

The Genesis of the Bábí-Bahá'í Faiths in
Shíráz and Fárs

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The Genesis of the Bábí-Bahá'í Faiths in Shíráz and Fárs

By

Mirza Habibu'llah Afnan

Translated and Annotated by Ahang Rabbani



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*In memory of Muná Mahmúdnizhád who, at age 17,
was among ten Bahá'í women executed in Shíráz on 18 June 1983.
The primary charge against her: teaching Bahá'í children's classes.*

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FOREWORD BY TRANSLATOR

Sanctified be God! The All-Glorious Providence has decreed for the land of Sh[íráz] to be the dawning-place of light and fire. That is, before God, the appearance of these two attributes is most prominent and most evident in that realm. And this is because the fire of opposition broke forth brightly in that city before it appeared in all other lands.

—Bahá'u'lláh¹

Background to the Narrative

In the 1920s in Iran, Mírzá Asadu'lláh Fádil Mázandarání, a renowned scholar and capable historian, undertook a massive project to compose a documented history of the Bábí–Bahá'í religions, which he entitled *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq* [The History of the Appearance of the True One]—an effort that was greatly encouraged by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.² For his history, Mázandarání needed detailed accounts of events and occurrences during the first century of the Bahá'í Faith. With the aim of gathering such data and documentation, he and others traveled extensively throughout Iran and vicinity, combing through the Bahá'í community for available information, such as tablets, memoirs, letters, pictures, narratives, poems, historical sites, and family trees. However, Mázandarání recognized that he needed much more information, so he turned to Shoghi Effendi for assistance.

In the latter part of 1924, Shoghi Effendi began the process of recording the recollections of the Bahá'ís who had witnessed the early years of the Bábí and Bahá'í Movements. Knowing that these memoirs would have a profound effect on the understanding of future Bahá'ís about the genesis of their religion, Shoghi Effendi called for a systematic campaign to assemble

¹ *Light* is a reference to the Declaration of the Báb in Shíráz. Original Tablet in *Núri d-Dín Collection*, no. 144, dated 1 Rajab, AH 1307 [21 February 1890].

² Shoghi Effendi himself also participated in this enterprise, first by producing an elegant edited translation of Nabil Zarandí's history, *The Dawn-Breakers*, and later by writing two monumental analytical histories of the Bábí–Bahá'í Faiths, respectively entitled *God Passes By* and *Lawh-i Qarn* [Tablet of the Century].

such narratives. In the Haifa–‘Akká area, companions of Bahá’u’lláh such as Áqá Husayn Áshchí [broth-maker] and Áqá Abú’l-Qásim Bághbán [gardener] were interviewed for what they remembered of the formative days of the Bábí–Bahá’í Faiths. Sometimes, as in the case of Áshchí, such interviews happened literally on the person’s deathbed.

During the next two decades, Shoghi Effendi wrote to the Bahá’ís of Iran urging them to prepare detailed histories of each local community, particularly those that had a significant Bahá’í presence from the earliest days. He further called upon individuals who had witnessed the unfolding of the Heroic Age (1844–1921) in the “Cradle of the Faith” (Iran) to record their experiences in writing.

In accordance with this request, the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Shíráz entrusted the task of writing a comprehensive history of the Bahá’í Faith in this central region to Mírzá Habíbu’lláh Afnán, the hereditary custodian of the House of the Báb in Shíráz, who readily obeyed and wrote of what he had witnessed and the remarkable stories that he had heard from those associated with the founding of the Bábí–Bahá’í Faiths. Mírzá Habíbu’lláh notes:

In accordance with the instructions of the Guardian of the Cause of God in his wondrous and blessed letter, which stated: “Each town must write a brief history of the Faith since the dawning of the Sun of Horizons,” the Spiritual Assembly [of Shíráz] entrusted this service to this unworthy servant, Hájí Mírzá Habíbu’lláh Afnán. Even though this ephemeral servant considers himself unprepared for this great enterprise, yet hopeful of the divine confirmations of the Beloved, has committed to paper to a prescribed degree what he has seen or heard from reliable observers, that the sanctified command of the Guardian be fulfilled.³

Fárs and Shíráz

The land of Fárs is a province that millennia earlier had given birth to two great dynasties—the Achaemenian in the sixth century BC and the Sassanian in the third century AD. These empires were administered by leaders of great insight and learning, and engendered cultivated societies, formidable armies, great visions for humanity, and just rulers whose achievements were legendary and unprecedented. Indeed, the brilliance of their triumphs was so dazzling that the name of the region was

³ Afnán, *Tārikh Amrí Fárs va Shíráz*, p. 1.



Map of Iran with the province of Fárs and the city of Shíráz

extended to the entire country, and Persia—from *Persis*, the Greek form of *Fárs*—was born.⁴ Therefore, for Persians the name *Fárs* evokes a deep sense of pride and heritage. It calls to mind the past splendors associated with that cradle of civilization, when wise rulers from their seat in Persepolis wielded authority over a kingdom that extended from North Africa to China—kings who governed with such liberty and equity that the authors of the Old Testament were prompted to speak most glowingly of their benevolence.

The language of the nation, Fársí—the language of Fárs—descends lineally from the language that Cyrus and Darius spoke and is the language in which the proclamations were engraved by their command on the rock-tablets of Bísitún and Naqsh Rústam, and upon the walls and columns of Persepolis. This language stirs a profound sense of spirituality and refinement derived from the poetry of Háfíz, voice of the invisible and the master of Persian lyrical poetry, and Sa’dí, the sweet-tongued poet and the author of the famous *Gulistán*, a book of sonnets called the *Garden of Roses*. No other Iranian writers to this day enjoy—not only in their own country but also wherever their language is cultivated—a wider celebrity or a greater reputation than these two poets of Shíráz. Indeed, for Iranians, there is no Persian language more elevated than that which they have learned from Háfíz and Sa’dí, and deep in their collective consciousness the legacy of these two towering literary giants of Shíráz pervades modern Iranian culture.⁵

Beyond the circle of Iranians, the Bahá’í world community will forever associate the name of Shíráz with the opening chapter of its own history, for it was in Shíráz that the initial emanation of the divine revelation for this religion broke forth from the merchant-Prophet of that city. The Báb, He Who is acclaimed as the “Point round Whom the realities of the Prophets and Messengers revolve,”⁶ Who styled Himself “the Primal Point from which have been generated all created things . . . the Countenance of God Whose splendor can never be obscured, the Light of God Whose radiance can never fade,”⁷ arose meteor-like over the horizon of Shíráz.

⁴ *Fárs* is the Arabicized version of *Párs*. *Persia* and *Persian* both derive from *Persis*, the Hellenized form of the root word *Párs*. The Old Persian word was *Pársá*.

⁵ Those interested in a more detailed discussion of the general history of Fárs and Shíráz should consult appendix 7 and the sources cited there.

⁶ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 3.

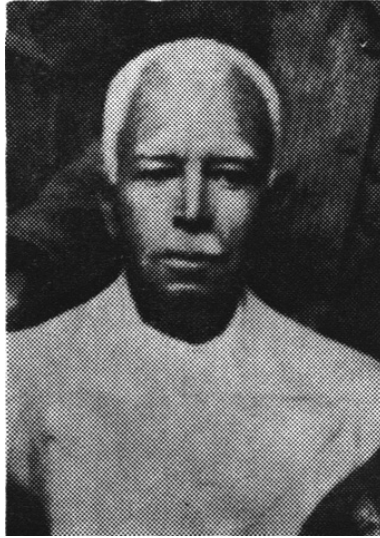
⁷ The Báb, *Sections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 11.

Mírzá Habíbu'lláh Afnán

It was in the House of the Báb in Shíráz that Mírzá Habíbu'lláh Afnán (1875–1951) was born and then reared by none other than Khadíjih Bagum, the widow of the Báb. The stories that he heard from her were the bittersweet stories of the Báb and the deeply devoted disciples who circled around the Báb in Shíráz. Khadíjih Bagum had a particular affinity towards the young lad's father, Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri'd-Dín, who, at a time when tribulations had most fiercely beset Khadíjih Bagum, was promised by the Báb to be the family member who would arise for her protection and support, and who had done just that. This immense love of Khadíjih Bagum likewise readily embraced Núri'd-Dín's children, and Mírzá Habíbu'lláh basked in the brilliance of her attention and affection.

In 1891–92 at the age of 16, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh was fortunate to be able to accompany his family to the Holy Land, where he spent some nine months in the immediate proximity of Bahá'u'lláh in the Mansion of Bahjí. Subsequently, from Egypt he remained in constant communication for the next decade with 'Abdu'l-Bahá and periodically visited Him in 'Akká, where as a trusted Afnán he was privy to some of the heart-wrenching scenes of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry and granted a glimpse into the most private inner workings of the Bahá'í Faith—he witnessed the disloyalty of the half-brothers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, their corrupt ways, the consequent anguish of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's efforts to conceal their perversion and their violation of laws, and the means by which this sad news was transmitted to the Bahá'í community.

At the turn of the century, in 1902, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wished for Núri'd-Dín and his family, including his son, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh, to return to Shíráz to rebuild the House of the Báb, which had fallen into disrepair. Shortly before the completion of this reconstruction, Núri'd-Dín passed away, and it fell to Mírzá Habíbu'lláh to complete the construction and to become the custodian of that sacred edifice. This was the hallmark service of his life, as for the next half-century he served with great distinction as the hereditary custodian of the House of the Báb in Shíráz. Consequently, he stood uniquely qualified to tell the story of the Bábí and Bahá'í Movements in Shíráz as well as to recount his recollections of the days of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Holy Land.



Mirza Habibu'llah Afnan

Narratives of Mirzá Habíbu'lláh Afnán

Mirzá Habíbu'lláh wrote two lengthy documents. The date of composition of the first narrative, entitled *Tárikh Amrí Fárs va Shíráz*, is not known with any degree of precision, although it has been estimated to be in the 1920s or possibly in the early- to mid-1930s. The original version was handwritten by Mirzá Habíbu'lláh, and the final draft was written by Mirzá Abú'l-Hasan Ansif Nayrízí. This final copy was edited by the author, whose handwritten remarks are evident along various margins and lines throughout the manuscript; this is the version used for translation purposes.

Of this first narrative, unquestionably the most valuable portions are those on the life of the Báb in Shíráz, a city acclaimed by the young Prophet as the *baladu'l-amn*, “the land of refuge.”⁸ Mirzá Habíbu'lláh did not wish to write a comprehensive history of the Báb's life, since he knew full well that others had already attempted such an undertaking—men

⁸ INBMC (Iranian National Bahá'í Manuscript Collection) 91:6–10, no. 3, and 91:13–14, no. 4. In chapter 55 of *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'*, the Báb refers to Himself as the Gate of the land of refuge (*Báb-i baladu'l-amn*). Verse 35 of the chapter “Pillar” (*rukn*) of the same book refers to Shíráz as the *baladu'l-amn*.

like Nabíl Zarandí, surnamed Nabíl A'zam, who was well known to Mírzá Habíbu'lláh. Rather, his objective was to tell stories of the Báb's sublime life that were current among the Báb's immediate family in Shíráz, particularly reminiscences he had heard from Khadíjih Bagum.⁹

The second narrative, entitled *Khátirát Hayát*, is the account of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh's pilgrimages to the Holy Land and his decade-long stay in Egypt. The exact date of the composition of this autobiography is unknown, but the author's sons, Abú'l-Qásim and Hasan Afnán, indicate that it was first composed shortly after Mírzá Habíbu'lláh's return to Iran.¹⁰ Based upon the evidence in the narrative and family records, it is known that these notes were recopied and reorganized in the mid-1940s.¹¹ Of this narrative, the most important part is the author's recollection of being near Bahá'u'lláh from the middle of July 1891 until shortly after Naw-Rúz 1892, that is, a little more than two months prior to the passing of Bahá'u'lláh. The remaining portions are singularly important, as they clarify many aspects of the first decade of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry when the opposition of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's half-brothers was at its height.¹²

Mírzá Habíbu'lláh was a well-educated man. He attended the same school that the Báb had attended and received tuition from one of the city's ablest educators. Bahá'u'lláh arranged for him to study with His own sons in the Mansion of Bahjí. Subsequently, he spent many years receiving daily instructions from the celebrated Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl Gulpáygání, one of the most erudite Bahá'ís of his generation. Therefore, the style of his composition is very learned and represents an important literary achievement in its own right. It is hoped that in due course the original Persian of these two narratives will also be published so that students of history will become better acquainted with his elegant style of composition.¹³

⁹ Those not fully familiar with the story of the Báb may find it helpful while reading this history to refer to Nabíl's history, presented in an edited version in *The Dawn-Breakers*, and to Hasan Balyúzi's biography, *The Báb*. These volumes describe many of the persons and incidents mentioned in this narrative, but depict them in a wider context. For an academic treatment of the same subject, see Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal*.

¹⁰ Private communications, summer 1985.

¹¹ For example, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh notes that fifty-five years had elapsed since the spring of 1892 when he had met Tarazu'llah Samandari in the Holy Land, and assuming these years are reckoned in accordance with the lunar calendars, this then places the date of recomposition around 1945–46.

¹² An annotated rendering by the present translator is forthcoming.

¹³ The original text of *Tárikh Amrí Fárs va Shíráz* has been published electronically; see <<http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/arabic/vol4/shiraz/shiraz.htm>>.

NOTES ON THE PRESENT TRANSLATION

In the course of this translation, every effort has been exerted to stay as close to the original document as possible, to the degree that a literal rendering has often been preferred to a more stylistic one. Footnotes have been added to augment information, clarify obscure points, and provide a more detailed perspective. Occasionally, comments by the translator have been added to improve the clarity or continuity of the material. These comments are enclosed in square brackets, thus [...]. All comments within parentheses are by the author, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh. The numbers in pointed brackets, < >, correspond to the Afnán family genealogy in appendix 6. The system of transliteration used in this monograph is consistent with the method used in other academic publications and varies from the system used in most Bahá'í publications by: (1) avoiding subdots and underlines (e.g., Fádíl), and (2) dropping the *izafih* connecting the first name to the surname (e.g., Husayn-'Alí Núrí, instead of Husayn-'Alí-i-Núrí). The page numbers of the original manuscript are indicated in square brackets, such as [p. 10], every five pages.

The following table provides a comparison between pages of the original manuscript and the chapters of the English rendering. The page numbers are followed by line number; for example, 77:6 indicates the 6th line of page 77.

Chapter	Pages in Original
1	2:1–21:4
2	21:4–41:10
3	41:10–77:5
4	77:6–115:5
5	115:5–145:10
6	145:10–153:6
7	153:7–183:11
8	183:11–222:8
9	222:9–254:4
10	254:5–305:12
11	306:1–350:10
12	350:11–409:4
13	409:5–464:12
14	465:1–500:12
15	501:1–569:12
16	570:1–595:2
17	595:3–602:9 (end)

Since any single Islamic year (denoted AH) typically overlaps with two Christian years, where only the Islamic year of the event is known, the equivalent Gregorian date is given as the first of the two years partially covered by that Islamic year.

Typically, the original text refers to the Central Figures by such honorific titles as “His Holiness” or “His blessed Person,” and these honorifics have been omitted for the most part. Nor does the translation reproduce such expressions commonly used in the Iranian literature of the Bahá’í Faith as, “May my life be a sacrifice unto His Sacred Threshold.” Many key individuals are often referred to by titles, such as His Holiness the Exalted One, a reference to the Báb; or the Blessed Perfection or the Blessed Beauty, expressions used for Bahá’u’lláh; or “the exalted wife,” a term used to refer to Khadíjih Bagum, the widow of the Báb. These titles have been replaced with their more recognizable names, the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh, or Khadíjih Bagum.

By the time Mírzá Habíbu’lláh wrote his narrative, many principal personalities featured in this history had died, and the original text therefore often refers to them as “the late” or “the deceased.” These terms, too, have largely been omitted.

Some details of the events recorded in Mírzá Habíbu’lláh’s chronicle differ from those found in *Nabíl’s Narrative*, the standard history of these events. However, given that the chronicle represents an oral tradition within the family of the Báb, it has its own importance and must form part of the analysis of historians. It should be emphasized that the spoken words attributed to the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in these pages cannot be ascribed with scriptural authority or equated with their authorized Writings. No one took notes at the time those words were uttered, although it cannot be ruled out that some may indeed be the very words spoken.

All renderings of the Sacred Writings from Persian and Arabic, unless otherwise specified, are by the present translator. If an authorized source (such as *Gleanings*) is not cited, then the renderings should be considered as falling in the class of provisional translations intended to convey the essence (*mazmún*) of communications by the Founders of the Bábí–Bahá’í Faiths. Such summary renderings are not to be confused with full authorized translation of the Bahá’í Holy Texts, which will be disseminated in due time by the Bahá’í World Centre.

Regarding these Texts, it should be noted that three major compilations have been immensely helpful in locating the original Tablets quoted by Mírzá Habíbu’lláh in his narratives:

1. “Núri’-d-Dín Collection,” which includes some 161 densely scribed pages containing Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablets to the author’s father.¹⁴ This unpublished compilation was prepared at ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s request, and the translator is grateful to Abu’l-Qasim Afnán for making his copy accessible.
2. The Iranian National Bahá’í Manuscript Collection (INBMC) volumes 51 and 52 contain many Tablets addressed to believers in Fárs. These volumes have been assembled and compared with the original texts. Volume 51 (633 pages) contains Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh, while volume 52 (683 pages) provides Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. As these volumes represent a most valuable mine of information for future researchers, to the extent possible, Tablets quoted by Mírzá Habíbu’lláh have been located in these volumes and the appropriate reference provided. The translator is indebted to the staff of the Persian-American Affairs Office of the National Spiritual Assembly of Bahá’ís of the United States for granting him a copy of these two volumes.
3. It should also be noted that a number of the Tablets quoted by Mírzá Habíbu’lláh Afnán have previously been published in *Khándán Afnán*, and these Tablets have also been identified and footnoted. However, for the purpose of this translation, greater reliance has been placed on the accuracy of the INBMC volumes.

Comment on the Appendices

To provide further historical perspective on the Bahá’í community of Shíráz, an additional narrative is included as appendix 1, namely, a history of Shíráz during the first half of the twentieth century by Abu’l-Qasim Afnán. Also, Mr. Afnán contributed most of materials for an essay on historical places in Shíráz of significance to the Bábí–Bahá’í Faiths (appendix 2). Furthermore, biographical data on the governors of Fárs, the Afnán family, and the paternal kin of the Báb are provided in separate sections, as is a section on the fascinating story of the conversion of Khál Akbar, the great-uncle of the Báb. Appendix 7 is a general overview of the history and languages of Fárs.

¹⁴ Bahá’u’lláh testifies in the Tablet of the World to “countless Tablets” having been revealed for Núri’-d-Dín (see *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 84).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This effort would not have been possible without the loving kindness of the following people. I owe an immense debt of gratitude for their help with this project:

Abú'l-Qásim Afnán kindly encouraged me to translate the narratives of his father. He also provided other valuable information, some of which appears throughout the book in footnotes and under his name.

Prof. Juan R.I. Cole generously shared a copy of the *Tárikh Amri Fárs va Shíráz*, making this effort possible.

The Bahá'í World Centre kindly reviewed this project and offered beneficial guidance.

Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir, Maryam Afnan-Rabbani, Dr. Moojan Momen, my late father Dr. Iraj Rabbani and Hasan Afnán offered several valuable suggestions and contributions. I am also deeply grateful to my sons, Bayan and Tebyan, for their assistance.

Ahang Rabbani
Houston, Texas
February 1998

Note: Although the translation of this book was completed in February 1998, various obstructions outside my control delayed its publication. In the meantime, on 20 February 1999 the Review Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom graciously reviewed and approved this monograph (as well as my forthcoming translation of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh's *Khátirát Hayát*, entitled *Memories of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*), referring to it as "a magnificent book and a delight to read." Also, I had the opportunity to reconsider parts of translation and to add further research notes. During this interval, with great care, Christine Zerbinis read the manuscript and offered a number of suggestions towards its improvement. All errors and shortcomings, however, are mine.

A.R.
April 2008

TEXT

TRANSLATION OF *TĀRĪKH AMRĪ FĀRS VA SHĪRĀZ*

CHAPTER ONE

THE CHILDHOOD AND EARLY LIFE OF THE BÁB

The Beginning of the History

The names of the paternal and maternal ancestors of the Báb are as follows: [p.2:1]

The blessed name of the Báb was Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Muhammad,¹⁵ son of Mír[zá] Muhammad-Ridá, the son of Áqá Mír[zá] Nasru’lláh, the son of Áqá Mír[zá] Fathu’lláh, the son of Áqá Mír[zá] Ibráhím.¹⁶ He was born into a highly regarded family of Husayní Siyyids¹⁷ to whose nobility, integrity, trustworthiness, piety, devotion, and detachment everyone in the province of Fárs would testify. Merchants by profession, they were all considered exemplary in integrity and purity in the entire region of Fárs. The mother of the Báb was Fátimih Bagum, the daughter of Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, who was the son of Áqá Mírzá ‘Abid,¹⁸ the son of Áqá Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad. This family also ranked among the renowned and trustworthy merchants of Fárs.

Early Years

His blessed birth took place on the first night of Muharram AH 1235 [20 October 1819], in the house belonging to His mother’s paternal uncle,

¹⁵ In the *Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’*, Surih al-Qarabih [kinsmen], verse 14, the Báb reveals: Verily, We have named this Remembrance by two Names from the divine Self, after two Beloved Ones among Our servants in the heavens.

¹⁶ The Báb gives a slightly different genealogy in *Sabífh Baynu’l-Haramayn* (The Treatise Between the Two Shrines): “Say: My name is Muhammad after the word ‘Alí [i.e., ‘Alí-Muhammad]. And the name of My father, as hath been revealed in the Book of God, is Ridá after Muhammad. And the name of My grandfather in the Book of God is Ibráhím [Abraham], and his father is named Nasru’lláh as has been revealed in the Qur’án (Fathu’lláh)” (Browne Or. MSS E.7[9]). The final statement is a reference to Qur’án 61:13: “And another [favor will He bestow], which ye do love—help from God [Nasru’lláh] or a speedy victory [Fathu’lláh]; so give the glad tidings to the believers.” The same genealogy is given in the *Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’*, Surih al-Qaribih, verses 14–15.

¹⁷ That is, this family traced its ancestry to Imám Husayn.

¹⁸ Fayzí, *Hadrat Nuqtih Ula*, p. 64, gives his name as Zaynu’l-‘Abidín.

Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí.¹⁹ The oft-recounted utterances of that exalted lady, the mother of the Báb, were along these lines:

From the moment of birth, it was evident that, unlike other children, He was not rapacious in drinking milk. Normally, He was serene and made no noise. During the twenty-four-hour period, He would desire milk only four times. While nursing he would be most gentle, and no movement was discerned from His mouth. Often I would become anxious and ask myself, “Why is this Child not like other children? Perhaps He has some illness that prevents His desiring milk.” Then I would console myself, saying, “If He really had some unknown illness, He would manifest signs of agitation and restlessness.”

Unlike other children, He did not complain or behave in an unseemly manner during the weaning period. I was most thankful that now that the Exalted Lord had granted me this one Child, He was gentle and agreeable.

Moreover, according to what trustworthy persons have reported, it was evident from the beginning of His childhood that He had an extraordinary character that excited the wonder and amazement of all, whether relatives, [p.5] friends, or strangers, for He was unlike any other child.

Schooling

According to Mullá Fathu’lláh Maktab-Dár [the school-master], son of Mullá Mand-‘Alí, when His blessed age had reached five years old,²⁰ He was taken to the [quranic school of] Shaykh ‘Abid,²¹ known as Shaykh

¹⁹ The Báb provides the date of His birth in the *Sahifih Baynu’l-Haramayn*: “Say O denizens of the Concourse! Hear the command of the Remnant of God from this Servant, the Exalted, the Wise. And this Servant was born, as hath been concealed in the Book of God, on the first day of Muharram of the year twelve hundred and thirty-five.” Also, the same date can be computed precisely from His age given in His personal diary appended to the Azali publication of the *Kitáb Panj Shá’n* (the Book of Five Modes). Other references to His age are to be found in the Persian *Bayán* 2:1 and 4:11, and the *Dalá’il Sab’á* (the Seven Proofs).

²⁰ In Persian, when someone’s age is reported as, say, five years of age, it means they are in their fifth year of life. In English, during the whole of the fifth year of life, a child is said to be four years old. In general, whenever age is given in Bahá’í histories translated from the Persian, it is necessary to subtract one to get the age in the English manner of reckoning. However, in the present translation, everywhere an age is provided, the original Persian reckoning is given.

²¹ His given name was Shaykh Muhammad (d. AH 1263/AD 1847), and he is also known as Shaykh Zaynu’l-‘Abidín or Shaykh Mu’allim. The Báb mentioned him in the

Anám,²² located in Qahvīyih Awlíyá,²³ one of the mystic convents occupied by the mystics of Fárs, on the Tayr marketplace,²⁴ near the house of His maternal grandfather, and His respected maternal uncle. Mullá Fathu'lláh Maktab-Dár, son of Mullá Mand-'Alí, was the custodian of the Masjíd Vakíl.²⁵ Like his father, he was one of the early believers [in the Báb] and, because of the persecutions and harassment, became a fugitive and forced to travel extensively.²⁶ He related:

When they brought His Holiness to the maktab [quranic school], I worked for Shaykh Anám in the Qahvīyih Awlíyá, which is one of the mystic convents in the old neighborhood of Shíráz,²⁷ where the school had several rooms with a circular portico around them. The honored Shaykh 'Abid, a man of many qualities, was the schoolmaster and taught the children of the noblemen, the affluent, the merchants, and other distinguished citizens. He was a tall, ever-dignified man with a long beard. A follower of the late Shaykh Ahmad Ahsá'í and Siyyid Kázim Rashtí, he ranked among the leading figures and divines of Shíráz.

At that time, I served the Shaykh as the khalifih (that is, the [school's] principal). Those wishing for their youngster to receive tuition from him, had to come beforehand and meet with him in person. They would ask the Shaykh for a place either through a letter or through a distinguished intermediary. This was because the Shaykh did not accept the children of just anyone and was particularly reluctant to accept lads from the bazaarí shopkeepers, because of their ill manners and dirty clothing.

Arabic *Bayán* 6:11, "Say: O Muhammad, My teacher! Do not beat Me ere My years have gone beyond five."

²² A variation of the same name, Shaykhuná, is employed in Nabíl A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 75.

²³ Named after a certain Sufi saint, Dervish Awlíyá (d. AH 1119/AD 1707), this convent is occupied by the dervishes and Sufis. Located in the Bazaar Murgh, it is situated near the house of the Báb's maternal uncle, Háji Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, and over the years it has decayed so thoroughly that no trace of it is now evident.

²⁴ Known also as the Bazaar Murgh [poultry market] quarter, this is one of the most prosperous and religiously significant quarters of the city and one of the five Haydarí wards of Shíráz. For further details, see Fasá'í, *Fársnámih Násiri*, vol. 2, pp. 27–47.

²⁵ Masjíd Vakíl was the largest and most important of Shíráz's mosques.

²⁶ Mullá Fathu'lláh and his father converted on the day the Báb proclaimed His Call in the aforementioned mosque. Both were among the martyrs at Shaykh Tabarsí, and therefore his recollection of the Báb must have been conveyed to the Afnán family at an early time.

²⁷ Mírzá Habíbu'lláh adds parenthetically, "And the center of this convent was inhabited, surrounded by ruins and evidence of old graves and gravestones."

Description of His Condition During Childhood

In any event, one morning, I saw the honored Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá,²⁸ who had been a friend of Shaykh Anám in the past, come to the Qahviyih [Awliyá]. He sat next to the Shaykh and described his situation as follows:

“After forty years, the Exalted Lord has graced me with a Child who has caused me to wonder over His behavior.” The Shaykh asked him to explain further, but he only replied, “It is hard to say.” [The Shaykh] insisted, to which [the father] offered:

O venerable Shaykh! Which of His amazing conditions should I recount? Such peculiar characteristics are manifest in Him that the people are astonished. Now, when He is five years old, He sometimes raises His hands to the threshold of the One God, and recites prayers. He wakes in the middle of the night²⁹ and stands to offer His obligatory prayers, in the midst of which He weeps. Sometimes He is sad, on other occasions He is happy, or immersed in rapture, or preoccupied with the imaginary world. My astonishment and bewilderment prevents me from describing further. Were I to recount all that I have observed from the time of His birth until the present, it would make a thick book.

At such a [young] age, He tells whether an unborn child is a boy or a girl, for the whole clan. After the birth, it is as He foretold.

And again, some time ago, together with His maternal uncle, the esteemed Háji Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, we were at the bathhouse of Bazaar Murgh quarter.³⁰ This Child was sleeping between His uncle and me, when suddenly He rose and stated, ‘The vaulted roof of the Garm-Khánih [steam chamber] of Mírzá Hádí’s bathhouse, which was for women, has just caved in, and five women and one child have been [killed] under the rubble.’ His uncle said to Him, ‘Áqá, please sleep and refrain from saying such things. What manner of talk is this!’ He responded, ‘It is as I said.’ It was not long after that we heard a tumult of voice from the direction of the bathhouse, saying that Mírzá Hádí’s bathhouse was wrecked and a number of women were under the rubble. One person said twenty women [were killed]; another said thirty or forty; but later it was determined that five women and a child had been killed. The truth was just as He had said.

²⁸ A.Q. Afnán has said that on that occasion, Háji Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, the Báb’s maternal uncle, went to the school (private communication, August 1993).

²⁹ This suggests that the Báb woke before dawn to offer His first morning prayer and, unlike most others, was not combining the first and the second Muslim obligatory prayer.

³⁰ A.Q. Afnán suggests that only the Báb and His maternal uncle, Háji Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, were present on that occasion (private communication, August 1993).

In another instance, a while ago He informed us, ‘Last night, I dreamt that a large balance was suspended in mid-air in a vast space. Imám Ja‘far Sádiq was seated on one of the plates, and, because of His weight, that plate was resting on the ground while the other plate was suspended in the air. An invisible person lifted Me and placed Me on the empty plate. My plate was now heavier than the other, and I came to the ground and the first dish rose into the air.’ I said to Him, ‘Alas, Child, how bizarre! Do not talk like that.’ [p.10]

What should I say! There are so many astonishing stories about Him that I cannot tell. At one time, Áqá Mírzá Siyyid Hasan³¹ suggested that this Child might be under the spell of jinn or fairies, and he said that we should take Him to those knowledgeable in such matters and request protective prayers for Him. Even though I do not believe that such things are true and trustworthy, in the light of his [Siyyid Hasan’s] comment I brought Áqá Muhammad-Hasan, the Munajjim [astrologer], to the house and described for him the details. He made some calculations and said, ‘He is protected from the malevolence of jinn and fairies, and he has not suffered any harm from sprites.’ Then he asked for His birthdate. Thereupon, he wrote certain protective charms and prayers and gave them [to us], recited some mysterious verses and, having learned of His birthdate, he left. After the departure of Áqá Muhammad-Hasan, the Child tore up the talismans, the writings he had left, and the sheet of instructions he had given [us], and tossed them out, saying to me, ‘In the words of the mystic: You make a great show of assistance, but I am that assistance.’³²

In short, for some time I have been consumed with the difficulties of this Child, and I do not know which of His conditions I should describe to you. It is now time for His education and training, and I wish Him to receive His tuition and religious training from you.

I was most astounded by the descriptions of the venerable Mírzá [Muhammad-Ridá], and the Shaykh was astonished as well. It was decided that at an agreeable time on [the following] Thursday morning the Child would be brought to the school.

On the promised morning, the Child arrived followed by a servant³³ carrying a small [copper-tray] filled with sweets and a student’s version of the Qur‘án, which is customary for the new pupil to read from in the schools in Shíráz.

Because of Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá’s descriptions of Him, the Shaykh, several of the students who had reached the age of maturity, and I were thoroughly enthralled in watching Him. He came in, greeted [everyone],

³¹ The Afán Kabír of later years, brother-in-law of the Báb.

³² An alternative reading of this poem is, You bring forth a prayer, and I am that Prayer.

³³ In the original, *ghulám* implies a slave or indentured servant.

and sat before Shaykh Anám. Soon after, His maternal uncle, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, arrived as well and sat next to the Shaykh. After the exchange of formal pleasantries, the Shaykh took the Qur’án from the tray of sweetmeats, opened it, and said [to the young Pupil], “Come Áqá, read.” He smiled and said, “As you please.” As was customary, the Shaykh told Him to read, “He is the Deliverer, the All-Knowing.”³⁴ His Holiness remained silent. The Shaykh repeated the verse, but He kept His silence. The Shaykh persisted. He [the Báb] asked, “Who is ‘He’. Can you explain?” The Shaykh responded, “‘He’ is God. You are still a child, and what concern of Yours is the meaning of ‘He?’” The Pupil responded, “I am the Deliverer, the All-Knowing!” The Shaykh was deeply enraged and picked up his stick and said to Him, “Do not utter such things here!” His Holiness commenced reading, and His maternal uncle smiled and ordered certain arrangements and then left.³⁵

The late Áqá Muhammad Ibráhím Ismá’íl Beg, who was a well-known, trusted, and respected merchant, related:

[p.15] I was twelve years old at that time, and on that day Siyyid-i Báb came and sat between me and Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá Mustawfí who was about the same age as I. In fact, He [the Báb] kneeled, in a refined way. His head was bowed over the student Qur’án, but He did not read a word, so I asked, “Why are You not reading the lesson [aloud] like the other children?” He made no reply; however, two other lads sitting near us were heard reading poems from Háfíz aloud, and they came to this verse:

From Heaven’s heights the birdsong calls to you
in sorrow that you’re trapped in walls of clay.

He turned quickly to me and said, “That is your answer.” I replied, “Well done.”³⁶

Similarly, it is related:

Since Shaykh Anám was a learned man and a follower of Shaykh Ahmad [Ahsá’í], each morning he conducted a seminary session in Qahviyih Awlíyá where several of his [theological] students would gather to engage him in discussions and debates. One day a scientific topic was being discussed, and after considerable debate it remained unresolved, since it was particularly complex. The venerable Shaykh stated, “Tonight I will study the [authoritative] books on this topic, and tomorrow we will discuss the matter again and solve it completely.” At this point, the exchange was concluded.

³⁴ Qur’án 34:25.

³⁵ Nabil A’zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 75–76, tells a similar story, though considerably different in details.

³⁶ Brief recollections from Áqá Muhammad Ibráhím have previously appeared in Balyúzí, *The Báb*, pp. 34–35.

Suddenly the young Pupil [who had been listening] raised His blessed head and with sound reasoning, irrefutable proof, and scientific evidence, propounded the answer they sought and removed all complexities. They were wonder-struck and amazed. The [seminarian] students informed the Shaykh that they had no recollection of ever having discussed that topic so that this Child could have memorized it like a parrot and now repeat it for them. They expressed their bewilderment, and the Shaykh responded that he too was filled with awe. Full of amazement, he asked Him where He had gained this knowledge. The Pupil smiled and offered this couplet from Háfíz:

Should the Holy Spirit's grace again assist,
Others too will do what Christ has done.³⁷

In all events, during those tender years, many such manifestations of extraordinary and innate qualities were observed in Him and are testified to by both friends and foes, and are beyond my abilities to describe.³⁸

His father, Áqá Mír[zá] Muhammad-Ridá, passed away when the Báb was only nine years old,³⁹ and from then on He was reared in the bosom of His maternal uncle, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí. This uncle had witnessed such remarkable and astonishing feats by Him with his own eyes, that when He declared His Cause, without requiring any proof or evidence, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí readily and unhesitatingly accepted His claim and became a believer. He sacrificed his life and possessions in the path of the Beloved of the world.

The Testimony of the Khál A'zam

My paternal grandmother, [Zahrá Bagum], who was a paternal cousin of the Báb's mother, related that she had personally heard the uncle [Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí] discussing [the claim of the Báb] with his younger brother, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí, and the latter was resisting the argument

³⁷ See Balyúzi, *The Báb*, p. 35. For similar childhood stories of the Báb, see Nabíl A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 75–76.

³⁸ The Báb in the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'*, Surih al-Sina, verse 5, addressing Himself states, "And We favored Thee during Thy Childhood with the mighty Cause of God, as it had been decreed as such in the Mother Book." In the same Book, Surih al-Ism, verse 34, the Báb proclaims, "Verily, as a child I was aware of the truth of My own Self, and God is the Almighty, the All-knowing."

³⁹ In the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'*, Surih al-Jihad, verse 39, the Báb states, "O My God, My Lord! Verily, in accordance with Thy will, My father passed away, and I do not remember Him. My Master, when he is seated with the heavenly angels, inform him of My Cause and record him in this Mighty Book."

saying, “Brother, what religious principles are these that you have turned to now? You have departed from our ancestral religion and follow our Nephew!” The eminent, martyred-uncle responded, “You should know well that God Most High has fulfilled the proof before me. After what I saw with my own eyes in His childhood and what I know with complete confidence about him since His adulthood, there is no room for doubt for anyone, especially for me.”

He then continued:

[p.20] Have you forgotten our journey to Sabz-Púshán⁴⁰ when He was a child aged nine years old? There was a group of us, and He came along as well. When we arrived, being completely exhausted, we performed our ablutions, offered our late afternoon and the evening obligatory prayers, paid our homage of visitation, ate dinner, and went to bed. It was not long after, at midnight, that I awoke and noticed that He was not in bed. Deeply perturbed, I was overtaken with anxiety that perhaps He had fallen from the mountain. Finally, after searching extensively, I heard a voice raised in the obligatory prayer and prayers of glorification to the Lord, coming from the lower extremities [of the mountain]. When I followed the melody of that chant, I found the Child, standing alone and in private, in consummate rapture voicing prayers and supplications to the One Who transcends all mention, on the deserted mountainside and at that late hour of the night. My beloved brother, I ask: After observing such things, is there any room for doubt? With a knowledge born of certainty, with truth that stands most manifest, and with my own unimpeachable observations, it is thoroughly evident that the Promised One whom we had anticipated has now appeared after twelve hundred and sixty years. The proof has been completed. Whosoever denies these revealed verses, each page of which stands equal to the whole of the Qur’án, must surely be among the most inequitable.

In short, our grandmother often spoke to us on this theme.

⁴⁰ Mírzá Habíbu’lláh added parenthetically, “Located in the mountains south of Shíráz, the shrine of Sabz-Púshán is about twelve kilometers from the city. The route to that place is most difficult, and even strong individuals are exhausted by the journey. People often visit that spot in the summer.”

CHAPTER TWO

COMMERCE AND MARRIAGE

Commerce

When the Báb had reached the age of fifteen, He joined the commercial office of His uncle, [Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí], in Shíráz.⁴¹ He remained for a short while in Shíráz and then moved to the port city of Búshihr. In that city, His office was in the Mírandí caravansary. Although it was before the declaration of His Cause, the many signs and evidences of His sanctity and the wondrous verses that flowed from His blessed pen would attract the envy and the jealousy of men of learning.⁴² [p.21:4]

One day in Egypt during the time when the illustrious Abú’l-Fadl was occupied with writing the *Kitáb-i Fará’id*, we came to talk about the early years of the Báb prior to His declaration and the period when He was engaged in trading. Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl related the following to me:

I myself heard Hájí Siyyid Javad known as Karbalá’í relate that

when His Holiness [the Báb] was active as a merchant in Búshihr, because of my friendship and close association with His maternal uncles, I used to stay with them whenever I visited either Shíráz or Búshihr. One day Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, a maternal uncle [of the Báb], came to me with a request, “Give some good counsel to my Nephew. Tell Him not to write or speak about certain studies that can only provoke the jealousy of certain people. These people cannot tolerate seeing a young merchant of little schooling demonstrate such scientific erudition and therefore become envious and resentful.” He was very insistent that I should counsel Him [to desist from such activities], but in the end I replied with this verse:

⁴¹ A.Q. Afnán suggests that based on extensive family correspondence examined by him, the Báb began to work in His uncle’s office at the age of ten, and it was at the age of fifteen—the age of maturity in Islamic law—that He moved to Búshihr (private communications, August 1992). The same information is provided by the Báb Himself in the *Kitáb-i Fihrist*, “After My childhood had passed, by the will of God, I began the occupation of commerce as this was decreed by God, and I commenced this from the age of ten.”

⁴² Nicolas, *Seyyed Ali Mohammad dit le Bab*, p. 189, n. 131, on the authority of Hájí Mírzá Jání of Kashan, whom Nicolas assumed to be the author of the *Kitáb-i Nuqtatu’l-Kaf*, suggests that at the age of eighteen the Báb revealed *Risálih Fiqhiyyih*.

The luster of the fair of face cannot be veiled,
Shut him in and out of eyelet will he show his visage.

and added: "We are earthbound and He is celestial. Our counsel is no use to Him."⁴³

In Búshihir He engaged in commerce for six years⁴⁴ and associated with all strata of society, including the 'ulamá, the merchants, and the shopkeepers, and dealt with all in such wise that they were very satisfied and grateful in every respect. In every gathering and assembly, men praised His splendid qualities.

During one of my journeys to the sacred presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, He spoke one day about the time the Báb stayed [in Búshihir] and of his commercial activities. He stated:

[p.25] During His stay in Búshihir, the Báb achieved extraordinary things and thoroughly demolished the foundation of people's corrupt practices. The merchants of Búshihir had a custom that after a deal had been concluded they would renege and barter to receive a considerable discount. Some of them came to His Holiness, negotiated purchase of indigo dye, and bought a very large quantity. After they had sealed the bargain and moved the lots of indigo to their own office, they returned to renege and bargain. His Holiness did not accept and said, "You made a bargain, signed papers, and the transaction has been completed. I will not give a discount and will not renegotiate." They insisted. He replied, "What I said is final." They pleaded, "It is the custom of the country." He responded, "Many of these customs are wrong and will soon be abolished." No matter how much they insisted, He would not agree. The merchants were obstinate, and at last He said, "[If] the price is high, return the merchandise as I will not barter." They insisted, "It is the custom here." He replied, "I wish to put an end to this custom." They insisted, "If a merchant has bought commodities and moved them to his warehouse, and then returns them, he will forfeit his standing with merchants." "It is your choice," He told them, "accept the terms and refrain from re-negotiation." Again they insisted, "But this is the custom of the realm." Yet again, He reminded them, "I am ending this custom."

'Abdu'l-Bahá continued relating:

Eventually, He [the Báb] ordered the merchandise brought back to His shop and did not yield to their efforts at bargaining. He changed many of their unseemly practices during the period He was a merchant in Búshihir.

⁴³ A similar translation appears in Balyúzi, *The Báb*, pp. 39–40.

⁴⁴ The Báb indicates He was in Búshihir for five years; see *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 180–81.

Soon thereafter, one of His maternal uncles arrived at Búshihir, and the same merchants who had returned the indigo dye came to see the uncle and complained about His behavior, saying, “He has ruined our reputation. We had a deal on dyes, however, as customary, we wished to renegotiate, but He did not comply. He arranged for the goods to be brought back from our store. This is a great insult to us as merchants. You should counsel Him not to repeat such offenses.”

The maternal uncle approached the Báb advising Him, “Why do You refuse to yield to people’s wishes and disrupt the established customs of the realm?” He told him, “Even now, if they should wish to bargain after a transaction is completed, I would refuse again.”

That was a very blissful day. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá smiled unceasingly and repeated several times, “Prior to His declaration, the Báb announced that He would change many of the accepted ways.”

In short, after six years’ residence in Búshihir, [the Báb] wrote several times to His uncles, “I plan to visit the ‘Atabát.⁴⁵ One of you should come to Búshihir and take over the business so I can commence my journey to the ‘Atabát.” The uncles procrastinated and did not comply with His wish. When the time for His departure arrived, He settled His accounts with everyone, prepared a detailed ledger, sealed the books, and left them in the office. He then sealed the entrance to the office and entrusted the key to the custodian of that building with the instructions that whichever of His maternal uncles should arrive first from Shíráz to Búshihir should be allowed to enter. Thereupon, He wrote to Shíráz “Though I wrote you repeatedly asking that one of you come to Búshihir as I have a journey to the ‘Atabát in mind, you have not come. Therefore, I have sealed the door of the shop and entrusted the key to the custodian and have left for the ‘Atabát.”⁴⁶ So, after six years in Búshihir, He left for the ‘Atabát.

Once His blessed letter was received in Shíráz, [His eldest maternal uncle,] Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad became deeply worried and perturbed, complaining, “What manner of conduct is this? Our good name in the commercial community will be ruined, and the chain of our business transactions will be broken! What will happen to our accounts with the people?” To this, the illustrious uncle, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, responded,

⁴⁵ The ‘Atabát is a general term referring to the region where Najaf, Karbalá, Kázimayn, and Sámarrá are located. The first of the two cities hold within them the Shrines of Imám ‘Alí and Imám Husayn, respectively. Kázimayn is famous because the Shrines of the seventh and the ninth Imáms are located there. Sámarrá is where the Shrines of the tenth and the eleventh Imáms, ‘Alí an-Naqi and Hasan al-‘Askari, are situated.

⁴⁶ Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl, *Tárikh Zubúr Diyánt Hadrat Báb va Hadrat Bahá’u’lláh*, gives the date of Báb’s departure as 1 Rabí’u’l-Awwal AH 1257 [23 April 1841].

“Rest assured! I know Him, and our Nephew does not do anything wrong. [I am certain that] He has arranged people’s accounts before leaving.”

The uncle, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, set out for Búshih. ⁴⁷ Upon his arrival, he secured the key from the custodian of the caravansary, noted the seal on the door of the room, opened the door, and began a careful examination of the books. He found that the accounts relating to every person were most satisfactory and accurate. Relieved, he wrote to [p.30] his brothers, “the accounts and record books are in order” and expressed praise and gratitude for their Nephew. ⁴⁸

In the ‘Atabát

The Báb arrived at the ‘Atabát. His blessed stay in the ‘Atabát is an extensive story, but it will be related here briefly, as our attention is focused on events in Fárs.

One day Mullá Husayn, who at that time was engaged in studies in the ‘Atabát under the tutelage of Siyyid [Kázim Rashtí], saw His Holiness [the Báb] while He was standing in prayer at the sanctuary of the Shrine of the Prince of Martyrs. ⁴⁹ He saw a young Siyyid, aged twenty-two, offering His supplications with an intense humility and rapture that was not to be observed previously among any of the ‘ulamá, the mystics, or the pilgrims [to that sacred Shrine]. He was carried away with petitioning God and performing the rites of pilgrimage. Mullá Husayn was astounded and attracted by his beauty and perfection. He approached [the Báb] and greeted Him. However, wrapped in devotions, His Holiness did not reply. Mullá Husayn moved to the back and waited there. Having completed the pilgrimage prayers in the inner sanctuary, [the Báb] went out to the courtyard, and to Mullá Husayn’s utter astonishment, repeated the pilgrimage prayers there.

Once more, Mullá Husayn approached and greeted Him. Being occupied with His prayers, [the Báb] did not respond, which further deepened the Akhúnd’s wonder. ⁵⁰

⁴⁷ A.Q. Afnán suggests that it was the younger uncle, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, who went on Búshih. (Private communications, Nov. 1992).

⁴⁸ For a brief description of the Báb’s stay in Búshih, see Nabíl ‘Azam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 77–80.

⁴⁹ A reference to Imám Husayn.

⁵⁰ Mullá Husayn is referred to as ‘Akhúnd’, meaning a lower-level divine who serves the people, somewhat analogous to a parish priest or a teacher of divinity at a school. The term

When [the Báb] had completed the pilgrimage prayers, He moved outside from the courtyard. The Akhúnd [Mullá Husayn] approached Him and greeted Him. This time, [the Báb] returned his greeting and apologized, “Twice you have showed your courtesy, but absorbed and transported in the rites of pilgrimage, concentrating only on the exalted Shrine of the Imám—upon Him be peace—I did not respond. For this, I wish to apologize. Whosoever attains that sacred ground must forget himself and all worldly matters. As such, I had become oblivious of My own Self and overcome with other conditions. Once more, I apologize to you.”⁵¹

Hearing such a speech only served to enhance the amazement of the Akhúnd, as he had never thought that a young merchant could manifest such extraordinary depth of humility, reverence, piety, and veneration. It was unusual and contrary to the fashionable neglect of religion. Therefore, he extensively expressed the depth of his gratitude and thanks, and asked, “Master, where is Your home, for I wish to make the customary courtesy call?” [The Báb] told him how to find the house. [Mullá Husayn] then said, “Siyyid [Kázim Rashtí] holds a service of prayers and admonition at his own home every Friday morning. Should You decide to attend, it would greatly honor the assembly, and we would be profoundly grateful.” [The Báb] responded, “There is no harm in that,” and promised to attend the session.

The Akhúnd reported with great care the details of what had transpired to Siyyid [Kázim] who had smiled and recited this verse:

That which my heart had understood in dreams
was hidden behind this veil, and is now found.

During the last two or three years, Háji Siyyid Kázim Rashtí devoted his sermons and lectures solely to the manifestation of the Promised Proof. He repeatedly expounded on the signs of His appearance and the characteristics of the Lord of Command. Many a time he would tell [his students that the promised Qá'im] must be young, not instructed by anyone else, and must be a scion of the Baní-Háshim.⁵²

has become pejorative in modern times but has been retained in several places in the present translation in the interest of authenticity. In a few places though it has been replaced with ‘Mullá Husayn’ to clarify the meaning.

⁵¹ For a description of a similar observation by Shaykh Hasan Zunúzí, see Nabil A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 30.

⁵² That is, a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

On the morning of the appointed Friday, [the Báb] made his promised visit to the home of the Siyyid where the latter was occupied with preaching from the pulpit and the house was filled to capacity with worshippers. Finding no seat available, His Holiness [the Báb] sat at the threshold. On seeing His countenance, the late Siyyid said no more, preferring pure silence. All those present were astonished. After a quarter of an hour, he resumed an oration regarding the signs of the manifestation of the Promised One. He said, “Behold, He is manifest as the sun”. With these words [p.35] he concluded his arguments and descended the pulpit.⁵³ It was at this moment that with the utmost reverence Akhúnd Mullá Husayn approached His Holiness [the Báb] and led Him to a seat next to the Siyyid.

Were I to detail the sojourn of the Báb in the ‘Atabát and the events that transpired there and the glad tidings imparted by the late Siyyid, it would be like a Qur’án commentary or a thick book of history. But our purpose is to outline the events in Fárs.

Return from the ‘Atabát

After six months of His blessed stay in the ‘Atabát had passed, His mother, longing to see her only Offspring, earnestly petitioned her brother, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, to proceed for the ‘Atabát and to bring His Holiness to Shíráz—a matter that she greatly insisted upon. Deeply devoted to his sister and Nephew, the illustrious uncle agreed and proceeded at once to the ‘Atabát.

On meeting His Holiness, he stated, “I have come to accompany you in Your return to Shíráz.” [The Báb] refused. However much the uncle insisted, He refused, stating, “I intend to remain in the ‘Atabát for some time.”

Because his sister was looking forward to His Holiness’s arrival in Shíráz, the uncle did not defer to this refusal. Through a message transmitted by Hájí Siyyid Javád Karbalá’í, he appealed to the Siyyid [Kázim] to convince His Holiness to return to Shíráz.

One day, the uncle himself went to the home of the Siyyid [Kázim] and explained the situation as follows: “My Nephew lived in Búshihir for six years before coming to the ‘Atabát. His mother has no other child beside Him and deeply longs to see Him and plans to arrange for His marriage.

⁵³ See Nabíl A‘zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 27, where Nabíl outlines slightly different recollections of that day from Shaykh Hasan Zunúzí.

He has not consented to what I say, in bidding Him return to Shíráz. Therefore, I beg of you to speak with Him, that He may accompany me to Shíráz." At first, the Siyyid replied, "Is it up to us to interfere? Allow us the benefit of His presence for a while longer." The illustrious uncle responded, "As His mother is anticipating His arrival and her approval is important as well, kindly tell Him to agree to return to Shíráz."

Eventually, the Siyyid transmitted the message to His Holiness [the Báb], saying, "If it pleases You, return to Shíráz." Because it was the wish of the Siyyid, His Holiness agreed. In the company of His uncle, He set out for Shíráz.⁵⁴

Marriage

There He rejoined His mother and relatives. After several months He expressed the desire to return to the 'Atabát. Hearing that His Holiness entertained such considerations caused His mother to grow deeply anxious, and with great urgency she spoke with her brother, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, about His marriage. Having spoken with the illustrious consort, Khadíjih-Sultán Bagum, daughter of the late Áqá Mírzá 'Alí and a paternal cousin of the Báb's mother, the arrangements for the wedding

⁵⁴ The following is noted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 132–33, on the authority of Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhúru'l-Haqq*, volume 3:

Because of the insistence of the mother of the Báb and other kinsmen as well as his own profound desire, Hájí Mír[zá] Siyyid 'Alí, the Khál, had come to Karbalá. One day the Báb met Mullá Sádiq [Khurásání] in the courtyard of the Shrine of Imám Husayn. The Báb said to him, "My uncle has recently arrived from Shíráz, and if you wish to meet him, come to our abode." The Akhúnd expressed his deep interest and with thanks assured Him he would come. That very afternoon he went to the home of the Báb where a great many of the 'ulamá, merchants, and other dignitaries were present, with the Khál sitting and conversing with the guests, and the Báb serving tea and sherbet. Mullá Sádiq spoke of the Báb's peerless qualities and His exalted character. In response, the Khál said, "Even though our entire family is well known in Shíráz and its vicinity for our pious nature and goodly characters, yet this Youth shines like a most brilliant candle in our midst, and it is most evident that He is cut from a different cloth. Our one wish is for Him to undertake study of divers sciences so it would bring added honor to us. However, He refuses." Mullá Sádiq responded, "If you do not take Him with you to Shíráz, I will see to it that He is engaged in studying." Thrilled at the prospect, the Khál stated, "Even though it is very agonizing for His mother and other kinsmen to be far from Him, yet because of your assurance, I will return by myself to Shíráz." A few days later, the Khál returned to his native city and left the Báb in Karbalá. However, it was not long thereafter that He, too, returned to Shíráz.

ceremony were made. The wedding⁵⁵ took place on Friday, the eighteenth of Rajab AH 1258 [25 August 1842] in the presence of an assemblage of the merchants, the noblemen, and the ‘ulamá of Fárs.⁵⁶

And since the appointed time for His Manifestation was near, He did not travel anywhere, but prayers and verses in Arabic and expositions on [divine] sciences continually flowed from His pen.

Ahmad, the Báb's Son

After a year, that is in AH 1259 [1843], God granted Him a son who died at birth. Before his birth, [the Báb] had prophesied, “The child is a boy named Ahmad, but it is not his destiny to live.” The child was buried in the Bábí Dukhtarán cemetery of Shíráz.⁵⁷ My paternal grandmother, [Zahrá Bagum], who was the sister of Khadíjih Bagum, related for me the details surrounding the child’s birth:

[p.40] The delivery of the child was very difficult, to the point that several times we lost all hope for the mother’s recovery. During the final surge of the labor pains, the mother of His Holiness went to Him. He asked her, “Has she delivered?” to which she responded negatively. [The Báb] then took a small mirror that lay by His side, penned a prayer and a talisman on the face of the mirror, gave it to His mother, [saying that she should] take it to His wife and hold it before her face. She took the mirror and held it before [Khadíjih Bagum]. As her gaze fell upon the mirror, instantly the lifeless child was delivered, and the mother recovered.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ As customary on such occasions, the wedding consisted of two separate celebrations, one for the men and the other for the women. The men gathered in the house of the Báb’s uncle, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, while the women gathered in the residence of Khadíjih Bagum’s father, which house was next door. The wedding was conducted by Shaykh Abú-Turáb, the Imám-Jum‘ih (A.Q. Afnán, private communications, August 1992).

⁵⁶ A copy of the Báb’s marriage certificate provides the same date, see Balyúzi, *The Báb* page opposite 80, and Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 158–61. The Báb refers to His wedding as follows: “O concourse of Light! Hear My call from the point of Fire in this ocean of snow-white water on this crimson earth. Verily, I am God, besides Whom there is no other God. On the exalted throne a beloved noble woman, bearing the same name [Khadíjih] as the beloved of the First Friend [the Prophet Muhammad], was wedded to this Great Remembrance; and verily, I caused the angels of Heaven and the denizens of Paradise, on the day of the Covenant, to bear witness, in truth, to God’s Remembrance” (The Báb, *Qayyúmu’l-Asma’*, Surih of Qarábat [The Chapter of Kinship], quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 7–8).

⁵⁷ Thus named since the tomb of Bábí Dukhtarán is located there. For further details, consult Fasa’i, *Fársnámih Násiri*, vol. 2, p. 1131.

⁵⁸ The following passage from The Báb, *Qayyúmu’l-Asma’*, Surih Qarábih, is addressed to Khadíjih Bagum (cited in Balyúzi, *Khadíjih Bagum*, pp. 8–9, edited slightly below): “O well-

The Báb's mother then returned to His presence and remonstrated with her Son, "As You evidently possessed such [preternatural] abilities, why did You not perform this act sooner and preserve the life of the child?" He smiled and replied, "It is not My destiny to leave any progeny." His mother was infuriated with this comment but said no more.⁵⁹

The wife of the Báb recounted for me:

One night I dreamt that there was a fearsome male lion in the courtyard. My hands were around the neck of the lion. The beast dragged me around the courtyard two and a half times. I woke up, profoundly alarmed and trembling with fright. His Holiness asked me the cause of my agitation, and I told him what I had dreamt. His comment was: "You awoke too soon, as [your dream portends that] our life together will not last more than two-and-a-half years." And what He said, transpired.

beloved! Prize thou highly the grace of the Great Remembrance for it cometh from God, the Loved One. Thou shalt not be a woman like unto others, if thou obeyest God in the Cause of Truth, the Most Great Truth. Know thou the great bounty conferred upon thee by the Ancient of Days, and take pride in being the consort of the Well-Beloved, Who is loved by God, the Most Great. Sufficient unto thee is this glory, which cometh unto thee from God, the All-Wise, the All-Praised. Be patient in all that God hath ordained concerning the Báb and His family. Verily, thy son, Ahmad, is with Fátimih [the Prophet Muhammad's daughter], the Sublime, in the sanctified Paradise." Also, see Balyúzi, *Khadíjih Bagum*, p. 9, for another mention by the Báb of his son Ahmad, in *Suratu'l-'Abd of the Qayyúmu'l-Asná*.

⁵⁹ See Nabil A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 76–77, for a brief reference to this incident and a purported prayer by the Báb marking the passing of His son.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BURNING BUSH

[p.41:10] It proceeded thus until finally the declaration of the Báb took place on the eve of Friday, the fifth day of Jamádiyu'l-Avval AH 1260 [23 May 1844], two hours and eleven minutes into the night.⁶⁰ There is a magnificent story of these wonderful events related by the wife of the Báb as follows:

The practice of His Holiness was that each day He would return home about an hour after the sunset and commence devotions, the chanting of the names of God, and writing. About three hours into the night He would have the evening meal and would retire about four hours past sunset. In the morning, He would rise one hour before the dawn and, after washing, would perform His ablutions and then proceed to the upper chambers of the House, which had been set aside as His formal guestroom and formed an outer apartment. There, He stood to recite tablets of visitation, prayers, supplications, and to repeat the names of God. When the sun had risen, Fiddih⁶¹ would fire up the samovar and prepare the tea in the chamber occupied by His mother. His Holiness would come down to that apartment and have the morning tea. After that, He would proceed to His merchant office to engage in His own business.

However, one night, unlike other nights, He came home at dusk, saying, "Tell Fiddih to prepare whatever we are having for the evening meal sooner than usual. Tonight I have a particular task to attend to." About an hour and a half into the night, the dinner was served, and He joined us for this purpose. Afterwards, Fiddih brought water for Him to wash His blessed hands, and, as usual in the evenings, she spread our bedding and retired to her own quarters. His Holiness retired for the night.

It was not long after that I saw Him rise from the bed and leave the room, going to the outer courtyard. At first, I thought He had gone to the lavatory. When considerable time had passed and He did not return, I was seized by apprehension. I rose from my bed and left the apartment. I looked in the lavatory but did not see Him. Checking the street door, I found it locked from within. I looked in the chamber of His mother and did not find Him there either. By then I was deeply bewildered and perplexed. I walked to the western part of the house and looked up towards the upper chamber, situated on the eastern wing of the House and serving as His private quarters, and

⁶⁰ The exact time and date of the Báb's declaration is given in the Persian *Bayán* 2:7.

⁶¹ Mírzá Habíbu'lláh adds parenthetically: Fiddih and Mubárak were two Black servants purchased in Búshihir during His days of commerce.

saw that it was well lighted. It seemed as if a thousand lamps illumined the room. This added to my surprise, because there were no guests to require so many lamps. Therefore, full of astonishment, I went up the steps to the room. When I entered, I found that the room was so brilliantly lit that it dazzled my eyes, although there was only a single lamp.

I saw His Holiness standing, facing the Qiblih; His hands raised heaven-wards, intoning a prayer. As soon as my gaze fell upon His blessed Being, I beheld such majesty and resplendence as is beyond my powers to explain. Suddenly, such awe and trepidation enveloped me that I stood transfixed where I was, trembling uncontrollably like a leaf. I could neither retrace my steps nor stand. I was close to losing consciousness. All kinds of perplexities enveloped me. Suddenly He made a gesture with His blessed hand, telling me to go back. This movement of His sanctified hands released me from that state, and I returned to the apartment and bed. But I could not sleep, and I remained deeply disturbed. Every detail of the image of His blessed Person and that scene [in the upper chamber] added to my consternation. I felt like a wrongdoer who has fallen short and awaits the all-powerful sovereign to pass sentence on her. I did not sleep that night, until the mu'adhdhin's⁶² call to morning prayers sounded from the mosque adjacent to the house. [p.45]

After the adhán [call to prayer] He came downstairs. As soon as my eyes alighted on His blessed Countenance, I was seized by awe and perplexity. He no longer seemed like the Person with whom I had lived for two and a half years. I did not have the courage to utter a word. In any case, the sun was rising and I rose, carried out my ablutions, and performed the obligatory prayer.

In accordance with our daily routine, our servant, Fiddih, had prepared the samovar and tea in the room of His mother and informed us that the tea was ready. Accompanied by Him, I proceeded there. In His mother's room, He drank some tea. Each moment added to my perplexity and conjecturing. With His blessed hand He poured a cup of tea, passed it to me, and with a heavenly smile said, "What is it that troubles you? You are distraught." I drank the tea, which eased my perturbation and anxiety to some extent. I said, "Áqá, what exalted state was it that I witnessed in Your chamber last night?" He replied, "At what an extraordinary time you arrived! That was untimely. But it was the will of God that you should see it with your own eyes. Know and be certain that at that very moment the One Exalted God appointed Me for the guidance of these servants. I am that Promised One whose advent they have been expecting. For the past twelve hundred and sixty years they have perpetually beseeched the Almighty for His appearance. I am the one appointed for the salvation of the people."

⁶² Each mosque has one or more mu'adhdhin who announce the time for the obligatory worship (salát).

As soon as I heard Him speak these words, I kissed His knees and became a believer in Him. In prostration, I raised my voice in gratitude to the Lord for having enabled me to recognize Him.⁶³

It was thus that the first woman to believe in Him was the illustrious wife of the Báb, [Khadíjih Bagum], and among the men of this family [the Afnán], it was the martyred uncle, [Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí,] and among the ‘ulamá it was Akhúnd Mullá Husayn Bushrú’í, the Bábu’l-Báb, whose story will be recounted next.

*The Evidence Presented to Akhúnd Mullá Husayn in Shiráz
and How He Attained [Faith]⁶⁴*

After the passing of Siyyid [Kázim Rashtí], who was a harbinger of this blessed Manifestation, the Akhúnd [Mullá Husayn] was afflicted with great perturbation and restlessness. Together with a group of fellow-students, who numbered more than forty, he undertook a period of meditation. The group included Áqá Mírzá [Siyyid] Muhammad-‘Alí Barfarúshí,⁶⁵ Mullá ‘Alí Bastámí, Akhúnd Mullá ‘Abdu’l-Jalíl Khú’í, Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Hádí, Mírzá Muhammad-Hádí, Áqá Siyyid Hasan Yazdí, Mullá Hasan Bajistání, Mullá Bashír, Mullá Bâqir Turk, and Mullá Ahmad Abdal—all of them learned men who were expecting the manifestation of the Promised One. Details related to each one of them are captured in the historical narratives, and our intention is only to recount the events of Fárs.

After a period of forty days of ascetic observance in the Masjíd Kufih and Masjíd Sahlih, the Akhúnd [Mullá Husayn] established a pact with

⁶³ See Balyúzi, *Khadíjih Bagum*, pp. 10–13, for a different rendering. In *Kitáb Fihrist*, the Báb states that the first descent of Spirit on Him was on 15th of the third month of AH 1260 [3 April 1844]. From this it is possible to infer that the event described by Khadíjih Bagum occurred on that date.

⁶⁴ The section pertaining to Mullá Husayn correlates closely with the narrative of Siyyid Husayn Hamadání (see *Tárikh-i Jadíd*, pp. 35–39), which is purported to be based on recollections of Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Wahháb Khurásání from utterances of Mullá Husayn and captured in the history of Hájí Mírzá Jání of Káshán. The present translator has not been able to determine if a copy of Mírzá Jání’s valuable history was in the possession of the early Afnán family. However, it is known that Mírzá Jání’s original text, which is about 80 or pages long, is extant and is in the possession of a non-Bahá’í in Tihrán. Although he did not allow his precious manuscript to be copied, because of his longstanding friendship with Fádíl Mázandarání he permitted the latter to examine this document, and he certified its authenticity. See Nabíl A’zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 52–66, for Nabíl’s moving, though very different, description of the Báb’s declaration.

⁶⁵ Quddús had returned to his native town some months prior to Siyyid Kázim’s passing; see Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 3, pp. 405–7.

his companions that if any one of them should hear the Call of the Truth, he would inform the others at once. Feeling himself drawn towards Shíráz, he set out.

Because he had been acquainted with His Holiness [the Báb] during His time in the ‘Atabát, when he arrived in Shíráz he desired a meeting [p.50] and inquired where His Holiness lived. He wished to pass the few days he would remain in Shíráz in His home. [Locating the Báb’s House], he knocked at the door, and His Holiness Himself came and opened the door. He warmly greeted and welcomed the Akhúnd, and expressed great kindness and affection. Together they proceeded to the upper room that served as the guestroom. [The Báb] said, “All day I have felt disinclined to go to the caravansary.⁶⁶ Evidently this was because of your arrival.”

After they had exchanged the customary inquiries and pleasantries, tea was served, and the Host enjoyed it with the Akhúnd [Mullá Husayn]. After showing him the courtesies due to a guest, the Host asked about the teachings and doctrines, the station and character of Shaykh [Ahmad] and Siyyid [Kázim]. Mullá Husayn replied, “Whatever the topic under discussion, their whole focus was the Traditions and sayings based on the glad tidings of the manifestation of the Promised One.” The Báb then asked, “You, the Shaykhís, have an essential doctrine that, after the passing of the late Siyyid, there must be someone else who assumes his title. It is now five months since his death. After him, who is the leader of the cause?” “As yet,” [Mullá Husayn] replied, “we have recognized no one. After him, no successor is specified. Rather, we anticipate the Author of the Cause, Whose advent is expected by all, to appear.” “What manner of man,” He asked, “must the Author of the Cause be?” The Akhúnd pondered for a moment and then enumerated a certain number of the spiritual and physical⁶⁷ characteristics of the expected Person. “Do you observe these in Me?” As Mullá Husayn had not observed any signs of knowledge during his Host’s residence in Karbalá and knew that He had not studied with the deceased teachers, responded, “I do not see any of these qualities in you.” His Holiness did not respond to this.

After a while, [Mullá Husayn] observed several books in a small niche. Examining one of them, he found it to be a commentary on the Surih

⁶⁶ Mírzá Habíbu’lláh adds parenthetically: The Báb’s place of business was at the custom building, known as the caravansary.

⁶⁷ The original Arabic phrase literally means “theoretical and practical.”

Baqara.⁶⁸ After reading a little, he saw that it was a commentary like no other. He was astonished and asked who the author might be. "A mere youthful beginner," He answered, "who has much other knowledge and attainments, in addition to this." Again, he asked who and where the writer was. "You see Him." Mullá Husayn did not apprehend His meaning, "You see Him." He read another page, where it was written, "the explanation of the essence of the essence." Considering this an error, he stated, "It should be, 'the explanation of the essence'" He answered, "It is, 'the explanation of the essence of the essence.' What can I say! The Author of this commentary writes masterfully and with utmost authority. Consider the passage attentively." This time, the Akhúnd read more closely and realized that the phrase, "exposition of the essence of the essence," was correct as it was written. He said, "I am tired. You read some more, and I will listen." His Holiness read for a time, and then with the customary haughtiness of an Akhúnd, Mullá Husayn said, "It is enough. That was sufficient. Do not trouble Yourself any further."

Mullá Husayn enjoyed lunch and then rested for a while. In the late afternoon, His Holiness had invited several merchants and Shaykhí 'ulamá to drink tea and meet the Akhúnd. [In the course of the conversation,] it was agreed that the next morning they would all gather at Masjid Ilkhání where the Akhúnd would deliver a lecture.

The group gathered, as appointed, in the mosque. When the Akhúnd [Mullá Husayn] wanted to start his discourse, he found that in place of eloquent expression and clear explanations, he had become tongue-tied, to the extent that he lost all power of speech. Filled with amazement, he thought, "this is so contrary to custom and nature, it must have some purpose," and he wondered "who is exercising this secret control, and what might be his object in rendering me mute and in such state of ecstasy that, in this gathering, I am like one who has been transported in spirit?". Such was his powerlessness, and so strong the astonishment and emotion which took possession of him, that he was not able to speak on any topic, and he cancelled the meeting and returned to his lodgings, deeply bewildered.

The next day when he wished to deliver his lecture, he found himself even more mute and devoid of ready knowledge than the previous day. There was nothing he could do but apologize to the audience.

⁶⁸ See, Lawson, "The Qur'án Commentary of Sayyid 'Alí Muhammad, the Báb." For copies of manuscripts see, MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bábí Doctrine and History*.

The same happened on the third day. On this last occasion, he departed from the mosque in a state of utmost misery and perplexity. The Exalted One, noting Mullá Husayn's despondency, told the rest of their friends to go to their own houses, while he took Mullá Husayn, with his consent, to His own home.

When they arrived at His Sacred House, after a short rest, the Báb said, "By what proofs and signs of his station, can you recognize the Author of the Cause, and by what proof can you pass from distraction and wandering in the valley of search to recognizing the Beloved and have complete confidence in the guidance He gives?" Mullá Husayn answered, "By scientific writings and by the Exalted Point which is the well-spring and center of all the knowledge of past and future prophets and saints." "Do you perceive these qualities in Me?" He inquired, "What if I were so endowed with such attributes?" Upon hearing this, Mullá Husayn was deeply perturbed, and said, "That You are devout, godly, and holy of life, is true; but innate knowledge and infinite wisdom are the only entry and evidence of this most exalted Station." At this comment, His Holiness was silent for while as though in wonder, while Mullá Husayn thought to himself, "What idea can this devout and sincere Youth be harboring that He so persistently introduces this topic, although he has no education? I must at all events ask some questions of His honored Person which He has never heard discussed and cannot answer, so that He may be turned aside from His vain imaginings."

Therefore, he presented to His Holiness a question which appeared to him very difficult to resolve, and which he had always had in mind during the lifetime of the late Siyyid [Kázim], but had never found an opportunity of propounding it in such wise as to have the difficulty removed in a satisfactory manner. Without hesitation, his Host provided a full and sufficient answer. Mullá Husayn was filled with amazement. He asked another difficult question, which his Host again answered comprehensively and conclusively. Mute with astonishment, [Mullá Husayn] reflected to himself, "Is not this Youth Who but a few days ago did not correctly read the Commentary on the Surih Baqara? How is it that He has now become the source and well-spring of all the sciences of the past?" All manners of thoughts filled his being.

All of a sudden, he observed His Holiness anew: he was sitting in a most dignified and majestic attitude, the left hand laid on the left knee and the right hand over it. He began to utter most wondrous verses containing answers to whatever question passed through Mullá Husayn's mind, until many verses had been revealed from the Fount of Divine Revelation.

During this entire period, Mullá Husayn waited anxiously for Him to conclude, so strong was the fear and awe that possessed him.

At length He ceased, and [Mullá Husayn], in the extremity of terror, rose up to flee, as some delinquent might flee from a mighty sovereign. He asked permission to take his leave, but His Holiness responded, "Remain seated! Where are you going? Anyone who beholds you in this state would think you had lost your mind." Constrained by His bidding, he could do nothing but sit again, while His Holiness withdrew to the private section of the House.

[p.60] During His absence, the Akhúnd [Mullá Husayn] was prey to most anxious thoughts. Care for worldly interests and the possibility of opposition from divers quarters, the need for caution and prudence, all passed through his mind. However, he realized that in the presence of the Lord, he could not be insincere, nor offer excuses and objections. He saw no way out save confession and acceptance. He was greatly perturbed, agitated, and troubled beyond all measure.

An hour later, contrary to His practice on other days, the Báb Himself brought in the tea, seated Himself near Akhúnd [Mullá Husayn], and showered him with most gracious expressions. He poured tea [for Mullá Husayn] and handed him the cup, but the honored Akhúnd, remained as one distraught and so amazed that he again asked permission to depart. "You are still in a state of extreme bewilderment," [the Báb] informed him, "though you are not yourself aware of it. Anyone who saw you in this state, would think you were possessed."

After an hour, however, when he had regained his composure, [Mullá Husayn] was permitted to take his leave.⁶⁹

On the occasion of the next visit, [Mullá Husayn] was shown a commentary that the Báb had written on the Hadíth-i Jariyyih.⁷⁰ He read it

⁶⁹ The date of the Báb's Declaration is fixed in the Persian *Bayán* 6:13 and 2:7, "And from the moment when the Tree of the Bayán appeared until it disappeared is the Resurrection of the Apostle of God, as is divinely foretold in the Qur'án; the beginning of which was when two hours and eleven minutes had passed on the eve of the fifth of Jamádiyū'l-Avval, AH 1260 [22 May 1844], which is the year of 1270 of the Declaration of the Mission of Muhammad" (translation in *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 107). In a Tablet in honor of Mírzá Qábil of Ábádih, 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifies this date as Kamál (8th) of Azamat; see Ishráq-Khávarí, *Gangínih Hudúd va Ahkám*, p. 426.

⁷⁰ Ishráq-Khávarí, *Kitáb Muhadhírat*, p. 14, notes that Jariyyih was a daughter of Khadíjih, the wife of Muhammad. For a discussion of this Tradition of the Handmaiden attributed to Imám Ja'far Sádiq, see Kulayni, *al-Usul min al-Kafi*, vol. 1, pp. 95–96. See also Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 30.

and recalled that the late Siyyid [Kázim] had stated when he was alive that the Proof Who was to appear would compose a full explanation of this Tradition. Now Mullá Husayn saw his Promised manifest before him. Moreover, he remembered that one day, when he was alone with the late Siyyid [Kázim] in the library, in the course of conversation, he [Mullá Husayn] had asked why the Surih Yúsuf [Joseph] of the Qur'án is titled the *Absanu'l-Qisas* [the Best of Stories], to which the late Siyyid had replied that it was not then the proper occasion for explaining the reason. This incident remained concealed in his mind.

Now His Holiness said, "Mullá Husayn, do you recall inquiring once of the late Siyyid, why the Surih Yúsuf is called the *Absanu'l-Qisas*, and how he replied that the proper occasion for explaining this had not yet come? The time for this explanation has now arrived." Then He showed [Mullá Husayn] a commentary on this Surih revealed from the Most Exalted Pen. On reading it, the eminent Akhúnd attained the shore of faith and prostrated himself in gratitude to God.⁷¹

⁷¹ In the course of the first section of the Báb, *Kitáb Panj Sha'n* (the Book of Five Modes), p. 9, revealed on the sixth anniversary of His declaration, the Báb describes the night of His declaration in the language of prayer:

In the name of God. There is no God but God. Sanctified art Thou, O God, My God. I testify that at an hour such as this, Thou hast bestowed honor and exaltation, glory and loftiness upon this night and hast sanctified it above all other nights through Thy Manifestation. This is the hour of the appearance of the Point of Bayán, Who is the sign of Thy dawning, the countenance of Thy morn of eternity, the evidence of Thy unity, the manifestation of Thy oneness, the confirmation of Thy loftiness, the signifier of Thy holiness, and the very essence of the divinity of Thy kingdom. Sanctified and exalted art Thou, that thou hast glorified this hour by creating whatsoever is within the Bayán and by decreeing the manifestation of whatsoever Thou willest. I testify and all things testify that on such a night as this I was at My house before Thy threshold when the first person [i.e., Mullá Husayn] who has tasted the sweetness of Thy love in this Ridván attained to Me. He prostrated himself before Thy effulgence in this Paradise, and with him were the Letters of the Three. At such an hour, Thou didst cause Me to show Myself to him. Sanctified and exalted art Thou for enabling him [i.e., Mullá Husayn] to recognize upon hearkening unto the signs of Thy guidance, and for having created in him a clear vision when I made mention of Thee. Therefore praise and gratitude be to Thee, O My God, a praise the like of which no soul hath offered in the past nor any will offer in the future, and such gratitude as none before hath offered and none will offer in the future, for the first who recognized My person, and for the recognition with which he recognized Me.

From this passage it is not clear whether the three travel companions of Mullá Husayn also attained the presence of the Báb that very night, or on a later occasion.

Conversion of Mullá Sádiq Khurásání

Mullá Husayn said, "During our stay at the Masjid Kufih and Masjid Sahlíh prior to dispersing [in search of the Promised Qá'im], my companions and I established a pact that whichever of us first heard the Call of Truth would inform the others. One in particular, Akhúnd Mullá Sádiq [known as] Muqaddas Khurásání, proceeded towards Isfahán and is now in that city. Please instruct me to go to Isfahán and to inform him so that he, too, may attain the station of faith." "There is no harm in that," the Báb replied, "however, it must be conditioned upon several things." "Whatever is Your command," [Mullá Husayn] responded, "I will instantly and faithfully obey."

The Báb then revealed a detailed commentary on one of the shorter Surihs of the Qur'án and entrusted it to the honored Akhúnd Mullá Husayn, instructing him, "Take this commentary with you to Isfahán. After you have renewed your acquaintance with the Akhúnd [Mullá Sádiq Muqaddas], first ask if, during his travels, he has heard of, or met, anyone who advanced a claim to be the Promised One? Should he respond that he has neither met a claimant nor heard of such a call, ask if he himself is putting forth a claim. Should he present one, he must confirm it by means of divine verses, in the way that you have witnessed. Only if he states that he has no claim of his own are you to present him with this commentary, without identifying its Author, as he himself must discern [the Source of Revelation]."

Mullá Husayn proceeded to Isfahán in accordance with the Báb's instructions and upon arrival, was reunited with Mullá Sádiq. "O honored Akhúnd," he asked him, "after we separated, did you meet any claimant or hear any call?" "I have encountered no one, and heard no call," he replied. "Do you suspect any qualities in yourself, which could serve as evidence of some exalted station?" Deeply puzzled, Mullá Sádiq rejoined, "Have you gone mad? You and I are of no account. The One who raises a call must possess innate knowledge. Have you lost your rational faculties, that you ask such a question?"

[p.65] Upon being certain of Mullá Sádiq's position, in accordance with the Báb's wish, he presented the commentary to him. After reading a little of it, Mullá Sádiq seized the hem of Mullá Husayn's garment, demanding, "Who wrote this commentary? The Author of these words is certainly the Truth. Where is He, and Who is He?" Refusing to answer his question directly, [Mullá Husayn] said "I am not permitted to say; you

must discern it for yourself.” In the face of [Mullá Sádiq’s] insistence, he remained adamant.

Soon the darkness of dusk fell, and supper was served. Afterwards, the honored Mullá Husayn retired, satisfied in the knowledge that he had carried out the mission entrusted him in its totality.⁷²

The story of Mullá Sádiq and the manner of his recognition is well loved and is no doubt related thoroughly in narratives of the history of Isfahán. As such, this servant will not add to the burden of the reader.

In short, after achieving certitude, Mullá Sádiq together with several others proceeded to Shíráz so that they would attain the blessed presence [of the Báb]. Upon arrival in Shíráz, however, they learned that His Holiness had departed on His journey to Mecca.

The honored Akhúnd Mullá Sádiq and his companions began to propagate the news of the Revelation, particularly in the Masjid Báqir-Ábád. Ascending the pulpit, they would present proofs to the people. This matter was reported to the ‘ulamá, who consulted [on the matter]. By order of [the Governor] Husayn Khán, the Ajúdán-Báshí, known as Sáhíb-Ikhtiyár, those illustrious personages were seized, beaten with sticks, their beards burnt, their noses pierced and a rope passed through the incision. From dawn to dusk, the executioner paraded them through the bazaar and received a sum of money from each shopkeeper and artisan.

At sunset, those oppressed ones, being extremely hungry and fatigued, and having been severely beaten and injured, were expelled from the city.⁷³

⁷² Mírzá Habíbu’lláh has added the following marginal note in his own hand: “Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Muhammad, the illustrious son of Mullá Muhammad-Sádiq Muqaddas related for me the following description which he had heard from his honored father: ‘No matter how I implored Mullá Husayn [to divulge the name of Him Who claimed to be the promised Manifestation], he refused and would only state that it was forbidden for him to do so and that I must seek Him independently. Disappointed by this response, I proceeded to the room set aside for devotions and performed my ablutions. I spread the prayer mat and began my supplications. I entreated with such earnestness that the tears pouring from my eyes dampened the prayer mat. In the midst of such contemplation and in a state of near-unconsciousness, I beheld the Young Siyyid that I had met in the gathering of late Siyyid [Kázim Rashtí]. He stood over me saying, ‘What do you desire? If you seek Faith, it stands apparent and manifest.’ This experience was repeated twice before dawn. After the third occurrence of this vision, I came to the room where Mullá Husayn was resting. I woke him and said, ‘Mullá Husayn, I have discovered the identity of the Master of this Cause. It must be none other than that same Shirází Siyyid that we met in the ‘Atabát.’ Mullá Husayn responded affirmatively.”

⁷³ A similar description is provided in Nabil A‘zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 144–48 relating to the events that befell Quddús, Mullá Sádiq, and Mullá ‘Alí-Akbar Ardistání subsequent to the Báb’s return from pilgrimage.

The Arrival of Quddús

The affirmation of faith of Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí Barfurúshí, who was surnamed Quddús: He was among the ‘ulamá and learned divines famous for piety and godliness, and because of his inner spirituality and purity, no sooner had he heard this Call than he set out for Shíráz to investigate the matter.⁷⁴

Upon arrival at that city and meeting the Báb in the street, without seeking proofs or signs, nor evidence or deductions, he instantly attained complete certitude. From the moment of that meeting, he ranked among the foremost disciples, manifesting unsurpassed qualities, displaying all-embracing virtues. The details related to his glorious life, his magnificent services, and his martyrdom are described in depth in the history of the events of Fort Tabarsí and as such will not be repeated in these pages.⁷⁵

The Báb’s Blessed Journey to Mecca in Sha‘bán [AH] 1260⁷⁶

The blessed and heavenly pilgrimage group that included the Báb left for Mecca—an undertaking that completed the proof for all who dwell on earth. Among those who were in His blessed presence were the late Hájí Abú’l-Hasan, father of Áqá Mírzá Báqir Khán Dihqán, whose goodly qualities are beyond any description; Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí, surnamed Quddús; and Hájí Mubárák, a slave with a pure nature and pleasant disposition who had been purchased by the Báb when He was a merchant in Búshíhr.⁷⁷ They set out from Shíráz. That year a large contingent of the city’s inhabitants, including many of the ‘ulamá and merchants, were also

⁷⁴ In his writings, Quddús describes his vision of the Báb some time prior to the Latter’s declaration that enabled him to recognize the promised Manifestation. He further states that on the first day of Jamádiyu’l-Avval [18 May 1844], he left his native town for Shíráz. For a detailed discussion of the life and writings of Quddús, see the present translator’s forthcoming book on this subject, *Quddús: Life and Writings*.

⁷⁵ Among the various eyewitness accounts of Shaykh Tabarsí, the most detailed were recorded by Lutf-‘Alí Mírzá Shirázi and Mír Abú-Talib Shahmírzádi. With the Bahá’í World Centre’s consent, the present translator is completing a translation of the latter account.

⁷⁶ August–September 1844. The Báb in one of His sermons, known as *Khutbah Jaddiyyih*, gives the date of His departure from Shíráz as 26 Sha‘bán (10 September 1844); see, Ishráq-Khávarí, *Kitáb Muhadhirat*, pp. 729–31.

⁷⁷ The Báb provides a brief outline of His hajj journey in the Persian *Bayán* 4:18; for translation see *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 89–91. See also the Persian *Bayán* 4:16 and 6:17.

travelling to Mecca.⁷⁸ Shaykh Hášhim (a brother of the Imám-Jum'ih of Shíráz, Shaykh Abú-Turáb) who was much hated and very quarrelsome, was also among this group of pilgrims.

That year, pilgrims from all corners of the world where Muslims live were proceeding towards Mecca, for according to the Islamic teachings, whenever the 10th day of Dhí'l-Hajjih, which is the observance of the 'Id-i Adha [the Festival of Sacrifice], falls on a Friday, that pilgrimage is called the 'Greater Pilgrimage,' and that is the year of the Manifestation [of the Promised One]. According to a well-known Tradition, [on such an occasion], the Qá'im will place His back against the wall in the court of the Masjidu'l-Ahrám and will openly declare His Cause.

At that time, journey by sea was most difficult and disagreeable, as steam vessels did not operate in the Persian Gulf. It was necessary to go by sailing ship, which made the voyage to Jaddih by sea a minimum of three or four months. One day the late Hájí Abú'l-Hasan [who had been a travel companion of the Báb] described his pilgrimage journey to this servant, saying: [p.70]

During the time I was in the presence of His Holiness aboard the ship, there was a large group of pilgrims, who for the most part were hostile [towards the Báb]. Among them was Shaykh Abú-Hášhim who molested [Him] both verbally and physically, and would cause great discomfort for His Holiness. The affront and nuisance he caused reached such a degree that on several occasions the captain of the ship came and reprimanded

⁷⁸ From Búshih, the Báb sent the following letter to His wife in Shíráz (Text quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 166–67, the original letter is displayed in the International Bahá'í Archives in Haifa):

O the best of Protectors! In the Name of God, the Exalted.

My sweet life! May thou be guarded by God!

It was not because of sadness that I did not write sooner,

Nor was it due to My heart being sorrowed

Nay, My hand wrote thee,

But My tears washed away the words.

God is My witness that I have been overcome with so much sorrow since our separation that it cannot be described. However, since we are all seized in the grasp of destiny, such has been decreed for us. May the Lord of the world, by the righteousness of the Five Near-Ones, ordain My return.

It is now two days since we arrived in Búshih. The temperature is extremely hot, but the Lord of creation will protect [us]. Apparently, our ship will sail this very month. May God watch over Us, out of His mercy. At the time of departure, it was not possible to meet My esteemed mother. Therefore, kindly convey My greetings to her and ask for her prayers. Regarding the silk cloth, I will write to Bombay. I am also intent on securing a maidservant for you. God willing, that which is ordained will come to pass. Upon thee rest the peace, favors, and grace of God.

him not to torment the innocent Siyyid [i.e., the Báb]. However, he did not change his behavior.

One day he started an argument with the captain and uttered such unseemly words that the latter became so aggravated that he instructed his sailors to seize the Shaykh and throw him in the sea. Greatly perturbed and enraged, the captain himself stood nearby, and the sailors hastened to bring the Shaykh to throw him in the sea. At that instant, His Holiness arrived and interceded. The captain did not accept [His intercession] and commanded loudly, "Throw this accursed one into the sea!"

Seeing that they were about to throw the Shaykh in the sea, His Holiness threw Himself on the Shaykh and embraced him firmly, and pleaded with the captain to forgive the Shaykh's offences one more time, on His account. Deeply moved by the benevolence and the generosity manifested by His Holiness, the captain accepted His intercession. Then he said, "Master, this accursed one has wronged you more than anyone else, so You should be even more eager than others to see him perish. Why did You stop us?" "Such people only harm themselves," the Báb said, "we should look upon their deeds with sin-covering eyes." The meekness exhibited by His sacred Self and His intercession on behalf of the Shaykh caused a change of heart among many passengers, and they no longer displayed enmity and hatred, instead becoming repentant and remorseful.

Once our ship had arrived at Jaddih, His Holiness proceeded towards Mecca. That year, there were innumerable pilgrims. Roughly speaking, the Arab, Turkish, Iranian, Kurdish, and Indian pilgrims, together totaling in excess of seventy thousand, for the most part came from the ranks of the 'ulamá and the learned. Many had mastered the science of divination and jafr [numerology] and had determined that in that year, the True Summoner would openly issue his summons in Mecca, and they had come to witness the event.

Among them was the renowned Hájí Siyyid Ja'far Kashfí,⁷⁹ who ranked as the ablest in the field of numerology and who had a profound knowledge of jafr. He had studied the Hadíth-i Marvy narrated by the Immaculate One [the eighth Imám, 'Alí ar-Ridá], upon Him rest peace: "In the year Sixty, His Cause will be made manifest and His Remembrance exalted," and the allusions of certain mystics who had openly given many signs for His appearance, such as Sháh Nímatu'lláh Valí, who in his poems had clearly given the news of the Manifestation:

If thou reachest the year of planting *ghars*,⁸⁰ behold,
the renewal of the sovereign, realm, nation, and faith.

⁷⁹ The renowned father of Vahíd Dárábí and one of the most distinguished theologians of his generation. For a detailed discussion of his life and writings, see Rabbani, *The Bábís of Nayríz: History and Documents*.

⁸⁰ According to the Abjad system, *ghars* has a numerical value of (1000+200+60=)1260, hence signifying the year of the appearance of the Báb.

And again:

With the passing of *ghars* years,
I see the Absent One has appeared.

And also in the collection of poetry by Khajih Háfi:

Behold the crest of the moon in Muharram,
and drink from the wine cup,
Since this is a sign of safety and absence of harm,
and augurs the year of peace and love.

He [i.e., Siyyid Ja'far] had studied these according to the science of numerology and had consulted an expert in divination: "As this is the year 'sixty,' will the Qá'im appear in Mecca?" To which he had received an affirmative response. He had then asked, "If I go [on pilgrimage], will I attain the presence of the Qá'im?" And again he had received a positive response. The Siyyid had then asked if he was destined to become a follower of the Qá'im, to which the expert responded: "You will not become a believer."

I myself met Háji Siyyid Ja'far in Mecca. He saw [the Báb] with his own eyes and heard [Him proclaim His Faith] with his own ears but did not become a believer.

Háji Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí [Quddús], some other believers, and I were in His blessed presence [of the Báb]. After the conclusion of the pilgrimage rites throngs of pilgrims were present in the Masjidu'l-Haram, and all the courtyards and rooftops overflowed with waves of people. His Holiness approached the Shrine and leaned His blessed back against the Ka'bih, holding the door-chain with His sacred Hand. With the utmost clarity and eloquence He announced three times loudly: "I am the Qá'im Whose appearance you have been expecting!" [p.75]

It was a true wonder that despite of the massive multitude and the noise, as soon as the Báb begun to speak a complete silence overcame that whole area in such wise that if a bird were to flap its wings, everybody would hear. Once complete silence was established over everyone, He uttered the same blessed proclamation three times, with the utmost distinctness, so that all the pilgrims could hear.

The pilgrims were recounting and translating the Báb's words for one another. All conversations among the multitude concerned only this event. Indeed, the very first topic that the pilgrims of every land wrote about to their kinfolk was that a young merchant and Siyyid, twenty-five years of age, had taken hold of the Ka'bih's chain and with resounding voice had advanced the claim of the Qá'imiyat.

In a short time, this news was spread in all parts of the world. Those who sought the Truth and whose souls were prepared to attain any degree of certitude responded, "We hear and obey!"⁸¹ and made haste on the pathway of Faith.

⁸¹ Qur'án 2:285.

The news of this event was noised abroad in Shíráz. Prior to the voyage to Mecca not all of the city's inhabitants were aware of this Call. Some had heard it and recognized its truth, while others had not heard the claim, and yet others were saying, "These words are imputed to Him, and there is no truth in them." After the news of Mecca had reached Shíráz and His exact utterances were written and disseminated, the whole of the people were now aware and fully informed, and no room remained for doubt and vacillation for anyone.⁸²

⁸² See Nabíl A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 130–41, for further details on the Báb's hajj journey.

CHAPTER FOUR

RETURN OF THE BÁB TO SHÍRÁZ

Return from Búshihr

The time was nigh for the arrival of His Holiness in Shíráz.⁸³ Shaykh Abú- [p.77:6]
Háshim, [brother of Imám-Jum‘ih,] wrote a most provocative account to Shíráz, promoting mischief and raising the cry, “Our religion is lost!” A great excitement was caused when his letter reached Shíráz. A contingent of the ‘ulamá, such as Shaykh Husayn Zalim [the tyrant], known as the Názimu’sh-Sharí‘ah; Akhúnd Mullá Muhammad-‘Alí Mahallátí; Shaykh Mahdí Kajawví; and a score of others went before Husayn Khán, who was at that time the governor-general of Shíráz. They complained, “The Siyyid Who publicly claimed [the station of] the Qá’imiyyat and the Bábiyyat⁸⁴ in Mecca will shortly arrive [in Shíráz], and you must join with the adherents of Islam in quenching this fire and silencing this Call, so it is kept under control.” Husayn Khán gave in to the flattery of the clerics. When the Báb arrived at Búshihr, Husayn Khán sent a mounted escort of several men to Búshihr to arrest His Holiness and to return Him to Shíráz.

Late one afternoon, His Holiness was standing on an elevation by the village of Dálakí,⁸⁵ a distance of two days’ journey to Búshihr, when the troops passed through that location. His Holiness instructed Hájí

⁸³ The Báb gives the following chronology of His travels in a Khutbih [Sermon] (Isbráq-Khávarí, *Kitáb Mubádirát*, pp. 729–31):

Left Shíráz	10 September 1844
Arrived Búshihr	19 September 1844
Left the port	2 October 1844
Reached Mecca	12 December 1844
Hajj Completed	24 December 1844
Left Mecca	7 January 1845
Arrived Medina	16 January 1845
Left Medina	12 February 1845
Arrived Jiddah	24 February 1845
Embarked on ship	27 February 1845
Sailed for Iran	4 March 1845

⁸⁴ Meaning, claims to be the Promised One and to be the gate of communication with the Imáms.

⁸⁵ About five miles south of Burázján.

Mubáarak, “Go quickly and ask the soldiers where they are going and what their mission is.” In accordance with His command, Hájí Mubáarak approached the soldiers and asked where they were going. The soldiers, being argumentative, said, “Where we are going and what we are doing is none of your business, black man!” Hájí Mubáarak returned to His presence and informed Him, “The horsemen refused to say what their mission is.” The Bááb said, “Go and tell them to come to Me.” Hájí Mubáarak went to the soldiers and said, “My Master asked that you should be so kind as to come, so that we can make your acquaintance.”

[p.80] A certain Aslán Khán, who was older and wiser than the rest, came back with Hájí Mubáarak and attained His blessed presence. He was asked, “Where are you going and what mission have you been given?” The soldier again refused to divulge their orders. The Bááb said, “No reason to conceal it: your mission is to take the Siyyid-i Bááb to Shíráz. Do not trouble yourselves. I stand ready. If you went on to Búshihir according to your orders and passed this village by, you would not accomplish your mission.” The official looked closely at His Countenance and noted all the signs that he had been given in Shíráz to identify Him and realized that this was the Siyyid in person. He returned to his companions and reported what had transpired, which caused them all to exclaim with wonder, “If a man is sought by the government or the people, it is only natural for him to flee the officers sent to take him under guard from one place to another. How is it then that with the utmost courage and firmness this Personage has come forward, informing us that He is undoubtedly the object of our quest? Of a certainty He must be of the true!”

The valor of the Bááb awakened the consciousness of the men. They attained His blessed presence, and His Holiness showered upon them His immense kindness and benevolence. He instructed Hájí Mubáarak to serve them the supper he had prepared, as these men had been traveling and were hungry and tired. Hájí Mubáarak served the same quantity of food that he had prepared for two persons and brought it. The men saw that there was very little food and that it would not even suffice one of them, but they sat to dine and ate their fill. This experience deepened their wonder. In the course of the journey they witnessed many such miracles.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ In a Tablet dated 24 Jamádiy' th-Thání AH 1261/30 June 1845 to His uncle, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, the Bááb mentions the esteem that the horsemen showed Him during this journey (A.Q. Afnán, private communications, August 1993).

With the utmost respect and dignity, the men accompanied His Holiness to Shíráz and told their friends and acquaintances of what they had observed and of the grandeur and majesty of the Báb.

Return of the Exalted One from Mecca to Shíráz in AH 1261 [1845]

In all events, after the true ‘ulamá, who were the heralds of the Manifestation, had raised the news of the Cause throughout the realm and it had been particularly widely reported in Shíráz, His Holiness returned from Mecca in AH 1261. When He proclaimed His Cause publicly in Mecca, the news spread even further than before. This is reported in all the histories of the Cause and will be recounted briefly here as well.

In short, His Holiness arrived in Shíráz in the company of the guards. They proceeded directly to the governor’s office and reported their arrival. They recounted all that had occurred—how they had met Him at the first staging-post at Dálakí and what they had seen with their own eyes along the way—to the Nizamud-Dawlih. Husayn Khán ordered that His Holiness should be detained. This news spread fast. Some ignorant people with a reputation for knowledge were present and began to torment and mock [the Báb]. They attributed to Him what was applicable to themselves. Shaykh Husayn Zálím tormented His Holiness with his own hand.

When the maternal uncle [of the Báb] and the revered mother of His Holiness were informed of these events, they were deeply perturbed. The latter went to her brother, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, and began to lament and bewail [over the condition of her Son].

The Báb’s maternal uncle departed for the governor’s office. On meeting Husayn Khán, he said, “It is reported that His Holiness has returned from the exalted city of Mecca, and His mother and other members of His family have been awaiting His arrival. Why have you detained Him? Is He not a descendant of the Prophet of God? Is there no shame before His illustrious Ancestor?” Noting the forceful manner in which the uncle defended Him, Husayn Khán replied, “If you will mediate and serve as a guarantor that He will not go to meet with anyone, that no one will be admitted to Him, and that He will not write anything or share His writing with anyone, I will release Him.”

Because the illustrious uncle, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, was respected by the merchants and associated with reputable people, he responded, “I associate with men from all strata of society, and His Holiness is my Nephew and has returned from Mecca. Naturally, the people want to [p.85]

see Him. How can I give my word, when He has come from Mecca, to say that He may not see people?" Faced with irrefutable logic, Husayn Khán responded, "For three days, people may come and go, but on the fourth day, you are to close the door to all and allow no one to visit your house." Having given his surety on these terms, the uncle brought His Holiness home with him.

[Upon the Báb's arrival home], His mother and His blessed wife, along with other friends and relatives, attained His honored presence, and for three days all the believers and friends delighted in this union and benefited from its immeasurable spiritual bestowal. Divine verses were sent down like a continuous rain: all were recorded in His own blessed Hand on large sheets of cashmere paper and bestowed upon the visitors.

On completion of the three days, all access was denied to the friends, and no one was permitted to attain the presence [of the Báb]. However, even if the Sun of Reality is covered by a sullen cloud of formal restrictions, its radiance and effulgence shines ever more apparent. Consequently, although to all appearances the believers were denied access [to the Báb], they still continued to submit to Him their questions and difficulties, and to receive replies, for it is incumbent on the generous to answer him who asks, especially when the questions refer to religious matters, and the demands are for guidance and direction in the path of salvation. The result was that many people, including people from the surrounding areas, came to inquire into the matter, submitted their questions, and received full and satisfactory answers, each according to his own capacity, so that they too were led to believe.⁸⁷

Arrival of Vahid Dárábí

One of those who attained the presence [of the Báb] in Shíráz was the honored Áqá Siyyid Yahyá Dárábí. His story is wonderful and amazing: he was the illustrious son of Hájí Siyyid Ja'far Kashfí, who has been mentioned in the recollections of Hájí Abú'l-Hasan, in the section pertaining to Mecca.

[Siyyid Yahyá Dárábí] was eminent among the mujtahids and students of truth, gifted with supernatural faculties and an exalted spiritual station, unrivalled in debate and investigation, no less than for his austerity and piety. At that time he was in Tíhrán. The late Muhammad Sháh Qájár

⁸⁷ This paragraph is congruent with the narrative of Siyyid Husayn Hamadání; see *Tárikh-i Jadíd*, p. 203.

trusted him profoundly, to the extent that he would not take any action or assign any task contrary to the permission and the fatwa of Siyyid Yahyá. When the news of this Cause reached the monarch's ears, he summoned the honored Áqá Siyyid Yahyá and said, "According to the information received at our court, a certain Personage in Fárs has advanced a claim to the stations of Qá'imíyyat and Bábiyyat. As you enjoy our utmost confidence, you must proceed at once to Fárs, and fully investigate a matter of such universal purport. Send word to our court regarding the truth or falsity of these claims, so that we may know our civil and religious duties. You must depart with all haste, and write a prompt report on this issue for us." He provided for his expenses, ordered that he be provided with a horse, and sent him on his way to Shíráz.

Upon arrival at Shíráz he met with the honored Hájí Siyyid Javád Karbalá'í, who was a scholar of divinity and wise in the wisdom of the eternal. The two had been friends and associates in the 'Atabát. Through him, [Siyyid Yahyá] met with several other [Bábi] 'ulamá and prominent believers and, having explained the purpose of his investigation, requested a meeting [with the Báb]. However, the summons was delayed because of various obstacles. He spent the interval in examining some of the revealed verses. Finding in them no ground for objection or denial, he said in confidence to the honored Hájí Siyyid Javád, "These luminous words and verses bear witness to the truth of the claim and leave no room for doubt; yet were I permitted to behold some miracle or sign beyond this, I would gain a fuller certitude and assurance." That illustrious person answered, [p.90] "If we were to ask that Perfect Reality for wonders and miracles, we would be like those who have seen a thousand marvels more wonderful than the fabled cleaving of the moon, but are so befuddled that they continue to seek light from a candle or lantern in the full blaze of the radiant sun."

In short, Áqá Siyyid Yahyá prepared a petition, requesting that a commentary on the blessed Surih of Kawthar be revealed for his edification. One night, about four hours after sunset, he himself took this supplication to the Blessed House of the Báb and attained His presence, presenting his request. [The Báb] instructed him to return at dawn to receive the response to his request.

In the early dawn, as bidden, [Siyyid Yahyá] again attained His presence and was given the response in the form of an unrivaled commentary on the Surih of Kawthar extending to nearly five thousand written verses.⁸⁸ He returned with it to his own home. Then, astonished by the number

⁸⁸ For comparison, the Qur'án is slightly more than 6,600 verses.

and quality of its luminous verses, on meeting the honored Siyyid Javád Karbalá'í, he remarked, "I have beheld a marvel a hundred-thousand-fold beyond what I have [previously] witnessed, for, with all my learning and scholarship, I spent nine whole days in writing one single page of questions containing not more than twelve lines. At four hours into the night, I presented them myself, and at dawn, I received such a response! I am astonished that these luminous verses, of such eloquence and clarity of style, should be revealed and written down during five or six hours of the latter part of the night, which is the time for His rest and sleeping."

