above indifference.

Mourn with me now these martyrs.
History, that cocky jaywalker,
may yet trespass on your complacent lawn.

See how my brother brings sweets to the murderer,
succumbs to his shot with a careless ease.

Might we not think he knew a rare confection;
could have taught us more than how to die?





IN THE
GRAVEYARDS
OF IRAN

GRANT HINDIN
MILLER



*‘Izzat
Jánamí*

AGE - 57





Ru'ya' 'Ishraqi

AGE - 23

Ru'yá

by Roger White

Not I shall sing your praises Ru'yá
But someone braver,
one steeled to tell the tale from
your young heart's chamber out to
the cord's abrasive kiss
on your slender throat.

Your mystery won't admit me.
I circumambulate your immaculacy of faith
lusting to know if when you put away your dolls
you foresaw that death would attend your debut,
envisioned yourself the orphaned maid
made matron by torture.


Child, child, what had your mother dreamed
for you?
Do fathers dower heroines?

Not I shall sing your praises Ru'yá,
though umbilical metaphors suggest themselves.
I have no breath for them
but leave your song to others,
for now you bind yourself to all of us.
One will unknot his throat
to speak of your demure entrance,
debutante of other dominions.
Let him tell how, even as you curtsied
under your mother's approving glance
a flush rising in your cheek,
the king as in the fairy tale
marked you for his own.

*Nusrat
Yaldá'í*

AGE 46






“Make your home a haven of rest and peace. Be ye hospitable and let the doors of your home be open to the faces of friends and strangers. Welcome everyone with a smiling face and let them all feel that they are in my home.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Star of the West, v. 6, p. 20

*Nusrat
Yaldá'í*

AGE 46





“May your faces, being steadfastly set towards the Divine Light, become so luminous that all your thoughts, words and actions will shine with the Spiritual Radiance dominating your souls.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 98

*Nusrat
Yaldá'í*

AGE 46



Táhirih
Siyávushí
AGE 32



“Few are those who have been freed from this darkness, who have ascended from the world of nature to the world of man, who have followed the divine Teachings, have served the world of humanity, are resplendent, merciful, illumined and like unto a rose garden. Strive thine utmost to become godlike, characterized with His attributes, illumined and merciful, that thou mayest be freed from every bond and become attached at heart to the Kingdom of the incomparable Lord. This is Bahá’í ‘bounty, and this is heavenly light.”

Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 206


Táhirih
Siyávushí
AGE 32





Mashíd
Nirúmand

AGE 25




“. . . allegiance to the essential foundation of the divine religions is ever the cause of development and progress, whereas the abandonment and beclouding of that essential reality through which blind imitations and adherence to dogmatic beliefs is the cause of . . . debasement and degredation.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 364



Mashíd
Nirúmand

AGE 25



“It is our wish and desire that every one of you may become a source of all goodness . . . and an example of uprightness . . . Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbors.”

