

# Status of Bahá'u'lláh during the Ministry of the Báb

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The unique circumstance where two Messengers of God were physically present at the same time raises the question regarding the “status” of the Supreme Manifestation prior to His declaration during the lifetime of the Báb. Although Bahá'u'lláh could be called a “follower” and a “disciple” of the Báb during that time, a better mind-set is promoted if Bahá'u'lláh is acknowledged as a “supporter” and a “promoter” of the Bábí Faith.

He [Bahá'u'lláh] it was Who, scarce three months after the [Bábí] Faith was born, received, through the envoy of the Báb, Mullá Ḥusayn, the scroll which bore to Him the first tidings of a newly announced Revelation, Who instantly acclaimed its truth, and **arose to champion its cause**. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 66–7)

It was He [Bahá'u'lláh] Who, through His correspondence with the Author [Báb] of the newly founded Faith, and His intimate association with the most distinguished amongst its disciples, such as Vahíd, Ḥujjat, Quddús, Mullá Ḥusayn and Ṭáhirih, was able to **foster its growth, elucidate its principles, reinforce its ethical foundations, fulfill its urgent requirements, avert some of the immediate dangers threatening it and participate effectually in its rise and consolidation**. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 67)

Described by the Báb as His “Beloved”. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 67) Other expressions are “promised Beloved” and “Beloved One of God”.

He [Bahá'u'lláh] it was Who, in the hey-day of His life, flinging aside every consideration of earthly fame, wealth and position, careless of danger, and risking the obloquy of His caste, **arose to identify Himself**, first in Tíhrán and later in His native province of Mázinarán, **with the cause of an obscure and proscribed sect**; won to its support a large number of the officials and notables of Núr, not excluding His own associates and relatives; fearlessly and persuasively expounded its truths to the disciples of the illustrious mujtahid, Mullá Muḥammad; enlisted under its banner the mujtahid's appointed representatives; secured, in consequence of this act, the unreserved loyalty of a considerable number of ecclesiastical dignitaries, government officers, peasants and traders; and succeeded in challenging, in the course of a memorable interview, the mujtahid himself. It was solely due to the potency of the written message entrusted by Him to Mullá Muḥammad Mihdíy-i-Kandí and delivered to the Báb while in the neighborhood of the village of Kulayn, that the soul of the disappointed Captive [Báb] was able to rid itself, at an hour of uncertainty and suspense, of the anguish that had settled upon it ever since His arrest in Shíráz. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 67–8)

What, we may well pause to consider, were the claims of Him Who, Himself a **disciple of the Báb**, had, at such an early stage, regarded Himself as empowered to abrogate the Law identified with His beloved Master? (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 93)

With it, may be said to have begun the last and most fruitful of the four stages of a life, the first twenty-seven years of which were characterized by the care-free enjoyment of all the advantages conferred by high birth and riches, and by an unfailing solicitude for the interests of the poor, the sick and the down-trodden; followed by nine years of active and **exemplary discipleship in the service of the Báb**; and finally by an imprisonment of four months' duration, overshadowed throughout by mortal peril, embittered by agonizing sorrows, and immortalized, as it drew to a close, by the sudden eruption of the forces released by an overpowering, soul-revolutionizing Revelation. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 107)

During the seven years that elapsed between the resumption of His labors and the declaration of His prophetic mission—years to which we now direct our attention—it would be no exaggeration to say that the Bahá'í community, under the name and in the shape of a re-arisen Bábí community was born and was slowly taking shape, though its Creator still **appeared in the guise of**, and continued **to labor as**, one of the **foremost disciples of the Báb**. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 128)

## The Dawn-Breakers

He was in the heyday of His life when the call from Shíráz reached Him. At the age of twenty-seven, He arose to consecrate His life to its service, fearlessly identified Himself with its teachings, and distinguished Himself by the exemplary part He played in its diffusion. No effort was too great for the energy with which He was endowed, and no sacrifice too woeful for the devotion with which His faith had inspired Him. He flung aside every consideration of fame, of wealth, and position, for the prosecution of the task He had set His heart to achieve. Neither the taunts of His friends nor the threats of His enemies could induce Him to cease championing a Cause which they alike regarded as that of an obscure and proscribed sect. (p. 376)

In 1863 one of the Báb's followers, Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alíy-i-Núrí, Bahá'u'lláh, would publicly claim to be that Promised One. (p. 1)

This unusual pattern is only understandable when we regard the Revelations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh as inseparable Twin Revelations, where the former had as its central purpose the preparation of the people for the latter. This unique structure also supports the thesis that the advent of Him Whom God shall make manifest was imminent.

Various writings of the Báb distinctly affirm this imminence and even indicate when the promised advent would occur. In the Arabic Bayán He says, "Rise ye all when ye hear the name of Him Whom We shall make manifest in the name of the Qá'im. Observe the difference between 'Qá'im' and 'Qayyúm', then in the year nine ye shall attain unto all good." [The Báb, Arabic Bayan, 6:15] (p. 344)

His [Bahá'u'lláh's] identity was kept secret during the reign of Grand Vizier Mírzá Taqí Khán, Amír Kabír, who would have killed Bahá'u'lláh had he discovered the real station He held in the Bábí community. (p. 349)

Was it not He Who, at the early age of twenty-seven, spontaneously arose to champion, in the capacity of a mere follower, the nascent Cause of the Báb? Was He not the One Who by assuming the actual leadership of a proscribed and harrassed sect exposed Himself, and His kindred, and His possessions, and His rank, and His reputation to the grave perils, the bloody assaults, the general spoliation and furious defamations of both government and people? Was it not He—the Bearer of a Revelation, Whose day "every Prophet hath announced," for which "the soul of every Divine Messenger hath thirsted," and in which "God hath proved the hearts of the entire company of His Messengers and Prophets"—was not the Bearer of such a Revelation, at the instigation of Shí'ih ecclesiastics and by order of the Sháh himself forced, for no less than four months, to breathe, in utter darkness, whilst in the company of the vilest criminals and freighted down with galling chains, the pestilential air of the vermin-infested subterranean dungeon of Tíhrán—a place which, as He Himself subsequently declared, was mysteriously converted into the very scene of the annunciation made to Him by God of His Prophethood? (Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 10)

George Townshend in *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 70, used the term coadjutor (co-assister).

## Summary

Bahá'u'lláh's role during the Ministry of the Báb was characterized as a "supporter" and "champion" by Shoghi Effendi, reflecting His unique position as someone who actively promoted and defended the Báb's Cause without being a mere follower. Bahá'u'lláh recognized the divine station of the Báb and played a pivotal role in advancing His mission, particularly through His leadership among early believers and His profound Writings that upheld the teachings of the Báb. This role was distinct from that of ordinary followers, as Bahá'u'lláh's actions and insights demonstrated extraordinary spiritual authority and foresight, preparing the way for His own eventual declaration as "Him Whom God Shall Make Manifest" (*Man Yuzhiruhu Alláh*).

## 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Another question regards the name of 'Abbás Afandí. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was named 'Abbás. During Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime He was also known as 'Abbás Afandí or "the Master". Only after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, did He ask to be called 'Abdu'l-Bahá.