

DECLARATION OF THE BAB
— Holy Day Dramatic Celebration

by

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DECLARATION OF THE BAB

[In DIM light KHADIJIH BAGUM, wife of the Báb, sits upstage on a chair. CHANTED prayer rises. "O God, My God, My Beloved, My Heart's Desire" from *Songs of the Ancient Beauty* CD. Brief tableau.]

[NARRATOR ONE enters. LIGHTS rise on him as he stands at a podium. CHANTED prayer concludes.]

NARRATOR ONE
(quoting "God Passes By"1)

In the 1840's, a Messianic fervor was sweeping the world. Devout Christians, who had made meticulous study of the prophecies of the Bible, came to the conclusion that 1844 would be the year when Jesus Christ's Second Coming would occur. Many Christians donned ascension robes in anticipation. The German Templars moved to Mt. Carmel in the Holy Land, in order to be close to the precise spot where Jesus was prophesied to return. The Seventh Day Adventist Faith began at this time in anticipation of Jesus's advent.
(beat)

[SOUND of telegraph TAPPING.]

Then, on May 23, 1844, Samuel Morse transmitted the very first telegraph message. He chose a verse from the Bible for this first message. The Bible, Samuel Morse's first telegraph message asked: "What hath God wrought?"... What has God done?
(beat)

The very first invention to allow for mass communication, the first message heralding the dawn of the age of mass media had exclaimed: What *had* God wrought?
(pause)

What *had* God done?... Samuel Morse could not possibly have known that on that very same night of May 22, 1844, in the distant land of Persia, in the fabled city of Shiraz...

[SOUND of telegraph TAPPING stops.]

But allow the wife of the Blessed Báb to tell you...

[LIGHTS rise on KHADIJIH BAGUM, still seated.]

...Allow her to tell you how the prophecies of the Bible – and of the Qur'an – and the hopes of all mankind were fulfilled that night.

[NARRATOR ONE withdraws.]

KHADIJIH BAGUM
(coming forward)

My name is Khadijih Bagum. Always on such holy days, the friends ask me to tell about my brief but glorious years with my Husband, the Báb. Tonight you have asked me about the circumstances surrounding the Declaration of His Mission...
(coming forward)

Known to me as 'Alí Muhammad, the Blessed Báb and I had been childhood playmates. As a teenager, I once had a dream of Him standing in a field of flowers, praying, wrapped in a robe embroidered in gold thread with verses from the Qur'an. When I told my mother the dream, she said it was probably due to the fact that 'Alí Muhammad was so devoted to His prayers... Another night I dreamt of Fatimih. I dreamt that the Prophet Muhammad's daughter had come to our house and asked if I or one of my sisters would marry her son – the Imam Husayn! We stepped forward with joy and delight to welcome her, and Fatimih arose and kissed me on the forehead. In my dream I understood that she had selected me! I awoke the next morning feeling exhilarated. Yet modesty forbade my telling my dream to anyone. But that very day at noon, the Báb's mother and grandmother both came to call upon us. My sisters and I went to greet them in the same way we had done in my dream. The Báb's mother arose and kissed me on the forehead. Just as in my dream! So when we girls were dismissed, I eavesdropped and listened as the Báb's mother requested that a marriage be arranged between her son and myself. Immediately, I felt a great stirring within my heart. It seemed as if I were being flooded with God's mercy and grace. I was thrilled at the prospect of such a marriage. When my mother told me of the proposal, I blurted out my dream. She became very excited. "Surely, this augers some good fortune," she said.
(beat)

Our wedding took place in August of 1842. I then moved into the House of the Báb. We lived with his mother and their two servants, Mubarak and Fiddih, an Ethiopian couple. No words can ever convey my blissful feelings of good fortune in those early days, those early days before the sorrow descended. The Báb's kindness as Husband and Companion, His loving care, his thoughtfulness were incomparable. He and His mother both showered upon me every kindness and consideration.
(pause)