As soon as Áqá Siyyid Yahyá had studied that most precious proof, he prostrated himself in adoration, and attained certitude. After a sojourn of some little while, during which the honor of an interview was accorded him, he received permission to set out for Yazd, by way of Bávanát and Marvast [Marv-Dasht], to proclaim the blessed Cause and to teach the Faith there. The details of the occurrences in Yazd will certainly be documented in the histories of that city. God willing, his return from Yazd and the events of Nayríz will be narrated at the proper place in this book.

The Báb's Public Announcement at Masjid Vakíl

In all events, the enmity of enemies was now manifest in the utmost degree, and they exerted many efforts to prevent the friends from attaining the presence [of the Báb] and meeting with His Person. However, the devotion of the believers and the grandeur of the Cause withstood their onslaught, and the friends' visits to His sacred presence increased considerably in accordance with the verse, "Verily the devils inspire their friends."⁸⁹ The honored opponents reported the events to Husayn Khán [who issued an order for the arrest of the Báb], and on the eve of 21 Ramadán [11 September 1846], over the neighbor's wall, the guards entered the House of His Holiness.

'Abdu'l-Hamíd Khán, the Dárúghih, who was charged with carrying out this order, arrived with several of his farrashes and noted that His Holiness was alone in the dwelling. Deeply embarrassed, 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Khán submitted, "Certain reports reached us that a crowd had gathered at this location, and therefore we came to investigate. However, since it is evident that no one is here, we take our leave." He then asked for a

⁸⁹ Qur'án 6:121.

gratuity, to which [the Báb] responded, “There is nothing here.” Insisting on receiving a prize, ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Khán seized the imported cashmere shawl that the Báb was wearing around His waist and sliced it in the middle, taking half with him.

The Dárúghih thereupon went before Husayn Khán, telling the latter that none were in the Báb’s House save He. However, the mischievous elements, led by the ‘ulamá, continued to instigate sedition, and as such Husayn Khán, the governor, sent his men to summon His Holiness with His maternal uncle to the governor’s office. There, Husayn Khán rebuked the illustrious uncle, roaring, “You guaranteed that none would be associating [with the Báb], but you have acted against your own written statement. Consequently, you must be punished.” He then turned to the farrashes and spoke harshly and contemptuously with them as well and instructed that sticks⁹⁰ be brought. The illustrious uncle, who was a greatly respected Siyyid and more than sixty years of age, was struck with sticks most severely, and the Báb was struck in the face as well. Afterwards, a sum of money was extracted from the victims, and [as the uncle was unable to walk] the farrashes carried him over their shoulders to his house where he remained injured in bed for a period of time. [p.95]

His Holiness was subject to brutal treatment and imprisoned in the house of ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Khán. For a while it passed thus. Once again, the ‘ulamá assembled and went before Husayn Khán demanding that he must follow through and force the Siyyid-i Báb to be summoned and compelled to recant His claim.

One afternoon all the ‘ulamá gathered in the Government House, that is, the governor’s office, and consulted on the situation and unanimously decided that His Holiness must be brought to Masjid Vakíl where all of the city’s inhabitants, including such ranks as the ‘ulamá, the merchants, the shopkeepers, and others would be present, and in that assemblage He must be forced to withdraw His claim.

My brother, Hájí Mírzá Buzurg, and I were present once when the late Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Sádiq Mu‘allim [teacher], who was a most respected man and had witnessed the event of Masjid Vakíl, related briefly that episode for the late ‘Andalíb. The details are as such:

I was about twenty-five years old and had reached the age of being able to discern truth from falsehood. It was noised throughout the city that, on the request of the ‘ulamá, the authorities were inviting all inhabitants of

⁹⁰ Most likely it is meant bastinado.

Shíráz from every strata to gather in the Masjid Vakíl where the Siyyid-i Báb would renounce His claims. I went to the mosque as well and exerted particular effort to find a spot near [the pulpit] where I could behold Him and clearly hear His utterances and speech. From the morning of that day, rank upon rank of onlookers arrived at the mosque, and by three o'clock in the afternoon the entire courtyard, the cloisters, the roofs, and even the minarets of the mosque were thronged with people. The governor, the 'ulamá, the merchants, and other dignitaries entered and sat in the cloisters, near the stone pulpit. (This is a pulpit carved out of one piece of marble and has fourteen steps.)

I was sitting near the pulpit when a commotion was raised in the courtyard: "He is coming!" He entered through the cloister's entrance accompanied by ten farrashes and 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Khán, the Dárúghih, and drew near the pulpit. The Báb was wearing a turban and an 'abá and walked with such dignity, might, grandeur, and magnificence that it is truly indescribable. Such a multitude of people in attendance meant nothing to Him, and He heeded them not in the least.

He said to the 'ulamá and the governor, "What is your purpose in summoning Me to this place?" They responded, "The intention is that You should ascend this pulpit and repudiate Your false claim so that this fury and excitement may subside." [The Báb] did not respond and ascended the pulpit where He stood on the third step. With great vehemence, Shaykh Husayn Zálím said, "Ascend to the top of the pulpit so everyone can see You and hear Your voice." His Holiness ascended to the top of the pulpit and sat there. Suddenly, an absolute silence prevailed and not a whisper could be heard from the people, and it seemed as if not a soul was in that mosque. Everyone was listening most attentively.

At first, with utmost majesty and sovereignty, He commenced recitation of an exquisite Arabic homily with absolute eloquence and clarity that lasted some half an hour. The entire concourse of people, high and low, learned and illiterate alike were in total rapture and listened with great fascination. People's silence, caused agitation in Shaykh Husayn who said to the governor, "Have you summoned the Siyyid in the presence of these people to establish the validity of His Cause or to recant His false claim? He is casting a spell on the assemblage with His enchanting speech. Instruct Him to say what He was intended to say. What drivél is He uttering?" Husayn Khán, the Sáhíb-Ikhtiyár, said [to the Báb], "Siyyid, state what they [i.e., the 'ulamá] have told you to affirm, what is this idle chatter?" His Holiness remained silent for a moment and then uttered, "O People, know this well and be informed. I say unto you what My Grandfather, the Messenger of God, spoke twelve hundred and sixty years ago, and I do not speak what He spoke not. 'What Muhammad made lawful remains lawful unto the Day of Resurrection, and what He forbade remains forbidden unto the Day of Resurrection.' In accordance with this Hadíth-i Marvî from the Immaculate One, 'Verily, the Qá'im will usher forth the Day of Resurrection.'"

Having recited this Tradition, He then descended the pulpit. Many of those who had previously harbored enmity or malice, once having beheld Him, were guided aright and repudiated their ways.

Shaykh Husayn Zálím, out of sheer hostility, raised his walking-stick to strike His Holiness in the head, when the late Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Khán, the Mushíru'l-Mulk, who was a young man in those days, readily brought forward his shoulder to ward off the attack, and it was his shoulder that sustained the hit. Afterwards, Husyan Khán instructed that His Holiness once again be imprisoned in the home of 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Khán.

In short, the aforementioned Hájí [Mu'allim], though not a believer but an admirer [of the Báb], related this story to the late 'Andalíb. His purpose was that [the Báb] on that occasion affirmed the truth of His Cause and completed His proof before the concourse of people.⁹¹

Fatwá Against the Báb

After His Holiness returned from the mosque and was placed under house-arrest at the home of 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Khán, the entire body of the 'ulamá assembled and fixed their seal on a fatwá decreeing the death of His Holiness. Among those present who signed the document was Shaykh Husayn Zálím, known as the Názimu'sh-Sharí'ah, who was the source of all sedition and the prime instigator of mischief. Others were Shaykh Abú-Háshim, Shaykh Asadu'lláh, Shaykh Mihdí Kujúry, Mullá Muhammad-'Alí Mahallátí, and those like them. They wrote whatsoever they wished and signed that paper.

That congregation then proceeded to the home of the late Shaykh Abú-Turáb,⁹² the Imám-Jum'ih, who, despite their insistence and every effort, had refused to attend their assemblage. Attaining the presence of the Shaykh, they acquainted him with their purpose and presented the document, requesting him to fix his seal on the paper as well so that the matter of the Siyyid be concluded [and the Báb be slain]. Upon perusing the fatwa and considering its content, the Shaykh, profoundly moved with indignation, threw the paper to the ground and cried, "Have you lost your faculties! Never will I sign such a paper, as I have no misgivings whatsoever regarding the nobility, chastity, integrity, sagacity, piety, and virtue of this Siyyid! In this Youth, I behold the ultimate manifestation of Islamic and human attributes, as well as evidence of the highest

⁹¹ See Balyúzi, *The Báb*, pp. 96–98, for a slightly different translation.

⁹² A son of Shaykh Muhammad Záhíd [pious] who had served as the Imám-Jum'ih of Shíráz after his father, Shaykh Abú-Turáb ranked as the foremost divine of the city and was greatly loved and admired by the citizens. He lived for a few years during the reign of Muhammad Sháh in Tíhrán but eventually returned to Shíráz where he passed away in 1855; see Bámdád, *Sharh Hal Rijál Iran*, vol. 1, p. 71.

expressions of wisdom and rational reasoning. I see two possibilities: Either He speaks truthfully, or He is, as you allege, a liar. If He speaks genuinely, then I would be remiss to issue a fatwa against an honest and trustworthy person. And should He, as you aver, be a liar and a perjurer, which of us standing here can claim to have spoken only the truth in our lives? Therefore, arise and leave this place, and do not conceive such empty imaginings.” No matter how they pleaded, the late Shaykh Abú-Turáb, may his station be exalted, refused to ratify the document with his seal, and through this refusal, their efforts came to naught, their purpose was frustrated, and their wish remained unfulfilled.

Departure for Isfahán

In short, at this time, for the warning and awakening of the neglectful and the ignorant, the Ocean of Divine Wrath stirred forth, and a grievous cholera epidemic fell upon Iran and raged with especial fury over Shíráz. Great multitudes from all ranks, including nobles, peasants, learned, illiterate, ministers, and subjects made haste to escape from this evident calamity. The first to retreat was Husayn Khán, the governor, and then others followed from all ranks of society.

[p.105] A large number died. It chanced that the two young sons of ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Khán, the Dárúghih, fell ill of the cholera and came nigh to death’s door. Their mother, deeply agitated, spoke harshly to her husband, ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Khán, saying, “Their illness is because of your evil doings towards this wronged Siyyid Who has been unjustly imprisoned here. Through such negligence, you will bring ruin upon yourself and the whole household. Let this innocent Siyyid leave.” ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Khán besought the Báb, earnestly stating, “Depart for wherever Your holy inclinations may lead You.” [The Báb] responded, “Husayn Khán has fled from the city in the face of divine chastisement; however, when he returns, you will be responsible [for My whereabouts].” “It is I,” ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Khán pleaded, “who must remain answerable to Husayn Khán as, because of my misdeeds, my sons are now near death. After them, I wish not to live any longer in this world.” He cried bitterly for the fate that had befallen him and beseeched the intercession of His Holiness, Who prayed and responded by handing him a sweet pomegranate and stating, “Have your sons eat from this fruit.” After the lads had partaken of the pomegranate and full recovery was theirs, ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Khán, having witnessed the occurrence of this miracle, implored Him, “Do not tarry, even for one

hour, in this dwelling, I will not prevent Your departure in whatever direction You will. And furthermore, I stand ready to offer whatever service that Your Holiness may require.”

[The Báb] retired to His house, and there the family and kinsmen came to visit Him. Later, in the company of Áqá Muhammad-Husayn Ardistání, who was reckoned among the believers and among His close companions, [the Báb] proceeded for the city of Isfahán.⁹³ The events occurring in that land are indeed beyond all description and assuredly have been recorded in the narratives pertaining to that city. For our purposes, only the following note regarding the incidents of Isfahán should suffice.

Upon arrival in the city of Isfahán, the late Manuchihr Khán, the Mu‘tamidu’d-Dawlih,⁹⁴ exalted by his station, came into the presence [of the Báb] and immediately became a most ardent admirer. His Holiness described some of the tyranny and injuries that He had previously endured at the hand of Husayn Khán, adding, “When We departed from Shíráz, cholera raged over the province of Fárs, and Husayn Khán escaped with all deliberate speed from the city. I was made captive at the home of ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Khán, but because of the epidemic and the fact that his own sons fell victims to the illness, he released this Wronged-One and of necessity asked that I leave. In so doing, he remarked, ‘Upon Husayn Khán’s return, I will personally shoulder the responsibility.’ Surely, after the pandemic of cholera has been eradicated and quiet has once again become the city’s norm, Husayn Khán will return and will inquire after Me. As he

⁹³ In the language of prayer, the Báb gives an outline of the events that had befallen Him:

Thou art aware, O My God, that since the day Thou didst call Me into being out of the water of Thy love till I reached fifteen years of age I lived in the land that witnessed My birth [Shíráz]. Then Thou didst enable Me to go to the seaport [Búshíhr] where for five years I was engaged in trading with the goodly gifts of Thy realm and was occupied in that which Thou favored Me through the wondrous essence of Thy loving-kindness. I proceeded therefrom to the Holy Land [Karbalá] where I sojourned for one year. Then I returned to the place of My birth. There I experienced the revelation of Thy sublime bestowals and the evidences of Thy boundless grace. I yield Thee praise for all Thy goodly gifts, and I render Thee thanksgiving for all Thy bounties. Then at the age of twenty-five I proceeded to Thy sacred House [Mecca], and by the time I returned to the place where I was born, a year had elapsed. There I tarried patiently in the path of Thy love and beheld the evidences of Thy manifold bounties and loving-kindness until Thou didst ordain for Me to set out in Thy direction and to migrate to Thy presence.

—*Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 180–81

⁹⁴ For a biography of Manuchihr Khán, see Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 4, pp. 159–63. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has revealed a Tablet of Visitation for him wherein it is revealed that visiting his resting-place in Qum is endowed with special spiritual potency.

is a wicked and ill-natured man, upon discovering that I no longer reside within His grasp, he will injure my kinsmen and family. My purpose is to ask your Excellency to petition Husayn Khán that he may not disturb [My family].” As soon as this request was made by his distinguished Guest, the late Mu‘tamidu‘d-Dawlih wrote a detailed letter to the governor-general of Fárs, with words to the effect that “the Siyyid-i Báb is a guest in my abode in Isfahán, and I stand as His protector. Should the government summon Him [to Tihrán for further inquiry], I will personally deliver Him. You have no cause to harass His family or inflict disturbance upon them.” This letter was sent to Shíráz with a special envoy.

When the epidemic subsided to a prescribed degree, the people who had fled the city returned forthwith, including Husayn Khán who [as anticipated by the Báb] immediately inquired from ‘Abdu‘l-Hamíd Khán the whereabouts of His Holiness. The latter responded, “As the epidemic raged uncontrollably throughout the land and my wife and sons had fallen victim to the illness as well, I could no longer properly minister His affairs and as such asked Him to retire to His own dwelling.” Deeply angered by the turn of events, Husayn Khán instructed ‘Abdu‘l-Hamíd Khán to proceed at once in company of ten farrashes and search the home of His Holiness or wherever else He might be and bring Him forthwith to the government-house.

Persecution of the Báb’s Family

As instructed, they proceeded immediately to the House of His Holiness and, not finding Him there, proceeded to the home of His illustrious uncle, [Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí,] but were unable to locate the latter at home either. They then proceeded to the residence of the late Hájí Mírzá Abú‘l-Qásim. The latter was a paternal cousin of the Báb’s mother and a brother of the honored wife of the Báb, [Khadíjih Bagum,] and at the time was the renowned standard-bearer of the family. My maternal grandmother [Zahrá Bagum], who was the sister of the Báb’s wife, related:

My late brother, that is, Hájí Mírzá Abú‘l-Qásim, was home suffering from cholera and resting in bed due to weakness caused by the illness, when some time before noon, there was a violent knock on our door. The entire household was deeply disturbed. Fírúz, our black, house-born servant, went to inquire who it was when suddenly and without warning, ‘Abdu‘l-Hamíd Khán, the Dárúghih, in the company of a number of farrashes and some other lewd characters entered our home and filled the courtyard. A most disturbing uproar ensued as they hurriedly searched the house for any trace

of His Holiness and disappointed [in their inability to locate the Báb,] came to the room where my late brother was resting in bed due to his illness. The farrashes placed him on their shoulders and took him before Husayn Khán, the Sáhíb-Ikhtiyár.

Profoundly infuriated, the latter inquired callously, "Where lies the Siyyid-i Báb?" "I have been afflicted with cholera," my brother replied, "and still suffer from the illness. As such, I do not know His whereabouts, nor do I have any news of Him." Husayn Khán dealt with him most harshly and severely and finally he was granted fifteen days to either present His Holiness or to pay a fine of fifteen-hundred tumáns.⁹⁵ Reluctantly, he accepted. Then the governor asked for a guarantor, and Hájí Muhammad-Sádiq Isfahání, who ranked among the best known and most respected of the merchants and who was a very close friend of the honored Hájí, stood in this capacity. After a surety was extracted, the Hájí was dismissed and returned home.

After the lapse of the agreed upon days, farrashes were sent to summon the Hájí [Abú'l-Qásim] to the governor's office and to present him before Husayn Khán. The latter, once again, spoke most sternly demanding either the delivery of His Holiness or the sum of fifteen-hundred tumáns. The more the Hájí implored for mercy and the more he swore that he was bereft of any news from Him, the angrier the governor grew. Finally, [unable to withstand the governor's admonishments,] the Hájí fell to the ground unconscious, and it was at that moment that the special envoy sent from Isfahán bearing the letter of the late Mu'tamiu'd-Dawlih arrived and the envelope displaying the seal of Manuchihr Khán presented to Husayn Khán.

Upon considering its content, [Husayn Khán] realized that he could no longer cause trouble or remonstrate, but he nevertheless extracted fifteen-hundred tumáns from him before allowing the late Hájí to leave.

He further issued a command that hereafter should any piece of paper be found in that city bearing the handwriting of His Holiness or a verse revealed by Him, he would demolish that house.

Husayn Khán rounded up all the believers and devotees of His Holiness, and, after administering severe beatings with sticks and causing them much injury, he extracted from the victims whatever sum they could muster.

Husayn Khán was an ill-natured, wicked man, and His Holiness the Exalted One has described his evil doings in the *Khutbih-i Qahriyyih* addressed to Hájí Mírzá Aqásí, and the reader may refer to that Tablet.⁹⁶ From his contemptible, base, and malicious deeds, it can readily be discerned how truly evil and corrupt a person Husayn Khán was.

⁹⁵ Fifteen-hundred tumáns represented an extraordinarily large sum of money for that time.

⁹⁶ See Fayzí, *Hadrat Nuqtih Ulá*, pp. 151–53, and Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhuru'l-Haqq*, vol. 3, pp. 85–89. In a Tablet (INBMC, vol. 64, p. 115), the Báb describes the governor to Muhammad Sháh as "vicious and sinister" who owing to consummate drunkenness "was never able to pass a sound judgment."

The Fate of the Báb's Writings

In short, my late maternal grandmother would continue relating:

After the governor's order was noised in the city, whoever had received such Writings [revealed by the Báb] would bring them in bundles and deposit the packs in a long vestibule in the house of Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim. One side of the courtyard was filled with such Writings stacked high, all penned on large exquisite cashmere papers in the hand of His Holiness. Were even a page of those precious Writings available today, it would surely be worth an immense fortune. Those papers all contained innumerable commentaries, prayers, homilies, and scientific treatises on diverse themes. The illustrious uncle⁹⁷ of the Báb was asked in what manner were we to dispose of those Writings, and he had made reply, "These are all the Words of God and as such cannot be treated disrespectfully. Wash the papers and throw the water in the well of the courtyard."

[p.115]

We placed four large washtubs on the ground of the courtyard, and the four of us, that is, the mother [of the Báb], Khadíjih Bagum, the wife of Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim,⁹⁸ and I began to place stacks of these papers in the tubs and washed them much like cloths are washed by hand. Page by page, the ink was washed away from all the sheets, and the water and the papers thrown down the well.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Presumably, a reference to Hájí Mírzá Siyyid-'Alí.

⁹⁸ Her name was Sultán Bagum, and she was from Jahrum.

⁹⁹ For other details on the Báb's stay in Shíráz, see Nabil A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, chapter 8.

CHAPTER FIVE

VAHÍD AND THE NAYRÍZ EPISODES

Subsequent to the departure of His blessed Person [the Báb], the friends in Shíráz observed wisdom and lived in serenity and tranquility. No other event took place for a while until the episode of the honored Áqá Siyyid Yahyá Dárábí and the events of Nayríz transpired. [p.115:5]

Earlier in these pages mention was made that the venerable Áqá Siyyid Yahyá, [surnamed] Vahíd, came to Yazd from the direction of Bávánát. It is important to describe briefly in these pages the occurrences associated with his stay in Yazd so that the sequence of events is clarified. Of a certainty, the full story of his visit and of the events of Yazd is either told in the history of that town [by other narrators], or it will be related.¹⁰⁰

Vahid in Yazd

After the illustrious Vahíd had believed and pledged submission, in accordance with His hallowed instruction [i.e., the Báb's], he took leave of the Latter and set out in direction of Yazd for the edification of the people, the promulgation of the Word of the Almighty, and the teaching of the Cause of God. For a while during the earlier period of his mission in that city he had expounded and taught the doctrines of His Holiness in gatherings of only such among the accomplished and the learned as were prepared and fitted to hear them. But afterwards, according to the purport of the verse:

Prudence and love can ne'er walk hand in hand,

and the verse:

Love and fair fame must wage eternal war;
O lover, halt not at the beloved's door!

¹⁰⁰ For the most part, the remainder of this section correlates with the narrative of Siyyid Husayn Hamadání, and as such, to the extent possible, the present translation has followed the rendering in *Tárikh-i Jadíd*, pp. 115–26.

he began openly to proclaim the truth of the Cause and converted a great multitude, as well as leading many to profess devotion and sympathy who, not having reached the stage of conviction and the haven of assurance, were yet greatly attracted and manifested empathy. At length, through the officiousness of certain mischievous persons, the governor of Yazd was informed of what was taking place. The governor, fearing for himself, sent a body of men to arrest him [i.e., Vahíd]. A trifling altercation occurred, and thereupon the governor readied for battle and prepared to effect his capture by force of arms.

The esteemed Áqá Siyyid Yahyá retired with a number of his followers and friends into the citadel of Yazd, while the myrmidons of the governor surrounded it and commenced hostilities and agitation. At length, the matter escalated into actual warfare, in the course of which some thirty or more of the governor's men and the rogues and vagabonds [of the city who had joined them] were killed, while seven of [Vahíd's] friends and companions were also slain, the rest being besieged for some time until some, unwilling to endure further suffering or withstand trial, dispersed.

His honor [Vahíd] therefore determined to set out for Shíráz and said one night, "If one of you could manage to lead out my horse, so that I might defuse this incident and convey myself to some other place, it would be well." A certain Hasan who had been for some time in attendance upon his honor and had performed his service with the utmost faithfulness and devotion, witnessing on the part of his august master many a display of miraculous and supernatural faculties, replied, "By your leave, I will lead out the horse." "They will capture and slay you," [responded Vahíd]. "In the path of your servitude," rejoined [Hasan], "that is easy to bear. No ambition have I beyond it."

So he was allowed to go and, even as had been foretold, they took the youth captive outside the citadel and brought him before the governor, who ordered him blown from the mouth of a cannon. As they bound him to the gun, he begged the gunners: "Bind me, I pray you, with my face toward the gun that I may see it fired." Gunners and bystanders alike were astonished at his composure and cheerfulness, and indeed one who can be cheerful in such a plight must needs have great faith, capacity, and fortitude. It is seemly indeed that one be so joyous and jubilant at such an hour!

In short, that honored personage [Vahíd] succeeded in effecting his departure from the citadel with one other, and set out for Shíráz, and from there he proceeded to Nayríz.¹⁰¹

After his withdrawal, the governor vanquished his followers. Several [p.120] were taken captive and put to death, while from the rest, after they had suffered divers torments, fines of money were exacted.

Vahíd's Arrival at Nayríz

Now when that honored personage arrived in Nayríz, where his wife resided and where he had many friends, many became believers, others denied, while still others caviled and remained in doubt. Though formerly professing the most devout attachment and humility towards his person, no sooner did the district governor perceive that a struggle was imminent and the government might slip from his hands, than he sent word to him [i.e., Vahíd] saying, "I do not consider it expedient that you should continue any longer in this province. It is best that you should depart with all speed to some other place." To this the honored visitor replied, "I have returned here, after a prolonged absence, to learn how matters fare, and to see my wife and family, neither do I wish to interfere with anyone. What makes you order me to quit my house and abode, instead of affording me protection, and observing towards me the friendship and respect that is my due? Do you not fear God, and have you no shame before my Ancestor?"

So when the governor saw that he heeded not his words and answered him sharply, he was filled with obstinate spite and strove to raise a tumult, inciting such men of every class and kind as were most wicked and mischievous to make a disturbance and drive out the honored personage. In turn Vahíd, perceiving this, repaired to the mosque and after performing his devotions ascended the pulpit, and thus spoke:

O people! Am I not he whose opinions you were wont to follow in all religious questions? In your needs and trials, as well as in all matters of doctrine, practice, and religious tradition were you not wont to prefer my

¹⁰¹ Mírzá Habíbu'lláh has added the following marginal note in his own hand about Vahíd's visit to Bávanát subsequent to the Shíráz journey: In Bávanát, the Shaykhu'l-Islám of Maziján, one of the villages of Bávanát, converted, and together they proceeded to Nayríz.

word to that of any other? Were not my belief and *ijtihad*¹⁰² the criteria of all your actions? What has become of you that now you greet me with opposition and enmity? What forbidden thing have I sanctioned in the pure religion [i.e., Islam], or what lawful thing have I forbidden, that thus without reason you charge me with heresy and error? I stand here among you wronged and oppressed for no other cause than that I have, for your awakening and enlightenment, spoken true words and held faithful discourse, and that I have, out of sympathy for you and desire for your welfare, not withheld the path of guidance from you. This being so, let each one who supports or slights me know of a certainty that howsoever he acts toward me, he acts toward my illustrious Ancestor [Muhammad].

When he had spoken to this effect, some were repentant, and some wept bitterly, saying, “We still continue in our former allegiance and devotion to you, and all that you say we hold true, right, and most meritorious.”

The Bábí Encampment

In short, Vahíd came forth from the mosque, quitted the city, and was compelled to alight in a ruined castle close by, the friends who bore him company being not more than seventeen in number. But even after he had left the city, his malicious and mischievous persecutors ceased not from their evil designs, for they pursued him with a great throng, scouring the country in all directions until they discovered his ruined retreat. Thereupon, they laid siege to the castle from every side and initiated hostilities.

Then the honored personage commanded seven of his men to go out and drive them away, and gave them full instructions as to the ordering of battle, adding that whoever should occupy a certain position would be slain by a wound, and that such as went in a certain direction would return unhurt. One among those present, a young lad of Yazd, good of heart and comely of countenance, arose and said, “I beseech you to suffer me to be the first among this much-wronged band and precede my comrades in martyrdom.” And that honored personage kissed him on the cheek and intoned a prayer for him.

Then the illustrious defenders of the castle sallied swiftly forth, attacked the foes, and ere long scattered them forthwith. But the Yazdí lad, even as his master had foretold, and he had himself desired, drained the draught

¹⁰² A religious ruling in Shi'ite Islam issued by a certified cleric.

of martyrdom, escaped from the bonds of earth's deceits, and gained the everlasting world and life eternal—blessings were his, and his end was good. The rest returned victorious.

At the very time of these events, the exalted Navváb, Prince Farhád Mírzá,¹⁰³ recently appointed governor-general of Fárs, came from the capital, Tihrán, to assume the government in Shíráz and was informed of what had taken place. He at once collected a considerable military force, which he dispatched under the command of Muhammad-'Alí Khán Díván-Begí, son of Hájí Shukru'lláh Khán Núrí, and Mustafá-Qulí Khán, commander of the Qaraguzlú, to subdue and take captive the insurgents.

When this force reached the vicinity of the castle, the number of [Vahíd's] followers had increased to seventy. Several encounters took place between the two forces, and on each occasion the friends and companions [i.e., the Bábís] routed and dispersed their opponents and obtained possession of a goodly spoil. And all this while the devotion, faith, and love of Vahíd's companions were much increased by the many victories they tasted and the great prodigies he wrought, so that each was fully prepared to lay down his life and possessions. He had repeatedly described to his companions the circumstances of his own martyrdom, and all had, for the good pleasure of the Beloved, washed their hands of life and, quit of earthly ties, awaited martyrdom.

Deceiving the Bábís

Those who had come to take them being unable, notwithstanding all their efforts, to prevail by force of arms, and despairing of the final issue, opened the door of treachery and deceit, and sent a missive before the illustrious Vahíd expressing perplexity as to his Cause, making excuses for past deeds, declaring themselves desirous of inquiring into the matter, and begging for instruction. They further pledged, with oaths sworn upon the Word of God [i.e., the Qur'án], that if he would be good enough to come out to meet them, they would obey whatever terms he might propose.

So, out of respect for the sacred Qur'án, which bore their seal, Vahíd prepared to go forth. But his followers surrounded him on every side declaring, "We are fearful and anxious about your departure, for this

¹⁰³ This should be Fírúz Mírzá.

host is more faithless than the men of Kufa.¹⁰⁴ No reliance can be placed on their oaths and covenants, neither ought you to believe their assertions.” That honored person replied, “By God, I clearly perceive their perfidy, faithlessness, and treachery, and I know it as well as my saintly Ancestor¹⁰⁵ knew the perfidy of the men of Kufa. But how can I resist their wiles, these being in accord with the divinely appointed destiny? Because of what they have written and pledged themselves on the Qur’án to perform, it is incumbent on me to go and complete the proof. Abide here till you receive my written instructions.” Then he mounted his horse and took a last farewell of his companions, saying, “Verily, we belong to God, and verily unto Him do we return.”¹⁰⁶ And his followers wept, a bitter weeping.

So that honored personage came to the warring camp and there alighted. [At first] the commanders treated him with all due respect and deference, and they agreed to postpone all discussion of terms between his honor and themselves till the morrow, and spent that night conversing on various topics. But when morning came and that honored person would have gone forth from his tent, the sentinels prevented him, saying, “It is not permitted you to go out.” So he remained a prisoner in the tent.

No sooner had tidings of this reached his faithful followers than, unable to restrain themselves, they emerged from their castle, hurled themselves upon the center of the army, and, in a short time, threw the whole camp into confusion. The senior officers seeing this, hastened into that honored person’s presence, saying, “Was it not agreed between us last night that there should be peace and concord?” “Aye,” said he, “but your conduct this morning provoked this reprisal.” “It was done without our knowledge and approval,” answered they, “and without our sanction. Some of our men, who have lost kinsmen and relatives in this warfare, offered you this insult ignorantly and without our knowledge. You, who are merciful and generous, must overlook their fault.” “What,” queried he, “would you have me do?” “Write,” said they, “to these men of yours, bidding them evacuate the castle and return to their own homes, that the minds of our soldiers may be tranquilized and we, too, be reassured; and

¹⁰⁴ The people of Kufa by their promise of support induced Imám Husayn to take up arms, but failed Him in the day of need; see, Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, pp. 28–33.

¹⁰⁵ A reference to Imám Husayn, from Whom Vahíd descended. On Vahíd’s lineage, see Rabbani, “The Family of Vahíd Dárábí”.

¹⁰⁶ Qur’án 2:156.

we will then arrange matters as you may determine, and act agreeably to your suggestions.”

That honored personage had no recourse but to write to his followers, “Come what may, you must submit to divinely ordained decrees; and meanwhile there is nothing for it but that you should gather up your own possessions, leaving the spoils you have won exactly as they are, and return to your own homes. Let us wait and see what God wills.” So these poor companions, being constrained to obey his behest, the following day departed to their homes. But no sooner were they arrived there than their foes attacked each of their houses, carried off all their goods as spoil, destroyed their dwellings, and brought them in chains, bound hand and foot, to the camp.

Vahid's Martyrdom

There was with the venerable Vahíd a certain believer of Yazd¹⁰⁷ who had served him faithfully both at Yazd and Nayríz, suffering much in the path of his master's good pleasure and attaining the exalted station of servitude and true recognition of the Lord by renouncing all earthly possessions. And when word was brought that the executioner was on his way from the city [i.e., Shíráz] charged with the killing of that illustrious Siyyid [Yahyá], this man began to make great lamentation. But his master said, “It is you, not me, whom this headsman shall slay; he who shall slay me will arrive tomorrow.”

When the morrow came, he performed the morning obligatory prayer, and an hour later, he said again, “He who is to slay me is now come.” Shortly after this, a party of farrashes arrived and led out that honored person and the Yazdí from the tent. Then the executioner, just as Vahíd had foretold, administered to the youth the draught of martyrdom. When his glance fell on that honored person, however, he said, “I am ashamed before the face of God's Messenger and will never lift my hand to slay His offspring,” neither would he, for all their importuning, consent to do their bidding.

Then one who had lost two brothers in the earlier part of the war, and therefore cherished a deep resentment, said, “I will kill him.” And he

¹⁰⁷ Mírzá Habíbu'lláh has added in the margin the following notation in his own hand, “known as Áqá Siyyid Já'far.” However, either he or someone else has crossed out this comment.

loosed the shawl wherewith that honored person was girt, cast it round his neck, and drew it tight. And others beat his holy body with sticks and stones, dragging it here and there over the plain, till his soul soared falcon-like to the branches of paradise. Then they severed his head from his body, skinned it, stuffed it with straw, and sent it, with other heads, along with the captives to Shíráz.¹⁰⁸

Captives Taken to Shíráz

[p.135] And they sent an announcement of their victory and triumph to Prince Farhád [*sic*] Mírzá, and fixed a day for their entry into Shíráz. And when on the appointed day they drew near, the city was bedecked, the people busy disporting themselves and making merry, most of them having come out from the town to greet the victorious troops, welcome the triumphant soldiers, and gaze upon the captives. As narrated by one Kuchak ‘Alí Beg, head-man and chief of the Basírí¹⁰⁹ [tribe of Shíráz]:¹¹⁰

After they had slain that honored person [i.e., Vahíd], they came to take camels from our tribe, intending to set the captives on barebacked camels. I was distressed at this, but could not resist the Governor’s order. I therefore rode away from the army’s camp at night and came to Shíráz, that at least I might not be among my tribe and have to endure the insolence of the soldiers. When I was come within half a farsang¹¹¹ of Shíráz, I lay down to sleep for a while and to be rid of my weariness. When I awoke, I saw that the people of Shíráz had come out in large numbers with minstrels and musicians, and were sitting about in groups at every corner and cross-road, feasting and making merry with wanton women. On every side I noted with wonder drunken brawls, wine imbibing, the savor of roasted meats, and the strains of guitars and lutes. Thus wondering I entered the city.

After a while, unable to endure the suspense, I determined to go out of the city to see what was taking place. As I came forth from the city-gate, I saw such feasting and rejoicing as I had never before witnessed. The men

¹⁰⁸ Parenthetically, Mírzá Habíbu’lláh notes: The severed head of the illustrious Vahíd was buried at the foundation of a blessed spot formerly known as Siyyid.

¹⁰⁹ The Basírí is one the Khamsa (Arab) nomad tribes of Fárs and Láristán; see Curson, *Persia*, vol. 2, p. 114.

¹¹⁰ This section in the narrative of Siyyid Husayn Hamadání is attributed to Mírzá Áqá Jání of Káshán. However, it is missing from the published *Kitáb-i Nuqtatu’l-Kaf*. Two possibilities exists: (1) Hamadání was using a text of Mírzá Jání that differed from the Browne’s published version by at least this one section, or (2) Hamadání simply added this material and attributed it to Mírzá Jání, much like other Middle Eastern historiographers who attribute their own writings or poems to earlier recognized figures.

¹¹¹ A farsang is six kilometers.

were engaged in making merry and toying with their lecherous and wanton women. After a little while I saw the camels approaching, whereupon there were set some forty or fifty women. Many of the soldiers bore on their spears the severed heads of the men they had slain. Until this time the townsfolk had been busy with their carnal desires, but no sooner did their eyes fall on the severed heads borne aloft on spears and the captives set on barebacked camels than they inconsolably burst into tears and sobbing.

Thus they brought the illustrious captives into the bazaars, which had been decorated and adorned, and though it was no great distance from the bazaars to the Governor's Ark [i.e., the government's seat], yet such was the throng of spectators who purposely retarded the passage of the captives that it was after mid-day when they reached the Governor's palace. The Navváb Prince was holding a pleasure-party in Kuláh Farangí¹¹² and the garden adjoining it, he sitting on a chair, and the nobles and magnates of the city standing. A curtain was drawn in front of the other chambers of Kuláh Farangí, behind which the women of the Prince's household were ensconced. And the captives were led in this plight to the accompaniment of cymbals and trumpets into the garden and brought before the Qájár Prince. Then Muhammad-'Alí Khán, Mírzá Na'ím, and the other officers recounted their exploits and their glorious victory, with various versions and many embellishments, to the Qájár Prince, who on his part kept inquiring as to the names and family of the captives, and throwing in an occasional, "Who is this?" and "Which is that?" And all the captives were women, with the exception of one child five years of age who was with them.

After that, those illustrious beings were excused from the presence [of the Prince] and housed outside of the city in a ruined caravansary that dated back to the time of Karím Khán Zand.

On the same night when the raid had been made on the houses of the believers [in Nayríz] and they were taken prisoner, twelve of the friends had succeeded in effecting their escape towards Isfahán. These, however, were subsequently captured in the neighborhood of Isfahán and brought to Shíráz, where they suffered martyrdom.

Second Nayríz Episode

Two years later, a protracted and unusual warfare was again waged against the believers who, because of the cruelties and brutalities to which they were subjected, were for a long while in hiding in the mountains with their wives and children. Until a mighty host of regular troops and [p.140]

¹¹² Lit., "the European's hat," it is the name of a summer-home of the governor-general of Fárs.

volunteers from far and near had been gathered against them, and consequently those wronged-ones were compelled to commence warfare. Hemmed in as they were, that wronged-band began defenses and won many gallant victories despite the fewness of their numbers. This struggle and the siege of the mountain from all directions lasted for a long time.

Often would a company of seven or nineteen men come down from the mountain with cries of “Yá Sahibu’z-Zamán!” attack a battery, cut down the gunners, capture the gun, and bear it away with them to the mountain, where they would mount it on a tree trunk and fire it morning and evening against the camp. At other times they would make night-attacks on certain suburbs of Nayríz inhabited by enemies and opponents, and return safely. [At such times] none could withstand them, nor do aught but choose between submission and flight.

Now Zaynu’l-‘Abidín Khán, the governor of Nayríz, had taken the chief part in bringing about all these troubles. He it was who had compassed the death of the much-wronged Áqá Siyyid Yahyá in the first war; he it was who devised most of the stratagems, tactics, dispositions, and arrangements of the army; he it was who, both in the first and the second war, provoked strife for the sake of securing his position as governor and winning approval from the government; he it was, in short, who had driven away [the Bábís] from their homes and possessions, and caused them with their wives and families to be beleaguered in the mountains. So one day when this honorable governor had gone to the bath, the illustrious insurgents attacked the bath and slew him.¹¹³

But reinforcements of men and artillery sent in rapid succession by the Navváb Tahmasp Mírzá, the Mu‘ayyadu’-d-Dawlih, who at that time was the governor-general of Fárs, continued to arrive from Shíráz and occupy the rising ground adjoining the mountain. Still, notwithstanding the greatness of their host, they did not have the courage to face the defenders or venture to ascend the mountain in an attack. Even in their camp they were ill at ease because of the night-attacks and sudden onslaughts made upon them by very small parties of the friends [i.e., the Bábís]. These, as was related, would oft-times rush into the camp, attack the artillery, slay the gunners, and return, pushing the guns with their shoulders, until they reached the mountain. Then, because the gun-carriages would go no

¹¹³ Zaynu’l-‘Abidín Khán did not participate in Nayríz II episode, and in fact, it was his assassination by his Bábí relatives that precipitated the second upheaval in that region in 1852–53.

further, they would unmount the guns, and, with shoulders and ropes, push and drag them up the mountain. There they would remount them on tree-trunks in place of carriages.

So when the royalist troops saw that they could effect nothing, they sent word to Istahbanat, Darab, and the other districts round Nayríz, and commanded the tribes to furnish as many marksmen and warriors as could be mustered, that these might surround the mountain on all sides and storm it after their own [tribal] fashion of warfare. And when this had been done, there were, besides the regular troops deputed for this task, nearly three thousand¹¹⁴ mounted gunmen of the people of Fárs, tribesmen, and others. These ascended the mountain on every side.

The illustrious friends [i.e., the Bábís], men and women alike, defended themselves most gallantly, and everywhere displayed, both in defense and attack, the most desperate courage, until most of them were slain, and the few survivors, having exhausted their powder and shot, were taken prisoners. Then the people, swarming over the mountain on all sides, seized the grief-stricken and downhearted women whose husbands had been slain, and brought them, together with a few little children, to the camp; and we can well guess the treatment to which these women and children were then subjected. After that the host of local auxiliaries dispersed, while the regular troops broke up their camp, and, carrying with them their prisoners, and the severed heads of the men, set out for Shíráz, which in due course they reached.

In accordance with the instruction of the central authorities, the heads of the martyrs were sent from Shíráz to the Qájár monarch in Tihrán as a prize. However upon reaching Ábádih, the royal command arrived with the instruction not to bring the heads to Tihrán, but rather to bury [p.145] them in that locality. [From the blessings of the martyrs,] Ábádih has now become an exceptionally pleasant place, and a Hadiratu'l-Quds had been established in that spot as well.

I have been informed that when the exalted Nabil¹¹⁵ passed through Nayríz, he heard the details from certain aged folk who had survived from

¹¹⁴ Hamadání gives this figure as ten thousands; see *Tárikh-i Jadíd*, p. 130.

¹¹⁵ In a footnote of *Tárikh-i Jadíd*, p. 131, Prof. Browne remarks that this section had been a subsequent addition to the original text of Hamadání, which seems a reasonable conclusion. However, Browne identifies "Nabil" as Mírzá Muhammad Zarandí and refers to *A Traveler's Narrative* for details concerning him. The present translator suspects, however, that by Nabil was meant Mullá Muhammad Qa'íní, surnamed Nabil Akbar, who in subsequent years had revised the narrative of Siyyid Husayn Hamadání and created what is known as *Tárikh Badí' Bayání*. Therefore, it seems that the Cambridge Codex used by

that time and had full knowledge of all that took place. The truth of the first and the second [Nayríz] battles is what has been described herein.

In short, with utmost wretchedness and distress, the much-wronged captives were kept in a caravansary for a period until the believers in Shíráz began to sponsor a number of them and they found husbands [and gained support].¹¹⁶

Browne is actually not a narrative of Siyyid Husayn, but rather this revision by Nabíl Akbar. Concerning the latter, see Balyúzí, *Eminent Babá'is in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 112–15, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 1–5.

¹¹⁶ For a discussion of Nayríz-I see Nabíl A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, chapter 21. For a documented history of Nayríz see, Rabbani, *The Bábís of Nayríz: History and Documents*.

CHAPTER SIX

THE HOUSEHOLD OF HUJJAT

After a while, consistent with the instruction of the Qájár sovereign, [p.145:10] the captives of Zanjan, that is, the household of the illustrious Akhúnd Mullá Muhammad-‘Alí Zanjání, [surnamed] Hujjat,¹¹⁷ who were previously destined for Tihrán, were now ordered to be sent to Shíráz. Bíbí Ruqiyiyih, the eldest daughter of the illustrious Hujjat, related the details of this episode for this servant thus:

After thirteen months during which the much-wronged party [i.e., the Bábís] had battled the government’s army, one morning Hujjat summoned his entire household into his presence. These included his three wives, two of whom were permanent, while one was contracted,¹¹⁸ and she did not have a child. One of the permanent wives was our mother who had six children, that is, five daughters and a son: Bíbí Ruqiyiyih, Bíbí Sarih, Bíbí Fátimih, Bíbí Saffiyih, Bíbí Hamidiyh, and Mírzá Husayn. The other permanent wife had a two-year-old son named Ahmad¹¹⁹ who was held closely at his mother’s bosom. We all attained our father’s presence where we were exhorted with words to this effect:

You must endeavor to distinguish yourselves over the other people and in no wise should you be like the rest. You must possess chastity, purity, piety, detachment, religion, and trustworthiness. Your deeds must bear witness to the nobility of being a believer and a companion of the Qá’im. Should your conduct be such that the One Exalted God will be well pleased with you, my spirit will also rejoice and be glad. My martyrdom is certain. They will martyr me. After me, each of you many choose either martyrdom or captivity, and the Lord will assuredly grant your desire.

He spoke at length in this manner. The younger wife who had an infant child replied, “I wish martyrdom so that in whichever of God’s worlds you dwell, I would be with you.” He replied, “Since you desire and aspire martyrdom, be confident that such will be your destiny.”

¹¹⁷ Lit., The Proof, one of the formal titles of the Báb. Toward the latter part of His life, the Báb bestowed some of His own titles on His chief disciples. For instance, in 1848 He bestowed the title of “Hadrat-i A’lá” (His Holiness the Exalted One) on Quddús.

¹¹⁸ Islamic jurisprudence allows for four permanent wives and any number of concubines. The latter do not typically enjoy the same status as the former.

¹¹⁹ Nabíl A’zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 578, gives his name as Mihdí and suggests that he died in Shíráz.

Our mother made reply, "Captivity has a greater station since the Household of the Prophet, that is, the wife and the descendants of the Prince of Martyrs [i.e., Imám Husayn] were seized and taken from town to town and land to land, and, therefore, I desire enslavement." "Imprisonment is decreed as your fortune and that of your children," Hujjat answered. He then added, "Today is my last day in this transient world. I ask that after my martyrdom, you bury me in my clothes by the threshold of this room and place all your reliance in the Divine Sovereignty."

After his utterances concluded, a cannonball shot by the enemies broke through the room and instantly martyred the younger wife and the child at her bosom. Hujjat instructed that she and her infant be buried at the same spot. Shortly thereafter, another bullet came through and took his own life. In accordance with his instructions, the companions interred his remains by the room's entrance. When the enemies learned that his holiness [Hujjat] was martyred, they surrounded the camp and seized all the remaining followers. Then they searched for his body. Finding the spot where he had been buried, they exhumed the remains and, cutting off his finger, removed a ring he wore.¹²⁰

[p.150]

Thereafter, they apprehended all of us—a group that consisted of five sisters and my brother, together with our mother and our father's concubine wife—and plundered all our possessions and seized our properties. Having completed these, they readied camels previously belonging to our family, and, accompanied by caravan-masters, they compelled us to mount the camels. In utmost misery, we were conducted in such wise from Zanjan to Tíhrán.

Upon arrival at Tíhrán, the Qájár monarch was informed of the manner in which they were made captive and conducted to the capital. The Sháh ordered that the prisoners must not remain in Tíhrán but instead panniers be prepared for their delivery to Fárs in a dignified and befitting manner. Subsequent to the Sháh's command, panniers with exquisite covers were readied and several attendants assigned to their service. In this manner they were conducted to Shíráz.

Arrival in Shíráz

Upon arrival, they were housed outside the city limits in a caravansary constructed by the late Karím Khán Zand, known by the name of Sháh Mír 'Alí-Hamzih. After two days, in accordance with the instructions

¹²⁰ Hamadání, *Tárikh-i Jadid*, p. 162, notes that anticipating this eventuality, Hujjat had stated, "Suffer no one to remove the diamond ring which I wear on my hand." Being asked the reason for this injunction, he had replied, "They must cut off my finger as they did that of Husayn ibn 'Alí ere they can take the ring."

from the central authorities, the governor-general leased a house near his Ark [the seat of government] and relocated them to that place. He also issued orders for a governmental stipend so that the family would have a source of livelihood.

Time passed and the daughters of Hujjat reached the age of maturity and each married. The late Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Khán, the Mushíru'l-Mulk¹²¹ [II], took one of the daughters named [Bíbí] Saffiyih as a permanent wife, and he also arranged for her brother, Mírzá Husayn Khán, to be employed as his personal attendant, thereby ensuring their escape from the constant harassment and injury of the enemies.¹²²

The Journey of Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim

During the period that the captives of Nayríz and Zanjan were being brought to Shíráz, the report was circulating among the population in an unseemly manner, provoking a general uproar and tumult. As such, Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11>, whose excellent name was previously mentioned in these pages, recognized that because of the persecutions by lewd elements and the tyranny and pressure of the authorities, he could no longer tarry in Shíráz and therefore prepared to leave for Mecca. The wife of the illustrious martyred-uncle, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, insisted that her only child, Hájí Mírzá Javád<23>, was to accompany his uncle,¹²³ Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim, to Mecca.¹²⁴ At that time Mírzá Javád was about twenty-eight years old and a year earlier had married his cousin, the daughter of

¹²¹ Born in AH 1226/AD 1811, in 1846 he succeeded his father, Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí, the Mushíru'l-Mulk I, as the vizier of Fárs and served in this capacity for the next 30 years. When Farhád Mírzá, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, was appointed governor-general, in collusion with the vizier's rival, Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk, he dismissed the Mushír from office and imprisoned him for a short time. Eventually, the Mushír regained his freedom and spent the rest of his days looking after his vast estate. He passed away in 1885. See Bámdád, *Sharh Hal Rijál Iran*, vol. 1, pp. 39–40.

¹²² Several of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets to the daughters of Hujjat in Shíráz can be found in INBMC 51:107, nos. 106–7; 51:379, no. 394; 51:380–81, no. 396; and 51:382, no. 398. The last Tablet is addressed to Bábí Fátimih, and the two preceding it are revealed in honor of Bábí Ruqiyiyih.

¹²³ Hajíyyih Bábí Ján was a half-sister of Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim.

¹²⁴ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubhuru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 516, states this journey was by Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad<5> and Mírzá Javád. However, the Afnán family records indicate otherwise.

Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, the illustrious maternal uncle of the Báb. It was during this journey that Mírzá Javád passed away in Mecca.¹²⁵

This journey of Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim lasted some eighteen months. The news of the martyrdom of the His Holiness the Exalted One—may the spirit of both worlds be a sacrifice for His pure blood—and the news of the passing of Hájí Mírzá Javád concurrently reached Shíráz and caused intense mourning and grief [among the kinsmen].

After his pilgrimage to Mecca and the 'Atabát,¹²⁶ the honored Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim returned to Shíráz, and by then the excitement in Fárs had subsided to some degree and no longer was this matter current on the tongues and in the conversations.

¹²⁵ Nabíl A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 446, states that Mírzá Javád died at infancy.

¹²⁶ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 528, states that on this journey he attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONVERSION OF THE FAMILY OF THE BÁB

After the martyrdom of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb]—may [p.153:7] the spirit of all else be a sacrifice unto Him—and subsequent to the events and troubles of Tihrán, which surely have been recorded in the history of that city, on the fifth day of Jamádu'l-Avval AH 1269 [14 February 1853],¹²⁷ the Blessed Perfection [Bahá'u'lláh]—exalted be His mention and praise—arrived at the Abode of Peace [i.e., Baghdad]. Through trusted emissaries, He commenced sending mighty Tablets to various parts and corners of Iran bearing His sacred insignia, 152, which is the number of Bahá.¹²⁸

Conversion of Núri'd-Dín

One such Tablet was revealed in honor of the exalted leaf [Khadíjih Bagum], the wife of His Holiness the Exalted One, in Fárs. At that time, no one in the Afnán family was among the believers, and consequently none were in the confidence of the illustrious wife [of the Báb]. As such, she began to speak and teach the present writer's father, Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán,¹²⁹ whom the Ancient Beauty in a splendid Tablet designated thus: “We have named thee at this moment, Núri'd-Dín [the light of].”¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 109, and Balyúzi, *Bahá'u'lláh the King of Glory*, p. 106, state that Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Baghdad on 8 April 1853.

¹²⁸ According to the *abjad* system, the numerical values of the three letters composing the word *Bahá* (*B*, *H*, and *A*) are 2, 5, and 1, respectively.

¹²⁹ For a biography see, Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá'is in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 216–36.

¹³⁰ For ease of reference, the entire Tablet is provided below and is a slight modification of the translation appearing in Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá'is in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 235; (original Text in INBMC 51:323, no. 326, and Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 201):

Afnán. The honored Mírzá Áqá, upon him rest the Glory of God!
He is God, exalted is He, the Lord of Majesty and Grandeur.

O My Afnán! Upon thee rest My Glory, My Bounty, and My Favor.

Verily, the Servant-in-Attendance [i.e., Mírzá Áqá Ján, Bahá'u'lláh's amanuensis] came and made mention of thee in Our presence. We therefore extolled thee in such wise as to cause the cities of remembrance and utterance to be set ablaze. Verily, thy Lord is the Supreme Ruler over all things. We have named thee at this moment,

At that time Núri'd-Dín was thirteen¹³¹ years of age and was her nephew. They engaged in discussion about the Cause, and shortly thereafter he embraced the Faith. The sacred breath of the illustrious wife [of the Báb] penetrated his being in such wise that even from a young age he was consumed with profound zeal and devotion, and was uncontrollably [p.155] propelled to teach the Faith with utmost courage and audacity.

Initially, he taught [the new Theophany to] his own father, Áqá Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín, who was close to the late Áqá Mír Muhammad-Ridá, the Báb's father, and was his paternal cousin. Having effected the spiritual conversion of his father, he turned his attention to his mother, [Zahrá Bagum], as she was a sister of the wife [Khadíjih Bagum], and she gave submission to the new religion as well. Thus his condition was eased within his immediate household.

My late father forwarded supplications to the sanctified presence [of Bahá'u'lláh] in the Abode of Peace, and in response was honored with mighty Tablets in the sacred hand of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. These Tablets are currently kept in a special container. Divine benevolence thus embraced him.¹³²

At that time, two requests for attainment unto His sanctified presence were sent [to Bahá'u'lláh]: one from my late father, Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri'd-Dín, and the other from his father, the late Áqá Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín. In response, two separate wondrous and hallowed Tablets in the blessed hand of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were revealed [by Bahá'u'lláh]. In reply to the late Áqá Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín's request, after bestowing great favors upon him, it was written, "Thou hast requested permission to attain Our presence. Before this Tablet reacheth thee, thou wilt have reached Us."¹³³ And in response to my late father's missive, again after showering him

Núri'd-Dín. We beseech God that He may ordain for thee that which will draw thee nigh unto Him and be of profit to thee. He, verily, is the All-Gracious, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

My affection rest upon thee and those that are with thee who hear thy voice in this mighty Cause.

¹³¹ The original text states "eleven," however, someone, possibly the author, has crossed it out and written "thirteen" over it. Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 6, p. 856, gives Núri'd-Dín's age at the time of conversion as 11 years old. Since the latter source has heavily relied on Mírzá Habíbu'lláh's account for its information on Fárs, it suggests that Fádíl Mázandarání had an early copy of this manuscript in his possession.

¹³² As described in the preface, at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's bidding, Núri'd-Dín prepared a collection of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets revealed in his honor and sent a copy to the Holy Land. This densely written compilation is more than 161 pages long.

¹³³ INBMC 51:318, no. 320, and Fayzí, *Khándán Afván*, p. 18.

with immense bounties, it was revealed in Arabic, “Thou hast requested permission to come before Us, but know that thou wilt be honored with this in the course of the next Manifestation.”¹³⁴

By the time that these sacred Tablets were received, Áqá Mírzá Zaynu’l-‘Abidín had passed away, and the meaning of His sanctified Person [i.e., Bahá’u’lláh] became evident and clear, as he had reached the Beloved before the Tablet had reached him. My late father, however, would often remark that he was most puzzled by the statement, “. . . in the course of the next Manifestation” he would attain the presence.¹³⁵

Conversion of the Great Uncle of the Báb

After having confirmed his parents, my father commenced discussion with the illustrious Khál, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad. One day a group of the friends were in his [Núri’-d-Dín’s] presence, and my brothers and this servant were in attendance as well, and he thus recalled his discussions with the honored Khál:

At the beginning when I broached the subject with the illustrious Khál, he would persistently refuse, and yet I would put forth more evidences and proofs [in support of the Báb’s claim]. It proceeded in such wise for several meetings.¹³⁶

One day in the course of our discussion I was strenuously enumerating proofs when, with great amazement, he exclaimed, “Áqá Mírzá Áqá, are you saying that my Nephew is the Qá’im of the House of Muhammad?” “And what if He is?” I responded. Thoroughly astounded, he rejoiced, “That would be most extraordinary,” to which I replied, “There is nothing strange about it!”

[From this comment,] he became most reflective. Considering his condition, I smiled. He asked, “Why do you laugh?” At first, I refused to answer and replied, “It might not be polite on my part, and therefore it is best for me not to say.” However, he insisted, “Do not be reticent and say [what you are thinking].” “Now that you wish,” I responded, “I will share. The objection that your exalted self now raised is the very one that Abu-Lahab¹³⁷

¹³⁴ INBMC 51:320, no. 321.

¹³⁵ Núri’-d-Dín attained the presence of Bahá’u’lláh after His Declaration and the inauguration of the Bahá’í Faith.

¹³⁶ Letters of the Khál Akbar written upon the Báb’s return from the hajj journey and arrival in Búshíhr indicate that by May 1845 he had already become a believer, though it is likely that he thought the Báb was only a representative of the Hidden Imám; see Rabbani, “Conversion of the Great Uncle of the Báb,” and appendix 4.

¹³⁷ An uncle of Muhammad who rejected and opposed His Mission.

raised previously. He too declared, 'Is it possible for my Nephew to be the Prophet of God?' Yet it was. Therefore, you must also exert yourself and investigate this matter. Know assuredly that this Sun has risen from your house, and this Light has become manifest in your household. You should be proud! Do not be perplexed, and do not separate yourself therefrom. The Almighty is well able to have appointed your Nephew as the Qá'im of the House of Muhammad. "The Hand of God is free."

Then, the honored Khál responded, "The light of mine eye! What an irrefutable answer! There is no further room for objection. What am I to do now?" I said to him, "This is what you ought to do: First, it is obligatory upon you to go on pretext of pilgrimage to the 'Atabát and there to visit your exalted sister, (namely, the mother of His Holiness [the Báb], as after the news of the Martyrdom she proceeded to the 'Atabát and resided there). Second, Íshán (that is, the Blessed Beauty) now resides in Baghdad, and it behooves you to journey there for a few days and to inquire of your perplexities. You must exert yourself and place your reliance in God. I hope that the veils will be lifted and certitude will be attained. 'Man can have nothing but what he strives for.'" ¹³⁸ After hearing these remarks, he responded, "Not a bad idea. Your words have penetrated my heart."¹³⁹

[p.160]

He wrote his [youngest] brother, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí, who at that time was a merchant in Yazd, "I intend to visit the 'Atabát and meet our exalted sister. Should you wish to join in, come to Shíráz so we may journey together." On seeing his brother's letter, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí wrote, "I stand ready to join you on this pilgrimage. Kindly remain in Shíráz until my arrival, and thereupon we will travel to the 'Atabát."

Therefore, the honored Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad commenced preparation for the journey and awaited the arrival of Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí. A month later, the Hájí arrived in Shíráz, and together they set out for Búshíhr and the 'Atabát. En route, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad did not divulge the true object of their quest to his brother and instead waited until they arrived at the Abode of Peace.¹⁴⁰ In Baghdad, he informed Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí, "The principle objective of this journey from Shíráz was to make a religious inquiry and investigation, and only secondarily did I wish to visit our sister in the 'Atabát. With your consent, we will tarry for a while in Baghdad and meet with His Holiness Íshán [Bahá'u'lláh], and after having completed our investigation, we will then proceed to the 'Atabát." Upon hearing these words, however, the honored Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí was moved with great indignation and notwithstanding Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad's seniority, spoke harshly, "I will not stay for one moment

¹³⁸ Qur'án 53:39.

¹³⁹ A slightly different translation of the above four paragraphs appears in Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá'is in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 220–21.

¹⁴⁰ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 521, states this discussion took place in Kazimiyn.

and have no wish to hear of such discussions.” That very day, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-‘Alí departed [from Baghdad].

The esteemed Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad remained behind and tried to meet with the venerable Hájí Siyyid Javád Karbalá’í, whose good name was mentioned earlier in this history. Upon their encounter, he informed the latter, “The purpose of my journey to the Abode of Peace is to meet with His Holiness Íshán and make certain religious inquiries. As you are known to His blessed Person and attain His presence, kindly request permission and ask for an appointment [that I may gain His presence].” In light of their long friendship and association, the honored Hájí Siyyid Javád, who was at that time a believer and confirmed, was deeply moved with the Khál’s stated purpose and expressed his profound joy and felicitation over this matter.

Thereupon, he attained the presence of the Blessed Beauty and stated, “The honored Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, the second Khál of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb]—may the spirit of all else be a sacrifice unto Him—has come from Shíráz to the Abode of Peace and wishes to gain the bliss of Your presence. Would permission be granted?” Out of divine favor and grace, [Bahá’u’lláh] expressed His joy and fixed the hour of the meeting and granted permission.

At the appointed time, together with Hájí Siyyid Javád, he [the uncle of the Báb] attained His presence and was surrounded with His immense blessing, at which time he shared his understanding regarding the issue of the appearance of the Qá’im, the prophecies [associated with this event], and certain other matters that expressed his deeply held convictions. In response, some of these difficulties were addressed [by Bahá’u’lláh], but then, as a grace upon all, He said, “Commit to paper all that you have in mind about such propositions so that sufficient and convincing response will be written as well.”

On hearing this, the honored Khál was exceedingly happy because of His benevolence and that very night wrote in detail the complex questions he had in mind regarding the appearance and the proofs of the promised Qá’im and presented these queries.¹⁴¹

In response, the sacred *Kitáb-i Íqán* was revealed in the honor of the Khál and bestowed upon him, and at that time was known as the [Risalih-i] Khálawiyih [i.e., The Treatise for the Uncle].¹⁴² That very copy of the *Kitáb-i Íqán* was seen by this servant in the possession of the illustrious Khál’s daughter, namely, the mother of the late Hájí Mírzá ‘Alí<54>. The entire Book, from the beginning to the end, is in the blessed hand

¹⁴¹ See appendix 4 for the text of questions.

¹⁴² Mírzá Habíbu’lláh provides the following marginal note in his own hand:

We did not attain our purpose in Shíráz,
happy the day that Háfiz departs for Baghdad.

Clearly, this poem speaks to the condition of the illustrious Khál, though outwardly it was written by the great mystic [Háfiz].

of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—may the spirit of both worlds be a sacrifice unto His being—and only in a few margins had the Blessed Beauty—exalted be His mention—added comments or made alterations in His own blessed Hand. At present, following her passing, that sacred copy is in the trust of the daughter<114> of the late Hájí Mírzá ‘Alí, the wife of the late Hájí Mírzá Husayn-‘Alí Yazdí, known as ‘Umummi.¹⁴³

In all events, subsequent to beholding the text of the *Kitáb-i [Iqán]* which resolved his questions, he became a believer and attained certitude, and then proceeded to the ‘Atabát whence, after having met with his sister who was the mother of His Holiness, he returned to Shíráz.

Khál’s Return to Shíráz

The friends came to meet the illustrious Khál and to receive spiritual sustenance from him. The late Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán related:

Upon attaining the presence of the Khál, with the greatest affection he welcomed me and expressed his immense gratitude by saying, “My son! Although age-wise you are considered as my own child, yet spiritually you rank as my father. For had it not been for your insistence and exertions in convincing me to undertake this journey, I would have never gone to the Abode of Peace and would have failed in attaining the station of certitude, which is the utmost desire of them that seek nearness to God.” He then prayed for me from the depths of his heart.

I asked, “Kindly grant me permission to speak also with your honored sons [so they too might find their way to the Faith of the Báb].” “Yea, speak with them at once,” he exclaimed, “and endeavor that they too may be confirmed in their belief and not remain deprived and without benefit.”

With the Khál’s acquiescence, he spoke with [his three sons], Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí<14>, Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taquí<13>, and Hájí Mírzá Buzurg<15>, and within a short time and through the divine confirmations they all embraced the Cause and attained the shore of certitude. However, they kept [their newfound religion] a complete secret and acted with great wisdom, not even telling their households about their conversion.

The number of believers at that time was very few, but the power of faith had permeated their being in such wise that they would not weary of one another. They were all focused on the Abode of Peace. Through

¹⁴³ See Balyúzi, *Bahá’u’lláh the King of Glory*, p. 165; Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi*, pp. 149–50, and Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 49–56, for discussions of the fate of the original copy of the Book of Certitude.

trusted messengers they would send their missives into the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, referred to in those days as “Íshán” [lit., They]. Eventually, the appointed hour for His Manifestation arrived, and the world was renewed with a fresh spirit and life. The promise of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb]—may the spirit of all that dwell on earth be a sacrifice unto His pure blood—now stood fulfilled. Unveiled and manifest, the Sun of Reality shone forth with the utmost brilliance and was declared universally on the fifteenth of Dhi'l-Qa'dih AH 1279 [4 May 1863].¹⁴⁴ After a stay of twelve days at the Garden of Najib-Pasha, [Bahá'u'lláh] proceeded for Istanbul.¹⁴⁵

Arrival of Nabil Zarandí

In accordance with His sanctified instructions, the late Mullá Muhammad Zarandí, surnamed by the Blessed Tongue as Nabil A'zam, was charged

¹⁴⁴ All other sources, including Bahá'u'lláh's own testimony, agree however that His Declaration took place on 22 April 1863.

¹⁴⁵ Before departure from the Garden of Ridván, on the final day of His stay, Bahá'u'lláh sent a Tablet in His own hand to Núrí'd-Dín openly declaring His station (slightly modified translation from Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 222; the original Text is in INBMC 51:321–22, no. 322).

[Mírzá] Áqá in Sh[íráz]

He is the Glorious!

Hearken to what the departing Dove revealeth unto thee, as He prepareth to leave the realm of 'Iráq—such are the methods of God decreed for His Messengers. Let this not cause thee sorrow. Put thy trust in thy Lord and the Lord of thy forefathers. Those who are endowed with the insight of the spirit are independent of all that was and shall be created, and are able to behold the mysteries of the Cause behind the thickest veils.

Say, O beloved of God! Fear none and let nothing grieve you; be ye steadfast in the Cause. By God, those that have drunk of the love of God, the Glorious, the Effulgent, fear no one and show patience in calamity—like unto the patience of the lover before the good-pleasure of the beloved. Amongst them affliction ranketh greater than that which is perceived by lovers in the countenance of the beloved.

Say, O concourse of evildoers! Ere long the Cause of God will, in truth, be exalted and the standards of those who join partners with God will perish, and the people shall enter the Faith of God, the Sovereign, the Supreme, the Ancient of Days. Well is it with those that hast even now have hastened forth in the love of God and received the tidings of the breath of the Holy Spirit. Glory be unto you, O concourse of believers in the unity of God.

[signed] 152.

[postscript:] Know then that thy missive hath reached Us, and We have given this reply to engender in thy heart the warmth of yearning, to cause thee to turn unto the paradise of this resplendent Name, to make thee detached from all things, and to enable thee to soar to such heights as the wings of the worldly-wise have in no wise attained, who are deprived of the shade of God's countenance and are indeed of the perplexed.

with proclaiming the new Cause throughout Iran.¹⁴⁶ He proceeded from the Abode of Peace and via Búshíhr arrived in Shíráz¹⁴⁷ and established his residence in the house of the late Afnán, namely, Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núrí'd-Dín.¹⁴⁸ The friends were informed, and as the intoxicated moth that circles the candle in adoration, they gathered around him. At first, Nabíl spoke with great wisdom. My late father related:

One morning, the honored Nabíl said to me, "Bid the entire body of believers gather at a suitable location and bring with them whatever Writings they possess. You bring all the Writings in your tenure as well, as I wish to segregate them. I have a particular charge that I must announce and desire to leave Shíráz shortly, as I must travel for other territories."

Congruent with Nabíl's request, I informed the friends to assemble in the home of the late Áqá Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Karím¹⁴⁹ and emphasized especially that they bring with them all the Writings and Tablets that were in their possession. At the appointed hour, the friends congregated, bringing the

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¹⁴⁶ Under the events of 1283 AH/1866, Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 3, states: "Mullá Muhammad Zarandí (Nabíl A'zam), wearing the garb of dervishes, and Mírzá Munír Kashání, Mírzá Ahmad, and Mírzá Ja'far Yazdí, and some others, were charged with travelling throughout Iran and 'Iraq to teach the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, wining over the Bábís."

¹⁴⁷ Nabíl's own travel diary indicates that he arrived in Shíráz from Ardistán. A summary of Nabíl's travels from the time of Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration in April 1863 until Nabíl's arrival in Shíráz is as follows: Nabíl arrived in Baghdad in time for Naw-Rúz 1863 and participated in the celebrations at the Garden of Ridván. Upon Bahá'u'lláh's departure from Baghdad, Nabíl remained behind for 19 days, but joined the Holy Caravan in mid-July 1863. He remained with Bahá'u'lláh until December of that year, when he was sent to teach the Cause in 'Iraq and Iran. He eventually reached Baghdad by Naw-Rúz of 1864, then traveled in the western and central parts of Iran, and eventually returned to Bahá'u'lláh in Edirnih. Once more, he was sent to Iran for the propagation of the Bahá'í Faith. In the winter of 1866, while in Tihrán, he saw a copy of the *Surih Asháb* as well as a Tablet addressed to himself and learned that it was time to widely teach the Bábís about the appearance of the Promised One of the Bayán, namely, Bahá'u'lláh. He proceeded to Khurásán and in a meeting with the believers in Mashhad, threw the writings of Yahyá Azal in the fire and thus invited them to embrace the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. He then proceeded to Yazd, Ardikán, and when he arrived in Na'ín, he learned in a newly arrived Tablet that Bahá'u'lláh had titled him, Nabíl A'zam. He went to Ardistán where he received the text of the two Tablets of Hajj and learned that he was to perform these rites. He proceeded immediately to Shíráz by way of Isfahán for the fulfillment of this important mission and further teaching of the Bahá'í Faith. He reached Shíráz in the fall of 1866 (See Vahid Ra'fati, "Nabíl A'zam Zarandí," 5:33–36).

¹⁴⁸ Before anything else, as bidden by Bahá'u'lláh, Nabíl preformed the rites of the obligatory pilgrimage (hajj). Nabíl knew the Afnán family from his visit in 1279 AH/1862 when he had arrived in time for the marriage of Mírzá Buzurg<15> (Abú'l-Qásim Afnán, private communications, August 1994).

¹⁴⁹ Better known as Kilíd-Dár [the key-keeper or the caretaker] he had been the custodian of Sháh-Chiráq.

Tablets and Writings. After partaking of tea, the venerable Nabíl gathered all the Writings and read each with great care. All the papers and Tablets were separated into three stacks and set apart from each other.

Nabíl then announced, “The first group are the Tablets of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb]—may the spirit of all else be a sacrifice unto Him.” He placed these on the floor and picked up another batch, saying, “These are the Writings of ‘Him Whom God shall make manifest’—may His mention be exalted—the very Person whose Advent was promised by His Holiness the Exalted One to the concourse of the Bayán, making the acceptance or rejection of all that He had revealed dependent upon His good pleasure. With greatest clarity, He established a Covenant, declaring, ‘O people of the Bayán! Be vigilant, for the appearance of Him Whom God shall manifest is nigh. Beware lest the Bayán and all that is therein may shut you out from His Manifestation.’ ‘The Bayán is but a leaf before Him. Were He to deign accept it, it would be of His grace. And were He to reject it, it would be but a sign of His justice.’ In another passage, the time of His blessed appearance was fixed with precision, ‘In the year nine ye will attain unto all good.’¹⁵⁰ ‘He will proclaim His Cause and invite all the people and the followers of the Bayán to the ridván of the His divine recognition. Whosoever accepts Him, is reckoned among the dwellers of paradise. And whosoever rejects Him, is of the people of hellfire and by fire they shall perish.’ This third group are the polemic papers¹⁵¹ and are unworthy of consideration.” He then picked up the third group of papers and threw them into the stove where a fire was burning.

[Upon this pronouncement,] a tumult was stirred among the friends. For instance, greatly agitated, the honored Khál, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, vociferously protested, “What manner of scheme is this? What sort of talks are these? Do you take faith to be like a weed; you cut it in daytime, and it grows again during the night?” In similar manner, many objected [to what Nabíl had advanced].

It was then that I [intervened and] spoke calmly to the Khál, stating, “Of a certainty, we must investigate and determine the actual truth of the situation. A mighty claim such as this must surely be true, for none save the True One has the temerity to advance such an assertion. Consider the time when His Holiness the Exalted One—glorified be His mention—was in Shíráz and proclaimed His divine mission. Was He not the Truth, and was He not sent by the One Exalted God to guide mankind? How was it, then, that everyone rejected Him, vast multitudes rose in opposition to Him, and in fact you were denying Him until you investigated, determined the truth of His claim, and drank from the chalice of assurance? Further, you hastened to the Abode of Peace and there met His Holiness Íshán [i.e., Bahá’u’lláh], partook of the vast ocean of His understanding, and the sublime

¹⁵⁰ Arabic *Bayán*, cited by Bahá’u’lláh in *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 141.

¹⁵¹ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 6, p. 857, suggests the writings of Azal were meant.

Book of Khálwiyyih was revealed specifically in honor of your good self. While in that city, did you meet any person [worthy of such august claim] other than Íshán? Of a certainty, He alone is the essence of Truth. ‘Beyond Truth, there is naught but waywardness.’”¹⁵²

After hearing such reasoning, the illustrious Khál grew reflective and responded, “We must thoroughly investigate this matter, as religion is not a trivial matter.”

In this way, on that day, the dispute among the believers was reduced, and the esteemed Nabíl was able to proceed towards Isfahán.

Henceforward, all the friends in Fárs embraced the claim of “Him Whom God shall manifest,” namely, the Blessed Beauty—glorified and exalted be His mention—and became firm and steadfast in their allegiance to Him.¹⁵³

Opposition of Shaykh Muhammad

My father further related:

[p.175]

There was a certain Shaykh Muhammad Yazdí in Shíráz who was a believer in His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] and prior to the Declaration of the Blessed Beauty would always say, “The Promised One of the Bayán, namely, ‘Him Whom God shall manifest,’ can be none other than Bahá’u’lláh.” The believers were particularly disturbed with such talk and were determined to harm him in some way. Often, they would come to me, complaining, “Please allow us to injure Shaykh Muhammad, as it is now only the beginning of the Dispensation, and he is raising matters that will cause differences. Indeed, he is planting seeds of division and rancor.” I would admonish them to calmness and respond, “It is best for you not to heed such comments and to leave him to himself. No one, as yet, has advanced a claim, and Shaykh Muhammad is welcome to speak as he wishes.” In short, I would endeavor to find ways to quiet the friends.

It went thus until the honored Nabíl arrived and announced the Cause [of Bahá’u’lláh], and all the believers readily accepted and embraced the straight path, except for the aforementioned Shaykh Muhammad who raised the standard of hesitation. With great energy he would resist this announcement and say, “There is no truth to such a claim. The promise of the Bayán remains unfilled, and we must await the coming of year ‘Ghíyáth’ and the

¹⁵² This paragraph and the three preceding it were previously translated differently in Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá’is in the Time of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 226–27.

¹⁵³ During Nabíl’s explanation of Bahá’u’lláh’s claim and station, Khadíjih Bagum had been listening from behind a veil separating the two rooms and had immediately accepted Him; see Balyúzi, *Khadíjih Bagum*, p. 31.

'Mustagháth.'¹⁵⁴ The Bayánic Era has not concluded, and the Bayánic laws have not been promulgated or implemented. Therefore, how could they be abrogated [so swiftly]?"

This manner of talk was particularly disagreeable and offensive to the friends, and they unanimously resolved to slay Shaykh Muhammad and destroy him altogether. They came to me and asked for permission, "Prior to [Bahá'u'lláh's] Declaration, this man would maintain that the Promised One was none other than 'Íshán', and when, because of such remarks, we proposed to injure him, you prevented us. Now that Truth is manifest and the promise of the Bayán stands fulfilled, this evildoer is denying Him and wishes to provoke division amongst us and to become a barrier in the path of God. We are determined to slay him and only wish to receive your permission." "You know best yourself," I replied, "that of certainty one who repudiates the Truth must be chastised."

The friends were particularly happy with this response and left determined to carry out that very night their plan by visiting and slaying that "denier of God" for his views. However, Shaykh Muhammad became aware of their design and immediately took flight from Shíráz.¹⁵⁵ In what direction he went, we never learned.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ See, the Persian *Bayán* 2:17 and 3:15. For a summary translation, consult Momen, *Selections from the Writings of E.G. Browne*, pp. 336, 389–90. Ghíyáth (help) and Mustagháth (he who is called up for help) have numerical values of 1511 and 2001, respectively. The followers of Mírzá Yahyá erroneously interpreted this to mean that the Promised One of the Bayán was to appear in two millennia. It is clear from the text of the Persian *Bayán*, however, that the Promised One would appear before the expiration of Mustagháth (2001 years) and not at such a date. Bahá'u'lláh (*Gleanings*, p. 50) explains this further: "Shake off, O heedless ones, the slumber of negligence, that ye may behold the radiance which His glory hath spread through the world. How foolish are those who murmur against the premature birth of His light. O ye who are inly blind! Whether too soon or too late, the evidences of His effulgent glory are now actually manifest. It behoveth you to ascertain whether or not such a light hath appeared. It is neither within your power nor mine to set the time at which it should be made manifest. God's inscrutable Wisdom hath fixed its hour beforehand."

¹⁵⁵ The tone of the original text implies that while, in order to pacify the believers, Núrí'd-Dín had consented to the murder of Shaykh Muhammad, yet secretly he had informed the latter of what was to occur.

¹⁵⁶ Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá'is in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 227, states that Shaykh Muhammad proceeded to Istanbul where he joined with principal Azalis and caused great mischief. A more detailed outline of his activities is provided by Bahá'u'lláh (INBMC 51:524–25, no. 517) where it is noted that together with Yahyá Azal, he committed many misdeeds. In a Tablet dated 21 Safar 1307 AH/23 October 1889 to Núrí'd-Dín in Port Said, Bahá'u'lláh refers to him as "Shaykh Muhammad Kádhháb [the liar]" (*Núrí'd-Dín Collection*, p. 155).

Praise be unto God that the worthless seeds of Yammutí¹⁵⁷ never took root in Shíráz, and the whole of province of Fárs remained cleansed and pure of the filth of mischievous and unholy men.¹⁵⁸

Conversion of the Remaining Kinsmen

After the departure of the honored Nabíl, Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán endeavored to teach and proclaim the blessed Cause, and was successful in confirming a number of seekers. During this period, he taught his maternal cousins, Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn and Áqá [Siyyid] Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan, the sons of the illustrious Afnán, the late Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11>. He would take them with him to various meetings and exert much effort in renewing their spirit.

Some days ago, this servant was in the presence of my distinguished maternal uncle, Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn<37>, and asked him concerning the way he had found the Faith:

Repeatedly, your father, the honored Áqá Mírzá Áqá, who was a paternal cousin of mine, would speak about this Cause with my brother Áqá Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan and me, and share the Divine Words. He would also take us to various gatherings, especially the ones held at the home of Áqá Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar Sábir. We attended several such meetings and heard the Sacred Verses. However, as we were of the same age as your father and were related to him, we did not much heed his efforts, though we would hold our tongues.

After some time, the honored Hájí Muhammad-Ibráhím Yazdí, the Muballigh,¹⁵⁹ arrived in Shíráz from Yazd. Your father took advantage of the opportunity and aligned the venerable Muballigh in this purpose with himself, and together they endeavored to teach and edify us. Out of the divine grace and through the confirmations from on High, we were able to recognize the Truth and embraced the Faith as believers.

In like manner the whole of the Afnán family in Shíráz accepted the Faith. Blessings be upon them and may their end be well!

My late father would relate: "During the time that the honored Hájí Muhammad-Ibráhím tarried in Shíráz and taught the Faith, a large num-

¹⁵⁷ Lit., the deceased ones, a reference to the followers of Yahyá Azal.

¹⁵⁸ The sole exception in Fárs was the community of Hindijan where one of the Bábís, Mullá Husayn, went to Basra and met with Siyyid Muhammad Isfahání, Azal's principal associate. Through this contact, the majority of the Bábís of Hindijan became Azalis. However, after a few years, most of them returned to Islam, and Shaykh Salmán was able to establish a Bahá'í community there.

¹⁵⁹ Lit., the Teacher, a title bestowed upon him by Bahá'u'lláh.

ber were confirmed, including the whole of the Khayyát [tailor] family who were originally from Kazirun. The total number of believers at that time, both male and female, was more than fifty or sixty souls. They were all firm in their convictions, filled with zeal and did not waste a single moment, but ceaselessly proclaimed [the Bahá'í Faith] to everyone.”¹⁶⁰ [p.180]
 In this regard Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán, who would also assist them with financial support, encouraged them. All meetings and gatherings were held in the residence of the esteemed Afnán.

In short, after his sojourn in Shíráz, the honored Muballigh returned to Yazd. The reason for his departure was that his stay in Shíráz became broadly known, and the meddlesome characters were informed, resulting in the ‘ulamá pursuing the matter. Troubles seemed imminent, and it was therefore decided best for him to quit the city. My late father would relate:

Several times, I emphasized to the honored Muballigh, “Once you have regained Yazd, kindly speak with the Afnáns residing in that city so that haply they would become believers in the Faith as well.” Since the esteemed Hájí Muhammad-Ibráhím was related to our Yazdí family, that is, his sister [Hájíyyih Bíbí Gawhar] had married Hájí Mírzá Hasan-‘Alí, a maternal uncle of His Holiness the Exalted One—may my spirit be a sacrifice unto Him—he was a confidant to the family.

Upon arrival in Yazd, in accordance with my request, he commenced discussions with the Afnán, that is, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-‘Alí, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Hasan, [surnamed] Afnán Kabír, and their sons.¹⁶¹ As the scions were young and less fanatical, they hastened to embrace the Faith. However, despite of the Muballigh’s efforts, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-‘Alí refused to recognize at that time and stated, “I will accept only if Áqá Mírzá Siyyid Hasan, who is our superior in the realm of divine knowledge, would also assent and recognize.” That is, he allowed the honored Áqá Mírzá Siyyid Hasan to become his spiritual lens and conditioned his acceptance upon the latter’s.

After the greatest of efforts and troubles, finally Áqá Mírzá Siyyid Hasan accepted the Faith, and immediately thereafter, the honored Khál, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-‘Alí, embraced the Cause as well.

In such wise, none among this distinguished family, whether male or female, remained deprived of the blessing of recognition.

¹⁶⁰ For some unexplained reason, Balyúzí, *Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 224, has placed these events some years earlier, closer to 1863.

¹⁶¹ Balyúzí, *Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 229, states that in accordance with the instructions of Bahá'u'lláh, Mullá Muhammad Nabíl Akbar had also arrived in Yazd to teach the Bahá'í Faith, and he joined forces with the Muballigh.

During the time that I tarried in Cairo, Egypt, one day the illustrious Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl—may my spirit be a ransom unto him—asked me, “Has the whole of the Afnán clan embraced the Faith, or have some remained as deniers?” “All have become believers,” I replied, “even their progeny and issue.” He remarked:

My purpose in asking this question was that while in Tihrán, during my visits with the honored Hájí Siyyid Javád Karbalá'í, he related, “At the beginning of the Manifestation of the Exalted One—may my spirit be a sacrifice unto Him—I besought His permission to speak about His appearance with His family. He prevented me saying, ‘Soon, the whole family will become believers, and not one among them will remain in doubt.’” Now I wish to know if indeed the entire family has recognized the Faith.

I confirmed that indeed, according to His blessed expectations, all the family had embraced [the Bahá'í Faith], even their descendants. Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl was exceedingly pleased.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FIRST BAHÁ'Í MARTYRS OF SHÍRÁZ IN 1871

After the departure of Hájí Muhammad-Ibráhím [Muballigh] from Shíráz, [p.183:11] the admired Nabíl Akbar, that is, Mullá Muhammad Qá'íní, arrived here. He stayed for thirteen months in Shíráz, and his residence was the home of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán. During this time, he was engaged in teaching and serving [the Bahá'í Faith] and was able to convert a large number [of seekers to the Bahá'í Faith] and to renew their spirits.¹⁶²

The Intercession of the Qavámu'l-Mulk

Among the incidents that occurred during this period in Shíráz and caused disturbance for the friends was the bitter dispute and conflict between Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Khán, the Mushíru'l-Mulk [II],¹⁶³ and Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk [II].¹⁶⁴ Since the Mushíru'l-Mulk was a vizier [of the province] and the Qavámu'l-Mulk performed the offices of Kalántar [police] and Biglar-bayki [provincial mayor], the believers became pawns in their contentions.

The Mushír's intent was to cause revolt and unrest throughout the realm, in the hope that it would engulf [his opponent] the Qavám. In whatever town he arrived, the Mushír would compile a list of the believers and forward it to the governor-general. Further, he would incite the 'ulamá and urge them to perpetrate various evils. Several times, he precipitated such disturbances and injuries. [p.185]

Eventually, in AH 1283 [1866], during the governorship of Sultán-Murád Mírzá, the Hisámu's-Saltanih,¹⁶⁵ he prepared a list of the believers

¹⁶² Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 229, indicates that Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11> became a believer at this time, thereby completing the conversion of the Afnán family.

¹⁶³ He inherited the title after the passing of his father.

¹⁶⁴ The fourth son of Hájí 'Alí-Akbar Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk I, he was born in 1829 and in 1865, after the passing of his father, assumed his title and position. Among the projects he supervised was the construction of an aqueduct in 1879 that brought fresh water to the city. He passed away at the age of 56.

¹⁶⁵ See appendix 5 for a biography.

[in Shíráz] and provoked Shaykh Husayn Zálím, known as the Nazimu'sh-Shari'ih, to most vigorously pursue these souls.¹⁶⁶ The persons [i.e., Bahá'ís] who, of every class, were on this list included Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad<5>, the Khál; Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Afnán<14>; Hájí Mírzá Buzurg Afnán<15>; Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim Afnán<11>; and Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán<24>. All ranked as the noblest citizens of Shíráz and were among the renowned merchants. [Other believers also on the list were] Hájí Abú'l-Hasan; Mashhadí Abú'l-Qásim Kharráz [haberdasher]; Mashhadí¹⁶⁷ Nabí Khayyát [tailor]; Mashhadí Muhammad-Ja'far Khayyát; Áqá Mírzá Áqá Rikáb-Sáz [treadle-maker]; Karbalá'í Muhammad-Háshim Qassáb [butcher]; Áqá Mullá 'Abdu'lláh Zarqání, whom the Abhá Pen had surnamed "Rafí Badí"¹⁶⁸; Mullá 'Abdu'lláh Biká'; and a number of others.

This list was given [by the Mushír] to the Qájár Prince Hisámu's-Saltanih, who upon reviewing the recorded names, summoned Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk, and with great vehemence, admonished him, "For several years now you have been given a position of service in the everlasting [central] government. And yet, you do not administer in the best interest of the government since the number of the traitorous elements [i.e., Bahá'ís] has grown to very many in the city! Why have you not on your own initiative reported the matter to us so that we would order their complete eradication? The first and foremost command of the everlasting government to the governors and officers is destruction of the enemies of the exalted Qájár crown and throne, and extermination of the filth of their person from the realm. Most assuredly and of a certainty, I expect these men [on the list] to be brought before me by tomorrow."

Noting the fury of the Prince, the Qavámu'l-Mulk had remained silent for a few moments. The taciturnity of the latter added to the anger of the Prince who had spoken most abrasively to the Qavám. Eventually, the Qavámu'l-Mulk stated, "Your exalted self should enjoy a water-pipe while I explain the circumstances." He ordered a water-pipe for the Prince whose rage subsided to some degree due to the poisonous effect of its tobacco. The Qavámu'l-Mulk then offered, "If it pleases your Excellency, I would

¹⁶⁶ See Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 6, pp. 857–58.

¹⁶⁷ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 6, pp. 859–60, gives his name as Muhammad, which most likely is a misreading of "Mashhadí."

¹⁶⁸ For one instance of such designation, see Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Núri'd-Dín in Port Said, INBMC 51:338, no. 342.

explain in detail the character of these personages and to introduce them properly." "Proceed without any hesitation," the Prince replied.

The Qavámu'l-Mulk responded, "First, these people who have been enumerated on the list are not ordinary citizens. Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim, and some others are among the distinguished merchants of the city. The rest are also noble, righteous men and are among the Bazaar's trustworthy shopkeepers. What has been reported to the exalted Navváb [Prince] may not be true about them." "Introduce them more fully so that we would be better informed of their condition," the Prince ordered.

The Qavám then commenced to tell of each in more detail, "Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad<5> is a merchant, and Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí and Hájí Mírzá Buzurg are his two sons. Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim Saqá-Khánih<11> is a renowned merchant and has attained your presence on a number of occasions. During the 'Ashurá commemorations, from the tenth of the month [of Muharram], he initiates rawdih-kháni ceremonies and gives alms by which a multitude of merchants, shopkeepers, and the needy are fed. If you kindly recall, during the last 'Ashurá, the Mushíru'l-Mulk and this servant were in your esteemed company when we went to his [Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim's] home, and you lit a candle by the pulpit and greatly praised his efforts. You spoke at length of the elegance his house, of the gathering, of the abundance of the worshippers, and especially of the Hájí himself.¹⁶⁹ You stated, 'In truth, this Siyyid is most distinguished, dignified, and benevolent toward the citizens.' The Hájí insisted for you to partake of dinner, but you did not accept. Áqá Mírzá Áqá is a nephew and son-in-law of Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim. These [p.190] are not commonplace people whom, because of certain men's animosity, we could arrest and cause disturbance in the city. Should your good self ever decide on their apprehension, I would first resign my office as the city's Kalántar and Biglar-bayki and would quit town before seeing such an order carried out, since I do not wish to be responsible for the events that may transpire."

On hearing the Qavámu'l-Mulk speak thus and learning of the background of the individuals on the list, the Prince was moved deeply and in astonishment remarked, "Hide this list and do not comment regarding this matter to anyone. We no longer desire any disturbance for these merchants and Siyyids, but wish to have the others brought before us."

¹⁶⁹ Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim was a very wealthy merchant.

With considerable skill, however, the Qavámu'l-Mulk was able to persuade the Prince to forego this request and to leave the friends alone.

The Imprisonment of Believers

For a while such talk subsided, until a second event occurred causing once again the fire of hostility to glow brightly. The following description of that event is based on what my father, Áqá Mírzá Áqá [Núri'd-Dín], related:

The wife of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Rikáb-Sáz¹⁷⁰ was a particularly rancorous and spiteful woman. The more that wronged-one tried to edify his wife and instill certitude in her, the less effect it had, and day-by-day she grew in enmity and hostility. He did not wish to divorce her because they had a child—a lad named Mírzá Nasru'lláh—whom he cherished fondly. No words of admonishment bore any fruits or had any effect on her. Eventually, the evildoers¹⁷¹ provoked this woman into going before Shaykh Husayn Zálím and informing him, “My husband is a Bábí, and each day congregates with other Bábís and has regular meetings. [For this reason,] I no longer wish to live in his home.”

Shaykh Husayn knew [her husband] Áqá Mírzá Áqá, as he had acted with wisdom, pretending to be among the foremost devotees of the Shaykh even to the point that at the mosque Áqá Mírzá Áqá would spread the prayer-mat for the Shaykh and wait upon him. Because of his confidence in him, at first the Shaykh refused to believe the woman and spoke most sternly, “You are a liar, as Áqá Mírzá Áqá is among my confidants.” In this manner, he sent the woman away.

Certain righteous men, who had witnessed this discussion with the Shaykh, reported the matter to that gentle soul, saying, “Be vigilant, as your wife has gone before the Shaykh registering such complaints against you. For now, the latter has admonished her and dismissed her protest. However, if you have certain Writings in your home, it is best to remove them immediately as he might follow through with an investigation.”

Áqá Mírzá Áqá had a pleasant Naskh style of calligraphy and often made copies of the Kitáb-i Íqán.¹⁷² He, however, paid no attention to their warnings, and the believers noting him to be heedless of their alerts, reported

¹⁷⁰ Nabíl A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 156, states that he became a believer in the Báb on the occasion of His proclamation in the Masjid Vakíl. Later he traveled to Baghdad and attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, and in answer to his questions, a Tablet in exposition of the Disconnected Letters of the Qur'án, and the meaning of the Light Verse was revealed.

¹⁷¹ Presumably, a reference to the Mushíru'l-Mulk.

¹⁷² For an example of his exquisite style, see the frontispiece of Balyúzí, *Bahá'u'lláh the King of Glory*.

the matter to me and explained the situation. I requested Áqá Mírzá Áqá to come visit and then exhorted him to remove the Writings from his home and to deal with his wife in a way not to provoke her, as she might cause mischief.

Nevertheless, after a few days, the wife had yet again gone before the Shaykh and cried out for intervention. This time the Shaykh, however, had remained silent. The mischief-makers, who had been at the Shaykh's lecture, had spoken supportive of that shameless woman, and she, encouraged by finding a number championing her, had exclaimed, "O honored Shaykh! How can you allow my husband to be home at this hour busy with transcribing the Bábí books?" The Shaykh had become perplexed and stated, "If it is as you describe and you speak the truth, then with my own hands I shall slay Mírzá Áqá!"

In their midst was a person who was secretly a believer. He had quickly left the gathering and reported the situation to me, thus, "A group of troublemakers will shortly attack the home of Áqá Mírzá Áqá and will seize him and the Writings [in his possession] and will take them to the presence of the Shaykh." I said to Nanih Ma'sumih, who [in former days] had been one of the Nayrízí captives and had remained behind in Shíráz working in our home, "Quickly proceed to Áqá Mírzá Áqá's residence and inform him of the details, and bring with you any Writings he may have. It is very likely that the mob will attack his house and will confiscate the Writings for the Shaykh. Make great haste to Áqá Mírzá Áqá!" [p.195]

Nanih Ma'sumih had put on her chador and briskly made her way to the home of Áqá Mírzá Áqá and observed him to be serenely engaged in transcribing [Bahá'í Writings]. She apprised him of situation. However, in refusing her request, the latter stated, "These are just idle talks. Shaykh Husayn has the utmost confidence in me." [Nanih Ma'sumih] insisted, "It is far worse than you think! Rise and gather the Writings!" The honored Áqá Mírzá Áqá, however, procrastinated. Considering the urgency of the situation and Áqá Mírzá Áqá's reluctance to heed her counsel, Nanih Ma'sumih had seized the box of the Writings placed before her host, and hiding it under her chador, quickly walked out.

Stepping into the street, she heard the clamor of the mob approaching in haste and great fury, led by a number of the Akhúnds and the wife of that wronged-one. Hiding herself for the crowd to pass, the brave Nanih Ma'sumih brought the box to me and informed me of the details.

Meanwhile, the crowd of myrmidons rushed into the house only to find Áqá Mírzá Áqá sitting alone, enjoying a water-pipe. The wife entered the dwelling to seize the box of the Writings for the Akhúnds to take to the Shaykh, but was unable to find it. Despite their thorough search, she and the Akhúnds found no evidence of any forbidden materials. Áqá Mírzá Áqá protested, "What is it? Why have you invaded my house?" They insisted, however, that he must go with them before the Shaykh. Astonished, he had replied, "What does our master require? I visited the venerable Shaykh this very morning." The Akhúnd stated, "Your wife came before the honored

Shaykh accusing you of being a Bábí, and indeed a transcriber of their Writings.” Since he was confident that no Writings were left in his house, Áqá Mírzá Áqá replied, “As no trace of any illicit materials are found in my home, it is most evident that my wife’s allegation is false!”

The Akhúnds admonished the woman, “Where are the materials you alleged to the honored Áqá [i.e., the Shaykh]? It is clear that you are a liar!” The woman had cried out, “By God, when I left the house this morning to attain the presence of Áqá, this apostate was engaged in transcribing. I do not lie.” The Akhúnds insisted, “If you speak the truth, then where are the Writings and the Books?” “Perhaps they have been taken by the ghosts,” said the woman, “as Mírzá Áqá controls the ghouls too!”

[Notwithstanding their lack of findings,] Áqá Mírzá Áqá was taken by the mob to Shaykh Husayn Zálím who reproached him bluntly, but that wronged-one maintained his silence. The Shaykh insisted, “Mírzá Áqá, how do you respond to your wife’s claim that you are a Bábí?” “This woman is a liar,” Mírzá Áqá replied, “as she had alleged that I was a Bábí and a transcriber of their Writings, while in spite of their thorough search, none were found in my home. Had they found any, then it would have substantiated her statement. Therefore, it is evident that she harbors false resentments and speaks disparagingly.” The Shaykh responded, “If she is a liar and you are not a Bábí, then you must curse them forthwith.” “I do not know them, and as such how can I curse people not known to me?” That tyrannical man [i.e., Shaykh Zálím] then named both His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] and the Blessed Perfection, and gave their particulars and instructed his victim to deprecate and denounce Both. On further refusing to comply with his persistently stated command, the Shaykh determined, “Indeed, it is apparent that your wife has spoken the truth.”

[p.200]

Thereupon, he proceeded to administer punishments with his own hands on the accused and afterwards wrote a report to the governor, and imprisoned that esteemed personage [Áqá Mírzá Áqá].

The following day, an enormous uproar engulfed the city, and again the Mushíru’l-Mulk prepared a long list of names, giving it to the Hisámu’s-Saltinih, claiming that they were all Bábís, deserving castigation and persecution.

The Prince summoned the Qavámu’l-Mulk, handed him the list and stated, “You are to bring these men before me.” The Qavámu’l-Mulk sensed that this time [the Navváb] was determined to see the matter through and that no intervention would help. Greatly perturbed, he instructed his farrashes and the Dárúghih to apprehend the named men.

By that afternoon, the following were arrested and brought before the Qájár Prince: Áqá Mírzá Áqá Rikáb-Sáz; Mashhadí Nabí; Mashhadí Muhammad-Já’far Khayyát; Hájí Abú’l-Hasan [Bazzáz]; Karbalá’í Muhammad-Háshim; Mashhadí Abú’l-Qásim Kharráz; Karbalá’í Hasan Khán Sarvistání; Áqá Mírzá Bāqir; Áqá Mullá ‘Abdu’lláh, the Fádil [Zarqání]; Áqá Mullá ‘Abdu’lláh Biká; and a number of others. These men were assembled before [the Prince] Sultán-Murád Mírzá who instructed that they be chained and fettered in the dungeon.

[With the spread of this news] a great commotion was raised throughout the city. The thugs and ribald elements were now unrestrained to speak most vehemently [against the Bahá'í Faith] and perpetrate mischief. Anyone that harbored a grievance against another used the occasion to exact his wish. No manner of antagonism was avoided.

The Release of Two Prisoners

After a few days, the Qájár Prince ordered the wronged believers brought into his presence in his palace. At first the honored Mullá 'Abdu'lláh Fádil, [surnamed] Rafí'-Badí', was brought forward. Both the Mushíru'l-Mulk and the Qavámu'l-Mulk were in attendance as well. The Mushír had a particular affinity towards Fádil and did not wish to see him entangled in difficulties. The Prince addressed the prisoner, "O Akhúnd! They say that you are a Bábí!" "What am I to say?" the honored Fádil replied, "I pray that no one suffers such a day of troubles. Everyone has competitors in his own field and domain. Even we rawdih-kháns have much rivalry among ourselves. Since my profession is rawdih-khání, many people in Fárs, particularly the affluent citizens, are fond of my services, and this has precipitated jealousy among other preachers. Second, because in the past I had quoted verses of Mawláná [Jaláli'd-Dín] Rúmi in my sermons in support of various themes, for some time they accused me of being one of the Illuminists. Moreover, since this servant associated with Hájí Áqá Muhammad and his esteemed son, Hájí 'Ali Áqá, and they have shown kindness to me, then people have further alleged, 'The Akhúnd is a Sufí [mystic]!' And now they charge that I am a Bábí! This servant does not understand any of these proclivities. Of a certainty, whoever has reported on this matter to your august self is misinformed."

Finding this an opportune moment, the Mushíru'l-Mulk interjected, "The honored Fádil, Áqá Mullá 'Abdu'lláh, is a deeply learned and well-lettered man. He is the foremost preacher of the city and is often the first to offer homilies in the homes of the nobles [of Shíráz]. In fact, unlike the other rawdih-kháns, he attends such gatherings only with a written invitation. The city's inhabitants universally testify to his trustworthiness, faith, sagacity, sincerity, piety, and detachment. In particular, he gives the closing sermons in religious ceremonies at the mosque and my Husayniyyih during the months of Muharram and Safar, and the blessed month of Ramadán." [p.205]

On hearing the Mushíru'l-Mulk intercede in such manner, the Prince paused a bit and then addressed the prisoner, "Fádil, is what they claim about you and others accurate, or is it a calumny?" Fádil replied with wisdom, "Your exalted self should know that I am a seeker. However, I have not yet determined the veracity or falsehood of this Faith and do not know of things hidden." With this answer, the Prince was convinced and stated, "God willing, what they say about you are lies, and I hereby release you on the condition that from the depth of your heart you pray for His Majesty the King." As such, the honored Fádil regained his freedom.

After him, Mullá ‘Abdu’lláh Biká’ was summoned, and as he was a man of weak constitution, he had conducted himself in a manner pleasing to them. He too was released. Others remained imprisoned.

Hájí Muhammad Khán Balúch

During this period, Muhammad Khán Balúch came to Shíráz. The enemies informed [the governor] that a dervish from Baluchistan sympathetic to these people [i.e., Bahá’ís] had arrived and in the streets and bazaars spoke in their praise. [The Hisámu’s-Saltanih] ordered his immediate arrest, and the officers located him in the Bazaar Kafsh-duzha [shoemakers], and after beating him harshly with their sticks, took him to the Governor’s Ark. The governor instructed him to be imprisoned and chained with the friends arrested earlier. My father, Áqá Mírzá Áqá, used to relate:

When I heard that Muhammad Khán had also been apprehended, I consulted with several of the friends and decided to take action through Hájí Mírzá ‘Abdu’lláh Khán Bályuz, [the ‘Unu’d-Dawlih,] an uncle of the Muvaqqaru’d-Dawlih. (Though not a believer, he was a virtuous man and somewhat informed of the truth of this Cause.)

I went to see him, saying, “This man is from Baluchistan and a British subject, and on the accusation of being a Bábí¹⁷³ Dervish has been imprisoned by the Hisámu’s-Saltanih. As you discharge the office of the Bályuzi, it behooves you to exert efforts towards his release. Perchance it is best to undertake this matter through Mírzá Hasan-‘Alí Khán, the Navváb, who is the British Consul General and can insist upon this man’s freedom.” Hájí Mírzá ‘Abdu’lláh Khán gave assurance that in whatever way possible he would bring about his release.

He then went to visit Mírzá Hasan-‘Alí Khán, telling him, “It has come to my attention that one of the British subjects, who came to visit [Shíráz], has been arrested as a Bábí by the Prince Hisámu’s-Saltanih. This is an insult on you as the representative of the British Empire. You must officially confront the governor and free Muhammad Khán from his prison.”