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 315



Mashíd
Nirúmand

AGE 25

NOW THEY ARE HANGING WOMEN

~ INTERMISSION ~



Zarrín

Muqímí

AGE 28




Shiraz-Adelabad
prison



Zarrín

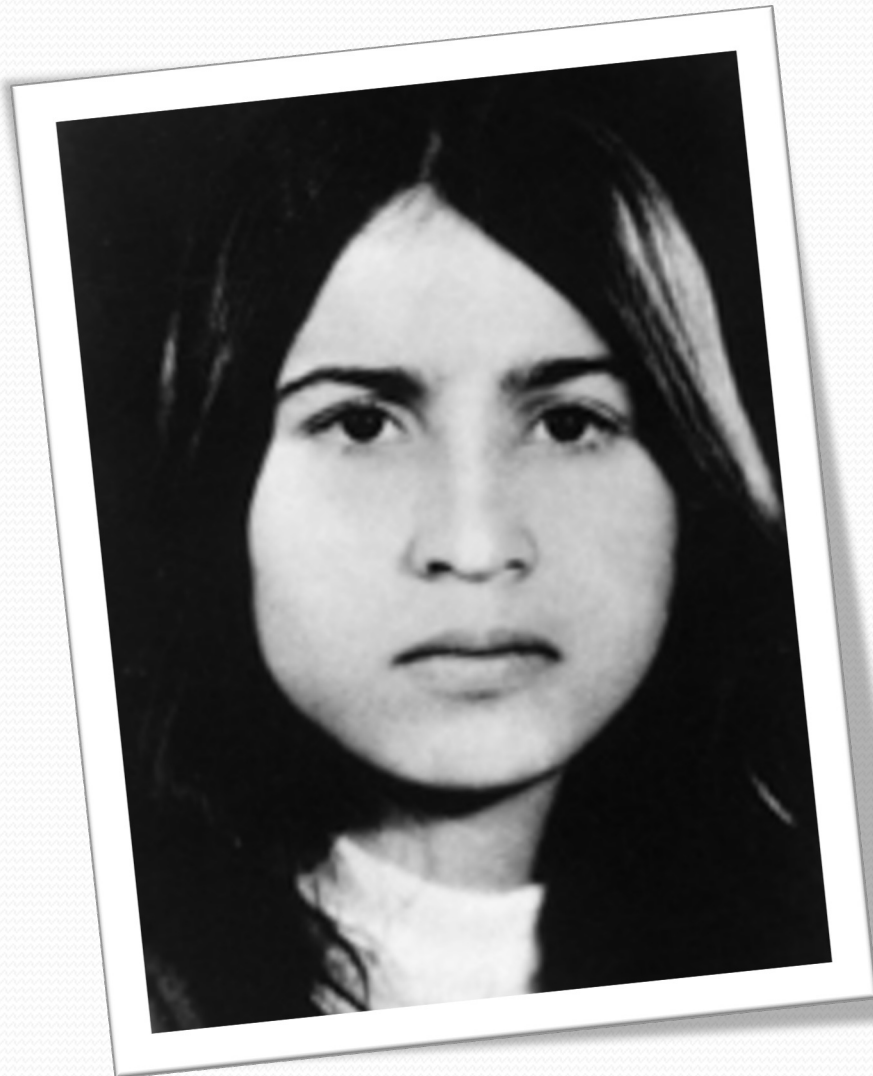
Muqímí

AGE 28



“For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under my trials.”

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, #48 from the Arabic




Akhtar Sabet
AGE 25

Shírín
Dálvand

AGE 25





“My calamity is My providence. Outwardly it is fire and vengeance, but inwardly it is light and mercy.”

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, #51 from the Arabic

Shírín
Dálvand

AGE 25






Símín Sábiri
AGE 24



Muná
Mahmúdnizhád

AGE – 17




“Ask a Bahá’í to deny any of the great Prophets, to deny his faith or to deny Moses, Muhammad or Christ, and he will say, ‘I would rather die . . . A Bahá’í denies no religion; he accepts the Truth in all, and would die to uphold it.’”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London, p. 56



Muná
Mahmúdnizhád

AGE – 17



BAHÁ'Í CEMETERY
SHIRAZ, IRAN



Assurances

by Roger White

The children of the wind-tossed wave
go singing into silence and, silent, dance;

so light of step, these lovelies, that
their feet don't brush the ground.
No prince to partner them.
Who will applaud their aerial pirouette,
their assured leap toward freedom?

More than an ocean away a million
Cinderellas
arise and attack the day heroically,
 their hours unsung,
shoo children to school in ritualized
skirmish,
arm-wrestle the Hoover,
gorge the insatiable Bendix.

Beds tamed by ten, they earn a coffee break,
a peek at the news:

White Sale at Bloomingdales
David Niven Failing
Now They are Hanging Women

History, too, gets on with her housework.

From the pages of *Cosmopolitan*
a beaming model whose cancer will be low-
tar

fatuously consoles:
You've come a long way, baby.