But then one night, not long after our marriage, I had another dream: a terrifying nightmare. A ferocious lion was standing in the courtyard of our house. My arms were wrapped around its neck. It was dragging me along, and I was clinging desperately to its mane. The beast dragged me once, then twice around the perimeter of our courtyard. Still I clung to its neck. The beast made a third circle of the courtyard, and we were half way around, when suddenly I awoke with a start, trembling and terrified. The Báb immediately reached out to comfort me. I told Him of my nightmare, and he soothed me, saying that I had awakened too soon, before the good tidings. "Your dream," He whispered, "portends that our life together will not last more than two-and-a-half years." Needless to say, I was greatly distressed by this revelation. A new bride expects to hear about beginnings, not endings. However, my beloved Husband's affection calmed my troubled heart, and soon the dire forebodings were offset by the joyous news that I was with child. I was to have a baby! But my joy was brief. I soon became deathly ill. Both my life and that of my child-to-be were endangered. It came time for delivery and I was on the threshold of death. My mother-in-law was frantic. She pleaded with her blessed Son to intervene. The Báb then took up a mirror and wrote a prayer upon it. He told His mother to hold the mirror in front of my face. I stared into the glass, I stared through the prayer into the mirror, placing all my faith in the holy words, and before I knew it, I had delivered my child. It was a boy. A beautiful boy. We named him Ahmad. We were young, we were in love, and now we were parents of a new baby. However, earthly joy was not to be ours. Shortly after his birth, Ahmad passed away. My mother-in-law was deeply grieved and very angry. She reproached her Son. "If You have such power that You can save your wife's life when she's on the brink of death, why could not you save your poor baby's life, and spare your wife such sorrow?" The Báb told His mother that He was not destined to have children. This was not what my mother-in-law, desiring grandchildren, wanted to hear. She became only angrier, and continued to reproach her Son. The Báb listened patiently, but said no more.

[CHANTED prayer, "O God, My God, My Beloved, My Heart's Desire" RISES again.]

The prayer we are listening to now, a prayer of radiant acquiescence, is the prayer the Báb revealed after our only child's death.

[CHANTING fades.]

I tell you all this, tonight, on the anniversary of the Báb's Declaration of His Mission, because I want you to understand

the circumstances surrounding the evening when I myself discovered His station.

(beat)

Before our marriage, the Blessed Báb had engaged in commerce with His uncle. While still in His teens, He had assumed complete management of their trading house in Bushihr. But in the early years of our marriage, my Husband had no specific employment. He spent most of His time in the upper chamber of our house, engaged in prayer and supplication. In the afternoons He would stroll in the fields outside the city, returning home at sunset. In the evenings, as was customary among merchants, He would ask for His bundle of papers and His account book. Yet I often observed that these were not His business records. I would occasionally ask: "What are these papers?" He would smile and reply: "These are account books on the people of the world." If an unexpected guest suddenly arrived, He would cover the papers with a cloth.

(pause)

One day, in the late afternoon, He came home earlier than usual. He told me that he had a particular task that He had to tend to that evening, and would I have our servant Fiddih prepare dinner earlier than was the custom. Our Ethiopian cook Fiddih was happy to comply and so we took our evening meal early that night in the room of my mother-in-law. My Husband then retired for the night. Soon I also went to bed. But about an hour later, while everyone was sleeping and the house completely quiet, my Husband rose from bed and left our room. At first, I took no particular notice of His absence. But when it lengthened to more than an hour, I grew concerned. I went to look for Him. But nowhere in the house could I find Him. I thought, perhaps for some reason He had gone out; but when I checked the main door, I found it locked on the inside. I then walked into the courtyard to the western side of the house and looked up to the roof top. To my surprise, I saw a light burning in the upper chamber. I was particularly surprised because I had never known my Husband to go to that part of the house at that hour of the night - unless He had quests. And yet, he always informed me when a visitor was expected, and He had not done so that night. Both surprised and concerned, I crossed the courtyard and climbed the stairs. When I reached the top of the steps, I saw my Husband within the upper chamber, His hands upraised, chanting a prayer, supplicating heaven, tears streaming down His face. But His features were luminous; rays of light radiated from His face. He looked so majestic, so powerful, that fear seized my limbs, rooting me to the spot. I began to tremble uncontrollably. I found I could neither enter the room nor retrace my steps. My will power abandoned me. Powerless, I was on the verge of screaming, when He made a gesture with His blessed hands, motioning me to go back. Somehow the movement of His hands returned my courage to me,

and I was able to descend the stairs and return to our room and to my bed.