[p.210] The Navváb thought about it a bit and then expressed his readiness. He met ceremoniously with the Prince [Hisámu’s-Saltanih] and said to him, “From what has been heard, you have arrested a British subject known as Muhammad Khán Balúch. In light of the alliance between our respective nations, this iniquitous deed is untimely and unwarranted. I ask you officially to either surrender him to me, or to stand responsible before my government.” Noting that the Navváb was speaking emphatically and in his official capacity, the governor responded, “But honored Navváb, this

¹⁷³ Bahá’ís continued to be known as the Bábís in Persian parlance.

person is a Bábí! That is the reason for his arrest.” The Navváb replied, “It is not proven to me that he is a Bábí. And even if he is, he is not an Iranian citizen. At worse, he can be asked to quit this turbulent city and return to his own abode.” The governor persisted, “He is an Iranian.” And the Navváb responded harshly, restating his earlier position, and soon the matter had escalated between them. The Navváb held his ground and spoke most strenuously. (At that time, the Navváb in Shíráz was like the present consul and enjoyed much prestige.)

The governor-general ordered [Hájí] Muhammad Khán brought forthwith and in presence of the Navváb asked him, “Where are you from?” Hájí Muhammad Khán responded in his native dialect, “I am a Baluch.” “From which region of the Baluchistan?” the governor then inquired. [In accordance with the secret instructions he had received, Muhammad Khán] responded, “From the British Baluchistan.” The governor further stated, “Dervish, they say you are a Bábí!” “To begin with, a Dervish has no religion, whether Bábí or otherwise. I do not understand your meaning.” The Hisámu’s-Saltanih replied, “If you are not a Bábí, then you must curse Subh Azal.”¹⁷⁴ Muhammad Khán stated, “I curse subh azal, zuhr azal, and shám azal. All three be cursed! I do not know subh azal or shám abad!”¹⁷⁵

This manner of speech caused everyone to laugh extensively. Muhammad Khán was surrendered to the Navváb, and together they left the Governor’s Ark.

On regaining his freedom, [Hájí Muhammad Khán] came directly to our house where my father gave him one of his own suits and a pair of shoes, together with five tumáns cash and a backpack filled with bread, meat, tea, sugar, tobacco, and other necessities for the journey. My father further instructed his own attendant, Áqá Muhammad-‘Alí Káshání, who was one of the believers, to accompany him [Hájí Muhammad Khán] on this journey [and to protect him on the way]. Five hours into the night,

¹⁷⁴ It is noteworthy that by this date, 1871, the governor-general of Fárs still thought that Yahyá Azal was the head of the Bábí community, indicating that the news of Bahá’u’lláh’s Declaration had not been widely promulgated even among the high-ranking officials. The title “Subh Azal”, literary, the Morn of Eternity, appears in an Islamic Tradition that is called Hadith Kumayl (or referred to as, “Risálat al-Kumayliyya,” Kumayl being a disciple of Imám ‘Alí), and a portion of it is quoted in by the Báb in *Dalá’il Sab’ih* (Bábíyyih Publication, p. 58). Mírzá Yahyá and his followers erroneously have taken this term as a reference to Mírzá Yahyá. It should be noted that the Báb only called him “Thamaratu’l-Azaliyya” and “‘Ismu’l-Azal” (see Mírzá Yahyá, *Mustayqiz*, pp. 391f.). However, the Báb did employ the title Subh Azal in reference to various other leading Bábís and in the *Kitáb Panj Shá’n*, He employes this term to signify the recipient of divine inspiration.

¹⁷⁵ Muhammad Khán, being a Bahá’í, did not hesitate to curse Subh Azal who had caused Bahá’u’lláh much harm, and playing on Persian words, he saved himself. *Zubr* is noontime, and *shám* refers to night.

both men left for Zarqan and Ábádih. In this manner he was saved from the torment of prison.¹⁷⁶

The Release of Hájí Abú'l-Hasan

The wife of Hájí Abú'l-Hasan¹⁷⁷ was a religious and pious woman and in every manner was a support to her husband. She was also related to Shaykh Abú-Turáb, the Imám-Jum'ih, and as such, [my father] the Afnán consented that her kinsmen petition the Imám-Jum'ih¹⁷⁸ for his intervention. Afterwards, the ladies of the household approached the Shaykh with this request, and he agreed to seek the husband's freedom on the condition that he would quit Shíráz for a while. The ladies accepted.

Subsequently, the Shaykh met with the Hisámu's-Saltanih and eventually persuaded the latter to release the Hájí with no further interrogations or troubles. On being released, the honored Hájí took his two esteemed sons and without a steed departed from the city in the direction of Sarvistan and Maharlu. He related to me:

Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Khán was older and stronger, while Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán was younger and more delicate. I placed the latter on my shoulders and let his brother walk alongside me. During the day, we would hide in the mountainsides and in the caves, and at nighttime walked the wilderness. Every time I heard the footsteps of a wild animal or a person, my whole being would tremble with fear, as if I had met the angel of death.

[p.215]

It took me a while to reach Kharamih¹⁷⁹ where, with the utmost difficulty and anguish, we stayed for a few months. When the winter season arrived, I realized that tarrying in such a village with two small children and no provisions was not possible. I consulted the Good Book about staying, it

¹⁷⁶ The unpublished narrative of Qábil Ábádí'í, p. 13, confirms the same outline and states that after Shíráz, Muhammad Khán proceeded to Isfahán and there met the King of the Martyrs, and through him, sent a supplication to Bahá'u'lláh requesting permission to visit the Holy Land and to remain there. His wish was granted, and, thereupon, he returned to Baluchistan, settled his affairs, secured the financial well-being of his wife and kinsmen, and then proceeded to the Holy Land and spent the rest of his life in that region.

¹⁷⁷ Parenthetically, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh notes: The father of Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Khán and Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán [Dihqán].

¹⁷⁸ Parenthetically, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh notes: Mention of the late Shaykh Abú-Turáb, the Imám-Jum'ih, was made in the earlier pages while describing the fatwá of the 'ulamá for the martyrdom of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] and his refusal to sign this fatwá. He was a most virtuous and upright man.

¹⁷⁹ See Fasá'í, *Fársnámih Násirí*, vol. 1, pp. 297, 321, and vol. 2, p. 1455.

came out negative; consulted about returning to Shíráz, it was affirmative. Placing my reliance in God, I therefore returned to the city.

In Shíráz, all the tumults of the past had subsided, and only the same few wronged souls [i.e., Bahá'ís] were still in prison. For two or three months, I stayed home¹⁸⁰ in isolation, but then I realized that I could not just remain in hiding. Little by little, I came out and gradually began to frequent the streets or shops inconspicuously so that people would once more become accustomed to seeing me. I would often go to the home of Imám-Jum'ih Shaykh Abú-Turáb, and he would publicly speak of my faith, uprightness, and the excellence of my character.

Finally, I decided to open a haberdasher shop at the Bazaar Hájí—one of the bazaars of Shíráz. However, every storeowner I approached to lease a place refused me, and it was only Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán who, without rent, gave me a small store that he owned at the entrance of the Bazaar.¹⁸¹ Now that I had a shop, I did not have the capital for merchandise. Once more, I went to the honored Afnán and apprised him of my situation. Without a word, thought, or hesitation, he went inside the house and came out with one hundred tumáns cash as a loan. I raised my voice in gratitude to God.

Starting the following day, placing all my reliance in the Almighty Lord, I opened my shop and began selling some trifling items. The divine confirmations poured forth, and soon I was successful. However, the other shopkeepers continued to cause many disturbances.

Fate of the Other Prisoners

Karbalá'í Hasan Khán Sarvistání was previously the Kalántar of Sarvistan, one of districts under the jurisdiction of the Qavámu'l-Mulk. Through the intercession of the latter, he was eventually freed and sent home to Sarvistan.

Mírzá Báqir was imprisoned for four months. Afterwards, he was brought out, extensively and severely beaten with sticks, and then released. He departed for Kirmán and there, because of his devotion and zeal [in the Cause of God], through the machinations of Hájí Muhammad-Karím Khán, the Athym,¹⁸² he was arrested and eventually martyred. No doubt, the details will be written in the history of the Cause in Kirmán.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ At the time, he was residing in the House of the Báb.

¹⁸¹ To the present day, this shop remains part of the estate of the descendants of Núrí'd-Dín (Abú'l-Qásim Afnán, private communications, August 1995).

¹⁸² Lit., the Sinner, a self-adopted title of Hájí Muhammad-Karím Khán. Bahá'u'lláh confirms that the Qur'án prophesied him through this title.

¹⁸³ A brief summary appears in Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, pp. 144–45.

The remaining three believers, namely, Mírzá Áqá Rikáb-Sáz, Mashhadí Nabí,¹⁸⁴ and Mashhadí Muhammad-Ja'far [Khayyát], however, continued to languish in confinement. Noting that through various means the other prisoners had been released greatly fueled the enmity and hatred of Shaykh Husayn Zálím. Therefore, he went before the Hisámu's-Saltanih, raucously raising the cry, "Our religion and faith is lost!" and spoke vehemently [in demand of severe disposition of the three imprisoned believers]. The Prince was induced to concur with his view and summoned the three men before him. No matter how they tried to force the three to recant their faith, they remained steadfast in their convictions, nay, would grow stronger in their constancy. The Qájár Prince was most bewildered. Immediately at that session, Shaykh Zálím wrote and issued a fatwá for their martyrdom, handing it to the Qájár offspring. That very night, the three believers were strangled with ropes in their prison cells.

The following morning, their wives and families were informed of their martyrdom and allowed to come and claim the bodies. After the ritual ablutions, the three martyrs were buried in Daru'l-Salam, which is one of the famous cemeteries of Shíráz.¹⁸⁵

[p.220] Subsequent to these martyrdoms, the rabble continued to perpetrate untold atrocities. They would compose unseemly verses, and in the streets and the bazaar chant such songs. On the fortieth day of the martyrdom of those devotees of the Beloved's Visage, all the rogue and lewd characters gathered, perpetrating every manner of insolence, brutality, and viciousness. Raising bags filled with diverse filth, refuse, sheep-skins, and dogs over their heads, they marched for four or five hours through the city, streets, and bazaars while singing and chanting slogans, and thence proceeding to the cemetery where they threw their heinous load on the graves of those fallen victims and committed yet other wicked and reprehensible acts. Truly, pen and tongue are ashamed of mentioning their deeds. Now that some fifty years¹⁸⁶ have passed since those days, on meeting one of the believers, the Shírází children still chant those contemptible verses.

¹⁸⁴ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 6, pp. 860–61, states that two years earlier, in AH 1286 [1869], he had walked to 'Akká in the hope of attaining the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. In the company of a group of pilgrims, he reached his destination, but instructions were received from Bahá'u'lláh that, on account of certain difficulties, the visitors should not come within the citadel. Mashhadí Nabí immediately returned to Iran.

¹⁸⁵ A detailed description of this episode is given in Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 6, pp. 858–61; see also Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 200.

¹⁸⁶ One of the internal evidences that suggest this narrative was composed in early 1920s.

It was shortly after these events that the Hisámu's-Saltinih was dismissed from office and departed from Fárs. With his departure from the scene, much of the persecution against the Faith abated.

Subsequent to these occurrences, the wife [of Rikáb-Sáz] was overcome with regret and remorse, but of what use! Those wronged-ones had already won their glorious station, leaving behind this troubled plane for the exalted paradise, the Abhá Kingdom and the everlasting bliss, hearkening to the Tongue of Grandeur, "Blessed are they and happy is their end." Because of their deeds, history will forever recall their bravery and signal achievement.

The wife [of Rikáb-Sáz] arranged for a large gravestone with his illustrious name and dates engraved upon it, and this was placed over his resting spot. However, the vagabonds learned of this and demolished the stone and the gravesite. Until her very last hour, she was filled with regret over her deeds and would lament bitterly. The One Compassionate God is the forgiver of the sins.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ A moving summary of the martyrdom of these three believers is given in Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, pp. 134–36, where its occurrence is dated AH 1288 [1871].

CHAPTER NINE

THE PASSING OF KHADÍJIH BAGUM

[p.222:9] During this period, various teachers of God's Cause and diffusers of the Divine Word arrived in Fárs in service to the Faith, thereby renewing the spiritual life of many souls. Amid such teachers coming to Shíráz was Áqá Mullá Muhammad Qá'iní, [surnamed] Nabíl Akbar, who ranked among the foremost promoters of the Cause. His stay in Fárs lasted some thirteen months and produced many benefits for the province and nearby territories, resulting in the edification of a number of individuals.

Munírih Khánum's Sojourn in Shíráz

During Shavvál of AH 1288 [December 1871], Munírih Khánum, who was traveling to the Holy Land for the purpose of her marriage to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, arrived in Shíráz from Isfahán. [Prior to her arrival,] a letter addressed to Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán was sent from Isfahán by Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan, the Sultánu'sh-Shuhadá¹⁸⁸ [the King of Martyrs], indicating that in accordance with Bahá'u'lláh's instructions, Munírih Khánum, an accomplished daughter of Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Nahriy, together with her brother, Áqá Siyyid Yahyá, were to proceed to the Holy Land and en route would arrive [in Shíráz] and that a residence was to be designated for their stay.

After considering the contents of this letter from Isfahán, the Afnán consulted with Khadíjih Bagum and because of its proximity to her own residence, she proposed the house of the Khál [Akbar], Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, as the residence for the coming guests. At that time, Khadíjih Bagum lived in the house of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, the Khál [A'zam], with her maternal sister [Hájíyyih B́bí Ján-Ján], who was the widow of the martyred-uncle, and the homes of the two uncles were adjacent to one another, connected by a common wall. Therefore, this house was designated for Munírih Khánum's stay.

¹⁸⁸ Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá'is in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 231, attributes the letter to the Mahbúbu'sh-Shuhadá [the Beloved of Martyrs].

Munírih Khánum and her brother, Áqá Siyyid Yahyá, arrived in the month of Dhi'l-Qa'dih [January 1872]. During their sojourn, she was a constant companion and consort of Khadíjih Bagum, and wherever they visited were in each other's company. For a few nights, she also tarried at the residence of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán. After a stay of 15 days in Shíráz, Munírih Khánum departed for Búshihr and eventually the Holy Land.¹⁸⁹ [p.225]

While she was in Shíráz, one day during the course of their conversations, Khadíjih Bagum stated, "Having been in the hands of diverse individuals, the Blessed House of the Báb has suffered extensively and stands in ruin. I wish for it to be renovated so that I could take my residence there. When you have attained the sacred presence [of Bahá'u'lláh], kindly implore Him that the request of this forsaken one be graced with the favor of acceptance so that I would be able to take my residence there for the protection of the House." [Munírih Khánum] had written down her supplication and presented it to Bahá'u'lláh, Who graciously commanded Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán to renovate the House in whatever manner Khadíjih Bagum desired and for her residence to be transferred there afterwards.

Renovation of the House of the Báb

Subsequent to issuance of His blessed instruction, the Afnán commenced the repair work. He designated one of the believers Ustád 'Abdu'r-Razzáq [a mason of Shíráz] as the construction supervisor and the laborers' overseer, himself visiting the site two or three times daily. In the course of this renovation, major architectural modifications were introduced, and the design and configuration of the entire House were changed from the original layout.

This work was completed after several months. While the reconstruction was taking place, a small house adjacent on the eastern flank that belonged to a Jewish man who had recently converted to Islam was purchased at the owner's insistence, renovated, and made part of the Blessed House of the Báb.

¹⁸⁹ See Balyúzi, *Bahá'u'lláh the King of Glory*, pp. 344–47.

After completion of the renovation, Khadíjih Bagum took up residence in the Blessed House in AH 1290 [1873]. Once more the friends began to come on pilgrimage to that sacred spot and to visit that exalted leaf.

Certain sinister men reported this development to Farhád Mírzá, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih. That is, one day, several of the mischief-makers called on the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih and informed him about the Blessed House. The gist of their comments was, "The House of the Siyyid-i Báb is now renovated and occupied by some of His kinsmen, and visitors from here and there frequent the House." Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Khán Munshí-Báshí and Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín Khán 'Alí-Ábádí, who ranked among the most pious of men and devoted Bahá'ís, were in attendance in that meeting and heard the matter [reported to the governor].

Four hours into the night, these two believers came to the residence of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán and informed him of what had transpired in the meeting with the Prince, adding their recommendation, "It would be best if for some time the Holy Mother¹⁹⁰ [i.e., Khadíjih Bagum] did not reside in the House, allowing such talk to subside."

The following morning, the Afnán gained the presence of Khadíjih Bagum and informed her of the details, as conveyed by the Munshí-Báshí and Áqá Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín Khán, suggesting that it would be better if for several months she did not live there. At first, she had sobbed bitterly; but eventually she consented to move her residence, not to the house that she previously lived in, but to the home of her nephew, Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán. That very day, together with her maidservant, Fiddih, she transferred her residence to the home of my late father and lived there for five and a half months.

[p.230] When various machinations were alleviated, Khadíjih Bagum returned to the House of the Báb, but lived there with the utmost wisdom. She never used the main entrance of the House, and all the comings and goings were through the entrance of the newly acquired house.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ The original is "Bí bí," a term of endearment for the older ladies of the house.

¹⁹¹ It seems that Khadíjih Bagum's residence in the House of the Báb continued to agitate the neighborhood. In a Tablet dated 19 Safar AH 1295 [22 February 1878] Bahá'u'lláh instructs Núrí'd-Dín in Shiráz (NC 16):

If at this time residence in the True House by the blessed wife, upon her rest all My Glory and My Exaltation, provokes commotion among Our servants and causes uproar and tyranny, then dwelling in that location is not permitted....Under all conditions, wisdom must be observed. If in these days, habitation in the House by the wife [Khadíjih Bagum] or the Afnán is against wisdom and prudence, then its doors must be closed and none be allowed to dwell therein.

Dahají in Shíráz

During this period, Hájí Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar Dahají arrived in Shíráz and commenced teaching and proclaiming the Cause. In accordance with the instructions of the Blessed Perfection, he was also engaged in transcribing a protection prayer revealed by the Exalted Pen of the Primal Point. Copies were made for each of the friends for a contribution of an Ashrafí.¹⁹² My father acquired a copy for each one of us, and the copies are currently available.

Departure of the Afnán from Shíráz

The news of the martyrdom of Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, the Mahbúbu’sh-Shuhadá, and Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan, the Sultánu’sh-Shuhadá, in Isfahán in AH 1296 [1879], soon reached Shíráz. At that time, Farhád Mírzá, the Mu’tamidu’d-Dawlih, was the governor-general, and this Qájár Prince was extremely antagonistic [towards the Cause]. There was great commotion in Shíráz, and merchants and shopkeepers in the customs, the commercial offices, and the bazaar spoke ceaselessly of the events of Isfahán. The elders [of the community] were particularly apprehensive, since it was only recently that the episode of the Three Martyrs had occurred in Shíráz.

The elders were enveloped in fear. Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí, Hájí Mírzá Buzurg, Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn, Áqá Mírzá Abú’l-Hasan, Áqá Shaykh ‘Alí Mírzá, and a number of other friends gathered and consulted on the situation. They concluded that Áqá Mírzá Áqá [Núri’d-Dín] was most renowned [as a Bahá’í], and should atrocities be plotted against the community, they would of a certainty be directed at him. They said, “None of us are known [as Bahá’ís] among the people. From the very beginning, because of his devotion, zeal, and associations, Áqá Mírzá Áqá is known [as a Bahá’í,] and should troubles now be directed against him, others would suffer as well.” Each of them spoke in similar manner, until they unanimously resolved that it was best for Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán not to remain in Shíráz and through Búshihir to depart forthwith for Bombay.

¹⁹² A gold coin.

Afterwards, in its entirety, this consultative body came to the residence of the Afnán and informed him of their decision that in light of the turmoil, upheavals, and chaos in Shíráz and all the talk current among the people, it was more prudent for him to arrange his affairs and depart immediately for Búshih. ¹⁹³ Though Áqá Mírzá Áqá had offered many arguments, the elders did not accept them so that, on account of their insistence and within twenty-four hours, he left for Búshih with his personal attendant, and then for Bombay [India]. ¹⁹⁴

With his departure, inactivity and dormancy fell for a while upon the province of Fárs. [Bahá'í] meetings were infrequent, and the friends would rarely gather. Even such devoted believers as Áqá Mullá 'Abdu'lláh Fádil, [surnamed] Rafí' Badí', Áqá Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Karím, and some others would comment, "With the departure of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán, the light of Fárs has become eclipsed. We did not appreciate all his merits. The worth of each thing becomes apparent in its absence."

For a while it went thus, until once again the Exalted and Glorious God sent forth such devoted personages as Hájí Mírzá Ghulám-Husayn, Áqá Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, and Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán. Through these sacred and enkindled figures, and their zeal and energy, life was renewed in Fárs, and all were rejuvenated. It was during this time that the divinely learned and spiritually awakened Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí [p.235] arrived in Shíráz, and the friends commenced holding many gathering to benefit from his wondrous presence, and a new fervor and spirit was breathed into all.

The Final Years of Khadíjih Bagum, Her Illness and Passing

After the departure of the Báb from Shíráz and the subsequent news of the martyrdom of His Holiness, His mother together with her own mother, in the company of her brother, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, left for the 'Atabát where she remained the rest of her days. During this

¹⁹³ Private correspondence between the two martyred brothers in Isfahán, namely, the King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs, indicates that they were business partners with Núri'd-Dín. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that part of the concern for the latter stemmed from the fear that the enemies of the fallen brothers in Isfahán would try to extend their hostilities to all their business partners, including Núri'd-Dín.

¹⁹⁴ About a year later, in a Tablet dated 14 Rabí'u'th-Thání AH 1297 [26 March 1880], Bahá'u'lláh instructed Núri'd-Dín to commence business and commerce: "In accordance with the divine decree, that illustrious personage must become engaged in trade, and assuredly means for such an occupation will be made ready" (*Núri'd-Dín Collection*, p. 22).

time, Khadíjih Bagum was alone in Shíráz, consumed by her inner agitation over the fate of her exalted Husband. Day and night she burnt like a candle, her sorrow and despondency knowing no end and her anguish being bottomless. With each fleeting day, she grew increasingly afflicted, depressed, and ill.

The Blessed Beauty's residence at the Abode of Peace [Baghdad] and the arrival of His many Tablets, however, instilled an everlasting spirit and eternal life into her. Once more, as result of Bahá'u'lláh's infinite loving-kindness, she was filled with zeal and strength and decided to journey to His blessed presence. Out of concern for his sister, Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11> prevented her from this journey though. She, however, continued longing and hoping that means would be arranged for her to attain the bounty of presence. Not long thereafter, news was received that the Blessed Beauty had been further exiled, first to Istanbul and then Edirne, and as such her hopes for visiting Him and beholding His Countenance were thoroughly shattered. Her sole consolation was now the Tablets that bore the loving expressions of her kind Lord.¹⁹⁵

In the year AH 1298 [1881], Siyyid 'Alí¹⁹⁶ came from Yazd to Shíráz and attained the presence of Khadíjih Bagum. He stayed for several months and often, day and night, would come visit Khadíjih Bagum. In the course of his conversations, he expressed his desire to visit the Holy Land and implored her to intercede on his behalf so that one of the exalted leaves [of Bahá'u'lláh] would join him in matrimony. In response, Khadíjih Bagum stated, "I will make this request, and of a certainty my supplication will find acceptance in His sacred presence. However, you must promise that when the appointed time has arrived, you will come from Yazd to Shíráz and take me with you to the Holy Land." Siyyid 'Alí placed both hands on his eyes, stating, "As a humble servant, I am at your service." Assured of his solemn promise, she penned a supplication requesting and imploring marriage [between Siyyid 'Alí and one of Bahá'u'lláh's daughters] and sent the envelope to Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán in Bombay. In turn, my father forwarded her missive along with his own supplication to the Holy Land.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Several of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets to Khadíjih Bagum are included in INBMC 51:252–62, nos. 258–66.

¹⁹⁶ In the original manuscript, often Siyyid 'Alí's name follows a blank space, suggesting a descriptive phrase associated with his mention has been erased by later hands.

¹⁹⁷ In his *Memories*, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh notes that in this request; 'Abdu'l-Bahá was also instrumental in petitioning Bahá'u'lláh to consent to this marriage.

Meanwhile, Siyyid ‘Alí returned to Yazd awaiting the news from the Holy Land. When the missive [from Khadíjih Bagum] was presented into the sanctified presence of Bahá’u’lláh, her request was favored with approval. When this glad tidings from the Holy Land was received, Khadíjih Bagum conveyed it to Yazd, adding:

Praise be to God that the request of this desolate one was graced with approval. Now I have nothing further to do in Shíráz and have made the necessary preparations for the journey awaiting your arrival. Of a certainty, you must leave at once and come to Shíráz so that we can journey together.

Day and night, she was beaming with joy and exhilaration. When the friends would attain her presence, the sole subject of her discourse was [p.240] her forthcoming journey. She had seen to all the necessary arrangements expecting the arrival of a letter from Yazd and the news of the family members coming to Shíráz. Indeed she was counting every fleeting hour. With the delivery of every post, she would quickly dispatch her servant to check to see if a communication had been received from Yazd.

Meanwhile, Siyyid ‘Alí, his parents, brothers, and sister departed from Yazd and through ‘Ishqábád and Istanbul proceeded [to the Holy Land]. He wrote her:

Since we were traveling as a group, wisdom dictated that we do not journey through Shíráz. Therefore, we voyaged by way of ‘Ishqábád. After attaining His sacred presence and fulfilling my objective, I will return to Shíráz and accompany you to the Holy Land.

On seeing this letter from Yazd and beholding its message—which was indeed the angel of death, slaying the spirit of that devotee of the Beloved—Khadíjih Bagum cried out loud and sobbed and moaned bitterly, speaking expressions of disappointment and distress. For some two hours she cried and lamented unceasingly.¹⁹⁸ That very day, she contracted a fever, which made her bedridden for five and a half months and eventually led to her passing on 2 Dhí'l-Hajjih AH 1299 [15 October 1882],¹⁹⁹ when that leaf of paradise ascended from this world of dust, and her triumphant spirit soared to the Supreme Concourse and Abhá Paradise, relieved of its separation and rejoicing in everlasting union.

¹⁹⁸ See appendix 6 for Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablet regarding the final letter of Khadíjih Bagum to Him.

¹⁹⁹ Mírzá Habíbu’lláh added marginally, “I have the letter of the late Hájí Mírzá Abú’l-Qásim providing this date.”

Burial of Khadíjih Bagum

It was five hours into the night that her remains were conducted out of the Blessed House and after ritual washing and shrouding, her earthly remains were interred. . . .²⁰⁰

In honor of that ever-present spirit, the Blessed Perfection revealed a Visitation Tablet that tells of her condition.²⁰¹ Only one verse of that Tablet of Visitation will be cited at this point to illustrate the depth of her yearning and despondency: “We testify that in thee two signs were conjoined and evident: the verse of reunion gave thee life, whereas the verse of separation caused thee to expire.”

The period of residence of Khadíjih Bagum in the Blessed House was nine years prior to her ascension.

The text of her Visitation Tablet will be quoted in its entirety for the reader to gain insight into the exalted station of faith and certitude that she attained:

In the Name of our Lord, the Ancient, the Comforter, the Consoler, the Exalted, the Most High.

Truly My Pen groans, and My Tablet weeps inasmuch as the lamentations of the faithful ones have ascended, and the tears of the denizens of the Supreme Paradise pour down. Methinks happiness hath closed its gates, the very limbs of joy have trembled, the heavens are shut out from their

²⁰⁰ Washing of the dead and shrouding took place at Hammam Khayrî, otherwise known as Guldastih (Abú'l-Qásim Afnán, private communications, August 1995).

²⁰¹ On 10 November 1882, Háji Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim, the brother-in-law of the Báb, wrote to Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núrí'd-Dín about the passing of his sister, Khadíjih Bagum. In this letter, he asked Núrí'd-Dín to inform Bahá'u'lláh of the passing of Khadíjih Bagum as result of her profound disappointment in not being able to visit Him. Núrí'd-Dín wrote as bidden, and in response to his missive he received a Tablet from Bahá'u'lláh, which contained a Tablet of Visitation revealed in honor of Khadíjih Bagum. A facsimile of this Text in the hand of Mírzá Áqá Ján appears after page 186 in Fayzi, *Khándán Afnán* and can also be found in the *Núrí'd-Dín Collection*, pp. 74–82, dated 14 Safar AH 1300 [25 December 1882]. A slight variation of the same Tablet appears in Bahá'u'lláh, *Athár Qalam A'lá* (Traces of the Supreme Pen), vol. 4, pp. 201–4, 125 BE, and in the same volume, 133 BE publication, pp. 339–41. Moreover, a version is included in Ishraq-Khávarî's *Ayyám Tis'ih*, pp. 29–31. However, the latter source does not include the paragraph beginning with “O fruit of My Tree!” but instead has concluded the Text with the following verse: “Bless Thou, O Lord my God, the Divine Lote-Tree and its leaves, and its boughs, and its branches, and its stems, and its offshoots, as long as Thy most excellent titles will endure and thy most august attributes will last. Protect it, then, from the mischief of the aggressor and the host of tyranny. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the Most powerful.” This verse, of course, appears in the closing paragraph of the Tablet of Visitation for the Twin Manifestations as assembled by Nabil A'zam. Nabil's source for this last section is not currently known, nor does this section appear in the facsimile copy.

downpour, the sun of cheerfulness hath been eclipsed, the stars have ceased to give their light, the breezes of tranquility have ceased to blow, and the garden is henceforth bereft of breezes. The edifices of love have had their lights extinguished, and the sacred earth hath ceased to yield forth shoots, the seas have stilled their waves, the birds their warbling and their song, the rivers stayed their rippling running waters, and the heaven of exposition its disclosures and its utterances. While in this condition I set down the mention of this great calamity that has transpired in the kingdom of creation, behold, I heard a voice calling out:

O servant in attendance! What is it that hath made you so sorrowful and taken from your hands the reins of choice? Hath the world been darkened before all its peoples? Have the trees become uprooted? Have the foundations trembled, and doth the edifice itself shake? Have the mountains crumbled into dust? Have all the banners been subverted? Have the standards been torn down? Did the leaves fall? Did the twigs [the Afnáns] plunge into sorrow? Have all the hosts become defeated, and did all the boats shipwreck? Did the Mirror of Knowledge fail in its reflection? Hath the Hand of mercy abandoned all creation? Did the Pen stay its motion? Hath utterance itself been muted and lost its ornaments? Did the outpouring stop? Did the Builder come to regret having first built? Hath the Divine Spread been rolled up? Wherefore do I behold you immersed in an ocean of sorrow?

[p.245]

Now thy sad lamentations rise, and again thy tears descend. Where is the canopy of glory? Where the Tabernacle of happiness? Where the Tent of joy, the shelter of cheerfulness? Where is thy smiling face? Where the ornament of thy name, the servant? Where are thy determination and thy strength in transcribing that which the All-Merciful hath revealed for all existence? It is as if I beheld before me thy face become sallow, thy frame wasting, thy strength melting. I beseech the One Who aided thee and Who made thee cognizant and adorned thee with the ornament of acceptance and made thee stand before His countenance, and Who made thee hearken unto His melodies and His utterances, and caused to appear from thee that through which the breezes of life were wafted, that thou disclose the matter.

I made reply: Doest thou not know what hath come to pass by virtue of the decree of our Lord, the King of Kings? I was bedecked in happiness as I was hearkening unto the Speaker of Sinai. Methinks I was pacing the meadows of joy and soaring in the atmosphere of felicity, and thus did I enter the presence of God, the One True King. Upon entering His presence, the Supreme Horizon, the Sublime Spot, I beheld the signs of sadness in the Face of our Lord the Most Glorious. Then did the Countenance of the Creator of the heavens turn to me and declare, exalted be His station:

Didst thou not hear, O servant of God that which the irrevocable decree hath ordained? The Most Sublime Fruit hath fallen from the Divine Lote-Tree. She was indeed the Remnant of the Beloved of the World in the Kingdom of His creation.

I swear by God, My Aim and the Aim of all things, when I saw the sorrow of the King of eternity I was overtaken by such a state that my spirit well nigh left me. Were it not for His protection and providence, I would

have passed into the realm of non-existence. Then the Countenance of God turned unto me and said:

O servant of God! The calamities of the People of Bahá are renewed as set down by the Supreme Pen, inasmuch as the established decree has come to pass on the Greatest Holy Leaf. Verily, she is indeed that Fruit at the mention of whose name the fragrance of Her Beloved is wafted, He through Whose Name the heavens are uplifted and by Whom the heavens are adorned with the Sun, Its effulgence, and Its rays. Verily, her name in its essence as well as outwardly calls to the remembrance of the people the Days of Her Beloved and the Beloved of all things. She is indeed the leaf that clung unto the Lote-Tree beyond which there is no passing. She attained the meeting with the Lord of mankind. She precedes the entire world in this except such as God hath willed, the Lord of the Throne above and of earth below.

Upon hearing this, sorrow overwhelmed me. My heart melted, my skin crept in grief, my limbs trembled, and my lamentations and wailings rose high until I returned to my abode and dwelling. I found it to be the house of sorrows, and I became occupied in transcribing that which the All-Merciful God hath revealed. After a few minutes passed, I was once more present before His Countenance by virtue of His sovereign command over all things. Then the Point of adoration of all existence seen and unseen turned to me and declared, exalted be His majesty, and sublime are His words:

Bring thou pen and ink that I may make mention of the remnant of the Primal Point, she who sacrificed herself with love and devotion so that my loved ones from lands and cities may visit her and recite in her memory these words.

These are His words, exalted and sanctified be He!

He is the Consoler, the Sorrowful!

O Pen! In truth a most mighty calamity and a great tragedy hath befallen Thee, by reason of which the Supreme Concurrence and the denizens of the All Highest Realm are wailing. On this account sorrows have become so great that they have touched the hem of the All-Merciful.

Blessed is he who hath determined to visit her in her life and after her ascension, and great is the blessedness of that handmaiden who hath sought her resting place and through her sought nearness unto God.

The glory that shines from My Luminous Countenance and the light that is manifest from the heaven of My Name, the All-Glorious, rest upon thee, O thou who art the fruit of the Sadratu'l-Muntahá, and the Holy Luminous Leaf upon that Tree, and the consort of the One through Whose Appearance the Kingdom of eternity, and all created things, were wreathed in smiles. We testify that thou art the first leaf to have attained the chalice of reunion in the Day of the Covenant and the last fruit to surrender her soul in separation. Thou art the one whose heart melted, whose mind burnt, and whose limbs were dismembered by virtue of thy remoteness from that Station which God hath made the Dawning Place of His Verses, the Dayspring of His clear testimonies, the Manifestation of His Names, the Source of His Commandments, and the Seat of His Throne.

[p.250]

O thou who art My leaf and the sweet fragrance of the garden of My good pleasure! Thou art with the Supreme Companion, and the Wronged One makes mention of thee in His Prison in 'Akká. Thou art the one who recognized the sweet savors of the raiment of the All-Merciful before the world came into being. Thou didst arrive before His Presence, and didst attain reunion with Him, and didst drink of the wine of certitude from the hands of His bounty.

We testify that in thee two signs were conjoined and evident: the verse of reunion gave thee life, whereas the verse of separation caused thee to expire. How many the nights in which thy cries and wailings were lifted up in the love of God and thy tears were shed in the mention of His Name, the All-Glorious! Verily, He was with thee and would observe thy enkindlement, thy attraction, thy zeal and fervor, and would hear the lamentation of thy heart and the wailing of thy soul. O thou the fruit of My tree! Because of thy calamity, a sea of grief was set in motion, and the breezes of forgiveness wafted.

I bear witness that on the night thou didst ascend to the Abhá Horizon and to the Sublime Companion, and on the day that followed, God hath forgiven every man or woman who passed away, as a token of honor unto thee and as a bounty for thee, except them that denied God and that which God revealed openly. Thus does God vouchsafe unto thee this supreme grace, this foreordained, this most ancient station. Great is the blessedness of them that visit thee, that seek thy nearness, that circle round thee, and great the blessedness of them that through thee have besought God in the past and will do so in the future.

Thou art that one on account of whose calamity the maidens of paradise wept and the leaves of the Tree of Revelation were seared yellow. Thou art she who, upon hearing the call from the Tongue of the Sovereign of the Kingdom of Names, didst accept Him, and this attraction enkindled thee to such an extent that all control well nigh escaped thy hands.

O thou My leaf! O thou who hast flown in the atmosphere of My love! O thou who hast turned unto My Countenance, who hast spoken forth My praise! We have revealed for thee a remembrance whose traces will not be erased by the passing of the centuries and the rolling of the ages. We have immortalized thy memory through Our supreme Pen in the Crimson Tablet, whose content none knoweth except God, the Creator of all things. We have, moreover, made mention of thee in this Tablet in such wise that the near ones may remember thee and the believers in the divine unity may turn toward thy resting place.

Blessed art thou. All happiness be thine, and all happiness be his, who comes before thy grave and recites that which the All-Bountiful hath revealed in this day of the Return.²⁰²

²⁰² Provisional rendering by Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir in collaboration with Ismael Velasco.

The Custodianship of the House of the Báb

In accordance with the Blessed Perfection's instructions, subsequent to the passing of Khadíjih Bagum, her sister took up residence in the Blessed House of the Báb. That is, Bahá'u'lláh was asked about the protection and maintenance of the Blessed House, and in a Tablet addressed to Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán it was revealed:

The custodianship of the House hath been granted to the exalted leaf, the mother of that illustrious personage [Núri'd-Dín].

Thus spoke the Tongue of Grandeur at this moment: O My Afnán! My glory and My favor rest upon thee. The exalted noblewoman, mother of thy honored self, is worthy of residence in that House. Custodianship of the House hath therefore been granted and bestowed upon her, and after her, to her progeny, as they are the remembrance of God and of her throughout centuries and ages.²⁰³

Consonant with Bahá'u'lláh's hallowed instruction, the illustrious sister [of Khadíjih Bagum], that is, the mother of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán, took up residence in the Blessed House and became the custodian and protector of that Sacred Edifice. In the year AH 1302 [1884], instructions were issued from the heaven of Bahá'u'lláh's Grace and Mercy, and fixed by His seal, for the custodianship of the Blessed House of the Báb to be entrusted to the sister [Zahrá Bagum] and her descendants. The original of this command, together with other Tablets revealed from the Pen of the Center of Covenant about the custodianship of the Blessed House, is now in the files of the custodians of that Threshold.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Tablet dated 26 Jamádiyū'l-Avval AH 1303 [2 March 1886] in *Núri'd-Dín Collection*, pp. 114–15, and Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 526. The remainder of the Text states: "In truth, the benefaction of the All-Glorious God is so encompassing that this ephemeral One is truly incapable of recounting it. The Tongue of Grandeur enjoins that the Mighty House of the Báb be restored and repaired in accordance with what hath been instructed previously. All are obliged to respect and honor that Sacred Edifice."

²⁰⁴ See appendix 6, under the entry for Khadíjih Bagum.

CHAPTER TEN

EVENTS OF 1880s

[p.254:4] During this period, the promoter of the Cause of God, Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí Isfahání arrived in Shíráz.²⁰⁵ He stayed for a few months and traveled to various towns in Fárs, including Nayríz, Sarvistán, and Ábádih, and engaged in planting the seeds of faith. He succeeded in offering great services and awakening a large number of individuals [to the Cause].

Imprisonment of Four Bahá’ís from Sarvistán

[p.255] In the year AH 1300 [1882], during the governorship of Sultán Husayn Mírzá, the Jalálu’d-Dawlih, and deputyship of Mírzá Fath-‘Alí Khán, the Sáhíb-Díván, a disturbance took place in Sarvistán between the friends and nonbelievers that escalated into a serious contention. As such, a report was sent to Shíráz, and the governor-general commissioned ‘Alí Khán to proceed to Sarvistán, thoroughly investigate the matter, and report to him.

After the arrival of ‘Alí Khán, non-Bahá’ís gathered around him and recounted many absurdities. Since ‘Alí Khán was a mischievous person, he connived with them and sent a report to Shíráz to their liking. This precipitated an instruction by the authorities that the suspected persons [i.e., Bahá’ís] were to be [arrested and] sent to Shíráz. ‘Alí Khán chained the following [four Bahá’ís] and sent them from Sarvistán to Shíráz: Karbalá’í Hasan Khán; Karbalá’í Sádiq; Mashhadí Sulaymán; and Ghulám-‘Alí Khán, grandson of Karbalá’í Hasan Khán.

Upon their arrival, they were presented at the governor’s garden to the Sáhíb-Díván,²⁰⁶ who after interrogation commanded their beating. The

²⁰⁵ For a biography see, Abú’l-Qásim Fayzí, *Stories from the Delights of Heart*; Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, *Bihjatú’s-Sudúr*; and Sulaymání, *Masábih Hidáyat*, volume 1.

²⁰⁶ The second son of Hájí Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar, the Qavámu’l-Mulk I, and a son-in-law of Fath-‘Alí Sháh. He carried the title of Sáhíb-Díván, which during the early years of the Qájár Dynasty referred to the minister for the Treasury at the province level, but later became a ceremonial title.

farrashes assembled the bastinado and applied it severely to Karbalá'í Hasan Khán. After him, Karbalá'í Sádiq was battered extensively, and he was followed by Mashhadí Sulaymán. When it was Ghulám-'Alí's turn to sustain the blows of the bastinado, that brave soul spoke critically of the authorities, "We have done no wrong. Your purpose is to harm innocent people. 'Alí Khán has falsely reported." Each prisoner was stricken [by bastinado] for an hour. Afterwards, they were ordered chained and fettered in a dungeon along with thieves and highway bandits. For some time, they remained thus constrained.

Being young, fearless, and filled with fervor and enthusiasm when he had converted, Ghulám-'Alí Khán, out of devotion, valor, and bravery, had tattooed on his right arm, "The Visage of Bahá stands manifest," and on the left arm, "And its effulgence revives me." This was a sign by which that courageous and peerless young man was known as a Bahá'í.

One day, the Sáhib-Díván summoned Ghulám-'Alí Khán, and in chains the prisoner was conducted before him. The minister ordered the prisoner's shirtsleeves rolled up and then asked the captive, "What marks are these on your arms?" With utmost courage and in a thunderous voice, he replied, "This is the Name of my Beloved" and thereupon had proceeded to chant the verse. Bewildered, the Sáhib-Díván asked further, "Are you not afraid to so boldly express your conviction?" "If I was apprehensive of consequences, I would not have engraved these tattoos." The Sáhib-Díván called in the executioner and ordered him to sever the prisoner's ears. Afterwards, as a lesson to all, he was paraded in the bazaar and subsequently imprisoned again. For some time, he continued to remain in the Sáhib-Díván's confinement, along with his honored grandfather, Karbalá'í Hasan Khán; his mother's uncle, Karbalá'í Sádiq; and Mashhadí Sulaymán.

After five years, the Sáhib-Díván was dismissed from the governorship of Fárs and left Shíráz. Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk [III],²⁰⁷ implemented these believers' release from confinement and aided their return to Sarvistán.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ A son of 'Alí-Muhammad Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk II, he was born in Shíráz in 1851 and in 1871 assumed the offices of Kalántar and Biglar-Baykí of the province. Upon the passing of his father in 1884, he inherited his title and his vast estate. For biography see Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 3, pp. 401–3.

²⁰⁸ A summary of the above incidents appears in Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, pp. 327–29.

Renewed Troubles for the Believers of Sarvistán

In AH 1305 [1887], the central government appointed the Prince Uvays Mírzá, the Ihtishám'd-Dawlih,²⁰⁹ as the governor-general of Fárs. The Prince was ceremoniously installed in office and assumed the governorship.

[p.260] During these years, once more, mischief-makers caused disturbance in Sarvistán, resulting in a great clamor [against the Bahá'í Faith]. During those days, Karbalá'í Hasan Khán and Karbalá'í Sádiq were in Shíráz, and these believers were seized and imprisoned. Ghulám-'Alí Khán, however, managed to effect his escape for Tíhrán. The Prince had ordered his arrest, only to be told that the fugitive had fled for the capital. As such, the governor informed Kamrán Mírzá, the Náýbu's-Saltanih,²¹⁰ of the imminent arrival of a Sarvistání Bábí who bore the mark of being a Bahá'í on his arms, and urged surveillance to ensure that he did not cause any troubles while in Tíhrán. Ghulám-'Alí Khán resided in the capital for several years and passed away in that city. He was buried at the Shrine of Sháh 'Abdu'l-A'zím.

Muhammad-Qásim Khán Baydá'yí

Another incident that occurred during AH 1305 [1887] in the course of the governorship of Uvays Mírzá, the Ihtishám'u'd-Dawlih, was as follows.²¹¹

Muhammad-Qásim Khán Baydá'yí was among the affluent and prosperous landlords of the city. He had accepted the governorship of various important locations in Fárs and for a few years had been the mayor of Bihbahán. In that year [1887] he was removed from office there and came to Shíráz.

One day, the Prince paid him a visit and was received with considerable pomp and ceremony. [Muhammad-Qásim Khán] had procured a precious golden water-pipe while in Bihbahán, and as means of offering the ultimate compliment to his honored guest, he had his attendants

²⁰⁹ For biographical data see Fasá'í, *Fársnámih Násiri*, vol. 1, pp. 849–56.

²¹⁰ For a biography see Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 3, pp. 149–61.

²¹¹ This incident is also recorded in Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, pp. 365–70.

prepare the pipe for the Prince and had it brought in for his enjoyment. The Prince [Ihtishámu'd-Dawlih] had greatly praised his host's water-pipe, its manufacture, and its crown.

Upon the conclusion of the gathering and his departure, [Muhammad-Qásim Khán had placed that water-pipe and some gold coins in a box and sent them after the Prince as a gift to him. This act of generosity greatly impressed the governor, and from then on he always sought an occasion to repay this kindness. It was not long after that the situation of the books, Tablets, and Writings occurred, and that incident is as follows.

By reason of his devotion and affection for the Cause, Muhammad-Qásim Khán always preferred to employ servants and maidservants who were his confidants and had an affinity [for the Bahá'í Faith]. There was a certain Hájí Murshid and his wife, who both claimed allegiance to the Cause. Because of this, Muhammad-Qásim Khán and his wife, who was a most devoted and enkindled believer as well, had the greatest confidence and trust in this man and woman, to the point that the complete authority and control of their vault was entrusted to Hájí Murshid's wife, who knew all the details of their precious possessions. The wife of [Muhammad-Qásim] Khán was ailing, paralyzed, and bedridden.

One day, the wife of Hájí Murshid, intending to steal some of her mistress' possessions, went into the vault, opened the box containing some of her clothing, and noticed that there were two smaller boxes within. She picked up both boxes and concealed them in the kitchen. At nighttime, when all the servants and the members of the household had retired for the evening and quiet had enveloped the house, she opened the two boxes. She noticed one box contained ornaments, jewels, and gold articles. The other box, she noted, contained books, papers, and writings. The maidservant hid the box of the jewels in the stove and cast the other box from the kitchen's chimney into the street. This latter box contained treatises and sacred writings, and also included the copy of a missive to the Holy Land that the entire family numbering forty or fifty men and women had signed.

On her way to mosque early next morning, the daughter of Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá Mustawfí, who was a very temperamental and acrimonious woman, noticed the box behind the home of Muhammad-Qásim Khán. Having taken the box home, she noticed that it was filled with Bahá'í writings and materials. She also found the supplication [to the Holy Land] and was thrilled by discovering in such a document the perfect means for causing mischief. After considering the contents, she took the [p.265]

box and its contents to an ostentatiously pedantic mujtahid known as Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar Fál-Asírí,²¹² who was regarded as a senseless Siyyid.

Upon perusal of the documents, the Siyyid realized that he had arrived at a means for great mischief and hence immediately raised the cry, “Our religion is lost!” He proceeded to the Masjid Vakíl, where he stirred up the people, exclaiming, “You must forthwith attack and destroy the home of [Muhammad-] Qásim Khán, and on account of this missive they have sent to their leader [i.e., Bahá’u’lláh] kill the entire household!” The call took hold across the city.

While attending the Masjid Naw, the late Mírzá Yúsuf Khán, who was a son-in-law of [Muhammad-Qásim] Khán, heard this call and went before the Khán and apprised him of the situation. Muhammad-Qásim Khán became extremely apprehensive and immediately inspected his vault, only to discover that his two boxes were missing. He realized that it must be the work of Hájí Murshid’s wife. He summoned the woman and inquired from her in this regard. At first she denied any involvement, but after persistent questioning and threats, she confessed to having hidden the jewelry box in the oven and tossing out the box of papers through chimney into the streets.

When the late Muhammad-Qásim Khán had learned of this, he immediately set out to visit the Prince and notified him of the occurrences and the involvement of Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar. The Prince stated, “Do not be perturbed. If you are afraid to go home, you may stay in the governor’s Ark as my guest. Leave this issue to me as I know best how to extinguish such fire and mischief.” Due to Muhammad-Qásim Khán’s previous generosity, the Prince was awaiting an opportunity to repay his kindness and now found the opportune moment.

²¹² Fál and Asír are two neighboring villages near Búshihir, (Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 373, has incorrectly referred to him as Fál-Hasírí). He married the daughter of the celebrated Mírzáy-i Shírází and as such wielded much influence. During the Tobacco Revolt of 1891–92, he incited the people of Shíráz to sedition, whereupon on hearing this news, the government in Tihrán exiled him to Iraq. However, his departure caused an uproar in Shíráz that was eventually quelled through the efforts of Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá, the Qavámu’l-Mulk. About two years later, the Siyyid was allowed to return to Shíráz where he resumed his iniquitous activities. This ill-tempered, arrogant divine was most prejudiced against the Bahá’í Faith, and as will be seen throughout the present narrative, he caused the martyrdom of a number of believers: three in 1869, two in 1889, and one in 1892. For a biography see, Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 2, pp. 430–33.

Muhammad-Qásim Khán responded, “If you permit, I will take my leave since my wife and household look to me for support and protection, and if I do not go home, it would worry them.” The Prince gave him permission to leave and sent a few soldiers along to protect the home of the late Khán.

Afterward, the Prince sent a message to the Siyyid stating, “I have heard that you have come upon some writings and documents from this wayward group [i.e., Bahá’ís]. Please come and bring with you all these writings for my inspection. Together, I as the governor, and you as the guide on religious matters, we can best decide how to conduct the affairs in the most beneficial manner to the luminous religion [of Islam].”

The Siyyid was most pleased with this message, thinking that he could now do as he pleased through the powers of the office of the governor. He placed all the writings, including the list of believers and the mis-sive [to Bahá’u’lláh], back into the box and took it to the Prince [the Ihtishámu’ d-Dawlih].

[In their meeting,] the Prince extended the Siyyid immense courtesy, well beyond the cleric’s rank, which greatly pleased the visitor and increased his confidence. This interview lasted more than three hours, in the course of which the Siyyid spoke at length—all drivel—while the Prince pretended to be listening most attentively and to be in agreement. When the hour for obligatory prayer arrived, the Siyyid asked for permission to take his leave. The Prince granted him leave with a request for a prayer. The Siyyid was about to take the box when the host stated with utmost politeness, “It would be best if you left the box with me as a trust, that I may study the papers more intently this evening. Come again tomorrow, and together we will decide how best to administer a due punishment upon this wayward people [i.e., Bahá’ís], as their possessions and lives are fair game: their possessions belong to the state, and their blood belongs to the people.” The Siyyid was elated with this comment, and responded, “I obey whatever command Your Excellency decrees. I leave this box with you in trust and ask that no one else interfere with its contents.” The Prince agreed, and the guest took his leave. [p.270]

Upon his departure, the Prince sent word to the Khán to come see him. When he arrived, he heard the details of what had transpired. The Prince handed him the box, declaring, “Carefully consider the contents, and if you believe some items may have been left with the Siyyid let me know, that by some means those can be retrieved from him as well.” The late Khán had previously prepared a list of the box’s contents and

left it in the box. Using this list, he was able to determine that all the papers remained undisturbed. The Prince remarked, "Take the box, and do not worry any more. I will answer the Siyyid. Should a representative of the Siyyid come to you, without any fears, sternly rebuke him. Have no misgivings!" Expressing his profound gratitude and thanks, the late Khán took his leave and once arrived home informed the household of the occurrences and the wise manner in which the Prince had interceded on his behalf. Everyone was most joyous.

The next day, relying on his previous day's discussions with the governor, Siyyid [Fál-Asírí] sent a harshly worded message to [Muhammad-Qásim] Khán, essentially, "You are wayward and disdained. Your documents are with me. You have two choices. One is for you to fill your boots with sand, rope them around your neck, barefooted and with one hand holding the sanctified Qur'án and with the other holding a sword, come this very afternoon to the Masjid Vakíl to repent and recant, that I might pardon and forgive your sins. Should you fail to do so, I will issue appropriate fatwá against you instructing that your home be demolished and your blood, as well as those whose names appear on the list, be shed."

When this message was given to the Khán, he remained quiet, in some perplexity. The late Mírzá Yúsuf Khán advised, "Uncle, why do you not respond to the Siyyid?" "What am I to say?" inquired the Khán. "Allow me to respond in your place," said the nephew. He then summoned the messenger and stated, "Convey to your master that his message for the Khán is like the message of Ibn Ziyád [for Imám Husayn]. When you have reached the stature of Ibn Ziyád, then we will do as bidden, wear our boots around our necks and, holding the Qur'án and a sword, come in repentance. However, neither are you Ibn Ziyád, nor are we [Imám] Husayn. Do what you can, and we will reciprocate!"

When this retort reached the Siyyid, it mortified him, and he immediately sought an audience with the Prince [Ihtishámu'd-Dawlih] but was not [p.275] received on an excuse. The following day, the Siyyid went for an audience again, but the Prince did not meet him and instead his farrashes stated, "His Excellency is ill." When he returned the third day, he was told that the governor had gone hunting. He submitted a missive, only for it to remain unanswered. The Siyyid then realized that the Prince was making excuses and was not of the same mind. He was outraged!

On the fifth day, the Prince met with him. At first, the Prince spoke softly with the Siyyid, who asked for the return of his trust. "I have not completed my study of the box's contents," the Prince responded,

“and a few more days of reading are required. I will then decide on the appropriate disposition of this case.” “The religious ruling on this matter resides with me,” the Siyyid stated, “and there is no doubt left in me that [Muhammad-] Qásim Khán is a Bábí, as all these books and writings are theirs. The life and possessions of these people [i.e., Bahá’ís] are permissible to us.” The Prince retorted, “Why do you speak such things? If such books were found in any house, would they prove the owner a Bábí and his property and blood forfeited?” “If he were not a Bábí,” the Siyyid responded, “then the books of this wayward sect would not be found in his house.”

The Prince considered the time propitious to rebut, “Siyyid, what do you think! Do you think the affairs of government are left to men like you, to do as you please and allege all manner of unseemly slanders on distinguished people? I too keep copies of the Zoroastrian books, and the Old and New Testaments at home. Should it then be said that the Prince is a Zoroastrian, a Jew, or a Christian? What rubbish do you speak? Even if [Muhammad-] Qásim Khán did own diverse books, he cannot be accused of certain transgressions!” The Siyyid then realized he had miscalculated and that the Prince was furious. As he no longer had any evidence in hand, he collected himself and kept his peace.

The Prince then ordered a water-pipe be brought in for the Siyyid and also his own golden water-pipe be prepared too. As they drank coffee, the Prince stated, “Siyyid, I swear on the royal robe, should you transgress your bounds and become the author of mischief, I will expel you from the city.” In such wise, he dismissed the Siyyid from his presence.

The Siyyid remained home for a few days nursing his wounded pride and then emerged, never again speaking of this incident. The matter died down. The Prince met with Muhammad-Qásim Khán and thanked him again.

Imprisonment of Sarvistání Believers

After a few months, a second occurrence transpired that involved the late Karbalá’í Hasan Khán, Karbalá’í Sádiq, the illustrious Áqá Murtidá Sarvistání, and Mashhadí Shukru’lláh Nahhás [the coppersmith]. The details are as follows.

In the year AH 1305 [1887], during the governorship of [Sultán] Uvays Mírzá, the Ihtishámu’d-Dawlih, having been frustrated with the outcome of the mischief he attempted on Muhammad-Qásim Khán, Siyyid

‘Alí-Akbar [Fál-Asírí] had waxed in enmity, animosity, and hatred [towards the Bahá’í Faith]. Each day he sought an opportunity to perpetrate trouble and interference.

The celebrated Murtidá was a painter by profession and before his conversion to the Cause had been a venerated enemy of the Faith to the point that all the believers in Sarvistán had been particularly apprehensive and cautious of him. However, after he had come to believe, his condition had transformed so thoroughly that he was enkindled and filled with ardor, and without any consideration or fear, he would audaciously proclaim the Faith. His wife was a paternal cousin of Siyyid ‘Alí, the Mushíru’s-Sádát, who was an opprobrious and conniving man, deeply antagonistic towards the Cause. This uncle went before Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar [Fál-Asírí] and informed him, “Murtidá has become a Bábí. His wife is my paternal cousin, and I do not wish for this perversion to stain our family’s good name. You must remedy this apostasy.”

[p.280] Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar [Fál-Asírí] sent his men²¹³ to seize that wronged one from his shop, which entailed much beating along the way. The Siyyid said to him, “Are you a Bábí?” “I am a painter,” was the response, “and it is you who claim that I am a Bábí.” “If you are not a Bábí, then you must imprecate [this Movement],” commanded the Siyyid. “I will not curse those I do not know,” firmly responded [Murtidá].

The crazed Siyyid commanded further beating and severe punishment of his victim. Afterwards, pending the issuance of a religious ruling and fatwá against him, Murtidá was sent before the Prince Uvays Mírzá on the charge that he was a Bábí, deserving incarceration. The Prince in turn instructed Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu’l-Mulk [II], to imprison him in his cellar. After Áqá Murtidá was confined, Siyyid ‘Alí, the Mushíru’s-Sádát, forced the wife of that wronged one to be brought to his own house and be joined to him in wedlock without a divorce [from her legal husband].

Soon thereafter, through the instigation of Siyyid ‘Alí, Karbalá’í Hasan Khán and Karbalá’í Sádíq were also seized and beaten by Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar [Fál-Asírí]. Subsequently, they were sent before the Prince, who ordered them yet again struck severely with sticks and then imprisoned. A few

²¹³ Every mujtahid had a circle of students who, in addition to their schooling, performed sundry tasks at the bidding of their master.

days later, Mashhadí Shukru'lláh Nahhás was captured and added to the rank of prisoners.

It was in those times that the Prince was dismissed from office, but the victims continued to remain confined. Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk, had a particular affinity towards Murtidá and did not wish to see him harmed. On several occasions he had ordered the prisoner brought before him, admonishing him, "All you must do is to state that you are not a Bábí, and then I will reward you handsomely and will in fact place twenty horsemen under your command. I will give you the job of Kalántar of Sarvistán." To this offer, Murtidá would reply, "I will not barter eternal happiness for ephemeral considerations, nor everlasting sovereignty for the fleeting days of this life." No matter what he offered, it had no effect on the young believer. Eventually, having failed to induce him [to recant his allegiance, the Qavám] freed him from prison.

The Passing of Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim

[Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim], the brother of Khadíjih Bagum and my maternal grandfather, whose manifold services and many sufferings have already been told, ascended to his immortal abode on Monday, 2 Rabí'u'l-Avval AH 1305 [18 November 1887].²¹⁴ His sanctified remains were interred at a resting place...next to the tomb of his esteemed sister, Khadíjih Bagum.

Two months later, as part of a Tablet addressed to Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn Afnán<37>, a Tablet of Visitation was revealed in his honor from the heaven of the will of the Lord of Creation, the Blessed Perfection, which is included in these pages that readers may be more fully informed of the afflictions sustained by this renowned personage.²¹⁵

Sh[iráz]. The honored Afnán and Afnán, upon both rest the Glory of God.

He speaketh forth from His Supreme Horizon!

This is a Book revealed by this Wronged-One that all may draw nigh unto God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

²¹⁴ According to the translator's calculations, 2 Rabí'u'l-Avval occurred on a Friday.

²¹⁵ Original text in INBMC 51:471-75. Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 260-62, provides two Tablets revealed for Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn and Siyyid Hasan on their father's passing.

Verily, there hath appeared that which was treasured in the knowledge of God and lay hidden from eyes and hearts. In truth the Day of Promise is come, but the people have denied the Proof of God and His Testimony, inasmuch as they have followed every heedless and ungodly one. They have cast the Book of God behind their backs and perpetrated what hath made the near-ones to groan. They committed that which they were forbidden in the Book of God and abandoned that which they were commanded to observe. They are indeed of them that broke all Covenants and Promises.

[p.285] Say: O peoples of the earth! Fear ye God and follow not the embodiments of vain imaginings and fancies. Behold ye! It is the Sun that speaketh forth before you and is inviting you unto His Praiseworthy Station. Fear ye God, and do not deny Him Whose Appearance from all eternity all the Books of God have celebrated, and Whose Praise all the Messengers have voiced.

O Husayn! The Wronged-One of the world calleth to thee from His prison and consoles thee in that which hath befallen thee. Verily, thy Lord is the Most Patient, and He bids thee to observe patience and forbearance. This is His commandment, in the past and in the future. Hearken unto the call that is raised from the prison of 'Akká. Verily, He speaketh forth under all conditions, proclaiming, verily, there is none other God but He, the Sovereign of the seen and the unseen. Nothing escapeth His knowledge. He doeth as He willeth, and He commandeth as He pleaseth, and He is the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Loving.

Beware lest the world's vicissitudes cause thee to be despondent on account of the misgivings of them that have denied the Book of God and His Manifestation, or cause thy footsteps to slip, for they are truly of the ignorant. Take hold the Book of God with the strength which cometh from Him. Verily, He commandeth thee to uphold righteousness and piety, and He is the Single, the One, the All-Loving, the Well-Beloved. Verily, He hath appeared, and He hath made manifest that which draweth people unto the straight and far-stretching path. Arise to serve the Cause of God and make mention of Him with wisdom and utterance, in such wise that all hearts and minds become attracted. Beware lest the clamor of the servants or the veils of them that have disbelieved in the witness of God and His testimony shut thee out as by a veil.

Say: I swear by God, all veils have been torn asunder and the All-Bountiful hath come in the Day of His return, bringing a Cause that armies and hosts cannot withstand. Say: This is the Day which you were promised in the Books of past Dispensations and whose glad tidings you were given by Muhammad the Messenger of God, in His words: "On the Day that all men shall arise for God, the Lord of the Kingdom."

Verily, We have revealed the verses and disclosed the clear signs, but the people for the most part understand not. This is the Day in which man must go forward, but the majority of the people have turned away. They have cast aside God, and chosen to follow their vain desires instead. Are they not of the ignorant? They have denied the Grace of God after its revelation; they have forsaken His sign after its descent. Unto this testifieth the Tongue of

Grandeur in the Supreme Horizon, yet mankind for the most part does not seek to hearken. By the righteousness of God! Were they to heed, they would hasten to a station wherein all the atoms do proclaim: "Verily, the Day of Promise hath come, and the Promised One is here."

Verily, My supreme pen wishes to make mention of the Afnán who hath ascended to the Supreme Friend as decreed by God's irrevocable decree. We testify that he hearkened to the call that was lifted betwixt earth and heaven. He attained unto that to which have attained God's servants on whom grace hath been vouchsafed. He hath recognized the oneness of God and His singleness, and hath acknowledged that which the Tongue of Grandeur hath uttered in His sublime station. Verily, God hath purified him at the moment of his ascension, and God hath forgiven him as a token of His Grace. He hath ordained for him in the Supreme Paradise a station such as minds and fancies cannot comprehend.

Blessed art thou, O Afnán, for that which hath befallen thee in the early days. Verily, thy Lord is the true One, the Knower of things unseen. Verily, He hath witnessed that which hath befallen thee and hath protected thee by His sovereign might until the pledge was fulfilled and that which was in the Preserved Tablet came to pass.

O Abú'l-Qásim! Upon thee be the glory of God and the glory of the chosen ones and the glory of them that circle round the Throne in the dawn-tide and in the night-season. May the first wave that billows from the ocean of grace be upon thee, on the part of God, the Sovereign of eternity. O thou that hast taken hold of the cord of His grace in the Days of God, the Lord of the Kingdom. May God's grace, exalted be He, descend upon thee at all times, as a bounty on His part, and may He ordain for thee that which may be the solace of all eyes. Thus doth the Tongue of this Wronged-One speak in this dark night at the bidding of God, the King of all existence. Verily, we are God's, and unto Him shall we return.²¹⁶

We have turned from the Arabic tongue to the Persian that all may understand the divine purpose and attain to it.

O Afnán, be not sorrowful on account of that which hath befallen thee. This world of being at all times shows men its pages and testifies in the loudest of tones to its impermanence, an admonishment to the peoples of the world. Blessed are the ears that have succeeded in paying heed unto this call, for were man to truly observe the changes and chances of this world, he would consider himself seated upon the throne of tranquillity. He would turn away from mortality to immortality. He would turn from the great humiliation unto the most great honor. The world and all that is therein would be powerless to affect such a person. Praise be to God that there hath been ordained for thee that which hath neither peer nor equal. The holy tree, the Sadra of God hath called thee Afnán. This is a great bounty, a high station. Protect this station through the power of His name

[p.290]

²¹⁶ At this point, the Tablet switches into Persian.

the Almighty, the One. Thy highest station is the station of promulgation and teaching of the Cause of God.

This Wronged-One hath from the earliest of days made mention of the Afnán. All Books testify to this matter, and all the Tablets bear witness. Ponder the great afflictions that have befallen Me, the sorrows that have descended upon Me, the Wronged-One of the world. From the first days, I have arisen before the face of men, be they rulers or divines, and for the sake of the one God without veil or covering have I invited them to the Supreme Horizon. My purpose in this hath been to elevate the Word of God, and My intention in calling them hath been to draw all beings nigh unto Him Who is the possessor of the seen and the unseen. It is evident and clear to the possessors of discernment and to them whose eyes are fixed upon the Most Great Vision, that I have sought no advantage for Myself in any matter whatsoever. To this testify My deeds among the people of the world and the manner in which I raised the call of God before all the nations. And when the effulgence of the light of the Sun of Truth was manifested from the heaven of this Manifestation, all the parties rose up in denials and objections, and perpetrated that which no one knoweth except God.

Praise be to God, there hath befallen Us from the people of Bayán that which the Pen is unable to describe. Some among the people of the Bayán have objected because of the mention of Godhood and Lordship. Say: O people of the Bayán! I swear by the righteousness of the All-Merciful, I have no purpose in the mention of aught, save to draw the servants near to God and make them turn to God, the Sovereign of the Day of Return. This Servant hath always loved silence, for the ears that are worthy of hearing this call are few and far between. To this testify all people of fairness and discernment. But His Holiness the Herald, the Primal Point, in the beginning of the Bayán saith: "He is the One Who speaketh under all conditions saying, 'Verily, I am God; there is none other God but Me, the Lord of all things, and all things other than Me are My creation. O my creation, worship ye Me!'"

And also in reply to one of the Letters of the Living, making mention of Him Whom God shall make manifest, He saith, "I am the first to believe in Him." Repeatedly, He [the Báb] hath made mention of these utterances. I swear by the Sun of Truth, were it not for His sanctified mention, this Wronged-One would have chosen silence except in order to disclose it to those that are prepared for it.

Praise be to God! The knowledge of the people of the Bayán appeareth to be lower than the knowledge of the followers of Islam, for the people of Islam accepted the utterance of "Verily, I am God!" from the Tree of Sinai; whereas, this people are not prepared to accept this same utterance from the Tree of Existence, from the Lord of the Seen and the Unseen. The people who cast doubts in such manner, their intentions are obvious and apparent in the sight of God, but He is the Concealer, the Patient, the Gracious, and the Most Generous.

Say: Nothing is hid from His knowledge; naught is there to weaken Him. He beholdeth, beareth witness, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

O Afnán, We beseech God, exalted be He, to aid thee and to assist thee and to ordain for thee that which causeth the hearts to be gladdened and the eyes to be solaced. In ending this Tablet we counsel thee to adhere unto that which will elevate thee and uplift thy station, and this is the exercise of consultation. If thou shouldst consult with the other Afnán, upon Him be My Glory, My Grace and Bounty, this is well beloved and accepted in the sight of God, and, verily, God shall settle thine affairs, cause thee to be near to Him, and lay bare before thee what lies hidden from all eyes.

Praise be to God the Lord of all the worlds. On behalf of this Wronged-One extend My greetings unto all thy relations. May the Glory that shineth from the heaven of My Mercy rest upon the Afnán who have not broken My Covenant and Testament, and who have observed what they have been commanded in My Book. The Cause belongeth unto God, the Omnipotent, the Triumphant, the All-Powerful.²¹⁷

*Arrival of Áqá Mírzá Ashraf, [nom de plume] ‘Andalíb in
Shíráz in AH 1306 [1888]*

After having endured great sufferings, afflictions, and tribulations in the path of the Cause, and having sustained the anguish of imprisonment, first in Lahiján and later in Tihrán, ‘Andalíb was at last freed from the clutches of the enemies and decided to come to Fárs and arrived in Shíráz. He situated his residence in that city and arose to promote and teach the Word of God. He traveled extensively throughout the region, in the vicinity of Shíráz and various districts of Fárs, including Ábádih, Nayríz, Marvdasht, Sarvistán, and other places, and planted seeds [of the Beloved’s message] in the heart of a number of seekers, reinvigorating the spirit of a host of others. Eventually, he returned to Shíráz and married the daughter of Hájí Abú’l-Qásim Kuláh-Dúz [the hat-maker], [p.295] who ranked among the constant and steadfast believers.

In the year AH 1309 [1891] ‘Andalíb, in the company of that illumined sage Hájí Abú’l-Hasan [Bazzáz], the father of Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán [Dihqán]—whose excellent mention was made previously in

²¹⁷ Provisional rendering by Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir in collaboration with Ismael Velasco.

several places in this history—journeyed to the Holy Land to attain the sacred presence [of Bahá'u'lláh]. In the month of Sha'bán [1 March–29 March 1892], he arrived in 'Akká where he tarried for some two months and where this servant met him and the aforementioned Hájí. While they sojourned in the Holy Land, the most great calamity of the Ascension of the Blessed Perfection occurred.²¹⁸ Afterward, in accordance with the

²¹⁸ 'Andalíb composed the following eyewitness account of Bahá'u'lláh's passing (*Diván-i 'Andalíb*, pp. 471–74):

He is the All-Powerful, the All-Mighty, the Beloved.
 Oh, in life's cup the wine-pourer of the feast of decree
 Poured life-ending venom instead of spirit-elating wine.
 For every ache there is a remedy, for every trouble a solution,
 Oh, for this remediless ache and this balmless trouble.
 The eye of creation was stunned, the world's heart darkened,
 Heart's orchard was withered, the nightingale of life silenced.
 From this loss, the pillars of existence were dismantled,
 From this loss, the eternal throne was crushed.
 The waves of the surging Sea of Grace were stilled; instead,
 Waves of grief's ocean gushed in the hearts and souls of the near ones.
 The banner of the Most Excellent Names fell to the dust,
 The lamentation of God's Party was raised to the high heavens.
 The One by Whose Manifestation the Day of Resurrection dawned upon the world,
 By the setting of His sun a commotion made the world to quake.
 The One Who in the Sinai of nearness called, "Behold, and thou shalt see,"
 Dismayed many a Moses by His roar, "Never shalt thou behold."
 The Most Mighty Ocean sunk its Ruby Ship,
 Whence a tempest of tears descended from the eyes of Noah.
 Thus was the king of the visible world established upon the placeless throne,
 Thus the Sun-like countenance became hid in the West of the eternal Holiness.
 The ear was deprived of the song of the Nightingale of Paradise,
 the eye was forbid the effulgence of the Sun-like countenance.
 For nineteen days that heavenly Beauty was bed-ridden,
 At the dawn of Saturday, second of Dhi'l-Qa'dah He was veiled from us.
 It was the sixteenth of the Roman month of Ayar,
 It was the thirteenth of the month of 'Azamat.
 Of the Persian Naw-Rúz seventy days had passed,
 And of the Migration, one thousand three hundred and nine years elapsed.
 Then it was this tragedy occurred, this loss appeared,
 And the phrase "Verily the Lord was hidden" became the mark of this tragedy.
 With mine own eyes did I behold the clear morn of the Day of Resurrection,
 As it surrounded the entire the land of 'Akká,
 As for the funeral 'Akká's population entire, low and noble,
 Gathered in Bahjí to express their faithfulness.
 The Persian believers lamented fate's unchangeable decree,
 And the native Arabs cried out, "Oh our Lord, Oh our Lord!"
 For the washing of the Sacred Body in the haram, the Most Mighty Branch,
 Stood at service solely out of His patience, resignation, and acquiescence.
 His Holiness God's Most Mighty Branch spoke to the friends compassionately,

instructions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, he returned to Shíráz and until his very last moment was engaged in teaching and propagating the divine message in Fárs. His passing will be related later in these pages.

Martyrdom of Two Believers

In the year AH 1307 [1889], Hájí Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar [Fál-Asírí] issued a fatwá for the slaying of Karbalá’í Hasan Khán and gave it to the Prince Uvays Mírzá. That very night, that wronged one was poisoned and martyred. The following day, without the ritual ablutions or the shrouding of the dead, and still in the same clothes that he wore [in the prison], he was buried next to the Masjíd Hájí ‘Abbás, outside of the city limits. Despite all the obstacles and dangers, that night the Sarvistání believers located his grave and exhumed his remains, wrapped it in fabric, and moved it to Sarvistan where it was interred in a most verdant orchard owned by the Khán himself.

This deed of the Sarvistání believers was most pleasing in the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, and in a Tablet revealed by the Tongue of Merciful extolling their great virtues, He likened them to “angelic couriers.” He also revealed a Tablet of Visitation for the martyred believer, in the course of which

With a speech eloquent and enchanting,
 “No one should be disturbed since God has said,
 In His *Kitáb-i Aqdas* for all creation:
 “O people, when the Sun of My Beauty has set,
 And My heavenly Temple is hidden from all eyes.
 “All must arise for the triumph of My Cause,
 Remain assured and raise its banner the world over.
 “There was a wisdom in My Manifestation, and a wisdom also in My disappearance,
 None will this wisdom comprehend save God Himself.’
 “Therefore must we become united in His Cause’s spread,
 We must become united both in outward seeming and within our hearts.
 “For teaching and triumph of the Faith we must be as one body,
 Instill a new spirit by this Call into the temple of the world.
 “Eleven were the Disciples of Jesus Christ;
 After the passing of God’s Spirit they gave healing to world’s dwellers.
 “Praised be God at present our number is several thousand,
 All enlightened by the effulgence and the Writings of Bahá.”
 Thanks be God’s that we are all beneath the Most Mighty Branch’s shade,
 The Branch of that Ancient Stock and the wave of that Ocean of Grace.
 Remain constant and assured in this mighty Cause,
 Patient in this tragedy, thankful in adversity.
 ‘Andalíb regrets that ere this tragedy struck
 He did not drink a cup borne by death’s angel!

it is revealed, “Verily, their Lord blest them in this transferal. He is the Gracious, the Protector, the Shelter, the Defender, and the Vindicator.”

Four months after [the slaying of] Karbalá’í Hasan Khán, the martyrdom of Karbalá’í Sádiq took place. He too was buried outside of city, but in an unknown spot.²¹⁹

The Passing of Zahrá Bagum

In the year AH 1307 [1889], the passing of the holy leaf Zahrá Sultán Bagum, the sister of Khadíjih Bagum, took place. From the beginning of her life in the Cause she sustained great sufferings and immense hardships, one hour of which none other could have withstood, so vehement were they in their intensity. What manifold angst she endured at enemies’ hand and what adversities she bore from unrelenting foes! For years she longed to see her only child, [Núri’d-Dín], and not a night passed that she did not shed bitter tears over her separation, nor was there a day that she was not moved to weep over what had befallen her.²²⁰ Her sole consolation was the favors of the Blessed Beauty as communicated through His trusted courier, Shaykh Salmán. In accordance with the wishes of the Blessed Perfection, after the passing of Khadíjih Bagum, that exalted noblewoman resided in the Blessed House of the Báb for some seven years, until her benevolent soul took its flight to the Abhá Kingdom and the exalted paradise on Wednesday, 15 of Safar [11 October 1889].

Her sacred remains were carried in circumambulation of the House of the Báb and then interred next to her sister’s. . . . A Tablet [of Bahá’u’lláh] revealed in honor of the sacred leaf, Maryam-Sultán<36>, the wife of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán, bears eloquent witness to the faith and certitude of that brilliant lamp of fidelity and that essence of constancy. That Tablet of Visitation is quoted in its entirety in these pages that the reader may discern her spiritual attainments:

²¹⁹ Several of Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablets addressed to him are in INBMC 51:441–47, nos. 446–54. A description of this twin martyrdom is given in Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 6, pp. 874–76.

²²⁰ As noted earlier, in order to protect the believers of Shíráz, Núri’d-Dín left Iran for more than 16 years and lived first in India and then in Egypt.

The Leaf, wife of the Afnán, upon her rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious. [p.300]

He is the Consoler, the Comforter, the Beloved, the Most Generous.

O ye Leaves of My Divine Lote-Tree! Upon ye be the Glory of God, the Lord of both worlds.

O ye fruits of My Tree of Bounty! Upon ye rest the Light of God, the Luminous, the Radiant, the Effulgent!

O ye remnants of My Afnán. The Sadratu'l-Muntahá in the Supreme Horizon makes mention of you and desires to console His Leaves, His Afnán, His Branches, and His fruits, in that which hath befallen them by virtue of God's irrevocable decree and His destiny, inscribed by His All-Powerful, His Wondrous Pen.

I swear by the righteousness of God! Thine afflictions and all that hath befallen thee grieved Me, and grieved them that circle round Me and hold fast unto the cord of My generosity and My mercy that hath surrounded all who are in the heavens and on earth. Unceasingly, mention is being made of thee in this Holy and transcendent spot, and the eyes of loving-kindness are turned in thy direction. Even though a great calamity hath descended upon thee, yet, since its origin and end are from God and unto God, no harm attacheth thereto. We beseech the One True God that He may transform the fire of grief into the light of joy and that He may sanctify the garment of detachment and trust in God from the dust of worldly vicissitudes and the smoke of the vain imaginings of the peoples of the world. What befell thee in the path of God were the greatest afflictions of the world. How many the nights and days that thou wert saddened by the cruelties of the people! And among the most great sufferings is the separation that hath transpired and come between Us. Know thou of a certainty that a station is ordained for thee that, were its glory to be disclosed to an extent less than the needle's eye, all would abandon that which they possess for that which is with God and would circle round the Throne.

The oppressors and the wayward of the world, following their fancy, are engaged in destroying the Faith of God, but all that hath come to pass hath led to the glorification of the Cause. The powers of the world are impotent to weaken His might, nor can His strength be affected by the fabrications of the people. From the inception of the Cause till now, We have aided the Cause with Our Pen, until it hath become the cause of astonishment and wonder for all the peoples.

The Words of the Exalted Ones are revealed in both the eloquent Arabic language and the luminous Persian tongue. Their recitation is beloved, and it is the source of consolation for hearts and souls. At this moment We purposed to make mention of My Exalted Leaf amongst God's handmaidens with a mention that will attract the hearts of the Concourse on High and the exalted Paradise in such wise that its fragrance would endure as long as His Most Beauteous Names and His exalted Attributes.

The First Light that hath shone from the horizon of the loving providence of the Lord of mankind, and the First Word that the Tongue of Grandeur hath spoken, and the First Fragrance wafting from the Garment of My

Most Great Name amongst mankind, rest upon thee O thou dayspring of fidelity, who hast been mentioned by the Tongue of Abhá in the Prison City of 'Akká.

I bear witness that thou didst hearken unto the summons from the earliest of days and that thou didst turn unto God, the Lord of all mankind, and didst seize the cup of divine knowledge and didst drink of what was proffered therein by the hands of bounty and grace. Thou art the one whom neither the cavils of the enemy nor the doubts of the wicked were able to hold back. Thou didst abandon thy people and didst turn to God, the Lord of the throne above and of earth below, and the Sovereign of the Beginning and the End.

May the first light dawning and shining from the horizon of God's bounty rest upon thee O thou luminous Leaf. I testify that thou didst turn thy face [unto Him] and didst confess what was spoken by the Tongue of Grandeur in the Kingdom of creation, and didst pour from His Choice Sealed Wine in His Name, the Self-Subsisting, and didst quaff therefrom before God's handmaidens and His Leaves. Thou art the one who was not impeded by the hosts of the divines and their disturbances, nor by the bellowing of the wicked and the cruel, and their vain doubts. Thou didst tear the veils asunder in the name of thy Lord, the All-Bountiful and didst confess the all-subduing Word of God and didst adhere to it in these days wherein the handmaidens have abandoned it, and all the men forsaken it, except him whom God, the Lord of the exalted Throne, hath willed.

[p.305]

Blessed art thou O my handmaiden! And blessed too are whoever hath sought thy grave and hath visited thy resting-place and hath striven after nearness unto God, and hath made mention of that which the Supreme Pen hath mentioned of thy afflictions and calamities.

Sanctified art Thou, O my God, and the Lord of the earth below and the Kingdom above, and the Sovereign of grandeur and dominion. I beseech Thee by the Branches of the Tree of Thy Singleness, and by Thy Chosen Ones who were so ignited with the fire of Thy love that they forsook their wealth and souls in Thy path, that Thou mayest pardon me and them that believe in Thee and in Thy signs. O my Lord! I beseech Thee by Thy sovereignty which hath encompassed all existence, and by Thy mercy which hath preceded the seen and unseen, that Thou mayest fulfill my needs and ordain for me that which will draw me nigh unto Thee and that it may be a light before my face in every world of Thy worlds. Verily, Thou art the Omnipotent, the Ever Bounteous, the All-Forgiving, the Merciful.²²¹

²²¹ Provisional rendering by Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir in collaboration with Ismael Velasco.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EVENTS OF EARLY 1890s

After Zahrá Bagum's passing, the Blessed Beauty granted permission to Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri'd-Dín to bring his family and kin from Shíráz [to Port Said, Egypt] and in their company to journey to the Holy Land. In accordance with His command, the Afnán wrote to Áqá Mírzá Áqá<53>, the celebrated son of Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Afnán, in Shíráz and asked him to arrange the family's immediate departure. [p.306:1]

Thereupon, the holy leaf Maryam-Sultán Bagum arranged for the marriage of Áqá Mírzá Jalál<75>, her second son, and placed him in charge of the protection and maintenance of the Blessed House of the Báb in Shíráz. The remainder of the household, that is, Hájí Mírzá Buzurg<76>, Hájí Mírzá Habíbu'lláh<71>, Hájí Mírzá Diyá'<72>, Hájíyyih Tubá Bagum<73>, Hájíyyih Zívar-Sultán, who was the mother of Áqá Mírzá Hádí Afnán<96>, together with two attendants, Áqá Muhammad-'Alí Káshání and Hájí Subráb, departed on Friday, 24 Safar AH 1308 [9 October 1890].

From Búshihr, we sailed for Port Said and then to the Holy Land. At that time, the present writer was only fourteen years of age. The leader of our travel party was my brother, Hájí Mírzá Buzurg, who was sixteen years old.

Martyrdom of Murtidá

During this interval, Muhammad-Taquí Mírzá, the Ruknu'd-Dawlih, was appointed governor-general of Fárs and came from Tihrán to Shíráz. By then, the celebrated Murtidá had been in prison for five years. When in AH 1310 [1892] the news of the Blessed Beauty's ascension had reached Fárs, Murtidá—that singular thrall of his Divine Beloved—lost all restraint and begun to lament and sob most intensely. This detail was reported to Siyyid 'Alí-Akbar [Fál-Asírí] who congregated with certain other 'ulamá of the period, including Shaykh Ahmad Sháníh-Sáz, Mullá Ahmad Mahallátí, Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Jabbár, Shaykh Táhir 'Arab, and Mírzá Hidáyatu'lláh Dast-Ghayb. Collectively and unanimously, they signed a fatwá for Murtidá's martyrdom in the presence of the Ruknu'd-Dawlih, stating, "You must

slay him this very day.” Having the required religious ruling in hand, the governor-general ordered the martyrdom of that wronged-one.

It was a blistering summer afternoon that day. The executioner went to the dungeon to retrieve the prisoner and to accompany him to Maydán Túp-Kháníh²²² for the discharge of the sentence, which was for the prisoner to be blown from the mouth of a cannon. Upon seeing his victim, the executioner informed that brave lover of the field of sacrifice of his expected fate and in chains extracted him from his cell. At the prison gate, Murtidá paused and, with utmost delight and serenity, removed his hat and presented it to the executioner, saying, “Of all the worldly [p.310] possessions, I have but this hat. As a reward for bringing me this most wonderful tiding, I wish to present it to you as a gift!” Then, with the utmost affability, he handed his offering to the executioner.

Soon that wronged-one was brought out to the Maydán, where a multitude had gathered to witness the event and a cannon was readied. Murtidá asked for water. Thinking that he wished to have his last drink of water, the executioner brought him some.²²³ That love-intoxicated soul took the water and with it performed his ablutions and then stood facing the Holy Land [‘Akká], and freely and with a resonant voice recited his obligatory prayer, followed by the chanting of a long prayer. Thereafter, he turned to the executioner, saying, “I have completed my duties. You must now discharge yours.”

As is customary, the executioner placed a short stool in front of the cannon-mouth, placing that wronged-one with his back to the gun, and he was about to tie him with ropes, when the latter said, “There is no need to tie me. Tying is for thieves, wrongdoers, and highwaymen. Indeed, I have been yearning for this day and this blessed hour! My sole request is that you place me facing the cannon that I may see it discharged.” On hearing that true lover speak so bravely and with such constancy of purpose, the executioner and the multitude of people were overcome with marvel and astonishment.

As requested, the executioner placed Murtidá facing the cannon. Upon firing, the entire area was filled with the din of the roaring gun, and the cannon ball tore its target to pieces, scattered throughout the city-square. The only recognizable part was his blessed head, which the heartless

²²² City’s central square where cannons are kept on permanent display.

²²³ Since Imám Husayn had been refused water during His final moments, it is customary in Iran that victims are given water before their execution.

executioner collected and paraded through the city in order to win alms and gifts from the shopkeepers and the merchants.

[Moved by the bravery of Murtidá] that very day several people declared their allegiance to the Faith, including such personages as Áqá Sultán-Muhammad Khán Qahrimání [the champion]; Ghulám-Husayn Kúlih-Kish [the porter]; Khán-Ján Duzdashny; and a number of others.

Of the ‘ulamá who had refused to sign and seal the fatwá for Murtidá’s martyrdom were Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí, the Mujtahid, and Hájí Shaykh Yahyá, the Imám-Jum‘ih, both of whom ranked among the equitable and charitable citizens.

On the day that they blew Murtidá from the mouth of a cannon, Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí, the Mujtahid, who was a most virtuous and principled man, sent words to Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar [Fál-Asírí] to the effect, “Siyyid, do you discern what you have done today? The cannon’s roar caused half the city to become Bábí! Indeed, you served the sacred religion of Islam and these people!”²²⁴

The area where Murtidá was martyred is now known as the Bágh Millí [the national park] and is filled with most flourishing shrubs and vegetation, most delightful flower gardens, and pleasing cypress, pine, and a variety of trees. Every spot reddened by the sacred blood of that lover, or marked by a piece of his body, has now witnessed the blossom of a flower or a thriving tree, testifying to his longing for union with his merciful Beloved. Indeed, over the area of his martyrdom, the Bánk Millí [National Bank] is now raised.²²⁵

The Arrival of Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís in Fárs in AH 1313 [1895]

After attaining the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Holy Land and gaining indescribable spiritual insights and manifold celestial understandings, Hájí Abú’l-Hasan Mírzá, known as Hájí Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís, arrived in Shíráz by way of the port of Búshíhr.²²⁶ He resided temporarily in Shíráz for several months before proceeding [first to Isfahán and then] to Tihrán.

²²⁴ A description of Murtidá’s martyrdom is given in Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuburu’l-Haqq*, vol. 5, pp. 373–74, and vol. 6, pp. 875–76.

²²⁵ One of Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablets in honor of Murtidá is found in INBMC 51:397, no. 408.

²²⁶ See Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá’ís in the Time of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 142–55, and Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 1, pp. 42–43.

Since during his first sojourn the weather in Shíráz had been particularly vivifying and the condition of Fárs most agreeable, he decided to return and settle for a longer period. He established a befitting home, and initially the distinguished ‘ulamá openly and warmly welcomed him.

[p.315] The venerable Hájí Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís established his classes at Masjid Naw, near the [Shrine of] Siyyid Mír Ahmad Sháh-Chiráq, which is a spacious and vivifying area, and there he would preach and deliver sermons. Truly and in all fairness, he was singular in eloquence and the ability to preach and teach from pulpits and at other public gatherings. Often it was witnessed that he delivered a discourse on a single theme for some four hours, completely sustaining the interest of his audience. All his sermons were aimed at the edification and awakening of the people, to the point that those among his seminary students endowed with discernment would write down his lectures verbatim and copy them for others. Gradually, through the circulation of these notes, all citizens were greatly attracted to his lessons. During the morning hours, he would have his classes at his own residence where a large group would receive tuition. Several among his foremost students recognized the truth of the Faith and numbered as his confidants.

Áqá Mullá ‘Abdu’lláh Fádíl, surnamed Rafí‘-Badí‘, whose sufferings and services were mentioned earlier in this narrative, was greatly attracted to the honored Shaykh upon first meeting him and discerned spiritual attainments in his words. He decided to determine the depth of the Shaykh’s unworldly sagacity. He versified a number of questions and together with several loaf sugars sent these to the Shaykh, with the purpose of ascertaining the convictions of the latter.²²⁷ The Shaykh, [being a most accomplished poet in his own right,] also responded in verse, and this exchange was indeed most instructive and extensive. To the extent that these poems have come to my possession, I will include them in these pages.²²⁸

In short, [through these exchanges,] veils were removed between the celebrated Fádíl and the esteemed Shaykh, and the former would often frequent the abode of the latter to spend time in each other’s company.

After Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís made a firm decision to remain in Shíráz, he began to form marital unions with influential and prominent citizens. He gave his eldest daughter in marriage to Mírzá Abú’l-Qásim, the Fakhru’l-

²²⁷ Because of his fame and Qájár background, Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís was directed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to conceal his conversion to the Bahá’í Faith.

²²⁸ Pages 317–21 contain several poetic exchanges between these two believers; these exchanges do not bear directly on the historical events and as such have not been translated.

Ashráf, the renowned son of Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí Fakhru’-d-Dawlih. He also gave his second daughter in marriage to the eldest son of Hájí Ahmad Khán Kurraní, who was among the affluent landlords of Shíráz.

These unions further fueled the envy and jealousy of the ‘ulamá, as they could see that because of his [Qájár] ancestry and other manifest qualities, the governors, officials, and dignitaries paid him great respect and consideration, and all major transactions before the governor took place through his intercession. Gradually, the company of the other ‘ulamá was abandoned and day-by-day the society of Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís expanded. All strata of the community gained the utmost confidence and trust in him, and this only added to the enmity of the ‘ulamá who were constantly scheming for ways to insult him or provoke him certain difficulties. Nevertheless, they were powerless to do anything save continue to associate with the honored Shaykh.

God willing, the rest of his account will be told in the course of the events of AH 1312 [1894] and AH 1318 [1900].

Departure of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri’ d-Dín

After sixteen years away, in accordance with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s instructions, Núri’ d-Dín left Egypt for Shíráz and to meet en route with the late Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan [Mírzáy-i Shírází], the Hujjatu’l-Islám [the Proof of Islam] in the ‘Atabát. Even though this description is not directly related to the history of the Faith in Fárs, yet since it has not been recorded in other chronicles, it is propitious that it be narrated in these pages so that kind mention is made of that singular steward of the world of humanity. That story and the reasons behind the meeting are as follows.²²⁹

In the year AH 1312 [1894],²³⁰ [Sáhibih-Sultán Bagum], the mother of Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn Afnán, together with her daughter [Fátimih-Sultán Bagum<42>], who is the mother of Muvaqqaru’ d-Dawlih<99>, visited the ‘Atabát. [In the course of their visit], they went to the residence of the esteemed Mírzá Hujjatu’l-Islám in order to introduce themselves to him.

²²⁹ A different translation of this interview formerly appeared in Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá’is in the Time of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 252–60. A summary is in Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 6, pp. 1013–15.

²³⁰ Núri’ d-Dín’s letters from Búshihir are extant and are dated AH 1311 [1893]. Therefore, most likely “1312” is a copyist error, and the actual date is AH 1311.

[p.325] After the exchange of customary formalities, the mother said, "I am the wife of the late Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11>, and this is my daughter. We ask your special blessings and favors."

"Which Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim?" he asked.

"The maternal uncle of Áqá Mírzá Áqá<24>," she replied.

"Which Áqá Mírzá Áqá?"

"The son of the late Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín."

Then he remembered who it was and said, "The Áqá Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín who [lived] near the gate of the Masjid Jámi?"

"Yes," she replied, and he was overjoyed.

"Where is Áqá Mírzá Áqá now?" he then asked.

"He was living in Egypt, but it appears from what he has written that he now intends to return to Shíráz."

"Do you know whether he has already traveled and reached Shíráz or not?"

"He has not arrived as yet."

"How much longer are you intending to remain in the 'Atabát?"

"We will stay for perhaps fifteen more days, and when we have completed our pilgrimage to the 'Atabát and the sacred city of Najaf, we will once again attain your presence and then return to Búshihir."

"When you return to Búshihir, if you find that Áqá Mírzá Áqá has already passed through that town and is on his way to Shíráz, then let it be. However, if he arrives while you are in Búshihir, please say to him from me: 'Be sure to come to the 'Atabát and visit me, for it has been many years that I have been deprived of meeting members of my family.' And if you leave Búshihir before he arrives, leave a message for him with a trustworthy person that it is imperative for me to see him."²³¹

The days of the pilgrimage of those two ladies at the 'Atabát drew to a close, and they went to bid farewell to the Hujjatu'l-Islám. They said to him, "We are taking our leave today." He urged them once more not to forget his message to Áqá Mírzá Áqá and to ensure that when he came to the 'Atabát, he would come and see him.

²³¹ Mírzá Habíbu'lláh adds parenthetically: (The Hujjatu'l-Islám had family ties with the Afnán, that is to say their fathers were paternal cousins, and he was also closely related to the father of the Báb. It was for this reason that he was trying to arrange the meeting.)

Meeting Between Núri'd-Dín and Mírzá-yí Shírází

After completing their pilgrimage, the ladies returned to Búshihr, and on the very same day the ship carrying the Afnán arrived at Búshihr. They met each other, and the ladies conveyed the message of the Hujjatu'l-Islám. My father related:

I was very hesitant whether I should go and visit or to forego such an intention. I thought about it a great deal. Eventually, I decided that it was best for me to go. The same ship took me on to Basrah, and from Basrah I traveled to Baghdad. I sent a missive before the Hujjatu'l-Islám saying, "In conformity with your exalted wish, your good message has been forwarded to me in which you had stressed that when I reached the 'Atabát I should visit you. I am now at Baghdad. Whenever you appoint a time, I shall come and attain your presence."

I sent the missive through one of the 'Arab Bahá'ís and instructed him to identify himself [as my messenger] and then deliver it. When the letter reached him and he realized I was in Baghdad, he sent the following reply, "O light of mine eyes! Dear and esteemed one! Your letter was received and read. Since at the present time there is much coming and going of pilgrims, please remain in the Abode of Peace [Baghdad] for fifteen days even though it may be an inconvenience to you. Then at the expiry of the fifteen days, come here to the 'Atabát that we may meet. I am very eager to meet that light of mine eyes." The same messenger brought this reply to me.

[p.330]

After seeing this response, I remained in Baghdad, according to the instructions, for fifteen days. At the culmination of that time, I set out to Samarra with a number of the 'Arab Bahá'ís. Upon our arrival, the 'Arabs found a place for us to stay, and we settled there.

The following day I called on the honored Mírzá and found an old man with a radiant face, sitting with pillows around him on which he was resting. The people who were being admitted to his presence would kiss his hand, sit in his presence for an hour, and then be dismissed. Like the others, I went forward, kissed his hand and introduced myself. He looked at me and inquired after my health. He only asked, "Where are you staying?" I did not know, but the 'Arabs who were with me gave the address and the location. He did not speak to me any further, nor paid any attention to us, and after sitting for more than one hour, I got up and again without adding any expressions of affection, he said, "Be under God's protection!"

I was deeply annoyed at his ignoring me and was not in a good mood. "What a thing to do," I said to myself. "I have caused myself a lot of trouble for no reason and have come here from Búshihr to no purpose." I was very offended. I arrived at the place where I was staying and said to my companions, "Let us make preparations to leave at first light tomorrow."

At the time of the adhán [call to prayer], which was two hours before sunrise, I was up and drinking tea, while the others were busy collecting our belongings. It was just getting light, and I was looking from the window

into the street when I saw an akhúnd coming. When he reached the door of our house, he called out to one of the Bahá'ís whose name was 'Alí. 'Alí went by the door to speak with him, and he said, "I have a message from the honored Mírzá, which I want to convey to Áqá Mírzá Áqá." 'Alí conveyed the message, and I went over and spoke with the akhúnd. He said, "The honored Hujjatu'l-Islám has asked that you come to see him alone, without your companions."

I decided to go, but my companions said, "We cannot let you go alone. Anything could happen." "These thoughts are wrong," I replied, "he must want to see me about something since he has specially sent for me." In the end my companions agreed, and I set out without them.

The name of the akhúnd was Shaykh Hasan, and he was one of the intimates of the Hujjatu'l-Islám. I went with him until we reached the door of the house of the honored Mírzá, where I had been the previous day. But he proceeded on around the corner.

"The house of the venerable Mírzá is here, O Shaykh," I said to him; "where are you going?"

"This is the bírúní," he replied. "He has instructed that you be taken in through the door of the andarúní, which is private."

He went on another twenty paces and opened a door. In the corner of the hallway there was a room. He opened the door and held up the curtain. I went in and found his honored Hujjatu'l-Islám, as on the previous day, with cushions around him, lying down. I greeted him, and he replied. Then he said to Shaykh Hasan, "Go brew some tea and bring it. No one is to be permitted to come here, for it is fifty years since I have seen any of my relatives. I want one hour free from interruption to be with him. Even the children are not to be permitted." After giving these instructions, he said further, "Also, close the door."

[p.335]

And so Shaykh Hasan closed the door and left. Then he opened his arms and embraced me. He wept copiously, and from his condition I began to weep too. He sat me down next to him and poured out expressions of affection and favor.

"I know that you were annoyed at the way we met yesterday and were displeased. I realized that you were angered. What can I do with such people? What can I do? It was for this reason that I sent Shaykh Hasan to you in the early morning to bring you here so that I can meet you."

At this moment, Shaykh Hasan brought in the tea.

"Leave it and go," he said. "Áqá Mírzá Áqá will pour the tea."

Shaykh Hasan put down the tray and left. I poured some tea and offered it to him. He said, "You drink it." I declined but he insisted, and so I drank the tea. He ordered me to fill up the same cup again, and he drank from it. Then we began speaking. He asked a few questions about where I had been during these years, what I had heard, and which persons I had met.

"What sort of persons?" I asked.

"Persons who have put forward claims and have caused controversy—that is to say, people with new ideas," he said.

I replied, "In AH 1296 [1879] when I traveled from Shíráz, I went to Bombay where I occupied myself in trading. Here I made friends and associated with Iranian and foreign merchants. I met all types of people, and we would discuss every kind of topic. For example, I met Hájí Muhammad-Ibráhím Yazdí, who is known as the Muballigh, and he spoke of many important matters. When I considered what he said and weighed his words justly, I could not refute them."

"Where did you go after Bombay?" he inquired further.

"In AH 1305 [1887], I went from Bombay to Egypt, and I remained for some time in Port Said and Cairo engaged in trading where I came in contact with all sorts of people."

"Where did you go from there, where did you live, and whom did you meet?" he yet asked.

It suddenly occurred to me, from his questions, that perhaps he wanted to extract a confession from me and cause me trouble. But I thought about this and seeing that there was no one present but he and I, I thought it unlikely that he was planning anything. So I decided to answer his questions with wisdom.

"For a time I went to Beirut and visited some important people from among the notables such as Áqá Muhammad-Mustafa Baghdádí and others like him."

"What did they speak of?"

"They spoke of the new Cause," I replied, "and whatever they said was supported by proofs and evidences from the verses of the Qur'an and the Hadíth of the Prophet [Muhammad] to such an extent that no fair-minded person could deny it. And so I wanted very much to see your honor so that I could ask you what my position is according to religious law and what my moral and religious duty is. Should they be accepted or rejected?"

"O light of mine eyes! The One exalted God has created the parts of the body for the use of His creation that mankind may utilize each of them. Thus, for example, eyes are created for seeing, ears for hearing, the tongue for speech, hands for touching, and feet for walking, but He has created the heart for knowing and recognizing Him and has ordained it as the seat of His effulgence. He has said, 'The heart of believer is the throne of the All-Merciful.' Since it is thus, Satan has no place there. And, therefore, if this Cause is not from God, it will have no effect on the heart and being of a man. Whatever the heart accepts and understands must, without doubt, come from God—it will not err."

When I heard this reply of his, I became more confident and felt free to speak.

"Now, the light of mine eyes, where did you go from Beirut?" he [p.340] asked.

"I went to 'Akká."

He smiled and asked, "O light of mine eyes! What did you see and find there?"

"From what point of view do you mean?"

"From both the material and spiritual points of view."

“From a worldly point of view, I found such majesty, power, authority, command, and might that no king or emperor could hope to rival. And as for the spiritual realm, whatever you have heard of the previous Manifestations of God or have seen of the Books or signs of those Essences of Being and Manifestations of Might you will find a more complete and a hundred thousand times more mighty demonstration in this Holy Personage. For example, from the Holy Prophet [Muhammad] the verses of the Holy Qur’án were revealed in thirty sections [*juz*’], gradually over a period of twenty-two years.²³² From this Holy Being, that is to say, Bahá’u’lláh, in one month ten times the Holy Qur’án is revealed with the utmost precision and eloquence for the world of humanity. And it is such that no fair-minded man can refute it nor produce the like of it.”

“It is indeed so, if one be fair-minded,” he replied. “I myself have seen some of these Writings, and they cannot be compared with the verses of previous revelations. No, they are much more eloquent and profound.”

Then respectfully I asked, “When did your exalted self come to this conclusion?”

He smiled and said, “Do you want to hear a confession from me then, my son?”

“God forbid! It is only because Your Eminence is the most learned of mankind that I wanted to know so as to increase the certainty in my own heart.”

“Light of mine eyes! Since you want to know, I will tell you. I was a young man, studying at Isfahán, when His Holiness the [Primal] Point graced that town with His presence. I was present at a gathering with the Imám-Jum’ih and the theological students at the house of Manuchihr Khán, the Mu’tamidu’d-Dawlih. They were asking Him scientific questions of every sort, [testing His knowledge] and He was answering each one convincingly and with the utmost eloquence so that all of us fell into an astonished silence. Then one of the theological students asked a scientific question, and He gave a full reply. That student showed himself to be unfair and recalcitrant. His answer to that person decided me, and I was convinced and understood everything. Nor did I allow this understanding to wane. Whatever of His verses and commentaries came to hand, I read, and they renewed my inner, spiritual being. No doubt has since then entered my mind, and this outward glory that God has granted me is on account of the fact that I approached this matter fairly and accepted this Cause.”

After hearing these words and becoming completely assured about that holy man, I said, “Now that this blessed Cause is manifest and proven to Your Eminence and the reins of control over millions of the Shi’ite sect are in your able hands, if you consider it advisable, you could make this matter public so that the people will be saved from ignorance and error and will enter the highway of right guidance.”

²³² The Ministry of Muhammad lasted some twenty-three years.

