

## **Bahá'i Holy Day in July: The Martyrdom of the Báb (KS3 & KS4)**

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The Bahá'i year, in common with most religions, has certain days which are regarded as Holy days, commemorated or celebrated by the Bahá'i community.

One of these special days falls in July each year, on either 9th or 10th depending on the solstice. On this day Bahá'is commemorate the Martyrdom of The Báb, (which means "the Gate" in Arabic), an event so shocking that were it not independently documented it would seem more legend than true story.

The Báb is regarded by Bahá'is as both a Messenger of God and the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh. Born in Shiraz, Persia, in 1819, His given name was Siyyid 'Ali- Muhammad. He was a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, and was known for His gentle nature, keen perception and wisdom even from a very young age. In 1844 He declared His mission to begin the spiritual and moral renewal of the peoples of the world, a process which would see the emancipation of women, and unite the peoples of the world. He also taught that another Messenger of God, the fulfilment of the world's great religions, was soon to appear.

The Báb's teachings, His call for a return to moral rectitude, His claim that He was a divinely inspired 'Educator', and the following which grew around Him, were huge challenges for the clerics and authorities of the time. Eventually, in 1850, a decree was made for His execution. The Báb was arrested and sentenced to death by firing squad. The following account is from Hassan Balyuzi's book, *The Báb: The Herald of the Day of Days*[1]:

*Sam Khan (Commander of the firing squad) approached the Bab: 'I profess the Christian Faith and entertain no ill will against you. If your Cause be the Cause of truth, enable me to free myself from the obligation to shed your blood.' To this the Báb replied: 'Follow your instructions, and if your intention be sincere, the Almighty is surely able to relieve you from your perplexity.'*

*The Báb and His disciple were suspended by ropes from a nail in the wall, the head of Mirza Muhammad-'Ali, Anis, resting on the breast of the Báb. Seven hundred and fifty soldiers were positioned in three files. Roofs of the buildings around teemed with spectators.*

*Each row of soldiers fired in turn. The smoke from so many rifles clouded the scene. When it lifted the Báb was not there. Only His disciple could be seen, standing under the nail in the wall, smiling and unconcerned. Bullets had only severed the ropes with which they were suspended. Cries rang out from the onlookers: 'The Siyyid-i-Báb has gone from our sight!'*

*A frantic search followed. The Báb was found, sitting in the same room where He had been lodged the night before, in conversation with His amanuensis. That conversation had been interrupted earlier in the day. Now it was finished and He told the farrash-bashi to carry out his duty. But the farrash-bashi was terror-stricken and ran away, nor did he ever return to his post. Sam Khan, for his part, told his superiors that he had carried*

*out the task given to him; he would not attempt it a second time. So Aqa Jan Khan-i-Khamsih and his Nasiri regiment replaced the Armenians, and the Báb and His disciple were suspended once again at the same spot. The Nasiri regiment fired. The bodies of the Báb and His disciple were shattered, and their flesh was united.*

Further accounts exist from contemporary foreign journalists and officials who witnessed or were told of the event, including one from Sir Justin Shiel, Queen Victoria's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Tehran to Lord Palmerston, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, July 22, 1850.

The remains of the Báb and Anís were retrieved at night by the Báb's friends and eventually interred on Mount Carmel in Israel, a place of pilgrimage for Bahá'ís across the world today.

1 Balyuzi, H.M. (1973). *The Báb: The Herald of the Day of Days*. Oxford, UK: George Ronald. pp. 154–161. ISBN 0853980489.

**Further reading:**

Nabíl-i-Zarandí (1932). Shoghi Effendi (Translator), ed. *The Dawn-Breakers: Nabíl's Narrative* (Hardcover ed.). Wilmette, Illinois, USA: Bahá'í Publishing Trust. ISBN 0900125225.

**See also:**

[https://bahaikipedia.org/Martyrdom\\_of\\_the\\_Báb](https://bahaikipedia.org/Martyrdom_of_the_Báb)

This resource was written by Debbie Tibbey, one of RE:ONLINE's Email a Believer team. If your class would like to ask a Baha'í representative any questions about their beliefs, or to see answers to previously asked questions please visit <http://pof.reonline.org.uk/people-of-faith/bahai/>