(beat)

But all that night I lay awake, deeply troubled and disturbed. In my few fitful moments of sleep, that scene in the upper chamber would flash through my mind, adding to my anxiety. My head throbbed with questions: what terrible event had taken place to have caused my Husband such sorrow and tears, to have resulted in such fevered prayers and intense supplications? Sleep was impossible to me that night. At last the dawn broke, with blessed relief; the sound of the muezzin's call to prayer drifting over the rooftops...

(beat)

A little after sunrise, Fiddih took the samovar and tea glasses to my mother-in-law's room. It was our custom to take breakfast there. My Husband had receded me there. When I entered the room and my eyes fell on him, the majesty and power of the night before again took shape before me. Once again I began shuddering uncontrollably. My mother-in-law had at that moment just exited the room. As the Báb was quietly drinking His tea, He looked up at me. With a gentle smile He affectionately bid me be seated. Then He offered me His own glass of tea. I drank what tea remained, and found my courage restored. He then asked what was troubling me. I spoke up boldly. I was too disconcerted by the change in Him to stand on ceremony. "You are no longer the same person I knew in my childhood," I blurted out. "We have grown up together as children; we have been married for two years, living in the same house – I thought I knew You! But now I see a different person before me. You have been transformed." I went on to say that this change troubled me, frightened me. He smiled and said that although He had not wished to be seen by me in the condition of the previous night, God had ordained otherwise. "It was the will of God," He said, "that you should have seen me in the way you did last night, so that no shadow of doubt should ever cross your mind; that you should now know with absolute certitude that I am that Manifestation of God Whose advent has been expected for a thousand years."

(beat)

I was dumbstruck. It was as if a thunderbolt had struck me. I fell at His feet, prostrating myself upon the floor. Immediately my beating heart became calm. Somehow I knew. I knew that this was the truth. I believed my Husband completely. 'Alí Muhammad was the Báb. I vowed to serve Him faithfully for the rest of my life.

(pause)

Some few weeks after this event, on the evening May 22, 1844, the Báb said to me: "Tonight we will entertain a dear guest." His entire being was ablaze as He spoke! I was most eager to hear more what He had to say and who this guest might be, but

He turned to me and said: It is better if you go and sleep." I did not wish to disobey Him, but when I retired to our room, I remained awake all night. Until morning, I could hear His blessed voice, conversing with His guest – Mulla Husayn, the Bábu'l-Báb...

[LIGHTS fade on KHADIJIH KHANUM. Lights RISE on NARRATOR ONE, who re-enters.]

NARRATOR ONE

In search of the Promised One, Mulla Husayn had just arrived outside the Gate of the city of Shiraz. Accompanied by his brother and nephew, his fellow pilgrims, he had set out from Karbila, Iraq for his native land of Persia. Their spiritual teacher, Siyyid Kazim, has said that the promised Qa'im was now manifest, and that all disciples should set out in search of Him.

(beat)

As the three future Letters of the Living entered Shiraz, Mulla Husayn bid his brother and nephew to proceed to the mosque and await him there. He expressed the hope that – God willing – he would join them in time for the evening prayer.

(beat)

A few hours before sunset, while walking outside the gate of the city of Shiraz, Mullá Husayn found his eyes drawn toward a Youth of radiant countenance. This luminous Youth wore a green turban, identifying Him as a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad. He embraced Mulla Husayn with tender affection, as though they had been lifelong friends.

(beat)

Allow the words of Mulla Husayn himself to tell you of his encounter that memorable evening.

[NARRATOR TWO enters. She stands at a podium at stage left, while NARRATOR ONE remains at podium, stage right.]

