

A Profitable End:

A History of the Zabihi Family

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for the English Edition

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A Profitable End: A History of the Zabihi Family

A translation of the book “ ‘Áqibat Bikhayr”

by Zia’u’llah Zabihi

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Foreword

In Remembrance of Friends

Some time ago I was given a copy of this manuscript. As I started to read, its contents moved me to my very core. However, as often happens, I forgot all about it. In the fall of 2016, one night I had a dream of a distinguished figure dressed in clothing and headwear prevalent during the time of the Blessed Beauty and the Master, who told me:

“This book must be published; there is much more to it!”

In response to this comment, I asked whether this was in accordance with the Divine will? He said: “Yes,” and then disappeared.

I hope that what has been written in this book, as well as much more that is missing, will one day be published together. This volume describes a brief albeit significant phase of the Cause of God in Yazd, Iran. I knew the late ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi), and other members of this extended family, who were among my friends. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb was a brave, sincere, righteous, content and selfless lover of Truth, whose every thought and word, much like his ancestors, centered around propagation and protection of the Cause.

In a tablet revealed in honor of his father, the Master writes: “... *thou wast counted amongst the servants of His Threshold and recognized as one of the keepers at His door. ...*” (provisional translation).¹ Dhabíhí (Zabihi) inherited the trait of safeguarding from his father. He writes in his memoirs: “... out of His grace and mercy He honored this insignificant being to safeguard His servants...”. He considered himself responsible to protect the Cause of God, never shied away from responsibility and welcomed every opportunity, even when it was dangerous.

Although, according to his own statements, he never set foot in school and was not educated, he was an outstanding orator with an exceptional ability to reason and debate. As pointed out earlier, he was entirely focused on teaching and guiding souls to the Cause. Dozens came to accept the

Cause through him, and hundreds in Yazd and other cities came to learn about the Faith because of him. One of the wonders of his life was that through Divine confirmations, he attained such a level of knowledge that he was able to converse and convince men of great intellect and accomplishment. Furthermore, with the beloved Guardian's blessing, he was put in charge of inscribing the Tablet of the Temple! In a tablet revealed in the honor of the respected father of the Zabihi's, the Master writes: "... *Thou must overlook the notion that thou wearest a hat upon thy head, and a shirt on thy human temple. Soon, through the strengthening grace of God, thou wouldst acquire such power of oration that no one would be able to challenge thee. ...*" (Provisional Translation),² it seemed as though this great bounty was transferred by the father to the son.

For more than fifty years, the history of the Faith in Yazd involved the name of this pure soul and his lineage. He was raised by a sacrificial mother and an illustrious family, among whom several souls, including his father, were among the faithful servants of the Blessed Beauty and the Master. In addition, seventeen souls³ among them, including his father, faced martyrdom and received a number of tablets that have adorned this book. However, despite the above, this book is not solely about the late 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí. It is also about the lives of many other sacrificial souls from the earliest days of the Cause, each of whom deserves a dedicated and detailed biography. In addition, this book includes a range of other important and immortal facts that deserve attention.

In conclusion, this volume is an account of an epic era of selfless lovers who stem from the days of the revelation of the Báb and the time of His early followers such as Jináb-i Vahíd-i Dárábí, in Yazd. The book: "A Profitable End" introduces a good standard to be emulated for many a soul to enrich their lives, and in particular for the youth.

Jalil Iqbal

Introduction (Persian Edition)

It was a source of joy to find the biography of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) in the final chapter of volume 9 of *Maṣábiḥ-i-Hidáyat*, [MAH] pages 482 to 567, written by ‘Azízu’lláh Sulaymání. However, the account of the life of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) in *Maṣábiḥ-i-Hidáyat* lacks details about him and the lives of our ancestors. Therefore, I decided to write this book which includes other material as well.

During the 1990’s, as a sign of his respect for their friendship, Mr. Hishmat’u’llah Mushrifzádh of Canada began to write a book about my father. He wrote to the Bahá’í World Centre, placed an announcement in *Payám-i Bahá’í*,⁴ contacted, consulted and met with many of his friends and family members to write a book in his memory. In a letter, Mr. Mushrifzádh wrote to me that the manuscript was finished and sent to the “Centre for the Study of the Early History of the Faith”, receiving a letter from this “Centre” signed by a certain Mr. Báhir. The letter included the following excerpt:

“Notwithstanding the fact that the manuscript is fit for publication and distribution, since he spent much of his fruitful life travel teaching and serving the Cause in pioneering spots, there is no doubt his friends and family members have many more accounts and information to add to the current 55 page manuscript. In addition to offering our thanks to the friend who has written about the life of one of thousands of servants of this Sacred Cause, it is hoped that through greater effort more information shall be received from his children, friends and those close to him, so that more accounts about his teaching and pioneering services are included to help make this an even more precious source for the education of future generations. The current version will be kept in the archives of this Centre.”

However, due to Mrs. Mushrifzádh’s ill health and her passing away, followed by the passing of Mr. Mushrifzádh, the book was never completed. All the efforts for writing the above-mentioned manuscript, all

information collected, including where and, or what the “Centre” was, could not fulfil the original objective. After losing all hopes, I considered it my duty to re-start this project and gather all necessary information to complete it. The current volume not only covers my father’s life, but also those of our ancestors, who willingly sacrificed everything in service to the Cause of the Blessed Beauty, and some of whom spent years in the presence of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Holy Land. It also includes a brief history of conditions in Yazd, as well as accounts and circumstances surrounding the Bahá’í community and life in that juncture in history.

The title of the book refers to a request made by ‘Alí-Akbar Káshí from the Master, as described in the first chapter of the book. The translation of the title is based on Shoghi Effendi’s translation, guided by a Tablet of Bahá’u’lláh as ‘... *“may grant that the end of their conduct may be profitable unto them”*’⁵... In conclusion I must mention that this book could not have been completed without the assistance of my dear sister, Parvin, who typed the text, and the help of my dear brother, Muḥammad Ḥusayn. Last, but not least, I wish to thank Dr. Jalil Iqbal, whose assistance made the publication and distribution of the Farsi version (original) of this book possible.

Zia Zabihi

October 2012, Waldheim

Introduction (English Edition)

The book “ ‘Áqibat Bikhayr” authored by DÍyá’u’lláh Dhabíhí (Zia Zabihi) in Persian, which was published in 2018, is essentially centered around the life of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi), and in effect is the story of his life narrated by his son. However, a great majority of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi)’s children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren live outside of Iran, who could not adequately benefit from the contents of the book in Persian; therefore, it was felt that an English edition of the book would be necessary for them. In addition to the family members there are many more individuals who could be inspired by the story of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb’s life. The first step for the publication of the book in English has been taken and a text of the original material has been translated by Dr. Tahirih Danesh, which was edited by Mrs. Mairianne Zabihi. In subsequent stages some changes followed; should a bilingual person in both Persian and English compare this text with that of its base (‘Áqibat Bikhayr) he would readily recognize some major differences which are listed below:

1. Any text in Persian might not require elaboration regarding certain cultural norms, historical figures, names of towns and places, lines of poetry, etc. This is mainly because they are easily understood by a reader of the text in Persian as they are parts of daily conversation and references. However, a reader who is raised in another culture needs further elaboration of such terminologies used in the translation of the Persian text. For this purpose, at the end of the current book in English, in chapter 8 , 122 endnotes have been added which throw some light on a number of issues for the benefit of whoever wants to refer to them. Also they are sources of authentic information and references for some events which have been described in the text of the book.
2. Names in Persian have been transliterated according to the Bahá’í transliteration standards.
3. Since references to a large number of names have been in the Persian text, most of whom were relatives of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi),

seven family trees exhibited in the English version of the book which display such relationships. Readers who are not familiar with such names and relationships are encouraged to consult these family trees.

4. A list of illustrations and titles of endnotes appear in the table of contents in order to make it easier to find a particular topic.
5. Certain short phrases in the Persian text which might require excessive explanation have been slightly modified or eliminated. In order to preserve the loyalty to the Persian text, such cases are kept to a minimum.
6. Wherever the author has quoted from other sources such texts have been italicized, and also for extensive texts the column of text has moved about one cm inwards. Also, the font used for the italicized text is slightly smaller.
7. The translation of all Tablets and holy Writings which are designated as provisional translation are done by Foad Seddigh and subsequently have been approved by the Bahá'í World Center for publication.
8. Since the contents of the book “ ‘Áqibat Bikhayr” basically consist either memoirs of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) or memories of him written by others, his son included, lots of references to historical events in the Persian edition of the book. In the English edition, practically all the historical events which were cited in the Persian text have been authenticated by references to reputed sources. Whenever the information regarding such material was not available in English sources, reliable and reputed Persian sources were consulted from which extracts were made and translated into English. A bibliography has been added.
9. It should be noted that the book “Maṣábíḥ-i-Hidáyat” authored by ‘Azíz’u’lláh Sulaymání is a well-respected and reputed history book which has been approved by the institutions of the Faith in Iran. In this monumental work of nearly 5000 pages, the author has researched and written about the lives and exploits of over one hundred notable teachers of the Cause of God in Iran who lived in the period starting from the earlier times of Baha’u’llah up to the

time of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. The life of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) has featured in volume nine, pp. 482 – 568. Since the book “Aqibat Bikhayr” has not cited the references for the sources of information, in the current book “A Profitable End”, wherever an event, story, or any description associated with the life of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí mentioned which has also appeared in Maṣábíḥ-i-Hidáyat [MAH], it has been documented and acknowledged. This provides further credence to the material appearing in the English edition of the book.

10. An abbreviation has been adopted for each reference book appearing in the bibliography and the entries have been sequentially and alphabetically arranged. Refer to the entries in the first column from the right for such abbreviation and their longer form in the next column.

It has been endeavored to retain as much of the original material as possible in the translation of this book. Since the translation was not done word by word, inadvertently some material might have been left out; however, such cases were rare and were kept to a minimum.

Foad Seddigh (Editor)

July 2023

Chapter One

The Ancestors

1 - Ḥájí Ḥusayn Turk, Ḥájí Baba

A brief biography of Ḥájí Ḥusayn Turk was included in the following letter that my father, ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) (photo below), wrote to Mr. ‘Aziz Yazdi ⁶ at his request:



Illustration 1. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi)

“Ḥájí Ḥusayn Turk, the maternal grandfather of both you and I,⁷ was the son of Ḥájí ‘Ali Amir David Qulí, a courageous and powerful man who came from a distinguished family in Tabriz⁸. As a result of a quarrel between him and a certain sheriff of one of the boroughs of Tabriz, the latter

was killed, and so the family set out towards Yazd, taking with them a camel-load of gold coins. They entered the village of *Manṣhād*⁹ with their fortune. This all happened prior to the advent of the Faith, and being Muslims, they funded the building of the local *Takiyah*¹⁰, mosque, and the public bath. *Hājī Ḥusayn Turk* had a brother called *Hājī Zaynal*. Together they had been on pilgrimage to Mecca¹¹ on three occasions, twenty-seven times to *Karbala*¹², and seven times to *Mashhad*¹³

Hājī Zaynal had two sons, ‘*Abdu*’l-*Karīm* and *Muḥammad Ibrahim* (who served the Blessed Beauty in later times) and they were cousins of both your maternal grandfather and that of my mother. A Tablet of visitation revealed in their honor is published in volume three of *Makātib-i-Ḥaẓrat-i ‘Abdu*’l-*Bahá*. [MKT]¹⁴ For the visitation of the tablet and its provisional translation, see Endnote 14. For examining the relationships between these two families, see family tree no. 1 in Illustration 2 below, and also family tree no. 2 in Illustration no. 3.

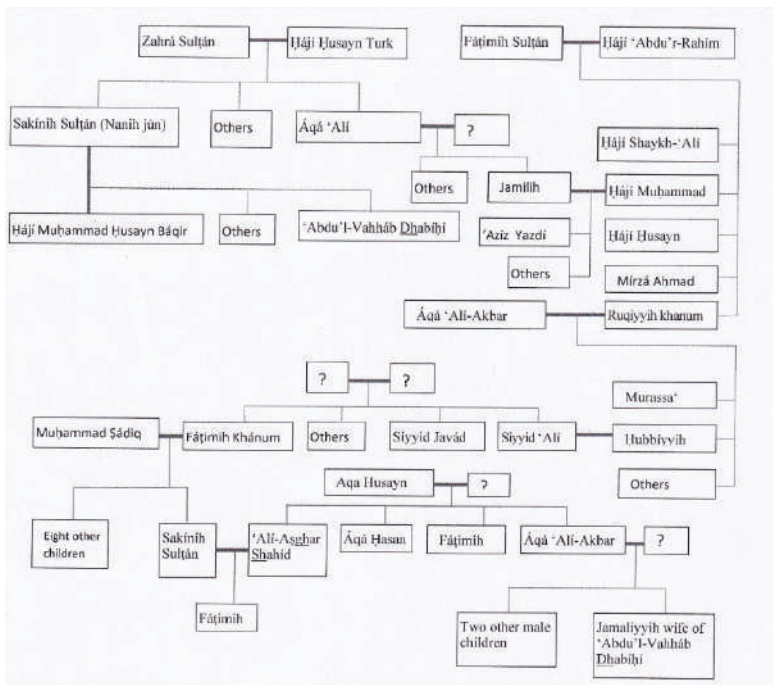


Illustration 2: Family Tree No.1: Connections between the families of Hājī Ḥusayn Turk and Hājī ‘Abdu’r-Rahīm Yazdī

When the Call of the Faith was raised in Yazd, Siyyid Yahyá Dárábí; one of the most learned, eloquent, and most influential subjects of the Sháh, was

delegated by the monarch to go to Shiraz and investigate the Faith of the Báb. Travelling south from Tīhrán to Shiraz, he stopped in Yazd, ascended the pulpit in the Musalla Mosque and announced: 'I have been commissioned by the King, Muḥammad Sháh, to go to Shiraz and investigate the claim of a certain noble Siyyid, if I find him to utter the truth, I will, with this very sword, wage the holy war in His name; but if I find his claim to be false, I shall indeed slay him with this same sword. Whosoever wishes to accompany me, let us do so in the Name of God.' All those present responded by saying that they would fully accept his decision.¹⁵

Siyyid Yahyá proceeded to Shiraz where he attained the presence of the Báb on three occasions. During the first interview, he regarded the young Siyyid as a merchant, and himself as an erudite scholar. On the second visit, he thought of Him as one equal in knowledge to himself. During the third interview however, the delegate of the Sháh was completely won over by the arguments and personality of the Báb. He regarded himself as a humble servant before his Almighty Lord, and in his own words: "lowly as the dust beneath His feet". He then wrote a letter to Yazd, conveying the account of his visit and his recognition of the Cause of the Báb:

A Fire, O friends, from afar is in sight,
From the heights of the Tur it is glowing so bright!
its flame is blazing for all to perceive,
The Message of the Lord it reveals with all might!¹⁶

Upon his return to Yazd,¹⁷ he wrote a letter to Mīrzá Lutf-‘Alí, the court chamberlain, to be submitted to the Monarch, giving a detailed account of his observations and acceptance of the new Faith. Ḥájí Husayn Turk, together with Raḍiú'r-Rúḥ¹⁸ pledged their allegiance to Áqá Siyyid Yahyá Dárábí. They became his companions in the upheavals in Yazd and led by him, they withstood the attacks of the enemies in that city.¹⁹ Ḥájí Zaynal along with the other brother, Áqá Ḥasan, also embraced the Cause and in due course, Ḥájí Husayn and Ḥájí Zaynal attained the presence of the Blessed Beauty. Ḥájí Zaynal remained there. Ḥájí Husayn attained the Holy Presence on three further occasions but returned to Yazd, as he owned many properties in Manshád, and visited the village during the summer season. There was a certain cleric in Yazd, an influential and wealthy man named Navváb Raḍaví,²⁰ who was a fierce

opponent of the Faith and he frequented Manshád in the summer also, in order to harass and harm Hájí Husayn.

It so happened that one day, when my mother and grandmother (the daughter and wife of Hájí Husayn) went to the public bath, the supervisor of the women's section, a woman named Gul Nisa, asked them to not enter the building, because the wife of Navváb was there that day, and their presence might create some problems. My mother who at the time was just a child returned home crying, and in reply to the query of Hájí Husayn, my grandmother recounted what had happened. He went to the bath house and confronted Gul Nisa harshly, saying: "Who built this bath, us or Navváb?" He was involved in many such incidents.

On another occasion, Mullá Husayn,²¹ the brother of Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ — a man who was honored by a comment of Bahá'u'lláh; that He liked Manshád, because of Jináb-i-Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ²² — attended the public bath. Mullá 'Alí-Akbar Sháhábáz, a staunch enemy of the Faith, arose and beat up Mullá Husayn so badly that the latter died of his injuries a couple of days later.²³

When on his return to Manshád, Hájí Husayn heard about this incident, he went to the Hammam and sat in the same spot as Mullá 'Alí-Akbar did. At this time Mullá 'Alí-Akbar arrived and announced: "I did warn these people not to come here, they didn't heed my warning and have even sat in my place." Hájí Husayn walked over to Mullá 'Alí-Akbar, held him by his beard and began to punish him so intensely that part of his beard was ripped out. The local Muslims hearing about what happened, sent the torn beard to Najaf²⁴ and objected to a Bábí mistreating a cleric in such a manner. Subsequently, Hájí Husayn was chained and returned to Yazd, where he was subjected to torture. In effect it can be said that from his declaration until his death in 64 B.E. (1908 AD), he spent his life either as a fugitive or a prisoner. His brother, Hájí Zaynal, was a steadfast servant in the holy household.

There were three brothers in this family. They were Hájí Husayn Turk, Hájí Zaynal and Áqá Hasan. Hájí Husayn married Zahrá Sulṭán, they had four sons and one daughter. The son's names were: Áqá 'Alí Manshádi (who was your maternal grandfather), 'Alí-Muḥammad Sháhíd (who attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and was later martyred in Manshád), Jináb-i Áqá Mihdí (whose mother was a grandchild of Hájí Sháh Muḥammad Amín'ul-Bayán, who at Bahá'u'lláh's order delivered the Tablet of Sulṭán to Badí', who in-turn carried it from Haifa and presented it to the Sháh of Iran). The fourth son was Hájí Muḥammad Husayn, who lived in Alexandria (you may know his children). The fifth child was a

daughter, Sakínih Sultán who was my mother. (Refer to Illustration number 3, the family tree chart no. 2 on page 22)

The second brother, Hájí Zaynal, had four sons and one daughter. The sons were named: Muḥammad Ibráhím, Abu'l-Qásim, 'Alí-Muḥammad Shahíd, and 'Abdu'l-Husayn. The daughter was named Fátimih Khánum – whose husband was martyred in Manshád. She was a consecrated believer who often said: “Even the wind cries out Alláh'u'Abhá, all that is needed, is a hearing ear.” Bahá'u'lláh blessed her with a gift of his own water jug.

The third brother, Áqá Hasan, attained Bahá'u'lláh's presence in Dár'us-Salám in Baghdad. He had a son and two daughters who were Bahá'ís – and several grandchildren, some of whom are also Bahá'ís.

Hájí Husayn was the recipient of several tablets from Bahá'u'lláh and the Master. In 1302 solar calendar (1923 AD), Hájí Muḥammad Husayn came to Yazd to take the tablets to the Holy Land. I am not sure what happened to the rest, but two of the tablets are with me.”

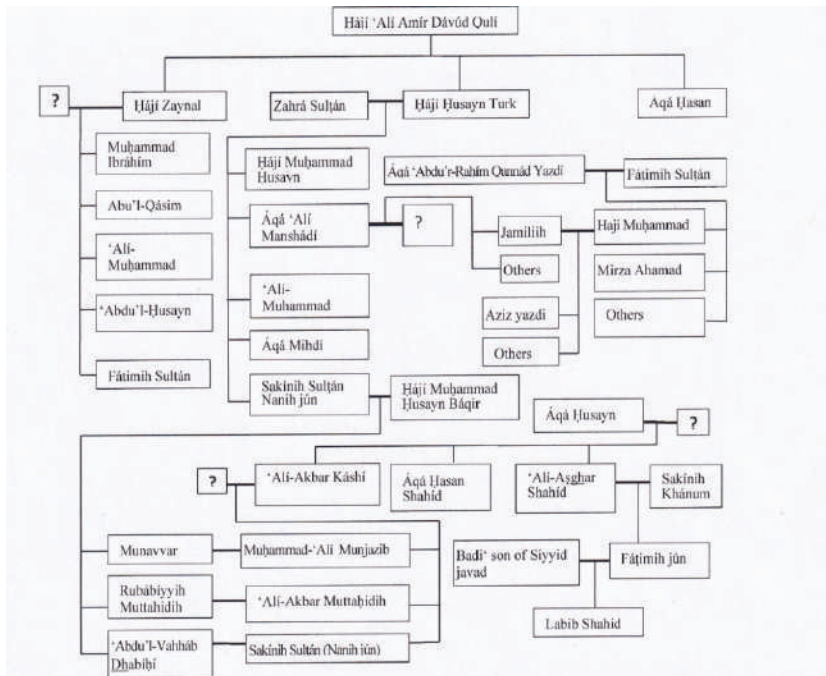


Illustration 3: Family Tree No. 2: More detailed descendants of Hájí Husayn Turk

My father often repeated a verse from one of the tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed in the honor of Hájí Husayn as he recalled it which stated that when the name of Hájí Husayn Turk is uttered, bravery and reliance come to mind.

The daughter of Hájí Husayn Turk, called Nanih jún by the family, used to recount many stories of his bravery. One involved his travels from Yazd to Tíhrán²⁵ to visit the court of the cruel Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh²⁶ and report on the actions of his grandchild Jalálu'd-Dawlih,²⁷ who ruled Yazd. The Sháh was so overcome with his majesty and grandeur that he listened to his report with great respect and thanked him by giving him a gift. As mentioned earlier, Hájí Husayn was often incarcerated. Nanih jún used to say: *“On one occasion, he was so happy to be free on Naw-Ruz.”*

Bahá'u'lláh and ‘Abdu'l-Bahá revealed several tablets honoring Hájí Husayn Turk and Hájí Muḥammad Husayn Báqir. As they were both named Husayn, some tablets in the possession of the descendants may have been addressed to either. They are presented at the end in chapter 7.

2 - Hájí Muḥammad Husayn Báqir, Sham‘ush-Shuhadá



Illustration 4: Hájí Muḥammad Husayn Báqir

Hájí Muḥammad Husayn (image above), was the son of Báqir, a local of Farasha, one of the villages in Yazd near Taft. Almost all residents of

Farasha wer of Zoroastrian origin. It seems the father of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn was a Zoroastrian also. When ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabihí (Zabihi) was in the Holy Land, Shoghi Effendi’s father, Áqá Mírzá Hádí, inquired about his origins. According to a letter my father sent to Mr. ‘Azíz Yazdí, his response was as follows:

“When Mírzá Hádí asked about my family roots, I offered the following: I am the grandson of Hájí Ḥusayn Turk and son of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn, the martyr, whom the Master titled as Sham’ush-Shuhadá.²⁸ Mírzá Hádí replied: “wonderful, during his four years in service to the Holy threshold, he was highly regarded and loved by the Blessed Beauty”. For instance, the first time he attained the Holy presence, Bahá’u’lláh said something to the effect that Mashhadi Ḥusayn! A body that is not dismembered in His path is worth less than dunnage.

He returned to Yazd after four years and married my mother. Then in 1891 AD he went back to the Holy Land and was there when the ascension of the Blessed Beauty took place. It was then when the Master instructed him to remain in the Holy Land. He wrote my mother and informed her of this order. She wrote back saying to stay as long as needed. He served there for three years. At his departure, the Master told him, Hájí Ḥusayn when you return to Irán, carry your cross, just as Jesus did.

Like his violent father and grandfather, Jalálu’d-Dawlih, ruled Yazd and was responsible for the massacre of thousands of Bábis and Bahá’is.²⁹ But when he decided to develop one of the villages, he asked the Afnán brothers to introduce two trustworthy Bahá’is to assist with agricultural expansions and construction. The Afnáns introduced Mullá Bahrám Akhtar-Khávarí³⁰ and Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn. In honor of the Master, he named the village ‘Abbás-Ábád³¹ to portray as though he had no ill wish against the Bahá’is.”

(i) Martyrdom

In his book, *Tarikh Shuhada’i Yazd [TSY]* (The History of the Martyrs of Yazd, written by Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí - 2007). Under the title of:

Events and Tragedies of Manshád, pp. 432-503, the author describes the course of events related to the martyrdom of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn. The translation of the relevant section of the book into English is as follows:

“Náyib Báqir Khán spent his evenings at Sulṭán-Ábád farm, adjacent to the Ákhúnd Farm. One evening he went there to attain the presence of Áqá Siyyid Yahyá Mujtahid and Áqá Shaykh Ismá‘il ‘Aqdá’yí, the owners who spend their summers at Ákhúnd Farm. He said: “Bahá’is in ‘Abbás-Ábád greet each other by saying Alláh’u’Abhá and consider us Jews. Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Báqir and Mullá Bahrám are their leaders who conduct dawn prayers and obligatory prayers in accordance with Bahá’i laws”. Báqir Khán ordered a few men to visit Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn at ‘Abbás-Ábád the next morning, to see whether he would confess to the same, and if so, he would be put to death. The next day he went to see a builder and an undertaker to instruct them that if they saw anyone at the Ákhúnd Farm engaging in such acts of worship, to gather their supporters to come and fight the Bahá’is.

A few hours into Saturday, 8th Rabí‘uth-Thání of the year 61 (4th of July 1903),³² the sons of Siyyid Yahyá Mujtahid laid a rug and sat next to the pool in ‘Abbás-Ábád. Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn and Mullá Bahrám received them with warm hospitality. Náyib Báqir joined them in welcoming: Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad, Áqá Siyyid Javád, guardians of Siyyid Yahyá, Siyyid ‘Alí Khán, the custodian of Imamzádiḥ Ja‘far mosque and the son-in-law of Shaykh Ja‘far Mujtahid ‘Aqdá’yí, who accompanied the guardians of Siyyid Yahyá. Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn and Mullá Bahrám brought a tray full of fresh cucumbers which Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn proceeded to wash in the pool³³. With great care and respect he offered them as refreshments, saying: “The weather is hot and you have travelled a long way, please help yourselves!” Náyib Báqir Khán stated: “You have washed these with your own hands, they are najis (unclean). You must first clarify what your faith is before the guests can touch them.” Then Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad, the father of Áqá Siyyid Yahyá asked: “Jináb-i Hájí what is your religion?” He responded by saying: “I believe in the oneness of God, prophethood of Muḥammad, the Twelve imams, the Guardianship of imam ‘Alí and his eleven descendants”. Áqá Muḥammad expressed his pleasure, referred

to Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn as “a wonderful man” and began to partake of the cucumbers.

In the midst of this, Náyib Báqir Khán shot a bird. Apparently, he had arranged that when the undertaker and the builders would hear shooting, they must act, so as soon as they heard the bullet they approached and waited until the group had finished eating. Then they all went to the newly built complex where Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn resided. They were looking around, admiring the buildings when Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn saw them and asked: “Why have you stopped working?” Náyib Báqir Khán stated: “The builders demand that in the presence of Hájí Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad and Hájí Siyyid Javád, Muḥammad Ḥusayn must deny his faith!” Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad asked them: “Do you confirm this statement?” They replied: “Yes.” Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad continued: “Not only is Jináb-i Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn not a Bábí, but also he is a wonderful man.” Báqir Khán then demanded a formal denial to satisfy those present. Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad turned to Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn saying: “Jináb-i Hájí, to refuse any accusation deny your faith so that the builders return to work.”

Jináb-i Hájí said: “Jináb -i Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad, I do not consider anyone as evil, how could I disdain any name?” Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad called out a name in disrespect and demanded that he follow suit. Jináb-i Hájí refused by saying: “I do not see it as my duty to do so. Everyone is free to do as they wish, I do not choose to disrespect anyone”. Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad lashed out by striking Hájí with a bat over his head and screaming: “Get away from me!” Muḥammad Zaynal, the servant of Áqá Siyyid Yahyá grabbed the same bat and struck Hájí Ḥusayn over the head with such intensity that his skull broke open and he fell to the ground. After this a third man named Taqí, who was a tenant of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn, attacked his head with a knife. Then the builders attacked him with whatever instruments were at hand and dragged his corpse outside the complex. Báqir Khán then ordered the undertakers to bring a rope to tie around his feet and bury his remains in an abandoned aqueduct. The builders and the undertakers cheered as they dragged his remains to its final resting-place, the main well in Sharíf-Ábád aqueduct, facing ‘Abbás-Ábád and towards Dasht - where, known to its inhabitants, they covered him with soil and left the area.

The next day seven representatives commissioned to protect the Bahá'is in 'Abbás-Ábád reached the area and learned of the martyrdom. They were shocked to hear that had they reached their destination earlier Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn would not have been killed. They inquired from Náyib Baqir as to why he had allowed this act to take place. He responded by saying: "He could not have prevented it from occurring."

Nanih jún used to say that for days after his martyrdom took place, a pet deer of Hájí Ḥusayn would stand by the aqueduct where his remains were buried. His bloodied clothes were brought to Nanih jún, his wife, indicating that his body had been cut to pieces, just as Bahá'u'lláh had foreseen.

(ii) The Events in 'Abbás-Ábád

The tragic events in 'Abbás-Ábád were described in *Yad-Namih Bayḏá'-i Núrā*[YBN, pp.123 -127] ³⁴ which is being translated and presented here as follows:

"With regards to the tragedy surrounding the frightful events on the newly built farm of Jalálu'd-Dawlih, the governor-general of Yazd and the owner of 'Abbás-Ábád said: there were up to twenty Bahá'is of Zoroastrian or Muslim background conducting business at the farm. Agricultural and tree plantations were allocated to Jináb-i Mullá Bahrám and several other believers of Zoroastrian background, whose families were residents. Construction, education and welfare of children were allocated to beloved martyr, Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Báqir. Coordination of the local shops and supplies were carried out by martyr, Hájí Aḥmad Kaffásh. Animal husbandry and the local meat supplies were also taken care of by another martyr, Áqá 'Alí-Akbar. Bahá'is and others lived together in peace and tranquility. Close to five hundred laborers worked at the farm, who were locals from nearby villages, including 'Alí-Ábád, Nasr-Ábád, Ákhúnd Farm and Mullá Farm. Some would return to their homes every night while others would sleep at the farm.

