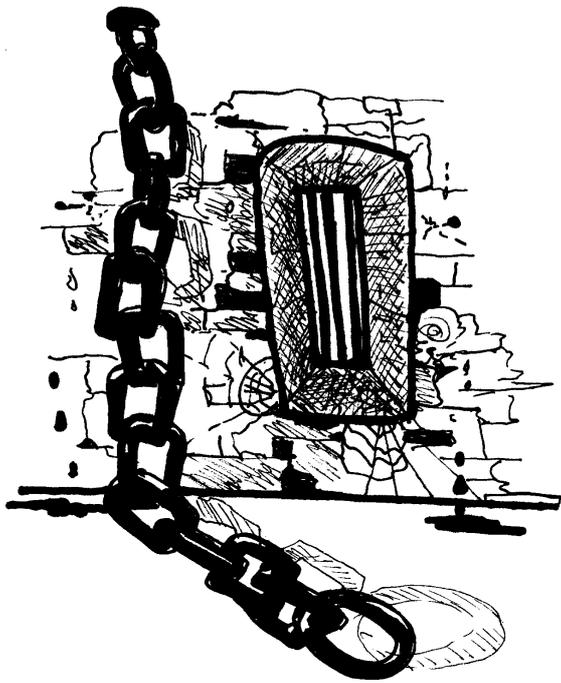


THE SACRIFICE OF BAHA'U'LLAH



Bahá'u'lláh spent almost the whole of His adult life in prison, or in foreign lands where He was sent to live in terrible conditions. Often He was cruelly tortured and much of the time He had to go hungry and thirsty. Sometimes He was cold because He did not have enough clothes or blankets at night. Many of the places where He had to stay were dirty and He was in danger of

illness and disease. Sometimes He had to spend long months with a crushingly heavy chain around His neck.

Like Jesus, Bahá'u'lláh could have escaped from these conditions. Whenever He wanted He could have walked straight out of the prison, because the guards loved Him so much they would have let Him go. But although His life of imprisonment was so hard and unpleasant, Bahá'u'lláh stayed because He knew this was the Will of God. It was a great sacrifice.

Many of Bahá'u'lláh's family and friends stayed with Him in these terrible conditions. They loved Him so much that they would rather be with Him in prison than apart from Him in freedom and comfort. Just being with Him was being in Paradise.

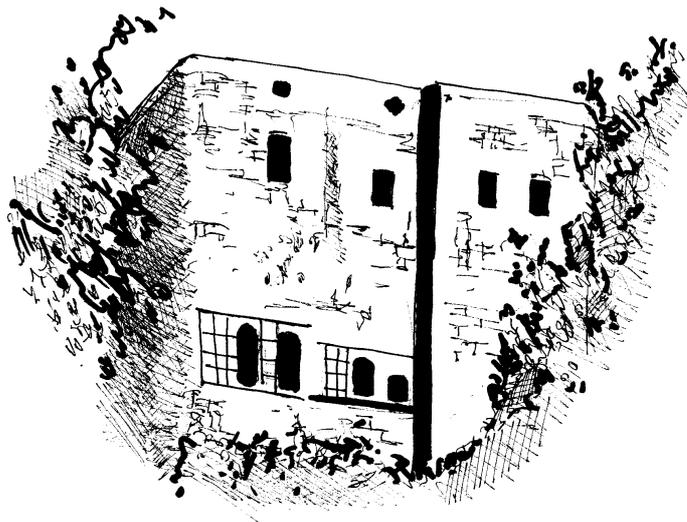


Mírzá Mihdí, The Purest Branch

One of these was His younger son, Mirzá Mihdí. Everyone loved Mirzá Mihdí who had grown into a pure, gentle young man, and who had suffered greatly from being so long in prison. One evening he was walking on the roof of the building where the family was living. The roof was flat and Mirzá Mihdí often went there to pray and meditate in the quietness. One day he was walking up and down, concentrating completely on a beautiful poem that Bahá'u'lláh had written, when he accidentally trod on an open window in the roof and fell through, landing awkwardly on a crate below the window. He was very badly injured and in great pain. Bahá'u'lláh came to him and saw that he was dying. Bahá'u'lláh had the power of healing. He had the ability to perform a miracle and make His beloved son well and healthy again. Mirzá Mihdí knew this, but begged Bahá'u'lláh, instead, to accept his life as a sacrifice.

For a long time believers had been making long and dangerous journeys to visit Bahá'u'lláh in prison, but had not been allowed to see Him. Mirzá Mihdí told Bahá'u'lláh that he wished to give his life that the gates of the prison would be opened and the believers be allowed to meet their Lord.

Although He could have chosen to heal His son, Bahá'u'lláh decided to give his life as a sacrifice. Later, in a prayer, He spoke to God saying, "I have, O my Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given me, that Thy servants may be quickened (brought to life) and all that dwell on earth be united."



The prison where Mirzá Mihdí died.

Shoghi Effendi, the great grandson of Bahá'u'lláh and Guardian of the Faith, tells us that the sacrifice of Bahá'u'lláh's son, Mirzá Mihdí, should be seen as the fulfilment of Abraham's intended sacrifice of His son, Isaac, thousands of years before.