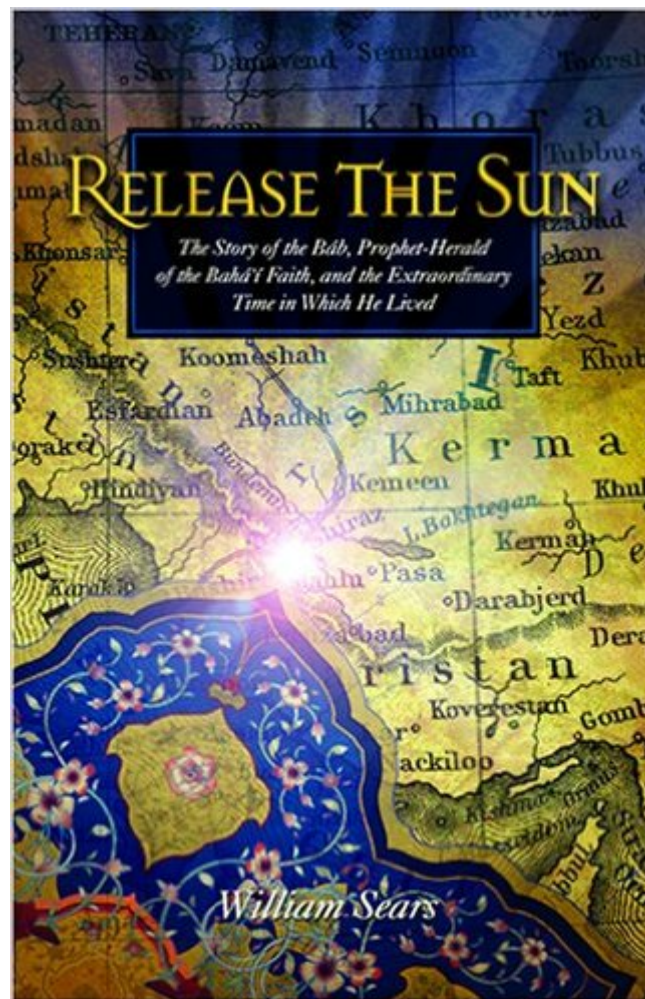


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Release The Sun: The Story Of The Bab, Prophet-Herald Of The Baha'i Faith, And The Extraordinary Time In Which He Lived



Synopsis

Millennial fervor gripped many people around the world during the first half of the nineteenth century. While Christians expected the return of Christ, a wave of expectation swept through Islam that the Lord of the Age would appear. Both Christians and Muslims believed that a new spiritual age was about to begin. In Persia, this messianic expectation reached a dramatic climax on May 23, 1844, when a twenty-five-year-old merchant from Shiraz--the Báb--announced that He was the bearer of a long-promised Divine Revelation destined to transform the spiritual life of the human race. Against a backdrop of wide-scale moral decay in Persian society, the Báb's declaration aroused hope and excitement among all classes. He quickly attracted thousands of followers. Why He did so, and why the events of over 150 years ago - including the Báb's execution and the massacre of some 20,000 of His followers - have relevance today, is one of the great and dramatic untold stories of our time.

Book Information

Paperback: 285 pages

Publisher: Bahai Publishing (May 1, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1931847096

ISBN-13: 978-1931847094

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 1 x 8.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 15 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviewsÂ (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #763,660 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #84 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Baha'i #4937 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Religious

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At barely thirty, he seemed so young to die. He appeared helpless and gentle, yet confident; a look of contentment on his face as he gazed calmly into the hostile barrels of 750 cocked rifles in the public square in Tabriz, Persia on July 9, 1850. In 1844 there had been great excitement over the return of the Messiah, the promised Christ and on May 23, "The Bab proclaimed that He was the One foretold in all the holy Books of the past. He said that he had come to usher in a new era, a fresh springtime in the hearts of men. His name, the Bab, meant the door or gate. His teaching, he said, was to open the door or the gate to a new age of unity in which men would recognize one God

and worship in one religion - the same religion which all of God's prophets had taught from the beginning of time. It would be an age in which all men would live as brothers."18 people accepted the Bab's teachings. One of these was Tahirih, the Pure, who saw Him in a vision, became a staunch believer, a courageous teacher and finally a martyr. Another, Mullah Sadiq, was so advanced in age that he knew he could not survive the thousand lashes administered for embracing the Faith but although he found the first seven strokes severely painful, he was filled with joy. Suffering, pain and persecution are only unbearable to those who have no purpose in life and no hope for the future. For the love of God pain becomes a pleasure and suffering a means of being closer to God. The Bab traveled to Mecca, but none would listen to his message because they were indifferent, antagonistic or afraid. The governor sent a mounted guard to bring the Bab in chains to Shiraz, believing this would dampen people's enthusiasm for the cause.

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