In the Presence of the Blessed Beauty

In Karbila

Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunúzí had been promised by the Bab that he would meet “Him whom God shall make manifest”. This promise was fulfilled in 1851. Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunúzí recounts:

Sixteen lunar months, less twenty and two days, had elapsed since the day of the martyrdom of the Bab, when, while I was passing by the gate of the inner courtyard of the shrine of the Imam Husayn [in Karbila], my eyes, for the first time, fell upon Baha’u’llah.

What shall I recount regarding the countenance, which I beheld! The beauty of that face, those exquisite features which no pen or brush dare describe, His penetrating glance, His kindly face, the majesty of His bearing, the sweetness of His smile, the luxuriance of His jet-black flowing locks, left an indelible impression upon my soul. I was then an old man, bowed with age. How lovingly He advanced towards me! He took me by the hand and, in a tone which at once betrayed power and beauty, addressed me in these words:

‘This very day I have purposed to make you known as a Babi throughout Karbila.’ Still holding my hand in His, He continued to converse with me. He walked with me all along the market-street, and in the end He said: ‘Praise be to God that you have remained in Karbila, and have beheld with your own eyes the countenance of the promised Husayn.’

I recalled instantly the promise which had been given me by the Bab. His words, which I had regarded as referring to a remote future, I had not shared with anyone. These words of Baha’u’llah moved me to the depths of my being. I felt impelled to proclaim to a heedless people, at that very moment and with all my soul and power, the advent of the promised Husayn. He bade me, however, repress my feelings and conceal my emotions.

‘Not yet’, He breathed into my ears; ‘the appointed Hour is approaching. It has not yet struck. Rest assured and be patient.’ From that moment all my sorrows vanished. My soul was flooded with joy.”
Hired Assassin

During Bahá’u’lláh’s stay in Baghdad, Shaykh Abdu-l-Husayn-i-Tihrani [an implacable enemy of Bahá’u’lláh who had been commissioned to the Shah to supervise repairs to the holy shrines] incited various persons to attempt His murder. One of these was a Turk named Rida, who stood waiting one day for the Blessed Beauty, weapon in hand. But the instance his eyes fell upon Bahá’u’lláh, he was confounded, his pistol dropped from his hand and he was unable to move. “Return his gun to him, and show him the way to his home,’ said Bahá’u’lláh to His brother, Aqay-i-Kalim. ‘It seems he has lost his way.’ (Furutan, Stories of Bahá’u’lláh, nr 34)

With an Example

The following incident was related to Nabil by Aqay-i-Kalim, the faithful brother of Bahá’u’lláh:

At the instigation of a few highly-prejudiced opponents of Bahá’u’lláh, a large group of Kurds of Shi’ih belief went to His house in Baghdad one night with the purpose of stirring up mischief. Upon entering the courtyard, and without uttering a word, they stood near the wall, ready at a moment’s notice to unsheathe their swords.

The Blessed Beauty addressed one of them, asking: ‘In your estimation, where those who surrounded the Prince of Martyrs (The Imam Husayn) in the desert of Karbila, intending to slay him and his followers, believers in God and in His Messenger?’ ‘It is evident’, came the reply, ‘that they were unbelievers, for had they been Muslims and believers in God and the Prophet, they would not have put to death the kindred of the Prophet and His followers, and would not have led into captivity the family of the Prophet of God.’

Thereupon Bahá’u’lláh invited them to enter His house and be seated, had refreshments served, and undertook to explain in detail the tragic story of the Imam Husayn and his martyrdom. One by one the Kurds seated themselves, and the Ancient Beauty related to them the history of the opposition of Yazid, who
had succeeded his father as the second Umayyad Caliph. He recalled to them the names of those who commanded the 4000-strong army sent against Husayn with only two hundred members of his family and devoted followers, and the startling change of the heart of the cavalry commander, Hurr, who crossed over to Husayn’s side.

‘And so,’ Bahá’u’lláh concluded, ‘with the utmost cruelty they martyred the Imam Husayn, and then proclaimed: “Verily, Husayn trespassed against the religion of his grandfather, and was killed by the sword of his grandfather.”’

Deeply moved, the Kurds were weeping as they arose from their seats and kissed the robe of Bahá’u’lláh. ‘We can be likened to Hurr,’ they asserted, ‘who at first was intent upon killing the Prince of Martyrs, but repented and became the first to yield up his life in his path.’ With the utmost sincerity and humility, they asked Bahá’u’lláh’s permission to take their leave. (Furutan, Stories of Bahá’u’lláh, nr 29)

**Arrival of the Blessed Beauty to Akka**

*When Bahaullah was exiled to the Prison City of Akka, a large crowd had gathered to see the exiles and jeer at them. Some of those in the crowd recognized the Greatness of the Blessed Beauty.*

These, as they gazed upon the countenance of Baha'u'llah, were struck by His majesty and witnessed a glory they had never seen before. Among them was a certain Khalil Ahmad 'Abdu, a venerable old man who used to say to the inhabitants of 'Akka that he could see in the face of Baha'u'llah signs of greatness and of majesty and truthfulness. He often said that the people of 'Akka should rejoice and be thankful to God for having ennobled their homeland by the footsteps of this great Personage.