Náyib Báqir Khán, the local representative in charge of the armory, oversaw receipt of funds from the city and income distribution among the laborers, all of which was calculated and recorded by martyr, Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Báqir. As mentioned earlier in this book,

persecutions began in Yazd. Jináb-i Áqá 'Alí-Akbar, the butcher, was in the city. As his name was known around the city, it was assumed his temporary move to 'Abbás-Ábád would save him from the persecutions. With great care and the encouragement of Hájí Siyyid Javád of Muḥammad-Ábád, he agreed to visit the friends in 'Abbás-Ábád.

On Friday, 29 Rabí'ul-avval 1321 (25/26 June, 1903), the enemies of the Faith were busy persecuting the friends in Yazd, harassment, martyrdom and pillage was at its height in Taft. Jináb-i Hájí Siyyid Javád who had not heard of these tragedies bade farewell to the friends in 'Abbás-Ábád and began his journey towards Taft.³⁵ When he reached Farashah, someone approached him, warning him about the tumultuous events in Taft, and cautioning him that he will be killed at first sight. So, he spent an hour in peaceful solitude, resting by the Áb-Jádih stream near the flour mill, which was a delightful place. A few children who saw him came forward and asked if he were a Bábi? He replied by saying: "Why do you ask?" Gradually close to twenty or so individuals began to harass and detain him. One of the children headed for Taft to inform people to come and martyr him. Not long after, two Taftí's approached the child and asked him why he was hurrying and whether he was a Bábi? The child told them he was on his way to Taft to arrange for Jináb-i Hájí Siyyid Javád's demise. Learning of his whereabouts, the Taftí's went with the child to his exact location where, using rocks, wood, knife and shovel they ended his life.

When news of his martyrdom reached Taft and 'Abbás-Ábád, Náyib Báqir Khán decided to eradicate the Bahá'is in 'Abbás-Ábád. In this vein, Ustád Ghulám Banná, a builder in 'Abbás-Ábád, and an enemy of the Faith, told the author (Baydá), that ever since the news of Hájí Siyyid Javád's martyrdom reached 'Abbás-Ábád, Náyib Báqir Khán intensified his enmity towards Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn who had been in charge of finances and refused to accommodate Náyib Báqir Khán's interest in usurping what rightfully belonged to the laborers. He used to repeatedly say that when 200 Túmáns a day were spent on laborer's, then he should get five Túmáns. But Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn had been absolutely against anyone misusing the funds.

So, it was that Náyib Báqir Khán felt this was his chance to kill Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn. He was not so concerned about others, just particularly the Hájí. Although he spent his days in 'Abbás-Ábád, he lived in Sultán-Ábád near Ákhúnd Farm. That evening he was at Ákhúnd Farm and complained to Áqá Siyyid Yahyá Mujtahid and Shaykh Ismá'il about having had enough of Bahá'is. He was tired of them; saying

Alláh'u'Abhá to each other, inviting guests and referring to others as Jews. He said: "Their obligatory prayers are different, they hold devotionals at every dawn chanting prayers, they have even groomed the ruler. Soon 'Abbás-Ábád will be entirely in their possession and perhaps will even be the site of their Mashriq 'ul-Adhkár. Now Taft and the city are in turmoil. Jalálu'd-Dawlih arrives here in three days. If we do not do anything over the next day or two, we will have missed our chance. This is urgent. They are a selfish crowd who may force Jalálu'd-Dawlih to attack the few remaining Muslims!"

Áqá Siyyid Yahyá professed he was behind the persecutions in the city and said: "Now at the Farm I am ready to do the same, but you must bring them to me for interrogation." Náyib Báqir Khán replied by saying: "There is no way to bring Hájí Muḥammad Husayn to you." So, they arranged that in the morning a few residents of Ákhúnd (Mullá's) Farm would pass by 'Abbás-Ábád to go towards the complex where Náyib Báqir Khán would invite them in and subsequently murder Hájí Muḥammad Husayn. In the morning, Náyib Báqir Khán went to 'Abbás-Ábád, as did the laborers. Apparently, he had spoken with the supervisors and informed them of the plan, as otherwise they may not have understood why cannon balls were fired. He confided in them that as soon as they notice a Siyyid or a cleric walk towards 'Abbás-Ábád, to prepare to attack Hájí Muḥammad Husayn.

On Saturday, 1st of Rabi'uth-Thani 1321 Lunar year, (27th June 1903), some Bahá'ís having Zoroastrian background went about their business as usual at the farm and the laborers were occupied with their work. According to the wife of the martyred Hájí Aḥmad, they were concerned about the persecutions in the city, but had no idea the same may happen in 'Abbás-Ábád. She said: "I was sick in bed with a fever, when on Friday evening Hájí Muḥammad Husayn came to visit us and shared with Hájí Aḥmad that persecutions may reach Taft and the surrounding areas. The famous Áqá 'Alí-Akbar, the Butcher was there. His crew were harassing the friends, killing sheep and camels to cause havoc. Therefore, it may be advisable to pay Áqá 'Alí-Akbar to go buy more sheep. This way he would not be around when Jalálu'd-Dawlih visited. And so that same Friday evening arrangements were made for Áqá 'Alí-Akbar to go buy sheep.

On Saturday morning Hájí Aḥmad went to work and Hájí Muḥammad Husayn came to check on me. He said he was given some plums, and wondered if I had the appetite to eat some? I told him that I had a dream the previous night and it had worried me. He said that he

also had a strange dream and asked if he could tell me about it first. I agreed. He explained that in his dream he had seen clouds and a rainstorm taking over our area, however it was brief and soon came to an end. Therefore, I was not to worry, all would be fine. Then he left and I went back to sleep. Two hours later I heard shots fired. I thought Náyib Bāqir Khán must be shooting again. However, not long after I heard the sound of a crowd and much commotion, so I wondered if perhaps Ḥaḍrat-i- Vála ³⁶ had arrived. Gradually I dragged myself to the roof top, where I saw some laborers and workers gathered near 'Imarat Lake. I heard one scream: "Kill him," and another shouted: "Destroy and pillage everything." I was stunned and speechless. Finally, someone came, and I asked them what was happening, only to be told that Ḥájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn had been killed. When I asked who had killed him, I was told it was the son of Áqá Siyyid Yaḥyá along with an unruly crowd. I fainted with the shock. When I finally came to, some Zoroastrian women were nursing and attending to me. Words fail to describe how I felt.

Siyyid 'Alí Khán, the custodian of Imam Ja'far's shrine and the son-in-law of Áqá Shaykh Ja'ar 'Aqdá'yí had been at Ákhúnd Farm as the guest of Siyyid Yaḥyá at the time; so, I asked him what had happened? He told me that on Saturday morning Siyyid Muḥammad, the son of Áqá Siyyid Yaḥyá had said they planned to go to 'Alí-Ábád and Naṣr-Ábád and invited him to go along too. He agreed and was given a mule to ride and they set out to Naṣr-Ábád. Siyyid Javád, the son, and Muḥammad, the servant of Siyyid Yaḥyá, accompanied them. As soon as they approached 'Abbás-Ábád Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad commented that as Ḥaḍrat-i- Vála has not yet arrived, they should go see the new royal complex and lake, in 'Abbás-Ábád. They agreed. On reaching the entrance, a man was sent in to inform of the arrival of the sons of Áqá Siyyid Yaḥyá. Náyib Bāqir Khán immediately sent a message that they were welcome; then with a gun in his hand, rushed out to greet them and extended an invitation for them to smoke with him. They accepted and disembarked, however no one was around to care for their mules. They entered the garden and sat by the lake to socialize.

At that moment, Ḥájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Bāqir, who was in charge, arrived and began to lavish us with great care, respect and hospitality. He called on Mullá Bahrám and said: "We have fresh cucumbers, bring some for our guests." Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad explained that we simply wanted to see the site, there was no need for fruit and hospitality. Ḥájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn however insisted that we

enjoy both. We accepted, and Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad mentioned that we would like to visit the inner complex, gardens and the stables. We toured the entire complex with Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn as our guide. He explained which parts were completed and which were still under construction. He was most gracious.

Náyib Bāqir Khán informed us that water pipes were ready by the lake. They had laid out a mat, so we went to rest there for a while. Mullá Bahrám offered a tray full of fresh cucumbers. Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn washed them to perfection in fresh water, placed them back on the tray along with a knife and some salt, and said: "Please go ahead." Náyib Khán said: "These gentlemen have heard that you are a Bábí and find it difficult to eat these cucumbers. You must first say something before the guests can touch them." Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn said: "What shall I say?" Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad said: "What is your faith?" Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn responded by saying: "I believe in the oneness of God, prophethood of Muḥammad, the Twelve imáms, the Guardianship of imám 'Alí and his eleven descendants." Áqá Muḥammad expressed his pleasure saying: "Not only are you not a Bábí, but in fact you are a wonderful man." Then, in the midst of this Náyib Bāqir Khán shot a bird. Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad said: "You were too distracted to hear how beautifully Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn spoke. Whatever you have heard is false." He began to eat the cucumbers, while Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn spoke about anything and everything.

The workers arrived with their tools in their hands and gathered around us. Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn said: "What is going on? Why have you stopped working?" Náyib Bāqir Khán stated: "They say Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn must deny his faith to assure us," and turned to Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad demanding, "tell Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn to recant." Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad responded: "Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn is a good man. Hájí you have already stated your beliefs, now recant too so they can return to work in peace." Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn said: "I do not consider anything as evil, how can I recant then?" Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad said: "Repeat after me." He then proceeded to utter profanities in reference to some names. Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn was upset, and his face noticeably changed when he said: "I do not have to repeat everything you say." Thus, everyone came to know he was a Bábí.

Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad felt perturbed and with a stick in his hand struck Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn over his head and shouted: "Get away from me!" Muḥammad, the servant of Áqá Siyyid Yahyá picked up a piece of Qapan wood³⁷ to hit him on the head, and the others followed

suit, attacking him with whatever tools they had in their hand - to end his life. Táqí, the tenant of Hájí Siyyid Husayn Shaykhí struck his head with a rock, so hard that it broke open. They dragged his body outside the garden, and dismembered it, all the while chanting mantras. His remains were thrown in a remote area, after which Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad, joyous, yet somewhat fearful, went with Áqá Siyyid Javád, Siyyid 'Alí Khán and some others; back to the Ákhúnd Farm, saying: "We will not go to Naṣr-Ábád today."

Siyyid 'Alí Khán said that for the entire day Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad and Siyyid Javád were anxious saying: "That was a terrible act, we should not have gone there in the first place. What if Jalálu'd-Dawlih investigates the matter and comes after us?" Around noon that day, Shaykh Ismá'il 'Aqdá'i who is the maternal uncle of Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad came to know about what happened and praised us by saying: "You did the right thing," he told Áqá Siyyid Yahyá the same thing, saying: "Some men went to 'Abbás-Ábád, and at Bāqir Khán's instigation put Hájí Husayn to death. Bāqir Khán is a good Muslim man who for some time had become increasingly concerned about this case, and possibly had even brought it to Jalálu'd-Dawlih's attention. This is as good as killing one hundred Bábis." Áqá Siyyid Yahyá confirmed this was a good deed, however, Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad and Áqá Siyyid Javád were still restless and anxious - and apparently after almost 18 months had passed, they still remained apprehensive and their hearts were filled with fear.

Hájí Aḥmad's wife went on to explain that on hearing the tumult and the news of Hájí Muḥammad Husayn's martyrdom, she had lost consciousness. When she came to, there were Zoroastrian women seated beside her, caring for her with great kindness. The mood among them was indescribable. The agony of Hájí Muḥammad Husayn's martyrdom on the one hand, and on the other fear for their lives and belongings, by enemies of the faith in this remote dessert. All the women were concerned about what was awaiting them and what recourse they had. In this way, the day came to an end; but none of them could sleep. Anyone who came to visit would ask: What happened? What chaos was taking place? What will the enemies do to them in this frightful desert? What will become of them? Will the evil masses arrest and detain them? Will they murder them just as they murdered their men?

We were engaged in these fearful exchanges until Sunday morning, the 2nd of Rabí'uth-Tháni 1321 Lunar (28th June 1903). It was three hours into the morning when around seven or eight soldiers arrived,

telling us that they had come to protect us, to have no fear. Had they arrived a day earlier no one would have dared to enter the Farm or murder Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn. But now, what had passed, was past. However, Baqir, the father of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn, on hearing the news of the martyrdom of his son raised his face and offered thanks to God for having removed this dark spot from the history of his family!”

Below is a Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about the martyrs of ‘Abbás-Ábád, that is most likely about the martyr, Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn. The provisional translation of the tablet appears below: (For the text of the Tablet in Persian see Endnote 38): ³⁸

Via Jináb-i Hájí Siyyid Javád, ‘Abbás-Ábád, Jináb-i Hájí Ḥusayn. May the Glory of God be upon him!

He is God!

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! What thou didst write to Jináb-i Hájí was noted. It was full of praises for ‘Abbás-Ábád, explanation that his Highness (1) is in utmost kindness, and the friends of God have arisen to render services in the utmost degree of truthfulness and high resolve. This news induced limitless joy and happiness, because one of the greatest commands of God and His teachings is that anyone who is in the position of command must be kind. On the other hand, anyone who should follow orders must be truthful, brave and a well-wisher. Should these twin undertakings become combined, they would result in joy, happiness, everlasting glory and tranquility in both worlds, a joyful conscience, and attainment unto the longing of heart and soul. Convey thou, on behalf of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, greetings to the friends who are engaged in services there and say: “Make ye a lofty effort! Be ye enkindled with the fire of the love of God, and adorned with grace in that village so that ‘Abbás-Ábád would become Bahá-Ábád.” Upon thee be salutation and praise! Ain. Ain.

(1) *This is the Prince Ḥusayn Mírzá, Jalálu’d-Dawlih*

Nanih jún, the wife of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn had said that on the morning of his martyrdom, Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn had said dawn prayers with the rest of the friends in ‘Abbás-Ábád. At the conclusion of the meeting a friend told him about events in Sulṭán-Ábád and suggested that today he should avoid going out in order to escape any possible danger. Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn had responded by saying: “Whatever is the Divine Will, shall take place.”

3. Sakíniḥ Sultán, Nanih jún

My grandmother, in the image below, the daughter of Ḥájí Ḥusayn-i-Turk and Zahrá Sultán, was the embodiment of steadfastness and perseverance, a main source of care and compassion for the family, friends and others. She used to spend two or three weeks at the homes of her children, or grandchildren, to bring joy to them, especially the young. Whomever was facing a challenge, would share it with her. She would often sit in a corner and offer prayers for them.

As mentioned earlier, Ḥájí Ḥusayn-i-Turk had four sons, but only one daughter, Nanih jún. She used to say that she was pampered and spoiled in her parents' home. Servants and maids managed domestic affairs and there was no need for her to do anything. Nanih jún would tell us that she was so lazy, the butler would tease her that no one would ever marry her - and if someone did, they would drop her off in front of her father's home the next day! But that was not the case and it was not long before she was married.



Illustration 5: Sakíniḥ Sultán (Nanih jún)

She was around 15 or 16 years old when she married Ḥájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Báqir. This couple had three children: Munavvar, ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb and Rubáb. There were no servants in Ḥájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Báqir’s home and Nanih jún was a beautiful spoiled girl, raised amid great wealth with no experience in housework. However, she had no choice but to do everything on her own. In those days, none of the ingredients necessary for cooking were hygienic. Everything had to be cleaned in a certain way. Dirt, rocks and soil had to be removed so that it could be suitable in cooking. One day she made mung bean rice for her husband. As he began to eat, he took one rock after another from each bite and threw them into a copper tray in the corner of the room. Nanih jún would say, the sound of each rock hitting the tray was as though a loud bell would shake her heart, its effect was worse than any yelling or other expression of dissatisfaction with the meal.

After the martyrdom of any believer, it was a normal practice to pillage his house. Therefore after the martyrdom of Ḥájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Báqir in ‘Abbás-Ábád, his home in Yazd was pillaged. With no one to provide for them, Nanih jún remained in the empty home with her three young children of five years, three years and six months old.



Illustration 6: Rubábíyyih Muttahidih and Munavvar Munjazib (Daughters of Ḥájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Báqir)

‘Abdu’l-Bahá revealed a tablet in honor of Sakíniḥ Sultán, Nanih jún (Refer to Endnote number 39) ³⁹, which spiritually strengthened her. Her impression of the tablet was that her husband fulfilled his pledge by sacrificing his life, and that it was her turn to do the same by raising her children. It is impossible to imagine how under those circumstances, with no provision of any sort and no income, a young widow with three children could make such a decision and remain faithful to it. She refused to accept any assistance from friends or family. If anyone came to visit her, she would put a pot full of water on the stove to appear as though food was being cooked and there was no need for assistance. She placed her whole trust in Bahá’u’lláh and with entire devotion began to work as a simple wool yarn weaver to earn some money in order to look after her children.

She used to say whenever it would get too difficult, divine confirmation would come. For example, when her home was pillaged, she quickly hid some jewelry only to forget all about it. After some time, she was in desperate need of money to care for her sick children. She was destitute and without hope for their survival, when one night her husband came to her in a dream and asked her why she was so wretched and failed to care for the children? Nanih jún in turn questioned him as to why he had left her alone? Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn responded that it was not of his own volition and then reminded her that she had hidden her jewels in the water well and added that help would come. She immediately awoke and found her hidden jewels.

The next morning, she was awakened by the noise of the movement of several mules from ‘Abbás-Ábád carrying all her husband’s belongings from his residence there, as well as donations by friends living between the two locations. This included some pomegranate blossoms from Taft.

These were particularly welcomed as the children were sick with measles (although the donors were unaware of this fact). The blossoms thankfully helped cure the children; and the rest of the load allowed them to go on living for a while. After a few days, once again the children did not have any hot food. This caused Nanih jún a great deal of pain. Suddenly she noticed her cat entering the house carrying a bag full of meat to her feet. She inquired

from all her neighbors whether the meat belonged to them. When they all said no, she cooked it for her children.

It was customary in those days to buy new clothes for children at the onset of each year. As the new year drew closer, her son wanted a new aba (traditional outer garment). The cost was two Rials, however it was not possible for her to come up with the money despite her utmost efforts. On New Year's Eve the child was in tears and she was so distressed because without his fathers' help, she could not fulfil her son's wish. In this state of sadness, she left home when to her surprise, she saw a two Rial coin on the bench next to her house. Despite all her efforts to find the owner, no one claimed the coin, and so she bought the "abá" ⁴⁰ and her son welcomed the new year with his new clothes. In this way she managed to raise her children and in time they all married and formed their own families. By this time, it so happened that the Iranian authorities had closed the Bahá'í schools and as the buildings were empty, Nanih jún moved into a room on the Tofiq school campus. When, as children we used to visit her, she would fill our pockets with dried fruit from the Manshád garden.

A provisional translation of the Tablet by 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Sakíniḥ Sultán (Nanih jún) appears below (Refer to Endnote number 39):

He is God.

O handmaid of the Abhá Beauty! That bright candle among the martyrs obtained manifest grace from God's holy Court and was given the honor of attaining unto His presence in the Abhá kingdom. During his lifetime, he rose up to the well-favoured of God, and he was confirmed in attaining unto servitude to His Sanctified Threshold. Thou art the respected companion of that pure soul. Thou shouldst live in accordance with his behavior and conduct so that thou mayest become the cause of his joy and gladness in the eternal realm. The Glory of the Most Glorious be upon thee.

(Provisional translation by F.S. and approved for publication by BWC)

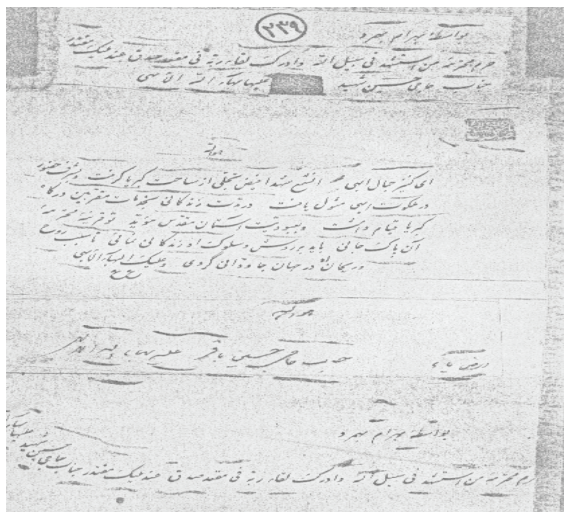


Illustration 7: Original copy of the tablet by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addressed to Sakíniḥ Sulṭán (Naniḥ jún)

A sentence she would often repeat was: *God, you have provided, continue to provide and will provide*. The entire family owes a great deal to Naniḥ jún and her priceless guidance. Her advice was invaluable. On one occasion she advised one of the girls in the family that a girl was akin to white fabric. If she were handled by those whose hands were not clean, no one would ever want the soiled cloth.



Illustration 8: Naniḥ jún’s room in her daughter, Munavvar’s home, in Gazurgah, Yazd (Bahirih standing in front of the entrance to the room)

The best memories of Naniḥ jún were from cold winter nights spent under the kursi (a table covered by a blanket and heated from underneath in order to

keep people warm, as they sat around it with half their bodies under the blanket). She would share beautiful memories and often speak of her life, her father Hájí Husayn Turk – and her husband, Hájí Muḥammad Husayn Báqir. Although she was a strong woman, she had a soft and endearing voice and despite the fact that she was illiterate, she had committed many prayers and tablets to memory. Even in her old age she chanted prayers at meetings as though she were a young woman. When she ascended to the Abhá Kingdom (a short time after the passing of her daughter-in-law, Jamáliyyih – my mother) she was put to rest in the Bahá’í Cemetery in Tīhrán.

4. ‘Alí-Akbar Káshí

During the 1891 era of persecutions in Yazd, seven martyrs of Bahá’u’lláh’s ministry were sacrificed. Following an elaborate plan devised by the authorities and carried out by the masses, they were murdered in the most horrific manner on the same day in different parts of the city. Hájí Muḥammad Ṭáhir Málímrí describes this incident in his book *Tárikh Shuhadá’i Yazd*, (*The History of Martyrs of Yazd*). Two of the seven martyrs were the brothers of ‘Alí-Akbar Káshí, named ‘Alí-Aṣḡhar and Áqá Ḥasan. The account of their martyrdom is as follows: ⁴¹

“Áqá ‘Alí-Aṣḡhar and Áqá Ḥasan, may my life be sacrificed for them, were taken to the center of the bazaar. On both sides, soldiers, footmen, drummers and musicians filled up the place. They were chained and pulled along by Afrasiyáb, the executioner, while crowds gathered around them. After entering the square and standing them next to the fountain, they removed the chain from around the neck of Áqá ‘Alí-Aṣḡhar, placed him to the north of the square and beheaded him. He was 24 years old at the time of his martyrdom. They then took Áqá Ḥasan to the south of the square, facing his brother’s remains in front of the apothecary, and removed the chain from around his neck. Hazrat-i-Válá ⁴² had instructed Mubarak Khán to try his best for Áqá Ḥasan to recant his faith instead of killing him, as he was exemplary in his looks and character, and much liked by the Hazrat-i-Válá. In fact, they were both so outstanding and unparalleled, in particular Áqá Ḥasan, that no one could stop staring at him without feeling overwhelmed by his unique countenance. I did the same whenever I saw him among friends at meetings and gatherings. In any event, Mubarak Khán told Áqá Ḥasan: “See we have killed everyone. Deny your faith

by uttering just a single word, and I shall accompany you, while you ride on my horse all the way to the castle to visit Hazrat-i-Válá. Then we shall return you to your home, safe and sound. Hazrat-i-Válá does not want to see you dead.” Áqá Hasan responded by saying: “Hurry up, all my friends have forsaken this world already.”

When the crowd heard him utter these words, they lost all hope. A soldier pierced his body with his spear, followed by others who attacked him with any, and all, tools of violence. All the while he remained composed and standing, until finally a soldier placed a knife to his chest and cut him open to his navel. He was still standing when the soldier placed his hand in his torso and ripped apart his internal organs at which point, he fell on the ground. Afrasiab the executioner then beheaded him even although he had already passed on. Everyone took a piece of his flesh, while Afrasiab pulled out his liver, held it in one hand; his head in the other, all the way over to the remains of Áqá ‘Alí-Aṣghar. Then, he cut open Áqá ‘Alí-Aṣghar’s side and ripped out his liver. He carried both livers in his hand and put his head on the end of a gun and returned to the castle,⁴³ where he was praised for this action. Shaykh Taqí Sabzivári rewarded him with a special garment and Mubarak Khán was elevated to a new position with the title of Nasaqchi Báshí.⁴⁴ After visiting the castle, the two heads and livers were then taken before the public. They hung Áqá Hasan’s head from a mulberry tree on Áb-Taft road, where the crowd threw rocks at it. Áqá ‘Alí-Akbar Káshí (the father of Jamáliyyih - the wife of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí - and the older brother of the two martyrs), named the tree **Va-vayla**, and that is how it remains known today. All the shops and the bazaar were closed on the day of the martyrdoms, and everyone was celebrating. An order was issued to put up lights and decorations everywhere, and while the masses were busy preparing, Hadrat-i-Válá ordered that some Jews remove the corpses. They did so by tying their feet with rope and dragged their remains from wherever they were last left, without any clothing or cover. Áqá Hasan’s remains were left in front of the entrance to his home on Sang Tarashi Alley (Masonry Alley) near Imam Ja’far’s shrine. So, all parts of the remains were collected and put back together. However, Áqá Hasan’s head, internal organs, as well as parts of his flesh were cut off. His head had been wrapped in a humiliating manner to his body and dragged among the crowds then thrown in a dry well in Kushak Hill near Maḥmúd-Ábád Aqueduct. So that same night, Bahá’ís endeavored to search and retrieve all remaining parts of their bodies and transferred them to the same well. At the time of his martyrdom, Áqá Hasan was 21 years of age. It was on

the 29th of Shavvál 1308 (June 7, 1891), when these seven pure souls attained the exalted station of martyrdom. The above is a brief account of what came to pass. Greater details would require a voluminous book.”

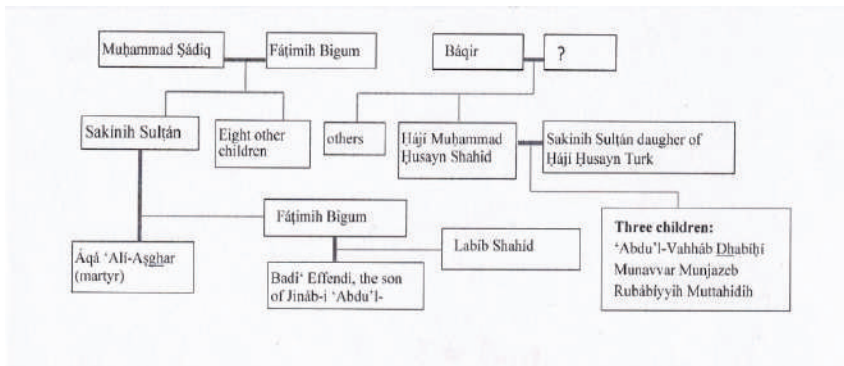


Illustration 9: Family Tree No. 3: Connection between ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabihí and the Family of Áqá ‘Alí-Aşghar (martyr)

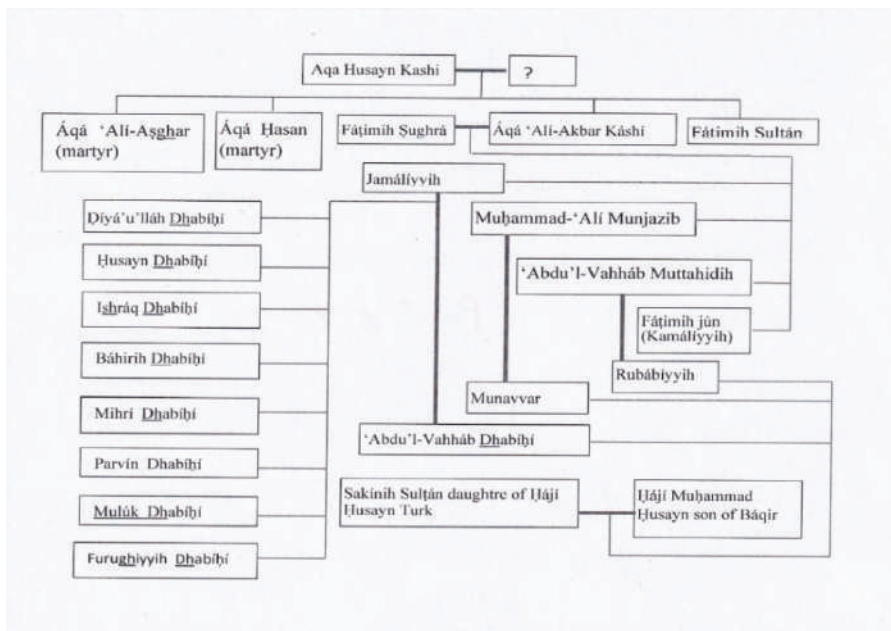


Illustration 10: Family Tree No. 4: Family Connection: Áqá 'Alí-Akbar Káshí and Children of Háji Muḥammad Ḥusayn son of Báqir and Sakinih Sultán daughter of Háji Ḥusayn Turk

There are many stories conveying the excellence and refinement of the characters of these two brothers, including the following: There was a

poor and illiterate family that lived in the same neighborhood as the three brothers. No one was willing to associate with them and their daughters lacked beauty. No one had come to ask for their hand in marriage and they were referred to as spinsters. One day Áqá Ḥasan told his mother to visit their family and arrange for one of the daughters to marry him. His mother responded by telling him that the most beautiful girls from some of the wealthiest families in town longed to marry him and yet, he desired to marry the most uncomely daughter of a family that lacked any position? He replied that he was not thinking of himself, he simply wished to lessen the burden on her poor father.