NARRATOR TWO

"The Youth who met me outside the gate of Shíráz overwhelmed me with expressions of affection and loving-kindness. He extended to me a warm invitation to visit His home, and there refresh myself after the fatigues of my journey. I prayed to be excused, pleading that my two companions had already arranged for my stay in that city, and were now awaiting my return. "Commit them to the care of God," was His reply; "He will surely protect and watch over them." Having spoken these words, He bade me follow Him. I was profoundly impressed by the gentle yet compelling manner in which that strange Youth

spoke to me. As I followed Him, His gait, the charm of His voice, the dignity of His bearing, served to enhance my first impressions of this unexpected meeting.

“We soon found ourselves standing at the gate of a house of modest appearance. He 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 Shíráz, 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? Might it not hasten the termination of a period of intense longing, of strenuous search, of increasing anxiety, which such a quest involves? As I entered the house and followed my Host to His chamber, a feeling of unutterable joy invaded my being.

NARRATOR ONE

“Immediately we were seated, He ordered a ewer of water to be brought, and bade me wash away from my hands and feet the stains of travel. I pleaded permission to retire from His presence and perform my ablutions in an adjoining room. He refused to grant my request, and proceeded to pour the water over my hands. He then gave me to drink of a refreshing beverage, after which He asked for the samovar and Himself prepared the tea which He offered me.

“Overwhelmed with His acts of extreme kindness, I arose to depart. “The time for evening prayer is approaching,” I ventured to observe. “I have promised my friends to join them at that hour in the Masjid-i-Īlkhání.” With extreme courtesy and calm He replied: “You must surely have made the hour of your return conditional upon the will and pleasure of God. It seems that His will has decreed otherwise. You need have no fear of having broken your pledge.” His dignity and self-assurance silenced me I renewed my ablutions and prepared for prayer. He, too, stood beside me and prayed. Whilst praying, I unburdened my soul, which was much oppressed, both by the mystery of this interview and the strain and stress of my search. I breathed this prayer: “I have striven with all my soul, O my God, and until now have failed to find Thy promised Messenger. I testify that Thy word faileth not, and that Thy promise is sure.”

(beat

That night, that memorable night, was the evening of May 22, 1844.

NARRATOR TWO

"It was about an hour after sunset when my youthful Host began to converse with me. "Whom, after Siyyid Kázim," He asked me, "do you regard as his successor and your leader?" "At the hour of his death," I replied, "our departed teacher insisiently exhorted us to forsake our homes, to scatter far and wide, in quest of the promised Beloved. I have, accordingly, journeyed to Persia, have arisen to accomplish his will, and am still engaged in my quest." "Has your teacher," He further enquired, "given you any detailed indications as to the distinguishing features of the promised One?" "Yes," I replied, "He is of a pure lineage, is of illustrious descent, and of the seed of Fátimih. As to His age, He is more than twenty and less than thirty. He is endowed with innate knowledge. He is of medium height, abstains from smoking, and is free from bodily deficiency." He paused for a while and then with vibrant voice declared: "Behold, all these signs are manifest in Me!"

NARRATOR ONE

When I first started upon my quest, I determined to regard the two following standards as those whereby I could ascertain the truth of whosoever might claim to be the promised Qá'im. The first was a treatise which I had myself composed, bearing upon the abstruse and hidden teachings propounded by Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kázim. Whoever seemed to me capable of unravelling the mysterious allusions made in that treatise, to him I would next submit my second request, and would ask him to reveal, without the least hesitation or reflection, a commentary on the Súrih of Joseph, in a style and language entirely different from the prevailing standards of the time. I had previously requested Siyyid Kázim, in private, to write a commentary on that same Súrih, which he refused, saying: "This is, verily, beyond me. He, that great One, who comes after me will, unasked, reveal it for you. That commentary will constitute one of the weightiest testimonies of His truth, and one of the clearest evidences of the loftiness of His position."

(beat)

"I was revolving these things in my mind, when my distinguished Host again remarked: "Observe attentively. Might not the Person intended by Siyyid Kázim be none other than I?" I thereupon felt impelled to present to Him a copy of the treatise which I had with me. "Will you," I asked Him, "read this book of mine and look at its pages with indulgent eyes? I pray you to overlook my weaknesses and failings." He graciously complied with my wish. He opened the book, glanced at certain passages, closed it, and began to address me. Within a few minutes He had, with characteristic vigour and charm, unravelled all its mysteries and resolved all its problems.