“What are you saying, my son? These people are not fair-minded. Are my attainments higher than those of Mullá Husayn Bushrú’í or Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí Bárfurúshí [Quddús], and Akhúnd Mullá Muhammad-‘Alí Zanjání [Hujjat] and the others? They would have done the same with me as they did with them. The best thing was for me to conceal my belief. In the meantime, I was able to perform such services that were I to tell you of them, you yourself would testify that it was right for me to conceal the matter and help the Cause.”

“I would like to hear of the assistance that you have given,” I said.

“In AH 1301,²³³ a number [of the believers] were arrested by Kámrán Mírzá, the Náyibu’s-Saltanih, in Tihrán and kept in prison in harsh circumstances for two years. Every day they were interrogated, and matters were made very difficult and agonizing for them. I wrote to Násiri’-d-Dín Sháh saying, ‘Why have you without any reason or my fatwá, caused such difficulties and harm to befall them? It has been due to you that this Faith has spread among the peoples and countries. The Apostle of God [Muhammad] has said, “Mankind seeks after what is forbidden.” Your prohibitions and persecutions have strengthened the Cause of these people [Bahá’ís]. You must certainly, as soon as my letter arrives, send for the prisoners, be kind to them, and set them free. And henceforward, do not cause anyone harassment on account of this matter.’ After the arrival of my letter, Násiri’-d-Dín Sháh summoned all the prisoners, gave them an Ashrafí [gold coin] each and set them free. Among them was Hájí Mullá ‘Alí-Akbar [Shahmírzadí, Hájí Akhúnd], Áqá Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl [Gulpáýganí], Hájí Amín, Mashhadí ‘Alí Qazvíní, and other important persons. That was one of the services I rendered. And another was when Siyyid Jamálu’-d-Dín Asadábadi, who is known as Afghání, was planning some mischief in Istanbul. He had interpolated some material into the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* and had inserted some rubbish of his own into that book. Among the things that he had added was that the mosques of Islam should be demolished and razed to the ground. Mecca should be destroyed, Medina pulled down, and some other things. He translated this into Turkish and gave it to Sultán ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd so that the Sultán might become angry and mischief might result therefrom. Sultán ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd wrote an account of this book to me and asked me what should be done. I replied, ‘You have no right to interfere in such matters. Whoever has done this has done so out of spite. Send all such books to me. After investigating the matter, I will decide what is to be done with them.’ Sultán ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd sent them, and I had Shaykh Hasan throw them all into the river where they sank and were obliterated. My son! You have no idea how often the ‘ulamá of Iran have written to me and asked for a fatwá [against Bahá’ís]. I have somehow managed to answer all their questions and have silenced them. If I were to tell it all to you, it would tire you. Among them was: [Mírzá Hasan] Áshtiyání and Kalbásí from Tihrán; Shaykh [Muhammad] Báqir and Shaykh [Muhammad] Taqí from

²³³ The correct year should be AH 1300 [1882].

Isfahán; Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar [Fál-Asírí] and Shaykh Táhír ‘Arab from Shíráz; Mullá ‘Abdu’lláh [Burújirdí] from Hamadán; and others from various places. Perhaps one hundred letters in all, and to each one I have given an answer and silenced its author.”

After hearing these words from the honored Hujjatu’l-Islám, I said, “Truly your help and assistance for this Cause have been inestimable and are worthy of praise. Of a certainty you have penned a will. It is good that you elucidate this matter in your will so that after you, others would know their duty.”

“I have written in detail. We must see if the inheritors will publicize my will.”²³⁴ Then he said, “When will you be leaving?”

“My sole intention was to meet you,” I replied. “I have no other business here.”

“Then it is better if you go soon, since, when you arrived in the Abode of Peace [Baghdad] some mischief-makers came and said something to the effect that someone has come from ‘Akká to Baghdad to promote [the Bahá’í teachings]. I gave them reply saying, ‘It is Áqá Mírzá Áqá, one of my cousins. I have personally invited him to visit the Holy Places and to come and meet me. Do not interfere in this matter.’”

[p.350]

We embraced warmly and said farewell and I left. As I left the house, I found the ‘Arab Bahá’ís gathered, worried, around the house of the venerable Mírzá. When they saw me, they were relieved.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

“We became worried because you took so long. We were thinking all sorts of things. Being distressed, we left our residence and gathered around the house of the honored Mírzá waiting for you.”

“That was not necessary,” I replied. I returned with my friends to our residence. The same day we left for Baghdad and Basrah and eventually reached Búshíhr.

²³⁴ The records of the Afnán family indicate that a copy of this will found its way to Mírzá Habíbu’lláh Afnán (Abú’l-Qásim Afnán, private communications, August 1995).

CHAPTER TWELVE

TROUBLES IN ÁBÁDIH

Arrival of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri'd-Dín

Subsequent to the Afnán's return to Búshihir in AH 1313 [1895], he [p.350:11] remained in that city for only a few days before proceeding to Shíráz. He arrived during the governorship of Muhammad-Taqí Mírzá, the Ruknu'd-Dawlih, was greeted by the friends, and settled at his residence where the believers warmly welcomed him. Having been away for several years, old friendships were revived, and the gatherings were infused with a new vigor. After a few months, Mashhadí Husayn arrived from Ábádih, and having renewed their acquaintance, at his insistence, Núri'd-Dín [and his family] left for Ábádih.²³⁵

Furúghí in Shíráz

A few months later, Áqá Mírzá Mahmúd Furúghí arrived in Shíráz by way of Búshihir.²³⁶ En route he had become a travel companion of Siyyid Muhammad A'lamu'l-'Ulamá, [known as] the Mujtahid Búshihrí and the Thaqtu'l-Islám, who was a brother of Áqá Najaf Isfahání,²³⁷ and [in the course of their conversations,] he grew cognizant that Furúghí was a Bahá'í. As a handsome prize, this news was brought by him to the circle of the 'ulamá of Shíráz who were told, "A prophet of these people [Bahá'ís] has arrived in Shíráz." He provided exact details, and each of the 'ulamá was told of the depth of Furúghí's knowledge and achievements, and was duly warned of his presence in the city.

²³⁵ Under the feudalistic system of the time, the Afnáns were among the affluent landlords, owning many properties throughout Fárs, including homes, farms, and other properties in Ábádih (Abú'l-Qásim Afnán, private communication, August 1995).

²³⁶ For a biography see Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 156–70, and Sulaymání, *Masábih Hidáyat*, vol. 3, pp. 417–83.

²³⁷ In Bahá'u'lláh's Writings he is referred to as "the son of the wolf."

Unable to contain his zeal and enthusiasm, on his arrival the celebrated Furúghí began organizing many Bahá'í gatherings. Each day, a large number of the friends would assemble in various homes [to partake of this spiritual sustenance]. Soon, reports of these activities were sent to the 'ulamá, which prompted them to cause sedition. They immediately sent a message to the Ruknu'd-Dawlih, stating in essence, "A teacher of these people [Bahá'ís] has come to Shíráz and is deceiving the citizens [into joining the Bahá'í Faith]. He must be summarily arrested and punished as a lesson to others." The governor-general was thus compelled into issuing orders for Furúghí's arrest.

The news of the 'ulamá's schemes and the collusion of the governor reached Furúghí that day as he participated in a large Bahá'í gathering in the home of Áqá Muhammad-Hasan Khayyát [tailor]. After consultation with the friends, it was decided that, in the company of a trusted guide, Furúghí should leave Shíráz for Ábádih. For this mission, Mashhadí 'Abbás, a keen, righteous and agile man, was chosen, and that very night they left the city.

The governor, however, learning of their exit, immediately sent several officers in their pursuit, and on the way to Zarqán he was intercepted and apprehended. Furúghí was brought back to the governor's orchard, and the Ruknu'd-Dawlih was informed of his arrest. The governor came from the Ark to the orchard where the captive was kept. He was, however, charmed and won over by Furúghí and ordered his Tufangdár-Báshí [the chief gunner] to serve as the host for the captive.

[p.355] While a guest in his home, Furúghí succeeded in teaching the Faith to his host, who was filled with love and admiration for the Cause. On hearing this, the Ruknu'd-Dawlih was enraged [but took no action].

One day, in the course of a conversation with Furúghí, the governor voiced an insult [to the Bahá'í Faith], which instantly caused his guest to become infuriated, rebuking him, "Know well, O governor, that I possess a mighty serpent, and should it be unleashed, it will devour you and your Ark."²³⁸ He spoke these words with such authority that the Prince was thoroughly overcome with fear and apologized profusely, assuring him that no offense was intended. Thereupon, Furúghí began to recite many verses of the Qur'án and the Prophet's Traditions that further served to deepen the admiration of the governor for his eloquence and learning.

²³⁸ The symbolism is that of Moses' admonishment to the Pharaoh.

During one of my pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Furúghí was also present, and he related for me:

One day in my absence, the Prince Ruknu'd-Dawlih asked Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís if he were acquainted with me. The Shaykh denied knowing me.²³⁹ Later when the Shaykh was not present, the governor asked me if I knew Abú'l-Hasan Mírzá Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís. I replied, "Yes, I know him well."

It so happened that on the following day, we both were in the presence of the Prince, and he remarked, "O venerable Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís, it is puzzling that you deny knowing Áqá Mírzá Mahmúd, when he states categorically that he knows you well. What is the meaning of this?" I quickly understood the wisdom exercised by the Shaykh and without a moment's hesitation, interjected, "The esteemed Skaykhu'r-Ra'ís had stated that he does not know me because he has forgotten our previous meeting. However, if he would recall, one day we both were attending my father's class, and in the course of conversation, the Shaykh misspoke a word that made my father angry, causing him to throw his water-pipe at him. Therefore, it stands to reason that he would not remember me."

The Shaykh promptly realized that I had spoken in a manner to cover his mistake and replied, "Yes, of course! You must forgive my lapse of memory. You are the son of the late Shaykh Muhammad Dúgh-Ábádí.²⁴⁰ Now I remember. Your late father was a man of unsurpassed merits and knowledge, and the esteemed Furúghí is likewise truly unparalleled in erudition and scholarship. But, alas, such men are not appreciated in this country and are only known to the keenest of men."

In all events, for a period of time, Furúghí stayed in Shíráz at the home of the Tufangdár-Báshí. Eventually, the Prince informed him one day that he was free to leave town in whatever direction he wished. Furúghí replied, "I desire to go to Tihrán by way of Ábádi. The governor offered a mount for the journey, which Furúghí politely refused. Then the Prince ordered his treasurer to give him fifty tumáns, stating, "Kindly use this money towards your journey's expenses." "Although I have sufficient funds for this purpose, it is unseemly to reject Your Excellency's generosity," and with that he took the money but immediately distributed it among the Prince's attendants, farrashes, the cook, the Tufangdár-Báshí, and some other servants. Fifteen qarán was left, and he recognized, "Báshmaqchí [p.360]

²³⁹ Since 'Abdu'l-Bahá had instructed Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís to conceal his faith, he had denied association with a well-known believer in order to safeguard his own precarious situation.

²⁴⁰ One of the foremost early Bábí-Bahá'ís, he was a survivor of the battle of Shaykh Tabarsí and served with distinction and renown in Khurásán; for a biography see Rabbani, *The Genesis of the Bábí-Bahá'í Faiths in Khurásán*.

has also sustained troubles on my behalf,” and offered him the remaining sum. The Ruknu’-d-Dawlih was filled with wonder and admiration by this display of benevolence and magnanimity.

At last, he left accompanied by two of the Prince’s soldiers who were instructed to provide protection as far as Zaraqán. Furúghí related for me:

These two soldiers only had a single gun between them, and en route I heard them comment to one another, “This Akhúnd is a Bábí, and it is best that we kill him from behind.” On hearing their whisper, I realized they were set on murdering me. When we reached a brook, I asked my attendant, Mashhadí ‘Abbás, to prepare tea, and I began to converse with the two soldiers. While they were busy talking, suddenly, I seized the gun, held the barrel while threatening them with its butt, saying, “If you dare, just come closer! You may think that I am just an akhúnd and that you can kill me. But you are wrong; I am a Khurásaní and can defend myself against a hundred like you!”

Realizing that I had the upper hand, the soldiers begun to apologize for their misdeed, and when we reached Zaraqán and met the believers, I returned their gun and gave them a gratuity.

*Mischief in Ábádih*²⁴¹

After a sojourn of one night, Furúghí departed for Ábádih and arrived at the home of the Afnán.²⁴² His entry coincided with the wedding of [my eldest brother,] Áqá Siyyid Áqá<74> to the daughter Dá’yí Husayn,²⁴³ and the honored Furúghí presided over the marriage ceremony, which was carried out in accordance with Bahá’í laws. However, on hearing this news, [Mullá Muhammad-Husayn,] the Imám [Jum’ih of Ábádih and a brother-in-law of Dá’yí Husayn,] thought he was slighted and

²⁴¹ The Ábádih incident is also told by Áqá Mírzá Qábil Ábádi’i in his valuable unpublished history, *Tárikh Ábádih va Tavabí*, (147 pages in the author’s hand, chapter “The Sixth Event”, pages 40–55), henceforth referred to as *Qábil*. There are some additional notable details provided by Qábil, as well as some differences between his version and the present document by Mírzá Habíbu’lláh. To the extent practical, these are noted below. For a biography of Mírzá ‘Abbás Qábil, see Sulaymání, *Masábih Hidáyat*, vol. 2, pp. 182–234.

²⁴² *Qábil*, p. 40, notes that in the company of Núri’-d-Dín, Furúghí arrived at Ábádih on 17 Dhi’l-Qa’dih AH 1313 [30 April 1896]. On the same day, Qábil himself arrived from Yazd. On page 41, Qábil notes that Furúghí had just returned from the Holy Land and in his meetings, urged the friends to steadfastness in the Covenant and avoidance of Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí and other opponents of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

²⁴³ *Qábil*, p. 2, notes that he was a son of Karbalá’í Muhammad-Taquí and surnamed “Bá’yí” [enduring] by Bahá’u’lláh.

remarked that a matrimony according to Bahá'í perceptions was an insult to his office.²⁴⁴

For several days thereafter, most enjoyable and befitting [Bahá'í] gatherings and assemblies were organized in Ábádih when, suddenly, the news of Nasiri'd-Din Sháh's assassination reached that region.²⁴⁵ Simultaneous with this, Siyyid Yahyá Khán Tafrishigar, the Hishmat-Nizám, and two regiments under his command arrived [from Tihrán] in Ábádih on their way to Shíráz. The akhúnds seized this opportunity and persuaded the Hishmat-Nizám to act against the Bahá'ís. Consenting to their request, he ordered his men to encircle the residence of the Afnán and to arrest the household, considering this seizure would yield great benefits. They intended to arrest Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri'd-Dín Afnán; Áqá Siyyid Áqá Afnán; Áqá Mírzá Diyá Afnán; Furúghí; Hájí 'Alí Khán; Dá'yí Husayn; Mírzá 'Atau'lláh Khán Siráju'l-Hukamá [the lamp of physicians]; Áqá Mírzá Husayn; Qábil [Ábádi'i]; and some other believers.²⁴⁶

Fortunately, the Imám's sister [Bíbi Bagum Ján] overheard their discussions and quickly informed her sister, the wife of Dá'yí Husayn, "[Our brother] the Imám and the Hishmat-Nizám are planning to arrest the Afnán and a number of other [Bahá'ís]. It is best for them to leave quickly and not be here when the gunmen arrive for this purpose." [p.365]

That day, it so happened that Furúghí, the Afnán, and some others were the guests of Hájí 'Alí Khán. At once, Dá'yí Husayn's wife informed the Afnán of the mischief that was brewing.

The soldiers came to Dá'yí Husayn's home and failing to find the believers, were led by the rabble to Hájí 'Alí Khán's residence. On gaining their destination, without any warning, two of the men entered the dwelling where they found the honored gentlemen [Bahá'ís] gathered around a table in the midst of garden and Furúghí, with his striking figure and enchanting voice, occupied in chanting the Holy Verses. The soldiers noted that Mullá Husayn who was a brother of the Qádí, the Afnán, Furúghí,

²⁴⁴ Ábádih has had a checkered history of Bahá'í persecution. Many of these episodes are described in detail in *Qábil*. One early incident is told in Mázarandání, *Tárikh Zubúruh'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 93.

²⁴⁵ The monarch's assassination by Mírzá Ridá Kirmání took place on 19 April 1896.

²⁴⁶ *Qábil*, p. 42, notes that the Imám-Jum'ih connived with a number of other clerics in presenting the Bahá'ís as the Sháh's murderers and as engaged in preparation of warfare against the state. This accusation caused the Ruknu'd-Dawlih to become particularly apprehensive of the situation. According to Qábil, the Hishmat-Nizám was ordered by the governor to remain in Ábádih to ensure the security of the region and if necessary, to seize and imprison the Bahá'í leadership.

Hájí ‘Alí Khán, and Dá’yí Husayn were present. They said to Áqá Mírzá Mahmúd [Furúghí], “Our master has summoned you.” However, Hájí ‘Alí Khán and Dá’yí Husayn advised Furúghí not to heed their request, but that instead they would go with the men to determine what was being planned. Eventually, Hájí ‘Alí Khán and Dá’yí Husayn convinced the soldiers that they would go with them instead.²⁴⁷

When they arrived at the residence of the Hishmat-Nizám, he instructed his men to detain these two and to return for the arrest of Furúghí as well. The recruits carried out this order and disrespectfully and insolently brought Furúghí before their commander. Upon arrival, Furúghí spoke softly and confidently, but as the Hishmat-Nizám was partially deaf, he did not understand his words and spoke in a harsh and impertinent tone. Noting that the Hishmat-Nizám was particularly hearing-impaired and unaware, Furúghí produced a letter in the hand of the Ruknu’-Dawlih ordering all the officials and chieftains of the region to show utmost respect and consideration towards the person of Mírzá Mahmúd [Furúghí]. Seeing this command, the Hishmat-Nizám ordered two of his soldiers to accompany the Furúghí out of city for a distance of two days’ journey and to abandon him there. Thus, he was expelled from Ábádih, and once having reached two days’ journey north of town, the two soldiers stripped him of his possessions, including his clothing. For two days and two nights, desolate, hungry, and cold, Furúghí was stranded in the outlying mountainsides of Ábádih.

Hájí ‘Alí Khán and Dá’yí Husayn were freed after being compelled to pay a fine of one hundred and fifty tumáns.²⁴⁸ Qábil was severely beaten with sticks, incarcerated for two days and two nights, and once freed, fled to Yazd.²⁴⁹

The Imám continued to pressure the Hishmat-Nizám into further action, particularly the arrest of Áqá Mírzá Áqá and his two sons, by saying, “Áqá Mírzá Áqá is the chief of Bahá’ís and must be apprehended. [p.370] Tomorrow, I will arrange for ‘Askar Khán Súrmuqí and his hired guns to

²⁴⁷ *Qábil*, p. 43, gives the date of this event as 1 Dhi’l-Hajjih AH 1313 [14 May 1896].

²⁴⁸ *Qábil*, p. 47, indicates that these two men remained in the prison for the duration of the troubles. The same source, page 50, indicates that the fine was 300 tumáns.

²⁴⁹ *Qábil*, pp. 45–47, gives a detailed account of a severe beating that he received during this period. Further, in pages 49–50, he gives the details of his presentation to the Hisámu’s-Saltanih on 22 May, implying that he must have been in prison for the duration of the troubles. On page 51, Qábil gives the exact date of his departure for Yazd as two hours into the night of 12 Dhi’l-Hajjih [25 May].

join your soldiers in attacking the home of Dá'yí Husayn and seizing Áqá Mírzá Áqá and his sons, Áqá Siyyid Áqá and Mírzá Díyá'. Once they are arrested, you can readily reduce all the rest and win their possessions." Exceedingly pleased with this plan and proposal, the Hishmat-Nizám left its execution to the Imám.

Three hours into that night, Bíbí Bagum Ján, the Imám's sister, again quickly took the news to her sister, the wife of Dá'yí Husayn, "Our perfidious brother, the Imám, has plotted against Áqá Mírzá Áqá, his sons, and your husband. In secret I have come here to inform you so that tomorrow, they may not be here." On hearing this intelligence, the wife of Dá'yí Husayn proceeded to the residence of the Afnán and informed him of the fate that awaited them. Áqá Mírzá Áqá asked where could they hide since he was not familiar with the town. She responded, "Our neighbor, Áqá Hasan, though not a Bahá'í, is a virtuous man, and his house has a turret in which you can hide for a while." Gaining his consent, she then spoke with Áqá Hasan's wife who also agreed to this arrangement.

At dawn, the Afnán along with Áqá Siyyid Áqá, Áqá 'Abdul-Hamíd [Gandum-Pákkun], and Dá'yí Husayn took refuge in the above-mentioned turret, but the Afnán's wife [Maryam-Sultán Bagum], and his daughter [Tubá Khánnum] and Dá'yí Husayn's wife stayed behind, bewildered and perplexed as to what awaited them.

The Ordeals of the Afnán Women

At the next daybreak, on the instructions of the Hishmat-Nizám, the soldiers led by 'Askar Khán and his gunmen proceeded to the house of Dá'yí Husayn. They loudly knocked on the door. 'Abdu'l-Hamíd's wife who lived next door and on elevated ground, was able to see into the street and recognize the gunmen. She quickly informed the household of Dá'yí Husayn. 'Askar Khán and the soldiers encircled the house and continued knocking, but when the ladies did not open the door, they entered from the neighbor's adjoining rooftops. Overcome with fear, the younger lad of the Afnán, Áqá Mírzá Díyá', who had not accompanied his father, rushed to the rooftop. Áqá Hasan's wife noticed him, called him down, and had him concealed in the basement along with Áqá Mírzá Husayn Khán.

Upon entrance into the residence, on the pretense of searching for the men, the soldiers and 'Askar Khán plundered the home and took all they could while they spoke every manner of abuse. They searched every room

for the men and took all the furnishings. Fearing the gunmen who had overtaken the house, the Afnán's wife and daughter placed chadors over their heads, covered their faces, and content with the will of God, sat on a platform and busied themselves with reciting prayers for deliverance. My mother related to me:

[p.375] We were intensely immersed in our imploration and had remained so quiet that the soldiers and the rabble thought that we were actually men hiding under the cover of chadors. After the militia and 'Askar Khán's gunmen entered the house, the people of Ábádih, men and women alike, rushed inside as well, and it was only after repeated and forceful protestations by Dá'yí Husayn's household that the commander of the soldiers instructed his men to shut and bolt the main doorway and prevent any further unauthorized entrance or exit.

Before they could shut the door, however, a thirteen-year-old black maid-servant of Dá'yí Husayn, ran inside the house. As she was being chased by the gunmen who were intent on injuring her, she took refuge next to the Afnán's daughter who was sitting next to her mother. The commander of the soldiers ordered his men to beat the young girl so they could learn from her the whereabouts of the fugitives. As enjoined, the rogues proceeded to beat the child, whose name was Shírín, with clubs and the butt of their guns while barking orders that she must confess the hiding place of the Bahá'í men. During a moment of relief, she threw herself on the knees of the Afnán's daughter [Tubá], who, no longer able to endure this grotesque scene of injustice and unable to contain her indignation over the assailants' brutality, shouted back, "Why do you beat this wretched child and make her suffer so? If you are charged to take our lives, then shoot us and be done! What simpleton fools are you to imagine that the men would divulge to us their hiding place?! Shame on you! Pity on you! Leave this child be!"

On hearing the Afnán's daughter speak so forcibly, the soldiers withdrew and informed their commander that the two under the chador were womenfolk and decided it was best to leave the house.

'Askar Khán returned to the Imám and reported, "Our search of the residence failed to discover the [Bahá'í] men, and brutalizing their women produced no result either. What do you suggest?" The Imám stated, "The sole remedy is to capture, torture, and torment the wife and daughter of Áqá Mírzá Áqá who would then tell us the men's whereabouts. If you do not do so, then our purpose will not be achieved."

After they had resolved to carry out this plan, once more, the Imám's sister overheard their conversation and proceeded to the house of Dá'yí Husayn to warn her sister of the impending fate awaiting her guests.

However, on reaching the house, she discovered the entrance was locked and soldiers were guarding the residence. Undaunted and after much pleading and beseeching, they let the brave lady in. She briefed her sister

of the situation, stating, “The soldiers were preventing me from entering here, and I had to endure a thousand forms of hardship and difficulties in order to gain admittance and share the news with you, that you might plan for your own situation and that of the ladies in whatever manner you deem appropriate. Dá’yí Husayn’s wife was perplexed as to how to inform the two ladies. Finally, they both went forward and told the wife and daughter of the Afnán [i.e., Maryam-Sultán Bagum and Tubá] of what awaited them and advised them immediate escape. In response they said, “We are strangers in this town and do not know our way.” They were told, “You must think of a safe place and leave forthwith for it, as the rabble plan injury and abuse towards you.” The Afnán’s wife stated, “Even if we wanted to flee, doors are locked and the roof guarded by soldiers! No path is left for us to take our flight.” [p.380]

Finding all avenues closed to them, at this hour of great peril they turned in prayer to the Holy Land and fervently supplicated assistance, “O Blessed Beauty! When we were in your sanctified presence, on many an occasion You told us, ‘We are with you at all times and under all conditions will, Myself, protect My Afnán.’ The time has come for You to look upon us with favor and mercy. We fear not death or bondage, but we implore You not decree for women like us humiliation and assault at the hands of relentless men!” As they prayed, the soldiers continued looting and plundering the rooms and the houses.

Being deeply frightened, Dá’yí Husayn’s twelve-year-old son, Áqá Jalál, was hiding behind a tall shelf. In their hasty search, the soldiers were using bayonets to search behind the shelf when one of them struck the child and split his stomach open.²⁵⁰ Blood began to gush forth, and they mercilessly brought that child and threw him in the middle of the courtyard. Blood was covering the ground, and his mother and sisters became extremely distraught, wailing loudly and profusely. Seeing the situation, the commander of the armed men sent one of his men to summon a physician by the name of Fúj, so he would sew the injury.

When the doctor arrived, he said [to the sobbing mother], “I will charge fifty²⁵¹ tumáns in advance to stitch his stomach.” The wretched mother cried out, “But I have no cash at home. Please treat his cut, and meanwhile I will raise the money.” The doctor, however, stated, “Until

²⁵⁰ *Qábil*, p. 53, places this event in the course of the second wave of troubles, that is, after the Hisámu’s-Saltanihi’s visit, and on 25 May 1896. Further, he suggests that the lad’s injuries were self-inflicted, which seems rather unlikely.

²⁵¹ *Qábil*, p. 53, gives the fee as ten tumáns.

my fee is paid in full, I will not tend to the wound.” Suddenly, the desolate mother remembered an exquisite cashmere shawl [that the soldiers had not managed to find and loot] and gave that to him. [Having been paid in kind,] the doctor thereupon attended the wound and stitched the cut.

Having heard all the commotion as well as the wailing and the sobbing of the mother, the neighborhood’s womenfolk came into the house and gathered in the courtyard. In the midst of her own agonies, Dá’yí Husayn’s wife, however, had the presence of mind to see a perfect opportunity for the wife and the daughter of the Afnán to escape. She told them, “This is a good break to change your chadors and leave among the many women gathered here. No one will recognize you.” [The Afnán’s wife] inquired, “Where are we to go?” “With my maidservant,” she answered, “you can go to the home of Dá’yí Husayn’s second wife.” “If it is a safe place,” she said, “then we will go.” “There is no other choice,” was the response. Quickly she asked them to replace their chadors for older ones common among the villagers and to change their shoes for local wear.

Meanwhile, she appealed to the commander of the soldiers to evacuate the house of the neighborhood’s women so that she could look after her injured son. The commander, having pity on the woman, ordered his men accordingly. As all the women were leaving, the Afnán’s wife and daughter, together with a trusted maidservant [named Tájí], escaped, and thus the invisible hand of the Providence delivered them from the clutches of bloodthirsty wolves. As bidden by Dá’yí Husayn’s wife, they proceeded in haste to the home of the second wife of Dá’yí Husayn—a non-Bahá’í woman.

[p.385] In the intervening time, after they had helped the injured lad and emptied the house of the neighborhood’s women, unable to find the Afnán women, the soldiers returned to the Imám informing him of the day’s events and the escape of the Shirází women. The Imám instructed them, “Dusk is upon us, and therefore it is best for the soldiers to leave the home [of Dá’yí Husayn] and to resume the search in the morning.”

Upon arrival at the home of the Dá’yí Husayn’s second wife, the women were informed by their hostess, “Since I fear the soldiers’ reprisals and destruction, I can only provide shelter for you until tomorrow morning. Two hours before sunlight, you are to leave this home.” “We are strangers in this land,” they replied, “and do not know where to go. However, we also do not wish to bring any discomfort, or worse yet, danger, upon you. God will assuredly watch over all of us. We only ask that you direct us to a place of safety.” “I do not know where you can go. Go anywhere

you please,” was the response of their hostess. The guests were particularly infuriated by this reaction.

Three hours into the night, the daughter of Dá’yí Husayn, who was the wife of Áqá Siyyid Áqá<74>, arrived with her maidservant and the three-year-old son of Mírzá Jalál<75>, the second son of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán. This child had accompanied them from Shiráz and was extremely attached to his grandmother and paternal aunt and upon seeing them, began to cry, “Dear aunt! Since I did not see you when you left, I thought the soldiers had taken you.” After much effort, eventually they were able to calm the child. The four women and the child were wondering where to go next when their hostess came and pressed them to leave by saying, “Have you thought about what you will do? Before tomorrow’s sunrise, you must leave my house.” Dá’yí Husayn’s daughter asked, “Wife of my father! You insist on our leaving, but where should we go?” She responded, “I do not know. Go wherever. I will not allow good Muslims to fall into trouble over the fate of you Bábís!”

Sent by Dá’yí Husayn’s [Bahá’í] wife to inquire after them, at last Tájí arrived and upon asking of their condition was told by the Afnán’s wife, “The lady of the house has told us to leave two hours before sunrise. We do not know what we must do.” Seeing their wretched condition, that trustworthy maidservant [i.e., Tájí] had promised that by the will of God, she would find them a place of safety. She left and returned after two hours informing them that she had secured the home of one of the farmers for their stay. She pledged to come again two hours before dawn to accompany them there, and with that, she returned home and informed the wife of Dá’yí [Husayn].

Consequently, in the middle of the dark night, dressed in their old chadors and shoes and without informing the house-owner, they left for their newly located haven. The appointed house was at the end of an orchard on the outskirts of the village. This house had an upper chamber, with a single entrance, where grapes were dried to make raisins. Such oven-like rooms have low ceilings, are kept extremely dark, have no air circulation, and are most unpleasant. In this room, they were to remain with a three-year-old boy who did not comprehend the gravity of the situation. Once more, Tájí impressed upon them not to make any noise lest they be heard by the neighbors. Locking the door from the outside, she left them to await their destiny. My mother related: [p.390]

The room was so dark that we were unable to see one another and could not calm the child who was terrified of the darkness and wanted to scream. He kept asking us to let him go out to play as he would on other days. When

he saw the door locked, he grew more in agitation. All we could do was to tell him, "Please lower your voice. If the gunmen hear us, they will come, seize us, and take us away." With this, he would be sufficiently frightened to remain quiet for a little while. However, after a short time, once more, he would plead with us to open the door just so he could see some light, promising that as soon as the soldiers appeared, he would close it again.

Indeed, it is heartrending to imagine the plight of those women and the depth of the poor child's fear, coupled with not even knowing what may have befallen their innocent men! If one could envision such a scene and if one were endowed with a measure of fairness, one would be filled with remorse over their condition. "The curse of God be upon the wrong-doers."²⁵²

Hiding some bread, cheese, and a jug of water under her chador, by lunchtime the trusted maidservant, Tájí, returned and was able to alleviate their anxiety over the fate of their men by informing them that they had taken refuge in the mountain caves with some other Bahá'ís and thankfully were safe and well. God willing, I will tell the story of this mountain journey of the Bahá'í men at a later occasion.

Yet again she left, locking the door from the outside and taking the key with her, and the women had to contend with the darkness and the heat of the attic, and a frightened child, though they were relieved over the fate of the men.

Tájí returned an hour after dusk and opened the door, saying, "With the cover of darkness, it is now safe for you to come out to sit on the rooftop and breathe some fresh air." As they sat on the roof, the farmer came by and greeted them warmly, stating, "From morning until now, I have been most apprehensive—almost at death's door—fearing that someone would discover your presence on this property. It would be best for you to leave tonight for another location, as it is unsafe to remain here."

Once more, the women were bewildered as to where they might take refuge. Despite all the hardship it presented, they had been satisfied with this dark and suffocating attic, but even this was now being denied them. The wife of the Afnán prayed and thought hard what to do, and eventually it occurred to her that perchance Áqá Mírzá 'Ata'u'lláh Khán, the Siráju'l-Hukamá, would provide a sanctuary for a few days until it became clear what the Almighty had decreed for them.

[p.395] As such, once more Tájí was sent on this errand, and she briefed the wife of Áqá Mírzá 'Ata'u'lláh Khán of the situation. In turn, she conveyed the

²⁵² Qur'án 7:44.

details to the Siráju'l-Hukamá and asked, "The Afnán's wife has conveyed a message wishing to take refuge here. How am I to respond?" "Of course, they may!" stated the Siráju'l-Hukamá, "Reply at once that they are most welcome. My house is like their very own. Here they will be safe, and no harm will come to them, as the people of Ábádih desperately need my [medical] services and will show no disrespect toward my guests."

Hearing this reply through the same trusted maidservant, dressed in the old chadors again, the ladies set out for the home of the Siráju'l-Hukamá where they were received with the utmost affection and made comfortable at long last. When they inquired after the [Bahá'í refugee] men, their host described their situation thus:

After they had spent the day in Áqá Hasan's turret, some of the friends from Dirghúk [village] led by 'Abbás Khán armed themselves and came to Áqá Hasan's residence about seven at night. They attained the presence of the Afnán and informed him, "Your stay in this house is no longer advisable. We will escort you to the hill-country where no one can interfere with us or cause harm." Consenting to their plan and placing their reliance in God, Áqá Mírzá Áqá, his two sons, Áqá Siyyid Áqá and Áqá Mírzá Díyá', as well as Dá'yí Husayn and Áqá Mírzá Husayn Khán, proceeded with 'Abbás Khán and other armed believers to the mountainous region of Dirghúk. Once other Bahá'ís, such as Háji 'Alí Khán, learned of their whereabouts, they also joined them in this new location.²⁵³

Áqá Mírzá 'Abbás Qábil was seized on that very first day and severely beaten with sticks. He was released after two days and two nights of imprisonment, whereupon he fled to Yazd. However, the friends from the surrounding regions of Ábádih are all armed, standing guard around the mountain. They have pleaded with the Afnán [Núri'd-Dín], "Kindly allow us to go into Ábádih and deal with the Imám as we should and punish him and his men as they deserve." Notwithstanding, Áqá Mírzá Áqá has prevented them, enjoining on the believers to manifest kindness, saying, "Do not permit the least unlawful act to occur. Bahá'u'lláh has charity to all. Whatever the foes may do, we must do the opposite: when they injure us, we must give them remedy; when they feed us bitter draught, we must offer them sweet honey. They are unaware; they are ignorant; they are heedless; they are unable to distinguish good from error. You must fix your gaze upon the exhortations of the Blessed Beauty. Even a small conflict authored by you will enable them to regard you as the source of all ills. Never, never, occasion a wrong, as it will ruin the efforts of all these years."²⁵⁴ Through such appeals, he has managed to calm and still their rage.

[p.400]

²⁵³ *Qábil*, p. 47, indicates that the entire Bahá'í communities of Ábádih, Dirghúk, and Himat-Ábád fled into the mountain fastness.

²⁵⁴ *Qábil*, p. 47, indicates that the leader of the armed Bahá'ís, Áqá Haydar-'Alí Himat-Ábádi, and 'Abbás Khán Dirghúki appealed to the two Bahá'í prisoners, Dá'yí Husayn

Furúghí's Fate

After Mírzá Mahmúd Furúghí was compelled to leave Ábádih, the soldiers accompanying him robbed him of all his clothing and possessions, left him stranded two stations outside the town, and triumphantly returned. Furúghí wandered in the wilderness and the mountains for two days and two nights—unclad and hungry—until finally with the greatest difficulty he found his way back to Ábádih. At nighttime he arrived in town and proceeded directly to the home of Hájí ‘Alí Khán, where he discovered the front gate locked and, therefore, with enormous struggle managed to gain entrance through a brook that ran through the property’s wall. Thoroughly drenched in mud and dirt, he came inside and was met by the widow of Hájí Muhammad-Ismá‘íl Dhabíh²⁵⁵ and her daughter who was the wife of Hájí ‘Alí Khán. They immediately took him inside, provided him with a change of clothing, and washed and dried his garments while he ate. He then inquired after the Afnán, Hájí ‘Alí Khán, and the rest of the friends and upon hearing of their whereabouts insisted in joining them that very night in the mountains. Subsequently, led by a trusted attendant, he set out for the mountain locations where the Bahá’ís had gathered. The Afnán used to relate:

We were all exceedingly elated with the arrival of the much-esteemed Furúghí and circled lovingly around him. For us, it was as if the mountain had turned into the throne of sovereignty and the air now had the savor of the everlasting paradise. Such depth of ethereal spirituality stirred within us that indeed it is indescribable. For a whole day and night we were in his presence in the mountains. In the course of our consultations, however, we decided that it was best for Furúghí to proceed to Yazd. Therefore, I purchased for him one of Áqá Husayn Dirghúki’s horses and arranged for other provisions for his journey. He left in the company of an able servant.²⁵⁶

Subsequently, we consulted and agreed that staying indefinitely in the mountains would not serve any purpose and that a potent remedy was needed. As such, we decided unanimously to cable the details to the office of the Prime Minister in Tihrán as well as the Ruknu’d-Dawlih in Shíráz.

and Hájí ‘Alí Khán, for permission to attack and free them by force. However, noting that ‘Askar Khán and one hundred of his men guarded the prison round the clock, the Bahá’í captives discouraged this effort.

²⁵⁵ Presumably, a reference to Siyyid Ismá‘íl Zavari‘í, surnamed Dhabíh; see Balyúzi, *Bahá’u’lláh the King of Glory*, pp. 132–34, and Taherzadeh, *Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh*, vol. 1, pp. 101–3.

²⁵⁶ *Qábil*, p. 55, gives the date of Furúghí’s arrival in Yazd as 28 Dhi’l-Hajjih [10 June].

The text of these cablegrams were prepared and dispatched to Ábádih where the Bahá'í womenfolk of Ábádih, Dirghúk, and Himat-Ábád were asked to proceed collectively to the Telegraph Office to dispatch these cables.

About three hundred Bahá'í ladies assembled at the Telegraph Office and presented the cable to the Zál Khán Shírází, who was the head of the Telegraph Office and was a particularly evil and vicious man, and also a devoted ally and collaborator of the Imám and the Hishmat-Nizám.²⁵⁷ He had taken the telegram and collected the corresponding fee, but had actually refused to transmit the cable. Instead, he had sent a vituperative report against the believers, filled with falsities.

Realizing Zál Khán's nefarious intentions, the womenfolk informed us in the mountain strongholds. I said to the believers, "Now that Ábádih is proving a disappointment, we will try through Yazd." I wrote a detailed account of the happenings to Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí Afnán, the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, in Yazd, requesting his immediate assistance in transmitting this report, and immediately dispatched it with a special messenger. In this letter, it was explained that numerous attempts had been made to cable Tihrán and Shíráz, but Zál Khán had prevented their issue and instead had transmitted false reports.

[p.405]

Upon the arrival of our account in Yazd, Hájí Vakílu'd-Dawlih informed the Prime Minister in Tihrán, who in turn cabled the Ruknu'd-Dawlih in Shíráz with instructions to instantly summon the Hishmat [-Nizám] and his men to Shíráz and to prevent the rabble from mischief.²⁵⁸ The Ruknu'd-Dawlih complied fully with these instructions and commanded the Hishmat to proceed to Shíráz. With his departure, the Imám [Jum'ih] had no other accomplices, and once more peace and tranquility returned to the town of Ábádih.

Once the believers in the mountain shelter were informed of the restoration of order in the city, the Afnán, Dá'yí Husayn, and Hájí 'Alí Khán returned

²⁵⁷ *Qábil*, pp. 47–48, indicates this event took place on 7 Dhí'l-Hajjih [20 May 1896] and that the group of 500 Bahá'í women from Ábádih and Himat-Ábád were led by the Siraju'l-Hukamá, Abbás Khán's wife, and Hájí 'Alí Khán's wife.

²⁵⁸ *Qábil*, p. 54, indicates that he arrived in Yazd on 16 Dhí'l-Hajjih [29 May] and briefed the Vakílu'd-Dawlih of the events. Thereupon, a telegram was sent to Tihrán, and on the following day a cable was received from the Prime Minister's office:

Response to the citizens of Ábádih:

[Attention of] the illustrious Ruknu'd-Dawlih:

Why has Mírzá Siyyid Yahyá Khán, [the Hishmat-Nizám,] the commander of the Hamadání forces, through the instigation of the mischievous Imám-Jum'ih of Ábádih and in collaboration with the scoundrel Zál Khán of the Telegraph Office, caused such tumult in Ábádih? And why have they caused the citizens of that region to be scattered on the mere accusation of being Bahá'ís, and plundered their possessions and properties, slain or injured a number of them, and yet again extracted fines from some others? Of a certainty, Siyyid Yahyá Khán must move at once from Ábádih, and all the confiscated properties and possessions must be returned to their rightful owners and peace must be re-established.

to Ábádih and reclaimed their homes, while Áqá Mírzá Husayn Khán, ‘Abbás Khán, and some others continued to remain in the mountains. The Afnán proceeded directly to the residence of the Siráju’l-Hukamá, where other members of his family were tarrying, and after expressing their deep gratitude to their host for his hospitality, they regained their own dwelling.

About the same time, on his way from Tihrán to his newly appointed office in Búshih, the esteemed Prince [Hájí Abú’l-Nasír Mírzá] Hisámu’s-Saltanih²⁵⁹ [II], a son of Sultán-Murád Mírzá, the Hisámu’s-Saltanih [I], came to Ábádih.²⁶⁰ Upon arrival, because of their previous friendship and association, he went to the residence of Áqá Mírzá Husayn Khán, known as Báqh Kuláh-Farangi²⁶¹ [the European-hat orchard], a most pleasant and verdant orchard. Upon hearing of his whereabouts and the reason for his sojourn to the mountains, the Prince sent word that he should return to Ábádih. Áqá Mírzá Husayn Khán, therefore, returned and described for the Prince all the brutalities of the Hishmat-Nizám, the atrocities and savageries of the Imám, the Qádí, and Zál Khán of the Telegraph Office. Moved deeply on hearing these details, the Prince immediately cabled the Office of the Prime Minister in Tihrán, requesting measures to be taken in order to restore security to Fárs—a request that was granted immediately.²⁶²

As such, the troubles in Ábádih were concluded, and peace was restored once more. After a few more months’ stay, the Afnán went to Yazd to complete some business transactions with Hájí Mírzá Áqá Afnán.²⁶³ Some time later, he returned to Shíráz.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ He had received the same title as his father, and therefore the notations “I” and “II” are used to differentiate between the two. For a biography, see Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 1, pp. 70–71.

²⁶⁰ *Qábil*, p. 48, gives the date of his arrival as 9 Dhí’l-Hajjih [22 May 1896].

²⁶¹ Not to be confused with a name of the famous building in Shíráz that for a long period served as the residence of the governor-general of Fárs.

²⁶² *Qábil*, pp. 50–51, states that with departure of the Hisámu’s-Saltanih II from Ábádih, the Hishmat-Nizám decided to renew mischief and planned on the murder of Qábil. However, the latter was informed of this plot and fled to Yazd in the middle of night.

²⁶³ A.Q. Afnán maintains that this journey took place prior to the events of Ábádih (private communication, December 1997).

²⁶⁴ Malmirí, *Khátirát Malmirí*, p. 126, indicates that Núri’ d-Dín remained in Ábádih for a year.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PROFILE OF TURMOIL: SPRING 1903

The Journey of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán, [Surnamed] Núri`d-Dín, from Shíráz—His Second Journey to the Holy Land

In AH 1316 [1898], ‘Abdu’l-Bahá summoned the Afnán to the Holy Land. He departed from Shíráz in the company of Maryam-Sultán Bagum, Túbá Khánum, and Mírzá Díyá’u`d-Dín and arrived in the Holy Land. They had the bounty of dwelling for a month under the canopy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s favors where each day they drank their fill from the chalice of their Beloved’s infinite munificence and partook of the honor of being in His presence. [p.409:7] [p.410]

At the conclusion of the month’s stay, congruent with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s command, the Afnán went to Port Said, as Hájí Mírzá Buzurg and this servant [Mírzá Habíbu’lláh] were residing in that town. My mother, sister, and brother, Hájí Mírzá Díyá’u`d-Dín, accompanied my father, the Afnán. In that town, we were engaged in commerce.

We remained in Port Said for three years when, once more in accordance with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s command, we returned to Fárs to serve and protect the Blessed House of the Báb. Our entire family was permitted to travel [again] to the Holy Land and to remain there for some fifteen days. After acquiring spiritual sustenance, consonant with His wish, we returned for a brief period to Port Said and thence proceeded to Shíráz.

When the friends in Shíráz were informed of the safe transfer of the Báb’s sacred remains from Tihrán to the Holy Land and their interment on Mount Carmel, the celebrated Hájí Shaykhu`r-Ra’ís penned a poem in AH 1318 [1900] which marked that blessed date and submitted it to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence.²⁶⁵ This offering won His high praise....²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ The remains of the Báb were interred in His permanent Shrine on Naw-Rúz 1909. For the history of events leading to this interment, see, Rabbani, “Efforts to Preserve the Remains of the Báb: Four Historical Accounts.”

²⁶⁶ The text on page 412 quotes five lines of this poem that are not rendered into English in the present translation. The concluding verse gives the date of this event, 1327 [1909], as the numerical value of the phrase “Hadíratu`l-Qudsí.”

Similarly, at the time when the arch—Covenant-breaker [Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí] had hoisted the standard of violation, Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís composed a missive in Arabic and a poem in Persian and sent them to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence as well. These two documents are truly enchanting, and upon their consideration, one perceives the depth of certitude, faith, and purity of intent of this peerless and evanescent believer. . . .²⁶⁷

Filled with joy and spirit, the Afnán arrived in Shíráz on 18 Sha‘bán AH 1319 [30 November 1901], with this servant and my brother, Hájí Mírzá Buzurg, [and the womenfolk of our family,] in his company. We attained the presence of the friends of the Merciful, and regular weekly gatherings were organized, where all the believers would come together in the utmost enthusiasm and unity. Moreover, with great order and undiminished wisdom, the friends would visit the Blessed House of the Báb and place their brows in humility on the Threshold of that Sacred Edifice.

In the year AH 1320 [1902], while in Tihrán, the exalted Navváb [Prince] Malik Mansúr Mírzá, the Shu‘á‘u’s-Saltanih, was appointed governor-general of the province of Fárs.²⁶⁸ He arrived in Shíráz with a large retinue, entourage, and a regiment of soldiers, exhibiting princely splendor and authority.

As result of his high standing, policies, and rule, Shíráz was quiet, and freedom reigned throughout the region. Meetings and Bahá’í gatherings were [regularly] organized in the utmost radiance. Áqá Mírzá Jalál Zarqání and ‘Andalíb were steadfastly engaged in teaching the Cause. There was no hint of disturbance, and Bahá’í congregations and assemblies met routinely, particularly the meetings held in the homes of the Bashíru’s-Sultán or Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Ridá Khán, where the celebrated Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís would grace the assemblage with his presence and all would benefit from his vast erudition.

It went thus until towards the end of the year when certain trouble-makers raised mischief and commotion, and tumult and uproar became sovereign throughout the city.

²⁶⁷ The text on pages 413–15 contains a copy this missive and poem, which have not been reproduced in this translation.

²⁶⁸ Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 1, pp. 28–29, indicates that he was first appointed governor-general of Fárs in AH 1318 [1900]. See appendix 3 for a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about this governor’s potential.

Mírzá Habíbu'lláh's Injury

It was during this time that this servant was affected by an illness that rendered me bedridden for almost four months. Various physicians were brought in, such as Áqá Mírzá 'Abdu'lláh Rahmat, who prescribed various odious and bitter medicines. The illness, plus separation from the Holy Land, induced an acute depression. Previously, for twelve years, I had the good fortune of being under the canopy of the Master's love where my spirit would be rejuvenated through His unceasing favors. But now I found myself in the destitute land of Iran, firmly in the grasp of bloodthirsty wolves, suffering profoundly, and being deeply saddened and agitated because of it.

One day after taking my medicine, I ventured to the roof of the Blessed House [of the Báb] and stood on the same side of the residence that the sacred orange tree planted by His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] was located. That sanctified tree was in full bloom. I stood there that perchance through the fragrance of the sacred orange tree my soul and my entire being might be revived. I stood facing the tree in the direction of the Holy Land and brought to mind a nineteen-couplet poem by Nabíl Zarandí:

I did not eat the [forbidden] wheat,²⁶⁹ O Beloved,
 Then why expulsion from Thy Ridván?
 If I partook some, it was out of ignorance,
 I am guilty, remorseful, and repentant.
 I am a fish far from water,
 Consumed by Thy separation's fire.²⁷⁰

When I had finished these lines, from the inner quarters of the house of Mírzá Áqá Mír—which along with its larger courtyard is currently part of the Blessed House of the Báb, but at that time was leased and occupied by Mírzá Ahmad Khán, the Khabíru'd-Dawlih—a brick was hurled at me, striking my skull over the right eye.²⁷¹ The impact was so severe that [p.420] the brick broke into many pieces and I fell unconscious.

Discovered by my brothers, I was brought down to the courtyard [of the House of the Báb] with my eye swollen shut. Immediately, [my

²⁶⁹ In the story of Adam and Eve in the Qur'án, chapter 34, it is wheat, not the biblical apple, which is forbidden unto man.

²⁷⁰ The author cites only these three couplets out of the nineteen.

²⁷¹ See Afnán, *Memories of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, chapter 11 for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets with regard to the purchase of this house in 1921.

father] the Afnán informed Áqá Mírzá Husayn Jarráh-Báshí [the surgeon], a devoted Bahá'í. After examination he reported, "Currently, applying medicine is not advisable since it is not possible to determine if the eye is lost or if there is still hope of saving it." He prescribed a mixture of almond oil and egg white to be slowly poured over the injury. Following his counsel, for three days brick remains were dislodged from my eye until after a week the swelling subsided somewhat, and I was able to open my eyelid a little, although the contours of the cornea and the eyeball were not discernible.

Áqá Mírzá Husayn came to visit and examined my condition, and, noting that I could actually distinguish between light and darkness, he became somewhat confident and pronounced, "This is nothing short of a miracle. It is only through the grace of this Sacred House that your eye has survived! Otherwise, it would have been completely and permanently impaired." Again, he repeated, "This is an absolute miracle!"

After investigation, it was determined that the assailant was the Khabíru'd-Dawlih's son from a Kurdish mother. He confessed to the act and said, "[Because he is a Bahá'í,] I hit him on purpose, hoping he would go blind."

During this period, I was unable to communicate with the Holy Land for forty days. After I had recovered to some degree, I wrote Áqá Siyyid Taqí Manshádí, apologizing for delay in sending missives and explained to him that the delay was because of an injury, describing a little of what had transpired. Manshádí took my letter to the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and described what had occurred. Immediately, from the heaven of His grace and bounty, an exalted and glorious Tablet was revealed in the honor of this servant, which will befittingly adorn the pages of this history:

Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, Áqá Mírzá Habíbu'lláh, may the Glory of God, the Most Glorious, be upon thee.

He is God.

O thou offshoot of the Tree of Reality! Thou hast been accepted at the court of the true Beloved, admitted at the threshold of the divine Physician, and become a sign of the favors of Sanctified God. This hath been achieved by virtue of your being persecuted and maltreated at the hands of the oppressors and harassed by the ignorant. A rock thrown by the foes has left a mark on thine eye and brow, but this loss is a mighty gain. Though this rock will remain a blot on the oppressors, it is evidence of the discernment and refinement of that affectionate wronged one. It has been said, "Whatever grows on earth and is verdant and alive will be stoned; haply, they may partake of its fruit." In the Qur'ánic Dispensation it was a custom of the mu'adhhdhins to cover their ears with their hands, as at

the beginning of God's Faith, when the call of the adhán was raised, the mu'adhdhin was stoned from all directions. Therefore, whoever announced the adhán would raise both hands to his ears to protect his head from the stones of ill-fated.

This hardship thou hast endured in the path of fidelity and this affliction and suffering hath been sustained because of thy love for the One Single God. Therefore, render thanks unto thy Lord, that thou didst attain unto this great favor and become aided and confirmed therein.

Convey my greetings unto thy father, the Afnán of the Sacred Tree, and likewise to all your brothers and to the blessed leaves.

Praise and salutation be upon thee.

'A. 'A.²⁷²

The Passing of Hájí Abú'l-Hasan in AH 1320 [1902]

In the year AH 1320 [1902], the passing of Hájí Abú'l-Hasan, father of [p.425] Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán [Dihqán], occurred. During the early part of this history, and then later, his loving mention was made extensively, and the excellence of his character, the depth of his devotion, and the troubles he sustained were noted. Now I wish to record the incident and injury that led to his passing, as an example of devotion unto all.

The Hájí had a particular affinity towards [my father] the Afnán and twice weekly, that is, on Mondays and Fridays, would come visit the Blessed House of the Báb and meet the Afnán. At that time, the Hájí was more than ninety years of age.

One day, his journey passed by the vicinity of the home of Siyyid 'Alí-Akbar Fál-Asírí, whose malicious deeds were mentioned in the course of the martyrdom of the illustrious Murtidá and the incident of Muhammad-Qásim Khán, and are recorded in the pages of history. The henchmen under the command of the Siyyid saw the Hájí [Abú'l-Hasan] and, after having severely abused that bright and spiritually resplendent old man, took him to the Siyyid's home. On being informed, that unenlightened Siyyid came forth to the front-court of his dwelling and with his cane brutally injured the victim. [As a result,] the Hájí became unconscious and was thrown into the streets by the same coarse mercenaries. Several farrashes of the Qavámu'l-Mulk happened upon the Hájí and, recognizing him, carried this old man to the home of Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Khán and left after receiving a gratuity. The household immediately

²⁷² INBMC 52:366, no. 410.

informed Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán [Dihqán], who came and attended to his injured father.

From that date, his son prevented him from leaving the residence, and within a few months, on Jamádiyū'l-Avval of AH 1320 [August 1902], he passed away and was buried in Háfiziyih.

Withdrawal of Shu'á'u's-Saltanih

In the same year, another incident occurred that caused general commotion and resulted in insult to Hájí Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís in the name of the Cause and this community, and the details are these:

A year into the governorship of Prince Malik Mansúr Mírzá, the Shu'á'u's-Saltanih, in Shíráz, while affairs were unfolding most harmoniously, certain insidious elements were eager to find an excuse to instigate trouble and gradually began provocations.²⁷³ The citizens were divided into two factions: a large contingent who, in support of the Prince, assembled at the telegraph office, and a second group, led by Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk, centered in Masjid Naw and [Masjid] Sháh-Chiráq, intent on mischief. Hájí Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís, for reasons of certain central authorities' consideration, and also by virtue of his kinship, championed the Prince. The much-respected Shaykh Yahyá, the Imám-Jum'ih, together with a number of the seminarians, nobles, merchants, and shopkeepers congregated in the telegraph office and raising tents and shelters, camped in that location. The other 'ulamá, such as, Áqá Mírzá Ibráhím Mahalátí, and certain others, followed the Qavám and made Masjid Naw their place of assembly.

This incident was a perfect excuse for nefarious constituents to fuel the fire of uproar and enmity and to poison people's thoughts [against the Bahá'í Faith], and this they particularly achieved through the sermons that Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís had delivered, the texts of which were transcribed and disseminated broadly. They contrived a plot to noise abroad that "Hájí Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís is a Bábí, aiming to corrupt the masses and lead them away from the straight path into waywardness and ignorance!"

²⁷³ Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 4, pp. 156–57, indicates that Malik Mansúr Mírzá, being among the most affluent Iranians with an enormous annual stipend, planned to seize Bazaar Vakíl and the shops around the Karím Khán's quarter. However, these belonged to the Qavám family, who induced a popular uprising that resulted in the Prince's being recalled from his post.

Using a large sum made available by Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk, and the religious rulings of Áqá Mírzá Ibráhím Mahalátí and other 'ulamá, as well as the influence of the merchants and the rabble, they encouraged and provoked the people. Each day, gangs of youth, vulgar characters, and rabble carrying sticks, clubs, pistols, and guns would roam the bazaars and streets, and forcibly close any shop that was opened. They constantly incited all citizens to tumult and would not shy away from using unseemly language and insult to achieve their means. In addition, a group of Ághivlí and Bayát²⁷⁴ womenfolk armed with sticks marched every day through the city and shouted obscenities against Hájí Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís and the Prince, and would curse and insult them on allegation of being Bábís. They also would clamor and shout out slogans, impelling and demanding the injury and slaying of all Bahá'ís! [p.430]

This tumult continued for nearly four months, during which time all the Bahá'ís lost hope of life and possessions. At the beginning of the month of Safar AH 1321 [circa 29 April 1903], a telegraph announcing the dismissal of the Prince from the office was received from Tihrán. Disappointed with the turn of events, the Prince decided it best to conceal the news, since it would be a grievous stain on his prestige, and instead ordered the cannons fired [as a sign of celebration], proclaiming that Tihrán's telegraph promoted him to a new appointment as an independent governor. Upon hearing the roar of the cannons, the opposition that had gathered in the Masjid Naw fled, while the 'ulamá concealed themselves under their 'abás and went into hiding in their own homes. None was left in the Masjid Naw and Sháh-Chiráq. Later that night, after it was determined that the adversary had vacated its position, the Prince, in the company of Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís and his household and staff, departed for Tihrán.

The following afternoon, on learning that the Prince was dismissed from the office and had quit the city, peace and tranquility became the norm. The Qavámu'l-Mulk let it be known, "Our purpose was to effect the impeachment of the Prince and the ousting of Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís, and none other. No one is permitted to accuse others of being a 'Bábí' or to issue an insult!"

From Tihrán, the Prince Muhammad-Husayn Mírzá, the Mu'ayyadu's-Saltanih, who was the head of the telegraph office [and a Bahá'í], was appointed the city's mayor, with Mírzá Ahmad Khán, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih, as the governor-general.

²⁷⁴ Two Turkish tribes of Fárs.

The Governorship of 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih

In the year AH 1321 [1903], the uproar of Isfahán and the incident of the Russian Consulate took place, which soon engulfed Yazd, and the details surely must have been recorded in the history of Isfahán and Yazd.²⁷⁵ The fury of that episode was also felt in Fárs. At that time, Mírzá Ahmad Khán, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih, was the governor-general.

[Ahmad Khán] was a powerful regent, and under his command order once again ruled throughout Fárs, as everyone was particularly apprehensive of his wrath. The governor himself would personally deliberate on all the affairs of the province.²⁷⁶

When the news of the occurrences of Isfahán and Yazd reached Shíráz, the governor increased his vigilance to ensure that similar acts were not perpetrated in his realm. In this regard, he had the confidence and support of: Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk; Habíbu'lláh Khán Bíglar-Baykí; Prince Muhammad-Husayn Mírzá, the Mu'ayyadu's-Saltanih; Ja'far-Qulí Khán, the Amír-Panjih [commander] of the Farídání regiment, [known as the Mu'azamu'd-Dawlih]; and Colonel Ahmad-Qulí Khán.

²⁷⁵ A.Q. Afnán states: "From the beginning of Rabí'u'l-Avval of AH 1321 [28 May–27 June 1903], the clamor of malice and enmity was noised abroad throughout many towns of Iran. It that same year, more than eighty destitute Bahá'ís were martyred in Yazd, and the earth of that region was reddened and ennobled with the blood of these souls. Contemporaneously, out of fear of the perfidiousness of Áqá Najafí and the treachery of Zillu's-Sultán, the friends of God in Isfahán took refuge in the Russian Consulate" (private communication, September 1997).

²⁷⁶ Based on his father's recollections, A.Q. Afnán writes (private correspondence, September 1997):

From the beginning of his regime, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih had the custom that he would devote Saturdays to investigating the complaints of various Shírázís, such as merchants, nobles, and shopkeepers. The rest of the week, he would spend on other matters pertaining to the administration of the province. Since he was a capable, yet severe and heartless person, and was particularly known for his foulmouthed expressions, people were deeply frightened of him and would try not to create a circumstance that would require his intervention. His other custom was that all complaints had to be presented in writing, whereupon the text would be read aloud in his presence and he would order the immediate summoning of parties and an investigation, and then he would pronounce decisions. On occasion, he would delegate the task of inquiry to others, such as the 'ulamá or the dignitaries, who had to report their findings on the following Saturday, at which time, he would issue the final ruling in the presence of both parties. He also had the habit of immediately enforcing his decision and punishing the guilty, and if he found the initial complaint to be invalid, often it was noted that he would force the petitioner to eat his entreaty and to receive a beating.

These men were aligned with the governor in ensuring that no protest would be aired.²⁷⁷

In the midst of this, reports of the events of Zaraqán were received. That is, Akhúnd Mullá 'Alí-Akbar Zaraqání had provoked the populace of that town to attack and severely injure Ustád Ahmad Malikí-Dúz [the shoemaker] and to persecute other believers. When this news reached Shíráz, Áqá Mírzá Jalál Zaraqání, son of Mullá 'Abdu'lláh Biká', who was previously mentioned in these pages, decided to protect the Cause. In consultation with 'Andalíb and certain others, they wrote a petition to the governor-general beseeching equity, complaining of the sufferings and anguish of Bahá'ís at the hand of unjust people. [p.435]

This appeal was written without the Afnán's knowledge and given to Áqá 'Alí-Akbar Khádím²⁷⁸ [the attendant] to present to the governor. In the morning, the governor was at the Khúrshíd palace, and a number of the 'ulamá, merchants, dignitaries, and shopkeepers of Shíráz were present as well. Áqá 'Alí-Akbar presented the envelope [containing the supplication] directly to the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih, who handed it to his confidant and private secretary, Áqá Mírzá Qásim Khán, the Ásifu'l-Mulk, who was a brother of Mírzá Husayn Khán, the Mu'tami'd-Díván,²⁷⁹ and instructed him, "Read the letter and to inform us of the details, so we may address the concern of the petitioner."

After reading the content, the Ásifu'l-Mulk was bewildered and decided it best to conceal the matter and therefore placed the missive back in the envelope, stating, "I will apprise Your Excellency later of this letter." Growing impatient, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih said stridently, "What is in the plaintiff's letter and concern?" "It is a missive from the Bahá'ís," replied the Ásifu'l-Mulk and then proceeded to briefly outline the content. The 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih became cognizant of the nature of the complaint and wrote on the margin of the letter that it should be referred to Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk. Further, he told Áqá 'Alí-Akbar that the Qavámu'l-Mulk would inform him of the decision.

²⁷⁷ Many of the upper echelon of the administrative machinery of Fárs were Bahá'ís, and it continued that way throughout much of the Constitutional Revolution. 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirms the same in His 23 July 1912 talk, "... a Bahá'í may hold a political office and be interested in politics of the right type. Ministers, state officials, and governor-generals in Persia are Bahá'ís, and there are many other Bahá'ís holding governmental positions..." (*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 238).

²⁷⁸ One of the devoted Bahá'ís of that era.

²⁷⁹ He was a Bahá'í, and as such, his brother, though not a believer, had a particular affinity for the Bahá'ís.

Immediately, the governor summoned the Qavámu'l-Mulk and stated, "If you know certain of these people [Bahá'ís], admonish them that now is not the time to raise such issues. Prudence is necessary, not open assertion of the rights for Bahá'ís!" In response, the Qavámu'l-Mulk expressed his readiness to undertake the mission and subsequently returned to his duties.

Certain insidious and evil-minded persons in that gathering had learned that the Bahá'ís had submitted such a petition to the governor and as such launched tumult in the streets, neighborhoods, mosques, and other places of gathering. They commenced insult and slander [against the Bahá'í Faith] and spread the details of the occurrences of Isfahán and Yazd throughout the city. Additionally, they sent a missive to the governor, and using the Bahá'í petition and the freedom of the believers as an excuse, they raised the cry of "Our religion is lost!" All of this resulted in an unruly uproar; tumult reigned throughout Shíráz; and deplorable events were expected.

Meeting with the Qavámu'l-Mulk

On the evening of 4 Rabí'u'l-Avval [31 May 1903], the Qavámu'l-Mulk sent word through his attendant, 'Abbás Khán, a deeply devoted and enkindled Bahá'í youth and known as such to his master, the Qavám. That night, about one hour after dusk, 'Abbás Khán came to the House of the Báb and informed Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán, "I bear the greetings and the best wishes of my master [the Qavámu'l-Mulk]. He asked me to inform you, 'Today at the Governor's Ark a common person²⁸⁰ submitted a petition to the governor in the name and over the signature of Bahá'ís, requesting freedom [for the Bahá'í Faith]. The governor turned the matter over to me, and at your convenience, I wish to meet for an hour with you at my residence in the city.'"

The Afnán replied to the message, "I am completely unfamiliar with this event and do not think Bahá'ís would have sent such a petition or made such a request at a time when turmoil has engulfed the city. Perchance, the author intends to cause mischief. Kindly inform his honor the Qavámu'l-Mulk and state that I am bed-ridden and unable to attend

²⁸⁰ Reference to Mírzá Jalál Zarfání.

his presence.²⁸¹ However, my son, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh, will attend on my behalf, and you may disclose your wishes to him.”

[p.440]

‘Abbás Khán informed the Qavám, who designated the following evening for this meeting, and we were informed of this appointment two hours later by the same messenger.

The following evening, 5 Rabí'u'l-Avval [1 June 1903], about an hour after the sunset, this servant went to the specified address, an orchard belonging to the Qavám, and found him alone, pacing and waiting for me. I met ‘Abbás Khán, who took me to the Qavámu'l-Mulk. After an exchange of pleasantries and inquiring after my father's health, he said:

“I am well acquainted with [your brother,] Áqá Mírzá Jalál Khán [who is the director of the post office in Ábádih], but I have never met you before. Have you not been in Shíráz?”

“No, I have not been here long.”

“Where have you been?” he inquired.

“For nearly eleven years, I have been in foreign lands, living in working as a merchant in Egypt and Port Said.”

“Did you go to Syria?”²⁸² he asked, and I answered affirmatively.

“Did you attain the presence of Bahá'u'lláh?” he further queried. I answered positively.

“Tell me about your journey to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh,” he asked.

I remembered what the Blessed Beauty had spoken in Haifa about Yazd, and those utterances had been meant for this very evening and for the Qavám's benefit.²⁸³ Therefore, I began by telling him [of my journey to 'Akká], “During Safar AH 1308 [September 1890], our family left Shíráz and arrived at Port Said where my father resided. My family then left that city on the 8 Dhi'l-Hajjih [15 July 1891] and arrived at Haifa on the 10th of the same month. It was then summer, and the Blessed Perfection was in Haifa. In that journey we remained for nine months in His presence, a portion in Haifa and the rest in 'Akká. I remember distinctly that the Blessed Beauty was in Haifa when the news of events in Yazd arrived, to the effect that Sultán Husayn Mírzá, the Jalálu'd-Dawlih, the governor-general of Yazd, had martyred seven believers in the most gruesome manner and that the citizens of that town had celebrated for three

²⁸¹ During his final months, Núri'd-Dín was attacked in Shamshírgarhá Street, where the House of the Báb was situated, and eventually passed away from these injuries.

²⁸² 'Akká was a district of Syria; see Balyúzi, *Bahá'u'lláh the King of Glory*, pp. 471–73.

²⁸³ See, Afnán, *Memories of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, chapter 2.

consecutive days while the atrocities of that iniquitous governor reached their highest. The details of this incident were reported in great detail to Bahá'u'lláh. When this news was brought before Him, profound sorrow overcame the Blessed Perfection. For some time, whenever the friends would attain His sanctified presence, His utterances solely concerned the cruelties and brutalities of the Qájár against this much-wronged community [Bahá'ís]. I remember especially that one night my brothers and I were summoned into His presence, and for some two hours this bliss lasted. The Tongue of Grandeur spoke thus:

[p.445]

The Jalálu'd-Dawlih has done what has caused the eyes of the denizens of the Supreme Concurrence to shed tears of blood. Do you perceive the reason for his doings? The motive is that Mas'úd Mírzá, the Zillu's-Sultán, wrote Us a letter in his own handwriting, and gave it to Hájí Mírzá [Muhammad-] 'Alí Sayyah to bring. Among the things he requested of Us was to aid him with the Bábís to destroy his Sháh-Bábá.²⁸⁴ "Should You do this," he wrote, "I will give You liberty, I will give You authority, I will support You, I will make amends for past atrocities." This Wronged-One wrote him, "Discard such thoughts. Praying for the Sháh is obligatory for you, all Iranians, and Us. We do not desire liberty, nor rule. Were We after leadership, what authority could have been better than occupying the post of minister in Tihrán? For the sake of God, We have arisen to improve the morals of a number of people, wronged in this world. Never again write in this vein to Us. Never again put such requests to this Wronged-One." Having despaired of such subversive imaginings, he has now arisen against the friends and harms them thus. But the tale of the wayward is not worth repeating. Ere long, however, he will become that "which he was a thing not worthy of remembrance."²⁸⁵ You will see the name of the Qájár obliterated, and no trace of them or their rule will remain.

Consider this: In one single city and at the same location, two persons dwell. One takes the path of waywardness, while the other acts with equity. One becomes the Mushír, and the other becomes the Qavám. From the dawn of the Cause in Shíráz, the Mushír has had the temerity to arise against the Faith. Ere long, that name will be eradicated from the realm of Fárs. In contrast, from the beginning of the Dispensation, the Qavám Dynasty has caused no harm, nay, they have always supported the friends and at all times have rendered assistance.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ His father, Násiri'd-Dín Sháh (r. 1848–1896).

²⁸⁵ Qur'án 76:1. The full verse is: "Did there not pass over man a [long] space of time during which he was a thing not worthy of remembrance?"

²⁸⁶ A.Q. Afnán has recorded that when relating this story his father would add: And Bahá'u'lláh further said, "The Qavámu'l-Mulk has succored the captives and helped the wronged believers, and to the extent within his power, he has protected and shielded the

I then related, "When Bahá'u'lláh spoke these words, He also prayed for you and asked for divine confirmations on your behalf."

On hearing this, Muhammad-Ridá Khán grew exceedingly happy and with tremendous excitement, three times asked, "He prayed for us?"

"Yes, the One True God does not forget the deeds of anyone. God does not veil them. He conceals sins, but reveals our good and virtuous doings."

Afterwards, the Qavámu'l-Mulk asked, "Are you aware of what has transpired in Isfahán and the tumult that rages in Shíráz? What sort of loutish person would send such a petition? And who would authorize such a deed? Now is not the time for such actions. I have exerted myself to prevent mischief over this and hope to be completely successful. I have always tried to vindicate the Bahá'ís and provide every support. In the case of the Murtidá Sarvistání, I intensely tried to ensure the safety of that innocent youth. But in the incident of the crazed Siyyid [Fál-Asírí], I was not able to remedy the situation, and what transpired took place. Now you must admonish [the Bahá'ís] to most stringently observe wisdom. It is best for the more prominent among them to remain at home for a while until these troubles have dwindled."

I responded, "Of a certainty, your will and counsel will be firmly adhered to. Hopefully God will protect, and Your Excellency will also prevent the rabble from mischief-making. Surely, you have been informed that this blessed Cause has spread overseas. Though the foes exerted to harm the body of the Faith in Iran and persecuted its members, the One exalted God has propagated His Faith throughout Europe and the continent of the Americas. Currently, it is spreading most rapidly in the United States, and indeed the verse "And thou see the people enter God's Religion in troops,"²⁸⁷ has been realized there.

"In America?" he inquired being most puzzled.

"Indeed, in America. I have a number of pictures of the American believers."

"I wish to see them," he stated.

"Through 'Abbás Khán I will send them to your presence."

"I will be very grateful," he said.

Faith. For as long as he and his family do not arise against the Cause, he will remain in his position—confirmed, assured, and successful" (private communication, August 1997).

²⁸⁷ Qur'án 110:2.

“The sacred blood of believers was shed in Iran, and its effect stands manifest in America. The Blessed Perfection told us, ‘Do not be sad over the martyrdom of believers in Iran. The sacred tree of the Cause of God is watered by the blood of the martyrs. A tree, unless watered, does not grow and bear fruit.’”

[p.450] In all, our discussions lasted some two hours. Afterward, I asked permission to take my leave, and in bidding me farewell, he said, “Kindly convey my warmest greetings to your father. I was deeply pleased by meeting you tonight and thrilled to hear of the tidings spoken about us by Bahá’u’lláh. On occasion, I will come and meet with you. Please be sure to send the pictures of the American Bahá’ís for me to see.”

When I arrived home, I briefed my father on what had been discussed and through ‘Abbás Khán sent the Qavám the pictures of the American believers that I had brought with me from the Holy Land.

Instigation of the ‘Ulamá

The day following, however, the residents of Shíráz began a massive altercation that included shutting all the shops in the bazaar for an extensive march, with accompanying shouted insults and curses through the streets, neighborhoods, and mosques.²⁸⁸ Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu’l-Mulk, and his eldest son, Habíbu’lláh Khán, who at the time held the offices of Kalántar and Bíglar-Baykí, and the [Qavám’s] younger son, Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí Khán, the Nasru’d-Dawlih,²⁸⁹ summoned all the chieftains and strongly admonished them, “The administration will not tolerate mischief, and none among the vulgar and unruly citizens is allowed to cause harm to the Bahá’ís.”

Nevertheless, for three days the bazaars were closed and the ‘ulamá and the rabble busy provoking malice and mischief. During this time, the ‘Alá’u’d-Dawlih, Muhammad-Ridá Khán Qavámu’l-Mulk, Muhammad-Husayn Mírzá Mu’ayyadu’s-Saltanih, Ja’far-Qulí Khán Amír-Panjih,

²⁸⁸ A.Q. Afnán has recorded the following additional details from his father (private communications, August 1997): “The clergy in Shíráz, following the example of the ‘ulamá of Yazd, commenced mischief and disturbances against the Bahá’ís of the city. Some shopkeepers, encouraged by Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar Fál-Asírí, his son Siyyid Muhammad, Shaykh Muhsin Qannád, and Shaykh Ja’far Mahallátí, closed their businesses in protest. The clergy ascended the pulpits and began insulting the Faith and provoking the religious fervor of the multitudes until a complete uprising against the Cause and the massacre of all Bahá’ís seemed inevitable.”

²⁸⁹ He served as a high-ranking military officer.

and Habíbu'lláh Khán Bíglar-Baykí, were in private conference in the governor's office about ways to restrain the rabble and bring peace to the city. They decided that it was best for several of the more prominent [Bahá'ís] to remain at home and not to attend their shops in the bazaar. Mírzá Muhammad-Ja'far Khán, who numbered among the faithful, sincere believers and who was a private secretary to Habíbu'lláh Khán [the Qavámu'l-Mulk III], was instructed to inform these Bahá'ís. A list of believers was prepared and included: this servant; my brother, Hájí Mírzá Buzurg; 'Andalíb; Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim Sá'at-Sáz [the watchmaker]; Mírzá Yúsuf Naqqásh [the painter]; Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn Naqqásh, known as Thábit [the steadfast]; Mírzá Jalál Zarqání; and Áqá 'Alí-Akbar Khádim [the attendant].

This list was brought by Mírzá Muhammad-Ja'far Khán to my father with the request, "In the course of our consultation, it was deemed advisable for these gentlemen to remain at home until the pandemonium and riots have alleviated." The Afnán responded, "Please do as they have suggested." Thereupon, Mírzá Muhammad-Ja'far Khán proceeded to the homes of the Bahá'ís on the list and informed each of this decision by the governor and the Qavámu'l-Mulk. Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim, Mírzá Yúsuf Naqqásh, and Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn Thábit each had a shop by the entrance to the Shrine of Siyyid Mír Ahmad Sháh-Chiráq and immediately closed their shops and remained at home. Áqá Mírzá Jalál, who was the author of the original petition and hence the instigator of the uproar, proceeded forthwith towards Tihrán. Áqá 'Alí-Akbar Khádim shed his clothes in favor of the dervish's garb and proceeded to Ábádih. 'Andalíb remained home. My brothers, Hájí Mírzá Buzurg and Hájí Mírzá Díyá', and I remained secluded at the Blessed House of the Báb.

The fifth day of demonstrations was a Thursday [4 June 1903], and it was noised throughout the city that the celebrated 'ulamá had issued a fatwá that on the following day, Friday, all swords would be reddened by the blood of Bahá'ís. This fact was reported to the governor-general, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih, who immediately summoned the Qavámu'l-Mulk, the Prince Mu'ayyadu's-Saltanih and Ja'far Khán Amír-Panjih and asked them for suggestions on ways to remedy the situation.²⁹⁰ The Qavámu'l-Mulk [p.455] stated, "We must ask the Imám-Jum'ih to come quickly and to promise

²⁹⁰ During this period, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih wanted to demonstrate to the officials in Tihrán his foresight and general abilities in administering affairs, as he desired a cabinet post in the capital. He knew that if Shíráz were to sustain the same fate as Yazd, it would end his political ambitions.

that he will calm and quiet the people. Further, we must see to it that the other ‘ulamá receive a sum of money as a prize for the cessation of disturbances and in order to buy their peace.”

Intervention of the Imám-Jum‘ih

Finding this suggestion agreeable, the ‘Alá’u’d-Dawlih asked Hájí Shaykh Yahyá, the Imám-Jum‘ih, to be brought to his office. The latter was a particularly virtuous and well-intending person, always supporting the believers and the Cause, and never perpetrating harm or disrespect. Upon his arrival, the governor and the Qavámu’l-Mulk briefed him on their predicament and asked his assistance in alleviating the troubles and commotion. The Imám-Jum‘ih promised that on the following day, [Friday,] he would admonish the citizens, calm the situation, and ensure that by Saturday all the shops were opened and the tumult subsided. They also decided to send a sum of money to the influential figures²⁹¹ in order to persuade them to cooperate.²⁹²

Friday morning, the public criers of the Imám-Jum‘ih proclaimed throughout the city that four hours before dusk all citizens of every rank were to gather at the Masjid Vakíl in order to hear his sermon. People thought that this was the awaited hour when the Imám intended to announce his fatwá [against the Bahá’ís].²⁹³ This news quickly circled through the city.

²⁹¹ Presumably, a reference to the ‘ulamá.

²⁹² Based on his father’s recollections, Abú’l-Qásim Afnán notes, “The Imám-Jum‘ih had suggested that the best course of action was for the governor to donate a sum of money to the ‘ulamá. Being in agreement with this proposal, the ‘Alá’u’d-Dawlih invited some prominent Bahá’ís in order to confer with them and acquaint them with the situation. Those attending the gathering contributed a sum that totaled nearly one thousand tumáns, the majority of which was contributed by the head of the telegraph office, Muhammad-Husayn Mírzá, the Mu‘ayyadu’s-Saltanih. When the money was ready, depending on the rank and influence of each cleric involved in the uproar, the Imám-Jum‘ih allocated a portion to each. He asked the ‘Alá’u’d-Dawlih to write a letter to each cleric stating, ‘Since a surplus is available from the tax account and now needs to be distributed to the poor and needy, I am leaving it in your charge to disburse it in any way that you deem appropriate.’ The Imám-Jum‘ih further emphasized that the governor should ensure that his attendants collected a receipt upon the delivery of the sum” (private communication, August 1997).

²⁹³ Mírzá Habíbu’lláh added parenthetically, “The Imám-Jum‘ih was peerless in eloquence, and all the inhabitants, young and old, male or female alike, would listen to him attentively and with due consideration.”

By the appointed hour, the entire courtyard, the cloisters, the roofs, and even the minarets of the mosque were thronged with onlookers, and the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih, the Qavámu'l-Mulk and other officials were in attendance as well. The Imám-Jum'ih, being more than eighty years of age and rather frail, arrived carried on the shoulders of his servant. On beholding him, in unison the crowd raised its voice in greeting. People were giving the glad tidings to each other that the Imám was about to issue his ruling and conclude the affair.²⁹⁴ He ascended the pulpit and delivered an eloquent homily. Thereafter, he began his sermon, flavored with his customary sweet stories and humorous anecdotes that only he could deliver. Having completely won over the attention of his audience, in his most gentle tone he addressed the city's inhabitants:

O ye people! You are all well aware that I stand eighty years of age and that I associate with all the residents of this town and know each and every person from every corner and class. You also recognize that you all are truly like my own brothers and children. I will not permit, and surely you will not consent either, that certain malefactors accuse you, or some of you, in various ways and issue slanders about you. Recall to mind that the Apostle of God, Muhammad ibn 'Abdu'lláh, peace be upon Him, has admonished His sacred community in the Qur'an, "Say not to anyone who offers you a salutation: 'Thou art none of a believer!'"²⁹⁵ Moreover, the Immaculate Imám ['Alí] has stated, "We are to consider the evident aspect of things."²⁹⁶ Therefore, according to the text of the Sacred Qur'an and the Tradition of the Holy Imám, we are forbidden from pronouncing others as unbelievers or labeling them non-Muslim.

Having established this, I now ask you to repeat after me, and I promise [p.460] you that if you were to do so, the everlasting paradise would be yours. Shout out three times, "In Shíráz, God willing, there are no Bábís!" By my life, shout it in unison and repeat thrice, "There are no Bábís!"

After he had extracted this declaration from the people, he said, "Today is Friday, and it is a good hour. Let us all go to the bazaar and open our shops. And from tomorrow, Saturday, everyone must commence his business."²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ That is, the people were expecting that Imám's ruling would unleash a Bahá'í genocide.

²⁹⁵ Qur'an 4:94.

²⁹⁶ Imám 'Alí, *Nahju'l-Balághih*, p. 265.

²⁹⁷ A.Q. Afnán (private communications, August 1996) has noted that his father used to add the following said by the Imám, "Tonight, on everyone's behalf, I will perform the Hájjat prayer and beseech the Apostle of God to intercede on our behalf on the Day of Resurrection and to shower our businesses with His confirmations." Thereupon, the Imám emptied a handkerchief filled with sugarplums over the heads of the audience and told them to sweeten their mouths.

It was two hours until sunset when people left the mosque and happily proceeded to open all shops and begin their commerce.

A number of Bahá'ís, who were not known as such, had been attending the sermon at the Masjid [Vakíl] and at once came to the Blessed House of the Báb to inform us that the Imám-Jum'ih had wisely alleviated the disturbance and had calmed the storm. May God exalt his station in the Great Beyond.

The following day, Saturday, all the merchants and the shopkeepers resumed their business, and it seemed as if none of these events had ever taken place in Shíráz.

That evening, the Imám-Jum'ih instructed one of his confidants, a most virtuous man named Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn 'Arifu'sh-Sharí'ih, to ask Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim [Sá'at-Sáz] to go see him. When the latter came before the Imám, he was told, "Mírzá, it is best if you did not dwell in Shíráz for a few days." He responded, "But I have no place to go." The Imám-Jum'ih replied, "I will arrange all details and ensure that they see to your comfort for some time." Thereupon, he wrote to the Kad-Khudá [village chief] of Husayn-Ábád Bízzyán where the Imám owned orchards located two farsangs²⁹⁸ from the city. Further, he provided Mírzá [Abú'l-Qásim] with sufficient funds.

After a month, however, the henchmen discovered his whereabouts and said to the Imám, "Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim has taken refuge in your property in Husayn-Ábád." Recognizing that these people were intent on mischief, [the Imám] sent a message for Áqá Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim to return to Shíráz, and upon coming into the presence of the Imám-Jum'ih, he was showered with utmost kindness and generosity. Further, he was told by the Imám, "You must remain at home for a while longer and not attend your store, as the rabble in the Sháh-Chiráq area where your shop is located are preparing for mischief. I have also asked Mírzá Yúsuf and Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn to remain at home as well." Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim responded, "But your honor must realize that I need to earn a living to support my family." "The Almighty God will provide," the Imám-Jum'ih remarked, "and for as long as you tarry at home, I will instruct my own bakery to give you fifteen man²⁹⁹ of bread each month. Further, I will ask the notables to bring their watches for you to repair. Therefore, you can stay at home and earn a living." Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim expressed his gratitude and at the

²⁹⁸ Each *farsang* is six kilometers.

²⁹⁹ Each *man* is 3 kilograms.

time of departure was given the first month's stipend in advance. This generous offering of the Imám continued for three years.³⁰⁰

After this period elapsed, other Bahá'ís made an effort and rented one of the shops belonging to the Mudabbiru's-Saltanih situated near the Government House for Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim and provided some furniture where he commenced a watch-repair business. Praise be to God, his trade expanded, and soon he was most prosperous.³⁰¹

Áqá Mírzá Yúsuf Naqqásh and Áqá Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn Thábit, both painters, were also asked to stay at home, allowing the troubles to subside. A few years later, both passed away to the Abhá Kingdom. My brother, Hájí Mírzá Buzurg, and I, however, freely went about our business activities and were also busy with Bahá'ís services. The city was now in peace, and there were no more disturbances.

³⁰⁰ A.Q. Afnán notes based on his father's recollections: "Other Bahá'ís who had shops in area of Sháh-Chiráq were also recipients of the Imám-Jum'ih's immense beneficence."

³⁰¹ Six of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets to him are included in INBMC 51:279-83, nos. 282-87. In one of them (no. 286, p. 282), it is revealed, "In truth, I say: The atrocities that the past Party [i.e., the Shi'ites] have perpetrated against thee hath caused the Tablet to lament and the Pen to wail—a sobbing that provoked the Concourse on High to cry out and the denizens of the Supreme Paradise to bemoan profusely."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RESTORATION OF THE HOUSE OF THE BĀB

The Second Restoration of the Blessed House in AH 1321 [1903]

[p.465:1] From the beginning of the month of Rabīʿu'th-Thání [27 June 1903], every time the post arrived, it brought a Tablet [from 'Abdu'l-Bahá regarding the restoration of the House of the Báb] in honor of the Afnán. In the first Tablet, it was instructed that an estimate of the total cost of the repairs be prepared and sent [to the Holy Land]. Through the aid of the Mí'már-Báshí [the construction taskmaster], the Afnán prepared a detailed estimate of the costs of construction and a drawing of the Sacred House, and sent it to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Upon its receipt, 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed several sanctified Tablets insisting on immediate commencement of the restoration work of the House. In response, the Afnán began to make the required plans and to assemble the necessary provisions.

At the beginning of Jamádíyu'l-Avval [26 July 1903], the post from the Holy Land brought an exalted Tablet for Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri'd-Dín, the Afnán, as the custodian of the House of God. Therein, special emphasis and utmost weight were placed on restoring the Blessed House to its exact original form [at the time of the Báb].³⁰² That blessed Text is included below so that the divine friends would become aware of God's inscrutable wisdom in this regard:

Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Áqá, upon him rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

O thou august offshoot of the sacred Lote-Tree! Some time ago, thou hadst written about the restoration of the heavenly point of adoration and the celestial Ka'bih, and a response was sent to thee. However, news of its receipt hath not arrived.

The restoration of the Blessed House [of the Báb] is thy most immediate duty, and not a moment's hesitation is permitted. However, the House must be rebuilt in complete conformity to the original design, and absolutely

³⁰² In 1872–73, at the request of Khadíjih Bagum and with Bahá'u'lláh's consent, the design of the House was altered under the supervision of Núri'd-Dín.

no change is allowed. Therefore, that illustrious personage must prepare a detailed estimate of the restoration costs and at once send it to the Holy Land. Somehow, the required funds will be raised and sent from here so that thou mayest soon commence work on the Blessed House, the heavenly point of adoration. Not a moment's delay is permitted. This is of the utmost importance. This undertaking will have profound spiritual and material influence. Upon the receipt of this letter, do not delay for an instant, and quickly submit an estimate. The design of the House and the plan for the rooms, the walls, the dimensions, and the orientations must not deviate by a dot from the original, and no change is admissible.

Praise and salutations rest upon thee.

‘A ‘A.

[ps.] Consider how important is the restoration of the Blessed House that this servant has pledged, that should the believers in Fárs rise to this task, all the troubles besetting that community will be removed. And as I had previously written, the friends must consider this the measure of truth or imposture.³⁰³

[Another Tablet:]

Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Áqá, upon him rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God!

O thou august offshoot of the sacred Lote-Tree! Thy missive hath arrived, and its contents stand manifest. The estimate for the restoration of the Blessed House was reviewed and found most agreeable. Through the honored Mí‘már-Báshí see to all the details and assemble the necessary provisions. In this task, the Mí‘már-Báshí must exert his utmost and of a certainty must ensure that the construction does not deviate by so much as a hair's breadth from the original design, layout, architecture, and dimensions. The building must be raised in the utmost refinement, beauty, and solidity. God willing, gradually the required funds will be sent. Now you must busy yourself with organizing the construction materials. Within a month, a sum will be forwarded. Report very frequently on progress, as this Servant, placing His reliance in God, will be able to facilitate all difficulties. Not a minute's delay is permitted. Be assured. I beseech God that I may not fail in my duties and may be rendered triumphant.

Praise and salutation rest upon thee.

‘A ‘A.³⁰⁴

Upon consideration of these Tablets and oft-repeated exhortations on the Mí‘már-Báshí to undertake this trust—a task requiring the utmost diligence, the greatest attention, and highest urgency—my father instructed [p.470]

³⁰³ INBMC 52:322–23, no. 360.

³⁰⁴ INBMC 52:321–22, no. 359.

me to invite several of the more experienced believers to the Blessed House to ponder these divine injunctions and consult on ways for the construction work to commence. This servant invited the following nine believers: my maternal uncle, Áqá Siyyid Husayn Afnán; ‘Andalíb; the Prince Muhammad-Husayn Mírzá, the Mu’ayyadu’s-Saltanih; Áqá Ja‘far-Qulí Khán Amír-Panjih [the regiment commander]; Colonel Ahmad-Qulí Khán; Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Muhammad Khán, the Muvaqqari’d-Dawlih; the Prince Muhib-‘Alí Mírzá; Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán; and Mírzá Áqá Mí‘már-Báshí.

As the Afnán had instructed, the named personages assembled in the Blessed House and read the received Tablets. After tea and sherbet were served, consultation commenced, and each person presented his views, spoke in a different manner, and commented as he wished. The Muvaqqari’d-Dawlih stated, “This undertaking is untimely, as the troubles in Isfahán and Yazd have not subsided and the blood of the martyrs is still fresh on the soil of Yazd.” Áqá Ja‘far-Qulí Khán added, “The episode of Isfahán and the [Russian] Consulate building is still current among people, and it is likely that the reconstruction of the Blessed House would likewise precipitate turmoil in Shíráz.” Others articulated similar views and supported the same sentiments.

The Prince Mu’ayyadu’s-Saltanih, however, commented, “In this regard, we must first ascertain the views of the Afnán.” Collectively, they asked him for his opinion, and the Afnán stated, “I submit to you that ijtihád [religious deduction] in the presence of an explicit text is wrong. [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] has written, ‘A moment’s hesitation is not permitted.’ He is the Head of the Faith and the all-encompassing fashioner of events. He knows best when to build and when to destroy. No need for us to express views or to put forth an opinion when His command is made known and stands manifest. He has written, ‘Of a certainty, commence this task, and do not wait for funds, as they will arrive.’³⁰⁵ Therefore, my vote is to act consonant with His instructions since we are servants and He is the Master. Servants’ views are unimportant when the Master has spoken.”

The Prince [Mu’ayyadu’s-Saltanih] exclaimed his praise and said, “I am in full accord with the judgment of the honored Afnán. There is wisdom in this undertaking that we are unaware of, but known to the Head of

³⁰⁵ This sentence represents the Afnán’s summary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s comments and is not an exact quotation.

the Faith. Therefore, let us commence the construction work.” Others said no more and only expressed their consent that the Beloved’s command must be carried out. The assemblage resolved that on 14 Jamádíu’l-Avval [8 August 1903], that is, nine days after the celebration of the Declaration [of the Báb], the Mí‘már-Báshí was to bring his laborers and construction workers, and to start the restoration in whatever manner the Afnán might instruct, since ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wished to return the House to its original design, without any addition or alterations, rebuilt with the utmost delicacy, deliberation, purity, and firmness, and none besides the Afnán knew the previous design from the time of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb].

The Start of Construction

On the appointed day, the honored Mí‘már-Báshí together with his crew arrived, and the work was inaugurated. With great haste and in full accord with [my father’s] instructions, the construction progressed, and each day some fifty or sixty laborers, workers, and carpenters were busy in the Blessed House with various tasks.

Within two months, the main structure of the House was raised in the same manner as in the original design, as called for by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.³⁰⁶ Both the overall layout and the details were in exact conformity with

³⁰⁶ The following Tablet speaks to the need to maintain the original design of the House of the Báb (INBMC 52:360–61, no. 406):

Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Buzurg and the honored Áqá Mírzá Habíb, upon both rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

O twin offshoots of the sanctified Tree! Thy letters arrived, but response was delayed due to a severe illness that rendered writing impossible; of a certainty, you will forgive this delay. The equivalent of one hundred French Lire [*sic*] was sent a month ago for the purpose of the restoration of the House. Also concerning the receipts that you had asked, even though they were sent previously, apparently they have gone astray, and therefore a second copy is sent herewith.

Pertaining to the House [of the Báb] you had asked a number of questions, but know that these are all unnecessary. Follow what has been conveyed previously, and do not deviate at all from the original design. The purpose is not decoration, but to maintain the identical form and condition of the Blessed House during the days of the Exalted Beauty, the Primal Point—may my spirit be a sacrifice unto Him. This is critical. Otherwise, of a certainty, it is befitting to raise it by bricks of gold, silver, and the finest jewels; nay, it is far worthier than this! You must keep this in mind. The intent is for the architecture to remain as before, and the same applies to the paint, the door, and other details. . . .

the initial plan. A complete progress report was sent to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence, noting that construction was being carried out following the original architecture and arrangement. After the receipt of this missive, the following exalted Tablet was revealed in honor of the Afnán showering him with infinite favors. The text is as follows:

[p.475] Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Áqá, upon him rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God!

O thou exalted offshoot of the divine Tree! What thou didst write was received and perused. Render thanks unto God that thou wert commissioned to raise the splendid House. Appreciate thou well the sacredness of this bounty! By God besides Whom there is none other god, the celestial dwellers and the denizens of the Concourse on High are calling out, “Blessed art thou!” and cry forth, “Happy art thou! Happy art thou!”

What the friends have contributed toward the restoration of the Blessed House is most acceptable and pleasing, and henceforth should anyone earnestly contribute toward that Sanctified Edifice, accept and record the same.

Although at the present the horizon of the world of humanity is dark with turmoil, its foundation shaken to its core, the portals of hardship and trials flung wide open, and the tempests of ordeals and difficulties most evident, it is precisely in such a convulsive state that the reconstruction of the renowned House must be carried out, as it will bring joy and comfort to every desolate heart. During times of safety and tranquility, anyone can achieve anything. But at the time of severe tempests and storms, faced with blasts of snow and blizzards, thunder and lightning from every direction, and mighty tornadoes and cyclones—amidst such great calamities and hurricanes for the captain to raise sail in the heart of the vast deep is proof of great courage. Otherwise, at a time when the sea is calm, the lowliest of seamen can raise sail and guide the ship! And this is but one of the favors of the Merciful and Compassionate Lord.

‘A ‘A.³⁰⁷

The Passing of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri’ d-Dín

In the month of Rajab [September 1903], the Afnán grew ill, and gradually the illness worsened to the point that he had to remain in bed. Initially, his physician was Mírzá ‘Abdu’lláh Rahmat, but later he recommended the care of Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí Khán, the Masíhu’ d-Dawlih. The condi-

³⁰⁷ INBMC 52:323, no. 361.

tion of the Afnán however, continued to deteriorate day-by-day, and the Masíhu'd-Dawliḥ became discouraged and for a few days did not visit. His attendant—a man bent on malice and enmity—noised abroad among the people, “The chief of the Bábís, who lives in the Shamshírgarhá street, is ill, and my master, who is his physician, has said he will expire any day.” This was meant as a signal to the rabble to commence mischief and injury. Gradually, the same whispers reached our neighbors, and they too started trouble and insults. We also heard reports from various directions that the shopkeepers in the nearby bazaar were saying, “At the time of Áqá Mírzá Áqá’s death we must not remain passive.”

This servant therefore concluded that our foes were making plans to uproot us, and as such I informed both the Prince Mu’ayyad [u’s-Saltaniḥ] and Áqá Ja’far-Qulí Khán.³⁰⁸ The latter assigned several of his esteemed men, who were also Bahá’ís, to quietly come and spend the nights in the residence adjacent to the House of the Báb. Moreover, the Mu’ayyadu’s-Saltaniḥ informed Habíbu’lláh Khán Bíglar-Baykí, “Áqá Mírzá Áqá is ill and is likely to pass away soon. The rabble is scheming to cause mischief and difficulties. As the city’s Kalántar, you must certainly prevent these lewd elements from achieving their wicked purpose.”

On hearing this, Habíbu’lláh Khán sent word to me through Mírzá Muhammad-Ja’far Khán, “Whatever is your wish, I stand ready to assist. The local Kad-Khudá and chieftain have been told, when needed and you are ready, to aid in the befitting transfer of the corpse to the cemetery.” Noting his cooperation and cordiality, this servant expressed gratitude and continued to manage affairs. Several devoted and dutiful believers were selected to help during this period. They were: Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Ja’far Khán; Mírzá ‘Alí-Muhammad Khán; Mírzá Lutfu’lláh Khán, the Khádim-Báshí; Mírzá ‘Alí-Ridá Khán; Mírzá Asadu’lláh Khán Tirmih-Dúz [the silk-weaver]; Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Sádiq Khabbáz [the baker]; Mírzá Shukru’lláh Jahrumí; [and] Áqá Mírzá Yahyá Khán. These honored personages assembled full of appreciation and earnestness and ready for service.

[p.480]

Through our consultations it was determined that it would be best not to organize a memorial service in the streets [as was customary], but rather to have the gathering and soothsaying session in one of the homes. For this purpose, we chose the house of Hájí Mírzá Abú’l-Qásim<11>, my

³⁰⁸ A Bahá’í who ranked as the Amír-Panjih and commanded the armed forces of Fárs.

maternal grandfather. The house partly belonged to my mother. All the necessary provisions for a memorial service were sent there.

With humility, submissiveness, and while uttering the Holy Verses, on Monday, 26 Sha‘bán AH 1321 [17 November 1903], the spirit of that essence of being [Núri‘d-Dín] ascended to the Exalted Horizon and Abhá Kingdom. During the entire sixty-two years that he spent on this dark plane of dust, he tasted from foes and enemies naught save insult and injury, trials and tribulations in the path of this wondrous Faith. And yet, he hastened to his immortal abode thoroughly resigned and filled with joy and ecstasy.

The appointed friends gathered to assist with the burial arrangements. Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Ja‘far Khán, who was assigned by Áqá Habíbu‘lláh Bíglar-Baykí, instructed several of the farrashes of the latter to guard the vicinity of the House. It was three hours into the night when the luminous remains were circumambulated around the Blessed House of the Báb and then moved to the Hammám Gul-Dastih in the same neighborhood for ritual ablutions and the performance of other rites in accordance with Bahá‘í precepts.³⁰⁹ That night, his remains were interred by the entrance of the Shrine of Siyyid Mír Ahmad Sháh-Chiráq. . . . About seven hours into the night, the burial ceremony was completed, and together with my brothers and all the friends we returned to the Blessed House and spent the night in mourning.

In the morning, a number of divine friends joined us in the House so together we could proceed to the house of the late Hájí [Abú‘l-Qásim]. However, my maternal uncle, Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn Afnán<37>, arrived and informed us that there was much tumult in the bazaar and the streets, and the mob was plotting mischief, so that it was unwise to hold the prayer vigils in the Hájí’s house. I was perplexed as to what to do when he suggested that it was best to convene the prayer meetings in the Blessed House of the Báb and the adjacent homes. The friends who were there for assistance immediately responded favorably to this suggestion and said, “We will quickly clean the second floor of the Blessed House from all the construction debris and will furnish it properly.” Meanwhile, the Mu‘arrif-Báshí [the public-announcer] arrived and was told to inform the believers and other citizens that the commemorative meetings would be held in the Blessed House.

³⁰⁹ Bahá‘í rituals for preparation of the dead and burial are provided by Bahá‘u‘lláh in the *Kitáb-i Aqdas*.

The believers began to clean the House when, in accordance to their everyday practice, all the laborers, carpenters, and other workers arrived and on hearing what had transpired, although they were not Bahá'ís, most selflessly began to help to clean the House. Within two hours the entire Blessed House was cleared of all the construction materials and was completely furnished. In addition, tea, coffee, sherbet, and other refreshments were ready for the visitors.

As was customary, the Mu'arrif-Báshí invited the Qur'án reciters, who arrived and began chanting Sacred Verses. For three days, the believers and other friends from all strata of the community would visit and share in the prayer vigils.

It was customary that on such occasions an important person would come on the third day and conclude the prayer gathering. As such, on the final day, in company of a number of ministers and farrashes, Áqá Mírzá Ibráhím Khán, the eldest son of the Áqá Habíbu'lláh Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk [IV], arrived and ceremoniously concluded the commemorative prayer vigils. The fact that such dignitaries came for this purpose left many of the nonbelievers wonder-struck. [p.485]

This third day of the memorial meeting coincided with the 28 Sha'bán [19 November 1903], which was the anniversary of the martyrdom of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb], and the sound of mourning and lamentation was raised high from the Blessed House and the adjacent homes.

Much wisdom was concealed and enshrined in the way that this memorial service unfolded, and it only gradually became apparent. For instance, previously the non-Bahá'ís had all manner of thoughts about the reconstruction of the Blessed House and had allowed their imaginations to run wild in this regard. They had wondered what construction was taking place in such small dwelling and what purpose it was to serve. However, when they came [for the services], they saw that their previous notions were wrong and that their imaginations had led them astray, and realized that it was only a simple House. The other misconception was that they never thought we would be in a position to associate with the most prominent and influential citizens of the community, including many among the wealthy and the merchants.

Through this incident, they grew cognizant of the majesty of the Cause and the great influence of the Blessed House, and their eyes and ears were filled with this. Therefore, much talk and plans for mischief were discarded, nor were unseemly remarks uttered in secret about the House or these servants, now spoken after these events. In fact, in contrast to

the past, the public exerted itself to associate [with Bahá'ís] and to show them respect.³¹⁰

The period of the Afnán's illness until his passing was about forty-five days. After the conclusion of the memorial services, the news of his death and a list of all those who had served during this ordeal were sent to the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. After a month, a number of Tablets were revealed as a bounty on the friends as well as a Visitation Tablet in remembrance of the Afnán. These Tablets tell of the services and the station of that devoted servant of His Threshold. The text of that Visitation Tablet is included in these pages so that the divine friends would perceive the meaning of: "Whoever takes a step in My direction, that effort will never dissipate."

Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Buzurg and Áqá Mírzá Habíb, upon them rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

Visitation Tablet for him who attained the exalted paradise, the illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Áqá, upon him be the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

The perfumed fragrances wafted from the celestial and glorious paradise, and the musk-laden breezes of the divine and heavenly concourse rest upon thy resplendent resting-place and thy renowned shrine, O thou merciful twig and exalted offshoot of the hallowed Tree!

I testify that thou wert awakened from thy heedlessness and wert guided unto the path of righteousness, and that thou wert chosen and moved from thy habitation to the presence of His Countenance and wert able to perceive the Days of thy Lord. Moreover, thou didst turn to the Blessed Beauty and believed in thine Exalted Lord and served thy Master in this ephemeral world.