Following the martyrdom of the two brothers, their sister Fátimih Sulṭán was in a state of deep trepidation, shedding tears and lamenting as to why they had not offered a sum of money to Jalálu'd-Dawlih as ransom to free her brothers? Her mother failed to ease her pain. Finally, one night her brothers came to her in a dream, soothing her soul, by letting her know that they were in the next world, were very happy and that everything had been prepared for their arrival in the Abhá Kingdom.

Roger White published a collection of his poems, *The Shell and the Pearl*, (White, Roger. “*The Shell and The Pearl*”: George Ronald publisher Ltd., Oxford UK 1984) in 1984. The collection is about ‘Alí-Aṣḡhar and centers around the courage and steadfastness of the mother of these two brothers. Before the enemies hung the head of ‘Alí-Aṣḡhar and his brother from the branches of the mulberry tree, they went to her home. His mother and his new bride, Sakineh Sultan, were busy dividing a new load of mulberries for their neighbors. The enemies threw the severed head of ‘Alí-Aṣḡhar into their courtyard. His brave mother picked up the head of her beloved son, cleaned the blood from his face and returned it, telling them that: “We do not take back the head that we have offered in the path of God.”

Below is a Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu'l-Bahá in honor of ‘Alí-Aṣḡhar (visitation tablet): In a moving manner the Master bears witness to his inner gratitude, enthralled with the fire of his love for His chosen ones and those who sacrifice their all as a sign of their love in order to exalt His Cause and return to the Beloved. He beseeches the Almighty to exalt ‘Alí-Aṣḡhar's station in return for his consecration and sacrifices in the path of God. The Master describes his martyrdom in the realm of the spirit as a true reunion

with one's Beloved, despite the gruesome manner of his physical death and the fearsome mistreatment of his mother and wife involving 'Alī-Aṣghar's severed head, threatening their faith to distance them from The Straight Path. The beloved Master then concludes the tablet by beseeching the Almighty to receive this martyr as a shining star in the Kingdom of Abhá, and to surround his bereaved mother and wife with His mercy, patience and grace. (Refer to the Endnote number 45) ⁴⁵

He is God!

Praise be unto Thee, O my Lord, O my Lord! I cry unto Thee from within the depths of my heart, within mine inmost being, the reality of mine essence, the very core of my life. I call Thee to mind from mine outward and mine inward self, from out my very bones and flesh and blood, from my soul and heart and tongue and pen—aflame with the fire of my love for Thy chosen ones, frenzied with yearning over Thy greatly favoured ones, those who have cast away their lives upon Thy pathway and given up their own selves for love of Thee, and their own blood for desire of Thee. They are the ones who have made themselves the arrow's target, who have found sweet the lance-head's biting steel, who craved that, for the upraising of Thy Word, their heads be raised upon the spear-point, and that their hearts be torn apart—out of adoration for Thy beauty, and yearning for Thy presence, and longing for Thy love, and in ardently seeking to extol Thy glory, to be drawn unto Thy heaven, and to be drowned in the sea of devotion unto Thee.

Among these was this youth, comely and sweet, he whom Thou didst call 'Alī the Less¹ in the kingdom of names, he whom Thou hast made, in the kingdom of attributes, to be 'Alī the Great.² For he, O my Lord, when he did drink from the cup of bestowals at the hands of the cupbearer of Thy grace, became drunken with the red wine of love for Thee, and there rose, over the horizon of his heart, the bright rays of knowing Thee. Then was he enraptured with the wine of desire for Thee, and out of longing for Thee he sped to the martyr's field, and following Thy path, he quit the bridal chamber on his wedding night, he left his cushioned ease and joy for a place of affliction and pain, and from his rank of honour and esteem was cast down to the depths of humiliation and abasement.

And then, at the decree of the worst among Thy creatures, did he redden his smooth and delicate cheek with the blush of his spilled-out blood, and with his life-blood dyed his clustered locks. Then did he exchange the fine embroidered garment, put on for his wedding night, for clothing dark with gouts of blood, and laid himself down in the bed of the scorned and despised, down in the dust of misery and loss, in exchange for his safe couch of bliss. This he did in his yearning for Thy realm, the all-glorious, and Thine Abhá Company. Then they rent his breast that had rejoiced in the tokens of Thy love, and they ripped at his heart, flaming with desire for Thee; and on Thy path, they shot their arrows of hate at

his fair, open bosom and, because of his love for Thee, with their cruel blade struck off the noble head.

Then they set his head on the point of their tyrant's lance, and they carried it to his tender-hearted and grievously wronged mother and to his honourable, his sorrowing bride. And to terrify their hearts and threaten them with more—so as to make them waver in their faith and cause their feet to stumble on Thy highway of truth, Thy path that runneth straight—they flung it into the courtyard of their spacious home.

Praise be unto Thee, O my Lord, that Thou didst keep their hearts firmly grounded in Thy love. They took that noble head and set it down outside the house, returning that precious substance to the merciless among Thy creatures, and told them: “God forbid! The head that we have offered up on the path of God, we will not take back. We will not ask for it again, the hidden gem, the treasured and well-guarded pearl that we have given up in love for God. O, may this comely head but vanish under the galloping horses' hooves! May the steeds of the obdurate trample it to dust!”

O my Lord! Make Thou this martyr a hero of Thy Kingdom, make him a mighty pillar in Thy supernal realms, a blazing star in Thy resplendent heaven.³ [Make him a pure spirit in the temple of faithfulness, a shining light in the lamp of “Then came he nearer and approached, And was at the distance of two bows, or even closer”⁴; and bestow Thy blessings, salutations, and greetings upon the mother who carried him in her womb, the breasts which nurtured him, and the bosom which held and raised him. Give her patience and comfort her through Thy great mercy and glorious bestowals. Exalt his noble wife, a leaf of Thy Sadratu'l-Muntahá⁵, with the lights of grace and grandeur. Place her under the shadow of Thy might and beauty, and adorn her head with the crown of great bounty, O Thou the Lord of them who have attained unto the knowledge of God. Cast Thou, through Thy bounty, the glance of the eyes of Thy grace upon all those who are related to him, that it may bring him honor, O Lord of mankind and the object of the longing of all that dwell in the heavens and on the earth! Thou art the All-Merciful, the Most-Generous. There is none other God save Thee, the Almighty, Whose help is implored by all.]

An authoritative translation of this Tablet has been obtained from the website which may be accessed through the following link:
<https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/abdul-baha/additional-prayers-revealed-abdul-baha/852289635/1#853877301>

Notes

1. The name of the martyred youth is 'Alí-Aṣḡhar.
2. 'Alí-Akbar
3. The section which follows inside the square bracket at this point is a provisional translation while what comes before it is an authorized translation.

4. A verse from the Qur'an, Surih An-Najm, 53: 8-9. (Rodwell translation). It refers to the spiritual journey (Mi'rāj of the Prophet Muḥammad in His journey to God, to a distance less than the length of two bows. It refers to the nearness of God. [see Endnote number 46]
5. Sadratu'l-Muntahá literally means the last tree. It is a Qur'anic term. In the Bahá'í revelation, it is a reference to the Manifestation of God. [see Endnote number 47]

5. Sakíniḥ Sulṭán, the grandmother of Labíb

An article published about the life of Sakíniḥ Sulṭán, the wife of 'Alí-Aṣghar, the martyr [not to be confused with 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí's (Zabihi) mother of the same name], written by Mah Mihr Gulistaníh (Vahdat) was published in an issue of *Payam-i Bahá'í* (a Persian-language Bahá'í magazine, published by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of France) ⁴⁸ the translation of which is as follows:

In 1971, my family and I were travelling to the youth conference in Padua, Italy. On our way we stopped over in Beirut. At that point, there was no sign of war or conflict, and Beirut was a beautiful Mediterranean city. Buildings of different colors and heights were anywhere and everywhere, like wild mushrooms with no rhyme or reason. Lack of attention to urban planning conveyed no unique sense of harmony or identity. In a short time, one could travel from the heart of the city, through beautiful breezy villages, all the way to the snowy cedar mountain tops and on to the blue ocean – all in one day.

Visiting the Bahá'í friends, particularly the youth, had such an impact on our spiritual lives that it changed our destiny forever. We spent a few days at the home of my husband's sister, Gulrukḥ, and her husband, the late Labíb Shahíd – who had moved to Beirut at the instruction of the Beloved Guardian. I remembered hearing the name of Sakíniḥ Sulṭán from Arab speaking Egyptian and Iranian Bahá'ís during my visit to Egypt in 1956. One day during our stay in Beirut, although he had never been to Iran, Mr. Labíb Shahíd (Labib Shahid) (whose mother was Fáṭimih, the daughter of Sakíniḥ Sulṭán and 'Alí-Aṣghar the Martyr) eloquently shared the story of her life in Persian. I was young then and filled with youthful vigor and pride. I listened to the account but never thought about it again until years later. Along with millions of other Iranians, following the 1979 revolution, we left our home for a new life in

a lonely and far away land, where memories led to countless journeys in the silence of one's heart. In 1998 Dr. 'Ali Gulistanih brought a number of documents from his trip to Cyprus, including an account about Sakíniḥ Sulṭán. I forgot about this too. While in Alexandria in January 1994, I came across some original tablets and sacred writings among the belongings of the Gulistanih family and we carried these invaluable treasures back with us to the United States.

Sometime later I was researching the life of the Yazdi family in Egypt when among the documents I saw a letter written, in the beautiful handwriting of a woman that bore the signature of Sakíniḥ Sulṭán. I could hardly believe that a woman born more than 120 years ago, into limitations of that land and time, had such beautiful handwriting. Dated the 4th of November 1908, the letter was sent from the Holy Land to the Yazdi family in Egypt. Curious about the relationship between Sakíniḥ Sulṭán and the Yazdi family, I began to review the documents I had in Arabic. With much exhilaration, Dr. Gulistanih and I translated a short compilation. Below is a brief account for your readers. May the seeds of love and joy, planted by this courageous and faithful handmaiden, result in sweet fruits of steadfastness, empathy and faith among the future generations.

Sakíniḥ Sulṭán was one of nine siblings. Her father, Muḥammad Ṣádiq and her mother Fáṭimih Bigum were both descended from well-known families in Yazd. One of Sakíniḥ Sulṭán's maternal uncles, Ḥájí Siyyid 'Alí, along with Ḥájí Muḥammad Yazdí, received the title of "The Twin Most Sublime Names"⁴⁹ from the Blessed Beauty. Another one of her uncles, Ḥájí Siyyid Javád Yazdí married Gawhar Khánum, (the sister of Muníriḥ Khánum, the wife of 'Abdu'l-Bahá). The intense persecutions at the order of the ruler of Yazd during the first few years following the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, led to the forced departure of the two brothers. Despite all challenges at the time, they reached the Holy Land, and at the order of the Blessed Beauty, left for Alexandria and settled there.

At the age of 13 Sakíniḥ Sulṭán married 'Alí-Aṣghar Yazdí. Sometime later the marriage resulted in a daughter named Fáṭimih. It was then when the Yazd seven martyrs suffered execution. 'Alí-Aṣghar, Sakíniḥ Sulṭán's husband was one of them. The sorrowful account of the martyrdom of 'Alí-Aṣghar and his brother Áqá Ḥasan, two of the Seven Martyrs of Yazd have been recorded in details and their names have been immortalized in the annals of the early martyrs of the Cause. These two brothers were peerless

in their patience, dignity, kindness and nobility. The seven were arrested, their hands tied behind their backs and then subjected to every vile act imaginable, as they were dragged through the bazaar, on the way to the ruler of Yazd. The ruler's name was Jalálu'd-Dawlih, and he was the son of Zilu's-Sulṭán and grandson of Nāṣiri'd-Dín Sháh. They were told to recant, but they refused and 'Alí-Aṣghar said: "My life belongs to my Beloved, whoever so desires, may end it". Jalálu'd-Dawlih then placed the noose around his neck. Those pure ones were dragged by a rope between two rows of soldiers, servants and slaves – amidst a fanfare of cheers, drums and trumpets. They were taken to the main square in the bazaar. To the north they beheaded 'Alí-Aṣghar. At the time he was 24 years old. This event took place on the 9th of Shavval 48 years after the Declaration of the Báb (1892 AD). ⁵⁰

A few years after the martyrdom of her husband, Sakíniḥ Sulṭán along with her daughter Fáṭimih, moved to 'Ishq-Ábád.⁵¹ At the instructions of the Master, they then moved to the Holy Land and resided in the home of her maternal uncle, Siyyid Javád Yazdí, who was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother-in-law. After some time, she was appointed as the custodian of the House of 'Abbúd and Fáṭimih was raised in the House of the Master in Haifa and educated at the Sisters of Nazareth School. She was taught the Qur'án and the Kitáb-i-Aqdas by the scholars of the Faith and was trained in calligraphy by Mr. Mishkin Qalam. One of her interesting creations was a beautiful frame designed with colorful yarn, which was presented to the beloved Guardian - and at whose order it is now displayed in the corridor of the Mansion in Bahjí. She also sewed beautiful cloaks for the Master.

In one of the accounts recorded by Juliet Thompson during her stay in the Holy Land in 1909, she refers to Sakíniḥ Sulṭán: 'The Master always sat in the right-hand corner of the divan by one high window, correcting the Tablets dictated to His secretaries, the small, glazed, ivory-colored leaf of parchment in His left hand. Around Him on the divan, we sat with the Holy Family. Along the divan and on the floor sat the families of martyrs, a number of children among them, whom the Master had taken under His own care. The samovar stood on the floor at the entrance on a Persian teacloth, a beautiful, happy-faced woman behind it serving tea. She had deep dimples in her cheeks and her hair hung in thick black braids, a white veil partially covering it. Years before in Persia, when she was a bride fifteen years old, her husband was martyred.' ⁵²

In 1911, Fáṭimih jún was married to Badi‘ Effendi, the son of Jináb-i ‘Abdu’l-Javád Yazdí (maternal cousin of Sakíniḥ Sultán) and settled in Egypt. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gifted them with 40 gold Liras and a tablet revealed in the name of Badi‘ Effendi. It was during the first year of Fáṭimih’s marriage that Sakíniḥ Sultán was directed by the Master to serve Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍá’il Gulpáýigání⁵³ and Shoghi Effendi; who was a student at the Catholic school in Beirut. Soon after Jináb-i Afnán received a letter from the Master expressing his deep satisfaction with Sakíniḥ Sultán’s services. Consequently, when Rúḥá Khánúm, the daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá fell ill, Sakíniḥ Sultán was asked to accompany her to the mountains of Lebanon.

In a letter issued by the Master on this occasion he indicates he recited the Healing Tablet for her, and that he is embarking on a journey that may take a longtime. He reassured Sakíniḥ Sultán that he will not forget her services and will offer prayers for her. One year after Fáṭimih jún’s marriage, she gave birth to a boy, named Labib. He is the author of this account in Arabic and writes: “I was born in October 1912 in Egypt. My mother called me Labib, but my official name is ‘Ali-Asghar, in honor of my grandfather. The Master bestowed the last name Shahid on me when I entered school. At the Sister of Nazareth School, my mother was also known by the same last name. My mother contracted a fever at the time of my birth and ten days later passed away. It appears that the cause of her fever was neglect on the part of my father’s family and their failure to inform Sakíniḥ Sultán about her condition. It was five days after her passing that Sakíniḥ Sultán rushed to Cairo, where the shock of this news made her delirious. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá heard this news before his journey and issued several letters to console the bereaved mother, reassuring her that she will be reunited with her daughter in the next world.

Sometime before the passing of my mother, my grandmother who was serving Mírzá Abu’l- Faḍá’il Gulpáýigání and Shoghi Effendi at the time, had a strange dream. Since Mírzá Abu’l- Faḍá’il was known for his ability to interpret dreams, she shared her experience with him. In response he simply said: “God willing all will be well.” She described the dream as follows: I saw Fáṭimih jún as a 7-8-year-old girl walking on the wall. She suddenly fell and broke into pieces like a china doll. Panic-stricken, I collected all the pieces and put them in a bag where they reconnected and came back to life. I thought to myself, thank God she is a new being and I will care for her and raise her up. After the

passing of Fátimih jún, Mírzá Abu'l- Faḍá'il visited Sakínih Sulṭán to offer his condolences and told her: "I saw no good come of the dream and that is why I did not say anything."

'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote a tablet on her passing as follows: (for the original tablet in Arabic refer to Endnote number 54)⁵⁴

He is God.

O My God! O My God! Verily, this maidservant was born in the stronghold of Thy love, and nurtured from the breast of Thy knowledge; she flourished in the cradle of Thy loving-kindness, was sheltered beneath the shadow of Thy oneness, and reached maturity under the banner of Thy lordship. O My God! She tasted the bitterness of her father's martyrdom, and quaffed from her earliest days her fill of tribulation in Thy path. While still of tender age, she swallowed the poison of tyranny and hate from the grasping hands of cruelty, oppression and enmity. No sooner had she reached maturity under the shadow of Thy tender mercy, and ere she had savored life's sweetness and enjoyed some measure of comfort in this material world, than she donned the robe of everlasting life and bid farewell to the ephemeral world. She returned unto Thee, imploring Thy kingdom, humbly supplicating Thy realm, longing to meet Thee. She was attracted to the concourse of glory, shining at the focal point of light in the kingdom of mysteries.

O My God! Verily, she is the daughter of a martyr, a cherished child of one who hastened to the arena of martyrdom, and who drank the cup of anguish whilst crying aloud saying: 'Take me, take me, O my compassionate God! Accept my sacrifice in Thy path, O Thou the All-Mighty, O Thou the All-Knowing! I offered up my soul and my blood in Thy love, seeking Thy presence, and taking refuge in Thy stronghold.'

O My God! Make this handmaiden of Thine a sign of Thy mercy, a banner of Thy forgiveness, a fountain of Thy bounty, and a wellspring of eternal life for centuries to come, till time without end. Verily, Thou art the Pardoner of sins, the Ever-Forgiving, the Kind, the Compassionate.

[Provisional translation by F.S. approved for publication by the BWC]

Labib Shahid continues: When I went to Cairo in Riḍván 1942, I first visited my mother's grave. With tearful eyes I offered a prayer for a mother who gave up her life to save mine. At the instructions of the beloved Guardian the following inscription beautified her tombstone:

He is God

I, Fátimih, was weaned from the bosom of this world to drink the eternal milk from the realm above.

Fátimih jún Shahid

23 Dhul-Qa'dih 1330 – 3 November 1912

Sakíniḥ Sulṭán was filled with sorrow and pain. She felt all her dreams were shattered. She imprisoned herself in the top floor of a house to die. She refused all efforts to bring her back. She refused to leave that room despite all requests and visits by friends until a letter written by the Master inviting her to the Holy Land reached her. In this letter the Master consoled and advised her not be sorrowful.

Labíb continues, I was one year old when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s letter summoned us to the Holy Land. My grandmother obeying the Master, returned, along with me (the only descendant she had) to the Holy Land where we settled in the House of ‘Abbud. This house had an eastern and a western wing. The eastern wing was composed of three floors facing ‘Abbúd square. Sakíniḥ Sulṭán chose to live in that wing, in a room adjacent to the one where the Master married Muníriḥ Khánum. The best years of my life were in that house. Sometimes we would enter the presence of the Master. The warmth and unconditional love of Sakíniḥ Sulṭán, known by all as Umm-i Labíb (mother of Labíb) filled my life. I will never forget the look on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s face while he softly chanted “Yá Iláh Al-Mustagháth” as he conversed with God. That heavenly voice meant that as soon as He would begin to chant prayers, my eyes would rest and soon I would find myself in deep sleep.

Our little room had a small window facing the square, where a Turkish bath was set up. How often I would stick my head out of this window and curiously observe the comings and goings of people and shopkeepers. Every night I slept on the bed next to that of Sakíniḥ Sulṭán and imagined that she was my mother. She put my bed next to the wall so that I would not fall down. She would hold me in her warm embrace and quietly chant Uda‘t-u Nafsi.⁵⁵ She would ask: “Do you love me?” And I would respond by saying: “Yes from the bottom of my heart.” I would express my child-like love and reassure her of my feelings for her, until our eyes would give way to sleep. The first time I noticed the faraway horizon over the ocean, I felt scared and called her to say: “Mother, look carefully, stars are falling on earth. She looked out the window and said, Labíb, these are not stars, these are lights far away in Haifa.”

I remember each time the youthful Guardian would visit ‘Akká, Sakíniḥ Sulṭán would send me with a small bag to buy his favorite, famous sweet

plums, from Abu Haydar's shop in Al-Hassabih bazaar. One day I was in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's room without permission, I opened his case and picked up the knife he used to sharpen his calligraphy pens or clean his nails. Sakíniḥ Sulṭán saw me and angrily took it from me. I cried so hard I passed out. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was upset and reprimanded her saying: "Did I not ask you to leave this child be?" He then took me into his embrace, kissed me and held me until I calmed down.

During the WWI years of 1914-1918 'Abdu'l-Bahá would send the list of names of 'Akká residents for Sakíniḥ Sulṭán from 'Adasiyyih. She oversaw the distribution of wheat among those who lived in 'Akká. He was personally in charge of agricultural matters, including harvest and transfer of wheat to ensure nothing was wasted. Everything was sent to Sakíniḥ Sulṭán at the House of 'Abbúd, who would issue receipts for each sac. She would then distribute them according to the list of names issued by the Master. The love and mercy of the Master for all inhabitants of 'Akká during those difficult years with scarcity of food and resources, and his initiative to care for the needy, had an incredible impact on their heart and soul; leaving no room for dissension among the Muslims, Christians and Bahá'ís. His love was all embracing. The summary of one of His letters is as follows:

I have been in Al-Ghur for some time. The afternoons are indescribably hot, causing me shortness of breath. I had to come to Tiberias (Northwest Palestine). I will return as soon as I feel better. I will send you the harvest as usual. Although friends are missed (due to the heat), otherwise I would be forced to return to Haifa and 'Akká. Regardless of all challenges I sent some wheat. However, the cost of transfer has been raised. Each load costs around 2-3 Majidi. We bought the entire load last year and each load cost one Majidi. This year, for the same loads we had to pay 2-5 Majidis (each load is about 5 pounds). This year I will send you 560 pounds of wheat. Distribute 540 pounds in accordance with the list I have included. Store it at the House of 'Abbúd and distribute it with great attention among the friends through trustworthy individuals. Pay them for the transfer and give my loving greetings to all the servants and handmaidens of God. If any wheat is left over, send some to our neighbor (Kamilih Khánum). That is all.

There are many such letters in which lists of names of families and friends in need are detailed. Sometimes due to lack of time He would send a brief. The order of the names was in accordance with the amount of wheat

delivered and each letter was sealed. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá knew everyone in each family in ‘Akká and knew how many members there were. If anyone would fall ill, he would send one of the Bahá’ís to visit them, and when necessary he would send a doctor. When he was at the House of ‘Abbúd, after each night’s rest he would rise at dawn and inquire: “O Umm-i Labíb have you sent anyone to look after the sick? Is so and so better? What is their temperature?” His fatherly love embraced all. He treated everyone equally. With sincerity and kindness, he asked about everyone. In another letter He sent my grandmother state that He faced obstacles to travel to ‘Akka and gives instructions of giving wheat to some individuals stating their names and the amounts to be given The name Umm-i-Khalil. Also He advised Sakinih sultan to bring Labib to Haifa.

The Master’s reference to “the wife of Farbuh,” was to a Christian widow who was from a respected and humble family. Her home was in Alfakhúrrat, near the House of ‘Abbúd and my grandmother used to send me to her.

Sakinih Sulṭán was an expert in preparing pomegranate paste. Every year during the harvest season, she would go along with two other hard-working women to the pomegranate garden. This was the only time I spent in nature with my grandmother. She would prepare everything a few days ahead of time and would instruct Isfandiari to come at dawn. Then we would all leave for the garden of Surush, near the garden of Riḍván in the outskirts of ‘Akká; where the best pomegranates (originated from Iran) were grown. The beautiful red of the pomegranates was an eye-catching contrast to the greenery of the leaves. One type of fruit known as Al-Lafani, was unparalleled in taste. For two whole days they would be busy preparing pomegranate paste. While the paste cooled down our souls were revived in the beautiful garden. Once ready, glass bottles and clay jars were filled and sealed up. These had to last for an entire year for the holy family in Haifa. I would spend these two days roaming around the garden and watching the fish swim by. Sometimes we would visit the Riḍván garden and I would stand by the peacocks to enjoy the beauty of their plumage. When the male peacocks extended their feathers, it was as though the rays of the sun formed into a shimmering beautiful rainbow. It took my breath away.

I remember during WWI that salt had become an unbelievably valuable commodity; so much so that it was used to pay soldiers. Sakinih Sulṭán would hire our neighbors’ wife to bring us beach sand in return for a small payment. She would then place the sand in water and shake it around until

all the salt was dissolved. Then, to extract the salt, all the containers of water were laid out to dry in the sun on our rooftops. I was 5 or 6 years old at the time, however I remember these details clearly as my grandmother would often recount this process for our neighbors and pilgrims.

In 1917-1918 my paternal grandmother, Gawhar Bigum visited Haifa. News reached us that she had come to take me to my father. When Sakīnih Sulṭān learned of this she was so shocked and angry that her face turned pale. She was so devastated she didn't know what to do with herself, so she put on her scarf, grabbed my hand and headed for the Mansion of Bahji, where 'Abdu'l-Bahá was staying for a few days. She was granted an audience with him and with my hand in hers, she said: "They want Labīb, here he is, take him away." 'Abdu'l-Bahá assuaged her, saying: "Calm down Umm-i Labīb, what is the matter?" Sakīnih Sulṭān replied: "After all these years, Gawhar Bigum has come to take Labīb away. I rescued him from certain death and raised him. He is now living with me in peace and safety. Why did they not take him back then, when his neck was bent and he was so malnourished, he was about to perish? Why did they not take him then? I told them, this is your child; even though Fāṭimih jūn was dead but they refused saying they couldn't care for him, that if I left him with them, he would die; so it would be just as well to prepare a coffin for him before I would leave. So, when I realized they did not want this child, I then took him and raised him myself. When I left Egypt, I promised not to let anything happen to him." She continued: "Now after all these years they have come to take him from me? My Master, you know I have raised him with tears and prayers offered day and night at the threshold of the Blessed Beauty, but now they think they can simply take him away? If this is just and fair, then fine."

On hearing all of this, I was so overcome with fear and trepidation that I fell before the Master sobbing uncontrollably. He took me into his warm embrace, kissed me, patted my back and told me: "Labīb, don't be afraid, no one can separate you from your mother. He then removed a 'Greatest Name' ring from his belt and placed it on my finger saying: "This ring belongs to you," all the while holding me in his arms until I finally calmed down. He then called Isfandiar and instructed him saying: "Prepare the horses and the carriage and take Labīb and Sakīnih Sulṭān to Abusanan village, as they need rest and recuperation."

So it was that in great comfort, we spent an enjoyable, happy summer in Abusanan, before returning to 'Akká to resume the academic year. One day, in the presence of the Master, I asked my grandmother why did the village women suffer from a red eye infection throughout the summer? With absolute sincerity I said: "I wish I could find a cure to help them." With a kind smile the Master said: "Umm-i Labíb this condition, conjunctivitis, causes mucopurulent discharge among women who work in grapevines, or farms, which harvest figs, tamarind or tobacco leaves. Unfortunately, it is viral." Sakíniḥ Sulṭán commented how she wished she could take away their pain. To which 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded: "I will provide guidance that will heal them." Then he gently went on to explain: "Dissolve some copper sulphate in boiled water to get a blue liquid. This is the best cure for this condition. Try to keep it sterilized and superfine. Place two drops in each eye every morning and every evening. The eye should not be touched and make sure to not apply the same cloth to both eyes." My grandmother offered her gratitude and prayed for him to live a long life.

The following day, my mother (Labíb often refers to Sakíniḥ Sulṭán as his mother) gave me a quarter and instructed me to purchase some copper sulphate from the apothecary of Ḥusayn Āshchí, who was one of the Iranian migrants living in 'Akká; known as Āshchí. Sakíniḥ Sulṭán followed the master's instructions to cure the village women's eye infections and from that day on, she was called Umm-i Labíb the Optometrist. Groups of villagers would come to see her, and she would use cotton balls to treat their painful eyes with the solution. They would thank my mother and sincerely pray for a long life for her son, Labíb. She became renowned for this and residents of other villages would come to her for treatment – and, like an angel of mercy she would care for one and all.

Over the years I attended schools in Haifa and 'Akká and later went to college. Towards the end of 1921 Sakíniḥ Sulṭán requested 'Abdu'l-Bahá's permission for me to go to Beirut to continue my studies. A letter from that embodiment of love and mercy reached Sakíniḥ Sulṭán conveying the following: As Labíb is still young it may be better to postpone this matter until next year. Nevertheless, I am in favor of your medical treatment there and if you so desire, you may visit Haifa. He added: "I hope your mind is at ease. Write whenever you wish. You know I will never forget your services. I am busy and have no time to write, but

I am writing this detailed letter to you through Suhayl Effendi. The letter was written on 7 October 1921 and his blessed ascension took place on 28 November 1921.

All her dreams and wishes following the passing of Fátimih jún were summed up in my life, as she lived to raise me with sincere maternal love. If I was happy, so was she. If I were ill or in discomfort, she would rush me to doctors, provide medication, food and drinks; regardless of her own welfare. She was a source of love and care to both the young and the old. Everyone loved her, selflessly she cared for the sick, as she was trained by the Master himself.