NARRATOR TWO

"Had you not been My guest," He afterwards observed, "your position would indeed have been a grievous one. The all-encompassing grace of God has saved you. It is for God to test His servants, and not for His servants to judge Him in accordance with their deficient standards. Were I to fail to resolve your perplexities, could the Reality that shines within Me be regarded as powerless, or My knowledge be accused as faulty? Nay, by the righteousness of God! it behoves, in this day, the peoples and nations of both the East and the West to hasten to this threshold, and here seek to obtain the reviving grace of the Merciful. Whoso hesitates will indeed be in grievous loss...

(beat)

"Now is the time to reveal the commentary on the Súrih of Joseph." 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. At last I reluctantly arose from my seat and begged leave to depart. He smilingly bade me be seated, and said: "If you leave in such a state, whoever sees you will assuredly say: 'This poor youth has lost his mind.'" At that moment the clock registered two hours and eleven minutes after sunset.

NARRATOR ONE

"This night," He declared, "this very hour will, in the days to come, be celebrated as one of the greatest and most significant of all festivals. Render thanks to God for having graciously assisted you to attain your heart's desire, and for having quaffed from the sealed wine of His utterance. 'Well is it with them that attain thereunto...'"

(beat)

"I sat spellbound by His utterance, oblivious of time and of those who awaited me. Suddenly the call of the muadhdhín, summoning the faithful to their morning prayer, awakened me from the state of ecstasy into which I seemed to have fallen. All the delights, all the ineffable glories, which the Almighty has recounted in His Book as the priceless possessions of the people of Paradise – these I seemed to be experiencing that night. Methinks I was in a place of which it could be truly said: "Therein no toil shall reach us, and therein no weariness shall touch us"; "No vain discourse shall they hear therein, nor any falsehood, but only the cry, 'Peace! Peace!'; "Their cry therein shall be, 'Glory be to

Thee, O God!' and their salutation therein, 'Peace!' And the close of their cry, 'Praise be to God, Lord of all creatures!'

NARRATOR TWO

"'This Revelation, so suddenly and impetuously thrust upon me, came as a thunderbolt which, for a time, seemed to have benumbed my faculties. I was blinded by its dazzling splendour and overwhelmed by its crushing force. Excitement, joy, awe, and wonder stirred the depths of my soul. Predominant among these emotions was a sense of gladness and strength which seemed to have transfigured me. How feeble and impotent, how dejected and timid, I had felt previously! Then I could neither write nor walk, so tremulous were my hands and feet. Now, however, the knowledge of His Revelation had galvanised my being. I felt possessed of such courage and power that were the world, all its peoples and its potentates, to rise against me, I would, alone and undaunted, withstand their onslaught. The universe seemed but a handful of dust in my grasp. I seemed to be the Voice of Gabriel personified, calling unto all mankind: "Awake, for lo! the morning Light has broken. Arise, for His Cause is made manifest. The portal of His grace is open wide; enter therein, O peoples of the world! For He who is your promised One is come!"

[LIGHTS on NARRATORS dim while J.B. Eckle's "While the City Sleeps" plays.]

[When MUSIC concludes, LIGHTS rise on KHADIJIH BAGUM. She comes forward and stands stage center.]

KHADIJIH BAGUM

Having sent forth Mullá 'Alí on his mission, the Báb summoned to His presence the remaining Letters of the Living, and to each separately He gave a special command and appointed a special task. He addressed to them these parting words...

[KHADIJIH BAGUM retreats upstage. LIGHTS fade on her and RISE on NARRATOR ONE and NARRATOR TWO.]

