

The Station and Claims of the Bab

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On the evening of the 23rd of May, 1844, in a modest house in Shiraz, Persia, a Muslim cleric met with a Merchant of that city. The cleric, Mulla Husayn Bushrui, was a member of the Shaykhi sect established by Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i and led by Sayyid Kazim-i-Rashti. Members of the Shaykhi sect believed in the imminent appearance the Promised Qá'im (He Who Ariseth) of Islam. Upon Sayyid Kazim's passing, the members dispersed in search of this Promised Qá'im.

Mulla Husayn's account of that extraordinary meeting can be found in chapter 3 of "The Dawnbreakers." Mulla Husayn had expected that the Promised Qá'im would reveal a commentary on a chapter of the Qur'an known as the Surih of Joseph. Mulla Husayn describes what happened:

"He took up His pen, and with incredible rapidity revealed the entire Surih of Mulk, the first chapter of His commentary on the Surih 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 Surih of Mulk was finished. I sat enraptured by the magic of His voice and the sweeping force of His revelation." [1]

That Merchant was Sayyid Ali Muhammad-Shirazi, known as The Báb, and that Surih of Mulk is the first chapter of a work known as the Qayyumu'l-Asma'. The Qayyumu'l-Asma' is unique among religious literature of the day. It follows the structure of the Qur'an itself, and many chapters begin with disconnected letters in as do chapters in the Qur'an. These features effectively signal that the Author is claiming a station equivalent to that of Muhammad Himself. [2]

The Qayyumu'l-Asma' hints at the Báb's station and claim, but He makes his claim explicit in a number of ways. One notable case is the incident of the Báb's examination by notable divines in Tabriz. The trial occurred in July of 1848. As is often the case, accounts of that event differ in a number of details, but they all agree on what the Báb had to say about His claims:

"I am, I am, I am, the promised One! I am the One whose name you have for a thousand years invoked, at whose mention you have risen, whose advent you have longed to witness, and the hour of whose Revelation you have prayed God to hasten. Verily I say, it is incumbent upon the peoples of both the East and the West to obey My word and to pledge allegiance to My person." [3]

In a Tablet addressed to Muhammad Shah, The Báb exclaims:

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"THE substance wherewith God hath created Me is not the clay out of which others have been formed. He hath conferred upon Me that which the worldly-wise can never comprehend, nor the faithful discover ... I am one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God...

"All the keys of heaven God hath chosen to place on My right hand, and all the keys of hell on My left...

"I am the Primal Point from which have been generated all created things. I am the Countenance of God Whose splendour can never be obscured, the Light of God Whose radiance can never fade. Whoso recognizeth Me, assurance and all good are in store for him, and whoso faileth to recognize Me, infernal fire and all evil await him..."[4]

Bahá'u'lláh adds His own testimony:

"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...

"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. A Revelation, of which the Prophets of God, His saints and chosen ones, have either not been informed, or which, in pursuance of God's inscrutable Decree, they have not disclosed..."[5]

In that same passage, Bahá'u'lláh refers to an Islamic tradition regarding the Promised Qá'im, which says that all knowledge is twenty and seven letters of which only the first two had been revealed. The Promised Qá'im would reveal the remaining twenty five letters of knowledge.

These are but a few passages of the many in the Baha'i Writings that unequivocally establish that the Báb claimed to be, and is recognized by Baha'is as, the Divinely ordained forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh and a full Manifestation of God on par with Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and others.

Notes:

[1] "The Dawnbreakers: Nabil's Narrative," p 61 [1970 edition] <http://bahai-library.com/books/dawnbreakers/chapters/3.html...>

[2] See: http://bahai-library.com/bab_qayyum_asma

[3] "The Dawnbreakers", pp 315-6 [1970 edition] <http://bahai-library.com/boo.../dawnbreakers/chapters/18.html...>

[4] "Selections from the Writings of The Báb", pp 11-2 <http://bahai-library.com/writings/bab/swb/3/sec-5.html>

[5] "The Kitab-i-Iqan", pp 243-4 http://bahai-library.com/bahaullah_kitab_iqan