In the path of God, thou didst sustain the darts of the slanderers and suffered the oppression of the enemies and the tyranny of the foes. Thou didst migrate forth from thy native home unto the Holy Land to behold the evidences and signs of thy Mighty God. Thou didst come before the Threshold of thy compassionate Lord, didst enter the presence of His Self and heeded His utterances from His blessed and sweet Tongue. Blest art

³¹⁰ The significance of this passage appears to rest in the fact that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had promised that should the Bahá'ís rebuild the House of the Báb, then all their troubles would be alleviated. And now Mírzá Habíbu'lláh describes that almost instantly this promise was fulfilled—not only did the attacks against the Bahá'í Faith subside but also was the prestige of the religion enhanced in the wider community through the completion of the House of the Báb.

thou for this most benevolent favor and happy art thou for this most splendid generosity!

I beseech God to bestow upon thee all His blessings in the Invisible and Hidden Kingdom, to attire thee with the robe of His favors, to grant all thy desires, and to make manifest in thee all the evident effulgence of His exalted paradise. [p.490]

Blessed is the one who visits thy resting-place. Because of thy love for the Blessed Beauty thou wert near to the Sacred Threshold. Upon thee be praise and salutations!

‘A ‘A.³¹¹

Completion of the Restoration

Subsequent to the passing of the Afnán, this servant and my brother, Áqá Hájí Mírzá Buzurg, continued to send monthly, nay, weekly detailed progress reports on the restoration of the Blessed House of the Báb to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.³¹² In turn, the sacred pen of the Center of the Covenant revealed many Tablets during this period in honor of these ephemeral servants.

From the beginning of construction to the end, it took almost two years and a few months, and throughout this period the work advanced methodically. The divine friends in Fárs and other parts of Iran donated towards the expenses of the restoration; a list of contributors was regularly submitted to the presence of the Master; and receipts issued therefrom.

When all the work was completed, there was a shortfall of five hundred tumáns, which at that time was nearly impossible to raise. However, the venerable Muhammad-Husayn Mírzá, the Mu’ayyad [u’s-Saltanih], donated this remaining sum. After the completion of work and the final tally of expenditures, a report was presented to the Holy Land, and the following Tablet was received, reflecting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s joy and happiness:

³¹¹ INBMC 52:326–27, no. 365.

³¹² Abú’l-Qásim Afnán notes: “In his will, among his children, Núri’d-Dín had chosen my father, Mírzá Habibu’lláh, as the next custodian of the House of the Báb. From that moment, a profoundly important responsibility was placed on my father’s shoulders. In the discharge of his duties and for the rest of his days, he knew not a moment’s rest by night, nor tranquility in the day. In addition to his great responsibility as the custodian of the House, he also had to safeguard the enormous collection of holy relics, Tablets, and manuscripts left in his trust. Although in truth these were all personal possessions, yet he deeply believed that all he owned belonged to the Cause in the first place” (private communication, December 1995). In a Tablet (INBMC 52:339, no. 381) addressed to Núri’d-Dín’s five children, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá informs them that a copy of the deceased’s will was received in the Holy Land.

Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, Áqá Mírzá Buzurg and the honored Áqá Mírzá Habíb, upon them rest the Glory of the Most Glorious.

He is God!

O ye twin verdant twigs of the Sacred Tree! Your missive hath been received, and the news of the completion of the Exalted House and the conclusion of the accounts hath filled me with the utmost felicity and life. The honored Mu'ayyad is truly confirmed, triumphant, successful, and luminous.

Praised be God that during such tempests and universal convulsions, when all hearts were agitated and people disturbed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, with extreme tranquility and serenity, instructed thee to restore the Exalted House, and bid the Afnán of the Sacred Tree, the honored Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taquí, proceed forth with building of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár [of 'Ishqábád]. Such tasks, which the sincere ones in the former days would undertake at a time of health, peace, and tranquility, we rose to fulfill at a time of mighty cataclysms and with heart and soul saw them through. This is naught save one of the infinite favors of the Blessed Beauty, may my spirit be a sacrifice unto His loved-ones. Therefore, in gratitude for the success of this most mighty achievement and the bliss of being able to render such a service, we must raise our voice in thankfulness to the Threshold of the Ancient Lord. Praised be God, and thanks be unto Him for what hath transpired.

The news of the illness of the mother of Áqá Mírzá Bahá'u'd-Dín brought sadness and much sorrow, and I prayed for her forgiveness at His Threshold of Oneness. The text of that prayer is enclosed. The sum of money bequeathed by that honored handmaiden was received at a most propitious instant, as affairs were most difficult in the Holy Land and the assailants most aggressive. It was given to a most deserving person in a condition of desperate need. This turn of events further testifies to the purity of her intentions.

Praise and salutations be upon you.

'A 'A.³¹³

'Abdu'l-Bahá commanded that a detailed ledger of all the expenditures be prepared and sealed by well-informed individuals, [thereby authenticating its accuracy], and He emphasized that they should include my maternal uncle, [Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn<37>]. Accordingly, an account that detailed such things as the cost of materials, wages paid to the laborers, and all other expenses related to the work of that Sacred Threshold from the beginning until then was prepared. With the utmost humility, [p.495] through the celebrated resident-believer Áqá Ridá [Qannád] Shirázi this account was submitted to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. After the arrival of our missive and accounts, and their review by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the same was returned to

³¹³ INBMC 52:356–57, no. 402.

Áqá Ridá, stating, “Return this account book to the esteemed personages [the Afnáns] and tell them that I have confidence in them. The reason I asked that an exact account be kept and signed by trustworthy dignitaries, such as their distinguished maternal uncle, is that they would have it in their custody, haply it may one day prove useful.”

It is important to record in these pages of history the text of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablet and a letter in the hand of the venerable Áqá Ridá written at the Master’s bidding, to further adorn these pages:

Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Buzurg, upon him rest the Glory of God.

He is God.

O thou offshoot of the branch of divinity! Thy numerous letters addressed to the honored Manshádí have been considered. The news of the completion of the sacred House hath assured my heart. Praise be to God that we both succeeded in this undertaking. Complete the account ledger in an orderly and methodical fashion, and obtain the concurrence of certain distinguished friends, such as thine honored maternal uncle. Keep this safe in thy possession. This is critical and will be of benefit to thee. In this regard, the honored Mí má-r-Báshí will assuredly be of the utmost aid.

Áqá Mírzá Fakhru’d-Dín, upon him be the Glory of God, must exert his best in learning the English language and commit to memory the whole of the Bible, from beginning to end.

A reply to the honored Mu’ayyad hath previously been written and sent. Surely, it hath been received.

Praise and salutation be upon thee,

‘A ‘A.³¹⁴

[The following letter was also received from Áqá Ridá:]

To the presence of custodians of the Threshold of the House of God, the esteemed Áqá Mírzá Buzurg and Áqá Mírzá Habíbu’lláh, may my soul be a sacrifice unto them.

25 Rabí’u’l-Avval AH 1324 [19 May 1906]

9

He is God.

May my soul be a sacrifice to the Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, who have remained faithful and centered on Him Whom God hath purposed.

Your august letter of 17 Safar [12 April 1906] was received on 24 Rabí’u’l-Avval, and upon its perusal I raised my voice in gratitude and praise to the Almighty, and was made most joyous by the news of your

³¹⁴ INBMC 52:333–34, no. 373.

well-being. I beseech His sacred Threshold for blessings, prosperity, health, and welfare in all your endeavors, and I pray that haply you will always be safe and protected in the Ridván of His bliss, as well as preserved from all that may cause sadness and vexation. He is the Hearer and the Answerer of the prayers.

After reading your missive and being gratified by spiritual favors derived from the heaven of blessings, I besought the sacred presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, may my life be a sacrifice for His friends, and delivered the account book to Him. His Holiness, without so much as a look, gave it back to me and said, “Send it back to them and write, ‘We know them to be trustworthy. Our intention was for this ledger to be kept safe there, since it will be of benefit to them in the future.’” In short, He expressed such immense favors and gratification about your deeds that my tongue fails in recounting them, and my pen is unable to repeat them.

Your presence is very much felt in these luminous surroundings. Praised be God, you are trees of fidelity, branches of the Tree of Holiness, and stars of the heaven of God’s love. May the Glory of the Most Glorious be upon you for all time.

[p.500] My sole supplication is that you remember me in your blessed prayers in the spiritual and illumined gatherings. Kindly extend my greetings and commendation to all the friends. They are in my prayers at the Threshold of God and in the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, where I supplicate for their well-being, protection, success, and divine assistance. In particular, I pray on behalf of your brothers Áqá Siyyid Áqá, Áqá Mírzá Jalál, and Mírzá Díyá’u’lláh who are always in my thoughts and whose presence I very much wish to attain.

Enclosed you will please find the account book. I hope that you will inform me of its arrival. Peace and the good pleasure of God be upon you.

—Ridá.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

POLITICAL TURMOIL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLT

As the demise of Qájár rule drew near, each day witnessed a new disturbance or commotion in the nation as a whole, and the occurrences of many incidents, especially in the province of Fárs. Every year brought a new cycle of upheaval, with each lasting some three to four months. The first step in instigating troubles was to encourage the vulgar and the mob elements to compose the most unseemly verses against this party [i.e., Bahá'ís] and to chant these in their street marches, giving vent to all manner of insults and slanders against this people. Rank upon rank of rogues, led first by the youths and followed by the adults, all carrying pistols, rifles, swords, and clubs, would shut the bazaar and congregate in the mosques and shrines demanding the dismissal of the governor. They would advance the charge, "The governor is a Bábí, and we refuse a Bábí governor!" Through the most horrific deeds, they would effect the dismissal of the governor [and other authorities]. And since the central government had grown particularly weak and ineffectual, it was unable to rule and prevent the mob from such disturbances. [p.501:1]

Community Infiltration by Dervish 'Alí

During this time, an insidious character by the name of Dervish 'Alí became acquainted with some gullible Bahá'ís and expressed a deep desire to learn about the Faith. In response, some of the friends began to teach him, and for a while he associated with the believers working in the bazaar. Through these contacts he learned many Bahá'í expressions and teachings, including the identity of the early believers, the martyrs, and the Letters of the Living of the first Era, and knew the membership of the entire Bahá'í community of Shíráz, young and old alike.

Once he had collected sufficient intelligence, [he showed his true colors and] quietly began to whisper critically about the Faith. Certain non-Bahá'ís capitalized on the situation and, realizing that he was a useful instrument in their designs for turmoil, further encouraged him during periods of disturbance. This unprincipled man, however, worked both sides of the fence. That is, while he was aligned with the troublemakers,

he continued his association with many Bahá'í shopkeepers of the bazaar who would secretly show him every consideration and pay him ransom in order for him not to divulge their identity publicly. This, as it turned out, only further incited him in his ways, and in fact he made it his business [to blackmail the friends].

Throughout the year, summer and winter alike, carrying a club, he would walk the streets each day: the mornings among the shops, the middays at the mosque and shrines, and the afternoons in the streets and marketplaces. Thus he would grossly insult and vilify the Cause. He would start by calling out the names of the Holy Figures in the most indecorous language, and add to it insults and abuse on the Letters of the Living and the martyrs of the Cause—all in the most unseemly language and fashion. He would continue in this manner crying out the names of contemporary Bahá'ís, and each name was accompanied by a most indecent characterization or designation. [For instance,] Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Sádiq Khabbáz [baker] was called “Umar”; Áqá 'Alí-Akbar Khádím was “the angel of death”; the Afnán was “Chihl-Chiráq” [forty-light]; this servant was “Imám Zaynu'l-'Abidín”; Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn Thábit was “the Satan”; Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Darvázih-Bán [the gatekeeper] was “the devil”; and with such labels he would identify these personages. The canaille and the ragtag elements would circle round this mongrel, pay him money, and provoke, encourage, and goad him in this contemptible behavior. In such wise he would publicly identify the friends.

[p.505] For instance, he would come by the Sháh-Chiráq market and stand before the haberdasher shop of four exceptionally devoted, enkindled believers and abuse them by name, saying: “Upon the four candles of the Bábí society, Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan, Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá, Mírzá 'Alí, and Mírzá Muhammad, be a hundred thousand curses every instant!” The rabble that circled round this unscrupulous villain would then join in, and they would in unison curse the believers.

He would then proceed a bit further and cry out, “Curses be upon the thrice ill-fated, Mashhadí Khusraw, Mashhadí Nazr, and Mashhadí Safir Kuláh-Mál Sarvistání in Gud-i 'Arabán!”

The cloister [of the Shrine] of Siyyid Mír Ahmad Sháh-Chiráq witnessed considerable public traffic, where scores of people would congregate and where many believers had their shops and bread-winning stores. Dervish 'Alí would amass an even larger gathering there and stand for two hours naming all the Bahá'ís one-by-one.

I especially recall that one day I was in the shop of the late Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim Sá'at-Sáz [watch-repairer], where believers would gather most days and meet one another. That dreadful man entered the cloister through the bazaar gate and first named the blessed name and title of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb]. Then he named the Blessed Perfection with His titles. And afterwards, Mullá Husayn Bushrú'í, the Letters of the Living, the illustrious Quratu'l-'Ayn [Táhirih], the martyrs of the Cause, until at the end he came to the believers of the present age, mentioning each [Bahá'í] haberdasher, hat-maker, including Hájí Muhammad-Husayn Bazzáz who was a merchant at that time. At that time, Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim said to me, "Be attentive as your turn will be soon." Dervish 'Alí then named my late father, the Afnán, by saying, "A hundred thousand curses be upon the forty-lights of the Bábís' grand-priest, Hájí Mírzá Áqá Afnán, and his four offspring, Mírzá Jalál, Mírzá Buzurg, Mírzá Habíb, and Mírzá Díyá', who live in the Shamshírgarhá Street and serve the Ka'bih of the Bábís!"

In reality, his introduction of the believers in this way served to let the seekers know that these men could provide information on the Faith and could aid in investigating the truth.

For four years it was thus, and this scoundrel in collusion with other base and vulgar elements would constantly heap insults on the gentle friends. Several times, Habíbu'lláh Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk [IV], who at that time discharged the offices of Kalántar and Biglar-Baykí of Shíráz, banished that perpetrator of wrong [Dervish 'Alí] as a means of maintaining the city's order, preventing public commotion, and protecting the believers from the barrage of insults. Being exiled from the city, he would however continue unhindered in the surrounding towns and villages, and soon would reappear in Shíráz. He also had taught his ill-reputed twelve-year-old son to behave in exactly the same way as he himself did in all the markets and streets.

At the appointed time though, the ocean of divine wrath billowed forth, and this man contracted heinous diseases, such as melancholy and black leprosy. With a thoroughly disfigured face and mouth, he lived homeless in the streets, and all would flee on seeing his diseased person. Even among the foes and the nonbelievers, he became an example of divine chastisement. In the utmost misery and anguish he left this nether world and was condemned to eternal condemnation. "Take heed, O men of understanding." It was never known what happened to his ill-mannered son after Dervish 'Alí's death.

The Second Governorship of the Shu'á'u's-Saltanih

[p.510] As noted earlier, because of the perpetual turmoil and disturbances, none of the citizens, especially the Bahá'ís, had a moment's peace. At nights, the roar of guns and rifles, and in daytime, the fury of the riffraff's protests and uproar of the ragtag and thugs continued. Most shops and marketplaces were closed in fear of the rabble's attacks and plunder. The 'ulamá were growing weary of the situation and indeed even sensed personal threats. They repeatedly cabled [the authorities in] Tihrán and succeeded in winning the immediate dismissal of Mírzá Ahmad Khán, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih. The latter left during the night, and affairs were placed in the hands of Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk [III]. With this news, tranquility returned to the city, and all the shops opened for business.

A second telegram [from Tihrán] in AH 1322 [1904] announced the appointment of the Prince Malik Mansúr Mírzá, the Shu'á'u's-Saltanih, to the office of governor-general, and he installed Muhammad-Husayn Mírzá, the Mu'ayyadu's-Saltanih,³¹⁵ as his deputy-governor and in charge of the city. The Prince arrived after one or two months, and for a year thereafter the city was calm and orderly; and no one breathed any discontent, all working harmoniously with one another and none uttering an insult against the Cause.

However, Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk, still harbored deep resentments from the governor's first tenure, the support that the latter had received from the Shaykhu'r-Rá'ís, and the uproars that were triggered as result of the telegraph office incident. As such, he constantly sought an opportunity to instigate troubles leading to the governor's demise and exit from the city. Secretly, he met with the 'ulamá and created favorable conditions for the renewal of turmoil and agitation.

Public Disturbances

The first step was taken when Áqá Mírzá Ibráhím Mahallátí, one of the foremost 'ulamá, stated in his seminary classes, "From what I have heard, the home of [Mullá] Mayvar, the Jew, has a taller wall than the home of the Muslims. This is against our religious law and is strictly forbidden. His wall must be torn down." Since they had already assembled all the

³¹⁵ This Qájár Prince was the powerful head of the telegraph office and a steadfast Bahá'í.

necessary provisions for a disturbance and altercation, upon this pronouncement, the rabble raised the cry of “Yá ‘Alí!” and “Haydar, haydar!” to the pinnacle of the heavens, and began to march in the streets and the bazaar. All the shops and the markets were shut. Led by wanton women and youngsters, the populace, thugs, and ruffians rushed to that Jewish home, and thoroughly destroyed it and plundered all its possessions. The governor tried to prevent further public disturbances, but it only fueled the fury. That very night, the opposition fortified all the strategic buildings and placed gunmen on the elevations.

When the governor learned that the people, provoked by the ‘ulamá, had arisen to perpetrate mischief and were about to attack the Jewish quarter and murder and plunder the inhabitants of that district,³¹⁶ he summoned Ja‘far-Qulí Khán,³¹⁷ the Amír-Panjih [Major General] of the Farydaní forces, and instructed him to protect the Jewish homes. Immediately, Ja‘far-Qulí Khán, the Mu‘azziamu’l-Mulk, arrayed his soldiers, assigned them to various posts in that quarter, and placed armed guards on the rooftops of the Jewish homes.

Led by the ‘ulamá, the mob congregated next morning in the Masjid Naw and Sháh-Chiráq, which were joined together. In unison, they raised the chant, “The Prince is Bábí, and his administration is entirely Bábí! We refuse a Bábí governor!” And in like manner, they began the most indecorous and degrading chants against the Faith and everything associated with this wronged party. The word *Bábí* and unseemly insults were the currency of the day. Climbing to the Masjid’s roof, they were crying a series of repulsive and abhorrent verses that actually made no sense whatsoever, yet each verse contained an insult to “the Bábí Prince.”

Soon, the congregation—akhúnds, siyyids, dervishes, thugs, and rabble alike—fervently raised the chant of “Bábí, Bábí!” and decided to rush forth and ransack the Jewish quarter, completely destroying the homes belonging to the Bahá’ís and to massacre every believer. The Masjid Naw was in close proximity to the Jewish district, and the Blessed House of the Báb was situated between the two. In fact, all the rooftops from the Masjid to the Jewish quarter were contiguous, and in the process, one would need to use the roof of the Blessed House in order to gain access to the Jewish homes. This rendered the position of the Blessed House precariously dangerous. [p.515]

³¹⁶ The House of the Báb was also located in that quarter.

³¹⁷ A staunch Bahá’í.

The commotion in the Masjid continued for three days, and on the third day, when the throng of the 'ulamá, merchants, shopkeepers, and the populace were assembled, the divines ordered the assault on the [Jewish] quarter and the murder of its inhabitants. The thugs and youngsters began to charge from the rooftops, and a large number took to the streets and rushed in that direction.

Ja'far-Quli Khán, who was commissioned to protect and safeguard the Jewish neighborhood, had his troops positioned in the quarter. He and some of his men were resting and smoking water-pipes on the rooftop of the residence of Mullá Rabí, one of the Jewish merchants. From this vantage-point, he readily saw the mob advancing on the quarter with great haste. He took out of his pocket a copy of the Qur'án and handed it to his special attendant, Mírzá Husayn—one of the most devoted and enkindled Bahá'ís—with the instruction, "With great urgency, reach these ignorant people and tell them on my behalf, 'I am tasked to safeguard this quarter, and I have sworn on these Words of God that I shall carry out my charge and repulse your assault. Therefore, halt your attack and do not cause difficulties for either of us.'"

Mírzá Husayn quickly reached the Masjid and came before the distinguished 'ulamá conveying the message of the Amír-Panjih only to see his warning completely ignored. Returning at once, Mírzá Husayn informed his commander of the determination of the 'ulamá to proceed with their aggression, and in turn, Ja'far-Qulí Khán, the Amír-Panjih, concluded that once the quarter came under an assault and pillage, then the Blessed House of the Báb would surely be destroyed as well. Therefore, as the throng of the ignorant mob left the Masjid over the rooftops, destined for the [Jewish] quarter, the Amír-Panjih ordered the trumpets sounded, summoned his men, distributed live ammunition to his soldiers, armed himself with a pistol, and stood ready for battle against the mob.

Meanwhile, a number of the friends had joined me in the Blessed House, and these included: Mírzá Lutfu'lláh, the Khádim-Báshí [the governor's attendant]; Mírzá Muhammad-Sádiq Khabbáz [the baker]; Mírzá Shukru'lláh Jahrúmi; Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad Khán; and my brothers, Hájí Mírzá Buzurg and Hájí Mírzá Díyá'. One can well imagine the condition that we were in and the uncertainty that governed. Resigned to the Will of God and yearning for His confirmations, we were busy praying fervently and supplicating, and waiting to see what the Almighty had decreed for us.

By then, several of the malcontent and the rabble had reached the roof of the Blessed House, stoning everything below. They were ready to descend to the courtyard and enter the House when Ja‘far-Qulí Khán, the Amír-Panjih, who was nearby, learned of their position and ordered his men to open fire. The Mu‘azzamu‘l-Mulk himself also fired a number of rounds. Altogether several of the young demonstrators were shot and fell from the rooftop into the street, thereby ending their sullied lives and thus being prevented from perpetrating any more harm in their ill-fated lives. When the remaining agitators saw that they were confronted with a potent force and some of their numbers were already shot dead, they retreated forthwith to their position within the Masjid.³¹⁸

Departure of Shaykhu‘r-Ra‘ís from Shíráz

For three solid months the bazaar, the customs office, and all the shops and emporiums were shut while a number of the governor’s supporters arrayed themselves in the telegraph office. At the same time, a large

³¹⁸ Based on his father’s recollections, A.Q. Afnán notes (private communication, August 1997):

The ‘ulamá’s other excuse for uproar and revolt was the presence of Abú‘l-Hasan Mírzá, the Shaykhu‘r-Ra‘ís, who had lived in Shíráz with influence and respect for well nigh fifteen years and who was involved in ecclesiastical matters and delivered fiery sermons. During this time, his Bahá‘í identity had been discovered, and because of his close association with the Shu‘á‘u’s-Saltanih and his direct involvement in governmental affairs, they noised abroad, “The Shaykhu‘r-Ra‘ís has converted the Shu‘á‘u’s-Saltanih and his men to the Bábí Faith.” This tumult was so potent that it forced the Shaykhu‘r-Ra‘ís to leave the city in the middle of the night for Isfahán, leaving his wife and family in care of Shaykh Muhammad-Taquí Zulqadr Fasá‘í who was to send them at a later date. Shaykh Muhammad-Taquí, who was a Bahá‘í and a close companion of the Shaykhu‘r-Ra‘ís, delivered his family to their destination, and with much difficulty procured a house for them in Isfahán and saw to their comfort.

Meanwhile, the Shaykhu‘r-Ra‘ís sent a telegram to the Prince Mu‘ayyadu’s-Saltanih and asked him also to rent a dwelling for him. The Mu‘ayyadu’s-Saltanih rented two residences belonging to Áqá Muhammad-Javád Sarráf and placed these in the Shaykh’s disposal. About this time [the governor of Isfahán], the Zillú’s-Sultán, left for a hunting expedition. However, this was merely an excuse for not receiving Shaykhu‘r-Ra‘ís, and he also asked the ecclesiastics not to visit him so that through this inattention haply the refugee would leave the city. To combat this, Mírzá Asadu‘lláh Khán Vazír, Áqá Muhammad Sarráf, and a few other Bahá‘ís prepared a tent and a pulpit for Shaykhu‘r-Ra‘ís to deliver sermons, as he was renowned for his eloquence and deductive style. After a few months, however, he left in favor of residence in Tíhrán.

During the entire course of the upheaval in Shíráz, the Qavámu‘l-Mulk plotted ways to overthrow the Shu‘á‘u’s-Saltanih.

multitude took to the Masjid [Naw] and Sháh-Chiráq and ferociously would chant, "The governor is Bábí; we refuse a Bábí governor!" During the day, the noise of clamors, insults, and invectives filled the air, and at night-season the roar of gunfire and a barrage of bullets kept everyone frightened to their core.

[p.520] Eventually, after three months, a telegram was received from Tihrán, dismissing Prince Shu'á'u's-Saltanih from office and summoning him to the capital. The central authorities in Tihrán asked that until the appointment of a new governor, Habíbu'lláh Khán Bíglar-Baykí, the eldest son of Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk [III], establish order.

With the Prince's departure, the marketplaces and shops opened, but because of the killings and a determination to avenge these deaths, an entrenched animosity between Muslims and Jews remained.

The Tenure of 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih

Habíbu'lláh Khán ruled the city for three months. During this period, because of the general and persistent disorder that had enveloped the region, none would accept the provincial governorship. Eventually, Mírzá Ahmad Khán, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih, accepted this post for yet another term of office. With a large contingent of soldiers and artillery, he arrived in Shíráz on Sha'bán AH 1323 [October 1905].³¹⁹

Since during his first term the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih had shown much audacity and had firmly withstood the rabble and the instigators of the revolution, once again he adopted the same approach. He showed no consideration to anyone, least of all the 'ulamá. He had well understood that during every turmoil and disturbance the 'ulamá were the fount of waywardness and the begetters of mischief and trouble, and that it was they who constantly strove to raise the banner of discontent and malice, and who provided leadership in this regard. Therefore, under no circumstances would he accept their recommendations or interventions and both in their presence and in their absence would speak most contemptuously of them. Through various means, he endeavored to reduce the ecclesiastics' influence in people's eyes.

³¹⁹ Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 1, p. 92, places the beginning of his governorship on March 1903.

For instance, he ordered a band to play music by the old Maydán Túpkháníh, which currently is known as the Pahlaví Circle or Bágh Millí [the National Garden]. Several cafés and teahouses were established in that place, and the concourse of citizens were encouraged to frequent the area, partake of the festivities, and make merry. He himself would walk among them in civilian garb and observe their behavior and disposition. Whenever anyone offended another or behaved iniquitously, that person was summarily arrested and dealt with accordingly.

On one occasion, I was present in the Maydán when an akhúnd representing Mírzá Ibráhím Mahallátí came before the illustrious governor [the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih]. He stated, "Áqá Hujjatu'l-Islám has asked me to convey, 'Since a number of worshipers and I are engaged in offering our obligatory prayers in the [nearby] Masjid Vakíl, the sound of music disturbs our concentration. It would be good if you could order the music stopped during the intervals when the worshipers are praying.'" Upon hearing this comment, the governor pulled the akhúnd forward and slapped him hard, saying, "To hell with Áqá for making this request! You go tell that akhúnd, 'You keep busy with your duty, and do not interfere with the affairs of the state and the authorities. You say your prayers, and we play our music!'" He added to this several of his choicest curses and sent those as a gift for the Áqá! He then ordered two more bands to join on the opposite sides of the Maydán and to play music as loud as they could!

In short, for a year and a half, he ruled very effectively and prevented the ill-intentioned mischief-makers from instigating trouble. However, since the Qájár's reign was coming to an end and from other regions revolutionary sentiments and general discontent were spilling over to Shíráz, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih realized that his efforts would soon be neutralized and that agitators would prepare the means of upheaval. Therefore, he cabled his resignation from the governorship of Fárs and proceeded to Tihrán.

The Rule of the Qavámu'l-Mulk, AH 1324

That year passed amiably. During that period, Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk [III], was in Tihrán, and the condition of there was unstable and tumultuous, as various groups had conflicting agendas and differing objectives. Every year, a new governor would be appointed for Fárs, but because of the nation-wide turmoil and mayhem, he would be dismissed from office and in a most absurd manner quit the region. [p.525]

Therefore, by then, no one was willing to accept Tihrán's offer of this post. However, Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk, did accede to this overture and arrived back at Shíráz as the new governor-general.

Upon entry into Shíráz he moved quickly to consolidate his position and establish order. He appointed his eldest son, Habíbu'lláh Khán, as his deputy, and his younger son, Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Khán, the Nasru'd-Dawlih, was put in charge of the armed forces. He further invited to the governor's office the most prominent leaders of diverse groups and publicly bestowed the robe of honor upon them. In short, he managed to completely seize the reins of the affairs of Fárs into his capable and powerful hands.

This fact, however, did not sit well with the rivals of the Qavámu'l-Mulk, that is, the Núrí family—the descendents of Hájí Amír and Mírzá Na'im Núrí, who were mentioned earlier during the course of the Nayríz episodes and the events related to the illustrious Vahíd, and who constituted a family that was most keenly antagonistic toward this sacred Faith. A deep and entrenched animosity had always existed between the Núrí and the Qavám families, and they despised Qavámu'l-Mulk's absolute authority. Therefore, they began to agitate in opposition, provoked the populace, and won over the 'ulamá and beturbanned clerics to their designs. Gradually, the pot of sedition came to a boil.

As was customary, the door of mischief was first opened by heaping insults and abuses upon this much wronged community [i.e., Bahá'ís], and the lead was taken by some of the ignorant yet seemingly learned 'ulamá who from before harbored belligerence towards the Qavámu'l-Mulk. They would say, "All the affairs and administration are handled by Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán [Dihqán], who is a Bábí and is among the chief lieutenants of the Qavámu'l-Mulk. They desire unbridled authority, and with his collusion they plan on the conversion of Muslims to the Bábí religion!"

Gradually, the standard of wickedness was hoisted, and the flame of malice and rebellion was fueled beyond invectives and cursing, evolving into beatings and injuries. Whenever any of the Bahá'ís were seen in the bazaar, without exception, they would be publicly subject to severe torment and harm.

This time the situation was worse than in previous upheavals, since in the past the principal target of assault was the governor, with the Qavám identified with the side of the populace and to some degree always able to exert influence to prevent the crazed mob from injuring the friends.

However, this time, it was the Qavám himself who was the governor of Fárs—an event not enjoying popular support—and the instigators of the revolt were the Núrí family, who from the past numbered among the most virulent enemies of this wronged party [i.e., Bahá'ís], aided by the dark-hearted 'ulamá who harbored resentment towards the Qavám. Therefore, the latter was powerless to protect [the Bahá'í Faith] against the mischief-makers and enemies, and a massacre of the community and the loss of much innocent blood was feared.

Anxious to avoid responsibility [in the anticipated pogrom], the head of the telegraph office cabled Tihrán a detailed report of the activities and objectives of the opposition and the malefactors, thereby making the central authorities aware of the looming situation. He further argued that should the government fail to quickly appoint a sufficiently powerful governor, and he fail to immediately assume his new office, then serious and grievous consequences were assured, as anyone opposing another would use religion as an excuse to achieve their purpose.

The Constitutional Revolt

Upon receiving this report and learning of the situation in Fárs, Ghulám-Husayn Khán Ghaffá'í, who was one of the special ministers and among the governor's ablest administrators, was appointed governor-general of Fárs. Since he was a wise politician, he telegraphed the appointment of the Mudabbiru's-Saltanih Núrí, who was the author of the mischief and troubles, as the deputy-governor, and himself left in haste for Shíráz.

He arrived towards the end of AH 1324 [circa November 1906] and moved quickly to seize full control. Several experienced ministers accompanied him, such as, the Mustawfi-Nizám, who effectively dealt with all the details. They were able to ensure that none in the city committed a transgression against another, and that those uttering religious insults were summarily arrested and punished. [p.530]

During this period, the incident of Tihrán occurred, and the widespread revolt and turmoil in the course of the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih's rule, then governor of Tihrán, spilled over to the rest of the nation. As Muzaffari'd-Dín Sháh was constantly ill and disappointed in absolutist monarchy, he therefore signed and promulgated Iran's constitution in order to please his subjects. According to the new provisions, each town was to elect a

representative to serve on the National Consultative Parliament, and this fact was telegraphed to all the governors and provinces.³²⁰

As soon as this matter was noised about in Shíráz, once again turmoil commenced, and people divided into several factions. One group rose in support of the constitutional movement, while another in opposition. Many diverse [political] parties were formed, including the democrats, the freedom party, the conservatives, the constitutionalists, and the absolute monarchists. Each of these diverse parties developed activities, organized meetings, identified candidates, published position statements, authored manifestos and policies, made specific promises, and forged alliances over the text of the Qur'án. Far more than at any time in the past, political activism became the norm.

The absolute monarchists would say in one voice, "All of these uproars are incited by the Bahá'ís; they are promoting the constitutional movement. Since they have suffered previously at the hand of the central government and have suffered under its coercion, they now exert themselves in wrecking the majesty of the Throne, and in the name of constitutional law emancipate themselves and cause trouble for the righteous Islamic nation, nay see to its reduction and destruction."

Conversely, the constitutionalists would say unanimously, "The Bábís and Bahá'ís are antagonists toward parliamentary rule and supporters of absolute monarchy. They do not wish to see the nation ruled and organized by a unified code of law. In the present [revolutionary] chaos, it is they who gain most by promoting their wayward ideas through the illiterate and ignorant masses."

And yet the democrats would claim, "We champion the masses who must be liberated by any means possible from the injustice of the absolutist yoke and led to the haven of freedom and comfort." The foremost enemy of the Bahá'ís were the Democratic Party, as they constantly connived to cause trouble and difficulties for this much-wronged people.

³²⁰ Some time earlier, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a Tablet addressed to Núri'd-Dín, had revealed (INBMC vol. 52, p. 290):

Praise be to God that His Majesty the King exerts the utmost patience, and with justice and equity wards off tyranny and favoritism. In a similar manner, the pillars of the monarchy and the ministers of the government will not tolerate the injustice of certain unwise elements and will exert themselves to bring forth the comfort and happiness of the people. Pray that His Majesty Muzaffar [Sháh] may prevail and his enemies be reduced and vanquished. For verily this Monarch is compassionate and merciful.

It was not long before Muzaffarī d-Dīn Sháh passed away and Muhammad-‘Alí Sháh came to the Throne [in January 1907]. Once more, the field of mischief was thronged with ill-intentioned men who persuaded the Sháh against constitutional law, and he tried to rule as an absolute monarch. From various provinces, men who were not in favor of constitutional reform were summoned to Tihrán, and each was given new orders [to combat the opposition] and sent forth as governors or other officers. Included in this was Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu’l-Mulk, who [having sided with the Sháh] was called to Tihrán, and after receiving full instructions returned to Shíráz where he formed a number of secret societies and swayed his confidants against the constitution and in favor of absolutist rule and its benefits. These activities, however, only served to fuel the revolution.

From various regions, certain agents, known as Mujáhid,³²¹ arrived. One group came from Tabríz, with diverse clothing; some others from Burújird; some from Rasht or Mázandarán; and from other places. The town’s mischief-makers were particularly joyous over these devious developments and created their own Mujáhid Society. Each of its members was tasked with the murder of several [opposition figures]. [p.535]

The ‘ulamá were also divided into two camps: one supporting the Qavámu’l-Mulk [and his royalist sentiments], while the other was advocating constitutional reform and [parliamentary] law. The sole point of unity among all the diverse groups was their mutual animosity towards the divine friends [Bahá’ís] and their abuse and insults of the believers. Every preacher who ascended the pulpit would devote his entire sermon, from the beginning to the end, to bitter denunciation, assault, and opprobrium of the Cause, and slanders and calumny against its wronged adherents. They would say, “The very authors of the constitutional movement are these people [Bahá’ís]. This is because the foremost objective of this wayward group and the principal teaching of this insidious party are to strengthen the foundation of the constitutional and republican movement. We must exert our utmost to thoroughly eradicate these loathsome and ungodly people to ensure the tranquility of the nation and protect the radiance of Islam. Should anything other than this be attempted, the peace and freedom that we cherish will never be achieved.”

³²¹ From the root word of *Jihád* [to exert], this term typically signifies freedom fighters.

Similarly, every cleric or preacher who was supportive of the constitutional reform would devote his entire sermon or homily to the destruction and extermination of the Bahá'ís. They would say, "The main supporters of despotism are the Bahá'ís. We must first thoroughly uproot them so that the absolutists are frustrated and constitutional law is promulgated throughout the land."

And when the Mujáhidíns arrived, the absolutists claimed, "Mujáhidíns are entirely Bábís!" And likewise, the constitutionalists insisted, "Mujáhidíns are all Bábís!" In the midst of all this commotion, the believers were given not a moment's rest or respite, and were the objects of attack of every party. As the famous adage states, "Harm always comes to the weak!" After the public's ears were filled with such sentiments and the Qavámu'l-Mulk's objectives became universally known, the citizens of Shíráz were divided into three factions:

- A large majority who were constitutionalists;
- The absolutist supporters of the Qavámu'l-Mulk;
- And the moderates, meaning those who had no views.

Once affairs were arranged, various coalitions established, and groups organized, Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk, made a public announcement, summoning the whole of Shíráz and every strata of society, including the distinguished 'ulamá, the wealthy, the merchants, shopkeepers, farmers and others, to a meeting in Masjid Naw at three hours before dusk on Thursday. For this purpose the mosque's courtyard was carpeted, tea and water-pipes were readied, and a number of ushers and servants enlisted. In the afternoon, rank upon rank of Shírázís gathered at the Masjid, and throngs filled the balconies and adjacent verandas, all waiting with great anticipation to see what would transpire and what end was to be achieved. After tea, water-pipes, and refreshments were served to the gentlemen, the Qavámu'l-Mulk stood to deliver his speech. In their eagerness to hear his words, people pressed closer to hear him more clearly and to learn his purpose.

Standing at the top of a pulpit made of ancient stone, the Qavámu'l-Mulk commenced in a resonant voice by first praising the majesty, the glory, and the sovereignty of Qájár Dynasty, and spoke especially of the abilities, courage, and the valor of Muhammad-'Alí Sháh. He then added:

O ye, citizens of Fárs! Unlike other places, you must be devoted to the Sháh and aid the government, and must not be swayed by insidious and evil-minded individuals. The people that bestir themselves in opposition to the government have shown their true colors, and it is known what sort of people they are and what the nature of their objectives. You must not allow yourselves to be manipulated by them. By God, I am your one true friend! The scheme put forward at present and known as “constitutional monarchy” derives from a source and spring whose provenance is known to me alone, and unknown to you. And that source is none other than the newfangled party [i.e., the Bahá’ís] who for many years have been anticipating this day. Currently, they wish to implement their true intent in its entirety. Since you are not familiar with them, I will now prove this to you and demonstrate it adequately so that you might be fully assured of it.

[p.540]

With this comment, he pulled out a copy of the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* from his overcoat and with the resonant voice read the following verse:

Let nothing grieve thee, O Land of Tá,³²² for God hath chosen thee to be the source of the joy of all mankind. He shall, if it be His Will, bless thy throne with one who will rule with justice, who will gather together the flock of God which the wolves have scattered. Such a ruler will, with joy and gladness, turn his face towards, and extend his favors unto, the people of Bahá. He indeed is accounted in the sight of God as a jewel among men. Upon him rest forever the glory of God and the glory of all that dwell in the kingdom of His revelation.

Rejoice with great joy, for God hath made thee ‘the Dayspring of His light’, inasmuch as within thee was born the Manifestation of His Glory. Be thou glad for this name that hath been conferred upon thee—a name through which the Day-Star of grace hath shed its splendor, through which both earth and heaven have been illumined.

Ere long will the state of affairs within thee be changed, and the reins of power fall into the hands of the people.”³²³

O people! Do you really want to implement the constitutional reform promised by Mírzá Husayn-‘Alí Bahá’u’lláh to His followers and to adopt His laws and precepts? Do you want to endure this regret? Do you not perceive that if you aid them in this regard, you will lose both worlds and will win for yourselves the curse of God and His Messenger, Who will thoroughly reject you? Do not commit that which will cause His Prophet [i.e., Muhammad] to turn away from you, for you to stand before Him filled with shame!

³²² Tíhrán

³²³ Bahá’u’lláh, *The Kitáb-i Aqdas*, K91–93. Mírzá Habíbu’lláh does not quote the entire passage from the *Aqdas*, and only mentions the beginning and the end phrases. However, for the ease of reference and better flow, the entire passage is included in this translation.

I have just come from Tihrán and know well what is transpiring in the capital. Today, the Bábís and Bahá'ís are the promoters of constitutional reform. All the disturbances in Tihrán during the reign of the late Muzaffari'd-Dín Sháh were at the hand of these people! Since the late Muzaffari'd-Dín Sháh was in ill-health and depressed and having no other recourse, he signed the constitution. However, His Majesty Muhammad-'Alí Sháh is against such a notion, as he is fully aware that such erroneous concept is based on Bahá'u'lláh's promise to His people! Of a certainty, you will aid and succor your loving Sovereign in this important matter.

Having uttered such calumnies, he descended from the pulpit. Present at the gathering were several of the leading constitutionalists, such as Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir Istahbánátí, Siyyid Ahmad Dashtakí, Hájí 'Alí Áqá Dhúr-Riyásatyn [twin chiefs], and some others. Unable to hold back their fury, they protested vigorously and forcibly stated:

With these nonsensical comments, the Qavámu'l-Mulk intends to confuse people and uproot the constitution. However, it is now impossible to erase this sentiment [i.e., reform] from people's mind. The tree of the constitution, the choicest fruit of which is the law, will never be uprooted! The feast of absolutists and despotism will never again be spread, and the likes you can never enjoy its corrupt benefits. No longer will you be masters, able to rule as feudal landlords where you can enslave the working masses and treat them as purchased possessions!

Following such protests, a huge uproar and commotion ensued, and it was feared that many among the assemblage in the mosque would be killed. When the Qavám realized that the atmosphere was too explosive, he abandoned his kinsmen and party supporters and quietly slipped away using a small door beneath the pulpit. When he reached the outside, he mounted [a steed] and with great haste fled to his [well-protected] residence.

Afterwards, Hájí Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir Istahbánátí, Hájí Siyyid Ahmad Dashtakí Mu'ínu'l-Islám, and Hájí 'Alí Áqá Dhúr-Riyásatyn together with the Democratic Party and the Mujáhidín gathered in the home of the Dhúr-Riyásatyn and collectively agreed, "Muhammad-Ridá Khán's speech against the Bahá'ís was based on seditious plans, and we should not heed it in the least, but must ignore it completely. The Qavám's purpose is to disrupt the constitutional process and has nothing to do with the teaching of the Bábís and Bahá'ís. He wishes to once again subjugate the people under his own vain imaginings and schemes."

To this, Hájí 'Alí Áqá added, "I know well that Bahá'ís would never interfere in governmental affairs or political discussions, much less would they agitate to sway the nation, be it toward constitutional reform or

toward maintaining absolutism. The purpose of the Qavám in his talk at the Masjid was to discredit the reformists and to turn people against the constitutionalists by associating the constitutional movement with the Bábís and Bahá'ís”

Hájí Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir noted, “And what harm is there even if it were so? For us constitutionalists, the best thing would be for the entire country, from whatever rank or creed, to support such parliamentary reforms. If they [i.e., Bahá'ís] are patriotic and nationalistic, then it behooves them to support the constitutionalist party. And if they are against such reforms, then it is of cardinal importance to thoroughly eradicate them from this land.” [p.545]

And finally, Hájí Mu'ínu'l-Islám commented, “It is imperative for all Iranian citizens to be supportive of the constitution and to repudiate the tyranny of absolutism, and this includes all Jews, Christians, Muslims, the Bábís and Bahá'ís. We must never heed the kind of calumny uttered today by the Qavám.”

When the Qavámists became apprised of the report of the constitutionalists' discussions, they spread far and wide among the bazaar shopkeepers the claim that “Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir and Hájí 'Alí Áqá are Bábís. Because if they were not, they would never speak in such a manner.”

In short, this much-wronged community was a target of both sides who would use it as an excuse to advance their own agenda. That is, the constitutionalists would say, “Bahá'ís support the absolutists,” and the monarchists would claim, “Bahá'ís are the mainstay of the constitutional movement.” And such news and proclamations were profoundly difficult for the friends to bear. The matter escalated to such a degree that they could not even leave their homes or step into the streets, since doing so carried the risk of running into one of the factions and being harmed or mistreated.

Multiple Assassinations

On Saturday, 1 Safar AH 1326 [5 March 1908],³²⁴ from the early morning hours until half an hour before lunch, Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk, met with a number of his men in a large orchard adjacent

³²⁴ Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 3, p. 401, places this event a year earlier on February 1907 when Qavám was 57 years of age.

to his private residence. He encouraged them to act against the wishes and interests of the constitutionalists and made plans for factions [under his control] to undertake various demonstrations and protests. Having completed his discussions and plans, he returned to the inner apartment of his home for lunch and, while he was descending the stairs, a certain Mujáhid, known among people as Ni‘matu’lláh Burújirdí, shot the Qavám three times in the heart with a small German pistol. Forthwith, Muhammad-Ridá Khán left this world of pain for the world above.

A huge uproar ensued in the Qavám’s courtyard and orchard, and the assassin was seized and on the spot fatally beaten by fists, kicks, sticks, and stones—and he too was relieved of the afflictions of this merciless world. Afterwards, they thoroughly searched his person to see what documentation could be found to identify the instigator of this crime, but none could be found.

Failing in their search, they nevertheless raised the cry, “Ni‘matu’lláh Burújirdí was a Bábí! The Qavám’s assassins were the Bábís! The murder was ordered by Mírzá Husayn Khán Kávarí, the Mu‘tamidu’d-Díván!” [They were placing this blame with] the Mu‘tamidu’d-Díván, because by virtue of his exceptional courage, valor, and audacity, it was well known among the populace that he was a Bahá’í, and no one doubted his allegiance to the Faith. Moreover, [it was learned that] Ni‘matu’lláh Burújirdí had stayed at his [the Mu‘tamidu’d-Díván’s] home, and therefore they were convinced that all evidence pointed to him regarding the Qavám’s assassination.

In short, the remains of the Qavámu’l-Mulk were washed, coffined, and laid out. His personal Husayniyyih was canopied, where a large mourning gathering and prayer vigil was organized with throngs of people from every class, such as distinguished ‘ulamá, merchants, shopkeepers, and other diverse groups came to share in the mourning from morn until eve.

On the third and the final day of the bereavements, approaching noon-time, all the ‘ulamá, businessmen, and prominent citizens of Shíráz had gathered for the occasion, and Habíbu’lláh Khán and Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí Khán, the Nasru’d-Dawlih, [the Qavám’s two sons] were sitting next [p.550] to each other greeting the mourners. At midday the gathering concluded and the two gentlemen rose to thank the mourners and bid them farewell. Among the participants were members of the Democratic Party as well as [the leading constitutionalists] Áqá Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir Istahbánátí and Hájí Siyyid Ahmad Dashtakí, known as the Mu‘ínu’l-Islám. Of a sudden, the sound of a gunshot was heard, and Habíbu’lláh Khán collapsed to the ground screaming. His people cried out, “Once more,

they have assassinated our master!” And with that, they quickly whisked him away over their shoulders to his home.

In the ensuing pandemonium, frightened people were fleeing in every direction and included among them were the aforementioned Áqá Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir and Hájí Siyyid Ahmad, the Mu’ínu’l-Islám, who quickly exited the Husayniyyih and proceeded in haste toward their residence. However, they were followed by the Qavámu’l-Mulk’s supporters, who bruted about that Áqá [i.e., Habíbu’lláh Khán] was shot. After a short distance, one of the Qavámu’l-Mulk’s men shot Áqá Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir in the back. He fell to the ground injured and screaming when a certain Sabbágh [painter] saw him and lifted him over his shoulders, and tried to carry him home, but both he and the Shaykh were shot dead on the spot from behind.

Subsequent to the Shaykh’s assassination, Hájí Siyyid Ahmad, the Mu’ínu’l-Islám, was chased with the greatest haste, seized, and brought back to the Husayniyyih where he was brutally murdered. His remains were hung from the entrance, and the cry was raised, “We have exacted a revenge for our master’s death and killed his murderers! Now the rest of the wayward and infidel Bábís can see what we intend!” With that, they burnt the corpse with straw and kerosene, and dragged it for some time through the streets and the bazaar, eventually throwing it into a well, known as the Qal’ih-Bandar, on the Sa’diyyih Mountain.

It should be easy to imagine the sort of tumult that overtook the city at that time and how wicked people took advantage of all these pretexts to cause mischief. All thoughts and discussions were solely on the issue of the Bábís and Bahá’ís. It was an obstreperous and turbulent period. Anyone who committed a villainous act would blame it on this Faith and its adherents. Everyone admittedly maintained that both the murder of the Qavám and the injury of [his son] Habíbu’lláh Khán were the doing of the Bábís! They even widely spread rumors in the city that it was solely the Bábís who killed Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir and in a heinous manner burnt [Hájí Siyyid Ahmad] Mu’ínu’l-Islám! In unanimity they would cry out, “The Bábís committed all these deeds and atrocities!” Thus, each day brought a new wave of persecution.

By then the situation between the two contending factions of the constitutionalists and the royalists had reached its peak and deteriorated into open murder and battle. Animosity had reached its zenith, and the two sides constantly imprecated each other. The governor reported the matter to Tíhrán at length and asked the court for instructions on how to deal with the situation. The Royal Court replied that Muhammad-Ridá

Khán's [the Qavámu'l-Mulk] sons were to be sent to Europe. Therefore, both Habíbu'lláh Khán and Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Khán, the Nasru'd-Dawlih, were sent by the governor from Shíráz to Búshihir and from thence to Europe.

With their departure from Shíráz, Fárs became somewhat tranquil, since at least the absolutists' main support was withdrawn. Gradually, the constitutionalists grew in strength and number, and the vast majority of the multitude favored parliamentary reforms. Nevertheless, the insidious elements continued to ensure that the Faith remained current in people's mind and that it was blamed for every wicked incident.

The Itihád Islám Society

During this time, the foes and enemies [of the Bahá'í Faith] organized a society known as the Itihád Islám [the Islamic unity] with the sole objective of opposing, countering, battling, and eradicating this much-wronged Faith.³²⁵ During the months of Muharram, Safar, and Ramadán, from every mosque and pulpit, they would launch bitter denunciations and engage in [p.555] slander and insults [against the Bahá'í Cause]. They taught their lads to confront the believers in the streets, by their shops and stores, to loudly curse and scorn them, and to pursue their victims with rocks and stones. The Bahá'í children were particular targets of these vicious assaults and were repeatedly attacked every time they came outside. Several despicable and bitter foes penned polemics in verse, put on the garb of dervishes and constantly frequented the streets, the bazaars, the mosques, and all the public places, resonantly chanting these poems—and in between verses insulting and vilifying the Cause—and after having defamed the Sacred Figures, they would heap contempt upon each of the renowned believers, who were named individually. Hearing such profane mocking and being the subject of relentless attacks would cause the believers to shed bitter tears and would break their hearts. We knew not what we could do to lessen this fury.

It was during this time that many Tablets were revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in honor of various friends, and in these He strictly forbade the believers from participating in political affairs, disallowed involvement in political parties, and proscribed membership in any of the factions. He admon-

³²⁵ The genesis of pan-Islamism and of this society are rooted in the efforts of Siyyid Jamálu'd-Dín Afghání.

ished the believers to dissociate themselves from any entity from whose activities the odor of dissension and disunity could be perceived. He even instructed the friends neither to attend rallies and demonstrations that could be construed as political in nature, nor to accept membership in any society, that they might remain safe and protected. In light of these instructions from our beloved Master, none of the believers attended any political gatherings or became entangled with any party. When any of our coreligionists was invited to attend a [political] gathering or join a party or in some way join with a society, he would offer an excuse and not participate—this held true even on occasions where such participation was demanded. Believers' avoidance of such activities and their lack of support for various cabals, of necessity, served to deepen people's enmity and suspicion toward us.

Meeting with a Leading Constitutionalist

In those days, the present writer had a particular matter to discuss with Hájí 'Alí Áqá Dhú'r-Riyásatyn and as such went to see him.³²⁶ Typically when we met, he would inquire about various Bahá'í subjects and tidings, and would especially inquire after 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as he was very attached to the Faith.

However, that day, upon seeing me, he inquired, "Why do you isolate yourself, avoid membership in political parties, and disassociate yourself therefrom? Is it not the case that Bahá'ís also cherish establishment of constitutional laws? Is it not true that Bahá'u'lláh in the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* and the *Tablet of the World*³²⁷ has clearly and emphatically enjoined upon Iran the acquisition of a constitutional framework? Therefore, it seems evident that you [Bahá'ís] must be more supportive of this effort than others and exert your utmost to promote this critical undertaking. Certainly, you will not be well served by your avoidance of these parties and absence from the democratically organized gatherings. You must be present and succor such efforts, and encourage and persuade all the Bahá'ís to attend as well."

³²⁶ Hájí 'Alí Áqá was the chief of the Ni'matu'lláhi mystical order of Shíráz, and Mírzá Habíbu'lláh has added the following parenthetical comments about him: "The Hájí 'Alí Áqá was a most righteous and good-natured man who had a considerable knowledge of this Cause. He would attend the private meetings of the friends and was well acquainted with the divine verses. Indeed, he even owned many [Bahá'í] books, such as *Isbráqát*, *Mufávidát* [Some Answered Questions], the *Kitáb-i Aqdas*, and the [*Kitáb-i Fará'id*."

³²⁷ Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 83–97.

Noting that he was adamant in his view, this servant replied with wisdom, “Clearly, Your Excellency is correct in everything you have stated. We, too, deeply desire constitutional reform and have no objections whatsoever to it. After all, as your own good self has mentioned, it is one of the divine promises that Iran will be adorned with the rule of law. However, as we are much too renowned, were we to participate in your political rallies, it would provide the absolutists with an excuse to discourage people from the constitutional reform and would make this fundamental document a plaything of the ignorant. That is, with our participation, you will not succeed. Wisdom is imperative under all conditions. You know full well that the Party of God [i.e., Bahá’ís] not only does not oppose your proposed reforms, but also is most supportive of them.”

[p.560]

On hearing this reasoning, he stated, “Of course you are right, and I agree too. But do your best to nurse people into adoption of the constitution.”

Formation of the First Local Spiritual Assembly of Shíráz

In the midst of all the turmoil and worries, and at the height of the [constitutional] revolt, emphatic instructions were issued from the Holy Land for the formation of the Local Spiritual Assembly [of Shíráz]—that is, nine believers who received the highest number of votes were to congregate once a week to consult on all spiritual matters and on ways of ensuring the community’s continual, strict avoidance of political affairs and membership in various parties.

Therefore, on Friday, 5 Jamádiyu’l-Avval AH 1325 [5 June 1908], the entire Bahá’í community of every creed came together in the home of Hájí Mírzá ‘Alí, known as Taryakí. The following nine believers received the highest votes: Mírzá Áqá Khán Bashíru’s-Sultán; Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán; Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn Afnán; Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán; Hájí Mírzá Buzurg Afnán; Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Muhammad Khán, the Muvaqarru’d-Dawlih; Mírzá ‘Alí Ashraf ‘Andalíb; Hájí Mírzá Husayn-‘Alí ‘Umúmmí; and Hájí Mírzá Habíbu’lláh Afnán.

The Assembly resolved to meet on Fridays at three o’clock in the afternoon at the [Báb’s] martyred uncle’s house, which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had designated as a Mashriqu’l-Adhkár. In accordance with the Master’s instruction, the late Muvaqarru’d-Dawlih had purchased two-thirds of this house, which had belonged to non-Bahá’ís, and had donated it to the Faith. The remaining third belonged to three groups of the Afnán

family: the children of Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim Afnán; the descendants of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Hasan, the Afnán Kabír; and Zahrá Bagum. They, too, had ceded their shares to the Faith, and therefore in its entirety the house belonged to the Cause.

In short, the Assembly meetings were held in this sacred location. With the utmost care, the Assembly was vigilant that none among the believers would associate in any way with any of the political parties and that the friends would avoid entanglement in such trappings.

The Murder of the Mu'tamidu'd-Díván

In that year, Sultán Mas'úd Mírzá, the Zillu's-Sultán, was appointed governor-general of Fárs. Upon arrival, since the Qavámu'l-Mulk's sons were no longer in Shíráz, he gave Mírzá Husayn Khán, the Mu'tamidu'd-Díván, the rights over the 'Arab and Khamísh tribes which had been part of the Qavám's estate. And the story of that incident is as follows.

At the beginning of the absolutists' movement, the Mu'tamidu'd-Díván was among the inner circle of the Qavámu'l-Mulk's most trusted men. Since Muhammad-Ridá Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk, explicitly trusted these two men, he would not attempt any undertakings without consultation and without the concurrence of Mírzá Husayn Khán and Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán. However, during the first tenure of the governorship of Mírzá Ahmad Khán, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih, a grave misunderstanding occurred between the Mu'tamidu'd-Díván and the Qavámu'l-Mulk that eventually escalated into open belligerency.³²⁸ The former completely withdrew from the affairs of the Qavámu'l-Mulk and threw his lot with the Qavám's enemies, aiding their designs.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was informed of this situation and in several sacred Tablets addressed to Muhammad-Husayn Mírzá, the Mu'ayyadu's-Saltanih, emphatically stated, "Mírzá Husayn Khán and Muhammad-Ridá Khán must be united with one another. Setting aside their differences and enmities, they must associate with each other in oneness and harmony. However, should they do otherwise, a grievous end awaits them both." The Master's admonishment was shared with both, but to no avail. Later, during the constitutional revolt, [as foretold by 'Abdu'l-Bahá] the Qavám perished.

³²⁸ As a prelude to this division, the Qavám subjected Mírzá Husayn Khán to the *bastinado*, an act which he greatly resented.

[p.565] As the Mu'tamidu'd-Díván was fully informed of the extent of the Qavámu'l-Mulúk's estate, he organized a large contingent of armed force and together with artillery and many soldiers proceeded in the direction of the 'Arab tribe in hope of fully consolidating the divergent elements of the estate. Informed of this undertaking, the Qavám's family, however, planned to murder Mírzá Husayn Khán.

With grandeur and much ceremony, in Rabí'u'l-Avval AH 1325 [April 1907]³²⁹ the camp moved from Shíráz and at a distance of fifteen farsang, in the vicinity of Saydún, a certain 'Askar Khán 'Arab, one of the 'Arab Kalántars, shot Mírzá Husayn Khán from behind. Seeing the latter fall from his horse, his brother, 'Abbás Khán, quickly reached him, but he too was shot dead.

A great pandemonium ensued, and the camp fell in complete disarray. In no time, the 'Arab tribesmen seized the supply of guns, artilleries, tents, and provisions. When this news reached Shíráz, a blanket of fear enshrouded the city, as everyone was deeply frightened of the prospect of heavily armed 'Arab tribes attacking the city and leaving none standing. In this fear, all were united—whether reformist, royalist, democrat, moderates, or Mujáhid—all felt the same way. No longer was anyone speaking of the Bábís or Bahá'ís. Everyone was apprehensive as to what fate awaited them.

It was during this time that Muhammad-'Alí Sháh [disrupted the reforms and] discharged his cannons on the Parliament Building, seizing and executing several of the opposition. However, uniting their forces, Sipahdár from the North and Sardár As'ad Bakhtiyár from the South attacked Tihrán, took the command of affairs into their own hands, and surrounded the royal palace. Muhammad-'Alí Sháh fled to the Russian Consulate and took refuge there. The Parliament dethroned the latter, and since Ahmad Mírzá had not reached the age of maturity, he was named the Throne's vice-regent.³³⁰ In haste, Muhammad-'Ali Mírzá left the capital.

All the ministers and governors appointed during the reign of Muhammad-'Ali Mírzá were summoned to Tihrán, including Zillu's-Sultán who was dismissed from his post in Fárs.

³²⁹ Given that the Zillu's-Sultán became the governor of Fárs during AH 1326, "AH 1325" seems to be a copyist error, and the correct date should be AH 1326.

³³⁰ Muhammad-'Alí Sháh's abdication occurred on 16 July 1909.

The Governorship of Ásifu'd-Dawlih

Ghulám-Ridá Khán, the Ásifu'd-Dawlih Sháhsún, was appointed to the office of governor-general of Fárs and with a large contingent [of armed forces] arrived in Shíráz on Jamádíy'th-Thání AH 1326 [July 1908]. He was a Turk, an ineffective administrator, and incapable of rule in Fárs. During his tenure, the affairs of Fárs were in total chaos, and anyone could commit any act he wished. The rabble and the enemies took advantage of the situation and were committing all manners of atrocities against the believers—far worse than before. With the utmost cruelty, the friends suffered great difficulties.³³¹

Not long thereafter, after a sojourn in Europe, the Qavámu'l-Mulk's sons returned in accord with the wishes of the government and came to Fárs.

Day-by-day, the believers grew in their love and rapture in the Cause. The greater the intensity of persecution and tyranny against them, the greater their unity and fellowship. Despite all the obstacles, day and night they were immersed in serving the Faith, teaching its healing Message, and awakening souls. During this time, Áqá Mírzá Tarázu'lláh, son of the illustrious Samandar, and Áqá Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar Rafsinjáni arrived in Shíráz and commenced teaching in that city and its environs, such as Ábádih, Nayríz, Sarvistán,³³² Dariyán, Jahrum,³³³ and other places, and succeeded in enrolling a large number under the banner of God's divine canopy.

³³¹ As an example of civil disorder in this period, the following comment by Abú'l-Qásim Afnán was shared for inclusion as a footnote (private communication, December 1997): "During the Ásifu'd-Dawlih's rule, Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad Khán, the Muvaqqari'd-Dawlih, occupied a senior position in the British Consulate, and his job often required him to visit the governor. One day on his return from such a visit, his carriage was attacked, his horse shot dead, and he stripped of all possessions. In this state, he returned to the governor's residence, harshly stating, 'The affairs in the province have deteriorated to such a point that shots are fired on a man of my standing, and he is assaulted in the front of the Governor's Ark!' The Ásifu'd-Dawlih replied, 'The attackers were your own gunmen instructed to kill Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán and in error attacked you instead.' These kind of incidents and incompetence were communicated to Tihrán, and soon the Ásifu'd-Dawlih was removed from the office, and Ja'far-Qulí Khán, the Sahámu'd-Dawlih, was appointed as the governor-general of Fárs."

³³² Sarvistán had changed its character from the earlier days when Bahá'ís were persecuted. By then most of the town's influential figures and headmen were Bahá'ís. The Bahá'í community of this town lived in relative tranquility and was a refuge for Bahá'ís of other communities who occasionally had to escape the wrath of persecution.

³³³ At that time Jahrum had more than 500 Bahá'ís and was administered by Siyyid Muhammad, son of Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Husayn Lári. Both father and son perpetrated great harm against the Bahá'í Faith at later dates.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BAHÁ'Í MARTYRDOM IN NAYRÍZ

[p.570:1] During this period [winter of 1909], the heart-wrenching, heart-rending event of Nayríz occurred, and the details of that incident, perpetrated by Hájí Siyyid ‘Abdu’l-Husayn Lárí,³³⁴ are as follows:

With his seat of power situated in Lár—a place known particularly for its warm [and inhospitable] climate—Hájí Siyyid ‘Abdu’l-Husayn was a low-ranking, ordinary cleric. He had built a long and checkered record in deceiving people. Gradually, he expanded his circle of influence to include such regions as Bastak, Lár, Galih-Dár, Jahrum, Dáráb, and Sar-Kúh. The inhabitants of those territories had fallen under his spell to such extent that they would consider it imperative to obey his every wish, nay, would deem his commands more meritorious and obligatory than their religious duties. In such depth had his authority penetrated the hearts of the population that if he were to declare their wives forbidden unto them, the people would immediately obey and would maintain their separation. They had noised abroad many stories of miracles and prodigies about him and would say, “Áqá, spreads his prayer mat on the pool and offers his prayers standing on the water! He ascends the fence and canters upon it like a mount!” Such rubbish had become the foundation of the firm belief of that region. They would even take his ablution water for medicinal purposes, and with colossal prices barter the same with one another. All this had enabled this man to greatly expand his influence.

Persecutions in Nayríz

When the tumultuous news of Muhammad-‘Alí Sháh’s abdication and the installation of General As‘ad [Bakhtiyári as the Prime Minister] was received, this gave Siyyid ‘Abdu’l-Husayn new ideas. Arraying a large number of armed men around him, he began to cherish designs for an [independent] sovereignty and throne. He issued commands and orders,

³³⁴ Died in 1923 in Jahrum; for a biography see Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 2, pp. 257–58.

and sent these forth for execution; summoned all the rulers and chieftains of the region, as far as Istahbánát and Nayríz, and incited them to submission and inflamed their greed; ordered a widespread jihád; seized and placed under his own rule all the government functions, such as the treasury, post office, and the police; printed stamps [under the title of “the nation of Islam”] and paper currency in his own name; he organized mercenary forces from local thugs; placed each district under the command of a savage rabble and fixed a reign of terror.³³⁵

Among this latter group numbered Shaykh Zakariyyá [of Sar-Kúh], who was assigned the command of Sar-Kúh, Ma'ádin, and the districts of Istahbánát and Nayríz. That barbarous tyrant, together with a force in excess of a thousand strong, all thoroughly bereft of humanity and civility, moved towards Nayríz. A distance of two days' journey from town, he wrote to the Shaykhu'l-Islám [of Nayríz], stating essentially:

His Excellency, the Ayatu'lláh Áqá Hájí Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Husayn has currently ascended the throne, and the constitutional monarch is none other besides him. All must show submissiveness before him by considering his every command their religious obligation. As in accord with the all-sovereign wishes of the illustrious Ayatu'lláh, I have arrived in this region today, I hereby charge you that, congruent with the instructions contained in this letter, you chain and send before me all the absolutist monarchists so that I may send them under guard to the illustrious Ayatu'lláh, the Sultánu'l-Muslimín [the king of Muslims], that he may punish them in conformity with Islamic jurisprudence.

Moreover, you are to purge Nayríz of all members of the wayward and perverse Bahá'í community.

Should anything other than what is commanded in this letter occur, then stand forewarned that I will come forth to Nayríz and will show no mercy to anyone.

Signed by me, Zakariyyá Ansarí

And on the envelope he fixed his seal, “Nasiru'l-Islám” [the defender of Islam]. [p.575]

³³⁵ Abú'l-Qásim Afnán notes, “An example of Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Husayn's savagery was the beheading in his own home of seventy-two of the tribal chiefs and the nobility of Garash, one of the dependencies of Lár. He claimed these men were the promoters of the constitution and the followers of the Qavámu'l-Mulk [III]. When this news was communicated to Muhammad-'Alí Sháh, he sent a telegram to the Nasru'd-Dawlih, who at that time was the military chief of Fárs, which read, 'Beloved of the sovereign, Nasru'd-Dawlih! Where art thou? Who is Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Husayn? All hail to the king!' Before an answer was received, the monarch was ousted from the throne” (private communication, August 1997).

Upon receipt of this letter in Nayríz, some opted to bend before his will, while others at first remained neutral but eventually grew apprehensive of grave consequences and resolved to defend themselves [against Shaykh Zakariyyá]. As a measure of protection, the inhabitants of Nayríz commissioned a number of gunmen to the Sayf-Ábád Fort and secured and established fortifications on all the elevated spots and prepared for defense. However, the residents of Sayf-Ábád were entirely in favor of the new regime, which allowed the Shaykh [Zakariyyá] and his rabble to benefit immensely from the situation. [Noting this betrayal,] some of the Nayrízí gunmen quit their fortification, while others threw in their lot with the Shaykh and led him triumphantly to Nayríz.

At the head of a large contingent, the Shaykh arrived in Nayríz and opened his hands and gave vent to massive looting of all Muslims—even the home of the Shaykhu'l-Islám. However, as the home of the Shaykhu'l-Islám and the surrounding homes had established fortifications and turrets, he decided to select that quarter³³⁶ as his own headquarters and fortress.

With much embellishment and great detail, [Shaykh Zakariyyá] wrote of his victory to Sar-Kúh and Istahbánát and told them of what had transpired in exaggerated language. Overtaken by greed, the residents of those towns decided to proceed to Nayríz, knowing well that booty and spoils of pillage awaited them. After such a beginning, he commenced the murder and plundering of Bahá'í residents and ignited the fire of mischief and fueled the flames of hatred.

Meanwhile, Muhammad-Hasan Khán, the deputy-governor [of Nayríz], fled the city. On hearing reports of the events, due to his innate incompetence, Hájí Ásifu'd-Dawlih [the governor-general of Fárs] failed to intervene, thereby allowing the flames of mischief to burn brightly.

On the Shaykh's behalf, public criers proclaimed throughout Nayríz, "Anyone submitting a captive Bahá'í, will be rewarded with a rifle. Henceforth, all Muslims are safe and secure. Our sole purpose is to slay all the Bahá'ís and none other." On hearing this announcement, the friends of the Merciful [i.e., Bahá'ís], who had previously gathered in the Masjid Jam'ih and had fortified that stronghold, retreated and fled.³³⁷ The vast

³³⁶ Presumably, a reference to the Bazaar quarter that in the 1850s served the city against the Bábí revolts.

³³⁷ Masjid Jum'ih Kabírih was located in the old Chinár-Sukhtih quarter, where most Bahá'ís resided. From the time of Vahíd Dárábí in 1850, this fortified mosque had served as an important stronghold for the Bábís and Bahá'ís.

majority of them went into the surrounding mountains and took refuge in caves.³³⁸

Bahá'í Martyrdoms

The following day, [two of the believers,] Mullá Muhammad-'Alí and his son-in-law, Mullá Hasan, were working the farm fields of Bíd-Lang, and were found and seized by the agitators. Bound, they were taken to Shaykh Zakariyyá. "We have brought you Bahá'ís!" they joyfully announced. That murderous tyrant and merciless tormenter immediately ordered their execution by firing squad. Thus, those two wronged-ones were martyred.

This incident bolstered the people's audacity, as they realized that in order to rescue themselves from the fury of [Shaykh] Zakariyyá and also win the blessings associated with the slaying of the Bábís—which they believed to be a meritorious deed—they needed to carry out his wish [and round up the Bahá'ís].

Next day, three more believers were taken to the Shaykh. However, he cunningly compelled them to turn over all their properties and possessions to him, and then they were released.

Hungry, thirsty, and filled with anxiety, the wretched believers who had fled from the city wandered over the mountains. After two days, the myrmidons and henchmen discovered their location and apprehended eight believers with the intention of taking them to the Shaykh. En route, the captives were subjected to all manner of mistreatment and brutality, to the point that by the time they arrived at the headquarters, no strength was left in them and blood poured from their ears and heads, and their entire bodies were covered in injuries.

Upon arrival, one of them asked for water, but instead the ruthless Shaykh ordered his immediate martyrdom by gunfire. In short, each of [p.580] the eight was slain in a different manner.

Moreover, that day,³³⁹ ten more believers, each in a different way, perished at the hand of the rabble. Ustád 'Alí Sabbágh [the painter] was riddled with bullets in the Chinár-Sukhtih quarters, next to the Masjid

³³⁸ According to the narrative of Mullá Muhammad-Shafí' Nayrízí, during 1853, the Bábí community of Nayríz took to mountains where several hundred of them perished in the most gruesome manner through their struggles with the military forces sent against them. For details see Rabbani, *The Bábís of Nayríz: History and Documents*.

³³⁹ The date of this event is Naw-Rúz 1909. On that very day, 'Abdu'l-Bahá interred the remains of the Báb on Mount Carmel, and the Bahá'ís in Chicago resolved to raise

[Jum'ih]. The remains of that wronged-one were burnt and the cinders thrown into a well. Mullá 'Abdu'l-Majíd, a sixty-five-year-old believer who had recently become blind, was heartlessly pulled from his home and most severely beaten. They perpetrated upon that man what no pen dare describe. At last, they repeatedly shot him and burned his remains.

In total, the number of martyred believers reached nineteen,³⁴⁰ and were I to describe the details of each, much like the first Nayríz episode outlined earlier, it would become a lengthy epistle.³⁴¹ It should suffice to note that this incident was in every way more severe, more brutal, and more harrowing than the previous episodes.

For quite a while, the widowed women and orphaned children, having lost their husbands and fathers, and having witnessed their homes destroyed and all their possessions plundered, lived in such conditions that indeed will remain a grievous stain of disgrace for the world of humanity. The majority of them took refuge in the mosques or spent [the chilling nights] in the streets or in the ruins of what once were their homes, now reduced to naught but a pile of rubble. When any of them tried to take shelter in the homes of their non-Bahá'í [relatives], they were forcibly denied. Their sole consolation was that they had not been killed like their men—insults and hardships they could endure.

Refugees to Sarvistán

For two days, innocent children and unprotected women lived with no food or provisions. Meanwhile, hundreds [of Bahá'ís] fled into the wilderness, knowing well that should any of them be caught by the rabble, their lives would be in iniquitous peril. Among such desolate believers were seventy-two who retreated in the direction of Sarvistán. What these refugees endured is most heart-wrenching and on par with the martyrdom of the other captives among their co-religionists.

the Mother Temple of the West—thus three sacred acts in the East, the Holy Land, and the West were intertwined on a single day.

³⁴⁰ The author's narrative suggests a total of 20 martyrs: two on an earlier day, and then eight and ten martyrs on another occasion, for a total of 20 martyrs.

³⁴¹ See Rabbani, *The Bábís of Nayríz: History and Documents*, and Rawhani, *Lam'átu'l-Anvár*, vol. 2.

Some of the escapees located one another in the vicinity of Istahbánát and together proceeded towards the Rúníz village,³⁴² which belonged to Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán and whose inhabitants were Bahá'ís. The village Dhábit [chief], Mír Muhammad-Hasan Nayrízí, was appointed by the Afnán and for several days saw to the comfort of the refugees.

Suddenly, word reached them from Qaytás Khán, one of the influential men of Fasá, "I am commissioned on behalf of Shaykh Zakariyyá to come to the village of Rúníz, seizing [fugitive] Bahá'ís, to send them forthwith before the Shaykh. As such, should any such person be at the village, you must see to their immediate exit so that you and I may not suffer problems and difficulties." Apprehensive of the potential consequences, Mír Muhammad-Hasan, who for years had worked for the Afnán and served as the village chief, informed the hunted believers, "Qaytás Khán is a ruthless man and most likely would cause harassment. I suggest you prepare for departure towards Sarvistán." The Bahá'ís [not wishing to bring difficulty on their host,] consented.

Even though their feet were severely injured from having sprinted [for many days] in the mountains and the wilderness, they recognized they had no choice but to flee yet again. As such, forced by circumstances, [p.585] with bleeding feet, they took to the desert.

They decided not to use the main road, as it might be frequented by 'Arab tribes and their cattle, and might cause them further trials. Led by a guide, they left in the direction of Kharman-Kúh. Still in the morning hours, however, the guide lost his way, and, deeply perplexed and confounded, they knew not in which direction to proceed. On their way, they passed through areas where snowfall had accumulated in excess of ten meters, and they had to make their way deep in ice and snow. Despite all the adversities that had befallen them, constant expressions of gratitude to the court of their Beloved streamed forth from their lips. In that wretched state, in utmost humility and entreaty, they would raise their voices in prayer to the Threshold of their compassionate God.

By noontime, due to extreme fatigue, none among them could take another step. They had no food or provisions, except a small quantity of flour. Using the brushwood in the wild, a fire was made and some snowflakes melted over a piece of clothing, and with that, dough was prepared

³⁴² The original word is *qal'ih*, which technically means fort, but in local parlance refers to village.

which allowed them to make a few pieces of bread. Though there was so very little, bread was eaten, and then they proceeded on their way yet again.

By dusk, the way [to Sarvistán] was found, and by darkness the village of ‘Alí-Ábád was reached. However, fearing the assailants, they decided to press on, and by mid-night they reached the forest in the vicinity of Sarvistán. [In the darkness,] they lost their way once more and failed to reach their destination that night. Fire was made, and they circled around it—some fell unconscious, while others remained awake due to the piercing cold.

At break of dawn, they rose and recommenced their agonizing, tortuous march. The vast majority of their group were so bitterly tired, injured, and starved that they could hardly take steps. Most had to satisfy their profound hunger with only leaves and wild bracken.

By noontime, their goal was within a half farsang of the village, and yet they were so extremely tired and famished that they could not travel this short distance. All fell to the ground unconscious, preferring death to such misery. Two among them, being younger and stronger than their peers, rose and, placing their trust in God, proceeded towards Sarvistán where their Bahá’í brethren resided.

During those days, the teachers of the Cause of God, Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar [Rafsinjáni] and Áqá Mírzá Tarázu’lláh [Samandari] were in Sarvistán, and the friends were filled with joy and ecstasy. However, when an ‘Arab messenger arrived from the [Rúníz] village belonging to the Afnán and informed them of what had transpired, their delight turned to bitter sorrow. Quickly they exerted themselves to gather all the necessary provisions so that upon the arrival of their wronged brethren, they might be welcomed befittingly. It was then that the two young refugees arrived and informed them of the occurrences and the condition of the remaining party.

Immediately, food and carriages were gathered and a large contingent of the friends taken to the spot where the persecuted believers had fallen unconscious. Seeing them in that state and at the door of death, the Sarvistánis cried bitterly over the afflictions and hardships that these devoted souls had endured. They were all fed and brought to Sarvistán.

[p.590] I wish to note for the reader that from the dawn of the Faith until the present, the Bahá’ís and the Muslims of Sarvistán have lived together like brothers and in the utmost fraternity have associated with one another.³⁴³

³⁴³ The implication of this comment is that Shírízí enemies perpetrated or instigated the several earlier episodes of imprisonment of Sarvistánis or their martyrdom.

No enmity or animosity, which has typically prevailed in other regions, is observed among these people, and for the most part, they are blood-relatives of each other. Therefore, on hearing of the arrival of the wounded and piteous Nayrízí Bahá'ís, the Muslims caused no harm or agony, nor did they proffer an insult. Indeed, very many of them came to welcome the new arrivals and dealt with them with the utmost consideration and hospitality. Seeing the unity, the generosity, and the brotherhood that existed among the Bahá'ís, filled these Muslim neighbors with admiration.

After the entrance of this group, gradually twelve more arrived in Sarvistán. They too had endured greatest hardship and misfortunes en route, and were severely beaten and injured by the 'Arabs of the desert. The believers in Sarvistán received them with open arms as well, and saw to their needs and comfort.

Return of Order

Having noted the extensive harassment, disarray, molestation, and abuse brought about by Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Husayn and Shaykh Zakariyyá, eventually Hájí Ásifu'd-Dawlih [the governor-general] ordered [Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Khán,] the Nasru'd-Dawlih, to establish order in the region and in the border towns. The latter organized a large contingent, armed with artillery, moved on Galih-Dár, Bastak, Lár, Dáráb, Istahbánát, Sar-Kúh, and Nayríz.

Proceeding with all due speed, Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Khán, the Nasru'd-Dawlih, first arrived at Sarvistán and was briefed by the Nayrízí Bahá'ís of the atrocities that had recently occurred. On hearing their report and seeing their wretched condition, he was deeply moved and lamented over what had befallen them. With much benevolence, he assured them, "God willing, I will remedy the situation."

In the company of the refugees, he then directed his camp towards Fasá³⁴⁴ and asked the believers, "Upon our arrival at Nayríz, do not

³⁴⁴ The Nasru'd-Dawlih stayed in Fasá for a little while in order to reduce the Nasírí 'Arab tribes that had been revolting for some time. It was there that through Qaytás Khán of Rúníz he received a letter written by the Imám-Jum'ih of Fasá to Shaykh Zakariyyá, encouraging the latter to eradicate the Bahá'ís. In a public gathering that consisted of all the clerics and headmen of Fasá and surrounding region, the Nasru'd-Dawlih produced this letter and asked the Imám-Jum'ih if he recognized the handwriting and the seal. To this, the Imám replied, "It is very similar to my writing and seal." Using his walking stick, the Nasru'd-Dawlih removed the Imám's turban, throwing it to floor, and ordered him to eat the letter. He continued to strike him in the head with his stick until he had

demand the return of such of your possessions as you see in others' hands. Wait until the tumult and uproar has subsided, at which time it will all be redressed." Thus the believers once again regained Nayríz and with great wisdom and tact dealt with the citizens. Soon the troubles were diminished.

Having heard that Shíráz had sent armed forces against him, by the time the opposing camp had reached Dáráb, Shaykh Zakariyyá had retreated to Sar-Kúh. God willing, in due course, I intend to describe more fully the events of Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Husayn and Shaykh Zakariyyá.³⁴⁵

Each week, a detailed report of Nayríz incidents and the sufferings of the friends of God was both cabled and mailed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence, which resulted in about fifty Tablets being revealed and sent from the Holy Land. In addition, from the Holy Land, He bestowed a sum for the relief of the Nayrízí believers. The Spiritual Assembly also wrote to various parts of Iran and informed the Spiritual Assemblies in every town and hamlet of the details. From every corner of the country, contributions began to flow [for the Bahá'ís of Nayríz], and the Spiritual Assembly would distribute these among the Bahá'í families and the remnants of the martyrs in proportion to their losses.

Gradually, the believers commenced their earlier professions and, through God's favors their businesses became even more prosperous than before, and the divine friends were more successful than at any time previously, which served as a lesson for non-Bahá'ís, although they did not become repentant.

[p.595] Praised be God at present, the Bahá'ís of Nayríz live in utmost comfort, and their homes and orchards are more marvelous than ever before, nay, it truly bears no comparison to the past.

finished eating the letter and then was ejected from the meeting in utmost disgrace (based on notes of A.Q. Afnán, August 1997).

³⁴⁵ No evidence has been found that Mírzá Habíbu'lláh wrote a separate account of Nayríz III.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

POLITICAL REFORMS AND UPHEAVALS OF 1909–10

Dismissal of the Ásifu'd-Dawlih

On hearing of the occurrences in Nayríz, the general disturbances in Fárs, and the ineptness of the Ásifu'd-Dawlih, the authorities in Tíhrán decided to discharge Ásifu'd-Dawlih from office and appoint a competent, law-abiding person as the governor-general of Fárs. Therefore, they telegraphed the dismissal of Hájí Ásifu'd-Dawlih, with the additional instruction for him to quickly depart for the capital, entrusting the affairs of Fárs to Habíbu'lláh Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk [who became the acting governor-general]. [p.595:3]

Bahá'ís in the Administration of the Sahámu'd-Dawlih

After several months, Jáfar-Qulí Khán, the Sahámu'd-Dawlih, was appointed to the governorship of Fárs and on the 1 Sha'bán AH 1327 [18 August 1909], accompanied by only seven others, arrived at Shíráz. As he was an accomplished administrator, upon arrival he rolled up the remnant of the absolutists' regime and allowed the constitutional monarchists to flourish. He announced that whoever volunteered [as a civil servant], would be hired with sufficient salaries. Many people from diverse strata accepted, and among those registering were a number of believers, either known or unidentified [as Bahá'ís]. Included in this group was the late Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Sádiq Khabbáz [the baker] who was particularly well known as a Bahá'í, and indeed his fame was on all tongues. Other believers were less known or were unidentified [as Bahá'ís]. With no exception, all were accepted for service.

Very quickly, in the [Governor's] Ark, which was one of the buildings from the era of the late Karím Khán Zand, various functions for a city-government were firmly established. One section of the building was set aside for the [civil] courts [and the judicial system]; another for the police; another for the municipality; and another for the military. The central building was designated for the provincial offices. The work of the government began to unfold in an orderly fashion and in accord

with the established laws, which everyone was obliged to follow. All petitions were reviewed [by the governor-general] and if deemed to be a legal issue, submitted to the judiciary for processing. The governor, however, closely scrutinized all operations, and if an agency was about to act with inequity and carry out an unjust decision, they were punished according to the precepts of the law. All levels of the administration were most cognizant of the need for careful expenditure of funds and had discarded the old practice of bribery and gifts. He also effectively reorganized the armed services.

The governor was particularly close to the two sons of the late Qavámu'l-Mulk—Habíbu'lláh Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk [IV],³⁴⁶ and Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Khán, the Nasru'd-Dawlih—and showed them much attention and consideration. He entrusted the former with the police and security forces,³⁴⁷ while Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí, the Nasru'd-Dawlih, was prized and placed in charge of the military forces, with the title of Amír-Tumání.³⁴⁸ The governor personally supervised the payment of monthly salaries to military personnel and ensured that payment was delivered properly on the first of each month.

The justice of the governor became renowned throughout the province of Fárs. In accordance with both religious law as well as civil ordinances, each crime or treachery had a specific code of punishment. Those having committed unseemly acts, after having their guilt proven, and upon the ruling of the court, would be forced to wear a colorful, paper hat, with bells hanging on the sides, and in such a [humiliating] condition, they would be lashed publicly. In one instance, a woman had committed thievery and after the court had pronounced against her, in accord with the quranic law, "As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands,"³⁴⁹ [p.600] four of her left fingers were severed on the public square. Such incidents served to ensure complete order throughout the region, and none dared being presumptuous towards others.

³⁴⁶ For a biography see Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 1, pp. 310–11.

³⁴⁷ The text lists the following offices: Kalántar, Bíglar-Baykí, and the Nazmiyyih, which are respectively the chief of police, the district administrator and the security forces.

³⁴⁸ The implication being that during the interim period, the powerful Qavám family had emerged as supporters of constitutional reform. This enabled them to regain their previous prestige and influence.

³⁴⁹ Qur'án 5:41.

Opposition to the Sahámu'd-Dawlih

Affairs progressed splendidly for six months, and all segments of society enjoyed tranquility and comfort. This peace and quiet, however, provoked certain mischievous elements³⁵⁰ to precipitate difficulties. From the beginning of the month of Dhi'l-Hijjih [December 1909], crowds of worshipers began to march in the streets.³⁵¹

On 1 Muharram AH 1328 [13 January 1910], ta'ziyyih commemorations were launched, and troubles were afoot. The rabble began provocation, and the wanton women and lewd youngsters joined in the incitement. They marched in the streets and the bazaar and in the name of mourning [for the Imám Husayn] would level insults and slanders. The esteemed divines organized many congregations in various homes and placed certain ignoramuses in charge of each, tasked with directly or through allusions criticizing the administration's reforms. Their intent was to underscore their opposition by insinuating that the governor [and his administration] had acted against the religious precepts and that the newly established government offices were incompatible with Islamic teachings and its sacred jurisprudence. They exerted themselves in demonstrating that indeed the real purpose of these civil improvements lay elsewhere and was inspired by other designs.³⁵²

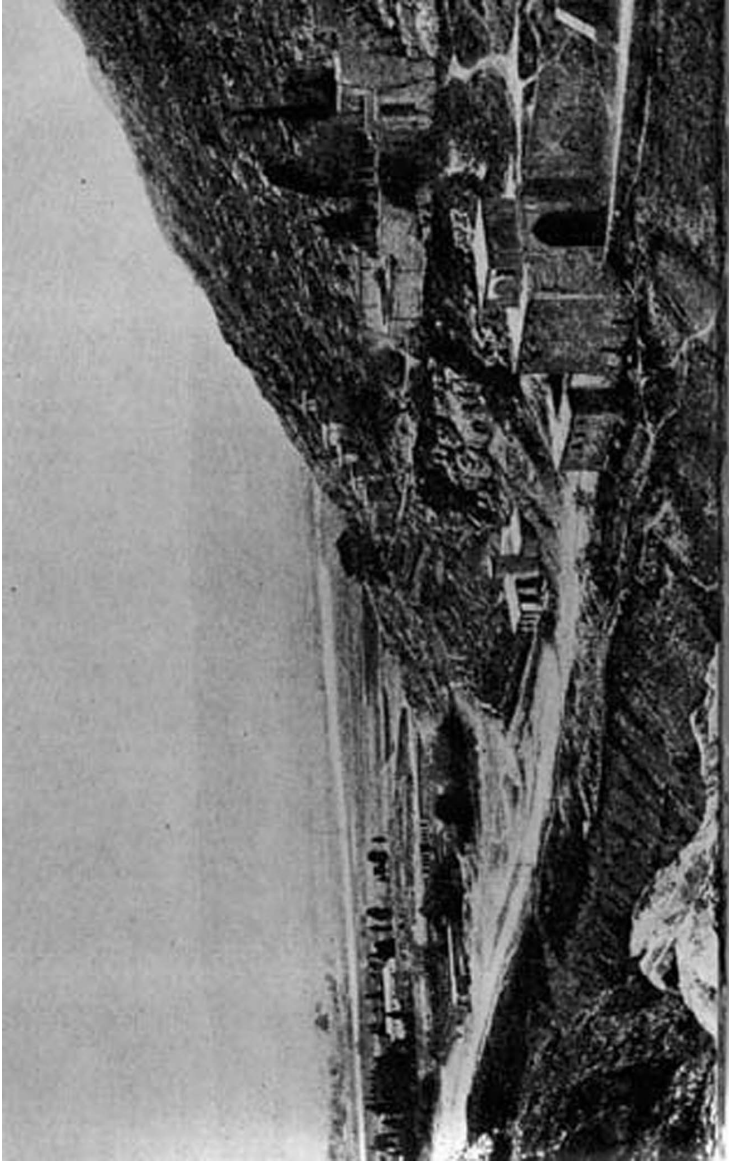
They further insisted that matters of law must be decided in the religious courts by the illustrious divines, not by the existing judicial system. Moreover, the opposition maintained, "The officials of the administration are members of the wayward and perverse community [i.e., the Bahá'ís], and the governor has appointed Bábís to all such ranks. Such a government is harmful to the province of Fárs and must immediately and completely be aborted. Further, why do we need modernized police? Security must be maintained as before through Kalántars and Bíglar-Baykís, and administered by the Dárúghihs and the local Kad-Khudás!"

[Mírzá Habíbu'lláh's narrative ends at this point.]

³⁵⁰ Presumably, a reference to the absolute monarchists.

³⁵¹ Political demonstrations in Iran are typically disguised as religious events, particularly associated with the martyrdom of Imám Husayn, which is commemorated in Muharram.

³⁵² The author's intent seems to be that the clerical opposition was implying European regimes had inspired the reforms.



Shimaz 1910

APPENDICES

MATERIALS FOR THE STUDY OF
THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF SHÍRÁZ

INTRODUCTION

Note: As explained in the Foreword, in order to provide a fuller perspective on many individuals and events described by Mírzá Habíbu'lláh Afnán in his narrative, a series of appendices are presented in the following pages. In the course of preparation of these supplementary materials, it was occasionally necessary to cite texts from the Writings of the Founders of the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths. All renderings of the Sacred Writings from Persian and Arabic, unless otherwise specified, are by the present translator. If an authorized source is not cited, then the renderings should be considered as falling in the class of provisional translations intended to convey the essence of these communications. Such summary renderings are not to be confused with full authorized translation of the Bahá'í Holy Texts, which will be disseminated in due time by the Bahá'í World Centre. Inclusion of such summary provisional translations in the present monograph is merely to assist students of history and has no other application.

APPENDIX ONE

GLIMPSES OF SHÍRÁZ: 1910–1951

By

Abú'l-Qásim Afnán

[In the course of the following essay, Abú'l-Qásim Afnán extends his father's history by providing a sketch of the events during the Pahlaví regime until Mirzá Habíbu'lláh's passing. With gratitude to him, a translation of this previously unpublished narrative appears below. Translator.]

The Governorship of the Sahámu'd-Dawlih

Subsequent to his triumphant return to Shíráz, the Nasru'd-Dawlih joined hands with his brother, Habíbu'lláh Khán, the Qavámu'l-Mulk IV, in order to create tumult resulting in the abdication of the governor-general, the Sahámu'd-Dawlih, and forcing the latter to quit the city. For this purpose, the two Qavám brothers succeeded in winning over the 'ulamá to their purpose and incited the leading mujtahids to create the conditions for a popular uproar. The 'ulamá were more than happy to comply with this request and reckoned that they could hit two birds with one stone, namely, to evict [a liberal] governor from his post and to uproot the Bahá'ís. As such, in no time they noised abroad that the Sahámu'd-Dawlih was a member of the wayward sect [i.e., Bahá'í Faith] and that he received all his instructions from the leadership of that community. Once again, the old method of using Bahá'ís as the scapegoat and the *raison d'être* for the commotion proved most beneficial, and the name *Bábí* was made the currency of the upheaval.

Led by youngsters and ruffians, the streets were filled with demonstrators who shouted obscenities against the governor and the Bahá'í Faith. They had decided in secret that the most opportune time to bring their revolt to fruition was the day of 'Ashurá and had prepared intensely for that event. Their chief strategy was for the leaders of different districts and neighborhoods to direct their march against the residence of Bahá'ís, with the crowning goal of destroying and plundering these homes. In this regard, they had particularly targeted the Blessed House of the Báb.

On the eve before this occurrence, Áqá Mírzá Áqá Hakím [known as Faríd] was in the upper chamber of the Blessed House of the Báb reciting [Bahá'u'lláh's] Visitation Tablet for the Prince of Martyrs [Imám Husayn] when persistent knocks were heard on the main entrance. Upon opening the door it was found that the visitor was Mírzá Mihdí Bávanátí—a staunch believer—who informed us that when he was passing through the city's Sa'dí Gate he had come upon a procession of mourners. From the leader of this group he had learned that on the day of commemoration of Imám Husayn's martyrdom [22 January 1910], in the course of their procession, the myrmidons of the Kázirún and Sa'dí districts, along with the rabble of Kúshk 'Abbás-'Alí and Tal-Khidash, planned to attack and demolish the House of the Báb.

As soon as my father, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh, heard this news, he sent Áqá Mírzá Áqá [Faríd] to apprise the Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih<99> of the situation. In turn, the latter wrote a letter for the attention of Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán Dihqán and sent it through the same messenger. Upon becoming acquainted with the details, that very night Dihqán wrote to the Qavámu'l-Mulk [IV] and his brother, the Nasru'd-Dawlih, informing them that rumors suggested that various religious leaders premeditated the destruction of the House of the Báb. In this letter, he asked the powerful Qavám brothers to prevent the occurrence of this opprobrious and contemptible deed. Dihqán's attendant, a certain Yúsuf, carried this missive to the Qavámu'l-Mulk's residence, but he learned that the two brothers had gone to the orchards at 'Afif-Ábád. As the situation was most treacherous, Yúsuf proceeded after them to their vacation spot and delivered his charge.

Deeply perturbed by the turn of events, that very night the two Qavám brothers returned to Shíráz and immediately summoned the leaders of the aforementioned districts. In no uncertain terms, the chieftains were told, "Our sole intention was to force the departure of [the governor] the Sahámu'd-Dawlih, and not a general assault on the homes of innocent people and the pillage of their properties!" They exacted from the assembled leaders a solemn assurance that none would commit atrocities against the Bahá'í Faith.

At the hour of dawn the following day, the Nasru'd-Dawlih, in the company of cavalry and foot soldiers, came to the district where Sháh-Chiráq, Masjid Naw, and the Jewish quarter were situated—the neighborhood where the House of the Báb was located. By a show of force, he wanted to make certain that law and order were maintained and that none dared to be presumptuous towards the Blessed House of the

Báb. He spent the day in the district and took his lunch at the honored Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih's home, which was situated in close proximity to the Masjid Naw and the House of the Báb.

Soon, processions from the various townships and villages arrived in Shíráz, armed with shovels and pickaxes, and determined to do harm. However, to their astonishment, they found their designs against the Bahá'í Faith thoroughly frustrated. It was the efficiency and the wisdom of the Qavámu'l-Mulk and the Nasru'd-Dawlih, as well as the resolute act of Dihqán and the Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih that prevented riots and protected the Blessed House of the Báb.

Not long after, the Sahámu'd-Dawlih was dismissed from office, and Ridá-Qulí Khán, the Sálár-Mu'azam, who later came to be known as the Nizámu's-Saltanih II, was appointed as the governor-general of Fárs.

The Governorship of the Sálár-Mu'azam, until AH 1330 [1912]

Before coming to Shíráz, [Ridá-Qulí Khán] the Sardár-Mu'azam³⁵³ served as the governor-general of Kirmánsháh, and his political proclivities inclined him toward German policies. In the company of a number of nationalists who were deeply against the British imperialist involvement in Iran, he came to Burázján by way of Bihbahán. His intention was to join forces with [Ismá'íl Khán,] the Sawlatu'd-Dawlih [Qashqá'í] and to form a sovereign rule in the southern region of Iran, completely independent of Tihrán's control. He determined that the main obstacle in achieving his goal was the presence of the Qavámu'l-Mulk, the Nasru'd-Dawlih, Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán Dihqán, and a few others. As such, he decided to remove these personages from the scene.

It was during this time that Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán was summoned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Holy Land. Though he personally wished to obey the Master's instruction, nevertheless, he consulted with the Qavámu'l-Mulk. Considering all the commotion that surrounded them as result of the anticipated threats directed by the new governor and the fact that Dihqán's presence was critical to the Qavám's operations, the latter persuaded Dihqán to postpone this journey and advised against it. However, it was then that a cable was received by Bashíru's-Sultán from

³⁵³ Various sources refer to him alternatively as either the Sálár-Mu'azam or Sardár-Mu'azam.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which read, “Shíráz Bashíru’s-Sultán. Immediately dispatch the director of the Post Office, Muhammad-Baqir Khan.”

Instantly, the Bashíru’s-Sultán went to Dihqán’s residence and presented him with the text of this telegraph, adding, “You must leave [for Haifa] at once! No one knows what wisdom lies concealed in the Master’s instruction, and it behooves you to faithfully obey.”

This time, Mírzá [Muhammad-] Báqir Khán did not discuss the matter with anyone, and within twelve hours he left Shíráz for Búshíhr that very night. In Burázján he happened to come upon the camp of the Nízámú’s-Saltanih and the Sawlatu’d-Dawlih. The latter advised the governor to arrest Dihqán, but rejecting this plea, he responded, “If we were to seize him, the Qavám brothers would become aware of our plans for subduing them upon reaching Shíráz, which is our primary objective, and its execution would become an insurmountable task. Further, Dihqán is leaving the country at the present and is no threat to our purposes. When the Qaváms have been removed from the scene, then Dihqán is insignificant. Therefore, it is best to allow him leave quietly.” As such, Dihqán was saved and quickly left Iran, and it was then that the wisdom of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s emphatic instruction for his immediate departure became evident.³⁵⁴

In short, Dihqán proceeded to the Holy land and met the Greatest Holy Leaf [in Haifa]. Afterwards, he left for Paris where he attained the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. When the region presented him no further threats, he returned to Shíráz during the First World War after an absence of some four or five years.

The arrival of the Sálár-Mu‘azam, accompanied by the Sawlatu’d-Dawlih and one thousand Qashqá’í cavalry, caused enormous chaos and disorder in Shíráz.³⁵⁵ Soon, disorder and disturbances spread to the surrounding towns and villages in Fárs. The new governor arrested the Qavám brothers and banished them to Europe. However, en route, the Nasru’d-Dawlih was slain at the hand of the Qashqá’í tribesmen,³⁵⁶ but his older brother, Habíbu’lláh Khán, escaped through an unfrequented road and succeeded in reaching the British Embassy, where he sought and received protection.

³⁵⁴ See Mu’ayyad, *Khábirát Habib*, vol. 1, pp. 89–90, or its translation in Rabbani, *Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, chapter 3, where Dihqán’s safe arrival at Beirut is reported.

³⁵⁵ According to his biography in Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 2, pp. 31–34, Ridá-Qulí Khán (AH 1286–1343/AD1869–1924) was the governor of Fárs from 1329 to the beginning of AH 1330 [circa December 1911].

³⁵⁶ The Sawlatu’d-Dawlih was the chief of the Qashqá’í tribe, and this assassination took place at his instigation.

The Governorship of the Mukhbiru's-Saltanih Hidáyat

During the rule of the governor [Hájí Mihdí-Qulí Khán, the] Mukhbiru's-Saltanih, no particular event affecting the Bahá'ís took place in Shíráz and the province of Fárs.³⁵⁷

The Governorship of the Farmán-Farmá

Of the occurrences during the tenure of 'Abdu'l-Husayn Mírzá, the Farmán-Farmá,³⁵⁸ two incidents are particularly noteworthy, as they had the potential to become a serious hazard to the [Bahá'í] community. However, through ever-present divine protection and the foresight of the Farmán-Farmá and Mírzá Fadlu'lláh Khán Banán, known as Hakím Banán, both were quietly defused.

First Event

This incident involved Siyyid Asadu'lláh Isfahání, who had adopted the sobriquet "Bulbul" [nightingale]. One day when he happened to pass through the Bazaar Vakíl, because he was a Bahá'í, the rabble commenced harassing and cursing him, and to wax presumptuous towards the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Being young and unwilling to bear such insults, he retaliated to their scorns, and soon a fight broke out that caused him some injuries. Under the pretext that he had spoken irreverently towards the Qur'án and the sacred religion of Islam, he was seized and taken to the presence of Shaykh Ja'far Mahallátí. After further punishment, Shaykh Ja'far ordered him confined until such time that a fatwá for his death could be issued.

At that time, Mírzá Fadlu'lláh Banán occupied the post of the first secretary of the British Consulate and was an influential figure in Shíráz. Quickly, he informed the Farmán-Farmá of the details and asked for his intercession. The governor wrote to Shaykh Ja'far reiterating that the capture and punishment of rebellious elements resided with the magistrates, and it was that office, empowered by both religious and secular law,

³⁵⁷ He was the governor-general of Fárs from AH 1330 to 1333 [1914]; for a biography see Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 4, pp. 184–87.

³⁵⁸ 'Abdu'l-Husayn Mírzá, the second son of Fírúz Mírzá, the Nusratu'd-Dawlih, became the governor-general of Fárs in AH 1336 [1917]; for a biography, see Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 2, pp. 247–53.

which was to investigate the matter. Further, the Farmán-Farmá warned the mujtahid, “Restraining citizens in your stable, as has been reported in this case, could be a serious offense, and criminal charges could be filed against your own person. As I do not wish inconvenience to be brought upon you, kindly send forth the imprisoned youth with the same messenger bearing this note so that he may be subject to the due process of law and sentenced accordingly.” Having been left with no recourse, the Shaykh released Siyyid Asadu’lláh to the custody of the official.

The following evening, the Farmán-Farmá summoned Siyyid Asadu’lláh to his office and released him to Mírzá Fadlu’lláh Khán. He further advised him to send the young Siyyid out of Shíráz. As such, the Siyyid went to India where he lived for well over twenty years. Later he returned to Shíráz and tarried there until he passed away to the Abhá Kingdom.

Second Event

Through the collective effort of Sulaymán Shakybá of Isfahán, Mírzá Fadlu’lláh Khán Afnán<171>, and Mírzá Munír Nabílzádi, Dr. Muhammad-Báqir Húshyár was brought to the shore of certitude. From the very beginning, he set out to teach the Faith of God with indescribable zeal and unmatched audacity and courage. Soon, he decided on the conversion of Shaykh Ja’far Mahallátí. He took a copy of the *Kitáb-i Íqán* for the mujtahid and asked him to produce convincing reply that would sufficiently reject the claim of the Bahá’ís. He added, “The more I consider the contents of this Book, the more evident it is that every word of it is consistent with the Qur’án and the Islamic Traditions. As such, I personally see no room for refutation. However, I would like to have you consider the matter attentively.”

