

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets.]

[Personal information has been **redacted**.]

[The excerpt below is from the section of the article that pertains to the Baha'i Faith]

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What Did the Baha'i Girl Say to Me on the Phone?

At noon on Tuesday, I had just gotten rid of my daily work when the phone rang. I picked up the phone. The delicate voice of a woman, who was clearly anxious and worried, was heard over the phone, and [she] asked to speak to the editor of Sahar Newspaper.

Since, I was very soon impressed by the soft and supplicating tone of this lady's voice, I said, "Please say it; I am the editor of Sahar Newspaper." My sentence had not yet finished when she apologized politely and humbly for disturbing me during my resting hours of the day. When she was assured that I had no complaints, she spoke more boldly.

Her words sounded like a weeping patient who was deprived of life, its beauties and happiness, and it resonated in my ears with a special song.

She said, "You probably do not know that in these few days, I have lost seven of my relatives forever. This includes my brother, uncle and grandfather, and now not even the slightest trace of them is left for me and my other relatives. You cannot imagine how unbearable it is for a young girl to see seven of her people, guardians and loved ones killed in such a horrible way."

The tear-stained voice of this young girl transformed me and aroused my curiosity, and I had to ask her about the events. It soon became clear that my curiosity had upset her, because she said with frailty, "Sir, I did not tell you this [for you] to write it in the newspaper. Because I do not want the world to know that on such a day—as you wrote in the editorial and I was provoked by reading it—when 50 years of constitutionalism are celebrated, such events occur in Iran. Furthermore, it is not clear that the reflection of my information in the newspaper will not cause me any new problems and I will not find a worse fate."

At my insistence, and asserting that these barbaric acts were not supported by the government, she said, "Sir, you do not know that my grandfather was a stubborn person and relied on the law and the law enforcement forces, and before he suffered this tragic fate, it was suggested to him by the kadhoda [headman] of the village, that a ransom be paid to him, in order [for him] to be supported and his harassments to be abated; but my grandfather referred him to the law that is the government's support for the people and residents of the country, but later he suffered such fate."

The girl, who saw that she did not bother me with her phone call and that I was satisfied with this information due to my journalistic job, spoke freely. her voice was softer and calmer and less trembling, and she also told me things about her grandfather, uncle and her lost relatives and the course of the tragedy.

While listening to the description of these events, I was engrossed in bitter thoughts until the girl said, in a pleading tone, “Really, sir, what will they do to us in the month of Muharram and how can I and my people be safe?”

Telling the truth, I could not give a correct answer to the honest question of this innocent young girl and with my words, assure her of the future, because unfortunately, with all the emphasis and promises that the government has made to protect the people, such events will disappoint anyone. It is not really clear how many people will face such destinies, if the government does not perform its legal duties seriously and does not prevent the encroachment of the extremists and those personal opinion holders. But I could not express my thoughts to this young girl, who was anonymously seeking help and guidance from me.

Again, in my mind, relying on the promises made by the government, I realized with a concern and unhappiness that this promise of mine might come true. I told the young girl, “Under Article 9 of the Constitutional Amendment, the people of the nation are safe and protected from any kind of aggression in terms of life, property, housing and honour. You can be sure that you will be supported and defended by the government. There will be no incidents in the month of Muharram.”

But will the government really be capable of fulfilling the promise I have made to this Baha’i girl, or with its indecisive manner, as in these two months, will cause these actions to be repeated?