A beautiful cherished memory comes to mind, about my mother, while in the presence of the Master. One day the Master wanted to test her love for me. He asked her: "If you hear God and Labib are on the roof and are about to fall, which one will you catch?" Without hesitation she responded: "Of course Labib." He reiterated: "You will let God fall?" Sakíniḥ Sulṭán laughed and said: "My Master, God is all-powerful, He will safeguard himself and does not need a feeble maiden such as I." 'Abdu'l-Bahá laughed heartily and enjoyed her witty response. On another occasion my mother was seated in our room, immersed in thoughts and pain. The Master asked her: "Umm-i Labib, what are you thinking about?" She said: "My Master, I always think about Labib and his future. My husband was martyred and left me Fatimih jún. She too died young and left me Labib. I don't know what the future will bring." 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded by saying: "Fear not, I promise you, soon Labib will marry and the house will be filled with children." Therefore, and so it was that when my children and seven grandchildren were playing at my home in 1981, I suddenly remembered these words of the beloved Master. My heart was overcome with indescribable joy and I offered a thousand thanks to the Almighty.

A few weeks before the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I left for Beirut along with a few of his grandchildren. A short time later, the ascension took place. With broken hearts we returned to Haifa and took part in the ceremonies. We remained there for almost a year, and I continued my studies at the Italian school, next to the Master's house in Haifa. On my return to Beirut I studied at the Alfarir School. Every summer I would return to Haifa and 'Akká to visit the holy shrines and the beloved

Guardian. After graduation I was employed at a bank, but as I was not Lebanese, I was paid less. Nevertheless, I was happy and content as my grandmother and I could get by.

Sakīnih Sulṭān purchased a small house for me and after that endeavored to find a beautiful, healthy, educated young woman for me to marry. Unabated, she would continue her search and inquire around until she found the person she was looking for. My income was low and the last thing on my mind was marriage. But as soon as she would find someone mildly appropriate, she would consult with the beloved Guardian and beg for his confirmation and blessings. More often than not, he did not approve of her choice, until the summer of 1939 when he came to know Muḥammad Riḍā Gulistanīh and his family from Egypt, had come on pilgrimage.

Shuqangiz Khānum, the maternal cousin of Sakīnih Sulṭān and the daughter of Siyyid ‘Ali Yazdi asked permission for her daughter to marry Labīb; which was delayed at this time due to Gulrukh’s education. Labīb writes: “After some time Sakīnih Sulṭān visited the Guardian and without my knowledge consulted him about this marriage. This time his response was positive, he had no objection to the marriage of Gulrukh and myself. My grandmother took this as confirmation that the marriage must take place. However, when I heard of this, I lost my nerve, as I could not imagine how a wife could have been chosen for me without my consultation - but it was too late, and I was faced with Mr. Gulstanīh and his daughter. So, with the assistance of the late Mr. Muḥammad Taqī Isfahānī (Hand of the Cause of God) during Riḍvān 1942, our marriage took place.”

Labīb, the only love and concern of Sakīnih Sulṭān’s life, was finally married and just as the Master had promised, that tested soul lived long enough to see the first two children of this union (Bijan and Susan). She would hold them in her warm embrace and deeply enjoyed watching them play. In 1945 when she was about 68, she fell ill and after a year of suffering passed away. A year after her passing, at the order of the beloved Guardian, her remains were transferred from Beirut to ‘Akká and placed in their eternal resting place. Labīb Shahīd passed away some years ago. He and his wife, who resides in

Beirut, had two sons and two daughters, three of whom are pioneers married with children. In this manner Sakíniḥ Sulṭán's life came to a fruitful conclusion."

‘Alí-Akbar was the brother-in-law of Sakíniḥ Sulṭán. He was the older brother of the martyrs: Áqá Ḥasan and ‘Alí-Aṣghar. He was married to Fáṭimih Şuḡhrá. They had two sons and two daughters: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Muttahidih, Muḥammad-‘Alí Munjazib, Bíbí Fáṭí (Jamáliyyih, my mother) and Fáṭimih jún (Kamáliyyih) who married a newly declared Bahá’í. Later, this new Bahá’í was attracted to the teachings of British Christian missionaries and converted to Christianity; going on to become a priest. His wife, Fáṭimih jún, also converted and as a result, their children were raised as Christians.

It was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s desire that the two families of ‘Alí-Akbar Káshí and Ḥájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Báqir join together in matrimony. Accordingly, the two daughters of Ḥájí Ḥusayn Báqir, Munavvar and Rubáb, married the two sons of ‘Alí-Akbar Káshí, called Muḥammad-‘Alí Munjazib and ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb (my maternal uncles). The son of Ḥájí Ḥusayn Báqir called, ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb (my father) married one of the daughters of ‘Alí-Akbar called, Bíbí Fáṭí (Jamáliyyih). The Greatest Holy Leaf gifted Rubáb and ‘Abdu’l-Vahhháb with a dress and a coin on their marriage.

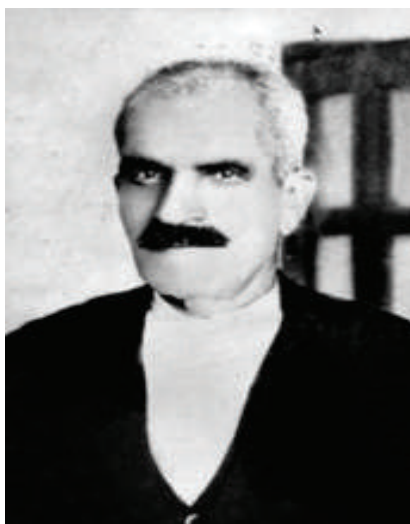


Illustration 11: Muḥammad-‘Alí Munjazib, the son of ‘Alí-Akbar Káshí

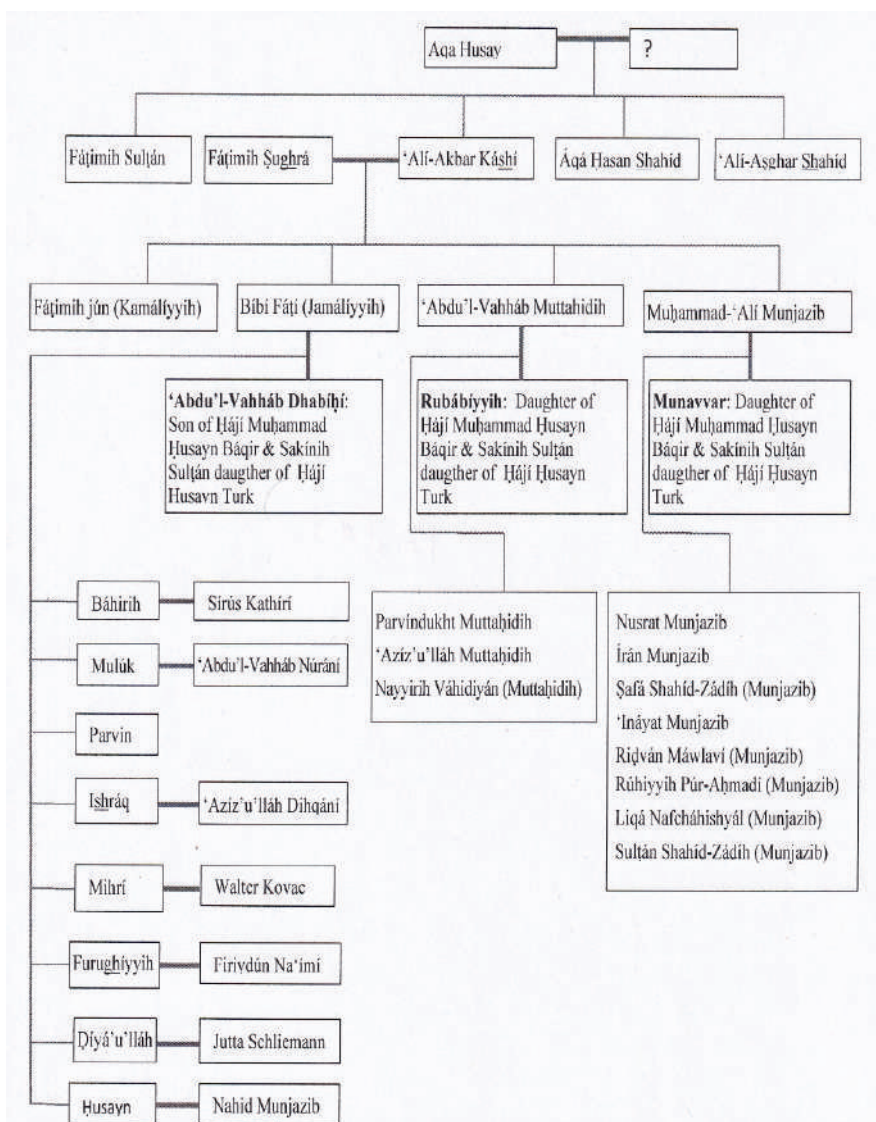


Illustration 12: Family Tree No. 5: The Family of the three brothers two of whom were among the seven martyrs of Yazd



Illustration 13: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Muttahidih, the son of ‘Alí-Akbar Káshí

The best years of ‘Alí-Akbar’s life were during his term of service in the presence of the Master. The account of the martyrdom of his brothers (beloved youth who were admired by all) has already been shared. The surviving brother of the two martyrs, ‘Alí-Akbar, was the eldest. He had a child who sadly passed away when only four years old. It is said that one day, one of the boys in the family took this young child to the nearby Ḥusayníyyih to play. Muslim children began to insult and stone them, so the twelve-year-old boy placed the child on his shoulders and ran for safety. Suddenly one of the rocks struck his head and he began to bleed. Frightened, they reach home. The relatives began to care for the older boy’s bleeding head and left the young child unattended. The following day the young child suffered from bloody diarrhea and shortly after, passed away. Unbeknown to them the child had suffered internal bleeding following the violent attack and sadly lost his life.

After some time, Áqá ‘Alí-Akbar attained the presence of the Master and was honored to spend four years in his service. One day the beloved Master arranged for ‘Alí-Akbar to have a ride in his carriage next to himself and the Guardian, who was a young man at the time. The Master then proceeded to shower him with kindness and grace, finally asking: “Áqá ‘Alí-

Akbar you sacrificed two brothers and a son in the path of God. You have been with us now for four years. What else do you desire?" 'Alí-Akbar responded: "Salvation" (the title of this book in Farsi, a reference to this conversation). The beloved Master removed his cloak and placed it around 'Alí-Akbar saying: "I give you this too, go in God's care." When 'Alí-Akbar returned to his companions he joyfully told them: "Abdu'l-Bahá closed the book of my life." Soon after he returned to Yazd and shared the news from the Holy Land with family and friends. He closed the books for his business and three days after his arrival in Yazd he passed away.



Illustration 14: In this photo, 'Alí-Akbar can be seen standing behind the Master

6. Fáṭimih Şuğhrá

The wife of 'Alí-Akbar, Fáṭimih Şuğhrá, was also his paternal cousin. She was a kind and selfless woman. She spent her days caring for the poor and those of ill health. She always tried to be of service and selflessly help

alleviate the hardship and suffering of others. It was her wish to die when she had been to the public bath, clean and dressed in fresh clothes, so that she would not be a burden to others!

And so it was that one day after her return from the public bath, she did her laundry then took it to the roof to dry. While hanging her clothes she fell down and after a short time she passed away in the arms of her son-in-law, my father, ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb. After her passing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá issued a tablet in which an expression appears to the effect that although she was Fátimih Şughrá (the lesser Fátimih) in this world, in the Kingdom of Abhá she will be Fátimih Kubrá (the greater Fátimih).

7. Jamáliyyih, Bíbí Fátí

My father, ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) was often travel teaching - or serving the community in other capacities. When in Yazd, he spent most of his time carrying out the affairs of the Local Spiritual Assembly and its committees. My mother had no choice but to get by with no resources and had to care for all our needs. The joy of visiting the House of the Báb in Shiraz was one of her long-held desires, yet it seemed impossible to attain. One day, some Bahá’ís of Yazd were about to travel to Shiraz. She asked one of her older children to care for the younger ones so that she could visit these Bahá’ís and request that they would offer prayers on her behalf at the Holy House. Dressed in her everyday attire, she put on her chador and headed to the place of the would be pilgrims. When she got there and saw the crowd gathered around the pilgrims who were about to make the journey to visit the Holy House, (the very wish cherished in her heart) she was so deeply affected that she began to cry. All were overcome with emotion on seeing her weep. The friends were saying goodbye to the pilgrims, who were seated in their car, when suddenly one of them reached for her hand and pulled her into the car with them; just as the car was about to move. And so it was, that when she arrived in Shiraz, she washed the simple clothing she had on. The pilgrims arranged for some material in order to sew her a new dress so that she would be prepared for the next day when they would visit the Holy House.

She could not sleep that first night – on one hand she was excited and happy at the prospect of pilgrimage, and on the other concerned for her loved ones back home, especially her youngest child. She wondered whether she would actually attain her desire. Although deprived of literary skills, she began to write her very first poem, comprised of 19 lines, while everyone was in deep sleep in the darkness of the shared room. She used her nail to inscribe the poem on the wall, fearing she may forget the verses by the morning:

*O Lord, I desire the liberation of my soul, in accordance to Thy will
To fly on freedoms' wings towards thy Paradise
O Lord, this lifeless body and wandering soul
I place in your care to attain a home and eternal joy
I am a lost ant searching for its' abode
Rushing towards Thee to sacrifice my soul*

The last and the nineteenth line says:

*Oh Zabihi, I sacrifice my life for Him
Can attain His presence anywhere.*

The day of pilgrimage arrived. It was customary for the pilgrims to be received by the custodian, Mr. Afnán, who would be given the letters issued by the Local Spiritual Assembly of each pilgrim. Then together, they would enter the blessed room where the Declaration of the Báb took place. However, this believer had no letter. No exemptions were ever made. Jamálíyyih was deeply stressed, wondering what would happen. Her heart was full of joy that she had made this adventurous journey. What miracle could possibly remove this obstacle – of no letter from her Local Spiritual Assembly? Was it not Divine Will that had brought her so close to this Holy Threshold? Would the same Divine Will allow her to attain her desire?

The pilgrims arrived at the site, were welcomed, then following introductions began to offer prayers; all the while my mother remained immersed in her thoughts and tears. One of the Western pilgrims, a woman assigned by the beloved Guardian to visit the House of the Báb on his behalf, was among the pilgrims. She began to share vignettes from her time in the presence of the Master. Since many there that day were from Yazd, she noted that a believer from Yazd, named Áqá 'Alí-Akbar, had been in the holy presence, and had been particularly favored by the beloved Master. She shared a few stories of his humility and selflessness, saying she:

“Wished to meet one of the relatives of this chosen servant of His Threshold.” When she was informed that the young woman shedding tears, was in fact his daughter – she too began to cry. Tearful she drew my mother, Jamálíyyih Khánum, into her embrace. Much like everyone else, Mr. Afnán was overcome with emotion and made no mention of the requirement for a letter.

My mother, Jamálíyyih, was born in 1909 AD in Yazd. As previously mentioned, my father was often travelling around the country to teach the Cause. When in Yazd, he served the needs of the persecuted community and its Local Spiritual Assembly. From time to time he would engage in paid work to provide for his ten-member family. The true provider for our large family, however, was my dear mother. With financial pressures, limited resources, lack of access to water, electricity and other necessities of life that we take for granted today, she performed her chores with great diligence. Imagine her arduous journey with no means of transportation, having to walk more than a kilometer to wash her children’s clothes in a brook. It was no easy task however she accomplished everything with patience, sacrifice and kindness. No doubt it was Divine confirmation that made our lives possible. Despite having to raise eight children with an absent father, lack of money and no access to education; we each formed our own families and lived comfortable lives. Sadly, despite her children’s desire to care for their hardworking mother, her life was too short, and she was unable to witness or benefit from our prosperity.



Illustration 15: Bíbí Fáṭí, Jamálíyyih

Our dear mother, Jamáliyyih had been a source of care and consolation for all, both when living in this world and now from the realm on high. Her compassion and care manifests itself in the dreams we have of her. One example of this involves the recent revolution in Iran and the subsequent persecution of Bahá'ís. One day revolutionary guards, led by an officer named Tulu'i, attacked the home of her daughter Ishráq. Tulu'i was responsible for the torture and execution of many Bahá'ís. He and the guards ruthlessly ransacked her home and their belongings. 'Azíz'u'lláh, her husband, was arrested and forced to carry the confiscated items from their home with him. This inhumane treatment took place in the presence of their young, distraught son. No information was divulged as to 'Azíz'u'lláh's whereabouts. It often happened in those days that the authorities carried out summary executions immediately after a person's arrest and did not inform their families. All they would get was a phone call to say where their remains could be collected for burial.



Illustration 16: Right to Left: My brother Ḥusayn, my father 'Abdu'l-Vahháb (holding myself, Ḍia'u'lláh) and my sister Ishráq

For the entire day and night after 'Azíz'u'lláh's arrest, Ishráq's family used every means at their disposal to find out where he had been taken; and what had become of him. But there was no information and Ishráq grew increasingly fearful as to his whereabouts and his fate. Around dawn Ishráq

fell asleep. She dreamed of her mother. In her dream, Jamálíyyih told her to remember to recite the Tablet of Aḥmad. Ishráq immediately awoke, got up and went to tell her niece, Fariba, who had spent the night to support and keep her company. They began to recite the Tablet. As soon as they finished the phone rang! It was ‘Azíz’u’llah, calling to tell them where he was being detained.



Illustration 17: Right to left: Ishráq, Báhirih, my mother with Mehri, Parí and Mulúk

Much like her mother Fáṭimih Şuḡhrá, our mother was constantly committed to serving others. There are many accounts that testify to this fact and demonstrate how she cared for the needy - despite her many family commitments. My sister, Mulúk, recounts about one such example: “At the end of the Cul-de-Sac in Gazurgah where our family lived, there was a senile woman who lived with her relatives. She had worked her whole life as a maid to an established family in town. However, when she grew too old to work, she returned to live with her family, who unfortunately left her alone to attend to her own needs, in the most remote room in their household. Gradually, she felt unwell and eventually was bedridden and unable to clean or care for herself – so my mother would go to care for her. As she was very busy throughout the day, caring for her own family (and risked punishment for caring for the elderly woman) she attended to her at every dawn. She cleaned her, changed her bedding, cooked for her and returned home before anyone was up.

Indeed, Jamáliyyih was a kind and virtuous soul. She put her family and others before herself. Her dearest wish was to visit the Holy Land – and thanks to a family friend, Maḥmúd Mishkí, arrangements were made for her wish to be fulfilled – and she went to pilgrimage to the Holy Land.



Illustration 18: Bíbí Fátí, Jamáliyyih

Sadly, Jamáliyyih's children did not have the opportunity to serve and care for her, as she had for them. She passed away at a young age. She was just 57 when, after a brief illness she died on April 11th 1966. A magnificent funeral was arranged for her at the Ṭíhrán Bahá'í Cemetery. Regrettably, after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the grounds were confiscated, demolished, and a cultural center was built in its' place. Many members of her family were buried in this cemetery including Nanih jún, my father, my maternal uncle and Sa'íd the baby son of my sister Mulúk.



Illustration 19: My mother, Jamálíyyih Khánum, with my sister, Mehri

Fortunately, the name of our dearly missed mother has been eternalized. Close to San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, there is a Bahá'í Institute named after her. The Jamálíyyih Institute serves as a center for national activities, conferences, and trainings. The news of the inauguration of this institute was announced in a telegram issued by the National Spiritual Assembly of El Salvador on Naw-Ruz 1985.



Illustration 20: The entrance to the Bahá'í Cemetery following its confiscation by the Islamic Republic of Iran



Illustration 21: The Bahá'í cemetery in Tíhrán



Illustration 22: Above: Entrance to the Jamáliyyih Institute in El Salvador.

Below: Bahá'í Conference at the Institute.

Chapter Two

‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi)

1. Memoirs

‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (my father) has written some details regarding some aspects or some phases of his life. These notes will be presented in this chapter as follows:

(i) Challenges in early life

“As many friends have insisted that I write my memoirs, I hereby share the account of my pilgrimage for the benefit of all the friends.

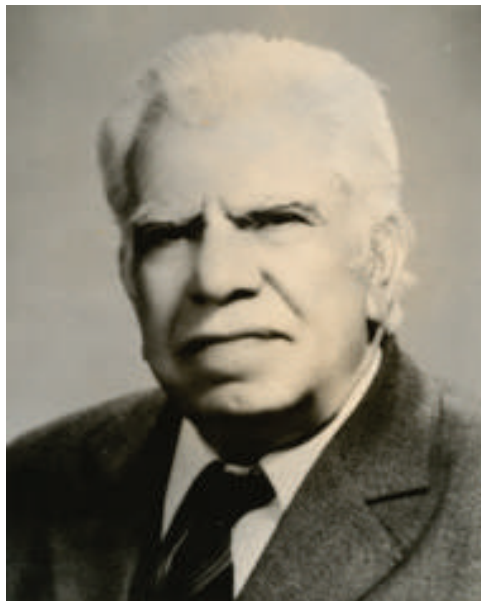


Illustration 23: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi)

After offering praise and gratitude to the Threshold of the Blessed Beauty, the Most Exalted, I am grateful that He blessed me with the grace and blessing of guarding His servants. This, indeed, is above and beyond rulership of the earth. During the year 57-58 B.E. (1900 AD), I, this worthless servant was born into a Bahá'í family in Yazd. In 61 B.E. (1903 AD), my father Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Báqir, along with many others in our family, was martyred for the crime of adherence to the Bahá'í Faith. Our home and belongings were ransacked. Within the span of a single month, my mother (Sakínih Sulṭán), a faithful handmaiden, lost 17 members of her family all of whom were martyred [The particulars of these 17 martyrs have been given in the Endnote number 113, Illustrations 59, 60 and family tree numbers 7 and 8]. Despite this immense suffering, she managed to raise me (four years old at the time), along with my six-year-old and six-month old sisters. Although she was grieving, her cruel neighbors denied her the right to express her grief by threatening her and saying: "If we hear you cry out aloud or sigh in pain, we will chop you up!" Regardless of such threats, she remained in God's protection.[MAH-9, pp.482-484]

We grew up having no access to education. Schools were scarce in those days therefore we had no means to study. Eventually, my sisters married two brothers who were the nephew of two of the Seven Martyrs of Yazd. When the Master heard about our family, it is reported that He said: "I am delighted to see these two persecuted families unite in marriage." After some time, I married their sister, and from that point on, I was the recipient of Divine confirmations, as she, Jamáliyyih was a heavenly woman – and soon after we had our first child. [For information regarding relationships refer to the family tree number 3 & 4 on pages 36 & 37 and number 5 on page 50.]



Illustration 24: Right to left: Ishráq, Parí, my father with Mihrí (Mehri) and my mother with Báhirih

One day some Bahá'ís visited our home. Among them was one of the teachers of the Cause, Jináb-i Mírzá 'Abdulláh Muṭlaq. He announced: "I have something precious with me, if you would like I can share it with you." We all expressed our interest and so he took out a photograph of the Guardian. We were in awe as we had never seen such an image before. When I saw his face, I felt as though I were reborn. I no longer thought of my family, and even considered taking my own life. Afterwards, I dreamt of Bahá'u'lláh, the Master, or the beloved Guardian almost every night. Sometimes, I would have more than one dream. I even dreamt of the Báb; may my soul be a ransom for His sacrifice. I felt worse by the day. Finally, one of the friends informed the beloved Guardian of this and begged for my healing. I do not know what the friend had written, but shortly after I received a letter from the Guardian. [MAH-9, p.487] In that letter I came to know the Guardian was fully aware of my feelings and he advised me

in such manner, that whenever I followed his instructions, I felt perfectly well. [MAH-9, pp.487-488] [Refer to Endnote number 56] ⁵⁶

The summary of a letter which has been written by Maḥmūd Zarqání, the Eastern Secretary of the Guardian, dated 12 Muḥarram 1345 (23 July 1926), addressed to ‘Abdu’l-Vaḥháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi), the son of the martyr. In the letter, Maḥmūd Zarqání stated that ‘Abdu’l-Vaḥháb’s letter was mentioned before the Guardian and he remembered his name and expressed the hope that he would get the divine grace and healing. He has encouraged him to recite holy verses and to ask for God’s mercy and to beseech divine blessings.

In Shoghi Effendi’s handwriting: “O spiritual friend! I beseech the Kingdom on high to surround you with confirmations and assistance as promised by the Beloved. Be assured and never lose hope. The True Protector is your aid and helper. I pray that you may attain unto that which is worthy of this most great Revelation. The Servant of His Threshold, Shoghi”

[Provisional translation by F.S. approved for publication by the BWC]

Since then letters have been issued showering me with infinite grace and bounty.

(ii) Permission for pilgrimage

Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vaḥháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues with the story of his pilgrimage:

“In 1928, I began to think about the possibility of visiting the Shrines of the Blessed Beauty, the Báb and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and to pay my respects to the beloved Guardian. I lacked the material means and so it seemed impossible. I had 36 Tumans when I wrote the beloved Guardian to seek his permission to go on pilgrimage. I took my letter to the Local Spiritual Assembly for them to send to the Holy Land. One of the members candidly told me that they could not send my letter, as I was unable to afford such an expense. In those days when friends wrote to seek permission, the Guardian would never refuse anyone. Instead, he would make the permission conditional on material means, approval of the Local Assembly or a period of

waiting. I was ill at the time, so when the Assembly refused to send my letter, I felt incredibly sad. I took my letter, returned home and only God knows what I went through. So, I sent my letter directly to the Holy Land. After some time, I received three letters from the Guardian. One was in the handwriting of Mirzá Maḥmūd Zarqání, and the other one in the handwriting of Mirzá Núr'ud-Dín Zayn. Both letters clearly indicated his permission: [MAH-9, p.488-489] [for the Persian text Refer to Endnote number 57] ⁵⁷

The summary of a letter which has been written by Núr'ud-Dín Zayn, the Secretary of the Guardian, dated Rajab 1346 (January 1928), addressed to 'Abdu'l-Vaḥháb Dhabíḥi (Zabihi), the son of the glorious martyr, Ḥájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Yazdí. In this letter it mentions that 'Abdu'l-Vaḥháb's letter radiated with humility and steadfastness and his desire for pilgrimage and that it was read by the Guardian. He gives the glad tidings for the permission given for 'Abdu'l-Vaḥháb's travel to the Holy Land.

Shoghi Effendi's handwriting: "O spiritual friend! I beseech the Best Beloved of the world to grant you success and hope that you may attain unto all that which is the desire of those who are near to Him. The Servant of His Threshold, Shoghi" [MAH-9, p.489]

[Provisional translation by F.S. approved for publication by the BWC]

[For the Persian Text of the following letter refer to Endnote number 58] ⁵⁸

The summary of a letter which has been written by Núr'ud-Dín Zayn, the Secretary of the Guardian, dated Rajab 1346 (2 November 1927), addressed to 'Abdu'l-Vaḥháb Dhabíḥi (Zabihi), the son of the martyr, Ḥájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Yazdí. It mentions that 'Abdu'l-Vaḥháb's letter has been seen by the Guardian; and that he has been given the permission to visit the Holy Land; and he expresses his happiness that 'Abdu'l-Vaḥháb's request was accepted and he will be able to make the pilgrimage; and that the letter has been written by the instruction of the Guardian..

Shoghi Effendi's handwriting: "Spiritual friend! I hope the means for your travel to the Holy Land will materialize so that you may attain unto your heart's desire.

The Servant of His Threshold, Shoghi" [MAH-9, p.491]

[Provisional translation by F.S. approved for publication by the BWC]

[For the Persian Text of the following letter refer to Endnote number 59]⁵⁹

The summary of a letter which has been written by Maḥmūd Zarqání, the Eastern Secretary of the Guardian, , dated 12 Khurdad 1306 Shamsi (3 June 1927), addressed to ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhi (Zabihi), the son of the martyr, Hájí Muḥammad Husayn Yazdí. It mentions that the beloved Guardian heard the message in his letter and his response was that he is permitted to come to Haifa in early spring for pilgrimage. Based on his instruction this letter was written.

*Shoghi Effendi’s handwriting: “O spiritual brother! It is earnestly hoped that, through the loving-kindness and grace vouchsafed unto you from the Realm of the Unseen, you may render splendid services in the future, and may be assisted and confirmed in that which is the cause of the promotion and high repute of this precious Faith. Make your steps firm and endeavor to promote the Word of God in utmost confidence. The Servant of His Threshold,
Shoghi” [MAH-9, p.492]*

[Provisional translation by F.S. approved for publication by the BWC]

[For the Persian Text of the following letter refer to Endnote number 60]⁶⁰

The summary of a letter which has been written by Núr’ud-Dín Zayn, the Secretary of the Guardian, dated Rajab 1347 (9 January 1929), addressed to ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhi (Zabihi). It mentions that ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb’s letter was noted by the Guardian and that it manifested the sign of sincerity. The Guardian assures him that what he saw in the world of vision is a sign of Divine grace, and an attainment unto Heavenly bestowals. The Secretary acknowledges the gift of his wife for the Greatest Holy leaf which arrived safely. He acknowledges the names of a few individuals whom ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb had mentioned in his letter who were the family of martyrs. The Guardian will remember them and he had asked to convey his greetings to ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb’s mother, and his wife, two sisters and daughters. He gives permission for a person by the name Ali Akbar to go for pilgrimage. This letter was written by the Guardian’s instructions. [MAH-9, p.493]

(iii) Dreams

‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) Describes His Dreams:

I dreamed I was in the Holy Land. I kissed the shoulders of the beloved Guardian three times. Once, during my first visit with him, second, on the day of my departure from the Holy Land, and the third was on the eve he instructed me to join him for a private visit. When he permitted me to leave, he said, go in God’s grace. I stood and waited for him to leave the room. At the point of departure, I held him in my embrace and kissed his shoulders while taking in the details of his entire being.

In another one of my dreams, I attained his presence. He pointed at me saying, he is enamored. I woke up. I was upset that I did. I fell asleep again. Once again, I was in his presence along with several friends. I was seated next to him. Each of us held a plate of food and were busy eating. In the case of the Guardian, he handed me his after eating half the food on his plate. I ate the rest while thinking about my own plate of food as I woke up.