NARRATOR ONE

"O My beloved friends! You are the bearers of the name of God in this Day. You have been chosen as the repositories of His mystery. It behoves each one of you to manifest the attributes of God, and to exemplify by your deeds and words the signs of His righteousness, His power and glory. The very members of your body must bear witness to the loftiness of your purpose, the integrity of your life, the reality of your

faith, and the exalted character of your devotion. For verily I say, this is the Day spoken of by God in His Book

NARRATOR TWO

"Ponder the words of Jesus addressed to His disciples, as He sent them forth to propagate the Cause of God. In words such as these, He bade them arise and fulfil their mission: 'Ye are even as the fire which in the darkness of the night has been kindled upon the mountain-top. Let your light shine before the eyes of men. Such must be the purity of your character and the degree of your renunciation, that the people of the earth may through you recognize and be drawn closer to the heavenly Father who is the Source of purity and grace. For none has seen the Father who is in heaven. You who are His spiritual children must by your deeds exemplify His virtues, and witness to His glory. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? Such must be the degree of your detachment, that into whatever city you enter to proclaim and teach the Cause of God, you should in no wise expect either meat or reward from its people. Nay, when you depart out of that city, you should shake the dust from off your feet. As you have entered it pure and undefiled, so must you depart from that city."

NARRATOR ONE

"For verily I say, the heavenly Father is ever with you and keeps watch over you. If you be faithful to Him, He will assuredly deliver into your hands all the treasures of the earth, and will exalt you above all the rulers and kings of the world.' O My Letters! Verily I say, immensely exalted is this Day above the days of the Apostles of old. Nay, immeasurable is the difference! You are the witnesses of the Dawn of the promised Day of God. You are the partakers of the mystic chalice of His Revelation. Gird up the loins of endeavour... Purge your hearts of worldly desires, and let angelic virtues be your adorning. Strive that by your deeds you may bear witness to the truth of these words of God..."

NARRATOR TWO

"The days when idle worship was deemed sufficient are ended. The time is come when naught but the purest motive, supported by deeds of stainless purity, can ascend to the throne of the Most High and be acceptable unto Him..."

NARRATOR ONE

"You have been called to this station; you will attain to it, only if you arise to trample beneath your feet every earthly desire, and endeavour to become those 'honoured servants of His who speak not till He hath spoken, and who do His

bidding.' You are the first Letters that have been generated from the Primal Point, the first Springs that have welled out from the Source of this Revelation. Beseech the Lord your God to grant that no earthly entanglements, no worldly affections, no ephemeral pursuits, may tarnish the purity, or embitter the sweetness, of that grace which flows through you. I am preparing you for the advent of a mighty Day. Exert your utmost endeavour that, in the world to come, I, who am now instructing you, may, before the mercy-seat of God, rejoice in your deeds and glory in your achievements..."

NARRATOR TWO

"The secret of the Day that is to come is now concealed. It can neither be divulged nor estimated. The newly born babe of that Day excels the wisest and most venerable men of this time, and the lowliest and most unlearned of that period shall surpass in understanding the most erudite and accomplished divines of this age. Scatter throughout the length and breadth of this land, and, with steadfast feet and sanctified hearts, prepare the way for His coming. Heed not your weaknesses and frailty; fix your gaze upon the invincible power of the Lord, your God, the Almighty. Has He not, in past days, caused Abraham, in spite of His seeming helplessness, to triumph over the forces of Nimrod? Has He not enabled Moses, whose staff was His only companion, to vanquish Pharaoh and his hosts? Has He not established the ascendancy of Jesus, poor and lowly as He was in the eyes of men, over the combined forces of the Jewish people? Has He not subjected the barbarous and militant tribes of Arabia to the holy and transforming discipline of Muhammad, His Prophet? Arise in His name, put your trust wholly in Him, and be assured of ultimate victory."

[Sitar MUSIC. LIGHTS dim on NARRATOR ONE and NARRATOR TWO who exit stage. LIGHTS rise on KHADIJIH BAGUM as she comes downstage center. MUSIC concludes.]

