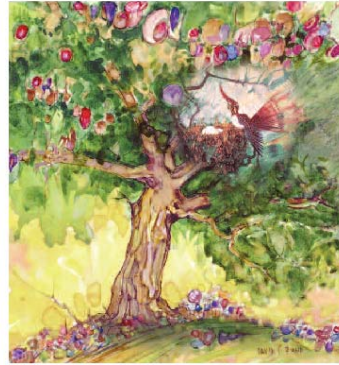


The following story is from the book

The Central Figures

Bahá'u'lláh

Volume One



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A photograph of a stone fortification wall overlooking the ocean. The wall is made of reddish-brown stone blocks and has a crenelated top. The ocean is blue with white waves crashing against the base of the wall. The sky is overcast and grey.

A Prayer for Mírzá Ja'far

*Written by Gail Radley
Photography by Pepper Oldziej*

The August sun burned down on the stone walls of 'Akká as the sailboat rocked roughly into the harbor. The Bahá'ís had come a long way. They were hot, hungry, and thirsty. But Mírzá Ja'far was happy—he was with Bahá'u'lláh!

The townspeople yelled at them from the streets, from windows and doorways, as they passed. Mírzá Ja'far had walked through hateful mobs before. He had been hungry, tired, and hot before. These things did not matter. He was happy.

The guards at the mighty stone prison gave them little to eat and drink. But Mírzá Ja'far thanked God. His dark, narrow cell seemed like a sweet-smelling rose garden with Bahá'u'lláh close by.

Then, one day, Mírzá Ja'far fell sick. How could it be? They had crossed deserts and climbed mountains together. Eager always to help, Mírzá Ja'far never complained, and he never seemed to need rest. He was the one who went with 'Abdu'l-Bahá to find supplies while others rested.



Now Mírzá Ja'far grew more and more sick. The doctor turned away. He knew of nothing that would help his patient. Mírzá Ja'far drew in his last breath.

Bahá'u'lláh's secretary rushed to tell Bahá'u'lláh that their beloved Mírzá Ja'far was dead.

"Chant the prayer . . . O Thou, the Healer," said Bahá'u'lláh, "and Mírzá Ja'far will come alive."

Quickly, the Bahá'ís obeyed. Soon Mírzá Ja'far's lifeless body grew warm. Next he began to move. Then he sat up, laughing and joking with his friends.

"Praise be to God!" Mírzá Ja'far cried. He would live to serve Bahá'u'lláh for a long time to come! ★

Retold from a story by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 156–58