Eventually, after a few years I went on pilgrimage. The first day, there was a gathering at the Pilgrim House. I went to the residence of the Guardian and accompanied him to the gathering. The Guardian entered the allocated room and indicated that I was to remain in his presence. All the chairs were occupied by the members of the Holy family. This was before they broke the Covenant. There was a single chair by the door, and as soon as I entered the beloved Guardian instructed me to sit, and I obeyed.

The first week came to an end. The following week I entered the room where the Sunday assembly was gathered. I noticed all the chairs were taken except two next to the Guardian. I did not want to impose and sit next to him, so I began to retrace my steps, however the beloved Guardian while pointing to the empty chairs instructed me to sit. I took a seat. Tea was served and the Guardian addressed us while sipping on his cup. When he finished his tea, he gave his cup to me. At once, Ghulám-Husayn Hákím (the son of Arastú Khán

Hakím) and Áqá Husayn Hájí (the son of Hájí 'Abdu'r-Rahim Yazdí) started gathering the cups and took the cup from me for cleaning. I regretted handing over the cup, but it was too late. Every night I would take the key of the Shrine of the Báb, so as I could visit it at dawn. I prayed most ardently that once again the Guardian would hand me his cup, so that I could keep and treasure it.

During the third week, I entered the Sunday Assembly at the pilgrim house. Once more, I noticed the same two chairs next to the Guardian. Again, I began to retrace my steps when he instructed me to sit next to him. I sat on one of the chairs, but I was anxiously trembling, hoping to get his cup. Tea was served. The Guardian was holding his cup in his hand so I could not tell whether it was empty or not, but I noticed he was not drinking it anymore. I got up, stood in front of him and extended my arm. He handed me his half full cup. I took it, left the room, drank the remainder and begged the custodian to let me keep it. I still have it!

I should mention one of my dreams that occurred about three months prior to pilgrimage. I was weeping in the presence of the Blessed Beauty at the Yazd Bahá'í Centre. He admonished me saying: Do not shed a tear, so long as you are in the presence of Truth, you are forgiven. Shed your tears during meetings. Then He departed. When He returned, I was seated to his left. He bid me farewell. I arose to leave, but before doing so, noticed His bare chest. I kissed it. Three months later, on the last day of my pilgrimage, I was crying uncontrollably. The beloved Guardian consoled me and then came the time to depart. When he opened his arms to embrace me, I placed my head on his chest. I noticed his bare chest. Just as in my other dream and I kissed the blessed chest.

In another of my dreams which involved attaining the presence of the Master, I begged to kiss his heels. He said: Some other time. We went over to the Zoroastrian quarters, where a beautiful spread was laid out in the middle of the street; and the beloved Master sat to enjoy some bread and cheese. The Zoroastrians wanted to object, but I told them that this was 'Abdu'l-Bahá and they all stood with respect in His

presence. Forty nights later I dreamt that I and a friend were to go on pilgrimage; however, he left to go before me. When he came back, I complained to him as to why he had left me behind. He returned to Iran and I went to the Holy Land and attained the presence of the Guardian. I bowed before his feet, but the Guardian forbade me to do so. In this dream, I remembered my previous dream with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, so I politely said, but the Master promised me so!

The next morning, I told my friend about the dream. He said I have no plans for pilgrimage, as I have received no permission. I told him, you will, before I do. I liked him a great deal and could not stand for him to miss such a blessing. Without telling him, I sent a letter to the Holy Land and sought permission on his behalf. The response was positive. I went to his home and said you too have received permission for pilgrimage! He was delighted. I kept reminding him that we would not be travelling together, and that is how it transpired. He was under the impression that travelling as a group may cause challenges in receiving letters, and so he travelled to Tīhrán to apply for his passport, and I followed later. He was related to Kázim Uf Amri and so the two men arranged their passports to travel together. Fourteen days after them I went on pilgrimage. While on route, I saw them dining at the same spot as in my dream, when I had complained about him leaving me behind. On arrival in the Holy Land, I prostrated before the Guardian, just as I had in my dream. He told me that this was not allowed. Instead we greeted each other as he helped me to my feet and graciously welcomed me.

These are my dreams about pilgrimage. I must add I would not have enjoyed travelling with Kázim Uf and his friends, as they were wealthy, and I could not travel with them. Instead, I accompanied someone with similar means and the journey was enjoyable beyond measure. The Guardian refers to this in the letter he wrote allowing me to attain pilgrimage:

[For the Persian Text of the following letter refer to Endnote number 61]⁶¹

“O spiritual friend! I hope that the means for your journey to the Holy Land may be provided according to your wishes, so that you may attain unto that which is the desire of your heart and soul. The servant of His Threshold, Shoghi”

(iv) Pilgrimage

It took some time for me to arrange the means for pilgrimage. What delight when the hopeful attains his heart’s desire! On the 8th day of Riḍván in the year 1352 in the Lunar calendar, (1932 AD) or 1311 Solar calendar, I left Yazd for Ṭihrán along with Mr. ‘Alí-Akbar Jávídání, to prepare the documents required for our trip. It took twenty-five days. Sixty-six days after Naw-Ruz we left Ṭihrán for the Holy Land. From the moment we set foot on our journey until we reached the Holy Land, as God is my witness, we experienced a new miracle at every hour and step of the way. After all the Guardian had stated: “O spiritual friend! I hope that the means for your journey to the Holy Land may be provided according to your wishes, so that you may attain unto that which is the desire of your heart and soul. The servant of His Threshold, Shoghi” [Provisional translation by F.S. approved for publication by the BWC] On the 76th day in the new year we attained his presence. Each year the Guardian would spend the 73rd-74th days of the year at the Bahá’i International offices in Switzerland, so I thought he was not in Haifa. However, I found out he had arrived a few days before we did and had informed the Pilgrim House that two people were coming. We entered the Pilgrim House at 2:30 pm. We took a bath and set out to the House of the Master and waited outside until Jináb-i ‘Alí-Aṣghar Adíb, one of the volunteers serving there, came out and delighted us with an invitation to enter his presence.

We went into his residence and awaited the Guardian’s arrival. Words fail me to convey the significance of moments such as these. Suddenly the curtains were lifted, and the radiant face of heavenly grace became manifest. I arose to my feet. Graciously he welcomed us. I barely remember anything after that. Crying, I threw myself at his feet. Then suddenly I noticed that the Guardian was helping me up, saying that was not appropriate. He then embraced and greeted me, saying that I should take a seat. After he was seated, he asked me when I left Yazd. I

told him forty days earlier and he explained that in the old days it would take the friends six months to travel. He inquired about the friends how they were. I expressed that with God's grace and bounty, they were all well and busy serving. To which the Guardian responded asking whether gatherings took place there. I shared that they were indeed, at the Bahá'í Centre. There were around 1,000 to 1,200 Bahá'ís in Yazd. He expressed his thanks to God again, saying that Yazd was an important spot for the Faith, that Bahá'ís must make every effort to help the Cause advance. Then he asked who the teachers of the Cause were. I mentioned Jináb-i Mirzá Munír Nabíl-Zádih⁶² and Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí,⁶³ as well as other friends. He then made a few comments and inquired about the clergy. I explained that they were rendered powerless. My recollection of his response was that saying this was the beginning of the fall of the clergy and the rise of the friends and that the significance of this process could not be fathomed by the friends at this time.⁶⁴ Then he asked the question whether I had any thoughts in this regard to which I responded: "He does as He wishes." The Guardian then said that we should visit the Shrines and mentioned that we should go along. He headed to the Shrine of the Báb and we followed. We spent four hours, until 8 pm, with him. [MAH-9, pp.489-490]

The Guardian would recite the Tablet of Visitation once a day, either in the Shrine of the Báb, or 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He would then leave the Holy Threshold and stand on the steps. I would hurry and stand next to him. On the first day, Hájí Áqá Muḥammad, the son of Hájí 'Abdu'r-Rahím Yazdí,⁶⁵ the son-in-law of my maternal uncle, was present. As the Guardian stood by the steps, he addressed him saying that Jináb-i Mirzá Muḥammad, tomorrow should go to Bahji before leaving the Holy Land. He then lovingly looked at me and said that he will send me to Bahji on Friday.

Every day at 3 pm we stood by the gate of his residence so that when he would come out to walk to the Shrine of the Báb, we could follow behind him. He would speak to us throughout the walk. On the first day, he came through the gates, an Arab child came forward and extended his hand. The Guardian instructed him to leave. He obeyed but then returned. The Guardian took a step towards him and the child quickly left. He said that Bahá'u'lláh has forbidden begging, but this

generation is desperate and that in America, thousands are unemployed, and this has left the nation in fear.

Mrs. Keith Ransome Kehler⁶⁶ was on pilgrimage at the same time as us. Jináb-i Hájí Maḥmúd Qassábchí⁶⁷ returned from visiting the Al-Aqṣá and joined us. In other words, there were just a few pilgrims, and this meant ‘Alí-Akbar Jávidání and myself could spend a great deal of time with the Guardian. On many days he would pay attention to me and ask whether I was having any difficulties. We spent four to five hours in his presence. Because of my reaction at meeting him for the first time, both to his person while on pilgrimage, and to his photos back in Yazd, I often used to whisper this poem:

Musa and we tread throughout the Tur

Not he, but we attained His presence

One day the Guardian said that in every city an archive must be established to house the holy writings, just as this has been done here. He clarified that Bahá’ís were not obliged to hand anything over, they could do so if they wished, or kept what they had. This was a relief to me as I had a few items that I have kept to this day. On another day he expressed his wish and longing to visit the friends and the holy places in Iran. I inquired: “In the near future?” His reply was negative and the reason was that he was alone, had no help, no deputy. That he must establish the Universal House of Justice. He alone was supposed to accomplish this.

On other occasions, while riding in the car, or immersed in the sea bath, Jináb-i Mírzá Muḥammad Sa’íd Miṣrî was always teaching the faith. During our afternoon visit, Jináb-i ‘Abdu’r-Razzáq Baghdádî mentioned this to the Guardian, who responded by saying that Bahá’ís must not teach as Catholics and Protestants do. They must first determine whether a person is receptive before speaking about the faith. All Bahá’ís must teach though. Ideally, half the day must be spent working and the other half teaching the Cause.

On another day, he told us that Bahá’ís must study the Dawn-Breakers. I said: “Beloved Guardian, it is in English, (it was not yet translated into Persian), what are the Iranian Bahá’ís, including

those in Yazd, supposed to do? Not many Iranians speak English.” The Guardian responded by saying that Iranian Bahá’is could study *Kavákib’ud-Duriyyih*, Ávárih’s History ⁶⁸ which was a beneficial source, and was the result of much effort. Although there were discrepancies, nevertheless, his civil rights must be upheld. Whoever owes him, must make every payment. The Guardian continued to speak about him and when we returned to the pilgrim house that evening, Jináb-i ‘Abdu’r-Razzáq Effendi was anxious. He said: “I was at the receiving end of the consequences of your question earlier today.” I asked what he meant, and he told me that he had 400 copies of the Ávárih’s books in Baghdád and after Ávárih broke the Covenant, he never responded to his letters. Therefore, what the Guardian said today was a directive to him. He explained as soon as he would reach Baghdad, he would sell the remaining copies and pay Ávárih. It is important to note the faithfulness of the Guardian, in that despite Ávárih’s infidelity, the Guardian continued to observe his civil rights. [MAH-9, p.491]

On one occasion I asked the Guardian: “If it were permissible, could we visit Karbala on our return journey to Iran?” He told me that there was no objection but added if they ask you about your religion you should say that are Bahá’is and if they allow you to enter the precincts, so be it; otherwise you should not enter. I felt however that he was not in favor of our visiting Karbala - as Bahá’í pilgrims did not normally go there since we would face questioning about our religion. The next day he returned to the topic stating that it was not wise for the friends to enter Islamic shrines and events until it is established that the Faith is independent of any nation or religion. Since my companion intended to visit Karbala on the day of our return, I asked the Guardian whether it would be permissible for us to visit the Holy House in Shiraz instead? In other words, I wanted the Guardian to state the obvious, hoping my companion would change his mind. The Guardian responded that this would be a wonderful and logical choice. Visiting Bahjí is not obligatory and friends were not required to go, however, visiting the Holy House was.

On another occasion during the pilgrimage the Guardian told us that the government of Iran plans to eliminate Arabic from the country. This was not wise as Arabic and Persian are like milk and honey. Iranian Bahá'ís must study Arabic. Likewise, Bahá'ís in Iraq must study Persian, so that they are able to read and comprehend the holy writings. He continued to expound on the nature of rulers around the world who were preoccupied with establishing their own power and this will result in corruption and loss and that it will result in chaos. He made some general remarks concerning the future.

Another topic he addressed was alcohol stating that although drinking wine is not explicitly forbidden in the Kitáb-i Aqdas, however, in the Tablet of Rám,⁶⁹ Bahá'u'lláh forbids it. The tablet has been sent to Iran so that the friends can recite it and learn about this matter. Bahá'ís must not interpret this to mean that drinking a moderate amount is permissible. Moderate or excessive, it is forbidden, forbidden, forbidden. Unless a competent physician prescribes it.

On a different occasion I recall him, while standing at a place where was overlooking the Shrine of the Báb, addressing me, saying that tomorrow he would send me to visit the Shrine in Bahjí, and that I will be there as a representative on behalf of all the Bahá'ís in Iran. And while on another such occasion I recall him coming to the Shrine of the Báb, picking an apple from a nearby tree and lovingly giving it to me. He then picked a branch from the Jasmine flowers and handed it to me also.

On one of the days when we were on our way to Bahjí, I saw a woman scantily attired [A reference to the swimming suit – it was much in contrast to the Shari't code of covering for women which was prevailing at that time in Iran] rolling in the sand by the beach. As I had never seen anything like it, I thought she had lost her mind. I asked Ghulám-Husayn Hakím, the son of Dr. Arastú Hakím, if she were insane? He told me: “The hot temperatures here drive many people crazy”; and during the two days we spent in the Garden of Ridván before our return to Haifa, the doctor kept saying: “That poor foolish woman.” [MAH-9, p.493]



Illustration 25: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) is seated first from right, in front of the steps of the Mansion of Bahjí

Later, on the same day that I saw the woman on the sand, Dr. Ḥakím suggested that we all go sightseeing. I declined, telling him I preferred to spend my time either at the Shrines or near the residence of the Guardian; and did not want any distraction from this. He responded, saying: “I am not extravagant however I would like to take everybody for an outing on Sunday.” So, on Sunday he rented a car and took everybody to the mineral bath. When we reached the sea, I saw a group of about 60 musicians. At that time Palestine was ruled by the British. I then noticed thousands of women and men of all ages who had very little in the way of covering their bodies (a reference to the swimming suit) in the sea! The Dr. said: “Zabihi, did I not say the hot temperatures here drive everyone insane?” After our return to the pilgrim house Ghulám-Ḥusayn khán kept up his humor with me.

The following day we attained the presence of the Guardian. He came from his residence to the spot above the Shrine of the Báb. A number of those who I had observed in the sea had brought their children to tour the gardens. As soon as they saw the Guardian they

prostrated before him. The Guardian treated them with much love and then turned to Mr. Furúd Siyávaṣhí, who at the time served as the custodian of the Shrine, saying: "Could you please open and then close the gate?" He obeyed these instructions. The Guardian then turned his attention to us saying: "The gates are open to friends and others. They do not even believe in God, but they believe in these shrines. One is praying for money, another for a child. They come and tearfully pray to obtain their wishes. The greatness of this Cause is beyond description."

An example of this can be seen when we were in Damascus, just two days before we reached the Holy Land. We were walking by a roundabout one evening when I noticed a man dressed in Iranian clothes. I greeted him and he warmly responded by saying: "Hello Iranian brothers, where do you come from?" I told him from Yazd and others responded accordingly. He inquired the purpose of our visit (not many Iranians travelled abroad in those days). I told him we were on our way to Haifa and when he asked the reason why, I told him it was to: "visit the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and pay our respects to Shoghi Effendi." He replied: "Wonderful, how fortunate that you have such a leader. Yesterday I spent two hours with him. I am not exaggerating when I say God has placed all His treasures in him. Lucky you! Lucky you!" I asked why he had come here, and he responded: "I am a traveler here on behalf of the Iranian government." He then bade me goodbye and left.

On another occasion, we accompanied the Guardian to the Bahá'í cemetery in Haifa instead of the Shrine. During this time, he addressed us without interruption. We returned in the evening, reaching the gate of his residence around 7 pm when he bid us farewell telling us to: "Go in God's protection," before entering the courtyard, I watched him as he walked away, after a few steps he turned his face to me and called out: "'Abdu'l-Vahháb come." I rushed to follow him. We entered his quarters; however, he did not turn any lights on. Instead he sat down and said: "Make yourself at home." I was going to sit by the entrance, but he asked me to go closer and closer until I finally sat facing him. He then said: "I wished to speak with you earlier but work never ends." I felt that the gates of grace had been opened to me. That was the eve of fulfilment of all my

dreams. He showered me with such grace and bounty that was deserving of he himself. I imparted: "Beloved Guardian, over the past five years, I have been suffering from mental illness." He responded: "Have you seen a competent physician?" I said: "They say it is incurable." He replied: "You have come to visit the Shrine in Bahjí, rest assured you will be cured." I had first began feeling unwell five years earlier at the sight of his portrait and only began to fully recover after he uttered those words. [MAH-9, p.494]

During the course of the evening, I mentioned that Jináb-i Mirzá Maḥmúd Badí'í wished to attain the presence of the beloved Guardian and visit the Holy Land. The Guardian agreed to this and instructed me to write and inform him. Mirzá Maḥmúd was the head of the Ṭihrán branch of provisions and needed no introduction - after my return, he went on pilgrimage, and imported a considerable number of Bahá'í books, a great service to the community. Mrs. Kehler and Dr. Ḡhulám-Ḥusayn Ḥakím were also leaving the Holy Land that day and were in the Master's House while I was standing in the reception. Mrs. Kehler, who always showered me with great kindness, called me. I went up the stairs. Dr. Ḥakím said: "We are going to see the portrait of Bahá'u'lláh, and you must come along." I did. Later when we attained the presence of the Guardian, he asked whether I had seen the portrait and immersed me in his love and grace, encouraged me to see the portrait again and then arose to bid me farewell. On leaving the presence of the Guardian he opened his embrace to me; I held him and kissed his chest.

(v) Bahá'í Books at the Customs

We left the Holy Land for Syria; we were depressed and forlorn. When we reached the border, customs wanted to go through our baggage. The Guardian had given me 20 copies of Dr. John Esslemont's book to deliver to the Local Spiritual Assembly in Baghdad, and two copies for myself. He instructed that if the customs officers decided to confiscate the books, not to resist and give them my copies. I wrapped the books in a bedsheet and tied them to the top of

the car. The head of customs came to the car saying: “This bedsheet, suitcases and other baggage must be checked!” I took them inside and as soon as I unwrapped the books, the phrase, Yá Bahá’ul-Abhá on the cover could be seen. He inquired in Arabic whether we were Bahá’ís and I confirmed we were. An Arab man travelling with us came into the building. When the head of customs came to know we were Bahá’ís, excitedly he said: “Image, image,” meaning did we have any books containing images?” I opened the book and showed him an image of the Master. He turned to our Arabian friend and inquired whether it was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the son of Bahá’u’lláh, and continued speaking with him in Arabic, explaining since the dawn of Adam, there had never been anyone like ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Then the head of customs wrapped up all our belongings and returned them to the car.

The grace and bounties of the eighteen days spent during this journey overcame the suffering experienced during my entire lifetime, and with that I shall conclude my remarks regarding my pilgrimage. As the poet says: [MAH-9, pp.494-495]

I am dizzy with a vision and the world remains deaf

I fail to recount and the world to hear

2. Shaykh Bihlul

My father continues to share other memories as follows [In order to appreciate this story and why has been narrated here requires some understanding and non-judgmental attitude, please refer to the Endnote number 93]:

“Now I will share a few experiences I have personally been through. At one time a person by the name of Shaykh Bihlul, turned up in Yazd in cleric’s clothing and gave speeches from the pulpit about Bahá’ís saying: “I want to speak to this sect.” The Bahá’ís did not respond however he persisted and so a Bahá’í named Jináb-i Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí, (whom I mentioned earlier, was a teacher of the faith in

Yazd) agreed to meet him. They met at the home of Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Husayn Atţár, a prejudiced Muslim. Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir read the passage: “And when the standard of Truth is made manifest, the people of both the East and the West curse it.” (The Kitáb-i Íqán, Bahá’u’lláh. Page 239, Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1989). Shaykh Bihlul responded: “This is not a Ḥadith.⁷⁰” Then Hájí said: “It is.” Bihlul again reiterated: “It is not.” Then Hájí retorted: “What if it is?” To which Shaykh Bihlul responded: “If it is, then I, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqí Bihlul, am a Bahá’í.” Hájí responded: “If so, then write it down.” Bihlul complied and signed it. Hájí continued: “Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Husayn, you are a follower of Bihlul, you should also write this down and sign it.” And he did the same. Shaykh Bihlul then said: “What happens if this is not a Ḥadith?” To which Hájí replied: “If it is not, then I have lied.”

The following day when they studied the *Uṣūl-i Káfi*⁷¹ and *Bihār’ul-Anvár*⁷² books, they verified the statements and the Muslims were terribly upset. Shaykh Bihlul had arranged to meet with the Bahá’ís at the home of one of the believers in order to pray and seek a resolution to the matter. That morning, the twenty seventh day of the month of Ramaḍán, an invitation was sent to the Hájí Bihlul. He accepted provided transportation was arranged for him. The home was near the gate of Mullá Ismá‘íl Mosque, the largest mosque in Yazd. We accompanied Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí along with the late ‘Alí-Akbar Dayyání, knowing we may not return home. This was due to the fact that eight thousand or so locals had gathered around a preacher named Siyyid Yaḥyá at the mosque. We were about a thousand steps away from the house of the believer when we began to hear the roaring of the crowd in the mosque. When we reached the street that the house of Shaykh Bihlul was on, we saw a Bahá’í named Áqá Husayn. We asked him whether Shaykh Bihlul was there. He informed us verbally that he was not however he signaled with his eyebrows that he was home!

Four merchants of Yazd, who were very prejudiced Muslims, could be seen in the distance. This was because given the turn of events, and Shaykh Bihlul’s promise to declare himself a Bahá’í, the masses did not want the Shaykh to show up. When we drew closer, one of the

merchants, *Hájí Muḥammad* asked if we had come to escort the *Shaykh*. I told him we had, and he responded by saying: “What shameless people you are! We have let you be, and yet you still persist in pursuing us?” I wanted to respond but *Áqá Husayn* signaled to me to keep silent. When we reached the doorway, women were seated in a fifty-meter-long vestibule. Upon entering the house, we noticed it was filled with clerics but there was no sign of *Shaykh Bihlul*. The merchant, *Hájí Muḥammad* announced: “Whatever I need to know, I researched and found at the age of fifteen.” He was shouting a great deal, when I finally said: “No one in this world wishes evil for himself, we too have investigated however it was *Shaykh Bihlul* who made this arrangement for today. This is about truth and falsehood.” *Hájí Muḥammad* was silent, and walked away momentarily, then returned and said: “Do you have a guarantee for your safety that you remain here?” I replied: “What do you mean by that? Please speak plainly.” He responded: “If someone were to verbally or physically assault you is he not a Muslim?” I replied by saying: “First you should acquaint yourself with me and then we can have a conversation. I am the descendant of those *Bahá’ís* martyred in 1321 (1903 AD). I am no different. But now it is the reign of *Riḍá (Reza) Pahlavi* and no one can assault another person.

In the midst of all this, *Shaykh Bihlul* arrived and asked: “Have you come to take me?” I said: “Yes,” and he responded: “You poor men, it is quite late now, give me the book to take with me.” He grabbed the book from one of the clerics and was about to leave when the crowd prevented him, insisting that he must refrain from joining us unless *Siyyid Muḥammad Vazirí* (one of the clerics) would accompany him. He said: “You are causing trouble; I have made a promise and people are waiting.” However, they would not allow him to leave and so we remained also. The atmosphere was so intense, as though blood was raining down on us. Then *‘Alí-Muḥammad* entered and spoke privately with *Shaykh Bihlul*. They talked for about ten minutes then *Siyyid* said: “*Shaykh Bihlul* and I are going to *Siyyid-i Šahrá* (one of the Islamic shrines in Yazd), you come and also bring along your *Hájí Táhir!*” I replied: “Neither you nor I are in charge,

we are but messengers. Shaykh Bihlul is the one in charge.” Shaykh Bihlul opened the book and said: “Yes, that is the case, you see Muḥammad took Ḥusayn,⁷³ ‘Alí,⁷⁴ Fátimih,⁷⁵ Salmán⁷⁶ and Abá-Dhar⁷⁷ to the desert to seek guidance, not to a house. We must follow His instructions.” I acquiesced saying: “Let us go together to wherever you wish to meet. If you would prefer, we can go as a group to Imámzádiḥ Zangí desert.” He responded: “Good idea, well said.” As he left, he invited Mr. Vazírí (one of the clerics) saying: “Let us go and bring anyone else who wishes to come.”

As we left the house, the women who were seated at the entrance stood up and began to scream and the situation quickly deteriorated. I felt in great danger. If each one of them merely put a hand on me I would be quashed; so, I shielded behind the Shaykh, thinking to myself that if they attacked me, I would hold on to Shaykh Bihlul! The Shaykh argued with the women. He rebuked them for making so much noise and asked them to calm themselves. Apparently, they intended to inform the people in the mosque and cause trouble. We escaped unharmed and after some time the Shaykh inquired about Vazírí. His servant said he was not there, and Shaykh Bihlul remarked: “What terrible people! What a dishonest lot!” Then ‘Alí-Akbar Dayyání said: “This is why people have stopped following them”. Shaykh Bihlul agreed saying: “Some have become Sufis, some Bábis and some Shaykhi!” We all laughed together. He then turned to his servant saying: “ ‘Alí-Aṣghar look into his whereabouts”. In a short while between 60-70 clerics and Mullá’s were following us and by the time we reached our destination about 100 were present. I rang the bell of the house of the believer. It was my nephews’ house. He opened the door and on seeing the crowd, began to panic. I told him to go and as soon as the three Mullá’s and nine students arrived I closed the door. The rest demanded to enter, but I said: “Whatever these twelve decide on, you follow through”. As soon as I entered the room, I noticed that Jináb-i Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí had placed the Ad’iyyih Maḥbúb (book of Bahá’í prayers by Bahá’u’lláh) in front of himself so that Shaykh Bihlul could curse it while Mr. Málmírí chanted the Fire Tablet. There were 31 of us in the house in all. Then

Siyyid ‘Ali-Muḥammad Vazírí announced: “Let us all go to the desert”. Muḥammad Iqtīṣdí replied: “We are not wild animals. There is no need to go to the desert. The responsible authorities must come before we go to the desert, you arranged to meet here.”

Suddenly the chief of the local police station and Office of Information, along with a number of their employees, entered the house asking questions regarding the meeting. Siyyid ‘Ali-Muḥammad Vazírí said: “Shaykh Bihlul has come to Yazd and has called for the Bahá’ís to enter this exchange”. The chief of the police said: “The government has banned such meetings”. He began to admonish the Muslims and said: “Let’s go”. The clerics assumed they were under arrest, however that was not the case. After walking for some time Siyyid ‘Ali-Muḥammad Vazírí begged the police not to take them to the station. The chief of the police said: “There is no harm in doing so, come of your own accord”. When the three clerics arrived at the station, the chief claimed they were causing havoc under his watch and Shaykh Bihlul had 24 hours to depart before he would be exiled from the city. Shaykh Bihlul told him that the Bahá’ís had a written statement from him and to please order that they return it. The chief refused, saying: “It is not my business.”

After I returned home in the afternoon, the news of this event had spread throughout the bazar, any Muslim that saw me made unpleasant remarks and when I reached the memorial near my home, a group of Muslims were standing there. One of them, named Siyyid ‘Ali-Akbar told me: “Zabihi, if someone had died today during that heated exchange, what would you have done?” I responded: “If the Angel of Death had arrived for anyone of us while we were debating, he would have returned from whence he came. However, if it were God’s will, it would have happened one way or another. Regardless, had all the Bahá’ís of Yazd been murdered and I was the sole survivor, I would become more steadfast and persevere in my beliefs, because I am certain about my faith.” Siyyid ‘Ali-Akbar turned to the Muslims and said: “We are the righteous ones, yet we would do well to have someone such as him among us.”

That same afternoon Shaykh Bihlul came over begging for the return of his signed statement. Jináb-i Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir said: “We must gather the same witnesses so that you admit to your mistake”. The next day everyone again gathered at the home of the prejudice Muslim, Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Husayn Aṭṭár. Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí recited a verse from the Qur’án when suddenly Shaykh Bihlul challenged its authenticity. Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir asked: “Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Husayn Aṭṭár, do you have a copy of the Qur’án in your home?” Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Husayn Aṭṭár confirmed and brought it to him. As soon as Hájí Ṭáhir opened it, he found the verse and said: “Here you are!” Shaykh Bihlul began to beg once more saying: “I am distracted please return my statement to me.” Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir returned it and Bihlul quickly grabbed his shoes and fled the house barefoot! No one ever saw or heard from him until we heard about the corruption he caused in Khurásán; ⁷⁸ the subsequent shooting that took place and the victims, including himself.