Wise to his intent, the Shaykh caused a huge uproar and ordered his immediate bastinado. Afterwards, Dr. Húshyár was sent to the police, while outside the building a large demonstration by the unruly elements was organized by the Shaykh. Once more, Mírzá Fadlu’lláh Khán Banán appealed to the Farmán-Farmá for assistance and rescue. The governor instructed the police commissioner, Háji Mas’udu’d-Dawlih, that, should Mírzá Fadlu’lláh Khán come to the magistrates, to comply with his requests. Banán went to the police headquarters and asked to speak with Dr. Húshyár, who had been brought in earlier. Upon entering the office of the police chief, Banán said, “This man will be my guest this evening and tomorrow, and I will deliver him to your charge on Saturday.”

In such wise, Húshyár was released from confinement and led to Ustád Muhammad Mí'már Khayrándísh's home, which was situated near the Kázirún Gate. Through the efforts of Banán, he was sent out of Shíráz with the first convoy proceeding to Búshihir and from there to India. He was very much favored by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and according to the Master's wishes he went to Germany in AH 1338 [1919] to continue his higher education.

After the dissolution of the British-backed forces in the south of Iran, known as S.P.R.,³⁵⁹ the Farmán-Farmá resigned as the governor-general of Fárs.

The Governorship of the Musaddiqu's-Saltanih

No new problems for the Bahá'í Faith presented themselves during the few months that the Musaddiqu's-Saltanih ruled in Fárs.

The Governorship of the Nusratu'd-Dawlih

A brother-in-law of Ahmad Sháh, the Nusratu'd-Dawlih³⁶⁰ was appointed governor-general of Fárs, and two important incidents took place during his reign that were related to the Bahá'í Faith:

The *first event* stemmed from the severe beating and vilification that Mírzá Nasru'lláh Khán Ázádigán of Jahrum received in the Bazaar Vakíl, and the details are as follows:

One day when Mírzá Nasru'lláh Khán was on his way to work in the post office, one of the assistants in a cloth-dealer's shop made certain slanderous remarks about his [Bahá'í] beliefs that he ventured to answer. As such, a number of shopkeepers attacked him with crowbars, scissors, and metallic rulers. After some time, he succeeded in freeing himself and, bloody and covered in injuries, gained his way back to the post office.

This event was immediately reported to Prince Muhammad-Ridá Mírzá, the Muqarrib, a staunch and devoted Bahá'í who directed the powerful post office. On hearing the details, he ordered the immediate suspension of the postal system of the province, which was to remain in effect until such time as the wrongs perpetrated against his employee were redressed. As a sign of

³⁵⁹ South Persian Regiment.

³⁶⁰ Fírúz Mírzá, son of 'Abdu'l-Husayn Mírzá Farmán-Farmá, was an influential politician of the late Qájár and early Pahlaví periods. For a biography, see Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 3, pp. 114–24.

respect and mutual support, the director of the telegraph office also closed the doors to his agency and announced that work will be resumed only after the affairs in the post office had come to amicable resolution.

The strike at these two critical agencies caused total disruption in the province and among the people, particularly for the merchants of the Bazaar who depended on the constant flow of communication for their daily livelihood and who were beginning to feel its grievous consequences. This action was also viewed most seriously in Tihrán, as all communication to the province was effectively terminated. A large number of the residents and merchants repeatedly appealed to the governor to intervene and find a solution to this impasse, rectifying matters so that the two [Bahá'í] directors would resume work.

In response to this public outcry, the Nusratu'd-Dawlih summoned Prince Muqarrib into his presence and asked him in what way could the matter be redressed and justice be served so that the postal work could be continued. The Prince replied that the person who had committed these slanderous remarks in the first place and had caused the beating of Jahrumí, worked in the Bazaar Vakíl, and he was to be subjected to the bastinado in public so that all would recognize that henceforth none were allowed to treat government employees disrespectfully. His overture was immediately accepted and an order issued for the arrest of the villain.

The following day, in the presence of a multitude that included the governor, the heads of all the governmental offices, the merchants, and ordinary residents, the prisoner was brought to the city's central square, known as the Maydán Túp-Khánih. As the bastinado was being applied to his feet and legs, he pleaded strenuously for mercy, but Prince Muqarrib instructed a more severe beating. The captive then cried out for mercy in the name of the Monarch and the Throne, but unmoved, the Muqarrib ordered yet more intense beating. The condemned, weeping in great pain, cried out for mercy in the name of the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'án, and the Holy Imáms, but it was to no avail, as the Prince would only instruct further beating. Finally, the captive, twisting in excruciating pain, cried out, "For the sake of 'Abbás Effendi accept my repentance!" And as soon as he uttered the name of the Master, the Muqarrib placed his cane on the bastinado, signaling the farrashes to stop beating. As such, the man was pardoned publicly in the name of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and that tumult came to an end.

The *second event* occurred when the news of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension arrived in Shíráz. My father used to related the details thus:

The telegram of the Greatest Holy Leaf from the Holy Land was delivered confidentially to Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán Dihqán³⁶¹ by Ghulám-'Alí Daváchí. Through his trusted attendant, a devoted believer by the name of

³⁶¹ At the time he was the contact for communications from Tihrán and the Holy Land, and served as the Chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Shíráz.

‘Alí-Muhammad Baig, Dihqán invited the members of the Spiritual Assembly to a meeting that very day at his home. He had asked Áqá Muhammad-Hasan ‘Ahdiyyih to inform me [i.e., Mírzá Habíb] and my brother Mírzá Buzurg of this meeting. ‘Ahdiyyih came to our house and said that it must be a matter of great import because Dihqán invited us at such an early hour. We left instantly, and Áqá Mírzá Áqá Faríd also joined us en route.

During that period, through hypocrisy and conniving, ‘Abdu’l-Husayn Taríqatí had managed to get elected to the Spiritual Assembly even though he was one of the principals in the Itihád Islámí Society. Constantly, he leaked news of the community and of the consultations of the Spiritual Assembly to his comrades. Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán was deeply suspicious of him and had expressed the hope that the friends would not re-elect him, but on that day, he was still a member of our Spiritual Assembly.

When we arrived at Dihqán’s residence, we immediately discerned from his downcast condition and reddened eyes that the news perturbing him so profoundly must be none other than the ascension of our Beloved. In response to our inquiry about communications from the Holy Land, in a voice filled with sorrow, he read to us the telegram from the Greatest Holy Leaf. The state of anguish and distress that overcame each one of us is truly indescribable. Deeply shaken by the news, our sorrow and grief knew no bounds. In an instant, all His loving memories, His brilliant visage, His heavenly tones, everything that had made Him more precious than life itself, passed before my eyes. How could life go on without Him?

While each one was expressing his sincerely felt loss, Taríqatí, however, was displaying unusual distress, quite foreign to a Bahá’í way of bereavement and Bahá’í dignity. This hypocritical sanctimoniousness at such a momentous time deeply angered Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán. He asked Taríqatí to withhold such unseemly demonstrations, stating, “Now is not the time for mourning in such manner, as we must think of ways to save and protect the community from the injuries aimed at it by unrelenting enemies. Of a certainty, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá must have appointed a worthy successor for the preservation and the guardianship of the one true Faith of God. We have to wait until instructions are received from the Holy Land.” He further suggested that this matter be kept confidential until such time as we could wisely announce His passing together with the news of His succession. Moreover, Dihqán emphasized, “Care must be exercised that this news does not reach the enemies of the Faith who would find it an opportune time to once again cause disturbances and to harm the believers.” Everyone readily agreed with these prudent measures.

Immediately after the meeting, however, Taríqatí, who at the time was a superintendent at the post office, made this news known to the Itihád Islámí, and the next day the city was filled with the cry, “The God of the Bábís is dead!” Under such circumstances, the clergy, especially Shaykh Ja’far Mahallátí, Mullá Hasan Qannád, Shaykh Murtidá, and Siyyid Muhammad Faly, who were influential and served as the marja’ taqlíd [i.e., the Shí’ites’ source of emulation], saw a perfect opportunity to commence disturbances and to attain their long-cherished goal of the destruction of Bahá’í Holy Places, particularly, the House of the Báb. Also, on their mind was pillage

of the business office of Muhammad-Hasan 'Ahdiiyih and the residence of Dihqán.

When their intentions were noised through the people in the streets and the bazaars, we became aware of it as well. Members of the Spiritual Assembly gathered in the office of Áqá Muhammad-Hasan 'Ahdiiyih for an emergency consultation, and we all were bewildered as to how this news had leaked outside the community. The Spiritual Assembly decided to have Dihqán and I consult [privately] on this matter and put forward a proposal.

Dihqán was a very kind and considerate man, but when he perceived an issue against the good of the Spiritual Assembly, then he would become visibly agitated and was prone to fits of anger. I was chosen for this consultation partly because he observed utmost regards towards me. When the two of us sat down to discuss the situation, he began by shouting, "I have said over and over that Taríqatí is a conniving liar and is nothing but a cheap informer for the enemies of the Faith. Yet, the Spiritual Assembly is so gullible that it allows him to attend the meetings and to spy on our affairs!" He paused for a minute and then asked, "Where are the other members of the Spiritual Assembly?" "They are gathered in the office of 'Ahdiiyih," I replied. He thought again and said, "Notify them to come to my house [for a meeting] and be sure to tell Taríqatí as well."

Within a short time, they all arrived. When everyone was present, Dihqán powerfully addressed the Spiritual Assembly in these words, "I had imagined that this Spiritual Assembly, when asked, was capable of keeping matters confidential and had not realized that some members were such impostors that they would take the decisions to outsiders." He continued to speak with much heat and anger, "Although the Spiritual Assembly had decided that for the time being it must emphatically keep the news of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension confidential, yet that news has spread throughout the city. The mullás are now busy planning sedition and injury to the Bahá'ís. However, this time they have grievously miscalculated! This is because after 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I no longer wish to live. I will dedicate all my [considerable] possessions to combating the mullás and to exacting a revenge for eighty years of wrong that these contemptible jurists have perpetrated against the innocent believers! 'Abdu'l-Bahá is no longer in this world to bridle the affairs of the Faith and to control its members through such admonishments as, 'It behoveth us to kiss the hand of the would-be assassin and to set out, dancing, on our way to the habitation of the Friend.'³⁶² Now that with their customary treachery and deceit, the 'ulamá have set out to destroy the Bahá'í community and to plunder my house, I will not sit quietly. I will avenge the past and will ensure that whosoever leaked this matter to our enemies receives the just chastisement that he deserves! Rest assured that I intend to spill much blood!"

He then asked the Spiritual Assembly's secretary, Áqá Mírzá Fadlu'lláh, the Hakím-Baná, to send a message on his behalf to all the [Bahá'í] chieftains

³⁶² Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Shikar-Shikan, *The Bahá'í World*, vol. 18, p. 11.

of various villages that they at once send to Shíráz all available riflemen under their command. Dihqán also wrote to the following: Mullá Husayn Khán, the Kad-Khudá of Qallát; Mullá ‘Alí Áqá, the Kad-Khudá of Zákhirid; the Kalántar and Kad-Khudás of Marv-Dasht, such as Fadl-‘Alí Khán and others; and Mírzá Husayn-‘Alí Khán, the Kalántar of Sarvistán. To all of these men, he emphatically conveyed his instructions to send their gunmen immediately to Shíráz. Having signed and sealed these directives, he ordered his attendants to deliver the communications and went so far to tell the one destined for Sarvistán to convey it with the greatest haste. Of course, he was stating all his commands in the most heightened and angered voice, accompanied with repeated poundings of his fist on the table.

Having completed these tasks, he then addressed the Spiritual Assembly with the same wrath, “The existence of a Spiritual Assembly that cannot protect its own discussions is of no use. Indeed, not having one is better than having one. Given the situation, I no longer need a secretary or advisors, and hereby [as the Spiritual Assembly’s chairman] dissolve this Spiritual Assembly.”³⁶³ With this comment, he dismissed everyone, but kept me behind.

After the other members of the Spiritual Assembly left his residence, he said to me, “I meant no disrespect toward any of the Spiritual Assembly members, as my sole purpose was to make it known to this miserable hypocrite [i.e., Taríqatí] that we are aware of his two-faced activities and to force his departure from the Spiritual Assembly. Kindly convey my heartfelt apologies to other members of the Spiritual Assembly and tell them that as needs arise, I am at their immediate disposal.”

Having realized that he had been discovered and that through Dihqán’s determination his life was in great peril, Taríqatí went directly to the headquarters of Itihád Islámí and with much embellishment informed its members of all that had transpired in Dihqán’s home. He informed the mullás, “Within twenty-four hours, at least two thousand riflemen will arrive in Shíráz for the purpose of slaughtering all the ecclesiastics, members of Itihád Islámí, and anyone who has previously opposed the Bahá’ís. Therefore, it is best that for now we postpone our plans for the elimination of these wayward people and wait for another opportune moment. Otherwise, there is every chance that we would suffer mercilessly in the ensuing battles.” Hearing this report and learning of Dihqán’s resolution to use his vast influence and wealth to confront them particularly frightened the ‘ulamá, and in no time they had collectively decided to remain quiet and see what was in store.

Next morning, nineteen Bahá’í riflemen from the village of Qallát arrived in Shíráz. Dihqán instructed them to disperse in the city and purchase

³⁶³ This comment needs to be read in the context of a time when in the early years of their formation, Spiritual Assemblies typically functioned without a full grasp of the Bahá’í principle of consultation. It was only later, during the ministry of Shoghi Effendi, that the importance of group decision-making was more fully understood and embraced by the Spiritual Assemblies in Iran.

ammunition from various stores in town—in so doing, he intended to make a public display of their presence. Afterwards, he ordered seven of the men to the House of the Báb with instructions to protect that Sacred Edifice from the rooftop. He further sent five men to the office and home of ‘Ahdíyyih, and placed the last seven on the roof of his own residence. Gradually, a number of other Bahá’ís from the surrounding region joined their ranks.

The city’s inhabitants conveyed the news of the occurrences to the ‘ulamá, who, deeply perturbed at the turn of events, took refuge with the Nusratu’s-Saltanih and the Qavámul-Mulk. The governor summoned Dihqán and in the presence of the clerics questioned him regarding these happenings. Without the least trace of fear or hesitation, Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán told him everything that had transpired. He even went as far as threatening the governor, saying, “Within the next twenty-four hours I will array more guns and men in this city than you know what to do with. And then I will exact a long-awaited revenge from these despicable mullás.” The evident determination of Dihqán had indeed profoundly frightened the assemblage, and at that very instant, governor and ‘ulamá alike spoke most apologetically, solemnly giving their assurance that no harm was to come to any Bahá’í life or property. They begged Dihqán to forget and forgive this “misunderstanding,” to which he agreed.

It was thus through Dihqán’s bravery and willingness to face cowardly foes that this particular threat to the Faith was alleviated and the situation stood resolved.

Continued Agitation of Itihád Islámí Society

Notwithstanding the oath taken by the ‘ulamá to leave the Bahá’ís alone, the Itihád Islámí did not desist from its activities [against the Bahá’í Faith] and never missed an opportunity to insult or injure the believers. In this regard, one of the merchants of the bazaar, Hájí Muhammad-Ismá’il Kázirúní, was most active and in every way possible sought to harm the Cause. He was particularly antagonistic toward the Bahá’í firesides led by Mírzá Munír Nabílzádeh³⁶⁴ where this devoted and enthusiastic teacher spoke. The news of these meetings and the zeal of Nabílzádeh constantly induced the members of the Itihád Islámí to protestation and machination. Led by Kázirúní, they endeavored to raise a popular revolt in the bazaar against the believers.

³⁶⁴ One of the foremost teachers of the Bahá’í Faith, Nabílzádeh had come to Shíráz some time earlier and regularly held very popular firesides meetings at his own residence.

In those days a group of ardent Bahá'í young men, such as 'Abdu'l-Husayn Satarí, 'Abdu'lláh Madara'í, Sulaymán Shakíba,³⁶⁵ Fathu'lláh Afnán, Nusratu'lláh Badrí-Afnán, Siyyid Abú'l-Qásim Páyandih, and a few others would gather every night at the Khál A'zam's house, one of the Bahá'í endowments. Previously, they had served for many years in the South Persian Regiment and as such were well familiar with the use of weapons. They spent their time planning armed attacks on various groups of opponents of the Faith. Repeatedly, Mírzá Munír admonished them as to the folly of their designs, noting that were they actually to implement their plans, this could bring complete ruin upon the Bahá'ís of Shíráz and could potentially endanger the entire Bahá'í community of Iran. Though these young men were generally not impressed by Nabílzádi's appeal for pacifism, he had, however, managed to exact a promise that they would consult the Spiritual Assembly before taking any steps.

Áqá Mírzá Munír related to the author [i.e., A.Q. Afnán] the following:

Realizing the gravity of the situation, I went to the Spiritual Assembly meeting, which was taking place in the house of Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Khán Dihqán, and related the story and the plan of the young men. I further left my own pistol on the table round which the Spiritual Assembly had gathered. After their deliberation, the Spiritual Assembly decided to send your father [i.e., Mírzá Habíbu'lláh] and me to the house of the Khál to find a way to disarm and disperse these believers.

About two hours into the night we arrived at the house of the martyred-uncle and with the utmost respect spoke to the honored gentlemen, "There is no question that generation after generation, Bahá'ís in every village, every town, and every corner in this land have been made the target of the most brutal tyranny and the torment of the ungodly. In addition, it is indubitable that the blood of countless martyrs and innocent men and women has reddened every inch of Iran's soil. Nor is anyone denying the pain and the suffering that multitudes of families must endure for a great many years after they have lost their loved ones. However, were an armed aggression to be initiated by someone in Shíráz, you can rest assured that the entire country will be engulfed in a massive holocaust of Bahá'í-killing. Do you really imagine that a city or town would be left where a single believer can reside or remain standing? Nay, if this powder were lit, it would most assuredly explode in our own hands and can never be extinguished. The only way to survival for this community is to remain pacifist, as enjoined upon us by the Blessed Perfection. Otherwise, in an instant, we would be obliterated."

For a while we spoke and reasoned in such manner, and this helped some to grow acquiescent, but a few remained wedded to their militant views.

³⁶⁵ For a biography, see Sulaymání, *Masábih Hidáyat*, vol. 9, pp. 123–94.

Finally, your father [i.e., Mírzá Habíbu'lláh] calmly said to them, "I have been commissioned by the Spiritual Assembly to confiscate your guns and ammunition. You have no alternative but to obey the Assembly's wish." All except Abú'l-Qásim Páyandih placed their guns on the table, however, he was insistent that he would not part with his weapon. Eventually, we prevailed, and he too surrendered his gun, and thereupon all dispersed. That night, all the weapons were turned over to the Spiritual Assembly.

Dissemination of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

My father used to relate that the Master's Will and Testament was first unveiled at a commemorative meeting that took place at the home of Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Khán Dihqán. My father read to the assembled friends the first half of the Will, and the second half was recited by 'Abdu'l-Husayn Khán Dihqán, who had just arrived from Beirut. When the reading of the Text was concluded, Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán prostrated himself on the ground and then raised his hands in thankfulness to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, saying, "Shoghi Effendi is related to the Twin Holy Trees and is of the Holy Lineage. We all bow in obedience before him; we all render thanks unto him; we all show humility before him; we all believe and rely on him; and we all stand assured and confident because of him. We verily testify that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the all-knowing protector of this community, and none was nearer to Him or loved more dearly by Him than Shoghi Effendi. Before the sovereign will of Shoghi Effendi we prostrate ourselves in submissiveness."

This expression of humility and obedience by Dihqán, coupled with his act of prostration in thankfulness, had a profound effect on the friends, and tears of joy and happiness were shed on that day. That day, once more Bahá'u'lláh worked His miracle, and our sorrow for the loss of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was transmuted into joy of bliss, celebrating the person of Shoghi Effendi.

Unanimously, the gathering decided to write a letter to the presence of the beloved Guardian expressing the community's servitude unto his threshold.

Bahá'í Martyrdom in Jahrum

The improprieties in the election of the Iranian Majlis Shawrá Millí [national consultative parliament] caused political upheaval in Jahrum, which precipitated serious divisions between the two opposing factions

in the year 1305 Sh³⁶⁶ [1926]. One of the factions consisted of the followers of [Ismá'il Khán] Sawlatu'd-Dawlih, the chief of Qashqá'í tribe, who harbored ambitions for national office.³⁶⁷ His supporters launched a massive political campaign in Jahrum that triggered a huge uproar, creating a charged atmosphere that led to conditions ripe for the persecution of Bahá'ís.

In those days Mírzá Lutf-'Alí Khán, the Mudyru'd-Dawlih, was the governor of Jahrum, while Akbar Mírzá, the Sarimu'd-Dawlih, was the governor-general of Fárs and Amír-Lashkar Mahmúd Ayram held the post of military commander of Fárs. The followers of the Sawlatu'd-Dawlih in Jahrum were such individuals as Siyyid 'Alí [Píshnámz],³⁶⁸ Karbalá'í Siyyid Habíb Jahrumí, Siyyid 'Alí Mu'izz, and his brother Siyyid Muhammad-Sadr Qadr-Qadr. To divert attention from their fraud, they started an intense, brutal persecution of the friends, and in the process eight Bahá'ís were martyred.³⁶⁹ These innocent souls were slain in the most barbaric manner imaginable through stabbing, beating, and stoning.³⁷⁰

A written report of the parlous incident was sent to the Sarimu'd-Dawlih and his military commander, General Mahmúd Ayram. Tihrán was also made fully aware of these details and a report presented to Reza Sháh, the new sovereign, who ordered an immediate thorough investigation. From Shíráz, Major General Sultán Sayfu'lláh Himat was charged to proceed to Jahrum to carry out the monarch's directive and to prosecute the offending individuals.

Over the years on many occasions, the present author has heard Major General Himat describe his efforts in these words:

After the governor communicated the orders to me, thirty soldiers were placed at my disposal for this mission. When we arrived in Jahrum, I immediately moved to arrest several of the Bahá'ís, thereby winning the confidence of the local Muslims. I then began my investigation and after two days discovered the identity of the criminal elements who had committed these reprehensible offenses. Instantly, orders were issued for their arrest,

³⁶⁶ Sh stands for Shamsí, which is a solar-based calendar used mostly in Iran.

³⁶⁷ At the time, he was a parliamentarian from Jahrum, but the tide of the election was going against him; therefore, he resorted to cheating.

³⁶⁸ He was the son and the successor of Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Husayn Lárí, the instigator of the Bahá'í persecutions of 1909 in Nayríz.

³⁶⁹ The eight Bahá'í martyrs were: Siyyid Husayn Ruhání; Ustád 'Abbás; Muhammad-Kázim; Muhammad-Hasan; Muhammad-Shafí; Mashhadí 'Abbás; Ustád Muhammad-Hasan; and Muhammad-Ridá.

³⁷⁰ For some of the reports on this heinous incident, see Momen, *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions 1844–1944*, pp. 465–72.

and every day they were publicly subjected to bastinado. I also immediately freed the Bahá'í prisoners and offered them my deepest apologies. A message was sent to Siyyid Muhammad that should he interfere in my affairs, he too would be arrested and publicly chastised. In this manner, the upheaval in Jahrum abated.

Because of the intense persecution of the believers and the martyrdom of Bahá'ís in that city, the Spiritual Assembly of Jahrum was dissolved. However, in the same year, a communication was received from the beloved Guardian who showered his loving benevolence on the much-wronged believers of Jahrum and encouraged them to remain undaunted and to resume their activities. He further instructed the Spiritual Assembly of Shíráz to assist in the reconstitution of the Jahrum Spiritual Assembly. For this purpose, the Spiritual Assembly asked my father to proceed to Jahrum and prepare the community for the re-election of the Spiritual Assembly. Toward the latter part of Bahman [circa mid-February 1927] my father went to Jahrum, and during the forty days of his stay, Bahá'í activities were re-initiated, the Spiritual Assembly was formed, and various committees re-appointed.

The fire of this ordeal, though most painful and intense, served to galvanize the believers into one unified whole and propelled them forward as no other force could.

Hasan Balyúzí in Shíráz

In the summer of 1309 Sh [1930], my deeply loved cousin [later, Hand of the Cause] Hasan Múvaqqar Balyúzí, arrived in Shíráz from Beirut for the purpose of visiting his family. Greatly excited at the prospect, the Bahá'í Youth Committee warmly welcomed him and invited him to speak at a gathering of the friends on the next Friday night. The main themes of his presentation were to be: the diffusion of the Cause in the West, the tidings from the Holy Land, and the Beirut students' visit to the presence of the beloved Guardian. The Youth Committee capitalized on this opportunity and invited the whole community, young and old alike, to this historic gathering.

In those days all Bahá'í activities were conducted in Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, the Khál A'zam's house, which was designated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a Mashriqu'l-Adhkar. The honored Fádil Yazdí and Fádil Tihrání both resided there as well, and thus the comings and goings to the building never ceased. This house was in the vicinity of Sháh-Chiráq and Masjid

Naw, as well as being in the proximity of another Bahá'í Holy Place, that is, the house where the Báb was born. After the passing of the wife of the martyred-uncle, the heir had illegitimately confiscated this residence and later had sold it to Siyyid Muhammad Qálí-Furúsh [the carpet-seller], who numbered among the most virulent enemies of the Faith. During the spring and summer months when Bahá'í meetings such as Feasts, deepening seminars, and character-training classes were held in the courtyard, Siyyid Muhammad would eavesdrop from the rooftop and learn the identity of the participants.

For that occasion, the carpet-seller had invited a group of the opponents of the Bahá'í Faith to his house. The meeting at the Khál A'zam's house started with the chanting of an opening prayer after which the chairman introduced Mr. Balyúzí, and the latter came to the podium. However, before he could commence speaking, a large rock was hurled from the rooftop, striking and breaking the lamp that had been placed on the podium. Naturally, the meeting disbanded. At that moment foes quickly descended from the roof and were joined by some other thugs who had been expecting the signal and had been waiting in the street, and together they attacked the friends. The believers also rushed forth in their own defense, and a fierce commotion ensued. The long corridor³⁷¹ of the building became the scene of a very intense battle, and several of the friends suffered serious injuries. However, soon the friends managed to overpower their foes and disarm the attackers. The young among the Bahá'ís lost no time in using the same clubs and sticks against the instigators.³⁷²

The friends immediately informed Lutfu'lláh Khán Munajjim, who was a very influential man and had a senior position in the police department.³⁷³ He quickly went to the magistrate's headquarters and spoke threateningly to the chief of police, the Diyá'u's-Sultán, inducing the latter into action. In no time, he came to us in the company of several gendarmes, and they arrested all the attackers, whether injured or not. On the following day, Munajjim filed official charges of disturbance of the peace and assault

³⁷¹ The old houses in Shíráz had an underground corridor that connected the main entrance to the courtyard. Presumably, a similar passageway is being referred to here.

³⁷² Parenthetically, A.Q. Afnán notes: "For many years the pistols and clubs confiscated from the attackers were kept in the office of the Spiritual Assembly as a reminder of that incident."

³⁷³ A.Q. Afnán (private communication, December 1995) clarified that Munajjim was an attorney who served in what today may be considered the general prosecutor's office.

with intent to kill against the entire group of the enemies, and their file was sent to the judiciary.

The transgressors were detained for several more days until the court was ready to hear their case and try them for the crimes committed. Of course, by then the entire city was astir with the news, and all sorts of rumors were circulating among the people. What was most evident was that the entire town was put on notice that if they inequitably dealt with Bahá'ís, or any other group, then the full force of the law would deal with the offenders.

In preparation for the court trial, a deposition was organized in the Central Judiciary Building where the highest echelon of the provincial government were in attendance, men like the governor-general of Fárs, Akbar Mírzá, the Sarimu'd-Dawlih; the military commander, General Ayram; the chief magistrate; the State's public defender, Sarábandí; and heads of various departments. Munajjim was also invited to represent the interests of the Faith and to speak on behalf of Bahá'ís.

At the start of the deliberations, Munajjim spoke strenuously, stating the need to punish the offenders to the full extent of the law so that people would thoroughly realize that during the reign of Reza Sháh Pahlaví it was the law that ruled and the tyranny of the mullás was at long last a nightmare of the past. He spoke most effectively of the dark cloud of injustice that for so many centuries enveloped the horizon of Iran in the name of the Shi'ite ecclesiastics and *ijtihád*. Moreover, he spoke of the need to set an example so that a heedless population would be awakened to the civil liberties guaranteed under the law for each person and the right of Bahá'ís to assemble unmolested.

In his presentation, Sarábandí responded by completely agreeing with every point raised by the prosecution. However, he appealed on humanitarian grounds, stating, "These offenders, though unquestionably guilty of the heinous act with which they are charged, nevertheless, have families for whom they must provide. If they were sent to prison, then surely their wives and children would suffer greatly as well and remain in dire need of their daily bread. In fact, as these men have been jailed during the past few days, their families are already perturbed and experiencing many difficulties. I am certain that the honored Munajjim wishes not to see innocent children suffer and prefers forgiveness to vengeance. As such, as the public defender for the province, I ask forgiveness for the transgressions committed and the dropping of the charges. My clients will not only pay for all the damages but also provide the court with a

written guarantee that they will never again commit such deeds. I beg of you to let them go free and close this case.”

As a gesture of Bahá’í magnanimity, Munajjim consented for the charges to be dismissed, which greatly heightened the prestige of the Faith in the eyes of the public and won the esteem and admiration of the assembled high-ranking officials.

In short, although that night Balyúzí was not able to deliver his speech, a most favorable situation was created for the Cause; as well, Siyyid Qálí-Furúsh and his accomplices were prevented from ever causing troubles in regard to the Mashruqu’l-Adhkár.

Endowments of the House of the Báb

In the year 1315 Sh [1936], Hájí Siyyid Muhammad<46>, a son of the Vakílu’d-Dawlih, donated part of his estate in Tihrán [in the Shimrán district] for the purpose of renovating the Blessed House of the Báb. He transferred the legal deeds of these properties, recorded as worth 500,000 tumáns,³⁷⁴ to the beloved Guardian. Because of the unusual nature of this contribution, the details were reported to Reza Sháh Pahlaví who was told, “The recipient of this sum is not a resident of Iran, and the actual value of the properties is far beyond what has been recorded in the deed.” The monarch ordered a thorough investigation.

It is unknown to me how the police grew cognizant of this situation, but as a result, Siyyid Muhammad was summoned for the investigation and questioned regarding the transaction. Without stipulating any reference to the House of the Báb or to Shoghi Effendi, he had replied, “For many years I have had commercial dealings in Shíráz with a close relative, Áqá Mírzá Hádí.³⁷⁵ I had purchased these properties with his money and, now that he is in the evening of his life, wish to reimburse the sum so I will not be under the weight of such obligations.”

³⁷⁴ The actual value of these lands went into the millions and represented an exceptional contribution for that period. It should be borne in mind that the Vakílu’d-Dawlih ranked among the wealthiest citizens, and only a fraction of his vast estate had previously been used for the construction of the Temple in ‘Ishqábád. Even though this gift was earmarked for the House of the Báb, it was clearly meant as a general contribution to the Bahá’í International Fund, as the needs of the House of the Báb were considerably less than this amount.

³⁷⁵ Shoghi Effendi’s father.

Despite his testimony, the police had mentioned in their report to the Sháh that this contribution was to establish a very sizeable religious endowment associated with the House of the Báb. Through this report, the matter had become even more serious, and the governor-general of Fárs, the Prince Dawlatsháhí, was instructed to visit the House of the Báb for a thorough determination and to report his findings directly to the royal court. As such, Dawlatsháhí, the police commissioner, as well as Lutfi-‘Alí Mu‘adil, the provincial deputy to the national parliament, came to the House of the Báb and were welcomed by my father [Mírzá Habíbu’lláh]. These distinguished guests were received in the same room designated for the arrival and welcome of the pilgrims. After the customary pleasantries, with the utmost respect the visiting gentlemen requested the privilege of viewing the House of the Siyyid-i-Báb. My father led them on a tour of the House.

After having expressed their appreciation for the remarkable air of spirituality and beauty that surrounded every aspect of that House, they asked, “Where are the endowment properties associated with this House?” “In the Bahá’í Faith,” my father had replied, “There is no such thing as endowments for Holy Places. The general funds of the Cause pay for the maintenance and upkeep of all such properties throughout the world.” They further queried, “It has recently come to our attention that one of your relatives has endowed some of his properties in Tihrán specifically for this House.” Not knowing anything about this contribution, my father expressed his lack of knowledge.

“Are you acquainted with Hájí Mírzá Muhammad in Tihrán?” they asked. My father responded, “Yes, indeed. He is a close relative and one of distinguished members of the Afnán family.” The governor stated, “This individual has donated a considerable amount of land in Tihrán in the name of Shoghi Effendi, the Head of the Bahá’ís.” Unaware of any such thing, my father was inspired to reply, “I have not been told of this, nor has he written me about it. However, I have frequently heard him say that he owed money to Áqá Siyyid [Muhammad-] Husayn<37> and Áqá Mírzá Hádí<96> from the time that they had business dealings in Shíráz and that he wished to repay his debt. Therefore, it seems likely that he was merely repaying his debt.”

The visitor continued to inquire further about the history of the House of the Báb, the number of pilgrims, and other similar matters. My father

had replied, “This was the residence of the Siyyid-i-Báb and is considered by Bahá’ís the holiest site in the whole of Iran. I, being a blood relation of the Báb, have been the hereditary-custodian of this Edifice since the passing of my father. Bahá’ís from different parts of Iran and the rest of the world come for visitation to this House and are welcomed and given the same reception that you enjoyed today.”

The governor further asked, “How do you manage to meet the required expenses associated with welcoming visitors and maintaining the House?” “From the return on the business interests and the properties that I have inherited from my mother’s family, I am able to meet such obligations. The details of my personal estate are well-known to the honored Mu‘adil.” At that point Mu‘adil had spoken extensively, extolling the sagacity, the trustworthiness, and the nobility of the Afnán family, and on this note the meeting had concluded.

Upon their departure, my father had immediately communicated the gist of the interview to Siyyid Muhammad in Tihrán so that in the event that he was also questioned, their answers would be consistent. In a response cable, Háji Mírzá Muhammad, after expressing immense affection and humility, had said that he, too, had replied in the same manner and that both were guided by Bahá’u’lláh in this regard.

Since the governor’s report contained the same exact details that were said by Siyyid Muhammad, Reza Sháh did not pursue the matter any further, and the whole incident quieted down.

The Centenary Celebration of the Báb’s Declaration

The year 1323 Sh [1944] corresponded with the centennial celebration of the Declaration of the Báb, and the beloved Guardian wished to mark the event most appropriately throughout the world. For the West, he had labored hard for many years to produce a befitting gift in the form of *God Passes By*. For the East, however, it needed to be accompanied with a different form of commemorative observance. Shoghi Effendi had instructed the delegates to the national Bahá’í convention to gather in Shíráz and hold a befitting celebration on 23 May 1944 under the shadow of the House of the Báb. He had further stated that should unforeseen circumstances prevent their gathering in the Blessed House, then some other location in Shíráz or its vicinity was to be used for the occasion.

Thrilled at the prospect, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Iran decided to keep the matter confidential, lest it attract the atten-

tion of foes and provoke them into mischief. Therefore, the delegates [to the national convention] were not informed until fifteen days before the event and were instructed to be in Shíráz on the appointed day without disclosing their destination to anyone.

It was about this time that Dr. Dhabíhu'lláh Qurbán had been expelled from the community, and the National Spiritual Assembly was somewhat concerned that certain difficulties would be provoked from that quarter.³⁷⁶ At the same time they had received a cable from the Guardian, which read, "Keep an eye on Shíráz Assembly."

Later, it became apparent that the Guardian was referring to the dangerous presence of 'Abdu'lláh Mustaqimí on the Spiritual Assembly, since through various avenues of deceit this man strove to create differences among the believers and to engender pessimism. He even went so far as to accuse various prominent believers of the most unseemly deeds. Another who was under the direct influence of Mustaqimí was Captain Thábit-Rásikh—eventually both were expelled from the community.

In order to make arrangements for the forthcoming celebration and also to monitor the work of the Spiritual Assembly, [the later Hands of the Cause] Áqá Mírzá Vallíu'lláh Varqá and Colonel Jalál Kházi' arrived in Shíráz about a month prior to the festivities. In the course of their consultation with the Spiritual Assembly, they were careful not to divulge anything about the centenary celebrations. The honored Varqá, however, confidentially acquainted my father with Shoghi Effendi's wish about this celebration and emphasized to him the need for absolute secrecy.

My father asked the women of his household to make large quantities of every possible kind of homemade sweetmeats, and when they asked about the intended purpose of these preparations, he only vaguely replied, "Since there will be a celebration in Tihrán, I plan to take sweets as my offering."

A week before the centenary celebrations, the honored Varqá informed the Spiritual Assembly of the Guardian's directive and the arrival of delegates to Shíráz. The Spiritual Assembly immediately started to arrange living quarters for the anticipated guests, and the homes of the friends throughout Shíráz were readied. Further, in order not to draw attention

³⁷⁶ Dr. Qurbán had married a Muslim woman without a Bahá'í ceremony and had refused instructions to rectify the matter, and he was therefore expelled from the Bahá'í Faith by the Guardian. The family of Qurbán and the majority of the Dihqán clan continued to associate with him, and one after another were excommunicated.

to the event, all Bahá'í activities at the Hadíratu'l-Quds were suspended, and the pilgrims' visits to the House of the Báb were cancelled.

The Shíráz Spiritual Assembly gave the overall responsibility for the arrangements to Áqá Mírzá Fadlu'lláh Hakím-Banán, who in turn selected a few members of the Youth Committee to aid him. His wonderful efforts for the success of this celebration were very much appreciated by everyone, and many other families assisted in various ways with all the details.

At last, on that sacred and holy night, the National Spiritual Assembly as well as ninety-three delegates to the national convention gathered in the hallowed vicinity of the Blessed House. The courtyards and the chambers of the House were illumined with so many lamps that the brightness and luster of that glorious night dazzled the eyes.

At the beginning of the celebration, the entire congregation stood in attention while four specially appointed believers, that is, Vallíu'lláh Varqá, Dr. Yunis Khán Afrúkhtih, Núrí'd-Dín Khán Fath-A'zam,³⁷⁷ and my father, went inside to spread the pure-silk carpet that was gifted for that occasion by the beloved Guardian. This carpet was spread in the upper chamber of the House of the Báb, the very spot where a hundred years earlier the Báb had illumined the world with His Manifestation.

A few minutes before the hour of the Declaration, the honored Varqá announced, "Mírzá Habíbu'lláh Afnán, as Custodian of the House of the Báb, will lead the assembled friends on a pilgrimage through the Sanctified House. We will follow his example, reverently visiting and paying homage to the spot where His Holiness the Primal Point was seated at the hour of His Declaration. Afterwards, with the utmost humility and serenity we will exit the House. At that time, the honored Mírzá Habíb Afnán will chant Bahá'u'lláh's Surih Hajj revealed in honor of this House, and then the Guardian's *Lawh-i Qarn*³⁷⁸ will be recited."

After the visit to the House was completed, the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, recited the letter of the Guardian in its entirety. This luminous and heavenly celebration continued until the early hours of the morning, and at the end all partook of breakfast in the courtyard of the house adjacent to the House of the Báb. Thus, the most glorious and magnificent celebration in the history of the Cause in Iran concluded in an atmosphere of the utmost joy and felicity.

³⁷⁷ For a biography, see *The Bahá'í World*, vol. 12, pp. 690–92.

³⁷⁸ Shoghi Effendi's *Lawh-i Qarn* [Tablet of the Centennial], written for the Bahá'ís of the East in Naw-Rúz 1944, is similar in many features to *God Passes By*, except it is shorter.

The following day a group of delegates returned to their homes, while the remaining, who numbered about forty or fifty, stayed a week later until the commemoration of Bahá'u'lláh's Ascension. These friends were able to once more visit the Sacred House of the Báb.

It should be noted that the necessary preparations for this splendid celebration took place with so much wisdom that no trouble whatsoever occurred, and even the town's police remained totally unaware of this celebration. In conjunction with the centenary celebrations, Áqá Mírzá Fadlu'lláh Hakím-Banán gave a wonderful feast at his home where the delegates and some of the local friends, altogether about three hundred souls, were entertained.³⁷⁹

The Renewal of Difficulties in Shíráz

During the years 1310 to 1320 Sh [1931–41], which corresponded to the reign of Reza Sháh, no incidents against the Faith took place in Shíráz. Most meetings and large gatherings, especially the Ridván festivities, were celebrated in the public orchards and parks, which were protected by the police.

However, a few years after the abdication of Reza Sháh, in the opening days of 1324 Sh [spring 1945], Siyyid Núri'd-Dín rose in influence and gathered the people of Shíráz around him. His initial target was the House of the Báb, and he targeted it by focusing on the neighboring mosque.³⁸⁰ He would ascend the pulpits and vociferously proclaim, "O my brothers! There exists a small, broken mosque in the Shimshírgarhá Street, near the House of the Bábís. Against the wish of those who desire naught but the destruction and obliteration of our holy places, we must arise to repair this Masjid. We must build for it a befitting pulpit and choose a worthy pishnamáz [prayer guide] to lead the congregation in their obligatory prayers and organize prayer vigils." In such fashion, he would go on for some time and speak of the significance of rebuilding the mosque next to the House of the Báb.

His sermons succeeded in winning support for his designs, and several from among his congregation proclaimed their readiness for the task and

³⁷⁹ A moving account of this event is reported in *The Bahá'í World*, vol. 10, pp. 181–84.

³⁸⁰ See Afnán, *Memories of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, chapter 11, for some other events associated with this same mosque.

within a few days repaired and prepared the mosque. For the inauguration, Siyyid Núri'd-Dín was the honored guest, and as sign of respect, his followers carpeted the streets along his path and with much ostentation and pageantry brought him to the Masjid. He began his sermons by taking exception to Bahá'ís and praised God that once more the forsaken mosque had flourished and the call of God was raised within that building.

In short, as result of the opening of the mosque, traffic in the Shimshírgarhá Street increased considerably. Gradually, the visits of Bahá'ís to the House of the Báb became a topic of constant discussion not only at this mosque but also in Sháh-Chiráq, Masjid Vakíl, and other locations. Of course the flow of Bahá'í pilgrims, particularly during such sacred seasons as Ridván or Naw-Rúz, even when undertaken with great wisdom, drew great notice in the neighborhood and provoked much hostility. Siyyid Núri'd-Dín interpreted continual visits to the House of the Báb as an effort to undermine his own authority and, therefore, set out to incite the people of Shíráz and other towns against the Bahá'ís. In particular, the friends in Sarvistán, Nayríz, Jahrum, and Ábádih were placed under great pressures during this period.

The reopening of the mosque and the increased focus on the House of the Báb multiplied my father's worries by many fold. Led by Ridázádih, a son-in-law of Siyyid Núri'd-Dín, most nights the crowds of so-called worshipers would pass through the street and loudly protest under various pretexts. These comings and goings were particularly intensified during the months of Muharram, Safar, Sha'bán, and Ramadán, as well as on all occasions associated with the Prophet Muhammad and the Holy Imáms. On these nights, whatever the weather, my father would go onto the roof of the house adjacent to the Blessed House, overlooking the street. He would sit guarding the perimeter, peering through holes of the fence, watching their activities until the last person had left the mosque and the door was locked. Only then would he consider it safe to come inside.

Another incident that took place in the year 1326 Sh [1947] was the following: One day Brigadier General Qavámí, the Furúghu'l-Mulk, who was the police commissioner and a close friend of my father, informed him, "It has come to my attention that Siyyid Núri'd-Dín and his followers are [secretly] planning to commit arson at the House of the Báb. Of course, I will assign security officers to patrol Shimshírgarhá Street round the clock, but for a while you must observe the utmost wisdom in your dealings lest troubles be created."

That very afternoon, multitudes of our adversaries began to frequent the [Shamshírgarhá] Street. They carried with them such provisions as

straw, kerosene, gasoline, and gunpowder, and stockpiled them inside the mosque. Deeply perturbed over the fate that awaited the Blessed House, my father secluded himself in the upper chamber of the House and unceasingly would chant [Bahá'u'lláh's] *Salát Hájjat*,³⁸¹ [the Báb's] *Du'á Tavassul*, and other protection prayers.

On the same street lived a policeman who was very close to Siyyid Núrí'd-Dín and who was related to the custodian of the mosque as well. At times he would visit my father and would boast about the plans and the popularity of the Siyyid. That day it so happened that about one hour before dusk he came for one of these occasional visits. In addition, by chance, *Ustád Áqá Ján Muqanní* [the well-digger] and several of his crew were present concluding some business account. Moreover, a few Bahá'í youth from Sarvistán were also there for the purpose of pilgrimage to the House of the Báb, and all had gathered in the courtyard. Resting against the wall was my father's hunting gun and some boxes of bullets. When the policeman came inside, my father called to him and with the utmost severity said to him, "Go and tell that frivolous Siyyid that if he or others are foolish enough to step into this street this night, his life will be in great peril. These men and another fifty armed Bahá'ís, who are waiting nearby, are determined to protect this House with their very lives. Should the crazed Siyyid take one step into this neighborhood, then blood will be spilled, and his will be the first. Tonight is the night that we intend revenge for all the harm that you people have perpetrated and a lifetime of transgression that we have endured. He should be advised not to act in such a way as would cause a great bloodbath on this very street."

Having never heard my father speak in such vehement fashion, the guardsman withdrew in haste and proceeded directly to inform the Siyyid of my father's message. He had not only added much of his own embellishments but also reported that he had witnessed a number of eager Bahá'ís arrayed for this purpose, with guns and munitions at their side. These exaggerated reports served to frighten the Siyyid who at once instructed his followers to cancel their plans and not to be seen in our district. Further, that very night he sent several of his men to remove the provisions for arson from the mosque. No incident took place that night, and for quite some time the Siyyid and his men posed no threat to the House of the Báb or to the believers.

³⁸¹ For translation see, MacEoin, *Rituals in Bábism and Bahá'ism*, pp. 115–18.

The day after this event, the Furúghu'l-Mulk telephoned my father and in the course of expressing his elation for the way that affairs had unfolded, remarked, "I am puzzled as to what caused the Siyyid to change his mind and not attack your House." My father made reply, "The Siyyid's goal is to serve himself; however, mine is to serve God. Consequently, with every breath I am guided, while he is left to his own devices. The divine confirmations can reduce mountains and still every storm. But in fact, it is not we who are guided, rather we are unworthy instruments for His all-encompassing Will."

The Passing of Mirzá Habibu'lláh Afnán

Near the end of his life, my father developed acute asthma, coupled with a heart problem, and consequently needed to rest more often. However, not once did he fall short in his duties and responsibilities as the custodian of the Blessed House and continued unabated to serve as before, and he was always present at the meetings of the Spiritual Assembly and other gatherings. Every day before dawn, he would be ready to welcome and receive the pilgrims to the sacred threshold of the House of the Báb, and he would exert much care ensuring that each visitor had a most spiritual and uplifting experience and thoroughly appreciated this divine benediction. For each group that visited, with greatest care and reverence he would prepare the Sacred Writings and Holy Relics associated with such visits, and afterwards would gather them with his own hands and place them in their special container. His insistence on continuing with the daily routines as before severely worsened his condition and finally placed him at death's door.

In short, after several heart attacks, in the month of Mihr of the year 1330 Sh [September 1951] he was bedridden. His physician, Dr. Mu'tamid, a most competent man who had been trained in Paris and who specialized in heart conditions, was able to make him more comfortable during his last days. My father finally passed from this nether world for the eternal abode on 30 Ázar 1330 Sh [22 December 1951] at the age of seventy-four. The telegram of the beloved Guardian on this occasion was our sole consolation and greatly calmed the heart and soul of every member of his family.

APPENDIX TWO

BAHÁ'Í HISTORICAL PLACES IN SHÍRÁZ³⁸²

1. *The House of the Báb*

In the Writings of the Báb, His Blessed House has been given unique and everlasting favors. Such blessings are found in: the *Qayyumu'l-Asma'*, chapter *Rukn* (pillar), 35–38; the Persian *Bayán* 4:16–18; the Arabic *Bayán* 4:16–19; Tablet to Khál Akbar at the time of the Báb's departure from Shíráz for Isfahán (generally understood to be His Will and Testament); and the *Kitáb Panj Sha'n*, chapter 1.

In time, it is expected that the House of the Báb will have certain dependencies. These are called for in the following Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Shíráz:

To the members of the Spiritual Assembly, upon them rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

O servants of the Abhá Beauty! Your missive arrived, and its contents were made manifest. Similarly, your letter to the illustrious Afnán of the Lote-Tree, upon him rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious, was received, as well as his response to your Assembly, which were most carefully perused, and I regret the delay in responding.

Through the confirmations of the Ancient Beauty, may My spirit be a sacrifice unto His friends, the Sacred House has been rescued from ruins and, through all available means, was rebuilt in the manner of former times. Through the assistance of the Greatest Name, various dependencies of that Mighty House, such as a hospital, an orphanage, a home for the elderly, and others will be constructed and completed in time...³⁸³

During the early part of this century [the twentieth century], the residence next to the House of the Báb was also purchased and made part of the Blessed House. Three of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets providing detailed

³⁸² For the most part, this appendix is a translation of excerpts of Abú'l-Qásim Afnán's article, "*Baytu'lláh Akram*." An outline of the same history is given in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 204–14.

³⁸³ The full text is in INBMC 52:379–80, no. 427.

instructions in this regard are most noteworthy and should be mentioned at this juncture:

He is the Most Glorious.

O ye illustrious Afnán! A few months ago, a prayer was revealed beseeching protection and divine favors for all the Afnán of the sanctified Tree and praising the qualities of the offshoots of the sacred Tree, but news of its arrival hath not been received. Nor hath there been any news of receipt of one thousand tumáns sent for the purchase of the adjacent home. Inform on what ye have done regarding that house and how much hath been received through [Hájí] Amín. But do so urgently. If you do not have time to write, then ask someone else to report on your behalf. It hath been a while since any news or communication from the Afnán of Shíráz hath been received.

I am encompassed by assaulting multitudes of mischief, difficulties, and calumnies, and because I must write to the whole world, not a moment is left to me. Notwithstanding, I write in my own hand that ye may realize how profoundly I care about this important undertaking. The object is, God willing, that the house adjacent to that Sanctified Court will be purchased, that none might be permitted to verbally or physically become presumptuous towards it. This house will be like a fortified foundation and a secure and permanent perimeter.

Through the protection and favors of the Blessed Beauty, we remain steadfast and determined, and beseech mighty confirmations and great blessings for the illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree. Upon them all return the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.³⁸⁴

The second Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about the purchase of the adjacent house follows:

He is the Most Glorious.

O firm offshoots of the sacred Lote-Tree! Your latest letter indicated that the promised house was purchased on 22 Ramadán [9 June 1920] for twenty-six hundred tumáns cash and a one hundred and seventy-five tumáns mortgage. That is, for a total of twenty-seven hundred and seventy-five tumáns. Through whatever means possible, God willing, the final seven hundred and seventy-five tumáns will be raised and forwarded to you. Prepare an exact financial ledger of this transaction so that records may be kept.

Regarding the property title: twice we purchased the House of Baghdad, and yet have lost it in both instances. Once it was purchased in the name of Áqá Siyyid Ahmad and another time by Hájí Husayn, and every time, after their passing, the House was lost to us. Therefore, you must act in such wise that no difficulty would be encountered in the future.

³⁸⁴ The original text is in INBMC 52:368–69, no. 412.

Upon ye rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.
 26 Dhi'l-Hajjih 1339 AH [10 September 1920], Haifa, 'Abdu'l-Bahá
 'Abbás.³⁸⁵

The third Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Buzurg, upon him rest the Glory of God.

He is the Most Glorious.

O thou offshoot of the divine Lote-Tree! Thy letter dated 20 Muharram AH 1339 [4 October 1920] was received, and its contents caused the utmost joy and felicity on account of the news of the prescribed House. Praised be God that efforts were exerted and that house became part of the estate of the Blessed House [of the Báb]. In these days, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's joy concerns things as pertain to the Exalted One, the Primal Point, may my spirit be sacrificed for Him, or to the blessed Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh, may my spirit be a sacrifice for His servants.

Glorify thy God and thank Him for having favored thee with such bounty and allowed thee to render such service! Two thousand tumáns were sent through the honored Amín, and praised be God it hath arrived. Through the divine benevolence, I cherish the hope that thou wilt be rendered successful in all thine undertakings. The account that thou didst send was clear and accurate.

'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás, 20 Rabí'u'th-Thání AH 1339 [1 January 1921] Haifa.³⁸⁶

2. *Birthplace of the Báb*

This house was situated between the residences of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, known as the Khál Akbar, and that of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, surnamed the Khál A'zam. The illustrious Báb was born in the upper chamber of the house, a room situated in the northwestern corner of the building.³⁸⁷

In the original design, the western flank of the house consisted of the main entrance, which opened onto the street behind the house; three rooms and two corridors on the lower floor; and two rooms on the second floor. The central room on the lower floor was called "*ursí*" and had five doors and a ceiling as high as the entire building. This room was situated

³⁸⁵ The original text is in INBMC 52:364, no. 408.

³⁸⁶ The original text is in INBMC 52:369–70, no. 413.

³⁸⁷ Three years after the Báb, Khadíjih Bagum was also born in this house.

in the center of the building, and two rather large corridors connected to either side of it. In addition, another room opened onto each of the corridors and had an entrance on the opposite side as well. At the end of each corridor, two spiral staircases connected the lower floor to the upper one and opened onto what was known as two-*Gúshvarih* [shape of two symmetrical earrings]. The rooms on the upper floor were situated over the chambers below.

Originally, this house was a property of Áqá Mírzá 'Alí<3>, the son of Áqá Mírzá 'Abid. With his passing, it came into the possession of his four children, each having an equal share. When the business activities of the older son of Áqá Mírzá 'Alí (namely, Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11>) flourished, he bought a few contiguous, smaller buildings situated in the Maydán Sháh quarter of Shíráz. He decided to demolish these and build a new, much larger, luxurious home in their place and to move his family there from the Bazaar Murgh quarter. His brother, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Hasan<10>, was a young man and moved to Yazd at about that time. He had no interest in his inherited share of the ancestral home. Zahrá Bagum, the older daughter of Áqá Mírzá 'Alí, lived with her husband, Áqá Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín. Moreover, the youngest child, Khadíjih Bagum, the wife of the Báb, resided in the Blessed House. Therefore, this left vacant the house where the Báb was born, and, as such, it was leased to Hájí Muhammad Mihdí Hijjáb, the maternal half-brother of these four siblings.

Hájí Hijjáb died in AH 1304 [1887]. As a favor to his nephews, Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim left this house to the children of the deceased. A year later, Hájí Mírzá himself passed away and was soon followed by two of his sons. His second oldest son, Áqá Mírzá Abu'l-Hasan<38>, left Shíráz for 'Ishqábád and Samarqand, where he spent most of his life, and eventually went to Haifa where he passed away in 1921. As such, the only legal and rightful heir of this house was Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn Afnán<37>, but he was unable to counter the claims of Hijjáb's family and lost his claim to the property.

Eventually, these occupants sold the house to a carpet-seller who was among the most determined enemies of the Bahá'í Faith.³⁸⁸ His occupancy of the house, so close to the houses of the two uncles, caused many difficulties. Ultimately, the municipality demolished the eastern section of

³⁸⁸ See appendix 1, which outlines Hasan Balyúzi's visit to Shíráz and gives an example of this carpet-seller's sedition.

this house because it was in the path of Sháh-Chiráq Street. At that time, the Spiritual Assembly tried hard to buy the house, but even then, out of spite for the Bahá'í Faith, the owner did not agree to sell. He donated it to the Mihdiyyih and placed a sign [of the Mihdiyyih] on the house. Finally, during the expansion of the Sháh-Chiráq Circle, the entire building was demolished.

3. *House of the Khál A'zam*

'Abdu'l-Bahá named this house a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. It ranks among the most sacred Bahá'í places in Shíráz, claiming a singular spiritual station. After the passing of His father, the Báb moved His residence to this house, where He lived until the age of fifteen. After His return from Mecca, He was subjected to harm and torment by the Sáhib-Ikhtiyár, the governor of Fárs, and to subsequent imprisonment. He was freed only after the Imám-Jum'ih intervened and the Khál A'zam offered a surety. Further, it was agreed that the Báb would stay in the house of the Khál and not associate with those who sought His audience. These sanctions proved effective, and with the passage of time, a measure of tranquility was realized. Eventually, favorable conditions allowed for regular meetings between the Báb and His followers in this very house. It was here that such disciples as Mullá Husayn, Siyyid Husayn Yazdí, Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím Qazvíní, Mullá Shaykh 'Alí 'Azím, and other learned Bábís such as Siyyid Javád Karbalá'í were admitted to the sanctified presence of the Báb. It was also here that the celebrated Vahíd Dárábí attained the Báb's luminous audience and the Commentary on the Surih of Kawthar revealed for him, enabling him to drink his fill from the chalice of certitude.

After the Báb's mother departed for Karbalá, Khadíjih Bagum left the House of the Báb and took up residence here. She stayed for many years and was able to welcome and entertain such honored guests as Munírih Khánúm ['Abdu'l-Bahá's future wife]. After the martyrdom of the Khál A'zam, this house was left in the custody of his wife [Hájíyyih Bíbí Ján-Ján] and his son, Mírzá Javád<23>. After them, two-thirds of the property was claimed by non-Bahá'í heirs, who decided to sell their portion in AH 1327 [1909]. Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn Afnán<37> communicated this news to the Holy Land. Consequently, 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructed the Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih<99> to purchase these shares in the name of the Bahá'í community. He carried out the Master's instructions through Hájí 'Abdu'r-Rahmán Kumpání, and the house came into the Bahá'í Faith's

possession. In a Tablet addressed to Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn Afnán, the beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

Thou hadst written regarding the house that was the dwelling of the illustrious branch of the sacred Tree, the martyred uncle, Áqá Siyyid 'Alí—may My spirit be a sacrifice unto him. That house was the residence of the Holy Dove and situated next to the House of the luminary of the Supreme Concourse, the Primal Point—may My spirit, My essence, and My whole being be a sacrifice unto Him. Therefore, that house is considered among the Holy Places, deserving utmost attention and consideration.

Convey My warmest greetings to the honored celestial twig, Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad Khán [the Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih] and inform him on my behalf, "O wondrous branch! With utmost attention and determination, exert thyself in securing that sacred house from the hands of the nonbelievers and turn it into a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. However, if this would incite uproar among the rabble, then it is sufficient to have the sacred house in our possession and to quietly organize meetings where the friends, in the morning and at dusk, can offer prayers and meditations. Through the blessing of this magnificent deed, the hearts will turn to the Merciful Lord, exultation will be raised, rapture will surround all, the fire of God's love will glow brilliantly, and unsurpassed excitement will envelop the friends. In other lands, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár hath precipitated outpourings of divine favors, caused the hearts to overflow with immense joy and felicity, and hath bestowed divine radiance on all souls. In Shíráz, however, utmost wisdom and prudence must be observed so that nonbelievers may not become informed. Even among the friends it should be called a spiritual gathering. Otherwise, the unworthy will plot sedition [to destroy it] and provoke fear in the hearts. . . ."

After a while, the house became the gathering point of the teachers and promoters of the Bahá'í Faith, and general meetings, Holy Day celebrations, deepening classes, and institutes were held there. Moreover, it sheltered the friends who visited from other cities. As such, this house became known as the center of the Bahá'í activities of Shíráz and attracted the attention of foes.

In 1324 Sh [1945], the Shíráz municipality ordered that Lutf-'Alí Khán Zand Street be extended to the vicinity of Sháh-Chiráq. In the process, they had to demolish all the buildings in their path. This house was one of those properties, and four-fifths of it was demolished during the road-work. However, at that time, the remaining one-fifth of the house was left untouched. This consisted of the western section, which included the room where the Letters of the Living would gather, the sleeping quarters of the Khál, and the storage room next to it. Also, the lower floor and the tunnel that led from the house of the uncle to the house of Áqá Mírzá 'Alí—that is, the house where the Báb was born and reared—remained

standing. On the instructions of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Shíráz, a wall was constructed in front of this remaining section and a custodian appointed to look after it.

In 1348 Sh [1969], the rest of the house—mentioned in the Báb's Will and Testament—and the house of the Khál Akbar were demolished at the instigation of Sharíffi, the custodian of Sháh-Chiráq, with the approval of the Sháh. The land was added to the Sháh-Chiráq Circle.

4. The office of the uncle of the Báb in the Saráy Gumrukí has remained to the present day and stands in the same form and shape as it did during his time.
5. The house of Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín is currently in the hands of non-Bahá'ís, though it has been preserved unchanged.
6. Bazaar Vakíl, Masjid Vakíl, and the stone pulpit ascended by the Báb have all endured to the present day.
7. 'Imárat Khurshíd, where Husayn Khán interrogated the Báb, was destroyed in the process of building Zand Avenue.
8. Kázirun Gate has changed. The section that stood at the time of the Báb has now become part of the street and is surrounded by other buildings.
9. The school attended by the Báb was in Qahviyih Awlíyá. It has changed considerably and is not used very often.
10. Hammam Bazaar Murgh, used by the family of the Báb and His Holiness, no longer exists.

APPENDIX THREE

THE GOVERNORS OF FÁRS

This appendix contains tables for the rulers of the Qájár and Pahlaví Dynasties, the Qájár prime ministers, the governors of Fárs and their viziers. It also provides brief biographical notes on the governor-generals of the province during the Qájár era—indeed an anthology of nepotism and corruption. For a more detailed description of their rule, the following sources may prove beneficial: Mihdí Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, 6 volumes; Mírzá Hasan Fasá'í, *Fársnámih Násiri*, volume 1; *Vaqáyi' Itifáqiyiyih*, edited by Sa'idí Sirjaní; and in the English language, Heribert Busse, *History of Persia Under Qajar Rule*; and Abbas Amanat, *The Pivot of the Universe*.

Monarchs of the Qájár Dynasty

1. Áqá Muhammad Sháh
Crowned spring 1796
Murdered 17 June 1797
2. Fath-'Alí Sháh
Crowned 21 March 1798
Died 23 October 1834
3. Muhammad Sháh
Crowned in Tabríz on 9 September 1834
Died 4 September 1848
4. Násiri'd-Dín Sháh
Crowned in Tabríz on 12 September 1848 and in Tihrán on 19 October 1848
Assassinated 1 May 1896
5. Muzaffari'd-Dín Sháh
Crowned 8 June 1896
Died 8 January 1907
6. Muhammad-'Alí Sháh
Crowned 19 January 1909
Abdicated 16 July 1909

7. Ahmad Sháh
Crowned 18 July 1909
Deposed 31 October 1925

Monarchs of Pahlaví Dynasty

1. Reza Sháh
Crowned 13 December 1925
Abdicated 16 September 1941
2. Muhammad-Reza Sháh
Crowned 16 September 1941
Departed Iran 16 January 1979

Prime Ministers during Qájár Rule

- Hájí Ibráhím Khán, the Ítimádu'd-Dawlih
Appointed January 1795
Deposed 15 April 1801
- Mírzá Shafí Mázandarání
Died 1819
- Hájí Muhammad-Husayn Khán, the Nízamu'd-Dawlih
Died 19 October 1823
- 'Abdu'lláh Khán, the Amínu'd-Dawlih, (son of the preceding)
Until 1824
- Alláh Yár Khán Qájár, the Ásifu'd-Dawlih
Until March 1828
- 'Abdu'lláh Khán, the Amínu'd-Dawlih, second term
Until October 1834
- Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim, the Qá'im-Maqám
Executed 26 June 1835
- Hájí Mírzá 'Abbás Irvání, known as Hájí Mírzá Aqásí
Until 1848
- Mírzá Taqí Khán Farahání, the Amír-Nizám
Appointed 19 October 1848
- Mírzá Áqá Khán Núrí, the Ítimádu'd-Dawlih
Appointed 13 November 1851
Dismissed 30 August 1858

Between 1858 and 1871, Násiri'd-Dín Sháh ruled through a council of six ministers, except for a short period, 1864–66, when Mírzá Muhammad Khán, the Sipahsálár A'zam, was Prime Minister.

Hájí Mírzá Husayn Khán, the Sipahsálár A'zam

Appointed 13 November 1871

Dismissed September 1873

Mírzá Fath-'Alí Khán Shírázi, the Sáhíb-Díván

Appointed September 1873

Reassigned as the Governor of Fárs on 22 March 1882

No one served formally as Prime Minister until the summer 1884.

Mírzá Yúsuf, the Mustawfiyu'l-Mamálik

Appointed 23 June 1884

Mírzá 'Alí-Asghar Khán, the Amínu's-Sultán

Appointed 1886

Until June 1897

Mírzá 'Alí Khán, the Amínu'd-Dawlih

Appointed June 1897

Until June 1898

Mírzá 'Alí-Asghar Khán, the Amínu's-Sultan

Appointed 3 July 1898

Sultán-Majíd Mírzá, the 'Aynu'd-Dawlih

Appointed 24 January 1904

Mírzá Nasru'lláh Khán, the Mushíru'd-Dawlih

Appointed 30 July 1906

Mírzá 'Alí-Asghar Khán, the Amínu's-Sultan

Appointed 26 April 1907

Murdered 31 August 1907

Abú'l-Qásim Khán, the Nasíru'l-Mulk

Appointed October 1907

Husayn-Qulí Khán, the Nizámu's-Saltanih

Appointed 20 December 1907

Until the abdication of Muhammad-'Alí Sháh in July 1909, several served as Prime Ministers and were rapidly replaced.

Muhammad-Valí Khán, the Sipahdár A'zam

Appointed 17 August 1909

The Governor-Generals of the Province of Fárs

1791	Hájí Ibráhím Khán, the I'timadu'd-Dawlih
December 1794	Fath-'Alí Mírzá (later Fath-'Alí Sháh)
1798	Muhammad-'Alí Mírzá
1798	Husayn-Qulí Khán
1798	Muhammad-'Alí Khán Qájár
29 March 1835	Husayn-'Alí Mírzá, the Farmán-Farmá I
February 1835	Fírúz Mírzá, the Nusratu'd-Dawlih
November 1836	Farydún Mírzá, the Farmán-Farmá II
October 1840	Mírzá Nabí Khán Qazviní
August 1841	Nasru'lláh Khán Qájár, the Sáhíb-Ikhtiyár
September 1841	Farhád Mírzá, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih
April 1843	Mírzá Nabí Khán Qazviní, the Amír-Díván
March 1844	Husayn Khán, the Nízamu'd-Dawlih
November 1848	Bahrám Mírzá, the Mu'izzu'd-Dawlih
March 1850	Fírúz Mírzá, the Nusratu'd-Dawlih
May 1853	Tahmásp Mírzá, the Mu'ayyadu'd-Dawlih
August 1858	Sultán-Murád Mírzá, the Hisámu'd-Dawlih
September 1860	Tahmásp Mírzá, the Mu'ayyadu'd-Dawlih
May 1862	Sultán-Mas'úd Mírzá, the Zillu's-Sultán
June 1865	Sultán-Murád Mírzá, the Hisámu'd-Dawlih
May 1869	Sultán-Mas'úd Mírzá, the Zillu's-Sultán
September 1871	Muhammad-Qásim Khán Valí
April 1872	Sultán-Mas'úd Mírzá, the Zillu's-Sultán
March 1874	Sultán-Murád Mírzá, the Hisámu'd-Dawlih
June 1875	Yahyá Khán, the Mu'tamidu'l-Mulk
April 1876	Farhád Mírzá, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih
22 March 1881	Sultán-Mas'úd Mírzá, the Zillu's-Sultán
1887	Sultán-Uvays Mírzá, the Ihtishámu's-Saltanih
1892	Muhammad-Taquí Mírzá, the Ruknu'd-Dawlih
March 1893	Nusratu'd-Dín Mírzá, the Sáláru's-Saltanih
September 1894	Muhammad-Taquí Mírzá, the Ruknu'd-Dawlih
1900	Malik Mansúr Mírzá, the Shu'á'u's-Saltanih
March 1903	Mírzá Ahmad Khán, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih
1904	Malik Mansúr Mírzá, the Shu'á'u's-Saltanih

1906	Husayn-Qulí Khán, the Nizámu's-Saltanîh
1907	Ghulám-Husayn Ghaffarí, the Sáhîb-Ikhtiyár
1907	Sultán-Mas'úd Mírzá, the Zillu's-Sultán
June 1907	Husayn-Qulí Khán, the Nizámu's-Saltanîh
November 1907	Ghulám-Husayn Ghaffarí, the Sáhîb-Ikhtiyár
July 1908	Ghulám-Ridá Khán, the Ásifu'd-Dawlih
August 1909	Ja'far-Qulí Khán, the Sahámu'd-Dawlih

The Viziers of the Province of Fárs

December 1794	Mírzá Nasru'lláh 'Alí-Ábádí
1798	Mírzá Muhammad Khán ³⁸⁹
1798	Charáqh 'Alí Khán Navá'í
1805	Nasru'lláh Khán Qaraguzlú
1807	Muhammad-Nabíl Khán Shírází
January 1810	Mírzá Yúsuf Ashraf Mázandarání
January 1814	Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín Káshání
December 1816	Áqá Muhammad-Báqir Káshání ³⁹⁰
October 1818	Hájí Mírzá Ridá-Qulí Navá'í
1828	Muhammad-Zakí Khán Núrí
1828	Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Shírází, Mushíru'l-Mulk I ³⁹¹
July 1832	Mírzá Hasan, the Nizámu'd-Dawlih
March 1834	Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Shírází, the Mushíru'l-Mulk I
July 1836	Mírzá Muhammad-Taquí, the Qavámu'l-Mulk I
November 1836	Mírzá Ja'far Mustawfi Savakúhí
October 1841	Mírzá Fadlu'lláh 'Alí-Ábádí, the Nasíru'l-Mulk ³⁹²
1844	Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Shírází, Mushíru'l-Mulk I ³⁹³
1846	Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Khán, the Mushíru'l-Mulk II
October 1848	Mírzá Fadlu'lláh 'Alí-Ábádí, the Nasíru'l-Mulk
December 1849	Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim Tafríshí
May 1853	Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Khán, the Mushíru'l-Mulk II
September 1853	Mírzá Muhammad-Taquí Áshtíyaní
1855	Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Khán, the Mushíru'l-Mulk II

³⁸⁹ Son of Prime Minister Hájí Ibráhím.

³⁹⁰ Murdered October 1818.

³⁹¹ Received title in 1829, deposed on July 1832.

³⁹² Son of the first vizier of Fárs.

³⁹³ Died 1846.

1858	Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn Hamadání
May 1860	Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Khán, the Mushíru'l-Mulk II
March 1863	Muhammad-Násir Khán Qájár, the Zahíru'd-Dawlih
March 1864	Mírzá Muhammad Farahání, the Qavámu'l-Mulk II
September 1865	Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Khán, the Mushíru'l-Mulk II
April 1869	Hájí Muhammad-Qulí Khán, the Ásifu'd-Dawlih
April 1871	Muhammad-Qásim Khán Valí
March 1872	Muhammad-Násir Khán Qájár, the Zahíru'd-Dawlih
May 1874	Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan Khán, the Mushíru'l-Mulk II ³⁹⁴
March 188	Mírzá Fath-'Alí Khán Shírází, the Sábih-Díván
1885–1900	(Difficult to establish an accurate list)
1900	Mírzá Ibráhím Mustawfí, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih

Biographical Notes on the Governors since 1844

Mírzá Ahmad Khán, the 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih

Born in 1866 as the second son of Muhammad-Rahím Khán, the Amír-Nízám, he commenced his service in the royal court at the age of sixteen. Four years later he had already reached the rank of Amír-Tumán (lieutenant-general) and in 1897 was first appointed governor of Zanján and later in 1903 was given the same post in Fárs. Wherever he ruled, he left his mark as a brutal and vulgar man, known particularly for his obscene expressions. He became the governor of Tihrán in 1905 and soon was at odds with the monarch, who imprisoned him and his brother. Released from prison, he was caught up in the fervor of the Constitutional Revolt, which first saw his home firebombed and at a later date, 1 December 1911, him fallen to the assassin's bullet.

Bahrám Mírzá, the Mu'izzu'd-Dawlih

The second son of 'Abbás Mírzá, the Náyibu's-Saltanih, he was appointed governor of Kirmánsháh, Luristán, and Khúzistán in 1834. After two years, he was appointed governor of Qazvín, and in 1848 he gained the same post in Fárs, a post he held for a little more than two years. Subsequently, he returned to Tihrán and was given various posts until in 1858 when he was sent to Tabriz where he ruled for the next two years as governor.

³⁹⁴ Deposed 5 October 1876.

In 1865, he was placed in charge of the army's internal affairs, and three years later became the governor of Luristán, a post he alternately held with his brother, Hamzih Mírzá, until he died on 21 October 1882.

Farhád Mírzá, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih

The fifteenth son of 'Abbás Mírzá, the Náyíbu's-Saltanih, he was born in April 1818. At the age of 17, his brother, Bahrám Mírzá, appointed him governor of Luristán. In the next several years, whenever Muhammad Sháh would leave the capital, Farhád Mírzá would be placed in charge of the city's security and the protection of the throne. In September 1841 he was appointed the governor of Fárs, a post that he held for about three years, but he remained in Shíráz until 1855 in various senior positions. It is unclear why he broke rank with Násiri'd-Dín Sháh; however, for some period of time between 1855 and 1862 he lived in the British Embassy of Tihrán under political asylum. Eventually, in 1862 he was pardoned, granted the title of the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, and sent off as governor of Luristán and Khúzistán, a post he held for two years. In 1866 he became governor of Kurdistán, where he remained for the next six years. During the monarch's sojourn in Europe, this uncle of the Sháh was brought to Tihrán to assist once more with the protection of the throne in his absence. In spring 1876, he was appointed governor of Fárs for a second tour of duty. Overall, he was a vicious ruler who often boasted that he had killed more than 600 men and severed the hands of 700 more. His only concern was to amass wealth, and this he achieved at the expense of poverty-stricken peasants. He spent portions of his lavish estate on the construction of shrines in the 'Atabát. Several books by him have remained.

Fírúz Mírzá, the Nusratu'd-Dawlih

Born in 1817 as the sixteenth son of 'Abbás Mírzá, the Náyíbu's-Saltanih, he was sent by his older brother, Muhammad Sháh, to govern Fárs in February 1835 in the company of Manuchihr Khán, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, and the British officer Sir Henry Lindsay Bethune. He gained his rule in Fárs after reducing the insurgents in the vicinity of Shíráz. Nearly two years later, he was sent to Kirmán to deal with the revolt in that region and was made governor of the province. In the spring of 1850, for the second time, he was appointed governor of Fárs, which tenure lasted some three years. Until 1867, he held various senior posts in Tabríz, Arák, and Tihrán, and in that year he was given the governorship of Khurásán—a post that he would hold sporadically for the next four years. In 1874 he

was appointed war minister, in 1877 governor of the Central Provinces, and in 1880 was appointed governor of Kirmán for two years. He died in Tihrán in 1886 at the age of 70 from excessive wine consumption.

Ghulám-Husayn Ghaffarí, the Sáhib-Ikhtiyár

A son of Mírzá Háshím Khán, the Amínu'd-Dawlih, he was born in 1859, and starting in 1882 he was given various posts within the court, mostly ceremonial assignments. From 1900 to 1903, he served as the justice minister. At the beginning of the Constitutional Revolt, that is, in 1907, he was given the title of the Sáhib-Ikhtiyár³⁹⁵ and was sent as governor to Fárs, where he ruled for only three months. A few months later, he was given the same post, but again it lasted for only a short time. In the latter years of his life, he served in various posts in the cabinet and died on 29 March 1947.

Ghulám-Ridá Khán, the Ásifu'd-Dawlih

Like his father, Husayn Khán, the Nizámu'd-Dawlih, he was a high-ranking officer. Ghulám-Ridá Khán entered military service and by 1883 had been elevated to general and appointed commander of the artillery forces. In the same year he was given the governorship of Mázandarán. Five years later he was again given the same post and in 1891 was sent as governor to Khúzistán. In summer of 1897, he was appointed governor of Kirmán, a post he held for two years. Afterwards, he gained various ministry posts in Tihrán. In 1907 he became Governor of Khurásán and in response to a popular uprising against him ordered a massive massacre. In 1908 he was given the governorship of Fárs, and under his watch the uprising of Lár and the pogrom of the Bahá'ís of Nayríz took place.

Husayn Khán, the Nizámu'd-Dawlih

A native of Marghih, Husayn Khán, or more accurately, Muhammad-Husayn Khán Muqaddam, was a decorated military commander who showed great bravery during the Perso-Russian wars of 1826–28 and was

³⁹⁵ This title was first used by Nádir Sháh who bestowed it upon Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, the custodian of Sháh-Chiráq of Shíráz. When the Sháh arrived in Kirmán in 1651, he summoned all the ministers of Fárs and ordered some killed and the rest blinded. In that same year, he appointed Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn governor of Fárs and titled him Sáhib-Ikhtiyár, authorized to kill, on any single occasion up to 50 men, but allowed to blind or maim as many as he wished.

elevated to the rank of the *Ájúdán-Báshí* (adjutant-major), and eventually became a full general. In the late 1830s he was sent as the Iranian ambassador to Istanbul and thence to Paris, and represented the Qájár throne during the coronation of Queen Victoria in England. He returned to Tihrán in December 1839 and was given the title of the *Nizámu'd-Dawlih* and assigned the governorship of Yazd. In 1844, he was appointed governor-general of Fárs, with the added title of *Sáhib-Ikhtiyár*, a post he held until 1848 when because of personal animosity between him and *Mírzá Taqí Khán*, the prime minister, he was dismissed from office after a massive upheaval in the city of Shíráz that resulted in many deaths. Even though he will forever be remembered as the first official who opposed and mistreated the Báb, nonetheless, fairness dictates that it be pointed out *Husayn Khán* ranked among the ablest administrators of his age. Wherever he ruled as a minister, he exerted efforts to better the condition of his people. He died in the year 1865.

Husayn-Qulí Khán, the Nizámu's-Saltanih

Among the most accomplished of the Qájár rulers and known for his knowledge, wisdom, and abilities, he was born in 1832 to the family of *Sharriif Khán Qazvíní*. During the early phase of his career, he was an aid to the *Hisámu's-Saltanih* and accompanied him to various posts. His first major assignment came in 1871 when he was appointed deputy-governor of Isfahán. Three years later, he was given the governorship of Yazd, a post he administered for a year. He then came to Tihrán and stayed until 1882 while he made a fortune through the commodities market. In 1886, he became the governor of Zanján and two years later was given the province of *Khúzistán* to govern. In 1893 the Prince *Nusratu'd-Din Mírzá* was installed as the governor of Fárs, and *Husayn-Qulí Khán* was sent in effect to administer the province. During this tenure, he was able to effectively curtail the power of the *Qavámu'l-Mulk II*, but after one and a half years was sent back to *Khúzistán*. He came to Tihrán in 1897 and was given the treasury ministry, and after a year he was sent to *Tabríz* as its governor. He was given the governorship of Fárs for yet another short period, but on 21 December 1907 he was elevated to prime minister, only to resign a few months later. He died shortly thereafter in 1908 in Tihrán. He has left a vivid autobiography, which remains unpublished.

Já'far-Qulí Khán, the Sa'ídu'd-Dawlih

A son of Hájí Qanbar Khán, the Sa'ídu'd-Dawlih, he was the chief of guards for Kamrán Mírzá and in 1895 was elevated to the rank of Amír-Tumání (major general). Nine years later he was given his title and in 1909 became the governor of Fárs and proved a capable administrator. In the course of various appointments, he amassed a huge fortune that for several generations has benefited his descendants.

Malik-Mansúr Mírzá, the Shu'á'u's-Saltanih

The second son of Muzaffari'd-Dín Sháh, he was twice appointed governor of Fárs, but each time he was ousted from office as a result of popular rebellions against him. In each of these incidents, even though he had amassed one of the largest fortunes in the country, he would still try to extort properties from the powerful Qavám clan of Fárs—a goal that remained largely unrealized. Through the efforts of the 'Aynu'd-Dawlih and with British consent, he also cherished ambitions to the throne, which goal likewise remained unfulfilled. A sizeable portion of his personal fortune was lost during the Constitutional Revolt, and toward the end of his life he lived in Tihrán. Malik-Mansúr Mírzá had a potential for greatness that remained unrealized. When he was first appointed governor of Fárs, in a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá the following was revealed in honor of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri'd-Dín in Shíráz:

... Your letter of 22 Safar AH 1319 [10 June 1901] was received, and its contents closely considered. You had written about the equity and justice of the victorious ruler, and this brought joy and felicity to our hearts. Of a certainty, he will be the recipient of divine confirmations and favors, and the news of his generous justice will endure for generations and ages. I beseech God to aid him by the invisible host and to enable him to befittingly serve His Majesty the King. Thanks must be rendered for this equity, and such justice must be embraced and upheld faithfully. Therefore, all the friends must readily serve and obey, much like sheep following the command of their shepherd. They must deal with matters in the utmost patience and steadfastness.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁶ INBMC 52:296, no. 296.

Muhammad-Qásim Khán Valí

A son of Dúst-'Alí Khán, he rose through the ranks and at last in 1852 was appointed consul-general of Iran in Tiflís. Three years later he was sent to the Iranian Embassy in St. Petersburg where he remained until 1861. A year later he was given the title of Valí and sent as governor to Gílán, remaining at this post for seven years. In 1868, he was sent to Fárs as the deputy-governor and in the fall of 1871 was made governor. He passed away on 22 March 1872 in Shíráz.

Muhammad-Taqí Mírzá, the Ruknu'd-Dawlih

Born in 1846, the fourth son of Muhammad Sháh, he was appointed Tihrán's governor in 1856 and in 1866 given the title of the Ruknu'd-Dawlih and sent to Zanján to rule. Subsequently, in 1876 he was appointed the governor of Khurásán, a post he held for some 12 years. For the next 8 years he held various posts in Tihrán, including the court ministry. Like all other governors of the Qájár period, by giving a large sum to the Sháh, he purchased the governorship of Fárs in 1892—a post he held for only a year. He was an unusually corpulent and brutal man, corrupt to the core. He died in 1900.

Nusratu'd-Dín Mírzá, the Sáláru's-Saltanih

The fourth son of Nasiri'd-Dín Sháh, he was born in 1882 and because of his grandfather was given the title of the Sáláru's-Saltanih. At the age of 11 he was made governor of Fárs, but after one and a half years was sent to Khurásán where he stayed for a year. In 1903, he was made governor of Hamadán where he ruled for 2 years. No significant post was ever given to him.

Sultán-Mas'úd Mírzá, the Zillu's-Sultán (Shadow of the King)

The fourth son of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, Sultán-Mas'úd Mírzá, was born in 1850. Even though his three older brothers died prior to his coming of age and although he was three years older than Muzaffari'd-Dín Mírzá, he was nevertheless excluded from the succession line, as his mother was a concubine. At the age of 11, he was appointed governor of Mázandarán, Astarábád, and the regions north. At the age of 13, he was appointed governor of Fárs where he ruled for three years, and at 17 was given the province of Isfahán. He came to Fárs again in the spring of 1869 for two years and four months, and the third time for two years starting in the

spring of 1872. In the same year, he was appointed governor of Isfahán where he ruled for the next 34 years. For some ten years during this period, that is, from 1878 to 1888, he was in effect the second most powerful man in Iran, after the monarch, as his influence extended well over half the realm and covered 14 provinces in the central, southern, and western regions. His gradual demise came through the efforts of the Russians (and in opposition to British interests) who warned the monarch of the power and influence of his son. During his entire rule, like many other Qájár princes, his single objective was to line his own pockets, and he did so through great brutality. All through his career, Zillu's-Sultán attempted to become the Crown Prince and for this purpose gained British support, but it came to naught. Bahá'u'lláh spoke of this effort, and Mírzá Habíb has recorded His utterances.³⁹⁷ After witnessing the dwindling of his vast estate, eventually in 1905 he was dismissed from his last post, the governership of Isfahán. After a short interlude in Fárs, he went on a self-imposed exile in Europe. His return to Iran was filled with perils, and he died on 1 July 1918 leaving behind an autobiography, titled, *Tárikh Sargudhasht Mas'údi* [A History of Mas'úd's Life].

Sultán-Murád Mírzá, the Hisámu'd-Dawlih (sword of the Kingdom)

The thirteenth son of 'Abbás Mírzá, the Náyíbu's-Saltanih, Sultán-Murád Mírzá was born in March 1818 and commenced his career by participating in the Harát campaign in 1837. His title was bestowed on him in 1850 after having reduced the insurgents in Khurásán led by Sálár where he was first appointed governor and served for the next four years. He was given the same post two years later, and this time his tenure lasted three years. During this period, he led the Iranian forces on the final Harát battle which, despite triumph on the field, was later lost under the Prime Minister, Mírzá Áqá Khán Núrí—a British citizen. This act resulted in the loss of Afghanistan to British interests.³⁹⁸ In 1858 Sultán-Murád Mírzá was recalled from his post and was given the governorship of Fárs. Two years later, for the third time he went to Khurásán and stayed for the next four years. Later he was appointed for two more tours of duty as governor of Fárs during 1865–68 and 1874–75. He passed away on 11 March 1883 when he had just assumed the governorship of Khurásán for

³⁹⁷ See Afnán, *Memories of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, chapter 2.

³⁹⁸ See Fasá'í, *Fársnámih Násiri*, vol. 1, pp. 820–33, and Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 2, pp. 104–10.

the fifth time. He was noted for his severity and cruelty; however, this resulted in his provinces being generally stable.

Sultán-Uvays Mírzá, the Ihtishámu's-Saltanih

The eldest son of Farhád Mírzá, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawliih, he was born in 1839 and married his cousin, the daughter of Sultán-Murád Mírzá, the Hisámu's-Saltanih. In the year 1870, he was given the governorship of Hamadán under his father's overall command. In 1873 he was given the title Ihtishámu's-Saltanih and was part of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh's entourage in Europe. In 1888, he was appointed governor-general of Fárs, and the title of his deceased father was bestowed upon him. After four years' rule, he was replaced with the Ruknu'd-Dawliih and died within a year, in 1893.

Tahmásp Mírzá, the Mu'ayyadu'd-Dawliih

The second son of Muhammad-'Alí Dawlat-Sháh, his career began in 1821 in the service of his uncle, the influential 'Abbás Mírzá. In 1834 he was appointed governor of Káshán, a year later to the same office in Hamadán, two years later summoned to Harát, and in 1848 was given the administration of Kirmán. In May 1853 he became governor of Fárs where he ruled for nearly six years. He was given the same post again in the fall of 1860. Two years later he was called to Tihrán and then was given the post of minister in Tabríz where he remained for the next 10 years. He died in 1880. Though very egotistical, he numbered among the very few Qájár Princes who cared for learning and had adopted the sobriquet Surúr for his verses.

Yahyá Khán, the Mu'tamidu'l-Mulk

An eventual brother-in-law of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, he was born in 1831 and for a period was sent to Europe for his education. Upon his return in 1856, he was given a post in the Iranian embassy in St. Petersburg where he stayed for only a year. In 1858, the monarch picked him as a personal translator and sent him on a mission to the Iranian embassy in Istanbul where his brother, Mírzá Husayn Khán, served as the ambassador. He worked at various posts until his brother's return to Iran in 1871 when Yahyá Khán was appointed governor of Luristán and Khúzistán. A short while later, however, he was summoned to Tihrán and later was given the governorship of Gílán. He was appointed governor of Fárs in

the summer of 1875 where he suffered at the hand of the Mushíru'l-Mulk and resigned from the post less than a year later. Two years later he was given the administration of Mázandarán, but he returned to Tihrán about a year later and after some time became the foreign minister. He was a very ambitious man and often worked to advance the interests of the Russian government. He died on 21 January 1892.

APPENDIX FOUR

CONVERSION OF THE GREAT UNCLE OF THE BÁB

Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, the eldest of the maternal uncles of the Báb and the recipient of the *Kitáb-i Íqán*, was born in 1798 and is commonly referred to as the Khál Akbar [the great uncle]. He was the first-born of Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, son of Áqá Mírzá ‘Abid (known as Zaynu’l-‘Abidín),³⁹⁹ son of Áqá Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad. This family ranked among the best-known and most trustworthy merchants in the Province of Fárs. His wife, Hájíyyih Bíbí Fátimih-Sáhib, was a daughter of Hájí Muhammad-Muhsin and a member of another prominent merchant family of ‘Abdu’l-Husayn, trading in Shíráz and Búshihr, and eventually having commercial interests that extended from India to Europe.⁴⁰⁰

Khál Akbar ran the family office in Búshihr, and consequently the Báb was closely associated with him during the first four years. He worked as a merchant there. During this period, Khál Akbar was concerned that the Báb’s preoccupation with religious matters would create problems and had remained skeptical of such proclivities. Later in the summer of 1844 the Báb instructed Mullá ‘Alí Bastámí—the second to believe in Him—to journey to Búshihr and to share the news of His proclamation with Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad. It appears that in the course of this visit, the uncle grew considerably in his understanding of the Báb’s claim.

A few months later, on His pilgrimage journey, the Báb stayed with the same uncle and once more, on 15 May 1845, visited him for ten days on His return as He passed through Búshihr.⁴⁰¹ It seems that by this time, the uncle had developed a deep sense of respect and devotion towards the saintly character and even the claim of his Nephew and warmly welcomed Him. It was during this visit of the Báb that the following letter was sent by the Khál Akbar to his own mother and sister—respectively, the grandmother and the mother of the Báb. The original of this letter in

³⁹⁹ Fayzí, *Hadrat Nuqtih Ulá*, p. 64.

⁴⁰⁰ Fasá’í, *Fársnámih Násirí*, vol. 2, pp. 76–77.

⁴⁰¹ For a discussion of the dates associated with the Báb’s hajj journey see, MacEoin, *Sources for the Early Bábí Doctrine and History*, p. 48.

the hand of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad is among the private papers of Abú'l-Qásim Afnán, and the text was printed in *Khándán Afnán*.⁴⁰²

O the Best of the Protectors!

To be conveyed to the illumined presence of the exalted lady, my mother, and my sister, upon them rest the contentment of God.

He is.

To your sanctified presence it is respectfully submitted that, first, may your eyes and mine, and indeed all eyes be illumined that, praise be to God, the honored Hájí [i.e., the Báb] has arrived in the utmost health and well-being, and presently I stand in His service. It is deemed prudent for Him to tarry for a while in this place before coming to you [in Shíráz]. God willing, He will return to that city soon. Your blessed self should be assured that He sent forth a letter from Muscat and a separate one that was addressed to my honored sister, though they arrived after His Own arrival. When I first opened the envelope, I did not notice that it was addressed to my dear and honored sister and only noticed that there was a short letter addressed to the sister of Áqá Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim,⁴⁰³ which was forwarded. Now that I have determined it was meant separately for my sister, it has been sent as well. Peruse them all.

All eyes be lit! In truth, His grace-bestowing Self brings light to the eyes of this world and of the next. He is the source of our pride. Praise be to God, a thousand praises be to God and His Chosen Ones! God willing, you have remained certain in His Cause and have not allowed the sayings of the people to introduce doubt or uncertainty into your hearts. Feel neither fear nor anxiety on account of what you may hear. The Lord of creation is His protector and His support.

I have no other matter to present before you. With infinite longing, I stand eager to serve Him. I beseech your prayers. Peace, tranquility, and the blessings of God rest upon you all. My children convey their warm greetings and state, “May your eyes be brightened by His arrival.” The mother of the lights of mine eye⁴⁰⁴ also joins in conveying her greetings and further adds her good wishes and informs my honored sister, “I am unable to be there to tell the mother of Áqá Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11>, ‘Praise be to God that

⁴⁰² Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 25–27. Over the years and in particular during the 1960s, two of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh's sons, Abú'l-Qásim and Hasan Afnán, had the opportunity to examine and classify the Afnán family papers dating back to the late 1700s. These dealt mostly with the extensive commercial enterprises of the family—including a large amount of records pertaining to the Báb's business activities—which had been accumulated over the span of several generations. In the course of this effort, they located a great many historical documents of prime importance, and several of those documents are translated in this appendix.

⁴⁰³ A reference to Khadíjih Bagum.

⁴⁰⁴ Presumably, a reference to his wife.

she has a Son-in-law [i.e., the Báb] Who is peerless in the world, and all the inhabitants of earth must obey His command.”

From the above letter, it is quite clear that the uncle believed in the Cause (*ámr*) of his Nephew and further encouraged his mother and sister—the mother of the Báb—to remain firm in their belief in the Báb as well. Therefore, it seems reasonable to surmise that by this stage at least some members of the Báb’s family had given their allegiance to Him and recognized Him as the author of a “Cause.”

About the same time that the above letter was penned, the uncle of the Báb sent another dispatch to his second brother, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí<7>, known as Khál A‘zam (the most-great uncle).⁴⁰⁵ From the content of this communication, it is quite evident that the Báb had already stirred a considerable commotion through His claim and that many, including some among His immediate family, were exerting efforts to discourage Him from continuing to advance those claims. However, it also provides further evidence that the Khál Akbar was by then a devoted believer in the Báb. The original of this letter, in the hand of the great-uncle, is also kept in the private library of Abú’l-Qásim Afnán, while a typed version appears in the *Khándán Afnán*.⁴⁰⁶ The first part of this letter deals with the family commercial business and is omitted in the translation.⁴⁰⁷

... The other matter is that a letter was received about the Cause of the honored Siyyid and my Master [i.e., the Báb], may His station be exalted by the Almighty. Mírzá Abú’l-Qásim had written in the same vein as well. Also, Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Husayn has written, though his first letter did not arrive, but the second one did, and they addressed the same matter. From what has been received, it is apparent that they have not deemed this matter [i.e., claim of the Báb] a truth and have suggested that we conceal these imaginings and prevent Hájí Mullá Muhammad⁴⁰⁸ from departing and spreading both Their claims. [Further, they have suggested that we] wait some time so that

⁴⁰⁵ After the passing of the Báb’s father, the Khál A‘zam served as his Nephew’s guardian and reared Him until the age 15, at which time the Báb moved to Búshíhr.

⁴⁰⁶ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 27–31.

⁴⁰⁷ The attribution of this letter to the Khál Akbar has been questioned in Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal*, p. 355, n. 127, where it is suggested that this letter was written by Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí. However, the original text of the letter clearly indicates that it was authored by the Khál Akbar; moreover, the narrative of his son, the Vakílu’d-Dawlih, quoted later in this appendix, confirms that indeed it was the Khál Akbar who was in Búshíhr at this time.

⁴⁰⁸ Presumably, a reference to Quddús whose full name was Hájí Mullá Muhammad-‘Alí Bárfurúshí.

gradually these talks may be erased from people's memory, since they fear that because of this [claim] we too might suffer injury or major losses.

My view, however, is that if we were to consider the matter from the worldly perspective, then it is indeed as they have stated. After reading these missives my Master, the honored Hájí [the Báb] became greatly depressed over the infirmity of those who had penned these [letters]. Nevertheless, He stated, "Regarding the teaching of the Cause, what Akhúnd Mullá Husayn [Bushrú'í] initially transmitted to the King, the 'ulamá, and the people should have sufficed, and this second time was only because of Our grace, as there was no need for it. Now that such reactions have been observed and will be discerned, for [the next] five years I have forbidden unto Myself the revelation of verses, and this indeed is the most grievous punishment for such as have denied, and they will comprehend its effect only after they have been left with no recourse. After My arrival in Shíráz, as had been My practice in the past, I will remain in My House and will not associate with anyone and will not allow others to attain unto My Presence. I will have no dealings with anyone and will leave people to themselves. Meanwhile, should anyone be found who seeks the Truth and is willing to embrace it, then I shall designate one to answer his questions. Once I decline to associate with others, others will forget about Me as well. If it were not because of My esteemed mother, I would never return to Shíráz and single and alone would establish My home in this very city [i.e., Búshihr], or would go in a direction that none would know."

If our honored mother desires to visit the sacred city of Mashhad, she can proceed with you. As such, please arrange for her journey. And by then, if the Hájí [the Báb] was to arrive [in Shíráz], they would be together for a few days, and she could go afterwards. Otherwise, may they journey in peace.

In short, these were the utterances of His honored Person. It is evident that they are based on His being downcast, though they represent His wish. God willing, once He has arrived in Shíráz, He would not associate with any other, and the same has been His practice while in this place. And should anyone ask of this matter, then answer it accordingly and state that He is the Proof, and all others must show obedience unto Him. What they do not understand of His laws, they must inquire from the one designated by Him and follow [His ordinances] as such. He Himself will not affiliate with anyone. And the reason for designating another person is that should people be found who in sincerity would recognize Him and seek to understand [His Revelation], then they can make their inquires from this designated person, as otherwise he will not associate with them either. For five years it will continue as such, until He decrees what will occur.

He [i.e., the Báb] states, "We have no concern or relation with anyone, and you are to continue with your business as before and fear no one. If you dread My coming to Shíráz, then I will not come." His command will unfold as described above.

However, about what you had written, "These Writings are not proof," and your inquiry as to how this servant attained certitude [in the Báb], I respond that besides these Writings, His very Person is the Proof. Consider how a Person like Him, Who has never studied, now without consulting a

book or referring to any text, is able to lift the pen and reveal such mighty Verses. Is this not proof?

Further, your own self had written, and the esteemed Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Husayn wrote the same, that through ascetic practices, He [i.e., the Báb] has attained spiritual perfection. Should One be the recipient of divine favors and be blessed to receive such [heavenly] grace, then surely God will protect Him from satanic desires. His honored Person [i.e., the Báb] has written in many places, “If anyone is certain in his own ways and denies My Cause, then let him come forth and engage Me in *mubahilih*.”⁴⁰⁹ I take refuge with God! How could One Who is so self-assured, be not of the truth? If you claim that He suffers from mental disturbance, I do not share your assessment, as how could it be that a person is unlettered while he is sane, but then when he is mentally disturbed he becomes so erudite?

In short, that which must have been said has been repeatedly stated. You know best how to act. Convey my greetings to our mother and sister, and kindly tell them of my condition. For me, no doubt remains. I have no reason [to deny the Báb], as consciously I see and perceive that this Cause is true. What they [i.e., mother and sister] wish to believe is up to them. Further, they should be aware that when the honored Hájí [the Báb] arrives at the city [of Shíráz], He would dismount and walk to the House. Therefore, it is best not to inform the people, that He may be left to Himself. Until now, it had been incumbent upon Him to obey their⁴¹⁰ wishes; but now it is the opposite, and they must strive to obey His every command. Under no circumstances, should they disobey Him.

I have no other matter to present you. I have written a letter for Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Husayn that you will also see, and perchance some things said here will be repeated there as well. He requested the appearance of some extraordinary event [from the Báb], such as news from the beyond. Sanctified be God! Repeatedly, we have beheld that He would take two small coins in His hand and inform us of the great beyond, and of the cherubs and angels. But if one’s heart has not attained certitude through knowledge, then of what use is conveying such stories?

From the above text, it is evident that the Báb was deeply affected by the lukewarm reception to His Call and had initially vowed to remain silent for five years and cease revealing Verses, though later in Shíráz He reversed this decision and continued to reveal many treatises, prayers, homilies, and books. Further, it can readily be surmised that the Khál Akbar counted himself among the Báb’s followers and was urging his younger brother, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, also to embrace the new Message. It seems very

⁴⁰⁹ *Mubahilih* is the practice of opponents challenging one another to mutual cursing, expecting the truthful one to be safe and the wicked to receive divine chastisement. For example, while in Edirnih, Bahá’u’lláh invited Mírzá Yahyá Azal to a public *mubahilih*, but the latter failed to come.

⁴¹⁰ Presumably, a reference to the Báb’s grandmother and mother.

likely that this petition some days later paved the way for the Khál A'zam to accept Quddús and his representations, and enabled him to accept the Revelation of the Báb unreservedly.⁴¹¹

However, we must ponder the question: At this stage, what did Khál Akbar understand of the Báb's claim and station? As noted earlier, the uncles of the Báb were merchants and enjoyed the type of education and training available to the business class of their age. For schooling, he had attended for a few years the same school in the Masjid Naw that years later the Báb would attend. This meant that he was taught a rudimentary religious education, which consisted of reading the Qur'án and a general history of Islám and its laws and basic jurisprudence. As a merchant, he was also taught accounting, elementary economics and, as any middle class citizen, was familiar with well-known collections of poetry and literature, particularly those of Háfiz and Sa'dí. What he most certainly did not possess was the sort of rigorous seminarian education that the typical Bábí converts of the early days had mastered through devoting years of training to the acquisition of such incredibly detailed sciences. And further, it is not clear if this uncle had actually seen any of the Writings of the Báb by the time he wrote the above letters. And what had been revealed by that time were works such as the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* and the Commentary on the Surih of the Cow, which are filled with subtle and complex allusions to the Báb's prophetic mission and which employ very sophisticated symbolism, in all probability, remaining beyond the ability of the Khál Akbar to discern their full significance. That is, since his knowledge and education consisted of what was common for the merchant class, what he may have seen of the Báb's Writings would have eluded him in its full implications. Therefore, one could assert that the central claim of the Báb had remained essentially inaccessible to Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, and as such he never realized that the Báb was advancing claims to Qá'imíyyat and Prophethood.

This assertion is further supported by the following two important documents written by his son that clearly demonstrate they generally thought the Báb to simply be a saintly figure, perhaps the gate to the Hidden Imám, but no more. It should be reemphasized that this gross misunderstanding stemmed from the inaccessibility of the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'*, for

⁴¹¹ Nabíl A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 143. As described in chapter 1 above, the Khál A'zam had been deeply impressed by the saintly devotion of his Nephew and, through his contacts with the Shaykhí community, was already expecting the Manifestation of the Promised One.

therein the Báb had definitely advanced a claim to Manifestationhood, but in a language only decipherable to those with substantial training and Shaykhí background.

Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad's eldest son, the renowned Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí, titled the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, was born in 1830 and by this time, 1845, had joined his father in Búshíhr and was engaged in his trading business, having occupied the same office as the Báb had used previously. He has penned several important narratives, the first to be presented in this study was composed in July 1906, and a typed version appeared in *Khándán Afnán*.⁴¹²

J-2 AH 1324 [July 1906]

The honored and revered Áqá Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar Rafsinjáni, who numbers among the foremost teachers of the Cause, has come to 'Ishqábád accompanied by Áqá Mírzá Tarázu'lláh Qazvíní, son of the illustrious Samandar, for the purpose of the Faith's propagation. The former has asked that I write for him what I recall of the dawning of the Manifestation of the Báb and those kinsmen who have joined the Cause of the Ancient Beauty and have been named, the Afnán. Although because of the passage of time, diminished memory, and advanced age, not all the details are recalled, however, in order to fulfill his wish, the following is noted:

What this servant remembers of the said events is that prior to His declaration, the deeds, the manner, and the company of His Holiness differed from those of other people. In the proximity of Shíráz's Masjid Naw, Masjid Fath, and the Jewish neighborhood, His exalted mother, who was an aunt of this servant, resided in the Blessed House on the Shamshírgarhá Street—a House that is now the celestial Ka'aba of the Supreme Concourse. Her sole offspring was that Sanctified Effulgence [i.e., the Báb] Whose father, Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá, had passed away during His childhood.

This servant was a mere child when I attained His blessed presence, and a little of that time is recalled though other details have been forgotten. I remember that on Sundays I would go into the presence of my exalted aunt. It was in AH 1260 [1844], but I cannot be certain which month, that one morning I attained the presence of the Báb. He was occupied with revealing prayers. Melon was placed before Him, and with the tip of a knife, He graciously offered me a piece. I ate it. He handed me a page with a prayer, and after I had read it, He asked, "What manner of supplication do you consider this?" I was familiar with the *Sahifah-i Sadjadiyyih*, recited each day of week and therefore replied, "It is similar to the prayer of *Sahifah*."⁴¹³

⁴¹² Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 113–17.