KHADIJIH BAGUM
(reciting or CHANTING "Tablet
of Visitation")

"The praise which hath dawned from Thy most august Self, and the glory which hath shone forth from Thy most effulgent Beauty, rest upon Thee, O Thou Who art the Manifestation of Grandeur, and the King of Eternity, and the Lord of all who are in heaven and on earth! I testify that through Thee the sovereignty of God and His dominion, and the majesty of God and His grandeur, were revealed, and the Daystars of ancient splendor have shed their radiance in the heaven of Thine irrevocable decree, and the Beauty of the Unseen hath shone

forth above the horizon of creation. I testify, moreover, that with but a movement of Thy Pen Thine injunction "Be Thou" hath been enforced, and God's hidden Secret hath been divulged, and all created things have been called into being, and all the Revelations have been sent down.

I bear witness, moreover, that through Thy beauty the beauty of the Adored One hath been unveiled, and through Thy face the face of the Desired One hath shone forth, and that through a word from Thee Thou hast decided between all created things, caused them who are devoted to Thee to ascend unto the summit of glory, and the infidels to fall into the lowest abyss.

I bear witness that he who hath known Thee hath known God, and he who hath attained unto Thy presence hath attained unto the presence of God. Great, therefore, is the blessedness of him who hath believed in Thee, and in Thy signs, and hath humbled himself before Thy sovereignty, and hath been honored with meeting Thee, and hath attained the good pleasure of Thy will, and circled around Thee, and stood before Thy throne. Woe betide him that hath transgressed against Thee, and hath denied Thee, and repudiated Thy signs, and gainsaid Thy sovereignty, and risen up against Thee, and waxed proud before Thy face, and hath disputed Thy testimonies, and fled from Thy rule and Thy dominion, and been numbered with the infidels whose names have been inscribed by the fingers of Thy behest upon Thy holy Tablets.

Waft, then, unto me, O my God and my Beloved, from the right hand of Thy mercy and Thy loving-kindness, the holy breaths of Thy favors, that they may draw me away from myself and from the world unto the courts of Thy nearness and Thy presence. Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou, truly, hast been supreme over all things.

The remembrance of God and His praise, and the glory of God and His splendor, rest upon Thee, O Thou Who art His Beauty! I bear witness that the eye of creation hath never gazed upon one wronged like Thee. Thou wast immersed all the days of Thy life beneath an ocean of tribulations. At one time Thou wast in chains and fetters; at another Thou wast threatened by the sword of Thine enemies. Yet, despite all this, Thou didst enjoin upon all men to observe what had been prescribed unto Thee by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

May my spirit be a sacrifice to the wrongs Thou didst suffer, and my soul be a ransom for the adversities Thou didst sustain. I beseech God, by Thee and by them whose faces have been illumined with the splendors of the light of Thy countenance, and who, for love of Thee, have observed all whereunto they were bidden, to remove the veils that have come in between Thee and Thy creatures, and to supply me with the good of this world and the world to come. Thou art, in

truth, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.

Bless Thou, O Lord my God, the Divine Lote-Tree and its leaves, and its boughs, and its branches, and its stems, and its offshoots, as long as Thy most excellent titles will endure and Thy most august attributes will last. Protect it, then, from the mischief of the aggressor and the hosts of tyranny. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. Bless Thou, also, O Lord my God, Thy servants and Thy handmaidens who have attained unto Thee. Thou, truly, art the All-Bountiful, Whose grace is infinite. No God is there save Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

THE END

* to shorten the performance, as well as the speaking part of Khadijih Bagum, the following may replace pages 2 and 3

[LIGHTS rise on KHADIJIH BAGUM,
still seated.]

According to Nabil: "No one except Tahirih, among the women of her generation, surpassed her in the spontaneous character of her devotion nor excelled the fervor of her faith."

(beat)

As a girl, Khadijih Bagum had dreamed that one day she would marry the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. After marrying the Blessed Báb she could see by His tranquility, His behavior, and His dignity that He was a great person. But she never imagined that He was the Promised One, the Qa'im... As a young wife, when she became pregnant, she had a difficult pregnancy. But the Báb revealed a special prayer and their child was born, a son they named Ahmad. Unfortunately Ahmad died in infancy.

[CHANTED prayer, "O God, My God, My
Beloved, My Heart's Desire" RISES again.]

The prayer we are listening to now, a prayer of radiant acquiescence, is the prayer the Báb revealed after our only child's death.

[CHANTING fades.]

SOURCES

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