3. Hájí Mullá ‘Alí

Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues his story; this is the story of Hájí Mullá ‘Alí as follows:

“During one of my trips on behalf of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Yazd, to raise funds for the Bahá’í centers in Syria and Egypt, one of my friends named Ustád Ghulám’Ali Thábit accompanied me. At that time one “man” ⁷⁹ of sugar-loaf cost 40 Tumans. We took two “man’s” of sugar loaves and some tea before we left. My companion said: “After we have collected the contributions, can we please make a trip to the mountains of Yazd, where there are no Bahá’ís?” I came up with an excuse saying: “If we collect enough contributions in cash, I’ll come with you.” But given his pure intention, unlike past experiences, all six villages we visited paid their contributions there and then. Some even borrowed money to pay us. I came to realize his faith was so strong that it would lead us to succeed regardless of all odds. [MAH-9, p.497]

We rented mules to journey the 30 kilometers or so to the mountains. By nightfall, we were halfway there. We had a rug to rest on. Our baggage and belongings had been sent on ahead. It was morning when we reached our destination. As there was no place for us to rest, we camped under a willow tree and moved ourselves accordingly as its shadow shifted around. One of Ustád Ghulám-‘Alí’s students, who was friendly towards the faith, arrived. It was as though we were reunited with a friend. We asked if we could find a place to stay. He told us there was not and that if people found out we were Bahá’is they would persecute us. However, we told him we wanted to teach the Faith and he offered to bring along receptive souls. [MAH-9, p.497]

There were two shelters in the middle of the desert. Each night we would climb one of them. The first evening, the student brought eight or nine seekers to converse with us – and all the while Muslims were chanting on top of the other shelter. The second night was the same. On the third day we heard that one of our friends - who had declared - had a garden about five kilometers away. We were very tired and so we went to visit him. I asked him if he knew of the whereabouts of the remains of ‘Alí-Riḍá the martyr? ‘Alí-Riḍá was the last Bahá’i martyred in that area in 1321 (1903 AD). However, the location of his martyrdom was not recorded accurately. Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir has identified it as Qavám-Ábád. However, this was not the case. Its’ exact location was in the Gold Valley’s Bábi Well, now filled with rocks and soil. I asked how far it was from our location and was informed that it was about ten kilometers through the mountains and about thirty kilometers by road. I was further informed that a police officer named Ḥájí Mullá ‘Alí was in charge. He was apparently quite prejudiced, but one could still get along with him. [MAH-9, p.498]

The next morning, we set off through the mountain for the valley. When we reached our destination, someone recognized me and told the locals that I was a dog! I sensed the tension and asked for the home of the leader of the village. One of the people asked what business I had with him. I told them only that we wanted to visit him at his home and was informed he was at the mill. Someone was sent to fetch him. I should

mention that sugar and tea were hard to come by in those days so, we gave some as a present to the village leader, which made him incredibly happy. Some locals gathered to socialize and enjoy tea. When I inquired about Hájí Mullá 'Alí's whereabouts, I was informed that he was at a farm some 5 kilometers away. The village leader asked why I wanted to see him, and I told him that we wanted to purchase land, and if it went through, he would benefit from the deal also. The leader went on to tell us that Hájí Mullá 'Alí had appointed him as the chief of the village and he went with us to the farm.

When we arrived, they had spread a rug and laid out cushions. A few people were sitting drinking tea and the chief announced: "This is Hájí Mullá 'Alí." I went forward and greeted him. He received us expressing his delight that we had come to visit. He asked our purpose there and I told him that I wanted to buy properties for investment. He said: "I am in charge of seven different types of villages." The village leader was still standing by. Hájí addressed him saying: "Go home and tell them to prepare a proper meal, I have two dear guests, the food here is not the best, but it will suffice." After lunch he said: "Let's look around and whatever property you choose, I shall arrange its sale for you." The chief, Hájí, his son, along with my companion and I, headed to the same spring we visited that morning. He said: "I have a seven thousand square meter garden with a river running through it. If you want a thousand meters of it, you can have it at whatever price you wish." I was praying that the chief and Hájí's son would leave so that I could speak freely. I asked the chief: "Could you please return home and prepare tea for us?" The chief left. Hájí turned to his son and said: "Go prepare the tea for our guests." Hájí's son left and so we three remained. Hájí invited me to go to the source of the spring to try the fresh water. After a drink he straightened his beard and commented that he may be tall and have a long beard, but he was not as stupid as people may say. Then he asked: "You are not after land, I like to know your real intention" I responded by telling him that he was indeed a wise man: "I do not have the money to buy land, but I have a friend back in Yazd named Burzú Aqdasí. He is of Zoroastrian descent and follows the Bahá'í Faith. He is the one who

wants to purchase the land.” To which Hájí exclaimed: “You do not know me and my bad temper, if you did, you would know that it is the worst.” I said: “But I don’t want to lie to you. I am not after property. My Bahá’í friend is, and I too am a Bahá’í. I am a descendant of someone murdered here in the year 1321 (1903AD) and I need to find where he is buried.” Hájí then responded: “I am not on good terms with the locals, but since you are my guest, I will do what I can to help you.” He proceeded to describe the details of ‘Alí-Riḍá’s martyrdom: “I was standing around and did not wish to see that old man die here. Although we are not from these parts, my father and I still felt like locals and did not want to see him killed in this place; he should have been taken to the city. However, a Mullá who was passing through the village announced: “Do not hesitate, kill him here and now!” We did not kill him though; it was the ones who came from the city that killed him. Then they threw him in one of the new water wells. Locals covered him with rocks. Since in Islam opening a grave is forbidden, we let go of that well and dug another one close by, so that we now still have access to water.” [MAH-9, pp.498-499]

Hearing all of this, I asked: “Could you please take me to the well?” Hájí Mullá agreed to do so, telling me that we needed to go when it was dark, so that the locals (who referred to it as the Bábí Well), would not see us. After three hours had passed, we went to the home of the village leader to have our tea. Then we waited until it was dark to go to the well. It was as had earlier been described to us. Hájí Mullá went off to sit in the desert, leaving my companion and myself to stand alone and pray. Afterwards we joined him and asked: “Hájí, would you allow me to say a few words?” He said: “No!” Since we were now familiar with each other I said: “You are being unfair. Since noon you have lectured us, and I have listened to everything you wanted to say or call us.” He then acquiesced to listen to me. I began by asking: “Is your flesh and blood different than that of Christian, Jewish or Zoroastrian priests?” He responded: “No.” I continued: “They did not recognize Prophet Muḥammad despite 30-40 years of education, and what about those who did not recognize the earlier Messengers like Moses or Jesus? Why do you think that is the case?”

*He was deep in his thoughts when I shared a verse from the Qur'án (Al-Hujarat 6) with him and explained its meaning. "O believers, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and do what will lead to your regret."*⁸⁰

When I finished, he responded that he needed to verify this interpretation.

We informed Hájí Mullá that we would stay with the Chief and leave in the morning. I then inquired if he would sell some of the land where 'Alí-Riḍá was buried, and he said that he would – provided we did not promote Bábí's. I asked the price for 1000 square meters and was told 600 Rials, but for locals, 150. So, I queried as to the difference in price and he replied by saying: "Your purchase is for a reason, regardless, I am doing you a favor. I will raise a wall around the property, will plant almonds and let you have access to water at no charge." I invited him to Yazd to carry out the deal and he asked: "Are you known in Yazd?" I replied: "Yes" after which he told me that he would not meet me in public; instead I should name a place and he would meet me there. [MAH-9, pp.500-502]

On my return to Yazd, I informed Mr. Afnán of the conversation and he advised that we either meet at his home or mine. On the 8th day Hájí Mullá sent a message that he had arrived in Yazd. I went to the appointed place to meet with him, but he was not there. I was told he was at the shop of a Jewish man and so I went to find him. After some trepidation he acknowledged me, and I invited him to my home. However, he declined my invitation on the account that I was a Bábí and therefore unclean! I responded by saying: "Hájí, you hosted me at your home." He replied: "You are always welcome there." So, I offered another option, suggesting we go to the home of a man who was the descendant of parents who were both Siyyids. Hájí Mullá's response was to question whether the man was a Bábí Siyyid - and went on to demand that I buy the land, otherwise he would leave.

I shared the details with the Local Assembly at the time - but they refused to act on it. Unfortunately, now they are trying to acquire the same property, at a much higher price; and with much difficulty. Two days later Ḥájí Mullá and the Jewish man at whose shop we met, came to my home. I invited them in where it was cooler to be seated and joked with Ḥájí Mullá saying: "Today you have to have your lunch here." He replied: "Despite my hunger and fatigue I won't." This made me remember that I had bought a melon earlier. There had been two melons at the shop near our home that morning. One was sold and the other was on hold for a cleric. However, I had begged the shopkeeper until he agreed to sell it to me. So, I brought the watermelon to the Ḥájí and told him that it was untouched, and that he should cut it and enjoy it with his Jewish friend. He commented that he did not have a knife, so I offered him mine. He refused on account of it being najes and unclean. I offered to rinse it in our pool, but he was right in that the amount of water was inadequate in accordance with Islamic rules to use for cleaning. So, I sent my son Ḥusayn to borrow a knife and a spoon from our neighbor, who served at the local mosque. I presented him with the cutlery, promising him that it was borrowed. He said: "I trust you, you are a truthful man," and then proceeded with the Jewish friend to cut and eat the melon.

He asked if I had seen Shoghi Effendi? I replied with a verse from Gulistan by poet Sa'dí, "Men of sense esteem him not magnanimous who speaks ill of the mighty." Then in reply to his question I said: "Yes I have." He asked what I saw, and I told him: "You cannot appreciate what I saw. It was exclusive to me." He responded: "I promise neither of you have anything special." I retorted: "I am not worthy of being anything, but the Jewish man who is sitting next to you may say the same about you and Prophet Muḥammad." His companion, Harun, laughed and I asked him: "Do you?" He responded: "If I did, I would be a Muslim." I turned to Ḥájí and said: "I rest my case." He responded: "Let me eat and leave." I replied: "I was not the one who asked the question, I was merely responding, would you like to read?" He accepted this offer and I brought him a copy of the

Kitáb-i-Íqán. He read two pages before I asked his opinion. In response he shook his head, then left soon afterwards.

Forty days after this incident Hájí Mullá sent his son, along with a saddled mule, in order to take me for a visit to the home of a Bahá'í. I had never ridden a mule, so I told his son that I would make my own way. He refused, telling me he would get into trouble so instead suggested that I ride with his assistant. I agreed and we went to the home of Mr. 'Alí-Akbar Bayání, who welcomed me by whispering the Greatest Name in my ear and shouting: "Salam Alaykum" in front of the others. On entering I noticed a rich spread, full of fruit. Mr. Bayání was a wholesaler and encouraged us to help ourselves to the fruit. I said: "Hájí considers me unclean." Mr. Bayání asked why this was and I suggested that he should ask the Hájí. He did so and Hájí replied: "Do you not know he is a Bábí?" 'Alí-Akbar Bayání responded: "No, I go to his home and he comes to mine." He then proceeded to serve me some fruit. [MAH-9, pp.502-505]

After we had eaten Hájí Mullá began to cry and went on to explain: "The day I left your home to return to the village, I found my daughter, a mother of four dead due to Diphtheria. Today is the 40th day after her passing." His son interjected: "Today we are hosting a memorial for her, will you join us?" However, since I had an Assembly meeting, I had to unfortunately decline their invitation. Hájí Mullá then turned to his son and asked: "Do you still think he believes in Imam Husayn?" I said: "May God damn whoever entertains such a thought that I don't!" Hájí retorted: "Did you mean to curse me?" I replied: "I know you know that I did not intend to," we bade each other farewell and left.

Several years passed before I saw him again. The Yazd Assembly had assigned me to visit Báfq, some 150 Kilometers away. I went along with one of the Bahá'ís who were from a Zoroastrian background, who owned a few properties. We reached Báfq by 10 pm. On arrival we noticed Hájí Mullá 'Alí pacing in the garden, in the dark. When the lights were lit, he saw me and asked: "Where were you?" I responded by asking: "What are you doing here?" He instructed the farmer to go and bring his bedding, saying: "So long

as my friend is here, I shall stay.” I had a bag of sugar cubes, rock candy and tea, with a teapot and cups so I offered them to him and said: “Have some tea, then pour some for me so that I do not touch yours.” He did just that and at bedtime, he slept on the roof. When we were alone Arbáb asked me how it was that I was acquainted with Hájí Mullá? I explained how we had met and shared details of our previous experiences. Then he said: “You have come to pioneer!” [MAH-9, pp.505-508]

The following morning, when Hájí came down from the roof, I inquired which way was the Qiblah? He pointed to Kaa’ba and I proceeded to face Bahjí and prayed. Hájí then left the room. After breakfast Hájí and Arbáb wanted to check their properties and asked me to go with them. Hájí insisted I ride the mule that had been designated for him and he walked beside me. When we reached our destination, he quietly asked me, whether I had any martyrs buried there? I said: “No, I am here in dire straits and have come to secure employment.” He was saddened on hearing this and confided in Arbáb that had he been sure I would not teach the Faith; he would have taken me to his village to support me. At noon, he announced: “Today you are my guest” and purchased three breads and three containers of yogurt. He placed Arbáb’s and mine in a separate dish and said: “Do not touch mine!” Every once in a while, I would jokingly say: “Can I dip my bread in your container of yogurt?” He would object saying: “Don’t you dare!”

After lunch we set out on our return journey. People who were praying had placed pots of water around palm trees. Even then when I asked for water, he would pour water into my hands to drink. One-night Arbáb, Hájí and I were invited by one of the locals as their guest. Hájí told me to go to a place where the host would meet me and take me to his home however, I was to take every care to ensure the host did not find out that I was a Bahá’í. I did as I was told. When I arrived at the home with the host, Hájí and Arbáb were already there. After sunset I asked our host, which direction the qibla was? He directed me to Kaa’ba, and I went on the roof behind a tall wall to offer my prayer facing the Bahá’í qibla. However, the host had snuck up on me

and had noticed I was facing the Bahá'í qibla. He returned to Hájí and said: "He is a Bábí!" Hájí confirmed this, saying: "Yes, I know, but we must show them kindness. If you complain, we will both be in trouble!" When we were heading to bed, Hájí said: "Mr. Zabihi, it probably would have been better if you had not prayed! I asked why, so he went on to explain.

The following morning, I invited our host to Arbáb's home. Later in the day when he arrived, I shared the basic tenets of our Faith with him – all the while referring to Hájí and asking him to bear witness to the truth of my statements. Hájí confirmed them and our host appeared to agree. Before he left, we gave him some tea and sugar as a gift. I then told Hájí: "Today I plan to leave." He said: "Let's go for a stroll." While we were out, the chief gendarmerie saw me and announced in the coffee shop: "That man is a Bábí." The locals were fundamentalist and uncivilized so Hájí grabbed my hand and took me to the coffee shop where he greeted the Chief; and then ceremoniously escorted me out showing I was under his protection and no harm would come my way. When we left, he commented that I was known everywhere! That same afternoon as I was leaving Arbáb commented: "Hájí is good to you." I replied: "May God bless him." Hájí accompanied me to the bus depot and told the driver: "Please take my friend out of here and bring me back the news of his safe arrival at his destination." The driver agreed to do so. Before I left, I had asked Hájí to come and visit me whenever he was in Yazd, saying: "Do whatever you wish at my home; we will not touch anything. I just want us to visit each other." Hájí had promised to return in fifteen days however, three days later he took a heart attack and passed away. May he rest in peace." [MAH-9, pp.508-510]

4. Khálishízádih in Yazd (During 1948 – 1951)

Mr. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues his story; this is the story of Khálishízádih in Yazd:

"Another event in Yazd in which I had a role to play involved an unknown figure, named Khálishízádih. Initially he was opposed to the

Shaykhís,⁸¹ then it was the Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians. However, they were all but scapegoats, used to attack the Bahá'ís. Our assembly meetings were held three times a week. Two meetings were exclusive, and one joined with the pioneering committee. One Friday afternoon I went for a stroll near the Bahá'í Centre, prior to the joint meeting. When I reached the entrance of the Centre, I noticed two Bahá'í youth fighting with a Muslim, while a few onlookers stood by. I made objections to the action of Bahá'í youth and they stopped. Using gestures, I told them to leave and escape the consequences. As it turned out the fight was over the Muslim youth verbally abusing the Bahá'í girls who were attending their class that afternoon. [MAH-9, pp.510-511]

The Muslim youth was pretending to be unconscious on the ground and other Muslims who had been attending two memorials nearby, heard of the incident and soon gathered in the vicinity. They attacked the Centre. My son, Dīyá'u'lláh (Zia'u'llah), and I quickly shut the door and remained trapped inside for some time. Other Assembly members who saw the crowd approaching the Centre, left the area. Soon the local police came to hear of the incident and Mr. Majdhúb, one of the Assembly members swiftly biked to the Centre. I opened the door to let him in. He joined the fourteen girls, my son, and myself. We locked the door and remained there all evening. Suddenly, the crowd attacked the center and profanities were hailed against me. I asked the girls to stay in one room and told them in the event that the attackers managed to break in, I would try to stop them, while they should run out the other exits. The doorway was being pounded so intensely that we could feel the earth shuddering beneath us. This lasted more than 90 minutes. [MAH-9, p.511]

Eventually twelve officers and the chief of police came to disperse the crowd. I tried to open the door, but it had been damaged so much that the bars were bent, and the door could not be unlocked. We used a pick to finally let them in. This process lasted four hours, until 8 pm. The officers inspected the scene and then we strategized as to the next steps; such as how many guards were needed to protect the center. I suggested four, and it was

agreed upon. The guards remained at the center and some other officers escorted the young girls safely to their homes.

The following day the chief of police, (Mr. Sharífi), detained the two Bahá'í youth saying: "Wisdom dictates that I keep them until 12th of Muharram. Then Khálishízádih (the true cause of this episode) will release them." This process was underway when the head of Tíhrán University was attacked. This added to the concerns of Bahá'ís in Yazd and they wondered what could happen next. The Assembly was meeting the same evening that this news reached us and decided that the following day two other Assembly members along with myself, would remain at home. We were so alarmed that the Assembly decided to meet every evening. This situation continued for two years. Arson, throwing rocks and other attacks frequently assailed Bahá'í homes. Around twenty Muslim youths who were on a payroll, would bike around town and chant defamatory songs insulting the Bahá'í Faith. One evening on my way to the Assembly meeting, as I covered my face in my overcoat and walked in the dark to hide my identity, I overheard some people discussing a plan they had devised against the Bahá'ís. I was near Gudarz Hospital building, meditating on my willingness to give my life to protect other Bahá'ís when I heard a commotion. I assumed it was a public mourning of some sort. Then I realized they were chanting anti-Bahá'í slogans. I had been in a hurry to reach the Assembly meeting when I had encountered the demonstrators. It was dark so no one recognized me. I retraced my steps and entered the home of one of the Bahá'ís who lived nearby. We went to the top of the roof and saw that there was no end to the number of demonstrators stretching over four square kilometers. They were attacking the Bahá'í Centre and had attacked several Bahá'í homes on their way there. One of the Bahá'ís retaliated by throwing a rock back at them. His home was behind an abandoned British hospital, where a priest whose church was lost to the floods, resided. The crowds were so angry that they attacked the priest – all the while uttering profanities at him for promoting Christianity in Yazd. [MAH-9, pp.511-512]

They also went to the home of Áqá Mírzá Badi'u'lláh Afnán; and his son-in-law, Muḥammad Taqí, fired two blank shots in the air. Following this the crowd attacked the Bahá'í Centre. Their numbers were rising by the minute. I could not stand by and watch anymore so I left the house. On the way to the Bahá'í Center I saw Áqá Mírzá Badi'u'lláh Afnán, Jináb-i Áqá Muḥammad-'Alí Afnán (Fálláh) and Sa'id Raḍaví all covering their faces with their overcoats to protect their identity, as they rushed towards the Centre. I reached Mr. Raḍaví. We saw two guards standing by the doorway. Mr. Raḍaví asked them: "What are you carrying on your belts?" They replied: "Guns." Mr. Raḍaví responded: "Why are you not controlling these unruly people then?" They replied saying: "Because we have not been ordered to."

People continued to throw rocks while insulting the Faith, then four additional guards reached the center. One of the Bahá'ís took off his belt and hit two of the attackers, one of whom suffered an injured skull and facial injuries before they ran away. His belt buckle fell off. One of the guards picked it up. I grabbed it from him, gave it to Mr. Raḍaví and told him to go, quickly, before the situation escalated further. The situation was so dire that early next morning Mr. Raḍaví flew to Tīhrán (with the help of a Bahá'í pilot). We then arranged for his family to join him. [MAH-9, pp.513-514]

I was standing by the guards, when one of them named Vazírí, a respectable man, asked me about the situation. I told him I had no idea and that he knew better than I. The two men injured by Mr. Raḍaví then returned and Mr. Vazírí asked them what had happened. They lied and told him that Bahá'ís at the end of the lane attacked them. Unfortunately, the guard who had witnessed the event had been transferred elsewhere, so I said: "The people standing there are the ones who had come to kill the Bahá'ís. Is there a Bahá'í left to attack?" Mr. Vazírí then asked them: "Who was it?" And instead of saying Raḍaví, they said Vazírí! I exclaimed: "They are troublemakers!" Mr. Vazírí was furious, so he detained them. Then he asked me if four guards were enough to guard the Centre? I told him it was and so the four remained; and we provided their meals and refreshments.

Along with the remaining guards we went to Badi' u' lláh Afnán's home. Given the dangers, I stayed with them. The guards asked: "Who fired the shots and why? People are sleeping at this hour." I explained that since five or six thousand people were causing trouble in the city, no one was asleep. Compared to the noise of the crowd, how could the two blank shots even be heard or wake anyone up? They responded that they had to detain those responsible. Therefore, they took Mr. Afnán and his son-in-law to the police station. Mr. Muḥammad- 'Alí Afnán was escorted home. I stayed there on my own. A few troublemakers were around. I asked one of them whom I knew whether he would accompany me home. He did. When I reached my home, I noticed our door was covered in rocks. I tried to open it and noticed my wife was holding it closed. When she came to realize it was me, she opened the door. On entering, I saw that all my children were suffering from anxiety and shock. They said that for more than two hours the attackers were bombarding the door and all the while threatening them. I realized that it was no longer safe for them to stay there, so we left for the house of one of the friends; where other Bahá'ís were already gathered. The situation was so overwhelming that we felt we had no hope of returning. [MAH-9, pp.514-515]

Early the following morning, the custodian of the Centre came by to say the Assembly was meeting and I must come. As it was not yet dawn and the streets were empty, I went. When I entered the meeting at the home of Dr. 'Abdu'l-Kháliq, I saw around 50-60 Bahá'í women gathered to meet the Assembly. In tears they reported that the locals in Mahallat were marching to Musalla mosque with horns and drums. Khálişízádih is there and ordering them to persecute the Bahá'ís. On hearing this report, Áqá Mírzá Muḥammad- 'Alí Afnán began to cry and said: "O Blessed Beauty, what shall we do with these enemies and their endless persecutions?" The friends then left and the Assembly held their meeting. It was decided to send a telegram to the governor and copies to the government offices. One of the friends, named Abu'l-Qásim Muşliḥ, took the text to the telegraph office. The manager there refused to send it and so Mr. Muşliḥ asked him to record his refusal in writing or else he would not leave the premises;

thousands were at the risk of death. The manager finally agreed to send it. At this time, the governor and the chief of police were not on good terms and wanted to cause trouble for each other. On receiving the message, the governor formed a task force. Luckily, that afternoon, the chief of police left for Tīhrán. His deputy was not so staunch. A task force was formed, and the head of the gendarmerie volunteered to restore order in the city. [MAH-9, pp.516-517]

As it so happened, three full gendarmerie trucks were passing through on their way to Isfahan. The head of the gendarmerie posted two officers and one policeman to various locations around the city. He issued an order that anyone harassing Bahá'ís must be detained at gunpoint. God is my witness, that day I saw with my own eyes the Blessed Beauty's miracle as a result of Áqá Mírzá Muḥammad-ʿAlí Afnán's tears. More Muslims were punished that day than all the years the Faith had been in Yazd.

That afternoon at the Amír Chakhmáq mosque, a prominent cleric in Yazd, named Áqá Shaykh Ghulám-Riḍá, called on the masses saying: "I have been preaching here for the past sixty years. There are Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and Bahá'ís in Yazd. We are all equal as brothers. Why such persecution?" A few days earlier he visited Khálišízádih at home and told him: "The fire you have started will burn us all. If you refuse to end it, I will leave this city." However, Khálišízádih did not pay heed and continued to corrupt the masses. The Shaykh then departed and was several kilometers away from the city before Muslims learned of his decision to leave and insisted that he return. By that afternoon Khálišízádih felt alarmed and published an announcement ordaining that the authorities must punish anyone who harasses Bahá'ís; all the while remaining the sole cause of the unrest.

By the order of the Assembly, we filed two complaints with the court. One by the Assembly and one by me. A few days later the judiciary arrested Khálišízádih. Apparently, he had forcibly removed a Zoroastrian girl from her family to become a Muslim. The girl was in tears refusing to do so and her parents had filed a complaint. The public prosecutor visited Khálišízádih at home and questioned his approach. In response Khálišízádih insulted the official and as a

result was put under arrest. The next day crowds gathered around the court demanding that the prosecutor be put to death. In light of our relevant complaints, I was summoned to the court. When I entered, I saw a large crowd. The guards were trying to disperse the people and the court was out of control. One of my friends, who was a lawyer working there joked, saying: "The court is unclean (najis) enough as it is, no need for you to make it worse. Sign the papers and leave." We did, despite the angry crowd, we reached home in safety. [MAH-9, pp.517-519]

A few days later I was summoned. The interrogator, Jaláli, who was now the head of the court, asked: "Mr. Zabihi, what is your complaint?" I said: "My written complaint is before you." He said: "You have just written that they attacked your home, threw rocks and uttered profanities". I replied: "Profanities are not measurable so I cannot prove it." He responded: "Identify the attackers and we will punish them. But we cannot go after the ones who have insulted 'Abbas Effendi. There is no such law to draw on. So, we can only act if they have insulted your loved ones." I replied: "Well, then our case is closed. I have nothing else to add. I thought there was justice and law. But now I see you favor impunity. Many instances are not covered in the letter of the law but still we may benefit from it. The same goes for the laws of the Qur'an." His secretary was biting his lips in anger and signaling me to stop. I thought to myself, this is it, I will not budge. No matter what he said I refused to respond. He asked: "Will you sign the court statement?" I said: "Yes", I did so and left the court. Mr. Jaláli then went to visit Mr. Nají – one of the leading figures in Yazd at the time. I know this because a short time after leaving a Muslim asked me if I had been at the court? I confirmed that I had, and he imparted: "Don't you know it is futile? I was just at the home of Mr. Nají and Jaláli was there, reporting everything that transpired. Apparently, that same day they held a meeting to decide how to proceed and subsequently, devised a plan to kill me. I told the informer: "Shame on you for killing the truth and taking pride in it!" I will explain later about an incident that occurred a few years after this, when some men were assigned to beat me to death in 'Iz- Ábád."

5. The adventures in Bam

Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues his story; he explains his home-front pioneering to the city of Bam:

“During the Khálishízádih upheavals, the National Assembly issued an order to the Bahá’is in Yazd, Kerman and Rafsanjan to form a joint meeting and devise a plan to send pioneers to the south of Iran. The first meeting took place in Rafsanjan and Mr. Majdhúb and I were the delegates. Prior to leaving I suggested we volunteer to pioneer and Mr. Majdhúb agreed. However, at the meeting he refrained from committing to this – and over the next three months, two additional meetings were held in Yazd and Kerman. I was a delegate in these meetings also; and was asked to pioneer to Bam.⁸² The spies were hard at work though and reported any and all decisions, and actions taken by the Assembly and its committees. Just as the Bahá’is had a pioneering committee, the spies, and those they represented, had an anti-pioneering committee to stop them! [MAH-9, pp.521-522]



**Illustration 26: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) and
Muḥammad Ḥusayn Dhabíhí (Zabihi) in Bam**

My son, Ḥusayn, and I went to Bam however, before we even approached anyone, the enemies began to vilify the Faith. This was proof to me that they knew we were coming. The Yazd businessmen had affiliates in Bam. They had been told not to let me work or rent a place to live. I came to know all of this a year later from the same informant. He said they had been instructed in writing. However, with God's grace, I secured both a residence and a shop, but the daily persecutions continued. At times thugs would attack us using knives, at others they would verbally assault us. With the assistance of the Blessed Beauty, in just one year, I befriended them all. [MAH-9, pp.522-523]



Illustration 27: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíḥí (Zabihi) second from right with some of the pioneers in Bam, and his son Ḥusayn first from left.

This went on until the Bahá’í prisoners in Yazd were brought to Kerman. The Yazd public prosecutor issued a statement to the Kerman prosecutor, falsely claiming that the Abarqú Bahá’ís ⁸³ had committed deeds which they had not. The prosecutor in Kerman approved the statement and distributed about 1500 copies. This was arranged through a Mullá, who was the son of Siyyid Átashí, as a means to cause trouble and force me to leave Bam. One Friday afternoon, I was awaiting the arrival of friends for a meeting when one

of them present told me about a letter issued from Kerman that was now in the hands of Muslims and Zoroastrians; which had them riled up, smearing and uttering profanities against Bahá'ís. I paid little attention and shrugged it off saying: "They do this on a daily basis."

The next day however, when I went to open my shop, I noticed one of the letters had been posted on the wall opposite to my shop. People had gathered around and as a Mullá was passing by, they asked him to read it. He did so. The crowd continued to grow and soon stretched all the way to the entrance of our shop. They continued to hurl insults at us. The text claimed that Bahá'ís had attacked Abarqú and killed an innocent woman along with her five children, who allegedly had insulted the Bahá'ís. Naturally, everyone was angered on reading this report so, I decided it was not wise for me to remain in the shop that day. I left and went to the National Bank. Mr. Ja'far Bád-Kúbihiyyí (now Raḥmání) was the manager and his residence was also in the same building. I shared the details with him of what was transpiring. He told me that he had heard about it and advised I stay away from my shop. He then called the chief of police and asked him to come over to the bank to discuss the matter. The chief was reluctant but nonetheless acquiesced. [MAH-9, pp.523-525]

When he finally arrived, he greeted me and asked what was going on in the bazar. My response was to tell him that he must know better than I about what was going on. He inquired if the posted letter was handwritten or printed and I explained that I had not actually read it but assumed it must be printed. He confirmed, imparting the information that 1,500 copies had been distributed. He went on to tell me to return to my shop with assurances that he would restore peace in the bazar. When I returned however, the situation had grown much worse. His promise to restore peace had not been carried out.