⁴¹³ Commonly known as *al-Sahifat al-Kamilat al-Sajjadiyya*, it is the collection of supplications of the fourth Shi'i Imám, 'Alí ibn Husayn, surnamed Zaynu'l-'Abidín, Who is also known as Siyyid Sajidiyyin, hence, the title of the book. The collection has been translated into English by William C. Chittick and published under the title of *The Psalms of Islam*. In his introduction, the translator notes:

I remember at that time the majority of mystics and ascetics of Shíráz were anticipating the nearness of the Manifestation (Zuhúr). However, He had appeared, but was concealed from all, except the believers and devotees from the Shaykhí faction who upon the passing of the late Háji Siyyid Kázim had gone in search of Him. It was noised abroad that a certain Person had appeared claiming to be the representative of the Imám (Náyib Imám), and His command forbidding the use of water-pipes was circulating among the populace. This servant asked Him [i.e., the Báb], "Is this true?" He made reply, "Yes, it is indeed so, and the use of water-pipes is forbidden."

A few days later, He departed for Mecca and left us forthwith. My late father was in Búshihr. In Búshihr, the Báb had decided on the conversion of Shaykh Hasan of the family of 'Asfúr, the Imám-Jum'ih of that city. Shaykh Hasan had neither accepted nor rejected His claim.⁴¹⁴

He departed on a sailing ship and along the way would reveal verses and homilies. In Muscat, He gained the allegiance of that city's Imám and revealed homilies.

Some two months after His departure, this servant left for Búshihr as well and was living with my late father when, some time later, the Báb returned from His hajj journey. In Shíráz His news was spreading exceedingly fast, but in accordance with His instructions, His blessed name was not known. The mu'adhdhins who ranked as His believers, were instructed to change the adhán formula into, "I testify that 'Alí [i.e., the Báb] is a servant of Baqiyatu'lláh, as recorded in the perspicuous Book."⁴¹⁵ Because of this, the 'ulamá had issued a fatwá condemning the Author of this command and had beaten and expelled from the city the prayer leaders, namely, the late Mullá Muhammad-Sádiq [Khurásání] and Mullá Muhammad-'Alí [Quddús], may my spirit be a sacrifice unto them both.

al-Sahifát al-Sajjadiyya is the oldest prayer manual in Islamic sources and one of the most seminal works of Islamic spirituality of the early period.... Shi'ite tradition considers the Sahifa a book worthy of the utmost veneration, ranking it behind only the Qur'an and 'Alí's Nahj al-balagha.... The Sahifa has been called by various honorifics, such as 'Sister of the Qur'an', 'Gospel of the Folk of the House', and 'Psalms of the Household of Muhammad'.... According to Shi'ite tradition, Zayn al-'Abidín collected his supplications and taught them to his children, especially [the fifth Imám] Muhammad-Baqir and Zayd. In later times the text became widely disseminated among Shi'ites of all persuasions. The specialists in the science of hadith maintain that the text is *mutawatir*; in other words, it was generally known from earliest times and has been handed down by numerous chains of transmission, while its authenticity has never been questioned.

This collection contains fifty-four supplications in the main body of the text and the additional supplications make up the fourteen addenda (including the prayers for the days of the week) and the fifteen *munájját* or 'whispered prayers.'

⁴¹⁴ Shaykh Hasan is the brother of Shaykh Husayn 'Asfúrí, the great-grandfather of Vahíd Dárábí. Earlier, the Báb had made mention of Shaykh Hasan in chapter 27 of His *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá*.

⁴¹⁵ Nabíl A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 144, gives the verse of the *Khasá'il-i Sab'ih* as, "I bear witness that He whose name is 'Alí qabl-i Muhammad ['Alí before Muhammad] is the servant of Baqiyatu'lláh."

The news of His return from Mecca reached Shíráz, and the authorities sent ten soldiers to arrest His Holiness. The period of His stay in Búshíhr was ten or twelve days, and my late father and this servant would regularly attain unto His presence. One afternoon He said to my father, "Arrange for a steed, since I must journey [to Shíráz]." My father pleaded with Him to stay longer, but it was to no avail. My late father arranged for a mount, and He left. En route, from Burázjân He arrived at [the village of] Dalakí where the soldiers charged with His arrest passed Him by. His Holiness sent His servant, Mubáarak, to their chief, and he was brought before the Báb. The Latter had told him, "Why are you going to Búshíhr? State your purpose so that your troubles may be lessened." He had stated their charge and was told, "The Person whom you seek is none other than Me." And together they had left for Shíráz, and were I to tell of the events of the city, it would require a mighty book, which is beyond the abilities of this servant.

And now I will outline the kinsmen of the Báb. There is a small Tablet in Yazd where the Báb has revealed, "After this Manifestation, all things perished, except those who were exalted." In that same Tablet it is recorded, "We have accepted the kinsmen among the Letters of the Exalted,⁴¹⁶ not because they were worthy in themselves, rather, because of Our love and affinity towards them." And the Ancient Beauty has titled the kinsmen of the Báb as Afnán, and at that time they included the illustrious grandmother of the Báb who was residing in Karbalá, together with His exalted mother. And His honored wife [Khadíjih Bagum] and her three distinguished bothers: Hájí Muhammad-Mihdí, surnamed Hijáb; Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11>, the grandfather of Áqá Siyyid Hádí<96>; Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Hasan<10>, the father of Mírzá Muhsin<29>; and Hájí [Siyyid Mírzá<25>], who were all related through marriage to the Báb, but who were also related through their paternal families. Also my father was alive, and his children included: Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí<14>; Hájí Mírzá Buzurg<15>; this servant [Vakílu'd-Dawlih]<13>; and my two sisters, [Bíbí Ján Bagum<16> and Khadíjih-Sultán Bagum<17>]. Also among the family were my uncle, the late Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí<7>, who was martyred in Tihrán, and his son, Hájí Mírzá Javád<23>, who died at an early age. The late Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí<6> was in Yazd, and his children included four sons and one daughter who is the mother of my children. The sister of the Báb's wife [Zahrá Bagum<8>] was married to the late Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín, and the late Áqá Mírzá Áqá<24> was their son. Also a couple may be included from the paternal family of His Holiness, such as, Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, His maternal cousin, who may have some surviving children, and the other is the late Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar, who was martyred in Baghdad.

There are several important points in the above document that should be emphasized:

⁴¹⁶ Original, "Huruf-i Vajhíh," which literally means the Letters turned to Him, or Exalted by Him.

- Abrogation of the use of water-pipes: Within the Shi'ite system of jurisprudence, it is solely the mujtahid who is authorized to pronounce on matters of personal law, and all others must refer to such accredited clerics. Clearly, the Báb was not certified as a mujtahid, and therefore the fact that He had forbidden the use of such a commonly practiced habit as the water-pipe, illustrates that He was assuming the right of legislation. In an important way this pronouncement, which is tantamount to innovation in matters of Islamic jurisprudence, signal led the abrogation of the Shi'ite system of laws.
- The second point has to do with the station of the Báb and how it was understood by the generality of people at that time. Even though the claim of the Báb to the station of Manifestionhood in such early Writings as the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* is explicit and is beyond dispute, yet as noted earlier, such statements could initially be deciphered only by those sufficiently trained. In this light it is of interest to note that the Vakílu'd-Dawliih reports that the Báb at that time was known as the Representative of the Imám—which indicates that through wisdom He was not divulging the full implications of His station.
- As noted earlier, this narrative clearly confirms that the Khál Akbar was in Búshihir at the time of the Báb's return from hajj, which provides further support to the fact that the Khál's second letter was written from that city.

The original of the following letter was in the hand of its author, Hájí Muhammad-Taquí, and a typed version was reproduced in *Khándán Afnán*.⁴¹⁷

1-5-2⁴¹⁸

In the Name of God, the Glorious, the Most Glorious, the Most Exalted.

At this time when I reside in 'Ishqábád and it is the Christian year of 1905, I have penned the following brief synopsis of my life, perchance some kind soul might remember me with a prayer or beseech forgiveness for my shortcomings.

In accordance with what my late father had written on the back of the *Kitáb-i Haliyatü'l-Mutaqiyyin*, my birth took place on AH 1246 [1830]. The home and residence of my late father, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, son of Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn Tájir [the merchant], was in Shíráz, between Masjid Naw and Sháh-Chiráq. My father's occupation was trading with Búshihir, and at times, he would go and stay there for three or four

⁴¹⁷ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 104-9.

⁴¹⁸ As noted earlier, the numbers 1-5-2 stand for the three letters composing the word *Bahá'*.

years, or perhaps longer, and then return to Shíráz. The people of Búshíhr spoke of the piety and detachment of my father and grandfather, Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, and even attributed the occurrence of certain miracles to them. Our daily bread was earned through commerce between Búshíhr and Shíráz.

I dimly remember my grandfather. He had three sons: My late father; the late Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí<7>, the martyr; and the late Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí<6>, who married in Yazd and settled there. He also had a daughter<4> who, after the passing of her mother—particularly frail during her final years—settled in the 'Atabát. This honored aunt, who was the mother of the Báb—may my spirit be a sacrifice unto Him—went to the 'Atabát and remained there until her passing.

My late father had three sons and two daughters. One was my late brother, Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí<14>, who was a merchant in China and who on his return became ill in India and passed away there. His remains were transferred from Bombay to Madá'in and buried near the shrine of the Persian Salmán. The story of his passing and the bringing of his remains require a book of its own, but there is no time for it now.⁴¹⁹ My younger brother<15>, the late Hájí Mírzá Buzurg, had a heart attack in Shíráz and passed away. My older sister passed away in Yazd, while the younger one expired in Shíráz. My late father passed away in Shíráz.

After the dawning of the effulgence of the Báb, that is, the appearance of the promised Qá'im, He was sent to Tabríz, Chihriq, and Máh-Kú. The honored and much-loved Hájí Siyyid 'Alí<7> decided to attain His presence and as such left Shíráz for Yazd and then Tihrán, so that in whatever way possible he would be able to reach the august presence of the Exalted One. It was during this time, however, that the upheaval of Mázandarán was occurring; and wherever they found a Bábí, they would martyr him, and this personage was also caught in Tihrán and numbered among the Seven Martyrs. There were a number of well-known merchants present at that incident and were ready to pay a ransom to secure his release, but he had said, "Do not waste your money as I have come for the purpose of martyrdom."

On two occasions, the late Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí<14> traveled to China, and on the first journey returned by way of 'Akká, where he attained the presence of the Ancient Beauty and was the recipient of His infinite favors. Afterwards, he came to 'Ishqábád.

Early in my life, this servant left Shíráz for Yazd where I married and established my home. In the course of the fifth year of my stay in Yazd, I left in the name of a hajj journey to the House of God [in Mecca]. My late brother came and joined me in this journey, and then we went to the 'Atabát where we achieved the principal purpose of this journey and gained admittance into the presence of the Ancient Beauty in Baghdad. On this pilgrimage, we were accompanied by Hájí Siyyid Mihdí<20>, a son of the

⁴¹⁹ A brief summary is given in, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 18–19.

late Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí. After we took our leave, we returned to Shíráz and went before our late father, and subsequently each returned to his own abode. That is, this servant returned to Yazd and continued with my trade, and my brothers resided in Shíráz. Upon the return of Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí from his first journey to China and his arrival at 'Ishqábád, this servant wrote him and asked that he purchase some properties in that city. He acquired several pieces of land, houses, and shops, and wrote and sent the details to the presence of the Ancient Beauty. He instructed that the land known as A'zam be designated as the site for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. During His lifetime, some of this edifice was raised. After His ascension, repeatedly the believers in 'Ishqábád appealed to Him Whom God hath purposed⁴²⁰ to build a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. He did not accept their petition. Out of divine favor and grace, He instructed this servant to leave Yazd for 'Ishqábád and to complete most befittingly the building raised partially in the land known as A'zam. He enjoined that no expense, whether contributed by others or myself, be spared in this undertaking.

My brother had only one child, and that was Áqá Mírzá Áqá<53> who currently resides in Shíráz. After the ground was broken on the A'zam land, with the permission of Áqá Mírzá Áqá, the rest of the properties purchased by my brother for the Temple were sold, and this totaled about 30,000 gold coins. The remaining cost was provided either by 'Abdu'l-Bahá or at His bidding by believers of various cities who contributed toward this construction.

In the presence of the [military] governor of Transcaspia, [General D.I.] Subotich, and the concourse of believers, the cornerstone was laid in Rajab AH 1320 [October 1902] The design for this nine-sided edifice was provided by the Master, and the entire construction was done in stone and cement. Much metal was used in all the pillars, the domes, and the walls. During these days (Rabí'u'th-Thani and Jamádiu'l-Avval of AH 1324 [June–July 1906]), the dome made from Russian iron has been installed. I cherish the hope that through the confirmations of the Master, the remaining detailed work will also be completed.

The above words were written previously and now, that is, Ramadán of AH 1324 [November 1906], praised be God, the construction has been completed, and we are engaged in painting the interior of the dome. About half has been painted and, God willing, the rest will be finished soon.

In a Tablet to Hájí Mírzá Mahmúd<45>, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's blessed will has decreed that after completion of the dome, in the utmost joy and tranquility, this servant proceed to the Holy Land and leave the remaining details to my son, Hájí Mírzá Mahmúd. I plan to depart on Saturday, 1 Shavvál AH 1325 [7 November 1907] for the Holy Land. Until that time, I will keep the account of all expenditures, and afterwards Hájí Mírzá Mahmúd will record the same. On Friday the 8th, I plan to leave by way of Batum.

⁴²⁰ A title of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

I pray that, as a token of divine grace, no harm befalls and I be enabled to circumambulate the celestial Ka'aba and to behold 'Abdu'l-Bahá.⁴²¹

Based on the internal evidence, the following narrative of the Vakílu'd-Dawlih was penned some time after the one quoted above, possibly in 1907, and the typed text appears in *Khándán Afnán*:⁴²²

1-5-2

I confess my inability to thank the Almighty for His ever-present favors! The illustrious Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar [Rafsinjáni] has recently come to 'Ishqábád for the purpose of the propagation and spread of the Cause of God and has asked this feeble servant to record all that may be recalled of the days of the Primal Point and to present the same to him. Although due to infirmity and being seventy-nine years of age, memory is no longer precise, yet in order to obey his wish, I pen the following brief account.

I remember that in the years twelve hundred fifty-nine until [twelve hundred] sixty [1843-44], many ascetics and holy men were anticipating the Manifestation (Zuhúr). [For instance] someone unknown prior to the year sixty had inscribed on the pulpit of the Masjid Jámi' that within three years the Qá'im will appear. And also my esteemed uncle, the martyred Háji Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, who attained the supreme station of sacrifice in Tihrán, quit his trading some four years prior to the advent of the year sixty and secluded himself expecting the Manifestation.⁴²³ Upon the Appearance, he readily accepted, but I was in Búshíhr and did not witness the great sufferings that were perpetrated against him by the governor-general of Fárs.

In the year sixty, it was noised throughout Shíráz that a beloved Siyyid had advanced the claim to be the Representative of the [hidden] Qá'im (Náyíb Qá'im). However, His blessed Name was not known.

I remember that on Sundays I would attain the presence of my illustrious aunt, the mother of His Holiness. During such visits I gained admittance unto His presence as well. One Sunday during the month of Rajab, or perhaps it was Sha'bán [July-August 1844], I attained such a blessing, and He was sitting in the courtyard of the House. After I received permission to sit, I noticed that melon was being served. With the tip of a knife, He offered me a piece. The Báb was occupied in writing certain verses and prayers. He showed me a page upon which a prayer for the days of the week was revealed, and instructed me to read it. After I had recited it, He asked,

⁴²¹ A moving eyewitness account of the Vakílu'd-Dawlih's arrival into the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in December 1907 is provided in Mu'ayyad, *Khátirát Habib*, vol. 1, pp. 29-30, and translated in Rabbani, *Eight Years Near 'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Diary of Dr. Habib Mu'ayyad*, chapter 2.

⁴²² Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 110-13.

⁴²³ According to A.Q. Afnán, the financial records of that era demonstrate that the second uncle of the Báb continued with his trading business well into 1845 (private correspondence, August 1997).

“What manner of prayer do you perceive this to be?” I replied, “It is similar to the *Sabīfih-i Sadjadiyyih*,” a prayer that was well known to me.

It was rumored that the Representative of the Imám (Náyíb Imám) had forbidden the use of water pipes. Therefore, I asked if indeed this was true. He replied, “Yes, that is correct.”

That week, or perhaps the next, He departed for pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca, and left by way of Búshihr. Two or three months later, in accordance with my father’s wishes who was in Búshihr, I too left for that city. While in Búshihr, we heard that Shíráz was filled with commotion as two disciples of the late Hájí Siyyid Kázim [Ráshtí] who were the Imám-Jum‘ih and the mu’adhdhin, had added this verse to the call for prayer: “I testify that ‘Alí is the servant of Baqiyatu’lláh as has been sent down from the hidden Tablet.” The divines of the city heard of this incident and gathered to issue a ruling against these two Imám-Jum‘ihs, namely, the honored [Mullá Sádiq] Muqaddas and the honored Mullá Muhammad-‘Alí [Quddús]. These two esteemed personages were seized by the authorities and subjected to punishment, including burning of their beards and expulsion from the city.

The officials were eager to seize the Representative of the Imám (i.e., the Báb). When He returned from Mecca, I was in Búshihr. Day and night I would attain His august presence. All His time was devoted to the revelation of verses and prayers. One night it was the opportune moment for me to fervently and tearfully beseech Him to pray on my behalf that I would have a good end. He responded, “Your end is good.”

During this period of stay in Búshihr, my late father related two or three miracles from Him. During the days prior to His declaration, when He was engaged in trading in Búshihr, He would frequently come to the home of my late father and would shower him with His favors.

His condition was most different from that of others. I do not recall His smiling. I do not recall His exact utterances that I might record the same. In one of His Tablets, it is revealed, “All things will perish, except those that turned [in this Direction].” And He also stated, “Our kinsmen have been reckoned among the Letters of the Exalted. But not because they were deserving, nay, because of Our love for them.” In the course of the next Manifestation, this matter was inquired of His [i.e., Bahá’u’lláh’s] presence. He responded, “By ‘Afnán’, it is meant the kinsmen of the Primal Point, may the spirit of all be a sacrifice unto Him.”

The family members at the time when the [above-mentioned] blessed Tablet was revealed consisted of: my late father and his children; the late Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, who was martyred in Tihrán, and had a son who has passed away; the late Hájí Mírzá Hasan-‘Alí and his children; the late Hájí Mírzá Abú’l-Qásim<11> and his two sisters and children; the late Mírzá Siyyid Hasan<10> and some of his children; the late Áqá Mírzá Zaynu’l-‘Abidín and his son<24>; the late Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, who came to Yazd and passed away there; and the late Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar who was martyred in Baghdad. Him Whom God has purposed [i.e., ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] has numbered some of the descendants as Afnán as well, though this is solely a divine grace and favor.

When Háji Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad returned to Shíráz, he fell under the suspicion attached to all the members of the Báb's family, despite his protestations of orthodoxy. In fact, some time prior to his return, and shortly after the departure of the Báb for Isfahán, the family felt the threat of the vengeful governor and was compelled to destroy a large quantity of the Báb's Writings.⁴²⁴ The repressive environment only became more restrictive and arduous with the passage of time. However, the real difficulty must have remained trying to determine the exact nature of the Báb's newly founded religion. It is very likely that the uncle of the Báb was never fully apprised that the Báb claimed a direct Mission from God and the abrogation of Islamic precepts. What is clear though is that in the late 1860s, through the urging of his kinsman Núri'd-Dín, he decided to attain the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad and ask his questions.⁴²⁵

In a Tablet dated 27 Muharram AH 1306 [3 October 1888] revealed in honor of Áqá Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Shírází, Bahá'u'lláh recounts the visit of the uncle of the Báb:

The *Kitáb-i Íqán* was revealed in 'Iraq especially for the honored Afnán, the illustrious Khál Akbar, upon him rest all My Glory. The details are thus: After he had attained the 'Atabát and completed his pilgrimage, he arrived in Baghdad. The exalted Háji Siyyid Javád, upon him be the Glory of God, came into Our presence and said, "Two of the uncles of the Báb, may the spirit of all be a sacrifice unto Him, currently have arrived in this city and soon will depart for Shíráz." We inquired, "Hast thou spoken with them about this Cause?" And he responded negatively. Upon hearing this response, We were saddened and said unto him, "Go and convey the greetings of this Wronged-One to them and say further, 'Though We have not previously cherished meeting with others, We do desire meeting with you.'"

The illustrious Javád completed the entrusted mission and that afternoon returned forthwith with the celebrated Khál Akbar, who was able to attain Our presence. We said unto him, "It is hard for this Wronged-One to see that thou and the other members of the Afnán family have remained deprived of the Sacred Tree that hath appeared and flourished amongst you." He responded, "There are certain considerations that have prevented us from such acceptance." We made reply, "What are those things that have caused you to hold back from the Exalted Horizon and the recognition of the Sacred Tree? Present your questions."

The following day he returned, and single and alone We met with him in the inner quarters of the House, and at that time he spoke those questions that had held him back from recognition. In Our presence, answers

⁴²⁴ See chapter 4 for details.

⁴²⁵ See chapter 7 for details.

were revealed from the heaven of the Divine Will. That beloved and other friends of course know such details.

On another day he came into Our presence and said, “Ill-fated is the one who would peruse this Book, and yet fail in his belief.”⁴²⁶

As part of his efforts in the 1950s and 1960s to organize and classify the Afnán family papers, Abú'l-Qásim Afnán located the actual two sheets of paper penned by the uncle of the Báb and presented to Bahá'u'lláh. A facsimile of this document was given to Muhammad-'Alí Fayzí who published the same in *Khándán Afnán*, pages 41ff. The following is a translation of the questions of the Khál Akbar, which occasioned the revelation of the *Kitáb-i Íqán*:⁴²⁷

One: What previously was believed is that the promised resurrection will take place in another world. The raising of the dead, the Bridge, the reckoning of the deeds of all creatures, and the reward or punishment of those deeds will take place in that world. However, [the Bábís claim that] it is all in this world, and it has taken place. Moreover, the days of the advent of every Manifestation of the True One constitute that same Day of Resurrection for the period preceding it. In this new Revelation, there has been no punishment for man's deeds. Nay, the insurgence and corruption of the people of tyranny and oppression have increased, even if the real meaning of reward and punishment is nearness or remoteness from the Divine Court. This subject is the same, regardless of which world it occurs in. The People of Truth in this world, since they exist in God's good pleasure, are in a state of fortune; but they are outwardly caught in the grip of the people of oppression and are persecuted by them. The people of oppression, although they are tormented by being far from the threshold of God, are outwardly in state of comfort and by reason of their ignorance are unaware of that torment. If the requital for men's deeds and the promised reward and punishment be as described above, and there be no other world than this one, where will the oppressed seek vengeance from the one who oppressed him, and where will the people of punishment receive their justice? This is naught but a denial of the promised resurrection. I have not fathomed this subject fully, yet it is among the most important of matters to understand.

Two: From the inception of Islam until now, it has been a belief of all the followers of the Shi'í religion—a matter that no one has ever denied or even

⁴²⁶ Bahá'u'lláh, *Núri'd-Dín Collection*, pp. 97–98. Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 35–37, relates a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh revealed in the honor of the same Áqá Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Shírání that closely correlates with the first half of the above-quoted Tablet but differs drastically in the second half. It is not known to the present translator why these two Texts differ so markedly.

⁴²⁷ A summary translation previously appeared in Balyúzí, *Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory*, pp. 164–65. Dr. Denis MacEoin first attempted a full translation of this document on the H-Bahai Internet discussion group, and the present translation has benefited from this effort.

doubted, and concerning which Traditions, prayers, and Tablets of Visitation have been revealed by the Imáms—that the Twelfth Imám was born from the womb of His glorious mother and that He was outwardly alive in this world and shall remain alive in it until He reappears. This is something that cannot be denied. Yet, what we have now witnessed does not conform to this. I seek elucidation of this claim so that I may, God willing, attain complete certainty, nay, to the essence of certitude.

Three: The appearance of this new Cause is not in conformity or agreement with what has been understood from the history and Traditions of the past, nor with what all men have believed. We cannot reject all the Traditions of the past, nor interpret away what the Imáms have said, nor will men's hearts believe such a thing. The manner and custom of the sanctified Imáms is to guide and give directions to men. To interpret their words in such a way as to say they did not intend the outward meaning is without foundation, for it will not prove the cause of men's guidance, rather it will cause them bewilderment. In some cases, a Tradition has come down that is not to be taken literally; but to interpret all the Traditions other than by their outward meaning is in contradiction to the way in which the Imáms guided mankind. I would ask You to favor me with a clear explanation of this topic, in such a manner that it will create certainty in men's hearts, that no one will be able to open up a path of doubt.

Four: According to those Traditions that have come down to us from the sanctified Imáms concerning the time of the appearance of the Qá'im, such as: "An enemy will raise an army in Syria and will battle Him at a place whose name They have specified as being between Syria and Mecca"; "The land shall be divided in two"; "An army of eight hundred thousand shall descend all together upon the land, except for two men, who shall remain behind"; "They shall go to the army of the Qá'im and give him tidings"; "Then He [the Qá'im] shall rule and shall make Kufa His capital"; "The size of His army shall be so great that they will demolish the mosque of Kufa and shall build a new one with one thousand doors"; etc. There are many such accounts in the reliable books of Traditions. Yet, not one of these things has happened. I beseech You to provide a full explanation of this matter, that it may be a cause of certainty for my heart, and, God willing, lead me to perfect faith.

We are fortunate that a letter from the uncle addressed to his son, the Vakilu'd-Dawlih, and written only a few days after the revelation of the *Kitáb-i Íqán*, has survived. This letter is dated 17 January 1861, and based on its date we can place the time of revelation of the *Kitáb-i Íqán* in early January 1861.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 138, has placed the revelation of the *Kitáb-i Íqán* about a year later in AH 1278 or AD 1862.

O the best of the Protectors!

To the city of Yazd, Saráy Khán, to be presented to my esteemed son, Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí, the Shírází merchant, may he be ever-prosperous!

Loving light of mine eye, more precious to me than my soul, may God continue to enrich your life! I hope that you have lived under the care of the Almighty God and have been protected from all ills and wickedness, and have been auspicious in all your endeavors. If you wonder over our state, praise be to God and to His chosen Ones, on the night of the first of Rajab [12 January 1861] we attained the threshold of the Shrines of the twin Imáms at Kázimayín, upon them be a thousand, thousand salutations and blessings. Your place was indeed empty. On your behalf, we offered pilgrimage and prayers. God willing, the day after next, that is, on the seventh of the month, we will depart this location.

We had a joyful journey en route, and snow did not fall during our travels, except for one night, and it rained for two days. However, we were indoors, and the cold was not intolerable and caused no harm.

Praised be God, for what I have to write to you is that we attained unto the presence of His Holiness Bahá, upon Him be God's peace. Your place was indeed empty. He showered us with the utmost affection and kindness, and asked that we stay for the night, and we remained in His presence. The evident truth is that to be deprived of the blessing of His presence is a mighty and evident loss. May God bestow His grace upon us so that we might everlastingly attain unto the blessing of His presence.

Kindly convey our greetings to the exalted Hájí Muhammad-Ibráhím;⁴²⁹ his place is indeed empty. Also convey our best wishes to all the honored friends. Peace be upon you!

5 Rajab AH 1277 [17 January 1861]

The *Kitáb-i Íqán*, revealed in space of two days and nights by Bahá'u'lláh, was initially known as the *Risálih-i Khálawiyyih* [The Treatise for the Uncle], but was later changed by Bahá'u'lláh to its present title. The very copy of the *Kitáb-i Íqán* given to the uncle was in the hand of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and only in a few margins had Bahá'u'lláh added comments or made alterations in His own hand. The Afnán family presented that copy to Shoghi Effendi, and it is now displayed at the Bahá'í International Archives Building in Haifa.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁹ A famous and untiring teacher, titled Muballigh by Bahá'u'lláh. At a later time, mostly through his efforts the Afnáns of Yazd converted to the Bahá'í Faith.

⁴³⁰ See Balyúzi, *Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory*, p. 165; Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi*, pp. 149–50; and Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 49–56, for a discussion of the fate of the original copy of the Book of Certitude.

In summation, it seems reasonable, therefore, to conclude that the purpose of the *Kitáb-i Íqán* was not to convert the uncle of the Báb, as he was already a believer. Rather, its goal was to disclose the full station of the young Prophet to the uncle and to enable him to see in the Báb the same power and majesty as manifested by all the Prophets of old.

Subsequent to his meeting with Bahá'u'lláh, the uncle of the Báb proceeded to the 'Atabát and, after having met with his sister, returned to Shíráz. There the believers came to meet him and to inquire of what had transpired in Baghdad. Upon meeting with Núri'd-Dín, the Khál Akbar asked the former to also enlighten his sons as to the true station of the Báb as an independent Manifestation of God. Eventually, in the fall of 1866, Nabíl A'zam was instructed to proclaim the new Cause of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the length and breadth of Iran. His arrival precipitated the conversion of the Khál Akbar and the remaining members of the Afnán family in Shíráz to the Bahá'í Faith.⁴³¹

The last question that remains to be answered is: In addition to the family's claim as reported above, is there any evidence from the Khál himself to suggest that he actually believed in Bahá'u'lláh? And if so, did he recognize in Him the Promised One of the Bayánic Dispensation? To answer these questions, we can do no better than to turn to the words of the uncle of the Báb in his own final will and testament:⁴³²

In the Name of God, the Glorious, the Most Glorious.

These few words are written as my will in the middle of Dhi'l-Qa'dih AH 1291 [Circa 24 December 1874].

First, I testify to the oneness and singleness of God. He is sanctified and supreme from having a partner. I further testify that the exalted and hallowed Person Who declared Himself in AH 1260 [1844] is indeed in the truth and manifested the glory and ascendancy of the Almighty God. Whatsoever He decreed in His religion and all that He revealed of the divine spiritual stations, are all the manifest truth, and whosoever obeyed Him is among those that were saved, and those that opposed Him indeed rank as ones who have perished. Today, the one true religion of God is that which His Holiness [the Báb] ordained. And further, today, the author of the Dispensation and the succor of this luminous community is the exalted and elevated Bahá, may my spirit and the spirit of the world be a sacrifice unto Him. His Manifestation is the same as the Báb's Manifestation. Obedience unto Him, is obedience unto God, and opposing Him, is opposing God.

⁴³¹ See chapter 6.

⁴³² Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 43–46.

Immersed in an ocean of sin, because of the infirmities of self, this servant concealed his convictions from all, even from his children and kinsmen. But now I have committed them to paper so that after my passing they become aware and strive to perceive the matter. God willing, they too will number among those who believed.

I ask those who may come upon these pages, whether of my children or kinsmen, or of others, that after my passing, in accordance with the laws of the Bayán, they prepare me for burial by washing and wrapping [my body] in cloth. And if I was in Shíráz, to bury my remains there. . . . And should those who claim to be Muslim, but in truth have not benefited from Islam, prevent you from my burial in a Muslim cemetery, then it matters not and bury me anywhere that is possible, whether inside or outside the city. And should I pass away somewhere other than in Shíráz, then wherever I have expired, bury me at that spot.

Of earthly possessions, let it be known that I have none that would require disposition through a will. For some time now I have been meeting my expenses through the support of my children. I do not possess anything myself. I owe a sum equivalent to seven hundred and fifty tumáns that I cannot repay. However, my sons are aware of the details, and if they are able to meet this obligation to the creditor, then I pray that the Lord of creation will recompense them through His benevolence. And if they are not able to do so, then they know best.

At the time of the writing of these pages, God is aware that if I were to list the furniture of the house and other possessions, it would add to about forty tumáns, nay, thirty. This residence was paid in full at first, but gradually a third of it has been mortgaged to Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí. Let this be known to all. Peace.

There are some monies owed me, but these remain beyond collection. The borrowers, much like myself, do not have the funds to repay me. And should they be able to repay, of a certainty, my creditors must be paid first. However, even if all the debts were paid in full, they would still not meet the amount that I owe.

The great-uncle of the Báb passed away in Shíráz in 1876. Bahá’u’lláh revealed a Tablet of Visitation in his honor, which forever will immortalize his radiant memory.⁴³³

⁴³³ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 42ff.

APPENDIX FIVE

THE PATERNAL GENEALOGY OF THE BÁB

In this appendix a brief biography of the paternal members of the Báb's family will be given. Few of the Báb's paternal relatives became Bábís or believed in Bahá'u'lláh. However, several of His relatives played significant roles in Bábí and Bahá'í history.

Siyyid Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá

The father of the Báb was the son and grandson of retail merchants.⁴³⁴ He owned a dry goods shop in the Bazaar Vakíl, a family business that had existed since the eighteenth century, and he had a house in the Bazaar Murgh district, the neighborhood where most of the Shíráz merchants lived. He married well, into the family of established wholesale import/export merchants. He had several children prior to the Báb, but none survived. His only surviving child was the Báb. He was forty-nine when he died. The Báb was probably nine at the time, although other accounts say that He was still an infant. Siyyid Muhammad-Ridá left a large enough inheritance to provide for his Son and widow.

Háji Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan

Known as Mírzáy-i Shírází, he was the greatest mujtahid of his day, considered the sole Marja' Taqlíd [the source of emulation] for the Shi'ih world, which meant he was turned to as the guide and exemplar in all matters concerning the application of Islamic law. His father was Mírzá Mahmúd Khúshnivís, a resident of Shíráz famed for his calligraphy in the Nasta'líq style. Mírzáy-i Shírází was born on 5 May 1815 in Shíráz and received his initial education there at the age of four. Though originally

⁴³⁴ As given in chapter 1, the paternal genealogy of the Báb is: Siyyid Mír Muhammad-Ridá, son of Mír Ibráhím, son of Mír Fathu'lláh, son of Siyyid 'Ábid, son of Siyyid Lutfu'lláh, son of Mír Muhammad Mu'min Husayn Shírází. The Báb's grandfather, Mír Ibráhím, had a brother by the name of Mír Ismá'il, who had a son named, Mírzá Mahmúd Khúshnivís [calligrapher]. Mírzá Mahmúd in turn had three sons: Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan, known as Hujjatu'l-Islam or Mírzáy-i Shírází; Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar; and a third son who was a physician practicing in Karbalá.

destined to follow his father's career as a local official, at the age of 18 he was sent to Isfahán, Iran's foremost city of learning at the time. It was in this city that he met the Báb on several occasions and became an ardent believer, though he concealed his faith. In 1843 he traveled to Najaf, and at first used to return frequently to Isfahán, until he began to attend the classes of Shaykh Murtidá Ansári (1799–1864). It was then that he decided to settle in 'Iraq permanently. Gradually, he became known as the most prominent student of Shaykh Murtidá, who was acknowledged as the leading mujtahid of the Shi'ih world.

When Shaykh Murtidá died, Mírzáy-i Shírízí succeeded him as teacher of his circle of students. He went on pilgrimage to Mecca in 1871. Over the next few years, his stature among the other 'ulamá increased to the point that when Siyyid Husayn Turk died in 1882, Mírzáy-i Shírízí became acknowledged as the sole Marja' Taqlíd. He is also called Hujjatu'l-Islám [the Proof of Islam], Ayatu'lláh [the Sign of God], and Mujaddid [Renewer] by his biographers. In 1875, Mírzáy-i Shírízí transferred his residence to Samarrá and remained there until his death, making this provincial shrine city for a time a center of scholarship.⁴³⁵

In 1891–92 there occurred the famous protest against the Tobacco Régie. As a result of a fatwá,⁴³⁶ first written and circulated by Hájí Mírzá Hasan Áshtiyání, but in December 1891 endorsed by Mírzáy-i Shírízí, the Government of Iran and the foreign diplomatic establishment were amazed to observe an almost complete cessation of the use of tobacco. The Sháh was forced to capitulate, and the tobacco concession was cancelled. This incident proved to be a forerunner of the Constitutional Revolt of a decade later.

Mírzáy-i Shírízí died on 20 February 1895, and his body was carried from Samarrá to Najaf, where it was buried. Subsequent to his passing, prayer vigils were held for him throughout Iran, and Násiri'd-Dín Sháh attended the one held in Tihrán.⁴³⁷

Hájí Siyyid Javád Shirází

He was a paternal relative of the Báb's father and studied in 'Iraq and returned to Shíráz in the 1820s. In about 1832 he was sent to Kirmán by

⁴³⁵ He was the teacher of Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís, a Qájár Prince who was a leading voice for reform in Iran and who is mentioned considerably in this volume.

⁴³⁶ For the text of the fatwá, see Bámdád, *Sharh Hál Rijál Iran*, vol. 1, p. 335.

⁴³⁷ A four-page Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Mírzáy-i Shírízí is quoted in Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 6, pp. 1012(ff).

Fath-‘Alí Sháh to act as a balance to the brutal regime of that province’s governor. Soon he became the Imám-Jum‘ih. He was noted for his interest in mysticism. His lectures on the first two verses of Rúmí’s *Mathnaví*, a somewhat daring subject for a man of his class, attracted many students, including Shaykh Hádí Sabzivari, the foremost Iranian philosopher of the nineteenth century.⁴³⁸

His chief rival in Kirmán was the Shaykhí leader, Hájí Muhammad-Karím Khán. When Quddús came to Kirmán in 1845 to announce the religion of the Báb to the Shaykhí leader, he stayed with Hájí Siyyid Javád who readily embraced the new Faith.⁴³⁹ Later he intervened on behalf of two Bábí teachers, Mullá Sádiq Khurásání and Mullá Yúsuf Ardabilí, when they were attacked in Kirmán. He passed away in AH 1287 [1870].

Áqá Mírzá Zaynu’l-‘Abidín

A paternal relative of the Báb’s father, he was married to Zahrá Bagum<8>. Their son was Áqá Mírzá Áqá, known as Núri’d-Dín. He became a Bábí after the martyrdom of the Báb and received a Tablet from Bahá’u’lláh prior to his own passing in AH 1276 [1859]. He was a merchant but later retired to become a farmer.

Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar

A second cousin of the Báb, he was a devoted believer and a close companion of Mírzá Asadu’lláh Khú’í, surnamed Dayyán. Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar (and Dayyán) was murdered in Baghdad at the instigation of Mírzá Yahyá Azal, and Bahá’u’lláh makes a reference to him in His *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* and in yet another Tablet.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁸ Bástaní-Párizí, *Kuchih Haft Pich*, ch. 3, states that Sabzivari desired the tutelage of Siyyid Javád to such a degree that on foot he traveled from his native Khurásán to Kirmán, and when he arrived the period of enrollment for the Siyyid’s class was completed. Undaunted, Sabzivari took a job as a janitor in that building, married the daughter of the building’s custodian, and stayed for the next six months to partake of these lectures. The same source further states that Siyyid Javád would commence his annual classes on the first day of the Fall by reciting the opening two verses of Rúmí’s *Mathnaví*, and then spending the next six months offering unsurpassed analysis and expositions, concluding his last lecture on the day before Naw-Rúz.

⁴³⁹ One of the Bábís of Kirmán has left behind a large account of Quddús’ visit to that city, entitled *Kitábú’l-Quddúsiyyih*, which the present translator has rendered into English and which will soon appear in print.

⁴⁴⁰ Bahá’u’lláh, *Isbráqát*, p. 48.

APPENDIX SIX

THE AFNÁN FAMILY: SOME BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

In the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the term 'Afnán' is used to refer to the maternal family of the Báb. A definition is given in the following Tablet, revealed in honor of the martyred Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá (d. 1896):

In response to your question about the meaning of the terms 'Aghsán' and 'Afnán', when the Supreme Pen hath mentioned the Afnán, We have intended the descendants of the Primal Point. Verily, in this Dispensation, all have been summoned to the Most Exalted Horizon and guided to the Most Great Ocean. At the beginning of Our Days, a special prayer was revealed for the Afnán, which ordained that they would be faithful to the Manifestation of God and recognize Him. God willing, they will arise to fulfil what hath been decreed for them and will remain firm and steadfast in the Cause of God. Blessed are those whom We have called by this name, Afnán. Verily, the sweet fragrance of the All-Merciful hath been wafted from them. Moreover, We have established them as twigs of Our own Tree. Verily, this is Our favor upon them. We beseech God to protect them from the traces of the pen and the veils of knowledge. We have bestowed this gift on some in the Book, the contents of which are concealed from all save the Lord of Creation. Soon what hath been ordained for them by the Almighty, the All-knowing, will appear.⁴⁴¹

The term 'Afnán' is the plural of the word *fanán*, which in Arabic refers to a straight and verdant branch. In the Qur'án's Surih of Rahmán (the Merciful), the term was used to describe the celestial dwelling of the righteous. This dwelling has two heavenly trees, one of which is called 'the Afnán.'⁴⁴² Similarly, Islamic Traditions refer to a firm branch.⁴⁴³

The first genealogy of the Báb's family was offered at the beginning of *The Dawn-Breakers* by Shoghi Effendi. The following table provides

⁴⁴¹ Fayzí, *Khándán Afán*, pp. 10–11.

⁴⁴² Qur'án 55:46–47.

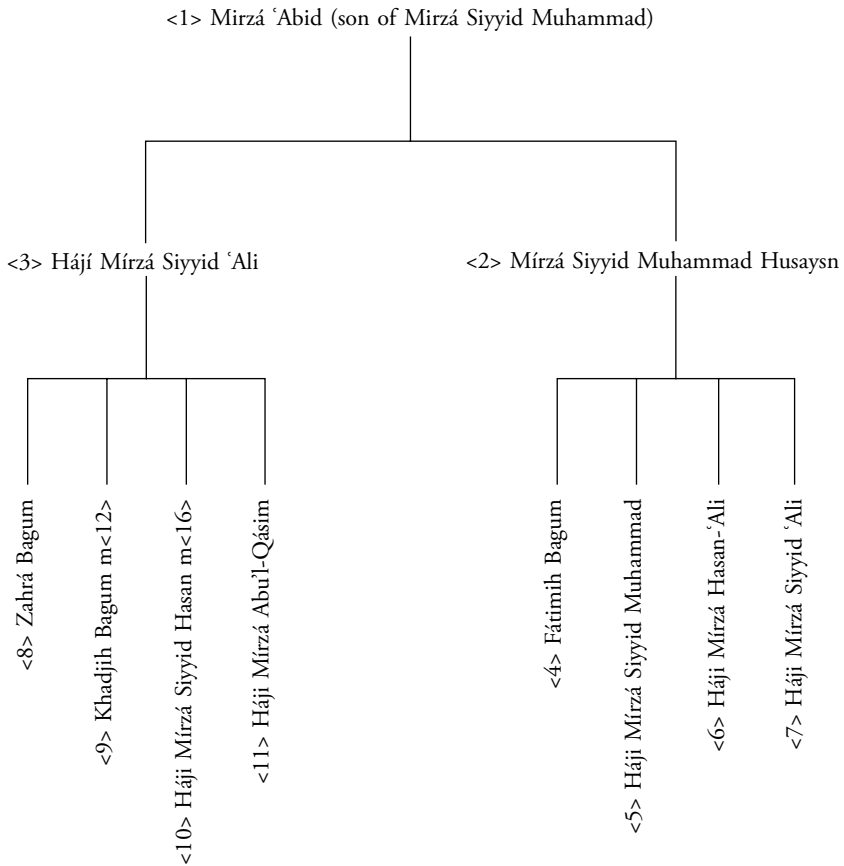
⁴⁴³ For an example of a Tradition attributed to Imám Hasan, see Fayzí, *Khándán Afán*, p. 9.

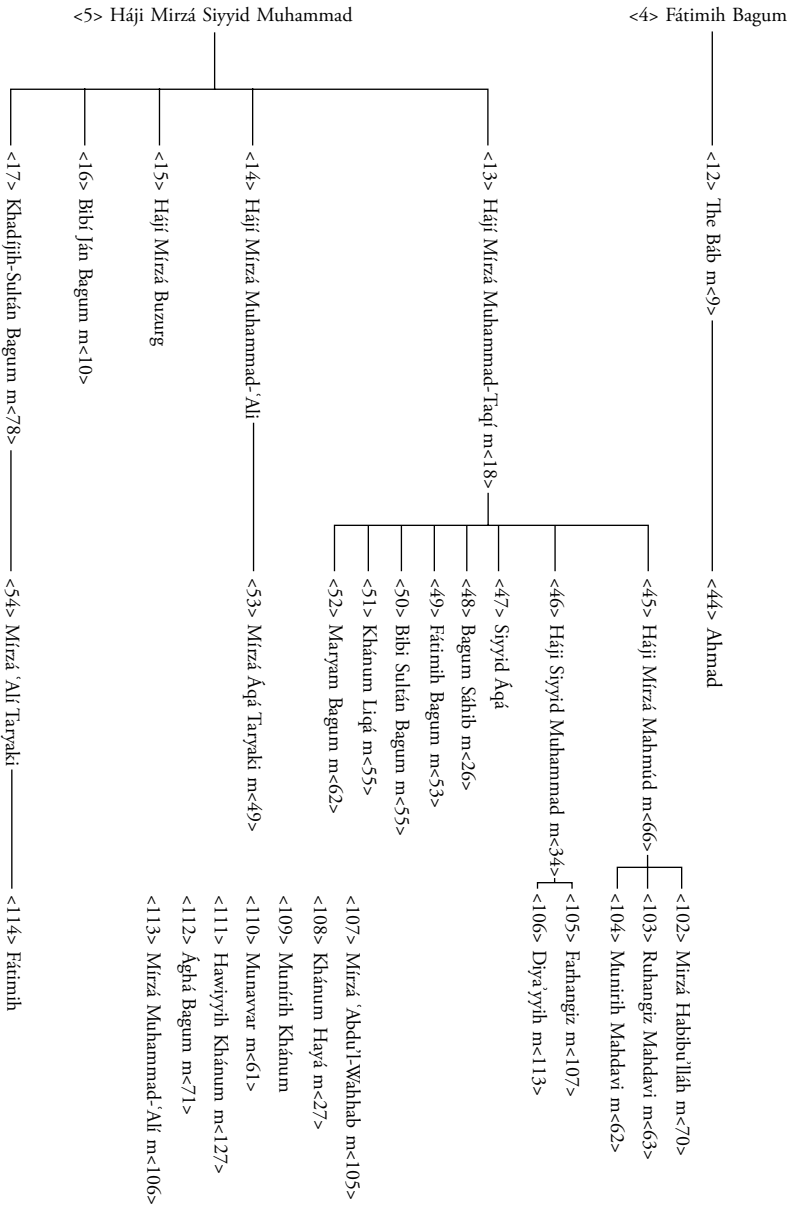
an extension of that genealogy for the Afnán family. It is followed by a biographical outline. I am grateful to Abú'l-Qasim Afnán, Hasan Afnán, Firdaws Afnán, and Maryam Rabbani for their generous help in preparing it.

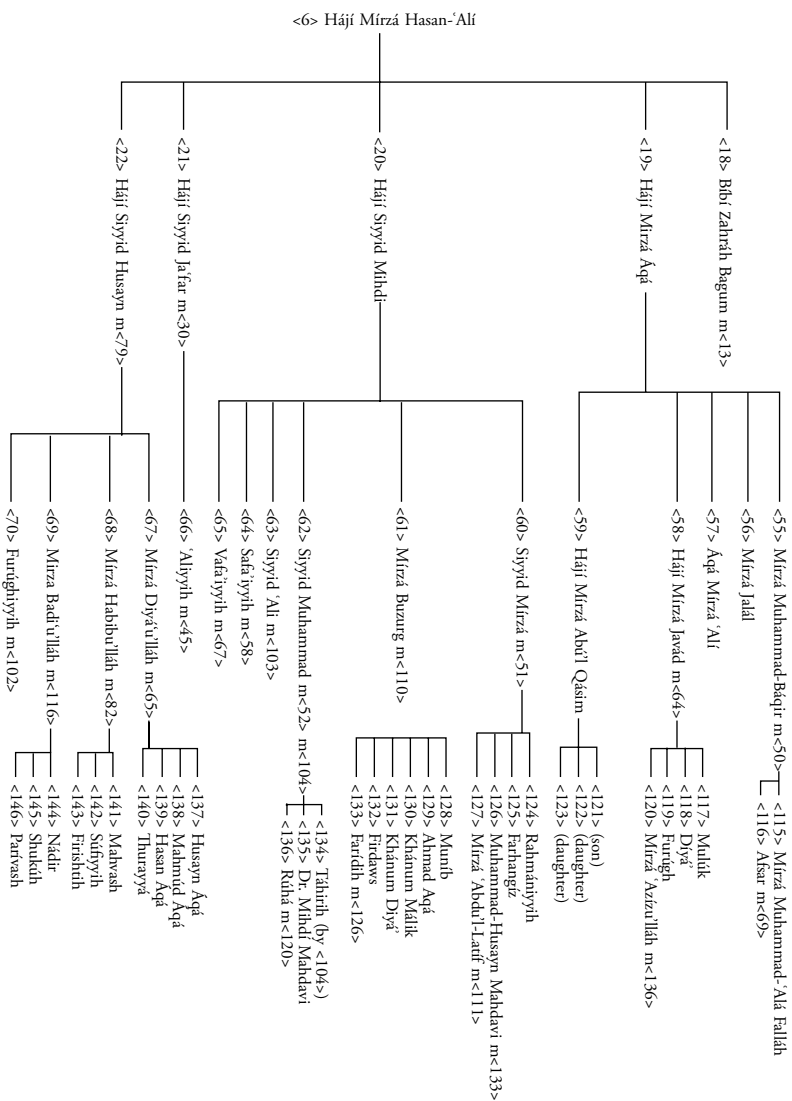
DESCENDANTS OF ÁQÁ MÍRZÁ SIYYID MUHAMMAD

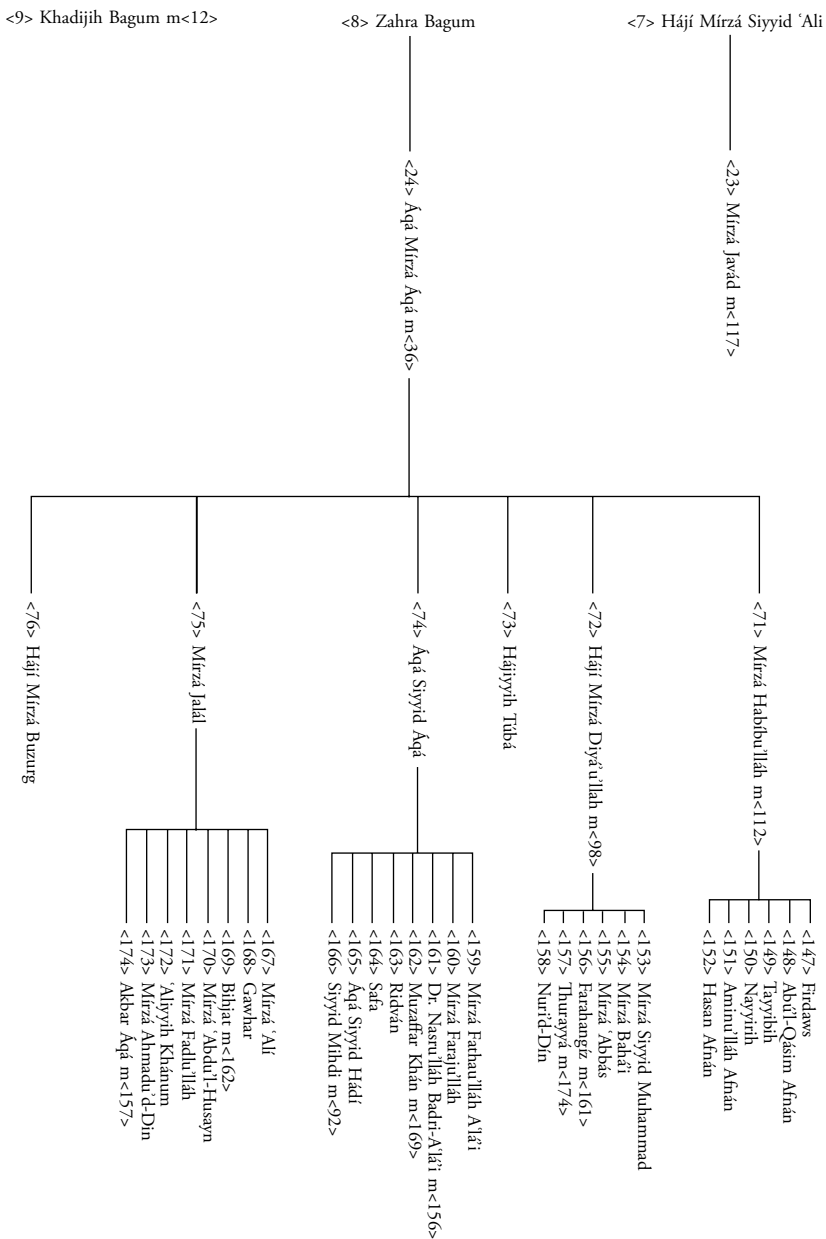
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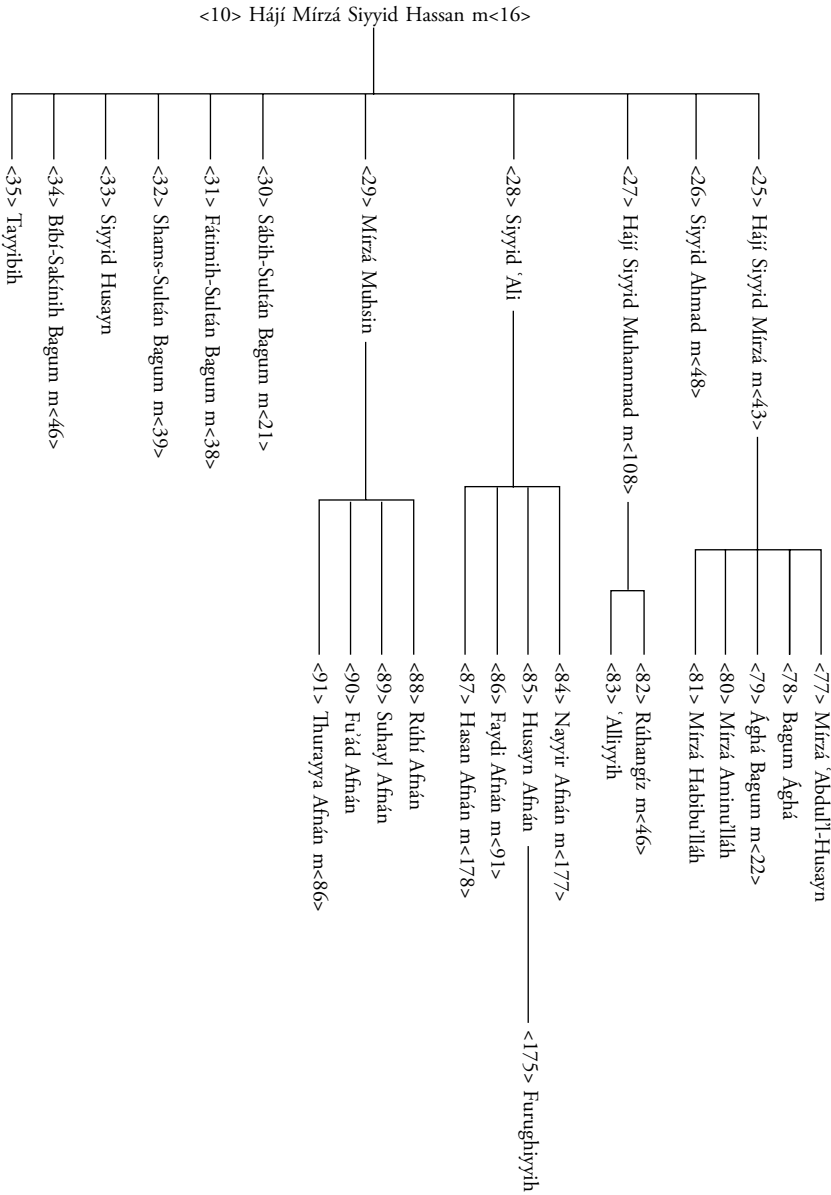
The individual designation number given in pointed brackets, < >. If the spouse was also a member of the Afná family, then their designation number follows “m”, as in, m<24>.

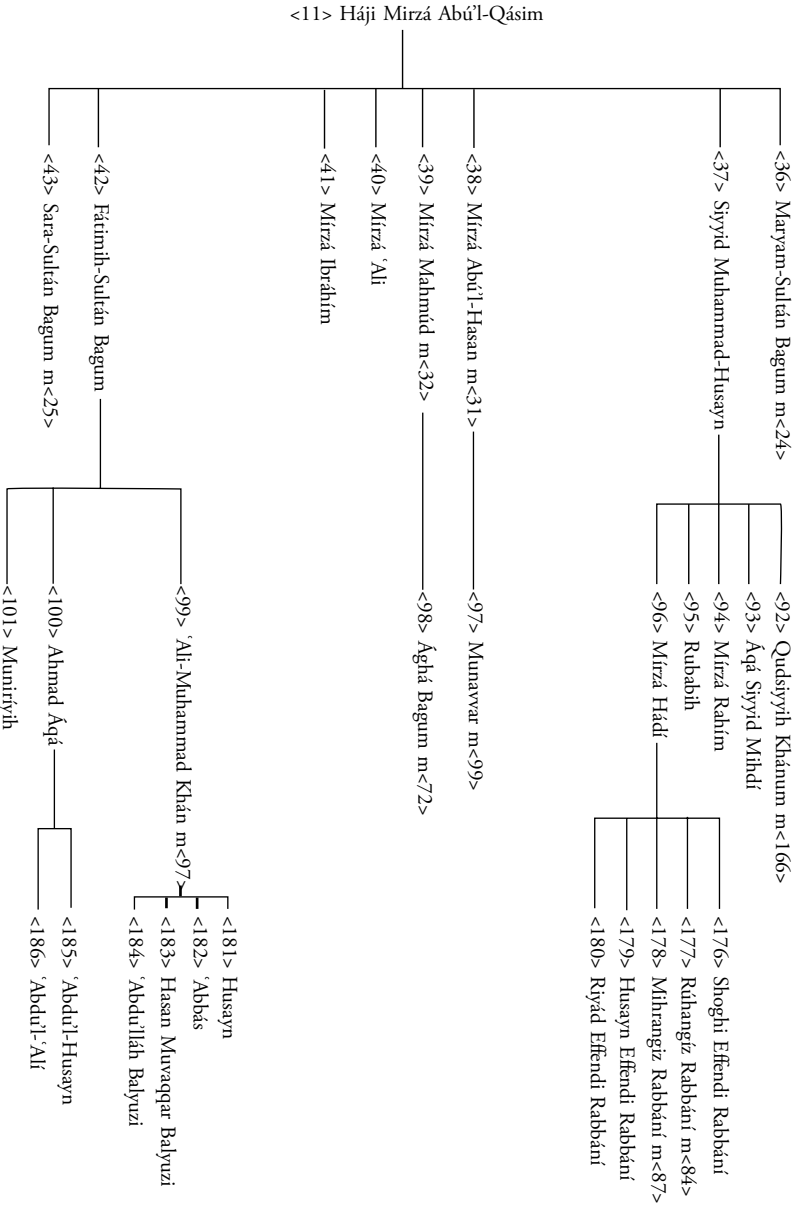












The following is a brief biographical sketch of the consanguineous members of the Afnán family who are mentioned in this volume or are of some other historical interest.⁴⁴⁴ The notes are in numerical order and use the same numbering system as the genealogy chart.

<1> *Mírzá ‘Abid*

A son of Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad. He was known as Mírzá Zaynu’l-‘Abidín.

<2> *Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad Husayn*

The Báb’s maternal grandfather.

<3> *Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí*

He was a wholesale merchant involved in importing and exporting through Shíráz and its port of Búshihir. He was married to Hájíyyih Bíbí.

<4> *Fátimih Bagum*

The mother of the Báb. She came from a well-known and highly respected cloth merchant family in Shíráz that traced its ancestry to Imám Husayn. She married Siyyid Muhammad-Ridá, a member of another merchant family from Shíráz. They had several children who did not survive. The only child to live to adulthood was Siyyid ‘Alí-Muhammad, the Báb<12>, who was born on 20 October 1819. When Fátimih Bagum’s husband died a few years later, she went to live in the house of her brother, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí<7>, who acted as her Son’s guardian. In 1842, she arranged for the marriage of her Son to Khadíjih Bagum<9> and lived with them in their House.

When the Báb first put forward His claim in 1844, Fátimih Bagum did not immediately become a believer, although her brother, Hájí Siyyid Mírzá Muhammad, influenced her to hold a sympathetic view of the movement.⁴⁴⁵ She was greatly distressed by the way Husayn Khán, the governor of Shíráz, treated her Son and by the raid that officials made on their House. When the Báb left Shíráz for Isfahán in October 1846,

⁴⁴⁴ For a detailed discussion of the Afnán family, see Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán* and Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 5, pp. 515–30.

⁴⁴⁵ For letters written by Khál Akbar to his family members on this issue, see Rabbani, “Conversion of the Great-Uncle of the Báb,” and appendix 4.

the people and government officials of the city continued to harass the family.

According to Nabíl A'zam, before the Báb left Shíráz, He prepared His will and bequeathed the estate to His mother and His wife, with the whole reverting to His wife, Khadíjih Bagum, when His mother died.⁴⁴⁶

News of her Son reached Fátimih Bagum only sporadically. When He was executed in Tabríz in 1850, the family kept the news from her for more than a year. The grief of the news and the hostility of friends and some family members finally caused her to move to Karbalá in Rabí'u'l-Avval AH 1268 [December 1851]. She took with her: Háji Mubárak, the Ethiopian servant of the Báb purchased in Búshih; Bábí Gawhar, aunt of the Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih<99>; and her own mother.⁴⁴⁷ Later, Háji 'Abdu'l-Majíd and his wife, who were both Bábís, joined her. During this period, the family worried about her living in the 'Atabát and, on at least one occasion, Khajídh Bagum considered visiting her. When she consulted Bahá'u'lláh about this, He said: "In response to your letter stating that the mother of the Exalted One, may the spirit of all be a sacrifice to Him, wants you to travel to that land [Karbalá], know that this is most pleasing. Should you undertake this journey, it will assuredly be a source of happiness for her."⁴⁴⁸

Up to this time, Fátimih Bagum was not a Bábí. Mírzá Habíbu'lláh<71> reports Bahá'u'lláh's stating that Mírzá Yahyá Azal's action in marrying the Báb's second wife drove Fátimih Bagum away from accepting the Faith. While Bahá'u'lláh was in Baghdad, He arranged for the wife of Háji 'Abdu'l-Majíd and for Háji Siyyid Javád Karbalá'í, an old friend of Fátimih Bagum's family, to speak to her about the Faith.⁴⁴⁹ Eventually, she became a believer. She continued to live in Karbalá until her death in about 1881.

⁴⁴⁶ Nabíl A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 190.

⁴⁴⁷ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 515, states that they were accompanied by Háji Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad<5>.

⁴⁴⁸ INBMC 51:261, no. 265.

⁴⁴⁹ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, pp. 515–16, reports: "In accordance with His [Bahá'u'lláh's] instructions, the two of them spoke with her about the Cause. Expressing her deep regret, the Báb's mother alluded to the shameful act of Mírzá Yahyá Azal in marrying the wife of the Báb from Isfahán days and remarked, 'How is one to trust the faith of a people who marry His wife, while the blood of that Wronged One [the Báb] is still wet on the ground?!' On returning to the presence of the Blessed Beauty, Siyyid Javád conveyed her objections. Bahá'u'lláh was deeply saddened and responded, 'Henceforth, do not speak with the mother of the Báb about this Cause, as she is grieved over what has happened. Indeed, no excuse can be offered for the transgressions that she speaks of, and she is most assuredly correct about them.'"

In the *Qayyumu'l-Asmá'*, Surih 28, the Báb refers to Fátimih Bagum as *Ummu'l-Mu'minin* [mother of the believers] and *Ummu'dh-Dhikr* [mother of the Remembrance]. Bahá'u'lláh refers to her as *Khayru'n-Nisa* [the best of women] and forbids all others, except Khadíjih Bagum, from adopting this title.⁴⁵⁰

One of the objectives of the Ten Year Crusade was to locate the grave of Fátimih Bagum. Thus far, the Iraq Bahá'ís have not been able to do so.

<5> *Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad*

The oldest of the Báb's maternal uncles and the recipient of the *Kitáb-i Íqán*. He was also known as Khál Akbar [great uncle].

Khál Akbar was born in 1798 and was a merchant. His wife, Hájíyyih Bíbí Fátimih-Sáhib, was a daughter of Hájí Muhammad-Muhsin and a member of another prominent merchant family trading in Shíráz and Búshihir. Khál Akbar ran the family office in Búshihir. The Báb was closely associated with him during the first four years. He worked as a merchant there.

Several years before the Báb's declaration, Khál Akbar was concerned that the Báb's preoccupation with religious matters would create problems. Later, he met Mullá 'Alí Bastámí, whom the Báb had sent as a messenger, and began to have a change of heart. The Báb stayed with him when He passed through Búshihir on His pilgrimage journey. On His return, the Báb stayed with him once more, arriving on 15 May 1845 and staying for 10 days before leaving for Shíráz. It seems that during this time the uncle recognized in the Báb unrivalled spiritual powers. When Khál Akbar returned to Shíráz, he fell under the suspicion attached to all members of the Báb's family, despite his outward protestations of orthodoxy.

In the late 1850s, the young Áqá Mírzá Áqá<24> began urging Khál Akbar to renew his commitment to the Bábí Faith and accept the Báb as the promised Qá'im. Since his sister, the Báb's mother, was living in Karbalá, he agreed to visit Bahá'u'lláh while passing through Baghdad. He was received by Bahá'u'lláh in early January 1861. At Bahá'u'lláh's request, he wrote out the questions that disturbed him about why the Báb had not literally fulfilled Islamic prophecies.⁴⁵¹ Over the next two days and nights, Bahá'u'lláh revealed the *Kitáb-i Íqán* in reply. After this, Khál Akbar became fully aware of the Báb's station.

⁴⁵⁰ Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i Badi'*, p. 389.

⁴⁵¹ For a translation of this document, see appendix 4, or Rabbani, "Conversion of the Great-Uncle of the Báb."

He became a Bahá'í in 1867 when Nabíl came to Shíráz with news of Bahá'u'lláh's claim to be "Him Whom God will make manifest." He passed away in Shíráz in 1876 and was immortalized with a Tablet of Visitation revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.⁴⁵²

<6> *Hájí Mirzá Hasan-'Alí*

The youngest of the Báb's maternal uncles. He was known as Khál Asghar [youngest uncle]. He lived in Yazd and traded on the family's behalf in eastern Iran. He married Hájíyyih Bībí Gawhar, the daughter of Hájí 'Abdu'r-Rasul Shírází,⁴⁵³ another Shíráz merchant.

He remained unsympathetic to his Nephew's movement for many years. Although he accompanied his brother to Iraq, he refused to meet Bahá'u'lláh. He was finally converted in the late 1860s through the concerted efforts of several famous Bahá'í teachers: Muhammad-Ibráhím Muballigh, Nabíl Akbar, and Mullá Sádiq Khurásání. He died in Yazd but was buried in Karbalá. The location of his grave is not known.

<7> *Hájí Mirzá Siyyid 'Alí*

The second of the Báb's maternal uncles. He was born at the turn of the 19th century. Although in terms of age he was the second of the maternal uncles, he was referred to as Khál A'zam [most great uncle]. This was because of his devotion to the Báb and spiritual attainments. He is best known for being the Báb's guardian and one of the Seven Martyrs of Tihrán.

He was a well-traveled merchant, prominent in the business community, and respected for his piety. He and his two brothers carried on a business importing from and exporting to India. He was married to a maternal half-sister of Khadíjih Bagum, who was known in the family as 'Ammih Hájí.⁴⁵⁴ When the Báb's father died, Khál A'zam assumed the guardianship of the Báb and His mother. He was very attached to his Nephew and reared Him in his own home with a great deal of attention. Seeing that his Nephew had no particular interest in formal studies, he put Him

⁴⁵² Fayzí, *Khándán Afján*, pages prior to 43.

⁴⁵³ Hájí 'Abdu'r-Rasul had three children: Hájí Muhammad-Ibráhím Muballigh, Hájíyyih Bībí Gawhar, and Hájíyyih Fátimih Bībí.

⁴⁵⁴ Her name was Hájíyyih Bībí Ján-Ján. She passed away in 1889 and was buried in Sháh-Chiráq.

in charge of the family's trading office in Búshih. He later traveled to Karbalá to try to persuade the Báb to return home.

Vakílu'd-Dawlih^{<13>} notes that around 1840, Siyyid 'Alí retired from the business world and joined the messianic rank of those who anticipated the appearance of the Qá'im. This may well have been due to his Shaykhí proclivities. However, there is also evidence that he continued his trading activities into 1845.

Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí became a Bábí in June 1845 through the efforts of Quddús, whom the Báb had sent ahead of Him to Shíráz after His pilgrimage. When the Báb returned to Shíráz under arrest, Khál A'zam approached the governor and stood as surety for the Báb to obtain His release. During the remainder of the Báb's stay in Shíráz, He sometimes lived in His uncle's house. When the Báb was arrested in October 1846, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí was beaten so severely that he was bedridden for three months.

After the Báb left Shíráz, Khál A'zam tried to shield the Báb's wife and mother from the news of His imprisonment and sufferings. When he received news of the Báb's transfer to Chihríq and His trial and beating with the bastinado, he set out to see the Báb once more. He left in 1848, going first to Yazd, where he settled his business accounts with his brother, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí, and entrusted the Báb's business capital to him. He eventually reached Chihríq and stayed a short time with the Báb but was soon forced to leave. He went to Qazvín and then traveled to Mazandarán in order to join the Bábís at Shaykh Tabarsí.⁴⁵⁵ However, the Tabarsí conflict had ended by the time he reached Bárfurúsh, so he went to Tihrán.

Khál A'zam lived in the capital for a time at the house of Muhammad Big Chápárchí. Muhammad Big had been the commander of the Báb's escort from Kulayn to Adharbayjan and had now become a believer. Khál A'zam associated freely with the Bábís of Tihrán. Bahá'u'lláh's brother, Mírzá Músá, warned him to leave in order to avoid arrest, but he made no attempt to avoid the danger and was among the prominent Bábís arrested in February 1850.

Mírzá Taqí Khán, the prime minister, interrogated Siyyid 'Alí himself. Khál A'zam refused to recant, saying that he had seen the wonders of

⁴⁵⁵ At the Báb's instruction, all believers were called on to go to Mazandarán to aid Quddús.

the Prophets of the past in his Nephew and was willing and eager to face martyrdom on His behalf. He also rejected other offers to save himself by recanting. Before his execution in the Sabzih-Maydán, he took God as his witness that he was to die only for his faith, not for having committed any transgression. He was beheaded before a large crowd and became the first of the Seven Martyrs of Tihrán to die that day. The burial site of the Seven Martyrs is known as Maydán Amínu's-Saltanih and is situated between the two gates of the city, 'Abdu'l-A'zím and Naw.

Khál A'zam's house in Shíráz was designated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. It belonged to the Bahá'í community until Bahá'í properties were seized during the Iranian revolution of 1979.

<8> *Zahrá Bagum*

Referred to in the Writings as '*Ukht Haram*' [sister of the wife of the Báb]. In 1838–39, she married Áqá Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín, a paternal cousin of the Báb. She became a Bábí in the 1850s, after the conversion of her son, Áqá Mírzá Áqá<24>, and a Bahá'í about a decade later. She was very close to the wife of the Báb and was one of the few who dared to visit her during the difficult days after the Báb's arrest in 1846. During this time, she was known to dress as a beggar and visit her sister's House to lend her support. After her sister's death in 1882, she moved into the Báb's House in Shíráz and lived there until her own death in October 1889. On Bahá'u'lláh's instructions, the custodians of the House of the Báb are chosen from her descendants. She was buried near Khadíjih Bagum.

Zahrá Bagum received many Tablets from Bahá'u'lláh, two of which are quoted below.

Ukht Haram.

The Wondrous, the Most Great!

O leaf! God willing, through the bounties of the Lord of Creation, thou wilt be attached to the divine Lote-Tree in all the worlds. Heavenly favors have been decreed for each one of you and will continue to surround thee. Praise to the Lord of Eternity that thou hast attained the greatest bounty, the recognition of the Most Great Beauty. By God's leave, may thou always be engaged in praising the Merciful with the utmost spirit and joy...⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁶ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 198.

A second Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh in honor of Zahrá Bagum reads:

Sh[íráz]. The sacred leaf, the mother of the Afnán, upon her be the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is Governor over the Supreme Horizon!

O My leaf and mother of My Afnán, upon him rest forever the glory of God, and His bounty and His mercy, in both the heavens and the earth!

You have endured in the path of God that which hath caused the hearts of the denizens of the cities of justice and equity to be filled with sorrow. Yet, since all that occurred was sustained in the path of God, then it is very important and best to be patient and forbearing.

The exalted leaf⁴⁵⁷—upon her rest the glory of God, His mercy, and His bounties—and thine esteemed self, have always been in our thoughts and will always remain so. I swear by the supreme Day-Star, Which is evident and manifest over the horizon of the Most Great Prison, that what hath been ordained for the Afnáns is such that naught besides can compare with it.

The world testifies to its own evanescence. Every discerning person can readily and at all times see the world's impermanence, and every ear can hear its cry and lamentation.

The station that the Supreme Pen hath decreed for the Afnáns is the remembrance of God, His praise, and teaching of His Cause to a prescribed degree. No other station is greater than this. What hath been revealed in the Tablets is such that the entire world cannot be compared to one word of it....⁴⁵⁸

<9> *Khadíjih Bagum*

The wife of the Báb. She is occasionally referred to as Khadíjih-Sultán Bagum.

Khadíjih Bagum was a cousin of the Báb's mother. Marriages to cousins are common in many Muslim countries because they are believed to strengthen family ties. Khadíjih Bagum's mother was Hájíyyih BÍbí, a native of Jahrum. Her first marriage was to Áqá Muhammad-Taquí and, from this marriage she had a son named Muhammad-Mihdí Hijjab and a daughter named Hájíyyih BÍbí Ján-Ján, who later married Khál A'zam. Khadíjih Bagum's father, Áqá MÍrzá 'Alí<3>, was a wholesale merchant involved in importing and exporting through Shíráz and its port of Búshih. His residence was located in the Bazaar Murgh quarter.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁷ Presumably, a reference to Khadíjih Bagum.

⁴⁵⁸ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 198–99.

⁴⁵⁹ Some of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets to Khadíjih Bagum are quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 186–91.

As explained in previous chapters, Bahá'u'lláh bestowed the custodianship of the House of the Báb on Khadíjih Bagum:

Bahá'u'lláh.

In the Name of God, the Ruler, the Wise, the Ever-present Fashioner of the heavens and the earth.

O you the near ones in Sh[íráz]! Under all conditions, the Supreme Pen hath testified and always will: God is Single, the One, the Almighty, the All-powerful, the All-conquering, the Omnipotent. He doeth as He pleaseth and ordaineth whatever He willeth. He is the Compassionate, the Generous!

We have bestowed the custodianship of the Blessed House upon the exalted leaf, the wife of the Primal Point, and her sister, upon them rest the glory of God and His mercy and His favor. God hath granted the custodianship for this House. Verily, He is adorned with the robe of generosity and hath fixed His seal on this command, for He is the Almighty, the Beloved. From her Lord, the Merciful, this honor and benevolence hath been bestowed upon the sister and her descendants. He is the Munificent and the Compassionate, and He is the Generous and the Bounteous.⁴⁶⁰

A Tablet was revealed shortly after the passing of Khadíjih Bagum.⁴⁶¹ It is dated 17 Muharram AH 1300 (28 November 1882) and is addressed to Núrí'd-Dín.⁴⁶² It indicates that while Khadíjih Bagum was sending her final letter to Bahá'u'lláh, the Supreme Pen was in spiritual commune with her and was responding to her message:

... I beseech Thee, O Possessor of all names and Creator of the heavens, to ordain for Thy Afnán⁴⁶³ that which will protect him from all else besides Thee, and to bestow upon him a measure of Thy patience and to enable him to attain that which is worthy of Thy Days. Thou art the All-mighty, the All-knowing, the All-informed.

Even though the calamitous news of her passing hath set every limb and organ aflame, yet these days are the Days of the Manifestation, and patience must be observed in all situations. This hath been revealed by the One Who is to be obeyed. May the Almighty God adorn all with the robe of His patience. He is sufficient unto all creation.

Praise be to God! Several months ago, a special Tablet was revealed from the heaven of the divine will in honor of the exalted leaf, the most esteemed lady and the most melodious song.⁴⁶⁴ This servant [Mírzá Áqá Ján] was lost

⁴⁶⁰ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 203.

⁴⁶¹ For details of the events leading up to the passing of Khadíjih Bagum, see chapter 9.

⁴⁶² Bahá'u'lláh, *Núrí'd-Din Collection*, pp. 72–73.

⁴⁶³ Presumably, a reference to Núrí'd-Dín.

⁴⁶⁴ A reference to Khadíjih Bagum.

in thought over what was revealed, yet asked no questions because of His manifest might and sovereignty. A while ago, instructions were issued for a clean copy of that sacred and most holy Tablet to be prepared and sent. Now, considering the content of her letter, it hath become clear that at the same time as she was writing her letter, a response was being revealed from the heaven of divine favor.

Bahá'u'lláh was greatly disappointed about what had led to Khadíjih Bagum's untimely death. He revealed the following for Núri'd-Dín on 4 Rabí'u'l-Avval AH 1301 (3 January 1884):

The honored Afnáns,⁴⁶⁵ upon them rest all My glory, the Most Glorious, arrived in Beirut and, afterwards, by Our leave, gradually and individually arrived here. Having entered the canopy of Our favors and might, one by one they returned. Regarding what had happened, they stated that their plan was that, after arriving in Beirut, Siyyid 'Alí would return to Sh[íráz] to accompany the exalted leaf to this land of God. They stated that they had designed the plan in this way because they feared going to Sh[íráz] any earlier might provoke the foes and enemies to act and prevent all from attaining Our presence. It was even asserted that, despite such caution, the enemies caused disturbances along the way; but creation, protection, and liberty are all in the hands of God, and He is the All-bountiful, the All-generous. In short, such excuses were heard from one after another. But the Lord hath knowledge of all things; He is the All-knowing, the All-informed.

Nevertheless, it would have been best [if they had] carried out the wishes of the illustrious exalted leaf, as this was most pleasing and acceptable to God; but it was otherwise ordained. The One True God is My witness! Our heart hath melted in agony that she was deprived of this pilgrimage, and all the dwellers under the tabernacle of purity and might are most sorrowful and despondent. At one point, the Tongue of Grandeur spoke these exalted words: "O 'Abd-i Hadir![ever-present servant] The effect of what hath happened may well appear on earth." More recently, this utterance was spoken by His blessed Tongue: "Write to My Afnán [who had promised to escort the Báb's wife] that we agreed and consented to the exalted leaf's request. Currently, the honored persons continue to stand ready and prepared to fulfil that promise, though they have not spoken of it." He further stated, "Write of this matter to the Afnán, upon him be the glory of God, as he was well aware of such a promise beforehand. We desired to fulfil what We had assured the exalted leaf."⁴⁶⁶

It seems that there was considerable interest among certain Bahá'ís of Shíráz to serve as custodian of the resting-place of Khadíjih Bagum. In a Tablet dated 4 Rabí'u'l-Avval AH 1301 (3 January 1884), Bahá'u'lláh

⁴⁶⁵ Afnán Kabír and his family.

⁴⁶⁶ Bahá'u'lláh, *Núri'd-Dín Collection*, pp. 70–71.

informs Núri'd-Dín that a letter was recently received from Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí containing several requests that were all replied to. Bahá’u’lláh then states:

Further, he⁴⁶⁷ requested that the custodianship of the blessed shrine of the exalted leaf and the resting-place of the illustrious Afnán Kabír—that is, the celebrated Khál⁴⁶⁸—be given to Hájí Mírzá Fadlu’lláh. Hájí Mírzá Fadlu’lláh hath also petitioned for this, as have a few other near ones. After he attained Our presence and made the same request, the Tongue of the King of Creation uttered these sacred words: “All matters relating to the sacred leaf are to be referred to the honored Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán.”

In the following Tablet, the Master issued instructions about the sacredness of the resting-place of Khadíjih Bagum:

He is God.

Sh[íráz]. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree planted on Sinai, upon him be the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

O Afnán of the Tree beyond which there is no passing and of the friends of the Blessed Beauty! The sacred House [of the Báb] and the point of adoration of the denizens of the Concourse on High must be protected and preserved with the greatest wisdom and looked after and cared for with exhaustive effort. This Servant is but one of the attendants of that Threshold. Therefore, consider how truly precious that pinnacle of divine veneration is in the Abhá Kingdom. All the inhabitants of Fars dwell under the shadow of that sanctified altar.

Concerning the sacred, fragrant, and resplendent sepulcher of the illustrious wife [of the Báb]—My spirit yearns to inhale the holy scent of that dust—you must protect it with the greatest care until the time when her shrine is built. On behalf of this Servant, the Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree must circumambulate that sacred ground, where the spirit of the Sacred Ones circle in adoration, and visit that perfumed and sanctified resting-place.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.⁴⁶⁹

When Khadíjih Bagum died, Bahá’u’lláh instructed Zahrá Bagum to live in the House of the Báb.

<10> *Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Hasan*

Commonly known as Afnán Kabír. Although he was a merchant by profession, he spent some time as a theology student in Shíráz and Isfahán and,

⁴⁶⁷ Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí.

⁴⁶⁸ Hájí Siyyid Mírzá Muhammad, known as Khál Akbar.

⁴⁶⁹ INBMC 52:282, no. 333.

throughout his life, retained an interest in theology and the exact sciences. It is reported that he taught medicine and had many students.⁴⁷⁰ He built an observatory in his house in Yazd to pursue his interest in astronomy. There is some evidence that he was hostile to the Báb at first,⁴⁷¹ although ‘Abdu’l-Bahá credits him with having been a believer in the time of the Báb.⁴⁷² In any case, he played no active role until he accepted Bahá’u’lláh some years later. Towards the latter part of his life, he lived in Beirut, where he and his sons ran one of the branches of the Afnán’s trading company. He was married to Bíbí-Ján-Ján Bagum<16> and they had 11 children. Two of his sons married into Bahá’u’lláh’s family. In his final years, he retired to ‘Akká, where Professor Edward G. Browne met him in 1890.⁴⁷³ He died at the age of 85, a few months⁴⁷⁴ after Bahá’u’lláh, and was buried in Manshiyih cemetery near Bahjí.⁴⁷⁵

<11> *Hájí Mirzá Abú’l-Qásim*

An older brother to Khadíjih Bagum. He was born in 1811 and was known as Saqqá-Kháníh because he had once built a public fountain across from his office. His wife was Sáhíb-Sultán Bagum of Jahrum. He carried on his father’s extensive trading activities and became a very affluent merchant. In the early 1840s, he had business connections with the Báb. Many years later, he became a Bahá’í. Throughout his life, he was the main source of support for his younger sister, Khadíjih Bagum, and saw to her comfort. He passed away in Shíráz in 1887 and was buried near his sister.⁴⁷⁶ Subsequently, Bahá’u’lláh revealed the following Tablet in honor of his son, Mírzá Abú’l-Hasan<38>:

... O My Afnán, O Abú’l-Hasan! Upon thee rest My glory! Harken to the call of this Wronged One and, through the pure water of divine remembrance, sanctify your heart from the dust of sorrow that hath beclouded thee. Although what happened was indeed a great calamity, yet patience and forbearance are particularly worthy qualities in the sight of God. He

⁴⁷⁰ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 529.

⁴⁷¹ See Balyúzi, *Khadíjih Bagum*, p. 25, and Balyúzi, *Eminent Bahá’is in the Time of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 216.

⁴⁷² See ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 22.

⁴⁷³ See Browne, *A Traveler’s Narrative*, pp. xxxvii–xxxviii.

⁴⁷⁴ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 529 gives the date as 1894.

⁴⁷⁵ See Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 251–55.

⁴⁷⁶ For a brief biography of Mírzá Abú’l-Qásim, see Fasá’í, *Fársnámih Násiri*, vol. 2, p. 131.

is the Patient One and commands all His servants to act with dignified forbearance....

Convey the greetings of this Wronged One to all your kindred and counsel them to be resigned and forbearing. Today is a day for praise, glorification, and service to the Cause. The chosen ones, particularly the Afnán, must be engaged at all times in teaching and promoting the Faith. The Supreme Pen hath revealed for the Afnán what will endure for as long as the names and attributes of God will endure. You must make an effort to maintain this exalted station....⁴⁷⁷

<12> *Siyid 'Alí-Muhammad, the Báb*

<13> *Háji Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí*

He is famous for building the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the Bahá'í world. He was born in 1830 in Shíráz. After completing his studies at age 15, he went to Búshihir where he succeeded the Báb in his father's firm. He was in Búshihir when the Báb returned from his pilgrimage in 1845. In about 1854, he moved to Yazd where he married Bíbi Zahrá Bagum<18> and sometime later married a second wife who brought a daughter named Maryam Bagum<52> to the marriage.

In Yazd, his business prospered and reached as far as Hong Kong. As a leading merchant in town, he was appointed the consular agent for Russia, a position that afforded some protection from extortion by the Iranian officials. He was given the title Vakílu'd-Dawlih [agent of the state], but 'Abdu'l-Bahá named him Vakílu'l-Haqq [agent of God]. His cheerful and generous character won the respect of many, even though he was well known as a Bahá'í. He was on good terms with all the governors of Yazd, many of whom consulted him about their affairs. The following is recorded by Muhammad-Táhir Malmírí, who was a close associate of the Vakílu'd-Dawlih:

One of the divine blessings bestowed upon the friends in Yazd was that a large number of the illustrious Afnáns of the sacred Lote-Tree lived in that city. It is beyond the ability of my pen and tongue to recount their qualities. Even though outwardly these sanctified beings did not teach the Faith to others, yet they conducted themselves in Yazd with such goodly character and impressive behavior that, truly, this ephemeral servant cannot describe their vast influence. This luminous company and divine symbol of guidance was the cause of recognition for large numbers in Yazd. High and low have

⁴⁷⁷ Fayzí. *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 261–62.

testified that these blessed persons were the effulgent signs, radiant proofs, and sanctified emblems of the Cause. They were the essence of chastity, faithfulness, and wisdom; and, even though they would not openly speak of the Faith or admit affiliation with the Cause, all the inhabitants of Yazd were certain that they were among the Bahá'ís and the Afnán of the sacred and divine Tree, and none dared be presumptuous towards them.

All the Afnáns had offices in the Saray-i Khajih and controlled the city's commerce. However, they conducted themselves in such a way that learned and unlettered, peasants and noblemen, young and old would freely say, "These men are indeed heavenly angels. They are worthy of their station as descendants of the Prophet of Islam. We are not concerned with their [current] beliefs because of their holy lineage."

The honored Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí, who was an uncle of the Báb, would frequently attend the mosque and offer [Muslim] prayers. His three sons, Hájí Mírzá Áqá, Hájí Siyyid Mihdí, and Hájí Siyyid Husayn, each had a magnificent office, were pillars of commerce and employed a large staff of secretaries, accountants, attendants, and others. Despite their immense wealth and attainments, they were nevertheless very lowly and humble. It was truly astonishing and bewildering.

One of them was the honored Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taquí, the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, the official representative of the Russian government. He had won a special medal and displayed a flag over his house. Indeed, he was more accomplished than the others. He conducted himself with such tranquility, courtesy, humility, and selflessness, and dealt with people with such compassion, love, and equity, that when he passed through the streets, all the pedestrians would pause and, with great respect, defer to him, often bowing low before him. When a dispute took place between the merchants, they invariably would consider his word the final say and deciding factor. The day that he received a large golden emblem from the Russian government, several of the principal merchants happened to be his guests in his office. For two hours he wore that emblem, but never again. In His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh has addressed him as, "O essence of respect!" In some other Tablets, he is addressed, "O essence of meekness!"⁴⁷⁸

'Abdu'l-Bahá put Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taquí in charge of building the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád. Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taquí closed his business in Yazd and set out on 4 April 1900 for Russia. When he arrived in Mashhad en route, the authorities and prominent citizens warmly welcomed him. In their company, he went on pilgrimage to the shrine of the eighth Imám. For some time, people came to visit him, and this aroused the jealousy of the divines. They schemed to prevent him from entering the shrine for a second visit. However, on the appointed

⁴⁷⁸ Malmírí, *Khátirát Malmírí*, pp. 59–61.

day, the custodian of the shrine, Nasirū'l-Mulk Shírází, was also going for a visit. He was an old friend of the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, and, when he saw his friend, he deferred to him and showed him great consideration. Through this incident, not only were the opponents frustrated but also was the Nasirū'l-Mulk able to renew his friendship. Over the course of several meetings with the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, he became a believer. When the Vakílu'd-Dawlih arrived in 'Ishqábád, he supervised the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, using the plans and instructions sent by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and paying much of the cost himself. By 1906, the building was almost complete.⁴⁷⁹

In mid-1900, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to him confidentially about the troubles that surrounded Him in the Holy Land and instructed him to form the Universal House of Justice in the event of His slaying:

As to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, He is now in very great danger, beset by countless grave perils. Therefore, you must arise with the greatest strength and steadfastness and gather the Afnán of the divine Lote-Tree together. By this is meant that you must unite them in spirit and purpose, and let them join in harmony and concord with the Hands of the Cause, so that the Universal House of Justice may be formed as far as this is practicable and the provisions of the Will and Testament can be implemented when this is necessary. It is incumbent upon the Afnán of the holy Tree to stand in the forefront and to shield and protect the mighty stronghold of the Cause of God. In this way, they will become the recipients of such favors as will benefit the station that has been graciously conferred upon them.⁴⁸⁰

Some time later, Vakílu'd-Dawlih settled in Haifa. 'Abdu'l-Bahá remembered him as "an uncommonly happy man"⁴⁸¹ and ranked him as one of the 24 elders mentioned in the Book of Revelation.⁴⁸² He passed away in Haifa on 30 August 1911 at the age of 81 and was the first to be

⁴⁷⁹ One of the most detailed eyewitness accounts of this watershed event is in the unpublished memoir of Ustád 'Alí-Akbar Banná Yazdí, *Tárikh 'Ishqábád*, INBMC, vol. 94, 407 pages.

⁴⁸⁰ Bahá'í World Centre Research Department Memorandum, dated 31 October 1996.

⁴⁸¹ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 129.

⁴⁸² 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablet to Nátiq Nísání, *Ma'idih Asimání*, vol. 2, p. 50, and Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 117. The other elders are the Báb and His circle of 18 Letters of the Living. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has further stated in another Tablet (*Ma'idih Asimání*, vol. 2, p. 50) that the identity of the remaining four elders will be known in the future.

buried in the Haifa Bahá'í cemetery.⁴⁸³ 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed two Tablets of Visitation in his honor.⁴⁸⁴

<14> *Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí*

Born in 1824, he was the oldest son of the Khál Akbar. He was a successful, wealthy merchant who extended the family's trading links to China. He lived there for some time, having his home and office in Hong Kong and a warehouse in Shanghai.⁴⁸⁵ He also visited India often.⁴⁸⁶

While on pilgrimage to Mecca in 1859, Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí, his brother Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taquí<13>, and his cousin Hájí Siyyid Mihdí<20> visited Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, the first of the Afnáns to do so. It appears that they became believers at this time. In 1887, Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí returned from seven years in Hong Kong and visited Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká. At Bahá'u'lláh's request, he went to Russia, where he bought several parcels of land in 'Ishqábád and the nearby town of Firuzih. One parcel, named A'zam, was to serve as the site for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the new Bahá'í community in 'Ishqábád. The others were to be endowments providing income to support it.

When Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí died in Bombay in 1896, the Muslims refused to allow his body to be buried there, threatening to burn it. His body was brought to Karachi and then to Búshih, where the Iranians would not let it land. Eventually, and after an enormous ordeal, it was buried at Ctesiphon, near Baghdad.⁴⁸⁷ In May 1959, as one of the objectives of the Ten Year Crusade, it was reinterred in the Bahá'í cemetery in Baghdad.⁴⁸⁸ On Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí's passing,

⁴⁸³ A short but important biography of the Vakílu'd-Dawlih was written by Charles Mason Remey, *Star of the West*, 7 February 1916.

⁴⁸⁴ See Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 118–25. One of the notebooks of the Vakílu'd-Dawlih's memoirs is kept at the Bahá'í World Centre Archives MR 1442/F.235. Several other memoirs are translated in Rabbani, "Conversion of the Great-Uncle of the Báb." Vakílu'd-Dawlih's correspondence with Siyyid Muhammad, a son of Mírzáy-i Shírání, is in the private hands of his descendants.

⁴⁸⁵ It is noted in his biography in Fasá'í, *Fársnámih Násiri*, vol. 2, p. 45, that, due to economic depression in Fárs and family bankruptcy, Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí went to China for 10 years. There, he became the main contact for the opium trade of the merchants of Isfahán, Yazd, and Fárs. In the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, he is referred to as "the Afnán in China." See Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 83.

⁴⁸⁶ He married his maternal cousin, daughter of Hájí 'Abdu'l-Husayn.

⁴⁸⁷ See 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 16–21.

⁴⁸⁸ The news of this achievement was communicated on 14 June 1959 by the Hands of the Cause living in the Holy Land.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá revealed several Tablets extolling his virtues and composed two Tablets of Visitation.⁴⁸⁹

Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí was married to a maternal cousin, who was a daughter of Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Husayn, a renowned Shírází merchant and a brother of Hájí Muhammad Khálílí. The two brothers were not believers.

<15> *Hájí Mírzá Buzurg*

A brother to the Vakílu’d-Dawlih. He had no descendants.

<16> *Bibí Ján Bagum*

She was married to the Afnán Kabír<10>.

<17> *Khadíjih-Sultán Bagum*

In 1849, she was married at the age of nine to Mírzá Javád<23>. Four months after the marriage, her husband died on the hajj journey. He was 18 years old. She subsequently married Áqá Mírzá Ibráhím Khurásání and had a son named ‘Alí<53>. She passed away at the age of 71.

<18> *Bibí Zahrá Bagum*

The wife of the Vakílu’d-Dawlih<13>. On her passing, she was honored with a moving Tablet of Visitation.⁴⁹⁰

<19> *Hájí Mírzá Áqá*

A merchant in Yazd. He married Khadíjih-Sultán, a daughter of Hájí Abú’l-Qásim Tabrizí.

<20> *Hájí Siyyid Mihdí*

A son of the Khál Akbar. He was a merchant in Yazd who converted through a dream. When Bahá’u’lláh lived in Baghdad, Hájí Siyyid Mihdí attained His sacred presence with his brothers, Hájí Muhammad-‘Alí<14> and Hájí Muhammad-Taqí<13>. He married his maternal cousin, Bibí Ruqíyyih, a daughter of Hájíyyih Fátimih Bibí. Throughout his life,

⁴⁸⁹ See Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 88–93.

⁴⁹⁰ The text is in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 155–58.

he served with great distinction and suffered bitterly at the hands of the Bahá'í Faith's enemies. He established the village of Mihdí-Ábád, which became a center of Bahá'í activities. During the 1903 pogrom of the Bahá'í community, he greatly assisted the families of the persecuted believers. For many years afterwards, these families continued to receive his aid, often without knowing the source of the aid. He passed away at the age of 84. 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed a Tablet of Visitation for him.⁴⁹¹

<21> *Hájí Siyyid Já'far*

A merchant of great influence in Yazd. He went to Bombay for commerce and was in partnership with Hájí Mírzá Buzurg<15> and Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí<14>. He was deeply devoted to the Bahá'í Faith and rendered many services. In Baghdad, he attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. When he returned to Shíráz, he passed away a year before his father<6>. Subsequently, his remains, together with his father's, were carried to Karbalá and buried. The location of the grave is not currently known. He married Sáhíb Sultán Bagum<30>, the daughter of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Hasan<10> and Bíbí Ján Bagum<16>.

<22> *Hájí Siyyid Husayn*

A merchant who lived in Yazd. He married Aghá Bagum<79> and they had four children.

<23> *Mírzá Javád*

Because of the troubles in Shíráz that followed the martyrdom of the Báb, Mírzá Javád and Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11> left for pilgrimage to Mecca. Mírzá Javád passed away in Jeddah en route. He was 18 years old and was married to Khadíjih-Sultán Bagum<17>.

<24> *Áqá Mírzá Áqá*

Born in 1842, he was the only surviving child of Zahrá Bagum. From childhood, he was known as Siyyid Muhammad, but as a sign of respect for the Prophet Muhammad, the family called him Áqá Mírzá Áqá. Later, Bahá'u'lláh gave him the title Núri'd-Dín. He was the only member of the Afnán family to be related to the Báb on both his father's side and

⁴⁹¹ The text is in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 146–47.

mother's side, and was the third member of the Báb's family to openly become a Bábí. Áqá Mírzá Áqá became a believer at the age of 13 through his aunt, Khadíjih Bagum, to whom he was very attached. Through him, both his parents became Bábís, and, soon after, so did Khál Akbar. Núrí'd-Dín received many Tablets from Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad and throughout His life. When Nabil Zarandí came to Shíráz in 1867 carrying word of Bahá'u'lláh's claim to be the Promised One of the Báb, Núrí'd-Dín was one of those who believed.

Áqá Mírzá Áqá was a merchant, trading in partnership with other members of the Afnán family. Though he was well known as a Bábí and Bahá'í, the family trading business prospered. In March 1879, two prominent Bahá'í merchants in Isfahán were martyred. As Núrí'd-Dín had close contacts with them, the elders of the nascent Bahá'í community feared for his safety and sent him away the next day. He lived in Bombay from 1880 to 1889. He then went to Port Said where he traded under the name Núrí'd-Dín Hasan and organized the Rúhaniyyih Company. In July 1891 at Bahá'u'lláh's invitation, he and his family came to the Holy Land, where they stayed for nine months. During this period, Bahá'u'lláh revealed the Tablet of the World in his honor. It states:

O Afnán, O thou that has branched from Mine ancient Stock! My glory and My loving-kindness rest upon thee.

How vast is the tabernacle of the Cause of God! It hath overshadowed all the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and will, ere long, gather together the whole of mankind beneath its shelter. Thy day of service is now come. Countless Tablets bear the testimony of the bounties vouchsafed unto you. Arise for the triumph of My Cause and, through the power of thine utterance, subdue the hearts of men. Thou must show forth that which will ensure the peace and the well-being of the miserable and the downtrodden. Gird up the loins of thine endeavor, that perchance thou mayest release the captive from his chains, and enable him to attain unto true liberty.⁴⁹²

A little more than a year after Áqá Mírzá Áqá returned to Egypt, 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructed him to go to Shíráz to defend the Bahá'í Faith against the Covenant-breakers there. He went to Yazd with the Vakílu'd-Dawlih in order to curtail the growing influence of the Covenant-breakers in that region. In 1895, he escaped arrest by the Imám-Jum'ih of Ábádih and Hishmat-Nizám, the commander of a regiment traveling from Tihrán to Shíráz. Later, he returned to Port Said to resume his business. At about

⁴⁹² Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 84.

this time, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá informed him confidentially that He had begun the construction of the Shrine of the Báb, explaining the events leading to this historic undertaking:

He is God.

Port Said. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Áqá, upon him be the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

Confidential glad tidings.

He is the Most Glorious!

O thou distinguished branch of the blessed and sacred Lote-Tree! When the Ancient Beauty and Most Great Name, may My spirit be a sacrifice for His friends, was staying in Haifa, He often praised a certain site on Mount Carmel and said it was a very pleasant and agreeable spot, with a splendid view and an uplifting quality. His blessed, cherished wish was to buy that site, and He directed that the land be bought in whatever way possible. Through great effort, the ground was bought four years ago and prepared with some minor work.

After that, special instructions were sent to Rangoon, numerous Tablets penned, and a design prepared and issued for a sarcophagus made of the region’s marble, which is renowned in every way. With great difficulty, it was carved and embossed in one piece. Eventually, it reached here [after traveling] through several towns. Of course, thou hast heard what happened in some cities along the way. In short, it arrived not long ago, along with a casket made from the finest Indian wood.

A year ago, the honored Áqá Mírzá Asadu’lláh [Isfahání]⁴⁹³ was specially sent from here to Iran to bring, with the utmost humility, respect, and reverence, the sanctified remains and blessed temple of that majestic Being, may My spirit be a sacrifice unto His dust. Through the efforts of several other believers, it was transported and brought to the Holy Land. Currently, we are busy building the promised sacred edifice on Mount Carmel. God willing, we will call on thee to come and share in our endeavor constructing this hallowed and blessed Shrine. In this way, thou wilt receive everlasting confirmations and attain this most mighty honor. This good news stands supreme over the sovereignty of the earth and the heavens.

In truth, such joy and excitement have surrounded Me that it is indescribable, for the hands of the transgressors treated those sacred remains with great indignity. Praise be to God, through the aid and favors of the Ancient Beauty, everything has been arranged so perfectly that it will cause everyone to be filled with wonder.

The glory of God rest upon the Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ He was related to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá through his marriage to Munírih Khánúm’s sister.

⁴⁹⁴ INBMC 52:273–74, no. 323.

In 1901, 'Abdu'l-Bahá told Núri'd-Dín to return to Shíráz in order to restore the House of the Báb. Núri'd-Dín had been its custodian since the death of his mother in 1889. At the time of his passing on 15 November 1903, the work was nearly completed. His son, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh, succeeded him as custodian.

Núri'd-Dín left behind a valuable daily journal, a page of which is translated below:

Tonight is the eve of 27 Ramadán AH 1286 [31 December 1869], and the friends came to meet with Áqá Mírzá Mihdí Rashtí. He came some time ago to teach the Faith but, because of troubles and fear of harassment, was unable to meet with the believers. We came together to spend the whole evening in fellowship, discussion, and prayer.

As I write these lines, it is now midnight, and, because of the uproars [against the Bahá'ís], there is no hope that any of us will see daybreak. However, we are immersed in such warm love and spirituality that [my] pen is unable to describe it.

These trials and tribulations will strengthen the resolve of the friends. Soon, the believers will be seen to organize, unhindered, meetings where chanting of the divine verses will be raised and His praise and acclaim heard uninterrupted. However, will those future believers know the same spirituality that we felt? By God, never! This ethereal spirituality is born from the fire of persecution and is the result of enduring anguish and harm in His path.

<25> *Háji Siyyid Mírzá*

Initially based in Yazd and later in India, he engaged in trade extending from China to Europe and amassed a considerable fortune. During the days of Bahá'u'lláh, he carried out many services, such as acting as contact with the Holy Land, and was deeply respected by the believers. When Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí raised his rebellion and was joined by Siyyid 'Alí<28> in opposition to the Center of the Covenant, Siyyid Mírzá threw in his lot with them. He decided to journey to 'Ishqábád to stir the believers against 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but his brother, Siyyid Ahmad<26>, prevented him. During this period, Siyyid Mírzá's children severed relations with him. The painful decision to make this separation was spearheaded by Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn<77>, who even separated his business dealings from his father's. In no time, Siyyid Mírzá's vast fortune was completely depleted. Through the effort of the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, Siyyid Mírzá soon realized the error of his ways and was deeply repentant. He asked for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's forgiveness and was pardoned. He rose fearlessly to champion the Bahá'í Faith and to promote unity among the believers. In particular, during the

1903 pogrom of the Bahá'ís in Yazd, he was a pillar of faith for the community and greatly assisted the believers that suffered through that ordeal. He passed away as a steadfast Bahá'í in Yazd a year later. Hájí Siyyid Mírzá had married Sárá-Sultán Bagum<43> and they had five children.

