

WILL

for the Feast of Mashiyyat

by

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[Music. The song “ Yá Bahá’
Madadi,” a plea for divine
assistance, from the CD Naghmeha.]

[Twenty seconds into the melody,
the NARRATOR speaks.]

NARRATOR

“O friends! Prefer not your will to Mine, never desire that
which I have not desired for you...”¹

[After a long pause an ACTRESS
in long flowing garments – or
otherwise elegantly dressed –
enters carrying aloft a lit candle.
Her pace is procession-like. She
winds back and forth across the
stage, left to right to left, all
the while advancing downstage. Like
a martyr, her eyes look upward.]

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

“The candle of thine heart is lighted by the hand of My
power, quench it not with the contrary winds of self and
passion...”²

[The ACTRESS holding the candle
continues her procession toward
down center. Pause. The NARRATOR
repeats the first quote (1). Pause.
The NARRATOR repeats the second
quote (2). By this time the ACTRESS
has reached downstage center and
delicately – with reverence and
dignity – set the candle upon the
ground. She pauses, and then backs
away from the lit candle, as a
believer might exit a holy shrine.
Meanwhile, the NARRATOR reads.]

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

"I implore Thee, O my Lord, by Thy name the splendors of which have encompassed the earth and the heavens, to enable me so to surrender my will to what Thou hast decreed in Thy Tablets, that I may cease to discover within me any desire except what Thou didst desire through the power of Thy sovereignty, and any will save what Thou didst destine for me by Thy will."³

[Music concludes. The NARRATOR recedes upstage, and an ACTOR enters. The ACTOR is also dressed semi-formally. He carries a glass basin of water in both hands. He directly approached the lit candle. As he does so, NARRATOR speaks.]

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

"My will and the will of another other than Me, even as fire and water, cannot dwell together in one heart."⁴

[The ACTOR sets the glass basin down beside the lit candle. Slowly he dips his fingers into the water, and then sprinkles drops at the candle flame. Pause.]

[The NARRATOR repeats the quote (3). The ACTOR then dips his fingers into the basin and with wet thumb and forefinger squeezes the wick and extinguishes the flame.]

[He turns his back on the doused candle and exits upstage. The NARRATOR wanders downstage and reads from a Holy Book.]

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

"The will of the most resolute of men is as nothing when compared with the compelling evidences of Thy will, and the determination of the most inflexible among Thy creatures is dissipated before the manifold revelations of Thy purpose."⁵

[A SECOND NARRATOR enters. After a pause, s/he reads from another Holy Book.]

SECOND NARRATOR

"God Himself does not compel the soul to become spiritual. The exercise of the free human will is necessary."⁶

[Dramatic pause. Tension.]

[Then, as the strains of "On Earth As It Is in Heaven," from the CD soundtrack of the movie *The Mission* begins to play, the ACTOR re-enters. He is bearing a long wax taper that is lit. He enters majestically to the majestic music and approaches the extinguished candle.]

[He lights the candle just as the percussion music starts, a split second before the oboe starts. Only one minute has elapsed since his entrance. The ACTOR blows out the wax taper and stands in front of the candle. Thirty to 60 seconds more of music plays.]

[Music fades. When music becomes barely perceptible background music, the ACTOR intones a prayer. No music.]

ACTOR

"O Lord, make a me a hollow reed from which the pith of my self hath been blown, that I might be a clear channel through which Thy love may flow unto others."

[Pause.]

[The ACTRESS enters to the song "Falls" from *The Mission* soundtrack. Her steps are synchronized to accompany each guitar strumming. It is a stealthy approach, as if she is sneaking up on the ACTOR downstage.]

[She conceals something behind her back. Just as the oboe in the song sounds, she presents the ACTOR with a a wooden wind instrument.]

[With Native American-like gestures – such as a fist from the heart toward the other person, touching the flute to the heart before presenting it, accepting it, etc. – the exchange is made in slow choreographed movements.]

[After accepting the wind instrument, the ACTOR regards it in wonderment. As the music builds to a crescendo, the ACTOR raises the wooden instrument to the sky, timing its rise so that his arms become fully extended, right at the moment when the music peaks.]

[Music fades.]

[Silence.]

[The NARRATOR and SECOND NARRATOR come forward, and all four ACTORS stand at strategically spaced intervals on the performing space.]

[Pause.]

ACTOR

"I have no will but Thy will, O my Lord, and cherish no desire except Thy desire... I am stirred by nothing else except the winds of Thy will, and breathe no word except the words which, by Thy leave and Thine inspiration, I am led to pronounce."⁷

NARRATOR

"O thou who hast surrendered thy will to God! By self-surrender and perpetual union with God is meant that men should merge their will wholly in the Will of God, and regard their desires as utter nothingness beside His Purpose. Whatsoever the Creator commandeth His creatures to observe, the same must they diligently, and with the utmost joy and eagerness, arise and fulfil. They should in no wise allow their fancy to obscure their judgment, neither should they regard their own imaginings as the voice of the Eternal."⁸

ACTRESS

"I beg of Thee, O my God... that my choice be conformed to Thy choice and my wish to Thy wish, that I may be entirely content with that which Thou didst desire, and be wholly satisfied with what Thou didst destine for me by Thy bounteousness and favor. Potent art Thou to do as Thou willest. Thou, in very truth, art the All-Glorious, the All-Wise."⁹

SECOND NARRATOR

"...In this consisteth the complete surrender of one's will to the Will of God. Meditate on this, that thou mayest drink in the waters of everlasting life which flow through the words of the Lord of all mankind, and mayest testify that the one true God hath ever been immeasurably exalted above His creatures. He, verily, is the Incomparable, the Ever-Abiding, the Omniscient, the All-Wise. The station of absolute self-surrender transcendeth, and will ever remain exalted above, every other station.

"It behoveth thee to consecrate thyself to the Will of God. Whatsoever hath been revealed in His Tablets is but a reflection of His Will. So complete must be thy consecration, that every trace of worldly desire will be washed from thine heart. This is the meaning of true unity." ¹⁰

ACTOR

"...If it be Thy pleasure, make me to grow as a tender herb in the meadows of Thy grace, that the gentle winds of Thy will may stir me up and bend me into conformity with Thy pleasure, in such wise that my movement and my stillness may be wholly directed by Thee."¹¹

[Pause.]

[In unison the ACTORS bow at the waist. They then exit reverently upstage. Candle remains burning.]

END OF FEAST'S DEVOTIONS

REFERENCES

1. Bahá'u'lláh, *Hidden Words*, Persian #19
2. *ibid.*, Persian #32
3. Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 241
4. *op. cit.*, Persian #31
5. Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 163
6. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 131
7. Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 108
8. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 337
9. Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 54
10. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, p.337-38
11. Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 240

ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, pp.287-89
2. George Townsend, Introduction to *The Hidden Words*,
pp.vi-viii
3. Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, Vol.III,
pp.3-4