The son of Siyyid Átashí, was at the mosque issuing orders. Finally, amid this mayhem one of the thugs who had become acquainted with me, came to my shop as he was aware of my circumstances. When he asked some questions, I refused to respond hoping not to worsen my situation. However, the shopkeepers across from me did speak to him and stoked things further – but instead of

returning to me, he vilified them and threatened and slapped two of the instigators, saying: "It is not your business to attack this man who is our guest in Bam." When he left, one of the two troublemakers came over and said: "We mean no harm. You are a father figure to us. We are not swearing at you. We are swearing at 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

It was an extremely difficult day for me as it was the time of the fast - but I did not want to close the shop and give them the satisfaction of claiming that they had made me leave.

So that evening and the following morning I prayed most ardently. On the third day, the chief of police called the bank manager (Mr. Ja'far Bád-Kúbihiyyí) and told him: "This is all about Zabihi, I cannot do anything to prevent it. He must leave. I will escort him out of town all the way to Yazd and I will post guards to watch his shop here."

There were enough Bahá'ís in Bam to form the Local Assembly. I told the Assembly that I was neither closing my shop, nor leaving, therefore they must consider this fact in their consultations. The Assembly consulted and decided to file a complaint regarding the Bam chief of police, which they sent to the chief of police in Kerman, (who was the same, Mr. Sharifi, who had been involved in the Yazd incident). A letter was sent by the Bam Assembly to the Local Spiritual Assembly in Kerman, who in-turn were to pass it on to the chief of police in Kerman. Consequently, the Kerman chief of police, instructed by phone and in writing, that the Chief of Police in Bam must prevent any further commotion and restore peace. Two days later when I arrived at my shop, two guards and the same intelligence officer who had posted the announcement, were waiting for me. At first, I thought they had come to take me to the police station or banish me, but this was not the case. Instead the intelligence officer asked me to file a complaint so they could arrest those responsible. However, I told them I did not plan to file anything and indeed, had I wanted to, I was well aware where to find the authorities. As people gathered, he became more persistent and finally I said: "If I were to complain

about anyone, it would be you. You were the main instigator here. It was you who posted that false announcement everywhere.” Somehow, I managed to convince him to leave. [MAH-9, pp.525-528]



Illustration 28: Members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Bam, Mr. Zabihi is seated in the center

The chief called the bank manager and asked to meet him privately, either at his home or Mr. Báð-Kúbihiyyí’s house. The manager hastily told him he did not have the time to leave the building and requested that the chief come to his residence. The chief apparently took umbrage to his response and decided to refer the matter to the governor. The same afternoon the governor (Aḥmad), summoned the manager to his office with the chief present. Following official protocol, the governor ordered tea, however the manager refused, on the grounds that he was fasting. The governor questioned the timing, as to which the manager responds by saying: “Do you not know that I am a Bahá’í and this is the month to fast?”

The governor then explained that he had received an order from the Prime Minister, Ḥájí ‘Alí Razm-Árá to ignore complaints by Bahá’ís. He said: “Zabihi teaches the Faith in the bazaar and holds Assembly meetings every Monday. We ignore all of this; therefore, it

was not right for you to treat the chief as you did today.” Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí explained: “I did not intend to insult him. He called during office hours and I could not ignore my work. You may carry out whatever orders you have received. It is true that we meet every Monday and Zabihi teaches the Faith.” He then excused himself and left. He subsequently came to my home and shared everything with me. [MAH-9, p.529]

The next morning, the premier of Kerman arrived in Bam. Whenever the officials arrived the normal protocol was such that first the governor and the bank manager would receive them, followed by other government authorities. However, on this occasion the governor did not invite the bank manager to join him in receiving the Premier. One of the friends of Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí, who on such occasions arranged his transportation, naturally assumed he was invited, therefore had arranged a car. However, since Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí had not been invited he redirected the car to the governor. That evening the manager had invited me to break the fast with him. On arrival I immediately noticed his dismay. During the evening, his wife told me that her husband had had a dream, where he put on a cloak and shawl that he had been given to wear. I responded: “Thank God he enjoys dignity as a person, soon he will enjoy the same among the public.” Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí then commented: “What public? They did not invite me today.” We continued to talk for some time on the topic. Ultimately, he was wondering whether he should visit the premier at all. I asked him if he felt it necessary. His feeling was that it wasn’t, and I agreed. After I left his home, the leader of Bam, who was hosting the governor telephoned Bád-Kúbihiyyí letting him know that the Premier wished to meet with him; so in this event Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí had no choice but to oblige.

On his arrival the son of the host approached Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí cautioned that he be careful as there had been complaints about him. Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí inquired about the reason for the complaints - had he been unfaithful in any way? The host’s son told him that the complaints were about religion, and he must say that he is a Bahá’í.

The chief then approached Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí asking him to let the matter go as he had already sent his representatives to Zabihi's shop and had asked him to file a complaint, but he had declined. Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí did not pursue the matter any further and was then taken to see the Premier. [MAH-9, pp.529-530]

As he approached the Premier, he silently called on the Blessed Beauty. On entering, the Premier stood up and warmly greeted him. He then smiled and asked: "Bád_Kúbihiyyí what have you done that 30 Mullá's claim you have formed an Assembly?" Bád-Kúbihiyyí responded saying: "I swear on your life, when I arrived, an Assembly was already in place. Please let me explain before you decide on anything. I am from Isfahan. All Bahá'ís, in general, and Isfahan Bahá'ís, in particular, respect the Bakhtiari tribe as sincere and honest people". The Premier responded: "This is kind of them, but you must not pretend. Prime Minister Razm-Árá has sent a confidential telegram, I do not know what it is all about. You act with caution and we will prevent harassment". Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí stated: "We do act cautiously. There is a man named Zabihi who runs a shop in the bazar. They harass him a great deal. A few days ago, the chief had sent a representative to inquire about any complaints he may file. But he has not filed anything." Immediately, the Premier called on the Chief and the Governor and asked them: "Why have you let these cruel people insult these gentlemen? Razm-Árá has sent a telegram, so what, what on earth? What does it have to do with us? We must maintain peace and order to guard against agitators. His intentions have nothing to do with us. Take the agitators to the station and deal with them accordingly." He then turned to the chief and emphasized: "I am talking to you! You! The rest know what to do." He then dismissed the governor and the chief, then addressed Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí: "I know you obey the law but remember what I said."

Despite his invitation to stay longer Mr. Bád-Kúbihiyyí excused himself saying that he had guests to attend to. At 8:00 am the following morning the Premier departed from Bam. By 10:00 am the Radio announced that Prime Minister Razm-Árá had been assassinated. It was 1951. Suddenly everything changed. A few days

later I left for Yazd to spend the New Year with my family. I stopped in Kerman and intended to leave the next day to reach my family in time. However, persecutions in Yazd had re-intensified. Two of the friends were injured and one was martyred. Following these events, the Local Spiritual Assembly felt it prudent to order me to remain in Bam. I was most disappointed however, on not being able to see my family.

The next day I returned to my shop. One of my friends was busy reading the newspaper. He called me over and said: "The situation in Yazd is dire. The governor has restored order and has announced that anyone involved in harassment will be banished to Bandar-'Abbás.⁸⁴" So, I informed a number of Assembly members of this news and proceeded to buy a bus ticket to Yazd. One of the friends took my luggage to the bus depot and when I arrived there, I noticed some of the same agitators from Yazd were travelling on the same bus as me. Since my luggage had already been put on the bus, I had no choice but to go. I sat in the waiting room and with great devotion recited the Tablet of Aḥmad. While there, I saw a drunken Ḥājī with a bottle in one hand and a head of lettuce in the other. He approached me saying: "Have you seen my son's photo?" I said: "No." He took out a photo from his pocket to show me and told me his son was now a driver in Ṭīhrán. I blessed his son. Then he turned to another traveler and said: "He is my son too." I said: "Bless him also." When he left, the manager of the station informed me that he was travelling with me all the way to Yazd. I responded to this by quoting Sa'adī: [MAH-9, pp.531-532]

*'The beauty in our midst takes the breath away,
even more so now with her added flair'*

As I boarded the bus along with the other travelers, I felt a deep sense of trepidation. When the bus began to move someone shouted: "Chant Muḥammad's prayer for the dead." The same old man said: "It's New Year's Eve. We want to have a good time. We do not know Muḥammad from Adam, why should we chant?" While offering chocolate and cigarettes, he told the passengers: "For my sake let's spend this evening in friendship and joy." Twice they attempted to chant but he repeated his request and said: "Once should be enough,

please stop.” He then started singing songs and sharing jokes. When the bus stopped in Rafsanjan,⁸⁵ some twenty kilometers from Kerman,⁸⁶ he left the bus in search of liquor. He found none and returned to the bus to continue singing and socializing with everyone. He kept saying: “I swear by my life, one has to know one’s self in order to know God.” He talked non-stop all the way to Anár, a city about 150 kilometers from Yazd. After our stop in Anár, he began to sing poems by Tahirih. He referred to her as a follower of the Báb while addressing me. I did not engage in his attempts to speak with me. While continuing to offer chocolate and cigarettes to everyone, he even went so far as to say: “The clerics did not recognize the Báb. Many condemned him to death while he gave birth to a new world.” I was worried someone may object. [MAH-9, pp.532-533]

At dawn we reached Yazd. The driver announced that whoever wanted to perform their obligatory prayer to disembark the bus. The Yazdi instigators followed suit. Two Jews and I remained. No one objected but they turned to the Hájí and asked: “Do you want to pray?” He said: “God forbid! Out of the eighty years God has given me, sixty-six years have been spent with no prayers. The rest will remain the same. Instead of praying, I drink and praise myself.”

We reached Yazd with no incidents. This was the effect of the Tablet of Ahmad. God sent a person like Hájí to protect His servant. When we arrived at the bus depot and all passengers left, I told Hájí: “I am here to see my family after six months. I like you and would like for you to join us.” He said: “I have grown to like you too, but I have to reach Isfahan at the earliest. Here is my address in Kerman, let us try to see each other whenever possible”. He gave me his address in the Mushtáqiyyih neighborhood of Kerman where dervishes live. Anytime I visited Kerman I went to Mushtáqiyyih, but never managed to find him. The last time I tried, I was told he had passed on and was guided to his gravesite. I noticed the site was decorated and closed off with his photo displayed at the top. I prayed for the progress of his soul. I remained in Bam for two more years before changes in my circumstances caused me to return to Yazd.”

6. The Falsafi Era

Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues his story; this is concerning Falsafí:

Two years later the Falsafí era⁸⁷ of persecutions began (1955). On 27 March that same year, I went to a place about thirty kilometers from Yazd to officiate a marriage. The next day as I headed back home, I saw the same person who had been previously assigned by Khálisházádih to kill me, along with three others. One of the three remarked to me: “As if we don’t have enough Bábi’s, now you had to come here to produce more!” They began to attack me with every intention to kill me. I was unconscious. Apparently, they wanted to throw my body into a well, but the locals prevented them. Instead, a Muslim driver agreed to take me in the back of his car while carrying other passengers to Yazd. A short distance before Yazd the Bahá’ís, who were passengers in the same car, feared that returning to Yazd may result in Muslims setting my body on fire. One of them told the driver they would remain, so they got out and took me, along with their belongings. Two of the Muslims also got out and kicked me a few more times. They then arranged for another car to take me to the home of one of the Bahá’ís who had been on the bus. I regained consciousness but could not remember anything. They called in a doctor who ordered me to rest. I was bedridden for 80 days. On the third day a state doctor examined me. He begged my wife’s forgiveness and said: “I have been instructed to issue bed rest for 18 days only.” I responded by saying: “Don’t worry about me, do what you need to.” He did as he was told but it took me a full 80 days to completely recover.

Chapter 3

Teaching Memories

In this chapter, Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) explains a few stories from his teaching experiences and his teaching trips. He starts with the following story:

1. Debate with a Cleric

“I have so much to share with you about another kind of experience in life. I could write many books, however, instead will only share a few glimpses. I hope these will suffice to uplift the souls of friends and inspire them to include me in their prayers and supplications from the Almighty. [MAH-9, p.532]

Siyyid Abu’l-Qásim Nadím was very much attached to his Islamic beliefs in Yazd, who after three years of investigation and consultation with teachers of the Cause, accepted the Faith. He then decided to share this Message with one of his relatives, who was a cleric in the city. One day Siyyid went to visit him and said: “Áqá Siyyid Abú-Turáb, do you remember that you used to advise me not to associate with the vagrant sectarians because they do not recognise God and are enemies of the Faith? I spoke with them and learned that they worship no one but God and His Messenger. Whatever they share is based on the holy books.” Siyyid Abú-Turáb had replied: “You too have fallen for their tricks?” Siyyid said: “Yes, and now I have come to seek your assistance to save me.” The cleric agreed to meet and speak with him. [MAH-9, p.533]

One night when I visited Siyyid Abu’l-Qásim Nadím at his shop he mentioned that he had invited Áqá Siyyid Abú-Turáb to his home that evening and if I could I go and talk about the Faith with him. As we conversed together, Áqá Siyyid Abú-Turáb entered. Siyyid Abu’l-Qásim Nadím closed the shop and we headed to his home. After enjoying some fruit, Áqá Siyyid Abú-Turáb addressed me saying:

“Share something that may be of benefit.” I responded by telling him that I was not educated and therefore had come to learn from him. He sarcastically retorted: “I do not believe in God, so prove His existence.” I laughed and said: “I am not lying.” He said: “Why are you laughing?” I responded: “Because you mix true and false together. Here you say you do not believe in God, but then preach from the pulpit that you do! Seventy thousand inhabitants of Yazd follow you. How could you say you do not believe in God?” He took note of his false claim and said: “Let’s assume that I do!” I said: “Let’s set aside assumption and talk based on facts.” He said: “Fine, I believe in God, but not others.” I asked: “If you do, then how do you prove He exists?” He said: “God is constant and independent of any logical explanation.” I refused this statement saying: “Half the planet denies His existence, let’s say I am one of them, so you prove He exists!” He appeared to be frustrated. I continued: “I will share a verse with you written by someone you consider a non-believer, whose book you refuse to touch. Keep in mind a gem is a gem, even if carried in the mouth of a dog. It must be treasured. Rumi, whom you consider a heretic, says:

If it were not for Muḥammad,

You would follow your ancestors and worship idols.

[MAH-9, p.533-534]

From Abraham to Muḥammad, all Messengers prove the existence of God and guided humanity to worship them. If Muḥammad, himself from a family of idol worshippers, had not been appointed as a divine Messenger, none of the Arabs would have recognised the Almighty, and would have remained immersed in ignorance.” At this point he said: “Let’s say I accept Muḥammad too, but no one else.” I repeated my request to set aside assumptions and to speak based on facts. He said: “But Muḥammad was my ancestor!” I responded: “May my life be a sacrifice to you and your ancestor! Please prove He was sent by God. Let’s assume I deny him, like all the Buddhists, Brahmans, Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians. Now I want to recognise Him. But how?” He said: “Recognise His miracles and accept Him!” I asked: “Which miracle?” He replied: “The splitting of the moon as

mentioned in the *Qur'an*, or similar cases like when He conversed with a crocodile, grew a palm tree on the hump of a camel, or turned pebbles in the palm of his hand into gems which he gave to an Arab." I responded: "Áqá Siyyid Abú-Turáb, why should I believe these miracles to be true?" He said: "Because of frequency." I asked to elaborate further what he meant, then he continued: "If a thousand people enter this house and tell us a man was put to death in the main square, how would we come to believe their words?" I said: "If millions deny it, which would we choose to believe then?" He asked me to explain what I meant, and I said: "Buddhists, Brahmanians, Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians who do not accept Islam, they ridicule us, otherwise they would have become Muslim." Angrily he said: "I hope the sword of the *Qá'im* responds to you." I replied: "His sword was His words, which taught us what we know." When I noted he could no longer continue I said: "Áqá Siyyid, allow me to ask another question, if Muḥammad split the moon in two, how did He put it back together? Keeping in mind we have seen many magicians cut off a head and then reconnect it. A miracle is one that cannot be reverted and retains its validity, so that all can experience and believe it. If the moon was split into two halves, should not it be noticed by all who live on earth? How is it that none of the historians have recorded anything of this nature?"

I continued and said: "With regard to the crocodile who conversed with the Prophet, did he do so in Arabic or his own tongue? If the crocodile would speak Arabic, then it would be the animal that has performed the miracle. If it is Muḥammad who spoke in the crocodile's tongue, it is an insult to His station. With regard to the palm tree that grew on the camel's hump, none of the museums around the globe bear any such image. On the other hand, if any military figure has achieved any victory, they are surely the subject of paintings and sculptures. How could such an important claim be excluded? Had He managed to grow the palm tree in this manner, out of His bounty, there would be so many trees now that would leave no need for palm groves. With regard to the rocks, if the said incident had come to pass, the resultant gems would

have been on display in museums. Have you ever heard of any such gems?" [MAH-9, pp.534-536]

He asked: "Are you denying these miracles? Or God?" I said: "No but listen to my explanations to understand we worship God and believe in miracles, but true miracles not vain imaginings." He said: "You cannot." I replied: "If so, then I am in the same position as you are." He asked me to explain further and I said: "What is meant by a pebble?" He said: "A stone." I said: "What does dark mean?" He said: "Black." I asked: "Then the black stone which is stored in Mecca has come from heaven or earth? There are many such stones in Mecca, a mountainous region. They are of no value. But when Muḥammad, the Messenger of God, touched it and said this is the Qiblih of Muslims, it gained value, so much so that many Muslims have given their lives for it. You know Jináb-i Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmirí. When he went on pilgrimage to Mecca during the Holy Year, he witnessed 70,000 lives lost next to this precious stone. Mass graves were dug for both men and women who died to reach this stone. Even today, are there any Muslims who would be ready to exchange this stone with anything else in the world?" He said: "No." I continued: "So this is the rock that the Prophet has turned into a gem." [MAH-9, p.537]

Now in regard to the palm tree that grew on the back of a camel. The camel was the vehicle of the Messenger. He rode upon it. His Essence was the fruitful tree, whose sweet speech nourished the souls of the believers. Next, the crocodile that spoke with the Prophet, there was not only one, but many that conversed with Him. Have you ever heard of an animal bury its own offspring?" He said: "No." I continued: "Prior to the revelation of Islam, Arabs used to either bury their daughters alive or throw them off cliffs. The Prophet managed to speak with these uncivilised tribes and trained them to the extent that before long four Islamic educational institutions were established in Baghdad, Egypt, Bukhara and Tripoli. Last, but not least, regarding the splitting of the moon, as you know the moon moves around the sky and there is no benefit to humanity to split it. The Prophet never did anything futile. At the start of our discussions you

said you do not believe in God. In all truthfulness, if you say that at the pulpit, what will happen to you?" He said: "But I won't." I asked: "What if you do? Will they even let you stand for a second before they chop you up to pieces? But the Prophet repeatedly stood before the uncivilised masses and the idols they worshipped to call them to God. Is this not stronger than splitting the moon? More importantly, did he not order them to replace all past traditions with His divine teachings? They all followed Him and supported a dispensation as grand as Islam. If you even attempt such a thing, you will be eliminated without hesitation."

This meeting lasted six hours and ended at 2:00 am. The cleric stayed overnight but I returned home. While bidding them farewell the host said: "I now know this community is bereft of all knowledge, but I beg of you, do not utter a word to anyone about what happened here tonight. No one should know how ignorant the cleric is." I replied: "Áqá Siyyid Abu'l Qásim, you have awakened the beast! I had no such intention, but you know he will spread the word that he debated and defeated a Bahá'í." The host doubted he would say anything. I insisted that if the cleric made any such claims, I too maintain the right to defend my position. The host agreed. [MAH-9, pp.538-540]

Forty days later I was passing through the bazar. I saw Hájí Hasan Dhu'l-Faqár, a pleasant friend and a leading figure in the community, among a few others. He called on me and said: "Zabihi, you have proselytised our Mullá? Don't you know they are good for nothing?" I replied: "Jináb-i Hájí, what proselytization? I am busy working and looking after my own affairs." He asked me to stay for a while and said: "You must stay and hear the details. Áqá Siyyid Abú-Turáb conducts weekly devotionals at the home of Hájí Muḥammad Šádiq. I am one of the regular attendants. He never accepts refreshments following the session, do you know why? Because if he stayed, he would get a meal. But by refusing to stay the host has to send enough rice, oil, sugar cone and tea to his home to last a whole week. He is a smart man." I asked: "What does this have to do with me?" He responded: "Zabihi, either because of you or Siyyid I used to get

my free meal. But this week when he finished the session, he wanted to stay for lunch and share an experience with all of us. While lunch was being prepared, he turned to us and asked: "How often have I advised you to send your children to religious, not secular schools? None of you listened. We now face dangerous enemies. I had to face Zabihi, a local who works in the silk industry and according to him, is illiterate. When I asked him to speak, he claimed he was entirely bereft of any knowledge. But when he spoke, he could defeat top Islamic scholars with his arguments. Regardless, I defeated him." While he was sharing these details, we were served a delicious lunch. [MAH-9, p.540]

I turned to him and said: "Ḥájí, I swear by the Black Stone and all things holy, that night Áqá Siyyid said he does not believe in God. Áqá Siyyid Abu'l-Qásim can testify to this fact. He was an unbeliever. When he finally accepted God then he said he does not believe in any of the Messengers of God. I proved the reality of the Messengers of God. He became a believer there and then." Sometime later, Ḥájí Ḥasan had shared the same details with the cleric and told him: "You are a liar, I am a Muslim, but the Bahá'ís know God and His Messenger better than we do." [MAH-9, p.541]

Teaching efforts continued until a few years later, one of the Bahá'ís of Yazd named Jináb-i Javád Qálíchi'i, shared the following story with me: "I have two nephews. Their father was a Bahá'i but one of them has converted to Islam and the other is an atheist. If possible, please speak with them. Maybe they will recognise the truth." We arranged a fireside with them. I accepted to attend the event at Mr. Bihi's home. Siyyid Muḥammad, the nephew who had become Muslim, refused to come because he could not speak with a Bahá'i teacher, however he would attend if he could bring along an Islamic scholar to debate together. I accepted and invited Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmirí to join us also. When we entered the home of Áqá Ramaḍán Bihi, I saw Áqá Siyyid Abú-Turáb seated with Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad. He got upset at seeing me and said: "Zabihi, I only have 90 minutes." Tea was served, but he refused to drink any. Discussions began, but he refused to speak. He only sat there to listen.

The seeker invited him to participate, but the cleric said: “All that is shared is wonderful. I must listen so that I can respond.”

In this midst, Jináb-i Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí asked permission to share a few points. After a few initial remarks he explained: “About ninety years ago a holy figure appeared, and many learned clerics accepted him. Among them were those who could far surpass any cleric today. Some twenty thousand followers sacrificed their lives for Him. He was the founder of a faithful community with many followers, is this not a true Cause?” The cleric replied: “Twenty-four years ago someone in India claimed to be a Messenger and has revealed a book.” I asked: “Show me one of his verses or followers.” He said: “Show me yours!” I responded: “Other than you and Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad, everyone else in the room is a Bahá’í and we have myriads of books and verses to show you.” At this point he commented that the meeting was taking too long and brought the discussions to an end. [MAH-9, pp. 540-541]

At another similar event Jináb-i Mihdí Sarsáz was present. When he witnessed Abú-Turáb’s unfair responses he said: “Áqá Siyyid, you have no idea what religion is, never mind Islam!”

2. Áqá Mihdí Sarsáz ⁸⁸

Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues with his teaching stories:

Áqá Mihdí Sarsáz had an interesting life filled with many contributions and it is worthwhile to mention a few of them. He was of Yazdi origin and worked in the textile industry. Prior to accepting the Faith, he had been a custodian of the mosque and harboured a great deal of prejudice and animosity towards the Bahá’ís. However, this was due to his dedication to Islam, and the assumption that Bahá’ís were heretics who acted against his faith and the Prophet. When he would open the gates of the mosque in the morning, for people to offer their prayers, he would launch in to a litany of verbal

abuse if he saw a Bahá'í, and cry out: "God, why have You let them turn their backs to Islam?" It was known that he would leave no stone unturned in order to locate Bahá'ís and harass them.

During those days, Riḍván celebrations would involve three to four thousand participants, only a quarter of whom were Bahá'ís. It was difficult to distinguish between the Bahá'ís and the non-Bahá'ís. Regardless, he identified a Bahá'í who was a clerk at the public bath. Áqá Mihdí had drunk a glass of refreshment at the Riḍván celebration, so the next day he went to the bath to purify his body of this drink. The clerk greeted him saying: "Alláh'u'Abhá." Áqá Mihdí lost his temper, beat up the man, threw him out and locked the door, declaring that the entire bath be cleansed. In addition he demanded that some Bahá'ís be killed before he would unlock the gates to the mosque!

Crowds soon gathered and the clerk along with six other Bahá'ís were subjected to a great deal of physical torture. Áqá Mihdí continued to instigate such incidents and became known for his devotion to Islam. This pattern continued until such time as the new officials in Yazd gradually grew to respect the Bahá'ís. As a result, the Bahá'í community eventually filed a complaint against Áqá Mihdí. The officials contacted the chief of his village, Ghulám Husayn Pír Muḥammad; also an enemy of the Cause, to bring Áqá Mihdí to court. The chief went to his textile factory and slapped Áqá Mihdí on the face saying: "You so and so, what have you done that the judiciary has summoned you?"

On his way to court, Áqá Mihdí prayed for justice. On entering the court, he was told that his superior had complained about the quality of his textiles and therefore he must be punished! Áqá Mihdí gave the court his promise that he was the best at what he did. However, the judge sentenced him to flogging by bastinado. As they brought the wooden lashes, the guards who knew what the real reason was, tried to pull the end of his trousers so that it would cover the soles of his feet in order to reduce the effects of the blows. However, he assumed they were actually removing his trousers and therefore refused to cooperate. As a result, the guards were angered and carried out the

lashing at full force. Áqá Mihdí kept praying, which added to the anger of the guards. They instructed him to apologise instead of praying but he didn't comply and so the guards carried on the punishment until he lost consciousness. When he gained consciousness, he was put on the back of a donkey and taken to his home. It was customary for the victim to pay the costs of lashing, but as he was poor, the local community raised the necessary sum to pay the authorities.

As there was no proper medical care it took Áqá Mihdí three months to recover. Finally, one day he stepped out with the aid of a cane. He ran into a Bahá'í named Áqá Muḥammad- 'Alí Simsár and proceeded to utter profanities against him. Since there was no one around and Áqá Mihdí was still injured, Áqá Muḥammad seized the opportunity to return his insults. [It should be noted that this is not a normal response of a Bahá'í under such circumstances. The normal response of an individual Bahá'í is to show kindness to aggressors.] Áqá Mihdí was physically unable to attack this Bahá'í man so he hit himself with his own cane and screamed: "All faith is lost, this Bábí is now insulting Muslims." No one acknowledged him and so he decided to go to the home of Mullá Ḥusayn, the son of Ḥájí Mullá Báqir Ardikání to complain about the Bábí man.

Ḥájí Mullá Báqir was one of the clerics who accepted the Faith during the time of the Báb. However, his son did not. It was noon by the time Áqá Mihdí reached the Mullá's house – taking him a full six hours to cover the half kilometre distance. He entered and saw the Mullá seated with all sorts of refreshments before him. He was busy eating and showed no inclination to share anything with Áqá Mihdí. He asked the Mullá: "Is it wise for you to enjoy this lavish set up while a Bábí insults a Muslim?" The Mullá put another piece of fruit in his mouth and replied: "What can I do? God will take care of it." Áqá Mihdí was shaken by this and forced to face the harsh reality that Mullás may say one thing and do another. As Hafiz writes:

*Clerics claim much at the altar and pulpit
In private they go and otherwise they commit*

As a result, Áqá Mihdí began to think about investigating the Faith. He approached one of the friends whom he had previously harassed. With great trepidation the friend taught him the Faith. Áqá Mihdí declared and became so devoted to the Faith that his every breath was in adoration of the Blessed Beauty. He taught the Faith to many, some of whom are still around and serving the Cause.

Sometime after his declaration, Jináb-i Ghulám-Husayn (the chief of his village) drank the cup of martyrdom. One of the Muslims who heard that Áqá Mihdí had declared and was teaching the Cause, went to his home and demanded that he come out, saying: "I am going to take you to Hájí Muḥammad Ja'far's home to have him issue your death sentence!" Áqá Mihdí refused to go. However, the Muslim was determined, saying: "You used to harass them and now you promote them, there is no way that I will not take you." Áqá Mihdí agreed to go with him on the condition that he would not be killed at Hájí Muḥammad Ja'far's home. On the way, they encountered several crowds. They changed their routes to escape any disruption to the plan against Áqá Mihdí. When they reached their destination, a servant opened the door. The Muslim man instructed the servant to get Hájí Muḥammad Ja'far to issue Áqá Mihdí's death sentence. After a few minutes, the servant returned and told them that Muḥammad Ja'far was not home! The Muslim man then turned to Áqá Mihdí and declared that they would go to another cleric's home. However, Áqá Mihdí refused to go elsewhere. The Muslim's reaction was to say: "I changed our routes several times so none of the crowds would attack you, you promised to come with me to be killed." Áqá Mihdí replied: "I fulfilled my promise to you and came all the way to this house." In this way they argued back and forth until late at night when eventually Áqá Mihdí escaped death.

Áqá Mihdí lived in service to the Cause and taught the Faith to innumerable souls, including many vehement enemies of the Faith, until his passing at the age of seventy. His remains were buried in Buq'at-ul-Khaḍrá⁸⁹ in Yazd, next to the resting place of the Afnán family. May God's mercy and bounties surround his soul.