<26> *Siyyid Ahmad*

A brother to Hájí Siyyid Mírzá<25>. Siyyid Ahmad was a merchant, living for a while in Yazd and then in 'Ishqábád, busied with commerce.

He was a deeply devoted believer who traveled to 'Akká to see Bahá'u'lláh. While there, he learned that he was being accused of theft in Istanbul. He hurried to that city and suffered bitterly at the hands of the foes, including an enemy of the Bahá'í Faith by the name of Muhammad-'Alí Isfahání. However, he was able to prove his innocence and establish their slander.⁴⁹⁵ In one of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets, He says about this event, "There were several tormentors in Istanbul who perpetrated great harm on the honored Afnán, Áqá Siyyid Ahmad. Since the honored Afnán was meek and gentle, these men manifested the greatest oppression, spoke disreputable slanders, and incited other lowlifes and ruffians against him."⁴⁹⁶

After this incident, Siyyid Ahmad again attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká and stayed until after His ascension. Subsequently, he traveled to promote the Bahá'í Faith and once more returned to 'Akká, where the Master showered His favors on him.

In 1899, he went to 'Ishqábád and from there to Yazd, where he established the first Spiritual Assembly of that city.⁴⁹⁷ He eventually moved to Shíráz, where he was the victim of a night burglary and killed. On hearing the news, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was deeply grieved and conferred upon him the rank of martyr.⁴⁹⁸ The Master revealed two Tablets and a Tablet of Visitation to mark Siyyid Ahmad's passing.⁴⁹⁹ Siyyid Ahmad left no descendants.

⁴⁹⁵ Nabil Zarandí refers to this incident on page 1012 of his unpublished manuscript and includes it as "among the recent occurrences." This suggests that it happened at the same time that Nabil was concluding his narrative, namely, circa Rabí'u'l-Avval AH 1308 (October 1890). See Navvabzadeh-Ardikani, *Matalibí dar bárih Tárikh Nabil Zarandí*.

⁴⁹⁶ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 64.

⁴⁹⁷ Malmírí, *Khátirát Malmírí*, p. 61.

⁴⁹⁸ Afrúkh tah, *Khátirát Nuh Sálah*, p. 403, and Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 66.

⁴⁹⁹ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 66–73.

<27> *Hájí Siyyid Muhammad*

For many years, he was a merchant in Bombay where, in collaboration with his brothers, Siyyid Mírzá<25> and Siyyid ‘Alí<28>, he spread polemical papers against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He died and was buried in Bombay.⁵⁰⁰ Two daughters survived him, both of whom remained faithful to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

<28> *Siyyid ‘Alí*

A merchant in Yazd. On 13 Sha‘bán AH 1303 (17 May 1886), he married Furúghiyih, a daughter of Bahá’u’lláh.⁵⁰¹ After the ascension of the Blessed Perfection, Siyyid ‘Alí joined ranks with Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí and rose in opposition to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. For this reason, the Master has referred to him as the ‘Siyyid Mutimarid’ [rebellious Siyyid].⁵⁰² He fought constantly with his brother Mírzá Muhsin<29> over a parcel of land, trying to defraud him of the proceeds. During this family feud, he made the most vulgar accusations against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. For a period of time, he repented of his deeds but soon returned to his old comrades in opposition to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He died in ‘Akká in 1916.⁵⁰³ His children eventually broke the Covenant as well.

<29> *Mírzá Muhsin*

A devoted believer. He went to ‘Akká in 1899 and married Tubá Khánum, a daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Shoghi Effendi participated in his funeral in Haifa in 1923.⁵⁰⁴ All his children were eventually expelled from the community.

<30> *Sábih-Sultán Bagum*

A daughter of the Afnán Kabír<10>. She was married to Hájí Siyyid Ja‘far<21>.

⁵⁰⁰ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 530, gives Shíráz as the place of his business and burial.

⁵⁰¹ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 515.

⁵⁰² Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 62.

⁵⁰³ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 530, states that he died in Beirut.

⁵⁰⁴ Taherzadeh, *Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 360, gives his year of passing as 1927.

<31> *Fátimih-Sultán Bagum*

Married to Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan<38>. She had three daughters and a son, of whom only a daughter, Munavvar, survived. She accompanied her husband, Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan<38>, to Haifa. Because of an accident in which she sustained severe burns, she passed away in 1921, a few months before her husband. She was buried in the Bahá'í cemetery in Haifa.

<32> *Shams-Sultán Bagum*

A daughter of the Afnán Kabír<10>. She was married to Mírzá Mahmúd <39>.

<33> *Siyyid Husayn*

A son of Afnán Kabír<10>. He passed away at age 16 in Yazd and was the first believer buried in the Bahá'í cemetery of that city. On the occasion of his passing, Bahá'u'lláh revealed five Tablets in the name of various family members, consoling them for their loss.⁵⁰⁵

<34> *Bíbí-Sakínih Bagum*

Married to Hájí Siyyid Muhammad<46>. She survived her husband and returned to Shíráz, where she lived in the house of the Khál Akbar. She passed away in her 90s on 4 February 1954 and was buried in the Bahá'í cemetery in Shíráz.

<35> *Tayyibih*

A sister to Siyyid 'Alí<28>. She accompanied her parents to the Holy Land for the marriage of Siyyid 'Alí to Bahá'u'lláh's daughter. She joined Siyyid 'Alí in breaking the Covenant and opposing 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She died in 'Akká, having never married.

<36> *Maryam-Sultán Bagum*

She married Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri'd-Dín<24> and received many favors and Tablets from Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.⁵⁰⁶ She passed away in February 1939⁵⁰⁷ in Shíráz.

⁵⁰⁵ Two of them are quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 57–59.

⁵⁰⁶ Some of these Tablets are quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 217–19.

⁵⁰⁷ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 219, gives the date of her passing as October 1939.

<37> *Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn*

A son of Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11> and the paternal grandfather of Shoghi Effendi. He converted to the Bábí movement as a result of the efforts of Núrí'd-Dín and Nabíl Zarandí. He was a merchant in Shíráz and married Zívar-Sultán Bagum, commonly referred to as Khánum Hájíyyih. She was the only child of Hájí Muhammad-Báqir, a renowned merchant. When Hájí Muhammad-Báqir died, his trustee, Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11>, married Khánum Hájíyyih to his own son.⁵⁰⁸ Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn had a second wife by the name of 'Ismat Khánum, who passed away in 1951 in Shíráz. From this second marriage, he fathered a son and a daughter, named Siyyid Mihdí and Qudsiyyih respectively. Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn passed away in 1930.

<38> *Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan*

A son of Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<11>, and a merchant in Shíráz. At Bahá'u'lláh's instructions, he journeyed to the Holy Land where he remained for a while. When he was leaving, the Master revealed the following Tablet for him:

Haifa. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Abú'l-Hasan, upon him rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God!

O thou compassionate twig of the blessed Tree! Praise be to God that thou possessest such character that both the Blessed Beauty and the Exalted One, may My spirit be a sacrifice for Their dust, are pleased with thee. The friends are thankful to thee, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá thinks of thee with confidence and joy. In the midwatches of the night, when I get up to pray, I always remember the friends, particularly the distinguished twig, the illustrious Afnán⁵⁰⁹ resident by the Shrine of the Báb, and your good self. Of course, the esteemed Afnán and yourself also remember this desolate and grieved One in your prayers by the Shrine of the Báb.

Praise be to God that the fragrances of holiness are spread to all corners and the deeds of the friends who are firm in the Covenant are a clear sign

⁵⁰⁸ She journeyed with Mírzá Habíbu'lláh and his family to the Holy Land in 1890. She remained there until some time after the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. After her husband passed away in Shíráz, Shoghi Effendi urged her to return to the Holy Land. She passed away there in her 70s and was buried in the Haifa Bahá'í cemetery. Some of Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets for her are quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 279–83.

⁵⁰⁹ Presumably, a reference to the Vakílu'd-Dawlih<13>.

throughout the realm. All are partners and companions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in servitude, humility and reverence to the threshold.

Upon you rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious.
‘A ‘A.⁵¹⁰

Mírzá Abú’l-Hasan returned to Shíráz. He resumed his trading, married Fátimih-Sultán Bagum<31>, and had four children, of whom only a daughter, Khadíjih,⁵¹¹<97> survived.

During the latter part of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá invited Mírzá Abú’l-Hasan to live in Haifa again. While there, Mírzá Abú’l-Hasan organized a memorial meeting on 19 November 1921 in honor of his son-in-law, the Múvaqqari’d-Dawlih<99>. At this gathering, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá privately informed him of His premonition that His passing was near. This news overwhelmed Mírzá Abú’l-Hasan with sorrow and he did not want to live in this world after his beloved Master. That very night he walked to the sea and drowned himself. The next day, his body was retrieved. At the funeral, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá acted as one of the pallbearers for the procession to the cemetery. Mírzá Abú’l-Hasan is buried in the Baní Salih cemetery in ‘Akká.

<39> *Mírzá Mahmúd*

A farmer in the regions surrounding Shíráz. He was married to Shams-Sultán Bagum and they had daughter, Aghá Bagum<98>. He passed away in 1888 at a relatively young age. He is buried in Sháh-Chiráq.

<40> *Mírzá ‘Alí*

His base of commerce was in the port city of Bandar ‘Abbás, where he passed away in 1887. He never married.

<41> *Mírzá Ibráhím*

A merchant in China. He returned to Shíráz in 1893, where he passed away. He never married.

⁵¹⁰ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 275.

⁵¹¹ As a sign of respect for the wife of the Báb, Khadíjih Bagum, this child was known as Munavvar.

<42> *Fátimih-Sultán Bagum*

She married Áqá Muhammad-Hasan, a merchant from Búshihir. He was related to her maternal grandmother and was a son of Hájí ‘Abbás Tájir.

<43> *Sara-Sultán Bagum*

A daughter of Hájí Mírzá Abú’l-Qásim<11>. She was married to Hájí Siyyid Mírzá<25>.

<44> *Ahmad*

The Báb’s only child, who died at birth in 1843. Initially, he was buried under a pine tree in the shrine of Bábí-Dukhtarán. In the opening days of 1955, the Shíráz municipality decided to construct a school there, which would have destroyed the gravesite. The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Shíráz refused to act to arrange an alternative burial site. Unsatisfied with this decision, Abú’l-Qásim Afnán<148> immediately informed Shoghi Effendi.⁵¹² The Guardian cabled his authorization of the transfer: “Guardian approves transfer Primal Point’s son Gulistán Jávíd. Ensure befitting burial.”⁵¹³

The Spiritual Assembly arranged for the remains to be exhumed, laid in a silk container, and placed in a cement coffin. For three months, the coffin was kept in the western part of the local Hadiratu’l-Quds. On 21 April 1955, which coincided with the day of the Báb’s martyrdom reckoned by the lunar calendar, a special ceremony for the reinterment was held. It was the largest Bahá’í gathering in Shíráz in the history of the Bahá’í Faith. Multitudes of believers from all parts of the country participated in the historic event. In a prayerful atmosphere, the remains were reinterred in the Bahá’í cemetery of Shíráz. The Guardian heard the details and, on 24 April, cabled his joy:

Shiraz Assembly care Khaden Teheran. Overjoyed historic achievement congratulate valiant friends loving remembrance Shrines supplicating bountiful blessings. Shoghi.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹² In his Naw-Rúz 113 BE letter to the Bahá’ís of the East, Shoghi Effendi recognized and praised Abú’l-Qásim Afnán for his initiative.

⁵¹³ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 195.

⁵¹⁴ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 195.

In the first *báb* of the fifth *vahíd* of the Persian *Bayán*, the Báb asks for a befitting structure to be built over the resting-place of Ahmad for the faithful to worship God.

<45> *Hájí Mírzá Mahmúd*

A son of Vakílu'd-Dawlih<13>. He was very charitable and selfless in his services to the Bahá'í Faith. He established his home as the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Yazd, where the friends would gather each morning for devotional prayers. During the 1903 pogrom of the Yazd Bahá'í community, his home became a haven for the believers. After a while, however, he became a target for the enemies, and he had to retire to the village of Marvast.⁵¹⁵ After Yazd, he took up residence in 'Ishqábád and, with great zeal and diligence, completed the construction work on the temple begun by his father. The following is one of the Tablets revealed in his honor by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during this period:

He is God.

O My Mahmúd! O offshoot of the blessed Tree! Indeed, thou art worthy to be an Afnán and deserve what hath been bestowed on you. For a while now, the offshoot of the divine Tree, thine illustrious father, hath been a companion of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in this land. At a time of sorrow, he was a source of fellowship, love, and comfort. From the beginning of his life until the present day, he hath achieved all that is becoming of one who hath branched from the sanctified Tree. He was confirmed in rendering a great service by establishing the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, and in this field he hath exceeded all others. He hath brought joy to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the rest of eternity. Now he liveth close to the sacred Threshold and protects that hallowed ground. He is blessed now and will be until his end.

Praise be to God that thou art engaged in service in his place. This too is a great blessing that cannot be calculated.

The honored Áqá Mírzá Áqá is on his way to 'Ishqábád. Show him every assistance and consideration. Try to find employment for him that he might be engaged in an occupation and pass his days in tranquility and happiness.

Upon thee rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

'A 'A.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵ Malmírí, *Khátirát Malmírí*, pp. 137–50, gives the details of the escape of the Afnán and Malmírí families from Yazd. It involved an armed struggle with the Muslims, and some of the opposition were killed.

⁵¹⁶ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 126–27. Another Tablet for him is in *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 127–28.

Hájí Mírzá Mahmúd passed away in 1918 at the age of 64, after returning to Yazd. His funeral was widely attended, and it is reported that the city mourned his passing. He was married to 'Alíyih<66>.

<46> *Hájí Siyyid Muhammad*

Known as Hájí Mírzá Buzurg. Initially, he was a merchant and a farmer in Yazd; then he transferred his residence to Tihrán where he spent the rest of his life. He donated a large number of properties outside Shimrán Gate as endowments for the maintenance of the House of the Báb and other needs of the Bahá'í Faith. He died in December 1949 when he was in his 70s. Shoghi Effendi cabled his sympathies and his assurance of prayers.

<47> *Siyyid Áqá*

His given name was Áqá Mírzá Husayn-'Alí. He passed away at a young age in 'Ishqábád.⁵¹⁷ He never married.

<48> *Bagum Sábib*

She was the daughter of Hájí Muhammad-Taquí<13> and Bíbí Zahrá Bagum<18>. She married Siyyid Ahmad<26>.

<49> *Fátimih Bagum*

She was the daughter of Hájí Muhammad-Taquí<13> and Bíbí Zahrá Bagum<18>. She married Mírzá Áqá Taryakí<53>.

<50> *Bíbí Sultán Bagum*

A daughters of the Vakílu'l-Haqq<13>. She married Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir<55>.

<51> *Khánum Liqá*

She drowned in the 1955 Yazd flood.

⁵¹⁷ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 130, states that he passed away in Yazd.

<52> *Maryam Bagum*

A daughter of the Vakílu'l-Haqq<13> by his second wife. She married Siyyid Muhammad<62> and they had two children.

<53> *Mírzá Áqá Taryakí*

His given name was Muhammad. He was known among the family as Áqá Mírzá Áqá Kúchak [the junior]. He engaged in a business trading in opium with China.

<54> *Mírzá 'Alí Taryakí*

As his trade was mostly in opium, he was known as Hájí Taryakí. In the latter part of his life, he attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in Haifa.

<55> *Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir*

A merchant and farmer in Yazd. During the decade of 1900 to 1909, when 'Abdu'l-Bahá was constructing the Shrine of the Báb, Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir contributed generously to this project. As such, the Shrine's water reservoir was named after him.⁵¹⁸ He passed away in 1941 in Tihrán and was buried in Imámzádiḥ Ma'sum, although the exact burial site is not known.

<56> *Mírzá Jalál*

He was killed at a young age by thieves in Marvist, a village of Yazd. He was not married.

<57> *Áqá Mírzá 'Alí*

A merchant in 'Ishqábád. Late in life, he returned to Yazd, where he passed away. He never married.

<58> *Hájí Mírzá Javád*

A farmer in Yazd.

⁵¹⁸ For a translation of this Tablet, see Rabbani, *Eight Years Near 'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Diary of Dr. Habib Mu'ayyad*, chapter 9.

<59> *Hájí Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim*

He was a resident of Yazd and had two daughters and one son.

<60> *Siyyid Mírzá*

A merchant in Yazd. He was deeply devoted to the Bahá'í Faith. When he died, 'Abdu'l-Bahá honored him with a Tablet of Visitation.⁵¹⁹

<61> *Mírzá Buzurg*

His given name was Mírzá Hasan-'Alí.

<62> *Siyyid Muhammad*

A merchant who lived all his life in Yazd. From his first marriage with Maryam Bagum<52>, he had two children. His daughter by a second marriage was named Tāhirih.

<63> *Siyyid 'Alí*

He did not have any children.

<64> *Safa'iyih*

She was the daughter of Hájí Siyyid Mihdí<20> and Bíbí Ruqiyyih. She was married to Hájí Mírzá Javád<58>. They had four children.

<65> *Vafa'iyih*

She was the daughter of Hájí Siyyid Mihdí<20> and Bíbí Ruqiyyih. She was married to Mírzá Díyá'u'lláh<67>. They had four children: Husayn Áqá<137>, Mahmúd Áqá<138>, Hasan Áqá<139>, and Thurayyá<140>.

<66> *'Aliyyih*

At a young age, she attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. He revealed a special prayer for her marriage to Hájí Mírzá Mahmúd<45>.

⁵¹⁹ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 148–50.

<67> *Mírzá Diyá' u'lláh*

A son of Hájí Siyyid Husayn<22>. He married Vafa'iyiyih<65> and they had four children (named above).

<68> *Mírzá Habíbu'lláh*

A son of Hájí Siyyid Husayn<22>. Mírzá Habíbu'lláh married Rúhangíz<82> and they had three children: Mahvash<141>, Súfiyyih<142>, and Firishtih<143>.

<69> *Mírzá Badí' u'lláh*

Originally from Yazd, he pioneered with his family. When he returned, he was caught up in the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Yazd. In 1911, he was imprisoned for three years with other members of the Spiritual Assembly. He then settled in Tíhrán, where he continued to serve the Bahá'í Faith. He was married to Afsar<116> and they had three children: Nádír<144>, Shukúh<145>, and Parívash<146>.

<70> *Furúghiyiyih*

A daughter of Hájí Siyyid Husayn<22> and Aghá Bagum<79>. She was married to Mírzá Habíbu'lláh<102>, a farmer from Yazd.

<71> *Mírzá Habíbu'lláh*

The author of the narrative that forms the basis of this book. He corresponded extensively with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. For example, in 1897, two Tablets were revealed for him and his brother, Mírzá Buzurg, after they returned to Egypt from pilgrimage. The Tablet for Mírzá Habíbu'lláh is quoted below:

The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Mírzá Habíbu'lláh, upon him rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

O offshoot of the sacred Tree! From the day thou didst leave, my thoughts have been with thee. During thy journey, I pondered the fact that I could not associate with thee even though at every moment thou wert in my thoughts and, with every breath, my close companion. This land is tumultuous, and this Servant remains in the grasp of many difficulties brought about by mischief-makers hidden and manifest. For this reason, I was unable to outwardly converse and associate with thee. The sudden onslaught of these

various troubles, such as the one thou didst witness during the commemoration of the Day of Ascension, meant that thou wert sent away. Rest assured, however, that thou remainest in our hearts and will never be forgotten.

I cherish the hope that, through the bounties of the Ancient Beauty and the Most Great Name, may my spirit be a sacrifice for His servants, thou wilt remain protected and safeguarded under the canopy of His favors, and that day and night thou wilt progress rapidly in spiritual perfection.

O devoted offshoot! The obligations of this Day are great, very great! Thou must arise to dedicated service. Day after day, make mighty advances in the path of recognition so that out of the favors and protection of the One Who Arose, thou wilt shine out like a brilliant lamp over the horizon of the world of humanity.

His glory rest upon thee and upon all that remain steadfast.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.

Mírzá Habíbu’lláh married Aghá Bagum<112> and they had six children: Firdaws<147>, Abú’l-Qásim<148>, Tayyibih<149>, Nayyirih<150>, Amínu’lláh<151>, and Hasan<152>.

<72> *Hájí Mírzá Diyá’u’lláh*

A brother of Mírzá Habíbu’lláh. He accompanied his father and brother to the Holy Land. For two years after that, he lived in Egypt.⁵²⁰ In Shíráz, he carried out civil services for the administration of the Sahamu’d-Dawlih and was a confidant of the city’s governors. He married Aghá Bagum<98> and they had six children: Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad<153>, Mírzá Bahá’í<154>, Mírzá ‘Abbás<155>, Farahangíz<156>, Thurayyá<157>, Nuri’d-Dín<158>. Mírzá Diyá’u’lláh passed away in 1942 at the age of 61.

<73> *Hájíyyih Túbá*

The sister of Mírzá Habíbu’lláh. Modeling her life on that of the Greatest Holy Leaf, she never married and devoted her life to spreading the Bahá’í Faith and serving the Bahá’í women on pilgrimage to the House of the Báb. She was two years older than her brother. She passed away on 21 January 1953.⁵²¹

⁵²⁰ Two of Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablets for Mírzá Diyá’ are quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 239–40.

⁵²¹ For two of Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablets addressed to her, see Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 241–42.

<74> *Áqá Siyyid Áqá*

The oldest son of Núri'd-Dín and the brother of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh. To our knowledge, he is the only member of the Afnán family elevated by Bahá'u'lláh to the rank of Hand of the Cause.

He was born in Shíráz in 1869 and was reared by Khadíjih Bagum. His given name was Ahmad-'Alí. At the age of seven, he began attending the classes of Shaykh Muhammad-Husayn. From childhood, he was endowed with great wisdom, unusual courage, and an unrivaled memory. His devotion to serving others was admired by everyone. When his father left for Bombay in 1879, he instructed Áqá Siyyid Áqá to continue organizing weekly gatherings in their home, which were led by Mullá 'Abdu'lláh Fádil. He also asked his son to look after the needs of the believers from the surrounding regions who visited Shíráz. Once a year, he was to visit all the Bahá'í communities in the province and support their activities and cheer their hearts. From his teens, Áqá Siyyid Áqá was constantly traveling on behalf of the Bahá'í Faith. He sent reports of his activities to Bahá'u'lláh, Who sent encouragement in numerous Tablets. One Tablet reads:⁵²²

He is the Revealer, the Wise.

The Tongue of the Merciful saith: O My friend and son of My Afnán! The robe of honor hath been cut and prepared for thy temple. The Supreme Pen hath revealed for thee that to which no created thing can be compared. Wherefore, render thanks unto thy Lord that thou hast branched from God and are known by His name at the beginning of thy life. In these days, abasement in His Cause is indeed the source of honor and the dawning-place of divine favor.

In truth, ere long the Almighty, the Fashioner of both worlds, will make manifest such matters that, were others to be apprised of them, they would verily circumambulate around thee. Soon, they will realize what they have lost, on the Day when people will arise for their Lord, the Creator of the Worlds.

Fleeting, temporal things are not worthy of consideration. Ears were not made to hear them, nor eyes meant to look upon them. By God, they are in evident loss.

The Perspicuous Book stands evident, and the Mother Book has been made manifest! Yet all have remained deprived and heedless, except those whom God hath chosen. Thou art blessed and favored, as are thy brothers and them that are with thee and love thee for the sake of God, the Almighty, the All-praised.

⁵²² Some of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets to Áqá Siyyid Áqá are in INBMC 51:345-50.

The glory that hath dawned from the horizon of My favors rest upon thee and thy kindred and My Afnán! For they have truly drunk the choice wine of utterance⁵²³ from My generous hands. Know of a certainty that they are among those that have attained unto the Most Mighty Book.⁵²⁴

In 1884, Áqá Siyyid Áqá went to Bombay to be reunited with his father. At about the same time, the Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih<99>, who was about the same age as Áqá Siyyid Áqá, also arrived in the city. Together they worked to improve their command of English and Urdu.

After five years, Áqá Siyyid Áqá left for Egypt with his father. There, they established the Rúhaniyyih Company offices in Port Said, Alexandria, and Cairo. On 20 December 1889, they both attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh at the Mansion of Bahjí, and Bahá'u'lláh gave Áqá Siyyid Áqá a finely embellished 'abá.⁵²⁵ Again in July 1891, Áqá Siyyid Áqá attained Bahá'u'lláh's presence, together with other family members, and remained in the Holy Land for a month. On his return, his father traveled to the Holy Land, and the Blessed Perfection revealed the following Tablet, elevating Áqá Siyyid Áqá to the rank of Hand of the Cause:

Afnán. The honored Áqá Siyyid Áqá.

He is God, the Forgiver, the Generous.

The honored Afnán⁵²⁶—upon him be the peace of the Merciful—hath repeatedly attained Our presence. Praised be God that he is mentioned by this Wronged One and hath received Our special favors. With the greatest determination, he must arise to guide the people and conquer the world's inhabitants by the Most Great Name. Verily, this cannot be achieved unless it is ordained by God, the Omnipotent. The ranks of the oppressors and the cry of the evildoers have somewhat discouraged the friends of God. We cherish the hope that, through the light of the manifestation of the Speaker on Sinai and the fire of the sacred Bush, the world will glow radiantly.

O My Afnán, upon thee rest My glory! Thy station is that of guiding the servants, so that the sincere may drink their fill from the generous Hand

⁵²³ Literally, "*bayán*," a reference to the Báb's Revelation.

⁵²⁴ INBMC 51:348, no. 354. Also quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 220–21.

⁵²⁵ About this, Bahá'u'lláh notes, "Recently the Afnáns and Amin—upon them be My glory and loving kindness—attained Our presence and beheld Our countenance; likewise Nabil, the son of Nabil, and the son of Samandar—upon them rest the glory of God and His loving kindness—are present and have drunk the cup of reunion. We entreat God that He may graciously ordain for them the good of this world and of the next and that the outpouring of His blessings and grace may descend upon them from the heaven of His generosity and the clouds of His tender compassion" (*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 73–74). In addition to the two Afnáns, Bahá'u'lláh is referring to Hájí 'Abdu'l-Hasan Amin, Shaykh Muhammad-'Alí Nabil, and Áqá Shaykh Ahmad Nabilí of Qazvín.

⁵²⁶ Presumably, a reference to Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri'd-Dín.

of the everlasting Kawthar, and revive the world with a portion thereof. By the mercy of God, thou art reckoned and mentioned in the Book as the Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree and as a Hand of the Cause.

The blood of the martyrs in the Land of Ya [Yazd] will speak to the world and its inhabitants. By God, none can measure its effect and its value as a proof, and pen and ink cannot describe its potency. I beseech the sanctified and exalted God to make the oppressors aware of what their deeds have wrought in this ephemeral plane and to give them the everlasting divine chastisement ordained for them.

We mention all the friends in that land and implore God to enable each to manifest meritorious deeds and a goodly character.

You mentioned the honored Muhammad. Praise be to God that he hath attained certitude and is illumined by the light of recognition. We beseech God to ordain for him what will enable him to sing His praises, arise to serve Him, and remain turned to His horizon. He is the hearer and answerer. My glory and light be upon his father for having attained Our presence numerous times, and upon every faithful and righteous believer.

Praise be to God, the Lord of both worlds.⁵²⁷

In 1894, Áqá Siyyid Áqá attained the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. At that time, the whispers of the Covenant-breakers were reaching Fars. Therefore, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked Áqá Siyyid Áqá and his father to go to Shíráz to try to protect the community. Two years later, Áqá Siyyid Áqá married Ághá Bíbí of Ábádih and became the head of the post office in Yazd. From this marriage, he had six children: Faraju’lláh (who died in infancy), Fathu’lláh, Nasru’lláh, Muzaffar, Ridván, and Safá. In Yazd, he married Zahrá Bagum, who bore him two children. Áqá Siyyid Áqá remained in Yazd until 1909 and then returned to Shíráz. There, he devoted all his time to serving the Bahá’í Faith, starting up the first Bahá’í printing press in that city. While in Búshihir he passed away in August 1929 at the age of 62.

<75> *Mírzá Jalál*

A son of Núri’d-Dín. He lived all his life in Shíráz and worked in the post office. As noted in chapter 1 of these memoirs, Mírzá Jalál acted as the custodian of the Blessed House during his father’s absence. Because of this important service, he received several Tablets, one of which is quoted below:⁵²⁸

⁵²⁷ INBMC 51:348–49, no. 355; Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 221–22; and ‘Alá’í, *Mu’assasib Ayady-i Amru’lláh*, pp. 810–11.

⁵²⁸ One of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablets is quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 225–26.

Sh[íráz]. To the attention of the illustrious Afnán, the honored Mírzá Jalál, upon him be the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is the Most Glorious.

O servant of the divine Threshold! Numerous Tablets have been revealed and dispatched to thee. These reveal the never-ending and ever-present favors and munificence granted to thine honored self. If thou wilt fully consider the sanctity of the Threshold that thou guardest and the sacredness of the Court that thou dost serve, thou wouldst know of a certainty that thou wearest the crown of glory, are attired with the celestial robe of honor, and are seated upon the throne of sovereignty. This is because thou dost serve a Court that hath been the abode of the King of the Kingdom of Names and Attributes, and thou art servant before a Threshold set apart for them that longed to behold the Lord of Proof and His manifest signs—may My spirit, My essence, My whole being, and My reality be a sacrifice to Him.

Therefore, render thanks to the one true God that thou art favored with such a bounty and the grace of such beneficence. Shaybih was a servant to the Ka'bih and, at his time, was looked upon as a lowly servant. But now, each of his descendants is situated upon the throne of glory and honor, and prideth himself in the name of his esteemed ancestor.

The glory of God rest upon thee and upon all the pilgrims to that Spot.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.⁵²⁹

Mírzá Jalál’s profession required him to travel extensively. When he was away, he would leave the affairs of the House of the Báb in the hands of a maid. This caused complications with the community, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá received complaints. Eventually, He wrote to Núrí’d-Dín in Port Said and asked for another of his children to take on custodial duties:

... With regard to the Sacred House in Fars, the believers in Shíráz have made a loud protest. About two months ago, they wrote collectively asking for [me to] intervene in the affairs of the Blessed House. Had I sent that request to thine honored self, it would have caused deep sorrow. Therefore, I spared thee. However, thine eminence must try to do what thou canst about this, as all things relating to the House are of great importance, and, indeed, of such great moment that they cannot be allowed to drift.

Therefore, it is essential that thine own esteemed self or one of thy children maintain a presence at the House. Such a critical matter cannot be entrusted to a maidservant, even though she will do her best to protect the House. In short, the friends have complained in such a way that this Servant hath been left with no other option. In whatever way this can be arranged,

⁵²⁹ INBMC 52:328–29, no. 367. Another Tablet in a similar vein is in INBMC 52:327–28, no. 366.

kindly send to Fars one of the illustrious Afnáns who are currently with thee that they can actively attend to the affairs of the House. Take action on this matter immediately; no delay is allowed.

The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Tree, Áqá Mírzá Jalál, hath an occupation that requires him to travel each day in a different direction. These things are not under his control. Thou must cable him and chose one of his brothers to travel at once to that place. This way, all the believers will know that this Afnán is in Fars to manage the House and hath no other occupation or distraction...⁵³⁰

Mírzá Jalál married three times. The first marriage was to Mah-Tal'at, a niece of Muhammad-Qásim Khán Baydá'yí. The children of this marriage—Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn, Mírzá Fadlu'lláh, Mírzá 'Alí, and 'Aliyyih Khánum—all died at a young age. Mírzá Jalál's second marriage was with Ághá Bibí, a daughter of Áqá 'Alí of Ábádih. This marriage produced two sons, Mírzá 'Amadu'd-Dín and Akbar Áqá (known as Núri'd-Dín), and one daughter, Bihjat. With a third wife, Ján-Ján Bagum, Mírzá Jalál had a daughter known as Gawhar Khánum, who married Mahmúd Samimí.

<76> *Hájí Mírzá Buzurg*

A brother of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh. His given name was Muhammad-Husayn, and he was occasionally referred to as Hájí Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín. He was a companion of his brother throughout his life and rendered great services to the Bahá'í Faith in Egypt and Shíráz. Bahá'u'lláh revealed several Tablets in his honor, including the following:

Afnán. The honored Mírzá Buzurg, upon him rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is the Sustainer of Truth and the Upholder of Justice.

O Afnán, My glory and My favor rest upon thee! Your letter arrived and was read before the sovereign throne of the Speaker on Sinai. Praise be to God that the fragrance of the dwellers of the Crimson Ark was inhaled from it and its perfumed scent testified to thine steadfastness, devotion, and belief. Thou hast been surrounded by divine grace and will continue to be so favored. Let nothing grieve thee. All that has been revealed especially for thee by the Supreme Pen will assuredly come to pass. Under all conditions, this Wronged One remembereth His Afnán and hath decreed for them what no one can imagine or any mind fathom.

The All-knowing, the Wise, hath revealed these words: 'The deeds of the servants will not alter the divine Will, nor will they reduce the potency of

⁵³⁰ INBMC 52:307, no. 347.

the exalted Word. That which hath been uttered by My Tongue will appear word-by-word on earth. The revolution of the world and its events will not affect what hath been decreed, nor erase a jot of it.' Thus hath it been ordained by the Pen of Firmness, and no part of it may be erased by the passage of time. This is what the Tongue of the Wronged One spoke on this resplendent station.

On behalf of this Wronged One, greet the leaf of My divine Tree and the entire household. Remind them of what hath been revealed.

My glory rest upon thee and upon them that love thee and have heard thine utterances on the Cause of God, the Lord of all Creation.⁵³¹

'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed numerous Tablets for Mírzá Buzurg. The following one was written in the summer of 1897, after Mírzá Buzurg returned to Egypt from his pilgrimage to the Holy Land:

Egypt. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Mírzá Buzurg, upon him rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

O wondrous offshoot of the sacred Lote-Tree! I am very sorry and sad that, during thy journey, it was not possible to provide appropriate hospitality for that twig of the Lote-Tree. I certainly regret this. However, over this time, various troubles, numerous difficulties, and the onslaught of a number of injustices, from both within and without, robbed me completely of the opportunity to suitably serve the friends or lovingly associate with them. As thou didst thyself perceive, various difficulties had to be suddenly resolved. Therefore, it was considered better for thee to leave.

However, at all times, I am concerned as to how such a foreign land is treating thee. Be sure to write about the details of thy situation.

'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás.⁵³²

In another Tablet addressed to Mírzá Buzurg in Shíráz, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote:

... On the day of the martyrdom of the Báb, may My life be a sacrifice to His dust, circumambulate the sanctified Haram [the House of the Báb] on My behalf and, with the greatest reverence and fervor, beg for confirmations and divine assistance for 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This is because the attack of the hordes of Covenant-breakers and infidels is unceasing. This Servant grieveth over the harm [done] to the Cause of God; otherwise, I have earnestly longed for trials. From childhood, I have implored the Almighty for scores of trials

⁵³¹ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 228–29. Another of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets for Mírzá Buzurg is in *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 229–30.

⁵³² INBMC 52:335, no. 375.

and every kind of calamity and affliction in the path of Bahá. Praise be to God that I was granted this chalice and have drunk my fill from it.⁵³³

In 1903, during the construction of the House of the Báb, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote to Mírzá Buzurg about the need to maintain the original design:

Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Buzurg and the honored Áqá Mírzá Habíb, upon both rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

O twin offshoots of the sanctified Tree! Your letters arrived, but a response was delayed due to a serious illness that prevented all correspondence. I am sure that ye will forgive the delay. The equivalent of 100 French lire was sent a month ago for the purpose of restoring the House. Also, about the receipts ye had asked for, they were sent earlier but apparently were lost in the post, and so a second copy is enclosed.

Ye asked a number of questions about the House. Know that these are all unnecessary. Follow [the instructions] that have already been sent, and do not deviate at all from the original design. The purpose is not decoration but to maintain the identical form and condition the Blessed House had in the days of the Exalted Beauty, the Primal Point—may My spirit be a sacrifice to Him. This is critical. Otherwise, to do a befitting job, it would be necessary to build it out of bricks of gold and silver and from the finest jewels; nay, it is worth far in excess of this! Ye must keep this in mind. The intention is that the architecture remains as before, and the same applies to the paint, the doors, and other details...⁵³⁴

About the same time, Mírzá Buzurg received another Tablet from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on a similar theme:

Shíráz. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá Buzurg, upon him be the glory of God.

He is God.

O twig of the Tree of Eternity! Through thee, the honored Áqá Mahmúd ‘Assár sent a letter and, in it, asked for permission to visit the Blessed House. He is allowed.

The news of the illness of the illustrious Afnán of the Tree of Holiness caused great sorrow and sadness. I beseech God that we attain to what is pleasing to our divine Beloved and long for the chalice of sacrifice in His

⁵³³ INBMC 52:332, no. 371.

⁵³⁴ INBMC 52:360–61, no. 406.

path, walk the path of righteousness, seek His union, speak of His praise, and in whichever direction we turn, fix our gaze upon Him.

The news of the construction of the Blessed House, where the world's inhabitants will circumambulate in adoration, caused great joy and happiness. Despite this, hearing about the illustrious Afnán's illness was a source of sorrow. I cherish the hope that this sadness will turn to bliss.

Praise and salutations be unto thee.

'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás.⁵³⁵

Hájí Mírzá Buzurg never married and passed away in October 1941.

<77> *Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn*

A merchant who lived in Yazd. He was a firm and profoundly devoted believer, who spent his days in service to the Bahá'í Faith. He received numerous Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá praising his singular devotion to the Bahá'í Faith.⁵³⁶ At the turn of the century, about the time that 'Abdu'l-Bahá confidentially informed Núrí'd-Dín about the construction of the Shrine of the Báb, He also wrote the following Tablet to Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn:

He is the Most Glorious!

Yazd. The illustrious Afnán of the sacred Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn, upon him rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious!

He is the Most Luminous!

O sweet branch of the sanctified and divine Lote-Tree! Give thanks to the one true Lord that He has enabled thee to attain the greatest of all heavenly blessings. Nothing has been denied to thee, and no barriers have prevented thee from the most important bounty; that is, steadfastness in, and faithfulness to, the Covenant of God. If, like billowing waves, thou wert to give thanks with every breath for this favor, thou wouldst certainly not have rendered it justice.

Now I will give thee glad tidings that shall light up thine eyes and exhilarate thy being. And that news is this: the Blessed Beauty repeatedly commanded that a particular location on Mount Carmel in Haifa [be used] for the Shrine of the Primal Point. It was located on the choicest spot and was preeminent in its splendor and magnificence, and peerless throughout the world. In short, four years ago, that land was purchased for the resting-place of the Exalted One, may My spirit, reality, essence, and being be a sacrifice for His dust. I then wrote to Rangoon to have a sarcophagus prepared and engraved with great care in one piece of marble, and also a casket of the finest Indian wood, and to be sent here.

⁵³⁵ INBMC 52:370, no. 414.

⁵³⁶ For some of the Tablets, see Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 75–80.

Six months ago, the two caskets arrived in Haifa after enormous difficulties. No one knew their real purpose; everyone thought they were intended for the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh.

After that, I sent Mírzá Asadu'lláh, with several others, to bring the sacred and sanctified remains of the Báb—may My spirit and essence be a sacrifice to His dust—with the greatest care, humility, and reverence. Of them, only Mírzá Asadu'lláh knew the real purpose of the mission. The others thought they were transporting [packages of] Writings. That sacred trust arrived in Damascus and was taken to the Holy Land by carriage. It must be obvious what immense joy and spirituality resulted from this event.

Currently, the land that was bought on Mount Carmel is being prepared. The Ancient Beauty, may My spirit be a sacrifice to His friends, always praised that spot and instructed that it be bought. In all their books, the Messengers of God have spoken of that location and given clear prophecies [about it].

We are now busy raising that sacred Shrine and abide by the Will of God. Therefore, thou too must join us by offering thy labor to build and construct this Shrine. Hasten here by any means possible and obtain this most resplendent bounty. This favor is greater than all worship!

Pass on my warmest Bahá'í greetings to the holy leaf, thy grandmother, and to the sacred leaf, thy mother, and to the other leaves of the Afnán.

Upon thee be glory, O thou who hast remained firm in the Covenant!
'A 'A.⁵³⁷

Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn never married and passed away in Tehran as a result of an accident. His resting-place is not currently known. The Master wrote the following Tablet in his honor:

He is God!

To the attention of the illustrious twig of the divine Tree, the honored Áqá Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn, upon him rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

O thou wondrous branch of the sanctified Tree! Some time ago, Hájí Siyyid Javád met with Me on thy behalf. He is currently conveying thy warm greetings. However, at the same time, he states, "The illustrious Afnán will not accept my bearing and conveying greetings on his behalf, unless Thou liftest up the pen and write a tablet for him." And since he is determined in his purpose like a tax-collector during Fath-'Alí Shah's era and asking with great sincerity, I picked up the pen and am remembering the Afnáns of the Tree beyond which there is no passing. In so doing, I was rejuvenated and renewed and wish to write: "O thou verdant and flourishing branch of the Tree of Reality! It is time to be luscious and fruitful and to display

⁵³⁷ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 77–79.

divine delicacy and beauty. While there is time, blossom and perfume all nostrils.”

‘A ‘A.⁵³⁸

<78> *Bagum Ághá*

She did not marry and passed away in Yazd.

<79> *Ághá Bagum*

A daughter of Hájí Siyyid Mírzá<25> and Sarah Sultán Bagum<43>. She was married to Hájí Siyyid Husayn<22>, and they had four children.

<80> *Mírzá Aminu’lláh*

He did not marry and died with no descendants.

<81> *Mírzá Habíbu’lláh*

He did not marry and died with no descendants.

<82> *Rúhangíz*

She was the daughter of Hájí Siyyid Muhammad<27> and Khánum Haya<108>. She married Mírzá Habíbu’lláh<68>. She and her sister, ‘Aliyyih, remained faithful to the Covenant despite their father’s opposition to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

<83> *‘Aliyyih*

a daughter of Hájí Siyyid Muhammad<27> and Khánum Haya<108>.

<84> *Nayyir Afnán*

Son of ‘Alí Afnán<28> and Furúghiyih. He was married to Rúhangíz Rabbání<177> and they had at least one daughter, Bahíyyih (who married Hasan Shahíd). He and his family were expelled from the Faith. In 1948 they fled to Lebanon, where he passed away.

⁵³⁸ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 75.

<85> *Husayn Afnán*

Son of 'Alí Afnán<28> and Furúghiyih. He was married to Badí'ah and they had one daughter, Furúghiyih Afnán<175>. He was expelled from the Faith.

<86> *Faydí Afnán*

Son of 'Alí Afnán<28> and Furúghiyih. He was married to Thurayyá Afnán<91>. He was expelled from the Faith in 1941.

<87> *Hasan Afnán*

Son of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí<28> and Furúghiyih, a daughter of Bahá'u'lláh. He married Mehrangiz Rabbání<178>. He was expelled from the Faith in 1941.

<88> *Rúhí Afnán*

He served as a secretary of the Guardian for many years. He supported the marriage of his sister, Thurayyá<91>, to an excommunicated family member, Fu'ád Afnán<90>, and was expelled in 1941. He married his cousin, Zahrá Shahíd, the youngest daughter of Rúhá Khánúm, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's third daughter. He moved with the rest of his family to Lebanon in 1948, where he passed away some years later.

<89> *Suhayl Afnán*

He was a son of Muhsin Afnán<29> and Túbá Khánúm.

<90> *Fu'ád Afnán*

He was a son of Muhsin Afnán<29> and Túbá Khánúm. He was born in 1917 and died as a result of injuries sustained in an air raid in London on 11 May 1941. In 1943 the Guardian gave permission to the British Bahá'ís to build his grave.⁵³⁹

<91> *Thurayyá Afnán*

Married Faydí Afnán<86>.

⁵³⁹ Shoghi Effendi. *The Unfolding Destiny of British Bahá'í Community: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to the Bahá'ís of the British Isles*, p. 159.

<92> *Qudsiyyih Khánum*

A daughter of Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn<37> and his second wife, 'Ismat Khánum. She married Siyyid Mihdí<166>.

<93> *Áqá Siyyid Mihdí*

He studied in Beirut for a few years. When he returned to Shíráz, he worked in different professions and married Irán Khánum, a daughter of the Bahá'í poet 'Andalíb.

<94> *Mírzá Rahím*⁵⁴⁰

A devoted believer. He lived in Shíráz, working in the postal services and passed away in 1943. He never married.

<95> *Rubabih*

A daughter of Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn<37> and his first wife, Khánum Hájiyyih.

<96> *Mírzá Hádí*

Born in 1873 in Shíráz, he was a well-to-do merchant in Shíráz and lived and worked in Bombay for a while. In 1896, he and his parents attained the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Some time during 1895–86 he married 'Abdu'l-Bahá's oldest daughter, Diyá'iyih Khánum (d. 1951). He was the father of Shoghi Effendi<176>, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. He died in 1955 and is buried in the Haifa Bahá'í cemetery.

<97> *Munavvar*

Her given name was Khadíjih, but as a sign of respect for her namesake, the wife of the Báb, she was called Munavvar. She married Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad Khán, the Muvaqqari'd-Dawlih<99>.

<98> *Ághá Bagum*

Married to Háji Mírzá Diyá'u'lláh<72>, a brother of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh<71>, and they had six children.

⁵⁴⁰ Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zuhúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 5, p. 529, gives his name as Áqá Siyyid Muhammad-Rahím.

<99> *‘Alí-Muhammad Khán*

He was a namesake of the Báb and so the family called him ‘Alí Áqá. From early youth, he was a Bahá’í and served in the Foreign Ministry. He advanced in rank and was given the title of the Balyúz and the Múvaqqari’ d-Dawlih. Bahá’u’lláh was very pleased with him and revealed several Tablets in his honor.⁵⁴¹ Two of his sons, Husayn and ‘Abbás, died at a young age. Múvaqqari’ d-Dawlih passed away in mid-1921 and was buried in Tihrán at the shrine of Sháh ‘Abdu’l-A‘zím, next to the room of Maju’ d-Dawlih. A commemorative meeting was held for him in Haifa some 10 days before ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing. It was at this meeting that the Master is reported to have alluded to His own imminent passing.⁵⁴²

As a sign of His particular affinity for the Múvaqqari’ d-Dawlih, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá revealed the following memorial Tablet about him on July 10, 1921, which includes a Tablet of Visitation.⁵⁴³

He is God!

The honored Múvaqqari’ d-Dawlih was one of the twigs of the divine Lote-Tree and one that was related to the threshold of His Holiness, the Exalted One, may My life be a sacrifice to Him. From childhood, signs of great wisdom and intelligence and the hallmarks of discernment were evident in his radiant face. He was only a baby in the cradle when he showed lofty character and noble features. When he reached adolescence, his relatives and, indeed, all who knew him witnessed distinctive features in his blessed countenance and were amazed by his bearing. He made outstanding progress in all the realms of spiritual and physical perfection and, in the land of his birth, achieved exceptional literary honor. He had great wisdom, and when he reached maturity, his characteristic qualities shone even more brightly. He was supremely serene, remarkably composed and calm.

When he learned of the appearance of the Báb’s holy revelation and the events of His holy life, he became enkindled with His love and ignited with the Báb’s divine attraction. He found out about what had happened to that Manifestation of Grandeur and became aware of the mysteries of this Cause. Illumined with the light of divine guidance, he was receptive to the glad tidings of the advent of ‘Him Whom God will make manifest’ and was quick to respond to the Dawn of the Sun of Truth. He was so immersed in the limitless ocean of grace and imbued with the effusions of the bounties of the Word of God that he nearly lost his self-control. He was intoxicated with the love of God, which surged in him like the turbulent

⁵⁴¹ For one example, see Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 263–64.

⁵⁴² Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 266.

⁵⁴³ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Makátib ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 3, pp. 238–43, and Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 267–73.

sea. His inner ear was always attuned to the melodies of the Kingdom. He rose up and spoke with exceptional eloquence in praise of the Manifestation of the Light on Sinai, so that he burst into flame with the fire of the love of God. He was indeed a sign of the oneness of God and an ensign of the glorious Lord. In the school of exposition and eloquence, he was a worthy teacher. Those that heard him were left joyous and happy from the beauty of his expression and words.

Continuously, his letters reached the sacred Threshold, and the Blessed Beauty would say with great joy, "Read the letters of Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih!" Bahá'u'lláh would soon send replies. These were evidence that Bahá'u'lláh showed him great love and kindness. In fact, it could be said that Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih was present there in reality. Often, Bahá'u'lláh addressed him in this way, "O thou who hast branched from this holy Tree." Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih, in turn, always became exuberant and joyous from the glances of the loving kindness of the Speaker on Sinai. The news of his joy and excitement would always reach the Holy Land and make the servants of God happy.

[This continued] until the Sun of Truth set from this world and shone from the unseen world. The news of Bahá'u'lláh's ascension plunged the Afnán into such distress and anguish that he couldn't speak for a while, and the flow of his writing and exposition was stilled. Day and night, this companion was downcast; at dawn and in the night season, he was encompassed with sorrow and tears. I wrote to him and maintained contact with him until he was rekindled and became reinvigorated and eager to begin serving the Cause of God again.

For some time, he worked for the government on the coast of the Sea of Oman. His administration was based on justice and equity. All the towns and cities of the southern provinces appreciated his sagacious rule, and everyone lauded his efforts to improve their state affairs. It was universally said that his rule was without equal and his administration of justice without prejudice to anyone. During the days of his rule, his primary objective was to improve the living conditions of the people. At all times, his praise was widely sung in those areas, and all the friends would rejoice to hear news of him. After some time, he went to India, and in the years he lived there, friend and foe would proclaim, "Here is one who is the standard-bearer of justice and one of its shining lights." He was supremely serene and had an undisturbable, self-possessed calmness.

Although everyone knew that he was a Bahá'í and, indeed, was related to the holy Tree, the enemies of the Cause showed him great respect and consideration. All the great ones of Iran—traders, businessmen, and travelers—sought his company and showed him love and respect. He was indeed a great luminary. Some time later, they asked him to go to Tihrán, where he met the ministers of the Iranian government.

But the bird of his heart—the bird of the rose garden of divinity—always sought the everlasting Kingdom and was detached from the ephemeral world. And when the appointed time came, the nightingale of his soul ascended to the eternal and boundless world above. He soared from this nether world

to the Concourse on High and sought a nest on the branches of the Tree of Eternity. This noble soul was indeed a sign of the Perspicuous Light, and, in the divine vineyard, he was a fruitful tree. Praise be to God that at the end of his earthly life, when he winged his flight to the Kingdom above, he was in a state of true servitude and steadfastness to the Cause of God. In such a state, he was attracted to the Kingdom of Beauty, asking for entry to the presence of his Lord, and seeking selflessness in the ocean of mysteries. Upon him be the glory of the Most Glorious God, upon him be the praise of the Primal Point, and upon him be the grace of God, the Almighty, the Ever-forgiving.

‘A ‘A.

A supplication for the progress of the soul of the Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the illustrious Múvaqqari’d-Dawlih:

He is God!

O God, my God! How can I make mention of Thee and of the fire of longing that burns in the heart of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the flame of sorrow and loss that ignites His being because of the great affliction that has surrounded Thy sincere ones? O Thou the Lord of the heavens above!

Tears are pouring down, and our hearts are aflame because of the calamity that hath befallen us. On its account, the cry of lamentation and weeping hath been raised from the hearts of Thy loved ones and the breasts of Thy servants. O Lord! In Thy grace, Thou callest to Thy presence in the Kingdom above those that have achieved certitude and have believed in Thee. Thou biddest them to return to the Paradise that is their true home. But Thou hast forsaken me, alone and desolate in this world, broken-winged and bereft of hope, deep in the sea of sorrows, and languishing in deprivation on this earth.

O God, my God! How long wilt Thou leave me in this state of abject lowliness, burning with the fire of separation from Thee, whilst Thou ordainest for those that are nigh unto Thee ascension unto the highest summit?

O God, my God! My body is melting away, my hair is white, and I have grown old. I have no strength to arise and serve Thy loved ones, whom Thou hast singled out to raise Thy word and spread Thy fragrances.

O Lord, my Lord! Hasten My ascension unto Thy sublime threshold and My arrival in the world above and the court of Thy grace. Hasten my admittance to Thy gift of forgiveness and pardon in Thine infinite Kingdom.

O my God! Thy meek and humble servant, who beseeched Thee—the twig that had branched from the holy Tree, named Múvaqqar—hath left this ephemeral world and is now pleading to return to the everlasting world. Lord, he hastened to Thee with a hopeful heart, throbbing in Thy love. His tears were overflowing, and his patience had ended. He could no longer wait to meet Thee. He had believed in Thee and Thy verses. He had become attracted by Thy fragrances. He had become enkindled with the fire burning in the Tree of Thy unity. He had sought comfort in Thy remembrance. He was content with Thy providence and hath now hastened to Thy shelter.

O God! He was a bird warbling in Thy garden, a lion roaring in Thy forests, and a whale swimming in Thine ocean, until the world of existence became too narrow for him. So when the day of his destiny came, he returned to Thee with a heart attracted to Thee, his countenance radiant, tears of joy flowing from him, exulting in the knowledge of Thy forgiveness and pardon.

O Lord! Raise his station! Ordain all good for him and grant him the glances of Thy favor. Immerse him in the sea of mysteries in the Kingdom of Light, in that assembly where Thy Beauty is manifest. Thou art the Generous, the Exalted, and Thou art the Forgiving, the Compassionate, and the Merciful.

The night of 5 Dhi'l-Qa'dih [AH] 1339,⁵⁴⁴ by the Shrine of the Báb.
'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás.⁵⁴⁵

<100> *Ahmad Áqá*

A younger brother of the Múvaqqari'd-Dawlih. After completing his studies, he worked for the government in the Foreign Ministry and was given the title Mas'udu's-Sultán. He was not a Bahá'í. He passed away in 1896 and was buried in Háfziyyih of Shíráz.

<101> *Muníriyyih*

She passed away at the age of 7 and was buried in the shrine of Sháh-Chiráq.

<102> *Mírzá Habibu'lláh*

A farmer, who lived in Yazd. He was survived by two sons, Drs. Mahmúd and Muhammad Afnán.

<103> *Ruhangíz Mahdavi*

She passed away in Yazd, with no descendants.

<104> *Munírih Mahdavi*

Her only child, a daughter by the name of Táhirih<134>, drowned in Yazd in 1955.

⁵⁴⁴ 11 July 1921.

⁵⁴⁵ Based on a previously unpublished translation by Hand of the Cause of God, Hasan Balyúzi, and shared through the kindness of A.Q. Afnán for this project (December 1995).

<105> *Farhangíz*

She was a daughter of Hájí Siyyid Muhammad<46> and Bábí-Sakinih Bagum<34>. She married to Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Wahhab<107> and they had four children.

<106> *Diya’iyyih Khánum*

A daughter of Hájí Mírzá Muhammad<46>. When her husband Mírzá Muhammad ‘Alí<113>, died, she settled in Shíráz. She passed away on 6 July 1965 and was buried in the Shíráz Bahá’í cemetery. One of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablets revealed in her honor states:

The sacred leaf, Khánum Diya’, daughter of the illustrious Afnán of the sanctified Lote-Tree, the honored Hájí Mírzá Muhammad, upon her rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God!

O thou sacred leaf! Render thanks unto God that thou belongest to the sanctified Tree, hast drunk from the breast of divine love, rested in the bosom of the recognition of the Lord, and been nurtured in the embrace of God’s bounties.

Now is the time to grow like a sapling in the paradise of divine guidance and become verdant and fruitful. Through the sprinkling of the cloud of bounty, become immensely exhilarated and rejuvenated, sing the praise of the blessed Tree, and speak out so that the birds of the meadow of reality are enchanted and enraptured.

Upon thee be greetings and praise.

‘A ‘A.

<107> *Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Wahhab*

A farmer in Shíráz and Ábádih. He lived in Shíráz all his life and passed away in 1885. He was initially buried in Háfiziyyih, but was reinterred in the Bahá’í cemetery in 1899. He had four children: Mírzá Muhammad-Taquí, Túbá, Mahín, and Thurayyá.

<108> *Khánum Hayá*

She was married to Hájí Siyyid Muhammad<27> and they had two daughters.

<109> *Munírih Khánum*

She married Háji Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Abidín Khalílí, a well-known merchant of Shíráz. She had two children named Muhammad-Báqir and Afsar, and a third child whose name is not known.

<110> *Munavvar*

She was married to Mírzá Buzurg<61>.

<111> *Hawiyyih Khánum*

Her given name was Múchúl Khánum. However, in a Tablet, 'Abdu'l-Bahá named her Hawiyyih.⁵⁴⁶ She died in her 50s, in June 1959, and was buried in the Bahá'í cemetery in Shíráz.⁵⁴⁷ Her two sons were Dr. 'Abbás Afnán⁵⁴⁸ and Hasan Afnán.

<112> *Ághá Bagum*

The wife of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh<71>. She spent her life in service to the House of the Báb. In 1955, she met Shoghi Effendi, who showed her great favor. When she returned to Iran, she continued to serve the pilgrims and visitors to the House of the Báb with great distinction. She passed away in Shíráz in February 1965 and was buried in the Bahá'í cemetery.

<113> *Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí*

He was known as Mírzá Kúchak [junior]. He was a farmer in the Bávanát region. He had six children: Muhammad-Husayn, Siyyid Muhammad, Furúghiyih, Rúhá, Maryam, and Nigár.

<114> *Fátimih Bagum*

She was born in Shíráz in AH 1297 (1879) and was reared by Khadíjih-Sultán Bagum<17>. She married Háji Mírzá Husayn-'Alí Yazdí, known as 'Umúmmí. Her husband attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and received

⁵⁴⁶ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 98.

⁵⁴⁷ One of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets for her is quoted in Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 98.

⁵⁴⁸ He was brutally martyred during the Bahá'í persecutions of the Islamic Republic in Iran.

numerous Tablets, in which Bahá'u'lláh addressed him as 'Sammy-Maqsúd'. 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to him as 'Khususí' and 'Sammy-Hadrat Maqsúd'.⁵⁴⁹

<115> *Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Falláh*

He studied for some years at the American University in Beirut and then, at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's request, lived in the Holy Land for 10 years. Afterwards, he studied at Cambridge University in England for two years that coincided with the years that Shoghi Effendi studied at the nearby Oxford University. He returned to Haifa 20 days before 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing and was present during the subsequent commemorative meetings. When he returned to Yazd, he took up farming and became a pillar of faith for the community. He and other members of the Yazd Spiritual Assembly were imprisoned from 1911 to 1914. He showed remarkable fidelity to the Covenant and was an example of patience and steadfastness for other believers. He married but had no children.

<116> *Afsar*

The sister of Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí Falláh<115>. With her brother, she studied in Beirut's American University and then spent 10 years in the Holy Land. Eventually, she went to Iran and settled with her family in Tehran.

<117> *to* <120>

Four children of Mírzá Javád<58>.

<121> *to* <123>

Three children (two daughters and a son) of Mírzá Abú'l-Qásim<59>.

<124> *Rahmaniyyih*

She married 'Abdu'l-Husayn Tabarsí and had two sons and two daughters.

⁵⁴⁹ Fayzí, *Khándán Afnán*, p. 47. One of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets to him is quoted in *Khándán Afnán*, pp. 48–49.

<125> *Farhangíz*

She was born in 1915 and died in the 1955 Yazd flood. She did not marry.

<126> *Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn Mahdavi*

A farmer in Yazd. He was survived by a son.

<127> *Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Latif*

He was a merchant in Yazd and had two sons.

<128> *to* <130>

Three children of Mírzá Buzurg<61> and Munavvar<110>.

<131> *Khánun Diyá'*

She drowned in the Ábádán River and had no children.

<132> *and* <133>

Two children of Mírzá Buzurg<61>.

<134> *Táhirih*

She was a daughter of Siyyid Muhammad<62> and Munirih Mahdavi<104>. She died at a young age in the 1955 Yazd flood and left no descendants.

<135> *and* <136>

Two children of Siyyid Muhammad<62> and his first wife, Maryam Bagum<52>.

<137> *to* <140>

Four children of Mírzá Diyá'u'lláh<67> and Vafa'iyyih<65>.

<141> *to* <143>

Three children of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh <68> and Rúhangiz<82>.

<144> *to* <146>

Three children of Mírzá Badí'u'lláh<69> and Afsar<116>.

<147> *Firdaws*

She helped her brother, Abú'l-Qásim Afnán, to carry out his services to the House of the Báb. She passed away in Oxford, England, in 1996, having never married.

<148> *Abú'l-Qásim Afnán*

A hereditary custodian of the House of the Báb. He married Mínu Báyár, a daughter of Muhammad-Husayn Báyár, and had two daughters, Maryam and Lálíh. He passed away in 2004 in England. He authored several important books, one of which is published under the title, *'Ahd-i A'lá*.

<149> *Tayyibih*

She married Mansur Nusrat and had two children, Goli and Hamíd.

<150> *Nayyirih*

She married 'Abbás Majídí and had a son and two daughters, Sa'íd, Taránih and Higámih.

<151> *Amínu'lláh Afnán*

A long-time pioneer to Kuwait. He married Gawlnár 'Alá'í, daughter of Dr. Nasru'lláh Badrí<161>. His two sons are: Mamdúh and Habíb.

<152> *Hasan Afnán*

An agriculture engineer. He married Mahín Afnán, daughter of Mírzá Fathu'lláh<159> and had two daughters, Ilhám and Nidá. He passed away in 2004 in San Diego, California.

<153> *Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad*

A son of Mírzá Diyá'u'lláh<72>, a brother of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh<71>.

<154> *Mírzá Bahá'í*

He married a daughter of Samimí and had three children: a son named Diyá', a daughter named Zhínús, and another daughter whose name is not known.

<155> *to* <158>

Four other children of Mírzá Diyá'u'lláh<72>, a brother of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh<71>. They are: Mírzá 'Abbás<155>, Farahangíz<156>, Thurayyá<157>, and Nuri'd-Dín<158>.

<159> *Mírzá Fathu'lláh A'lá'í*

He married Afsar, a daughter of Mírzá Husayn of Ábádih, and had three children: Husayn, Mínú, and Mahín. Mínú married Ghulám-'Alí Dihqán, and Mahín married Hasan Afnán<152>.

<160> *Mírzá Faraju'lláh*

He passed away in infancy.

<161> *Dr. Nasru'lláh Badri-A'lá'í*

For many years, he was a pioneer to the Arabian region. He married Farahangíz<156> and they had three children: Shamsu'd-Din, Gulnár, and Tahminih.

<162> *Muzaffar Khán*

He had married Bihjat<169>. He passed away in 1912 and was buried in the Bahá'í cemetery in Shíráz. They had no descendants.

<163> *Ridván*

She married Ghulám-'Alí Rijá'í and served as an international pioneer.

<164> *Safa*

She married Rúhu'lláh Jalálí and passed away at a young age after having two children.

<165> *Áqá Siyyid Hádí*

A son of Siyyid Áqá<74> and his second wife, Zahrá Bagum.

<166> *Siyyid Mihdí*

A son of Áqá Siyyid Áqá<74> and his second wife, Zahrá Bagum. He married Qudsiyyih Khánúm<92>.

<167> *to* <173>

Seven children of Mírzá Jalál<75>, a brother of Mírzá Habíbu'lláh<71>. They are: Mírzá 'Alí<167>, Gawhar<168>, Bihjat<169>, Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Husayn<170>, Mírzá Fadlu'lláh<171>, 'Aliyyih Khánúm<172>, and Mírzá Ahmadu'd-Dín<173>.

<174> *Akbar Áqá*

Another son of Mírzá Jalál<75>, he was known as Núri'd-Dín and left no descendants. He married Thurayyá<157>.

<175> *Furúghiyih*

A namesake of her grandmother, a daughter of Bahá'u'lláh.

<176> *Shoghi Effendi Rabbání*

'Abdu'l-Bahá's oldest grandson. He was born on 1 March 1897 and was reared in the house of 'Abdu'lláh Pashá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house in 'Akká. He was sent to study at the American College in Beirut, where he gained a Bachelor of Arts degree, and later spent two years at Oxford University, England. From December 1921 until his passing on 4 November 1957, he served as the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, presiding over the most spectacular era of the Bahá'í Faith's expansion and diffusion. Shoghi Effendi was married on 25 March 1937 to Mary Maxwell, known as, Ruhiiyyih Khánúm (b. 8 August 1910 in New York, d. 19 January 2000 in Haifa). They had no descendants. His resting-place is in London, England.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁵⁰ For a biography, see Ruhiiyyih Rabbání, *The Priceless Pearl*, and Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi*.

<177> to <180>

Four other children of Mírzá Hádí<96> and Diyá'iyiyih Khánum, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's oldest daughter. Due to various factors, they were all expelled from the Faith by the Guardian of the Cause.

<181> *Husayn*

He died 25 days after birth.

<182> *'Abbás*

He died at age 8.

<183> *Hasan Múvaqqar Balyúzí*

Born in 1908, he studied at the American College in Beirut and lived in England, where he served the Bahá'í Faith with great distinction. In 1957, he was elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God. He is remembered best for his momentous scholarly works on the lives of the Central Figures. Hasan Balyúzí married Mary (Molly) Brown and they had 5 children: Hushang, Robert, Felix, Richard and Simeon. He passed away in 1980 in London.

<184> *Dr. 'Abdu'lláh Balyúzí*

He carried out his medical studies at the American College in Beirut and returned to Shíráz to practice. A few years later, at the age of 30, he contracted typhoid fever and passed away in 1943. He had no descendants.

<185> *'Abdu'l-Husayn*

He was not a Bahá'í.

<186> *'Abdu'l-'Alí*

He was not a Bahá'í.

APPENDIX SEVEN

FÁRS AND SHÍRÁZ

Iran has had a long, rich, and complex history—a history comprising many cycles of expansions, invasions, revivals, survivals, and reversals of fortune. From the very beginning, the history of Iran has been inexorably tied to the Province of Fárs. The Iranian-speaking Aryan tribes first came to northern Fárs in the middle Paleolithic period; later the valleys of the Kur and Pulwar Rivers became their centers and remained so until the time of the Sassanid Dynasty in the seventh century AD.

Cyrus the Great founded the Achaemenian Dynasty (559–330BC) in Fárs, and his son Darius the Great (reigned 522–486BC) built Persepolis where the Pulwar flows into the Kur on the plain of Marv-Dasht. The nucleus of their Empire was called Persis and had its seat in the royal cities of Pasargadae and Persepolis. The kings of Achaemenian were wise and benevolent, ruling their empire for 229 years until Alexander the Macedonian founded the Seleucidian Dynasty (311BC), spreading all across Iran, where he founded many new towns in the Párs (Fárs) region. Párs was part of this dynasty until the period of Antioukhous IV. After the Parthians liberated the central parts of the Seleucidian Empire, Párs became an independent state.

Another town on the banks of the Pulwar, called Istakhr in the Middle Ages, was the focal point of the Sassanian Dynasty (224–651, founded by Ardishir Babakan). Other cities of Fárs, such as Shíráz, Fasá, Siraf, and Arrajan, later outshone Istakhr in terms of size and significance. Coins found in the region as early as 250BC have imprints of Pahlaví scripts with Iranian figures and Zoroastrian braziers.

Muslim Arabs first invaded Iran during the reign of ‘Umar, the second caliph. The people of Fárs displayed much bravery in face of the invading Arabs and in 638 defeated the Ibn Hazrami forces. In spite of Iranian resistance, ultimately towns in Fárs submitted to the Muslims and by force were converted to Islam.

In the tenth century, at the time of the caliphate’s weakness, Fárs was overtaken by Ya‘qúb Laís, the founder of the Saffarian Dynasty, and Shíráz became their capital. Ya‘qúb’s brother constructed the city’s Jum‘ih mosque. Subsequently, Fárs fell into the hands of the next set of rulers, Al-i Buyih and Siljukians. And with the demise of the latter, Ibn Mudúq

established Atábakan Dynasty in the province and ruled until 1149 when the Mongols invaded the entire region.

In 1353, the Al-i Muzafar Dynasty came to power in Fárs and ruled until 1490. With the founding of the Safavid Dynasty at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the entire country, including Fárs, was compelled to adopt Shi'í sect of Islam.

In short, throughout history, Fárs flourished and waned according to the fortunes of the ruling party. Often Shíráz served as various monarchs' capital, but eventually power, money, and influence shifted to the northerly cities of Tíhrán and Isfahán. Fárs nevertheless remained a significant commercial and cultural center. Today, its capital, Shíráz, is not only the bustling hub of commerce for the Fárs region but also one of the most industrialized cities in Iran. It is a major destination for tourists who appreciate historical sites and art centers and who wish to pay homage at the tombs of the poets Sa'dí and Háfiz.

Several nomadic ethnic groups, including the Qashqá'ís, Buyír-Ahmadís, Lurs, Khamsih, and Kuh-Kiluyih, continue to inhabit Fárs. Nomads typically spend summers on the high plateaus and move south to the Persian Gulf in winter to search for pastures for their herds; others spend winters in a city. These groups represent not only an economic mode of production but also a lifestyle that has strong cultural and traditional roots in many parts of Iran.⁵⁵¹

At the present, Fárs remains one of the largest Iranian provinces, with an area of 133,294 square kilometers. In 1998, this province had a population of 4.2 million people of whom 42% resided in rural areas and the rest were urban settlers. It is a region with great historical significance.

Geography and Climate of Fárs

The Zagros mountain chain crosses the province from the northwest towards the southeast, dividing the province into two distinct parts. The first is located in the north-northwest, while the second is located in the south-southeast area of the province, and both are mountainous highlands. The north part starts from Semirum elevations and ends south of Ábádih, at the point called Kuh 'Azimat, and its arduous pass. The southern part consists of the highlands of the Shíráz area, including the

⁵⁵¹ Readers interested in further materials on Fárs should consult: Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran*.

Maharlu, Kharman, and Tudaj Mountains. The western section is the prolongation of Kuh-Kiluyih highlands towards the Mamasaní Mountains, and the southern region includes the Dáráb Mountains and the Tangistan Highland.

There are three distinct climatic regions in Fárs. First, the mountainous area of the north and northwest with moderate cold winters and mild summers. Second, the central regions, with relatively rainy mild winters and hot dry summers. The third region is located in the south and southeast. Due to lower altitude and mountain position, the quantity of rainfall in winter is lower than in spring and autumn. It has moderate winters with very hot summers.

Shíráz

There was probably a sizable settlement on the site of Shíráz in prehistoric times, and cuneiform records from the great ceremonial capital of Persepolis show that Shíráz was a significant township in Achaemenian times. According to the ancient Elamite clay tablets found in Persepolis, the name for this city was written Tirazis. Phonetically, this is interpreted as *tiracis* or *ćiracis*. This name became Old Persian *sirájis*; through sound change comes the modern Persian name Shíráz.⁵⁵² Under the Sassanians, it became one of the main cities of the Province of Fárs.⁵⁵³

However, the city only became the provincial capital in 693, after the Arab armies conquered Istakhr, the nearby Sassanian capital.⁵⁵⁴ As Istakhr fell into decline, Shíráz grew in importance under the Arabs and several local dynasties. The Buyids (945–1055) made it their capital, building mosques, palaces, a famous library, and a great city wall. The invading Mongols spared the city when its local ruler offered tributes and submission to Genghis Khan, and the city reached new heights of prosperity under the Mongols (1220–1380). Shíráz was again spared by Timberline when in 1382 the local monarch, Shah Shuja', agreed to submit to the invader, even offering the hand of his granddaughter to a grandson of Timberline.

⁵⁵² The name Shíráz also appears on clay seals found at Qasr-i Abu Nasr, a Sassanid ruin, east of the city.

⁵⁵³ The city is referred to in *Hudúdu'l-'alam al-Mashriq ila al-Maghrib*, p. 126, where two fire temples and a fortress called Shammubad are reported. Hamdu'lláh Mustawfi also verifies the existence of pre-Islamic settlements in Shíráz in *Nushatu'l-Qulub*, p. 112.

⁵⁵⁴ Shíráz fell into Arab hands in 641, and Istakhr fell in 653.

After Shah Shuja's death, there was a turbulent succession of rulers for several years, until Timberline appointed his son as ruler of the city. In the thirteenth century, Shíráz became a leading center of the arts and letters due to the encouragement of its enlightened ruler and the presence of many scholars and artists. For this reason the city was named by classical geographers the Daru'l-'Ilm [the realm of knowledge]. Many of the most important Iranian poets, mystics, and philosophers were born in Shíráz and contributed to the fame of the city. Among them are numbered the poets Sa'dí and Háfiz, the mystic Rúzbihán, and the philosopher Mullá Sadrá.

Throughout the Safavid Empire (1502–1722) Shíráz remained a provincial capital, and Imám Qulí Khán, the governor of Fárs under Shah 'Abbás I, constructed many palaces and ornate buildings in the same style of those built in the same period in Isfahán, the capital of the empire.⁵⁵⁵ During this period, the city attracted a number of European traders who exported its famous wine. After the fall of the Safavid, Shíráz suffered a period of decline worsened by several earthquakes in the region, the raids of the Afghans, and the rebellion of its governor against Nadir Shah. The latter sent troops to subdue the revolt, and the city was besieged for many months and eventually sacked. At the time of Nadir Shah's assassination in 1747, most of the historic buildings of the city were damaged or ruined, and its population dropped to 50,000, a quarter of what it was in the sixteenth century.

Shíráz soon returned to prosperity under the enlightened rule of Karím Khán Zand, who made it the capital during his reign in 1762. Although master of virtually all of Iran, Karím Khán refused to take the title of king and contented himself with that of Vakíl [regent]. Karím Khán was a wise ruler and one of the greatest patrons of the arts in Iranian history. Employing more than 12,000 workers, he constructed a royal district with a fortress, many administrative buildings, a mosque, and one of the finest covered bazaars in Iran. He had a moat built around the city, constructed a clever irrigation and drainage system, and rebuilt the city walls.

However Karím Khán's heirs failed to secure his gains, and when Ághá Muhammad Khán, the founder of the Qájár Dynasty, eventually came to power, he wreaked his revenge on Shíráz by destroying the city fortification and moving the national capital to Tihrán in 1789. Although

⁵⁵⁵ In 1630, a flood destroyed a large segment of the city, which was later mostly rebuilt. Another flood hit the city in 1668.

lowered to the rank of provincial capital, Shíráz maintained a level of prosperity as a result of the continuing importance of the trade route to the Persian Gulf, and its governorship was a royal prerogative throughout the Qájár era (1795–1925). Many of the beautiful gardens, buildings, and residences built during the nineteenth century contribute to the current look of the city.⁵⁵⁶

During the Pahlaví era, large capital projects were funded for Shíráz to revive the grandeur of Achaemenid Persia. The 2500th anniversary of the Persian Empire and the large flow of investment in Pahlaví University were notable projects among others drawn up for this purpose, giving Shíráz a prominent status among Iranian cities by the late 1970s.

More recently, a number of restoration and reconstruction projects have taken place in Shíráz. Among these projects are the restoration of the Karím Khán Fortress and Vakíl Bath; plans for the preservation of the Old City quarter; renovation of the Qur'án Gate and the mausoleum of the poet Khajú Kirmaní, both located in the Alláh-Akbar canyon; and the expansion of the Háfiz mausoleum. The Iram and Qavám aromatic flower gardens are popular points of attraction. The population of the city was estimated at 1.16 million in 1998.

Other Notable Towns in Fárs

In addition to Shíráz, the other important towns in Fárs that are referred to in the present volume include: Ábádih, Ardakán, Bávanát, Dáráb, Istahbánát, Fasá, Fíruz-Ábád, Jahrum, Kázirún, Lár, Mamasaní, Marv-Dasht, and Nayríz. They are briefly described below.

Ábádih

Located about 640 km. south of Tihrán, this city dates back to antiquity. However, the town was developed in earnest after Karím Khán Zand chose Shíráz as the nation's capital. Ábádih is the mountainous, northernmost city of Fárs and is located at an altitude of 2,000 m. in a vast plain known as Sarhad. It has fertile lands that attract tribes such as the Qashqá'í in summer and spring. Various religious and historical monuments have remained from past ages.

⁵⁵⁶ Shíráz suffered two major earthquakes in 1824 and 1853, resulting in considerable damage though a number of historic buildings were spared.



Ardakán

Also known as Sipídan, Ardakán is located in the northern region of Fárs, in a mountainous and forested region mostly covered with oak trees. The City of Ardakán is about eight centuries old.

Bávanát

In the past this town was a part of Ábádih and more recently was named its own township with Surian as its center. The history of Bávanát is intertwined with Ábádih's.

Dáráb

Originally known as Dárábgard, Dáráb is located to the southeast in the province. Dáráb is geographically divided into two regions: the northeast region is mountainous and filled with forests, while the south-central region is at a much lower altitude and includes vast plains. It is in the latter region where the ancient city was raised, and its historical buildings remain to this day, including Dihya Castle. Dáráb is known for its many orchards.

Istahbánát

Situated 1,112 km. from Tihrán, this city suffered terribly during the Mongol invasion. Rebuilt by Amír Mubaruẓ'd-Dín of Al-i Muzafar in 1346, Istahbánát is located at two different altitudes and to the south of Bakhtigan Lake. The eastern part of the town has a warm climate, and the rest is mild due to the influence of mountains. Orchards of fig trees have contributed to the economy of this region.

Fasá

Located in a mountainous region to the southeast of Shíráz, Fasá includes a number of villages surrounding the town. Only the southeast and northwest regions of Fasá are to some extent flat. In the clay inscriptions at Persepolis, the town's name was mentioned as "Peshi Ya" or "Beshi Ya." The town was conquered by Muslim armies in 644, and in the tenth century enjoyed the status of being the second most important town of Dárábgard State, equaling the status of Shíráz.

Fíruz-Ábád

Located 1,035 km. from Tihrán in a mountainous region with a moderate climate in north and warm weather in the south, Fíruz-Ábád is one of the primary gathering points for the Qashqá'í tribes. The present Fíruz-Ábád is located a few miles southeast of a historical monument known as Gúr commissioned by Ardishír Bábakán, the founder of the Sassanian Dynasty. Arabs captured this city in 649 and converted the people to Islam. A number of important historical monuments, principally from the Sassanian Period and comparable to those found at Persepolis, are still evident in this region.

Jabrum

Located southeast of Shíráz and 1,158 km. from Tihrán, this city is one of the oldest in Iran and has a number of historical sites. It has a warm climate with famous palm groves and citrus orchards.

Kázirún

Located to the west of Shíráz and 1,032 km. from Tihrán, this town has a warm climate and is one of the oldest cities of Iran, first developed in 483–495 by Fíruz, the son of Bahrám of the Sassanian Empire. A few years later it was further developed and enlarged by Qubád. The Parishan Protected Lake is situated to the southeast of Kázirún. In former times, the City of Shápúr was more populous than Kázirún, and its ruins remain in the vicinity. Many historical monuments in this city remain.

Lár

Situated 1,324 km. from Tihrán, this town is located in a flat area with a very warm climate. In the Sassanian Period, due to the construction of a fire temple, this region became the center of attention. By the end of the eighth century, it was the center for minting a coin known as Larbun, used in the coastal regions of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

Mamasaní

Located to the west of Shíráz, Mamasaní has a cold climate in the north and a warm climate in the south. In ancient history books, Mamasaní was mentioned as Shulistan—a derivative of Shul, one of the Lur tribes.

Marv-Dasht

This town is located to north of Shíráz and has a cold climate in the hilly areas and a moderate climate in its other regions. Archeological excavations have shown that millennia before Darius decided to choose the plains of Mount Rahmat for the construction of the majestic Persepolis Palaces, people lived in Marv-Dasht Plains. The ruins of Istakhr and Persepolis illustrate portions of the city's ancient history.

Nayríz

Located about 1,140 km. from Tíhrán, Nayríz is situated southeast of Bakhtigan Lake. This city has a moderate climate in the north and is warm in the south. In the clay inscriptions of Persepolis, it is mentioned as Narizi. Ancient Arsiman in Natanz is 6,000 years old.

Persian Languages

An evolved version of the ancient Persian tongue—known as Fársí or Pársí, both derived from the Hellenized form *Persis* of the root word *Párs*—is widely spoken today in Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan. This language belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-Iranian language family and has had a rich heritage and continues to evolve.

Old Persian

Old Persian was contemporaneous with Avestan, another Old Iranian language. Old Persian is preserved through cuneiform tablets found in the remains after the Achaemenid Dynasty. The oldest traces of Old Persian date to the sixth century BC, but it was spoken until the third century BC. Old Persian was spoken in southwestern Iran, while Avestan was spoken in northeastern Iran. In addition to the two languages, there must have been at least a third. Median is mentioned by the Greek historian Herodotus. It is believed that there must have been a fair level of mutual intelligibility among the Iranian languages of this period, and more than there would be in later periods.

Middle Persian

Middle Persian was contemporaneous with Parthian, and during the Arsacid Period, Persian was strongly influenced by Parthian. Middle

Persian was the language used in the Sassanian Empire and was called Pahlaví. Middle Persian was, like Old Persian, spoken in southwestern Iran; Parthian was spoken in the north, while a group of languages (Khwarezmian, Sogdian, and Saka) were spoken in southeast. The grammar of Middle Persian was simpler than Old Persian's. The script used was an ambiguous script with multivalent letters, derived from Aramaic. Middle Persian would last until the ninth century, although its decline began with the introduction of Arabic two centuries earlier.

Modern Persian

Modern Persian, known as Fársí, the language of Iran today, was developed as early as the ninth century. It was in many ways a continuation of Middle Persian, but there were important influences coming from other Iranian languages. Modern Persian used an expanded form of Arabic writing, introducing letters like *ch*, *p*, *zh*, *g*, and changing the pronunciation of Arabic *zh* into *za*. There is also a large inclusion of Arabic words in Modern Persian, by some estimates exceeding 40%. The grammar of Modern Persian is simpler than Middle Persian's (just as Middle Persian was simpler than Old Persian). Most of the inflectional systems are lost, and there is no system of case inflection. Possession is shown by a suffix called *izafih*. Tense, mood, voice, and negative are likewise indicated by a series of prefixes and infixes (word elements inserted inside a word).

APPENDIX EIGHT

SURIH HAJJ FOR THE HOUSE OF THE BÁB IN SHIRAZ

[*The following is a portion of the Tablet of Obligatory Pilgrimage to the House of the Báb revealed by Bahá' u'lláh. This Tablet is also known as Surih Hajj I. To this date, the rites enjoined in this Tablet have been carried out only by Nabil Zarandí. The present translation is by Dr. Denis MacEoin.*⁵⁵⁷ *Translator.*]

O Muhammad, when the fragrances of holiness have drawn thee unto them and turned thee unto the land of the All-Merciful that thou mayest discover the breezes of divine praise, go forth then by permission of Thy Lord, the Generous, unto the spot around which circle the angels that are nigh unto God, they that sing His praises about the Throne. At the moment when thou arisest from thy place, seeking to turn in the direction of God, thy Lord, take off from thy body the robe of self and desire and from thy feet the sandals of sin and wickedness, for thou art entering the spot that none may reach save he that casteth behind him all that are on earth and in the heavens, wherein naught but the greatest righteousness shall be accepted, if thou art of them that comprehend, and around which circle the Mount of Command and the Land of Holiness and the Sinai of Glory and the hearts of them that ascend at all times unto the heaven of nearness. None other shall ever attain unto it nor be mentioned by God as having reached it, even should he dwell there for a thousand years as you number them.

And when thou hast journeyed from thy self and from the world and its people and hast travelled unto God, thy Lord, and hast reached the spot at which thou beholdest the outskirts of the city, dismount and stop where thou art and say:

Spirit and light and glory and praise be upon thee, O City of God, O dwelling-place of His names, O treasury of His attributes, O source of His bounties, O mine of His grace, O place of the manifestation of His effulgences that have encompassed all creation. I bear witness that from thy outskirts

⁵⁵⁷ MacEoin, *Rituals in Babism and Bahaism*, pp. 154–162. The present translator is grateful to Dr. MacEoin for permission to cite his elegant translation.

appeared the Primal Point [the Báb] and the ornament of pre-existence and the eternal mystery and the universal word and the fixed decrees and the hidden secrets. Thus hast thou surpassed all others in receiving grace from God, the Protector, the Self-Subsisting.

Lift up, then, your hands unto God, thy Lord, with humility and self-facement, with submission and pleasing contentment, and say:

O Lord, praise be to Thee for the wonders of Thy gifts and the graces of Thy bestowals. How can I give thanks to Thee, O my God, for having provided me with the visitation of Thy House and having honoured me with it and having chosen me for this bounty in which none hath preceded me and having taught me what none hath known but Thee? Wherefore, O my God, I have fled from the house of my self and taken refuge in the place in which Thy most exalted Self hath been established; I have taken flight from whatever hath kept me back from drawing nigh unto Thee and gone for protection unto the precincts of Thy most great mercy. Deprive me not, then, O my God, of that which belongeth unto Thee and cause me not to be occupied with any but Thee. Thou, verily, art the Mighty, the Forgiving. O Lord, make me steadfast in Thy love and in the love of Thy friends, and cause me not to be of them that have disbelieved in Thy verses after they were sent down, them that have mocked them after their perfumes had encompassed all created things and all that was brought into existence in the visible and the invisible worlds. O Lord, send unto me the rod of Thy grace and bounty that I may cleave therewith the sea of self and desire, pass over it, and reach the pavilion of the glory of Thine exaltation and the tabernacle of the holiness of Thy protection, lest there be made manifest from me that which Thy good-pleasure abhorreth. Thou, verily, art He that doeth as He willest, and Thou art, in truth, the Lord of this firmly builded House.

Ride on, then, until thou reachest a spot at which there shall be between thee and the city only a thousand steps, be it more or less. Whereupon, dismount and immerse thyself in water, as thou hast been commanded in the Book of God, the Protector, the Exalted, the Self-Subsisting. And when thou comest forth from the water, trim thy moustache, then clip thy nails, then shave thy head, then make use of the best of perfumes, then put on the best clothes you are able to afford. And if thou art not able to perform that which We have commanded thee, be thou not saddened, for God hath pardoned thee; He, verily, is the Powerful, the Forgiving, the Pardoner. Strive, then, within thyself that, at the moment thy eye falleth upon the city and thou comest close to it, thy heart may be purified from the mention of all things in such wise that thou mayest cast behind thee all that hath been created between the earth and the heavens, for thou art at that moment walking before the King of all creation, thy Sovereign

of names and attributes. Thus instructeth thee the Pen of God, thy Lord and the Lord of all things, if thou art of them that know.

And when thou hast performed that which We have commanded thee, rise from that spot and turn your face towards the House. Then stop, then raise your hands in humble devotion to God, the Powerful, the Protector, the Beloved, and say:

O my God, this is the spot through which the eyes of them that desire Thee have been solaced and the hearts of Thy lovers have been attracted; this is the utmost goal of them that seek Thee and the highest desire of them that yearn for Thee. This is the spot wherein the eyes of them that know Thee have rained tears in their separation from Thee and the faces of them that have attained unto Thee have turned yellow in their longing for Thy beauty. I beseech Thee, O my God, by it and by the effulgences of the lights of the glory of Thy oneness and the flashes of the manifestation of the holiness of Thy divinity, to release me from the fire of my self and to sanctify me from all that is unworthy of Thy sovereignty. Thou, verily, art the Protector, the Self-Subsisting.

Lower, then, thy hands until they reach the level of thy cheeks, then magnify God (with the phrase *Allahu akbar*) nine times, then raise thy hands yet again unto God, thy Lord and the Lord of all that hath been and all that is, and say:

O my God, this is the city wherein Thy sovereignty was made manifest and the signs of the glory of Thy grandeur appeared and Thy verses were sent down and Thy word was completed and Thy might was exalted and Thy proof shone forth and Thy mercy encompassed all things and all that is in the heavens and the earth. There beareth witness unto this my self and my heart and my tongue and beyond them blessed servants. Whereupon, I beseech Thee, O my God, by it [the city] and all that hath been manifested in it to remove that which hath kept me far from the shore of the holiness of Thy mercy and bounty and shut me out from the precincts of the outpouring of Thy grace and bestowal. Clothe me, then, O my God, in the robe of Thy graciousness and bounty. Thou wilt and Thou art, truly, the Mighty, the Exalted, the Beloved. Give me, then, to drink, O my God, from the fountain of the glory of Thy knowledge and the living waters of the holiness of meeting with Thee, waters which, were but a drop from them to be sprinkled upon all created things, they would be raised to eternal, everlasting life, standing before Thy face and the manifestations of the flashes of the lights of Thy countenance. Thou, verily, art the Mighty, the Exalted, the Holy.

Lower, then, thy hands and walk upon the ground with the dignity of God and His tranquillity. And as thou walkest proclaim the singleness of thy Lord (with the phrase “there is no god but God”) then proclaim

His greatness (with the phrase *Allahu Akbar*), then His holiness (with the phrase *Allahu Aqdas*), then His majesty (with the phrase *Allahu Amjad*). Follow, then, in the ways of the messengers and the manners of them that are near to God, saying:

Here am I, O my God, here am I; greetings unto Thee, and the light be before Thee.

Repeat these words as much as will not cool down the fire of thy ardour and passion. Thus We have instructed thee in truth that thou mayest be of them that act in accordance with what they have been commanded. Know, then, that thou didst answer thy Lord with these words when He ascended the Throne and called upon all created things with His words “Am I not your Lord?” Those words are the secret of those others, if ye be of them that ponder upon the mysteries of their Lord. Indeed, shouldst thou behold with the eye of thine inner being, thou shalt at that moment behold Him raised upon the thrones of all created beings, crying: “No God is there but Me, the Protector, the Self-Subsisting.” Know, then, O pilgrim, thy value and station at that moment. Give thanks, then, to God that this has been bestowed upon thee and that He hath aided thee therein. Verily, there is no God but Him; creation and command are His and all act according to His bidding. Blessed art thou, O servant, in that thou hast entered the land of holiness, the Paran of the Spirit, and the Sinai of Command. Yea, shouldst thou make sharp thy sight, thou wilt behold all about thee circumambulating. By God, O servant journeying from thy home, should God open thy vision and shouldst thou turn thy gaze above the head unto the heavens, thou wilt behold the sanctuaries of holiness, the habitations of loving-fellowship, the people of the pavilion of the heavenly kingdom, the inhabitants of the thrones of the kingdom of might, the bodies of the holy ones among the manifestations of the realm below and the kingdom above all moving in the heaven of holiness above thy head, extolling with thee the unity, the greatness, the holiness, and the majesty of the Lord of the City and of him that appeared from it and arose therein. Thus shalt thou behold the matter, if thou art of them that see with the eyes of the spirit.

And when thou reachest the spot at which thou art come nigh unto the gate of the city at a distance of 20 paces, stop at the command of God, thy Lord, the Lord of all things, and the Lord of this praiseworthy scene. Extol, then, the greatness of God 19 times, then address the city on My behalf, saying:

May God curse a people that have interposed themselves between Us and the lights of thy holiness, O City of God, and who have kept us back from inhaling the fragrances of the holiness of Thy oneness and from dwelling within the precincts of the glory of Thy mercy and from standing in the courtyard of the gate of the outpouring of Thy compassion.

Turn, then, thy gaze unto the most great spectacle, in the direction of the wall of the city and whatsoever hath been created therein and hath existed within it, for upon all of these hath fallen the eye of God, the Mighty, the Protector, the Self-Sufficient. Say:

O wall of the City! Blessed be thou, inasmuch as there shone forth above thee the lights of the sun of thy Lord, the Exalted, the Most High. O trees of the City! Blessed be ye, inasmuch as the breezes of holiness have been wafted upon you from the direction of eternity. O air of the City! Blessed be thou, inasmuch as the breath of God, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Beloved, was spread within thee. O earth of the City! Blessed be thou, inasmuch as the feet of thy Lord, the All-Merciful, have walked upon thee and the form of the Praised One hath passed over thee in the days when all were wrapped in the veils of their own selves.

Walk, then, until thou reachest the city; and when thou hast attained its presence and arrived at its gate, place thy face upon the dust of the gate, that thou mayest discover the fragrance of thy Lord, the Exalted, the Most High and may be of them that are nourished with the water of life. Know, then, that from its dust is manifested the decree of water, and from its water the decree of air, and from its air the effect of fire, and from a torch ignited from it hath appeared the decree of ‘B’ and ‘E’ [*hukm al-kāf wa ‘l-nūn*—i.e. *kun*, “be”], if thou art of them that know. This is how We have described it unto thee in the land and among these people that are unconscious in the drunkenness of self. Otherwise, by Him in Whose hand is my soul, an atom of its dust is more glorious in the sight of God than all that hath been created in the meadows of eternity and all that hath been decreed in the tablets of destiny within the mystery of fate in the realm of the divine decree. Thus do We cast upon thee the secrets of the Cause, that thou mayest be of them that comprehend.

When thou hast kissed the dust and derived a blessing therefrom, raise up thy head, then stand and magnify God (with the phrase *Allahu akbar*) 19 times, then walk with the dignity and tranquillity of God and with His grandeur and majesty until you arrive before the House. Then stop and say: “I bear witness by my tongue and my soul and my spirit and my body that this is the spot whereon prostrate themselves the inhabitants of the empyrean realm and the denizens of the kingdom of God’s decree

and they that inhabit the highest mansions of eternity behind the veils of grandeur. Through it all things have been made manifest and through it the breezes of bounty have blown upon the forms of all the worlds. And this is the spot whence the inhabitants of the Concourse of Eternity derive their blessings and the hearts of them that are established between earth and heaven obtain their illumination. Every day the dwellers of the crimson chambers sweep its courtyard and the angels that are nigh unto God brush it with the tresses of the spirit. And this is the spot wherein the Beauty of the All-Merciful appeared and in His own person ascended the Throne of Forgiveness and decreed that which He willed for all creation. He, verily, is the One that doeth as He willeth and decreeth as He desireth and performeth whatsoever He wisheth. I bear witness that, from a handful of this dust, the first Adam was created, wherefore was he named “the father of man” (Abu ‘I-Bashar) in the kingdom of names, and God made him His remembrance amongst all created things.”

Bow down, then, with thy face upon the dust, then place thy right cheek upon it and say with my tongue:

Praised be Thou, O God, my God. This is Thy servant that hath detached himself from all directions, turning in the direction of Thy oneness, and hath freed his soul from all apart from Thee, and hath clung to the cord of the bounty of Thy grace, and hath come in his completeness unto the meadows of the glory of Thy forgiveness. Cause to blow, then, O my God upon my heart the breezes of the glory of the holiness of Thy bounty and upon my inner being the fragrances of the majesty of the glory of Thy favours. Cast me not away disappointed, O my God, from Thy gate or despairing from the manifestations of the sun of Thy bounties. Thou, verily, art the Powerful over what Thou wiliest and Thou art the Protector, the Mighty, the Powerful.

Then stand and turn to the right of the House, in the direction of thy Lord, the Exalted, the Mighty, the Wise. Raise, then, thy hands unto God, the Exalted, the Most High and say:

Praised be Thou, O God, my God. I have raised the hands of my hope unto the heaven of Thy bounty and grace, and I have fastened the fingers of my reliance upon the cord of Thy grace and favours. I beseech Thee by him through whom Thou didst clothe all created things with the robe of Thy guidance and didst raise to life all existence from the power of Thy compassion and generosity, not to lock the door of Thy knowledge upon the face of my heart nor the door of Thy mercy upon my soul. Cause me, then, O my God, to be such as will be worthy of the power of the glory of Thy singleness and the majesty of the holiness of Thine eternity. Thou, verily, art the Gracious, the Bestowing, the Mighty, the Generous. And I,

O my God, have become detached from mine own self, hastening unto Thy Most Exalted Self, and have fled from mine own abode and stood before Thy most pure and most glorious House. Wherefore, I beseech Thee not to leave me unto myself nor unto them that keep back mankind from the love of Thy beauty and debar Thy servants from Thy mighty and unbending path.

Circle, then, about the House on my behalf seven times. Thus commandeth thee the Ancient Beauty and teacheth thee what none in all the worlds doth know. And at the time when thou art circumambulating the House of the Lord, make mention of Him in thy heart and upon thy tongue and turn within thyself unto the direction of the mighty Throne. And when thou hast completed thy circumambulation, present thyself within the first portico, before the door of the sanctuary, then, stand, then raise thy hands unto the heaven of the outpouring of the grace of thy Lord, the Mighty, the Inaccessible. And I counsel thee that, at that time when thou dost raise up thy hands, raise them with such yearning that thereby the hands of all beings may be raised up towards the heaven of the grace of thy Lord. And when thou desirest to call upon God, thy Lord, call upon Him with such devotion that thereby the tongues of all atoms may utter the praise of thy Creator and may make mention of Him that brought thee into existence, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Wondrous. And if thou be not thus, it is not fitting for thee to stand in the spot whereon have stood the bodies of the holy ones and them that are nigh unto God. Nor art thou worthy of thy relation unto my Self nor thy habitation beneath the shadow of my love, which God hath made a cutting sword whereby to separate the unbelievers from them that extol His oneness. And when thou hast raised thy hands unto the clouds of the mercy of thy Lord, the Mighty, the Knowing, the All-Informed, say:

I bear witness that no god is there but He; He is alone, no companion is there for Him nor likeness nor deputy nor comparison nor rival nor equal nor similitude for His sovereignty, the Exalted, the Inaccessible, the Most High. From all eternity He was one in His Essence and one in His attributes and one in His deeds and unto all eternity He shall be as He hath ever been in the glory of His majesty and the sovereignty of His sublimity, such that the mystic knowers have confessed their inability to attain unto the meadows of the holiness of His knowledge and the devoted ones have admitted their powerlessness to ascend unto the heaven of His mention and His praise. He, verily, is the Protector of all things and He, in truth, is the Mighty, the AllGenerous. I bear witness that the Primal Point [the Báb] our Lord the Exalted, the Most High is, truly, His Manifestation in the realm of the empyrean and His Appearance in the kingdom of the decree and His Dawning-place in the domain of destiny. Through Him all created things

are brought to life and all existence is renewed and the balance of justice hath been set up upon the station of praiseworthy glory. Through Him the Bird of the Throne hath crowed and the Dove of Glory hath warbled and the resurrection of the command hath come to pass and all that lay hidden in the treasuries of hidden glory hath been made manifest. Through Him the heavens of pre-existence were raised up and the clouds of bounty were elevated unto this most holy and most notable sky and the sun of grace and beneficence shone forth from the horizon of resplendent holiness. Through Him the oceans of verses surged in the kingdom of names and attributes and the time set for the command arrived with that which was decreed in the tablets of inaccessible majesty. And I bear witness that, through Him, the veil of mystery was removed from the beauty of grandeur and the secrets of the unseen were revealed in the kingdom of the divine decree, and that through Him every poor and needy one ascended unto the heaven of riches and every transient one rose up unto the dwelling-places of eternal life and every sick one was raised to the abodes of healing within pavilions of shining light. And I bear witness that this is the Spot wherein Thou didst ascend the Throne of the glory of Thy unity and didst bring into being all creation, both former and latter, through the power of Thy will and Thy desire, and wherein the clouds of Thy grace rained down upon all created things.

“Wherefore, I beseech Thee, O my God, by Thy hidden and Most Great Name and Thy concealed and most perfect word whose manifestation Thou didst promise unto Thy servants at the time of *Mustaghath* [i.e. at the time of the appearance of Him Whom God shall make manifest], to bring me unto the shore of the ocean of Thy forgiveness and to erase all that I have enumerated of my most great sins and my most mighty transgressions; then forgive, O my God, my father and my mother and my family and those whom I have related unto myself, them that have believed in Thee and Thy signs. Make, then, for me, O my God, a seat of truth by Thy side and cause me to be united with those of Thy servants that are nigh unto Thee. I ask Thee, then, O my God and my Beloved, not to make me to be one of them that circle about Thy House in Thy land and deny Thy sacred House within the Manifestations of Thy Self and the Dawning-places of the glory of Thy Self-Subsistence and the Locations of the glory of Thy Lordship. Thus, O my God, is my utmost wish and desire. Thou, verily, art the Sovereign, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Wise. I ask Thee, then, O my God, by Thy beauty whereby the suns of the glory of Thy bounty have been made luminous and the rays of the lights of the holiness of Thy generosity flashed forth, to cause me not to be distressed upon the day whereon every soul shall be distressed, on which the possessors of pomp and leadership shall be puffed up with pride, on which the feet of them that have attained shall slip, on which the lamentation of all things shall be raised, and on which every resplendent and shining light shall be darkened. Take hold, then, of my hand, O my God, with the hand of Thy grace and favours and deprive me not on that day of the fragrances of the glory of Thy holiness nor from hearkening unto the melodies of Thy new creation, and cause me not to follow upon that day behind every croaking, sinful

one. Open my eyes through Thy grace that I may recognize Thee by Thine own Self, not by that which is other than Thee, and that I may behold the wonders of the lights of Thy Beauty by what Thou hast bestowed upon me through Thy bounty, not that which belongeth unto men. For Thou hast not created any proof for Thyself save Thine own Essence, nor any evidence save Thy signs. Thou, verily, are He that ariseth, the Ruler, the Knowing, the All-Informed. Praise be to God, Lord of all the worlds.

Whereupon, end thou thy pilgrimage, for We have not permitted anyone to approach closer than this unto the sanctuary, for before that spot shine the lights of the Essence from behind the names and the attributes. And, apart from that, courtesy must be observed, for that is one of the best of all attributes in the sight of God, King of the earth and the heavens. Thus have We sent down upon thee the command with a shining and manifest proof. It is our desire that, from every city, one should go forth on My behalf and for his own sake to visit the House of God and that he may be a pilgrim. By God, at every step mercy and grace shall descend upon him from the heaven of resplendent holiness, and at the same time when he raises his foot for the first step and sets it down, God shall forgive his sins and the sins of his mother and his father and all that are related unto him. Thus hath the grace of thy Lord encompassed all created things, whether of the first or of the last. By God, whosoever visiteth the House, it is as if he hath visited God within the pavilion of the glory of meeting with Him and the tent of the majesty of His Beauty. Thus do We inform thee of the call that is mighty by the side of the Throne.

Whosoever visiteth the House as We have commanded him, God shall raise him up after his death within the paradise of majesty and grandeur in such a beauteous form that the dwellers of the Concourse on High shall be illumined by the lights of his face, and all that are in the exalted heavens shall be commanded to appear before him and to circle about him and to make their pilgrimage unto his beauty every morning and evening. O trustees of God upon the earth, strive unto the most great mention, and cast away all that is in your hands and turn your faces unto the Abode of God, the Mighty, the Powerful, the All-Knowing. Be ye steadfast, O people, in this station that, if all that are on earth should rise up against you, ye would not pay the least attention to them and would remain firm in the faith of God. The unbelievers shall prevent you performing what God has sent down upon you on account of the rancour that is in their breasts. But God shall do as He willeth through His word; He, verily, is the Powerful, the Mighty.

Know, then, that We have written concerning pilgrimage to the House detailed and vast tablets, but We have not sent them until now, If God wills, We shall send them in truth. He, verily, is the Guardian of the Messengers. That which We have sent is what was sent down from the kingdom of divine power in a brief form, for the angels that are nigh unto God and the inhabitants of the Exalted Concourse love to be brief in their outward acts. And inwardly, let there be at all times those that perform the pilgrimage. Thus have We taught thee and made known unto thee the paths of holiness and guided thee unto the shores of manifest grace.

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