Another man in the crowd watching the arrival of the exiles was known as 'Abdu'llah Tuzih. He saw the radiance, the power, and the glory of Baha'u'llah's countenance and was drawn to Him. He later became a believer and his daughter (who was born on the same day that Baha'u'llah arrived in 'Akka) was some years later joined in wedlock with Husayn-i-Ashchi, a cook in Baha'u'llah's household and one of His devoted servants.
In His Presence

Another believer tells the following about being in the Presence of the Blessed Beauty:

What happened in my soul and heart while I was with Him was an inner and mysterious experience beyond the scope of my words to describe. One of the mullas of Isfahan once asked me, "What did you see when you were in His presence?"

I said, "I had expected to see all sorts of miracles. I also had several questions that I wanted to ask. But when I attained His presence all this became unimportant. I had found the pure water which quenches thirst and gives true life."

The mulla asked, "What did you see?"

"I saw the form of a human being," I replied. "But His every step and movement was like a miracle to me. I saw "Him" and my eyes could take in nothing else, for He is different from all others in His bearing and in His manner. He is unique by Himself. No one in the world can ever be compared to Him. He is the One Whom the Qur'an has declared to have neither father nor son."

"But Baha'u'llah's father was well known!" the man replied. And his son, 'Abbas Effendi, is renowned for his perfections!"

"I saw neither father nor son," was my response. "Baha'u'llah alone is the Source of God's Revelation. He is the One Who 'begetteth not, nor is He begotten.' If you stand before a mirror and speak your name, your image will do likewise, but it is an illusion."

Celebrating Ridvan

One day, the Blessed Beauty was on His way to attend Ridvan Celebration at His brother's place (Mirza Musa) who lived in Akka.

"A new pasha had arrived in 'Akka as the head of the Custom House. On that day he was sitting in a coffeehouse with many of his officers and other dignitaries of the town. Baha'u'llah was on His way to His brother's house. As He passed the coffeehouse, the pasha and all his retinue stood up and bowed before Him. As He passed by, He bestowed His loving benediction upon them. Then the
pasha, bewildered, approached his friends and asked, "Is this the Holy Spirit or the King of Kings? Who is He?"

"He is the father of 'Abbas Effendi," was the unanimous reply.

In the Words of an Early Believer

Outwardly He was a Prisoner, condemned and wronged, but in reality He was the Sun of Glory, the Manifestation of grandeur and majesty, the King of the Kingdom of poise and dignity. Although He showed much compassion and loving-kindness, and approached anyone who came to His presence with tender care and humbleness, and often used to make humourous remarks to put them at ease, yet in spite of these, no one, whether faithful or disbelieving, learned or unlettered, wise or foolish, was able to utter ten words in His presence in the usual everyday manner. Indeed, many would find themselves to be tremulous with an impediment in their speech.

Some people asked permission to attain His presence for the sole purpose of conducting arguments and engaging in controversies. As a favour on His part, and in order to fulfil the testimony and to declare conclusively the proofs, He gave these permission to enter the court of His majesty and glory. As they entered the room, heard His voice welcoming them in, and gazed at His countenance beaming with the light of grandeur, they could not help but prostrate themselves at His door. They would then enter and sit down. When He showed them where to sit, they would find themselves unable to utter a word or put forward their questions. When they left they would bow involuntarily. Some would be transformed through the influence of meeting Him and would leave with the utmost sincerity and devotion, some would depart as admirers, while others would leave His presence, ignorant and heedless, attributing their experience to pure sorcery.

When a believer describes what he has experienced in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh his impressions may be interpreted as being formed through his attitude of self-effacement and a feeling of utter nothingness in relation to Him. But to what can it be attributed when one enters into His presence as an antagonist and leaves as a believer, or comes in as an enemy but goes out as a friend, or comes to raise controversial arguments, but departs without saying anything and, due to willful blindness, attributing this to magic? To be brief, the
bounties which were vouchsafed to a person as a result of attaining His presence were indescribable and unknowable. The proof of the sun is the sun itself.

In the Mansion of Bahji

Though I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the corner where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure... The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow... No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!

A mild dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: "Praise be to God that thou hast attained!...Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile...We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment...That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled -- what harm is there in this?...Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most great Peace' shall come...Do not you in Europe need this also? Is this not what Christ foretold?...Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind...These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family...Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind...