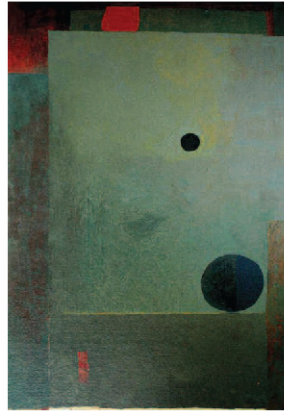


The following story is from the book

The Central Figures
The Báb
Volume Two



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Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education • Stories
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States


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The Sound of Water


Written by Fariborz Sahba
Illustrated by Barbara Trauger

Each day the number of the Báb's followers increased. They came to Shíráz from everywhere. Why did they devote themselves to Him? Why did they leave their homes and towns? Maybe the breeze took the perfume of the flowers of Shíráz to them. Maybe an angel told them the story of the new Manifestation. They knew that they were to suffer. They knew that they would soon risk their lives following this path. So why did they come?

They had waited years for the Promised Day, and now they were hearing heavenly songs from Shíráz. They heard the murmuring sound of streams and springs coming from Shíráz. This was the same sound which had made the vicious Arabs of the deserts to follow Muḥammad and to walk in the path of God; the sound which had attracted people to Muḥammad's house to sit and listen to prayers from the Qur'án, the Holy Book. The same sound was now coming from Shíráz. People were leaving their homes to go to Shíráz.

In Shíráz tumult and unrest were increasing. People who were ignorant of the Báb's Message thought the new Manifestation was in opposition to Islám. The Muslim priests felt their power and position were in danger, so they went among the people, turning them against the Báb and His followers. Things got so bad that the Báb ordered the believers to leave Shíráz. But still the fame of the new Faith grew, and every day a number of the most respected religious scholars became followers of the Báb.

The Báb knew that the situation was getting even worse. So He prepared for the future. He gave His house and His belongings to His mother and wife. He comforted His wife and told her to be



patient and to put her trust in God. He told her that He was going to sacrifice His life in God's name, and that she was to remember that whatever happened was God's plan.

The Governor of Shíráz was always trying to find ways to harm the Báb. He saw the number of Bábís increasing and was jealous of the Báb's fame. One night it was reported to him that a large group had gathered in the Báb's house. So he ordered his sheriff to take his men, break into the gathering, and arrest them all. He swore he would kill the Báb and His followers, so that never again would the Báb's name be mentioned in his city.

The sheriff carried out the orders of the governor and arrested the Báb. On the way to the governor's mansion they passed the marketplace. People were running everywhere screaming. A great tragedy had occurred. A plague of cholera had struck during the night and had killed nearly a hundred people. Everyone was fleeing. Even the governor had left the city. The sheriff was terrified, but because he was a loyal servant, he took the Báb to his house to wait for the governor's orders. They reached his house to find the sheriff's only son in bed, dying from the horrible disease. The man, seeing this, threw himself at the Báb's feet, begging Him to forgive him and save his son's life. Knowing that the sheriff was truly sorry for his actions, the Báb pardoned the father and saved the life of the son.

The sheriff instantly wrote a letter to the governor, warning him of the Báb's power and telling him to stop his cruel behavior. Because of this letter the governor set the Báb free. However, a short time later, the sháh learned of the governor's evil deeds and deprived him of his position. He died a poor and miserable man.

The time had now come for the Báb to depart. So leaving His wife and mother in His uncle's care, He left Shíráz for Işfáhán where He continued to proclaim His Message. Like refreshing spring water, this Message spread throughout Persia, and every day the number of the Báb's followers increased. ★