- **Donations in their memories to Bahá'í funds**
- **Projects dedicated to them, like the award winning *Children's Theater Company*, formed in by Mehr Mansuri and dedicated to the youngest of the ten women, Muná, who believed that children could be the force for positive change**
- **The Mona Foundation, a non-profit educational organization**
- **Deeds and charitable donations in their memory**
- **Poetry, drama, paintings and other arts created in their honor, including this humble effort**



Your Deaths were Not in Vain

by jaine

Four decades have passed
since you died —
died as you had lived —
with love in your hearts,
with devotion to Baha'u'llah:
Symbols of faith and detachment
from this glue trap of material life.

While on this earth
you soared in heavenly realms
which finally called you home

Yet still you live.
Yet still your voices rise.
Yet still our hearts connect.

We remember you.
We honor you.
We share your stories.
We serve in your names.
We will ensure

Your deaths were not in vain.



To Be as These

by Shelly Pittman – In memory of all Bahá'í martyrs

As gazelles go in grace
Over heated, sandy plains,
Moving to unquestioned havens,
As delicate blossoms dawn
Briefly upon the vine and fall
In oblation to greater life,
As artists move beyond knowing
Wield their brush and stroke divine
Lines descending to their rising
As lovers seem to others
To wander in drunken illusions
Yet stray never from their fixed gaze,
They leave this simile of earth
With memories that beckon ever
For us to be as these.



June 18, 1996

by Janet McGrath

As hearts throb around the world,
your innocent lives are not forgotten.

A burning light
is your example of Faith,
....a blazing torch in this dark night.

Joyfully, without regret,
you yielded last breaths
at an enemy's bidding.

With gratitude and dignity,
alone, you made your choice.

Each one, single file,
keys rippling across a piano,
you sang a song for all of humanity.

With complete devotion
and rapture,
you died as you had lived.
Courage from another realm
stung your persecutors with
shame and rage....

The fragrance of your sacrifice
perfumes our very lives...

what honour, precious honour
can I do your memory each day?
What breath of service can I draw
to keep your song alive?

Over ten years have gone,
and a century is closing,
closing, closing,
...how many human candles
will be snuffed

by the whirlwinds of oppression,
before the light of justice
calms the storm?


I ask for joy and peace for each of you,
the beauty of your lives lingers sweet....

with pure devotion,
I call out to our Creator,
somehow find me worthy
just to kneel down at their feet...




- **Acts of arson targeting homes and vehicles of the beleaguered Bahá'ís.**
- **Homes raided, educational materials confiscated and teachers of an underground university system for Bahá'ís sent to jail.**
- **To obtain a national identification card, one must declare their religion. Only four religions are recognized by the Iranian constitution: Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. Baha'is must either lie to receive the card or be denied one, which in turn denies them access to services such as insurance, education, banking and even public transportation.**






“Bahá’í students in primary and secondary school throughout Iran are increasingly being harassed, vilified, and held up to abuse...”

NEW YORK, 5 April 2007, (BWNS)



A March 2013 report cited “...some 300 incidents of abuse directed against Bahá’í schoolchildren...”

Violence with Impunity: Acts of Aggression against Iran’s Bahá’í Community




“...children are expected to announce their religion at school and are treated differently based on their answers. Children of the Bahá’í Faith get harsh discipline, such as being ‘insulted, degraded, threatened with expulsion, and, in some cases, summarily dismissed from school.”

Hamed Farmand, in IranSource, September 21, 2021

“...children are encouraged by schoolteachers and principals to emotionally abuse minority children at school. For example, school-age children in western Kermanshah province were called to the front of the classroom and forced to listen to classmates insulting their religion. In another account, one elementary school student reported that their classmates avoid touching them because they were told that Baha’is are najes (impure).”

Hamed Farmand, in IranSource, September 21, 2021





“When your time comes to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with fear of death, so that when their time comes they weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song and die like a hero going home.”

Chief Tecumseh



LILAC, LAVENDER, JASMINE, OIL OF ROSES, ROSEMARY,
REMEMBER ME, SOMETIME, AND DON'T FORGET WHY