*May those who let go and let others go be happy
Their legacy naught but a good name for eternity*

3. The fruitful seed

Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues with his teaching stories:

“Fahraj is the name of a village some 30 kilometers from Yazd. The great majority of those who lived there were fanatics and totally unaware of the Revelation, except for a single Bahá’í. He was the village chief and due to his position could not proclaim the Cause. On many occasions in Yazd I visited with this steadfast believer and asked him whether he was able to teach anyone in Fahraj? He informed me that no one was receptive to the Cause. Soon after WWI began, I was instructed by the Yazd Local Assembly to go to Fahraj in order to teach the Faith. I left on the first day of Muḥarram. Some 18 kilometers into my journey I reached the village of Khuvaydak, there I attended the celebrations for the Twin Holy Days for friends and seekers, where I proclaimed the Faith. This brought me great joy and I considered it a good omen. The next day, along with Áqá Muḥammad-‘Alí Ittiḥádi and Ḥájí Mihdí Shahídzádih, I set out for Fahraj. [MAH-9, p.542]

One of my companions had a bicycle and reached our destination first. I had advised him to be careful and not to draw the attention of the locals as to our arrival. But when we arrived, he told us everyone was surprised to see visitors inquiring about the chiefs’ home; therefore, they came to know we were there. Nevertheless, I emphasized they needed to exercise prudence. I recalled one of the fanatical Muslims in Yazd, named Panjih ‘Alí, who had two sons-in-law in Fahraj, named Mírzá Áqá and ‘Alí Áqá. Although I had never met them, I decided to pay a visit to Mírzá Áqá’s home. I inquired the whereabouts with the local shopkeepers and was asked: “Which one are you after? Half the village are called Mírzá Áqá!” I then asked about ‘Alí Áqá and was told that the other half of the village had that name! I asked which one was the son-in-law of Panjih Áqá and was told that there was only one and was guided to his home. When we knocked on the door, ‘Alí Áqá inquired about our business. We told

him that we were travelers and as it was cold and snowing, we needed a place to stay. He warmly welcomed us. [MAH-9, p.543]

The locals had informed the chief of our arrival. Although he was ill at the time and had never met us, he graciously invited us to his home. So, after lunch we went to visit the chief. We were joined by his son who soon came to realize that we were all Bahá'ís. This made him terribly angry, and he said: "You should leave now and in two hours you will reach Míhriz!" I knew in such bad weather it was impossible for us to make the trip and in fact the Chief's son actually wanted us to leave so that we would lose our lives on the way! However, contrary to his son's wishes, the chief insisted that we spend the night in Fahraj. We did. What an unforgettable night! His son left, only to return two hours later and casually greet us. I responded with great respect. Soon seventeen other men arrived and greeted us in the same off-hand manner. They all lit their smoking pipes. The smoke was so thick we could hardly see their faces or breathe. As Hafiz describes:

*How do those who pace the beach come to know
The dangers of the dark deeps and the fearsome storm?*

They continued talking, making veiled threats, saying things such as: "Do you remember how we cut up so and so? Killed so and so? Blinded so and so? All with impunity. This is who we are. We kill whomever we want, like a little bird. No one can do a thing about it." I remembered Hafiz's verse: [MAH-9, p.544]

*It's a deadly trap, unless the Almighty assists
No use for man, the damned Devil persists*

While holding on to the hem of His mercy and begging His Divine assistance, I began to speak and said: "Why speak of such things during the blessed month of Muḥarram? Tonight, we must talk about the sacrificial life of Imam Ḥusayn." I spoke about the enmity of Yazid⁹⁰ and the innocence of Imam Ḥusayn and the martyrs of Karbala. In particular, my description of the suffering of the martyrs at Karbala impressed them so much that they all began to cry; and demonstrated a great deal of sorrow. While shedding an endless flow of tears they continued to chant, may our lives be a sacrifice for the Prince of Martyrs. At this point I ended my talk. They said: "Such sweet words.

We have never heard such a sermon. May God forgive the souls of your loved ones in the next world.”

We spent the duration of the evening in this manner until everyone left for their respective homes. We slept at the place of our host. That night I had a dream that the Master sent a cloak from the Holy Land to Yazd for me. However, unbeknown to me it had been sent to the home of Muḥammad Ḥarírí. When I received the cloak, I realized it was actually a vest. I kissed it and put it on. The following morning when I awoke, I felt as though the mayhem we had survived the previous night had planted seeds that would bear great fruit in the years to come.

As soon as I completed my ablutions to offer my morning prayer, the guests returned one by one. Each had brought something, a bit of beetroot, turnip, milk, yogurt and bread. They said: “This is for the preacher.” As the conditions were propitious, I stood facing the Qiblih and offered the medium obligatory prayer, followed by the Tablet of Aḥmad and a few prayers in Arabic and Persian, and then a brief fireside. [MAH-9, p.545]

After breakfast we headed to Míhríz. Unlike the night before, the son of the chief was insistent that we stay for lunch. But it did not seem wise, so we began our journey. When we reached the bazar district, the butcher stopped us and asked: “Are you the one who described the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn in Karbala?” I confirmed that I was, and he continued: “I have pledged to recite the Tablet of Visitation for Imam Ḥusayn; you must stay and do it.” I told him that, I must leave for Míhríz today, however would hopefully do it next time. He kept insisting, but eventually agreed and we carried on our way.

The next summer, the two faithful nephews of the chief who lived in Yazd, ‘Alí-Akbar and Ḥusayn Mujahid, went with me to Fahraj. Prior to our arrival, one of the locals had alarmed the residents ahead of time by saying that 25 Bahá’ís were on their way. Frightened at this news, the locals had fled for the countryside. The chief alone was there to receive us. However, when they came to know it was just the three of us, they all returned. So, I felt the time was opportune to proclaim the Faith, regardless of the consequences. I spoke for more

than two hours about the teachings of the Faith, as the fulfilment of age-old prophecies. One of the elderly participants asked: "Do you have any holy writings?" I replied: Far more than the Qur'an." He responded: "Can you recite anything for us?" So, I began to chant the Tablet of Ahmad. After the final verse he said: "I testify that every word was revealed by God." Then one of those who was present felt overcome and declared his faith.

Sometime later, 'Alí-Akbar Mujahid shared the following with me: "The eighteen men who came to the home of the chief on your first visit, had gathered earlier on the outskirts of the city and had sworn on the Qur'an to murder you. But the Almighty had decreed otherwise." I said: "I do not fear death, but my blood is not worthy of the tree of the Cause of God." In the words of Hafiz: [MAH-9, p.545-547]

Your wayfarers desire calamity
A lover fears not apex or valley
When I bathe in the river of love
I pray for whatever below or above

4. The Isfahani Priest

Mr. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues with his teaching stories:

Around 1305 in the solar calendar (1927 AD), I went to the Christian mission in Yazd. The priest in charge, Mirzá Abu'l-Qásim was born and raised in Isfahán. He was a former Muslim and an expert government revenue agent. When he was waiting for his term of service, he converted to Christianity and soon reached the rank of priesthood.

Next to the mission was a hospital run by the church. There were six people at the mission. Two were religious studies students, two others were Muslims known as Muḥammad and Ḥusayn, and finally a Zoroastrian and a Bahá'í from Zoroastrian background, both of whom worked at the hospital. They served tea, which I drank, but the two religious students did not as they were upset with me. Each received a copy of the Bible, but neither looked at it. The priest opened the book and recited a verse about Jesus performing the miracle of feeding the masses with two fish and five loaves of bread. I asked the

priest: "It is now 3 pm and there are seven of us here. We have had lunch but I promise you, if you bring two fish and five loaves, we will finish all of it." He did not respond and so I regretted rushing in with my argument. [MAH-9, p.548]

The priest continued his remarks and said: "After Jesus, 24 false prophets will rise, all of whom will mislead the masses." [It should be noted that in the 24th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew states that many (not 24) false prophets shall arise and deceive many. Also number 24 is associated with the number of elders mentioned in the Revelation of St. John; 4:4 which has nothing to do with false prophets. It is possible that these two verses were mixed up in the mind of the priest.] One of the students inquired: "What do you think of Prophet Muḥammad?" He replied: "I have shared my views." The students asked again to which the priest replied: "Muḥammad was one of the 24 false prophets too." The siyyid student was angered by this and said: "So Christians have joined the Bábí's too?" The priest replied: "That's not possible." The student continued: "I have seen with my own eyes the photo of Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad Shírázī with a number of Christians." I explained that at the time, meaning some 90 years earlier, there were no cameras and no Christian accepted His Faith; (I should clarify the student was referring to a photo of the Master with a number of Bahá'ís in the West). He was upset but did not say anything.

I moved to sit next to the priest and said: "Thank you for everything today. I am from a Muslim background and have learned everything I know about Jesus Christ from the Qur'an, where the Prophet confirms the revelation of the Christ. I too consider Him as the Messenger of God. Now that you say Prophet Muḥammad was not a truthful person, I should extend it to all the Prophets of God including Jesus Christ because they are all one and receive their teachings from one source. What would you suggest that I should do?" He invited me to visit him at his home on Monday to guide me to the right path. I asked him to share what he wanted right there and then so that others could learn also. However, he refused saying: "I do not have time now." I replied: "But your time is supposed to be spent on guiding the masses. Every evening you remain with seekers until 6 pm. You must do the same tonight with me." I held onto his sleeve and continued: "I will not let go of you." Irritated he said:

“How many times have I told you to come back on Monday and I will convince you of the truth?” I said: “What if I die before Monday?” He responded: “I promise you won’t die.” He pulled his sleeve, turned to the Zoroastrian Bahá’í and said: “Mr. Surush, close the door behind these gentlemen,” and then he left.

Mr. Surush said: “Mr. Zabihi, the priest wants to earn his living; leave him alone.” The students agreed and happily left, but the Siyyid remained seated. I took advantage of the situation and began to teach saying: “They have not recognised the Christ. If anyone recognises one Messenger, they will recognise all of them. So, they have not searched to attain faith, they have simply followed others.” As Rumi says: [MAH-9, pp.548-549]

Man is ruined by blind imitation

Two hundred curses on imitation

When I finished talking, I was waiting for him to leave, but he continued to sit and listen without uttering a word. I finally left around 7 pm. He began to follow me. When I walked fast, so did he. When I paced slowly, so did he. When we reached a quiet area, he said: “I would like to say something.” I said: “Please go ahead.” He asked: “What is your educational background?” I replied: “I don’t even know the difference between A and B.” He did not believe me. I finally swore on all things holy until he accepted the truth of my statement. He then asked: “What is your religion?” I laughed and said: “You are Muslim, you know your Prophet has taught that one’s money, path and beliefs are private matters. Why do you ask then?” He then begged me to answer. I said: “I am a Bahá’í.” He replied: “Could we speak tonight?” I responded: “Of course!”

As we were not prepared to receive guests at our home, I took him to the home of Haj Muḥammad Zá’ir. I also turned to the Blessed Beauty and begged Him to guide this seeker. That evening we engaged in deep discussions that transformed him to his core. We met on two other evenings. He was absent on the fourth evening but returned on the fifth, when he declared. In the words of Hafiz:

Praised be God that whatever I desire

He grants beyond measure to admire

His name was Áqá Siyyid Hidáyat'u'lláh and he became an enkindled lover of the Cause. He asked permission to extract and memorise the words of the Master published in Star of the West, as he wanted to share them during his sermons saying: "Only the words of God can guide the masses to the Straight Path." Hájí Muḥammad Zá'ir responded: "Several souls in the Zabihi family have given up their lives for the Cause. Do you know why? Because they used to share the same words in public. You must observe wisdom as you gradually meet receptive souls and share The Most Great Name with them." But the fire of his love for the Cause lead him to arise to teach the Cause at once.

Before not too long, people came to know of his faith and began to persecute him. Finally, the Local Assembly was left with no choice but to ask him to leave the city. For over 25 years no one ever heard of him. At last, one day Jináb-i Hájí Muḥammad Zá'ir went to the Office of the Registry in Yazd, where someone approached him and whispered: "Alláh'u'Abhá! How are you Hájí Muḥammad?" He replied: "Who are you?" The man responded: "I am Áqá Siyyid Hidáyatu'lláh, how is Mr. Zabihi?" He then went on to share that he worked at the main Office of Registry and was on a two-day business visit to Yazd. Hájí Muḥammad explained that he had been trying to get something done for some time; and Áqá Siyyid took care of whatever it was that he needed and bade him farewell. [MAH-9, pp.550-552]

5. Trip to Afghanistan

Mr. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues with his teaching stories. He explains the details of teaching trip to Afghanistan:

During my 18 days of pilgrimage in 1311 Shamsi (1932 AD), when I met the beloved Guardian, he told me that Iranian Bahá'ís must establish the Faith in Afghanistan, and likewise the Iraqi Bahá'ís in Sudan and Ethiopia. On my return to Tíhrán, I visited Siyyid Ḥusayn Hášhimi-Zádih. He was a teacher and servant of the Cause. I was telling someone in his presence, about my memories from my unforgettable pilgrimage days, including the above statement by the Guardian when, Mr. Hášhimi-Zádih said: "If you decide to go there,

I will come along.” I said: “If it comes to pass, then wonderful!”
[MAH-9, p.553]

After saying goodbye, the guest of Mr. Hāshimī-Zādiḥ left the house with me. While on our way back he said: “I am Hāshim Yārshatīr, the brother of Mīrzā Ya’qūb Muttahīdīh, the brave martyr of Kirmanshah. Let us go for a stroll.” We spent hours walking around the area now known as Elizabeth Boulevard in Tīhrān. Back then it was a barren piece of land. The entire time he spoke of his time in the presence of the Master, and we finally reached his home in Amiriyyih around 4 am. There were a few rooms, each housing a family. He told me to go to sleep, however I hear him starting to pray, so I decided to join him. After our devotional session he said: “In our family before we begin anything, we spend a night in prayer. Now I want to consult with you about accompanying you to Afghanistan to help spread the Cause.” I replied: “I hope we do it.” He immediately wrote the Guardian and requested prayers. This event took place 60 days after the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf. In this manner the sun dawned, and a blessed night came to an end. As the poet Sa’di says:

*All in rest and midnight has come to pass
Yet Parvin and I find no sleep in our eyes*

As daylight appeared, a few children woke up and began to work. I asked them, who they were, and they informed me that they were his children. Back then they were young children, but now they have all grown up and are active servants of the Cause. He was a widower, so I asked him, how he planned to go to Afghanistan? He said: “I have a plan. I will place two of my children in an orphanage and two of them will go to one of my relatives.” I was deeply affected by his detachment which is a model to be emulated. [It should be noted that the family structure in Iran during the time of this story accommodated some freedom of action as extended family lived together or near each other. In this instance they could look after children for a short while. It was reciprocal, i.e., when younger children grew older they had an obligation to look after older people. The features of this story may not be emulated in the West at this time.]

Some 70 days after he wrote to the Guardian, I received a copy of the Guardian’s response through Dr. Sulaymān Birjīs,⁹¹ the martyr

of the Cause in Kashan. In this detailed tablet, the beloved Guardian displayed the greatest degree of love and then mentioned that a teacher had already been sent, and the expected results would be shared with the Assembly. Sometime later, Mr. Hāshim Yārshatīr sent the original tablet to me and said: "This is yours." A short while later I heard the news of his passing, which saddened me a great deal. I no longer felt I was able to go to Afghanistan.

Almost 40 years later, in the year 1351 (1972 AD) in the solar calendar, Mr. Hadī Rahmānī Shirazi, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors, saw me in Tīhrān and asked, if I was able to go to Afghanistan? I replied: "To do so is my ardent wish. Despite the fact that I am 72 years old and feeling quite weak, if the means emerge, I will go. At this time, I have been commissioned by the Pioneering Committee to travel. But when I return, I will be in touch with you." He responded: "Leave that trip to others, you are needed in Afghanistan." Since the commissioned trip was arranged through the National Spiritual Assembly, I consulted them and came to know they were fully informed of this new arrangement. [MAH-9, p.554]

I arranged for my passport and travelled to Afghanistan. A few kilometres before the border town of Islam-Qal'ih, the authorities kept my passport and instructed me to return to Mashhad to get vaccinated for smallpox. I told them my belongings were at the customs office. I would go there and return soon, however returning was difficult, so I began to chant the Tablet of Aḥmad and begged the Blessed Beauty to assist me. When I reached the customs building, the manager invited me to his office. Given my advanced age, he was most gracious to me. As he began to inspect my suitcase I inquired if there was anyone there that could assist me? He told me to go and see the General in charge. So, I went to his office and as soon as I entered, the General stood up and warmly received me. He offered me a seat and asked what he could do for me? I told him that something had come up and although unintentionally, I took full responsibility for it. I then shared the details with him and said: "I am at your service, I will do whatever you advise me to. He told me it would be his pleasure to arrange the vaccination for me. The General then called for a

doctor to come, vaccinate me and hosted me at a hotel for the next 24 hours. However, the doctor said that 48 hours of post-vaccine quarantine was necessary; to which the General commented: "I said 24 hours!" [MAH-9, p.555]

I went with the doctor to the Ministry of Health where I was vaccinated and returned to the general's office to receive my passport. He said: "Your passport is ready and even if it had been mailed by air it wouldn't have got here faster." When I returned to the hotel, with a great deal of wisdom and care, I spoke about the Faith with the manager until 10 pm. Whenever the employees came to him, he said: "Just assume I am not here, do whatever you need to, I am busy." Although he intuitively felt I was a Bahá'í, he showered me with indescribable kindness.

The following morning, it came to me that if I were to stay there for the entire period of 24 hours, it would be very late by the time I would reach Harat - and I didn't know anyone there. Therefore, it may be better for me to leave earlier so I spoke with the manager and he arranged for me to leave at 9 am, meaning that I would arrive eight hours earlier in Harat. This was the first instance of Divine confirmation that I experienced. I considered it a good omen.

In Harat I met about eight or nine Bahá'ís. I stayed there for over three days and then headed to Kabul, some 1,080 kilometres away. I went to a hotel that had been recommended to me by the hotel manager in Harat. Without my saying a word, they came to know that I was a Bahá'í. They gave me a room with two beds and when I told them I only needed a single room, they told me that they were giving me a double room at the price of a single room so that I would be comfortable. The staff were most hospitable. At first, I thought it was not from their heart and it was a show, but then I realised it was genuine, and due to the fact that I was a Bahá'í.

The next morning, I performed my ablutions and chanted the Long Obligatory Prayer, the Tablet of Ahmad and several other prayers - so that they would come to know Bahá'ís pray. The staff had nothing to do at dawn, so they would gather behind the door to my room and listen to the Holy Words. I spent 55 days in this manner. One of the

staff members told me: “I get up at dawn, offer my prayers and then I stand behind your door to hear your prayers.” I got in touch with the local Bahá’ís and spent time in deep prayer and meditation in order that I would succeed to spread the Message among the Afghans. Incidentally, I met ‘Abdu’l-Hayy-i Qádí, who is now the Minister of Transportation. He had two young sons 18 and 22 years old. They went hunting together. The older brother was shooting at some prey when sadly the younger brother raised his head and was accidentally shot dead. [MAH-9, pp.555-556]

Mr. Húshang Rashídí, one of the Iranian pioneers in Kabul shared the details of this accident with me and told me they were going to the memorial that evening, and if I were to find an opportune moment, to share the Faith with him! In addition to Mr. Rashídí, Mr. Maḥbúbípur and Mrs. Rashídí came along also. On the way there, Mr. Rashídí said: “This man is quite proud, don’t be offended if he ignores you.” I said: “I don’t easily get offended.” On arrival, Mr. and Mrs. Rashídí entered, but I removed my shoes first and then entered. Mr. Qádí arranged for alcoholic drinks so quickly that I did not even notice it happen, until sometime later when Mr. Rashídí shared the details with me. As soon as I was introduced to him, I commented: “Mr. Qádí I have heard a great deal about you and have been eager to meet you, albeit not on such a sad occasion.” Then I shared the following with him:

Heaven laughs at those who shed tears for a lifeless body

All are wayfarers; How strange to cry for those who arrive early

We then went on to speak about the eternal nature of the human spirit and the futile nature of this material world. Our visit lasted for about two hours. Throughout this time Mr. Qádí listened with great interest and invited his wife to join us. At the end he said: “I am sorry I did not record your words to keep with me but I promise not to shed another tear.” Since he was greatly moved, I said: “Mr. Qádí, there is a prayer that is of utmost benefit to you in this state, please recite it whenever you feel the need to.” Then Mr. Maḥbúbípur beautifully calligraphed the Remover of difficulties and another prayer for him. Mr. Qádí was educated so he reviewed the pronunciation and then

asked: "How many times do I recite them?" I replied: "As many times as uplifts your soul." While saying goodbye he said: "We could have hosted you, but I am afraid the sound of children crying would disturb you. I promise to visit you in Iran."

He and his wife escorted us to the gate. That same day the Prime Minister and his cabinet had visited them, but the couple only saw them to the door. His wife wanted to kiss my hands, but I did not agree to this and said: "It is forbidden. If it were not, I would have kissed your hands." When we were seated in our car, Mr. Qāḍī ordered two gunmen to accompany us. I told him that we had not noticed any danger on our way there, to which he responded: "But it is not safe." Later, Mr. Rashīdī explained that they were escorting us as a sign of their respect.

A few days later Mr. Rashīdī remarked that we should visit Mr. Mukhtārzādh, saying: "He is an important, educated and wealthy figure among the business community, and is well acquainted with Mr. Hādī Raḥmānī. However, it has not been prudent to share the Faith with him." Wholly trusting in God, I accompanied Mr. Rashīdī and his wife to Pakhman, near Kabul. As an excuse for the visit, Mr. Rashīdī gave me a photo of Mr. Raḥmānī and Mr. Mukhtārzādh that he had intended to hand deliver to him. Mr. Mukhtārzādh warmly received us. While there, we met another guest by the name of Khalīl Khalīlī, whom Mr. Rashīdī informed us was one of the professors of literature at Kabul University, who ranked third in his field worldwide. [MAH-9, pp.557-559]

I presented our host with the photo and he thanked me profusely. Then Mr. Khalīlī said: "I had intended to leave to see to my guests but I will stay for another 15 minutes to be in your company." During this time, he and our host spoke about literature and critiqued each other's poetry. When they concluded their discussion, I took advantage of this opportunity to ask: "Professor, may I ask you a question?" He said: "Please do!" I continued: "I am not educated and know nothing about poetry, but there is a poem I am curious about, both with regard to its writing as well as its writer," and then I recited Firdawsi's verse:

May my life be sacrificed for the dark in your eye

For at Judgement, God even wonders who created it

Mr. Khalilí smiled and said: “Mr. Zabihi, the poet has exaggerated a great deal, how could God wonder about the Creator? Nevertheless, it is a beautiful verse.” I responded: “Professor, the more a verse is exaggerated, the more beautiful it is.” He placed his hand on my shoulder and said: “That is true.” Then I recited a couplet composed by Fátimih Khánum, one of the Bahá’ís in Rafsanjan, known as Darvishih:

O Saba! Tell that fragile Farhad
 You’ve planted infamous seeds midst lovers
 Arduous labour for Shirin justifies
 Why an iron hatchet, your loving look empowers

Mr. Khalilí said: “That is beautiful. I had never heard it before.” Then he and Mr. Mukhtárzádi both wrote it down. After a brief discussion about poetry and prose I said: “There are three stations that are above all others. One is the station of prophecy that is reserved for the Manifestations of God. Second, the science of medicine, and third, education and training in literacy. Education of the mind is a prerequisite to education in divinity.” Mr. Khalilí responded: “I don’t think so.” I clarified: “Although religion is most important, nevertheless, unless a man is healthy, he cannot adhere to a religion.” Then I quoted Muḥammad who said: ‘science is of two kinds, one is the science of eternity or science of religion and the other one is science of body or medicine’. I added: “It may have another meaning that I am not aware of, but the science of eternity is before science of religion. Therefore, medicine is more important. I do not want to take your time of course.” At which point he said: “No I want to stay and learn.” So, I added Sa’di’s words:

Cloud and wind, moon and sun turn in the sky
 That thou mayest gain bread, and not live in ignorance

I continued: “This verse determines our path. If we use the science of medicine that is after divinity, or literature that is taught properly so that we recognise the Truth, then they occupy their rightful stations. If not, they have betrayed humanity.” [MAH-9, pp.560-561]

We began to talk about the Faith openly and referred to the fact that in nature, there is the phrase describing natural selection, the: Survival of the fittest, in other words weaker species are not protected. If we examine the nature and the animal world, we see that stronger animals exert their power over weaker animals. This is true also in the vegetable kingdom. We should note that Divine Teachers have tried to protect the disadvantaged people in the society by promoting love, harmony, unity, and cooperation instead of competition, dominance and the exploitation of one's weaknesses. At one level higher, this means that stronger individuals and nations should not trample upon weaker ones. The objective of this Dispensation is to extend such a teaching to the global community. At the end of our meeting Mr. Khalíli said: "Although I consider myself advanced when it comes to knowledge of literature, I must admit, I have never investigated about a religion that is establishing the foundation of oneness of humanity." Our meeting concluded and our host asked that we meet again. However, unfortunately, this never came to pass.

Three days before my return to Iran Mr. Rashídí received a letter from Mr. Mukhtárzádh in which he requested to meet with me. I wrote back explaining that I must leave soon, I would arrange to meet him next time I visited. I sent another letter to Mr. Qádí containing the following prayer by the Blessed Beauty: ⁹²

"Lord! Turn the distressing cares of Thy holy ones into ease, their hardship into comfort, their abasement into glory, their sorrow into blissful joy, O Thou that holdest in Thy grasp the reins of all mankind! Thou art, verily, the One, the Single, the Mighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise"

[For an authoritative translation, refer to:
<https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/search#q=%22Turn%20the%20distressing%20cares%20of%20Thy%20holy%20ones%20%22>]

I also included "Yá Subbuhun Yá Quddusun" and suggested that he recite these when he is overcome with emotion.

I went back to Iran and after three months or so I returned to Afghanistan. Mr. Qádí, on hearing of my arrival, came to my hotel to see me. I said: "I should have come to visit you." However, he told me that it was his duty to visit me and went on to invite me to his home. I

accepted this invitation along with Mr. Rashidi and while there, spoke at great length about the Faith. Mr Qádí wanted to meet again but unfortunately it was not possible.

After five months, Hand of the Cause of God, Dhikr'u'lláh Khádim, and Counsellor Hadí Raḥmání arrived in Afghanistan and went with Mr. Rashidi to visit Mr. Mukhtárzádih. On being informed that I was still in Kabul, Mr. Mukhtárzádih was very upset at not having seen me and asked that I visit him the next day at 5 pm. The following day I went to his home, to find that his brother was also there. I recited parts of the Kitáb-i-Iqán which I had committed to memory and when I was leaving, my host insisted that we meet again; and so, we did. [MAH-9, pp.561-562]

One day prior to my departure for Iran, we met at Mr. Rashidi's home. I told him: "Mr. Mukhtárzádih, you know I like you very much." He replied: "I know, and so do I. I continued: "I want to give you the most precious possession I have and candidly share with you a few things." Then I began to recite from the Iqan. He asked: "Whose words are these?" I replied: "Bahá'u'lláh's, in the Book of Certitude." He commented that he had read the book, but he had never understood its intent. He went on to ask: "Are there more Writings?" I told him that Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá had written innumerable volumes compared to revelations of the past. Then I went on to recite the Tablet of Aḥmad. He greatly admired it and asked: "Why is this Tablet revealed in Arabic when He was Persian?" I responded: "First and foremost, we do not question actions of Divine Messengers. Second, this is a Most Great Revelation for all humanity and compared to other languages, Arabic is far more precise and comprehensive. So, this is due to His perfection. Where in the world does anyone question perfection?"

I recited two other Tablets of the Master and explained that it had been 130 years since the Revelation had taken place. Before leaving I said: "How sad that despite your rich body of knowledge, you have remained bereft of this Grace. I beg of you to value the remaining days of your life and investigate reality so that your life is not in vain." We bade each other farewell and he promised to study the Writings.

During this same trip I engaged in teaching the Faith to a man named Ismu'lláh Máhir. After three days, on the eve of Riḍván, he declared. He was elected to the first Local Assembly of Harat and pledged to raise funds earmarked for teaching the Cause. I also met Sharhangí in Kabul. He was a former communist. After our first meeting he was so taken by the Faith that he regularly visited me at my hotel to discuss it. After two months he too declared. He sent a declaration letter to the Kabul Assembly that resembled a thesis. In 130 B.E. (1974 AD) he was elected to the Kabul Assembly.

Another fireside that must be mentioned is one that involved several merchants. Mr. Akhavan, one of the Iranian Bahá'ís in Kabul, befriended four of these well-known individuals. They had all been on pilgrimage to Mecca, one of them, a total of five times. So, before leaving for Iran, I had the privilege of meeting with them. They were very moved and inspired so much so that they asked to meet regularly. One of them who was a physician, kissed me at the end of our meeting and said: "We had never heard such teachings." He shared the word with his wife and brought her to our next meeting where we spoke openly about the Faith. They were told: "You have paid homage to the House of God in Mecca in order to draw closer to Him, but He revealed Himself 130 years ago. You must come to know Him first and then follow His teachings." That Thursday Mr. Akhavan and I were supposed to leave for Iran, but we received a telegram saying our trip was delayed by four days. This made me happy. We went on a picnic with the group of friends and spoke about the Faith in detail. At this gathering, Mrs. Tabíbi's father, an educated engineer, was also present. [MAH-9, p.563]

At the outset we spoke about Islam. The engineer said: "Do not talk to me about Islam. My children are all Sufis. But I hate Islam. It is nothing but a history of massacre and bloodshed." I responded: "The religion of Islam started as nothing but purity, and in essence, it remains so to this day." I pointed to the creek in front of us and continued: "Would you drink from there?" He said: "Never!" I asked: "How far is its source?" He responded: "It is about 1000 meters away." I asked: "Is the source polluted also?" He said: "It is the best quality of water in this area." I explained: "So for a 1000 meters distance, you do not drink this

water; the same goes for Islam over 1300 years. It has been polluted but its origins are perfect and pure. The station of the Messengers and the essence of Their teachings are one and the same.” We continued to speak for some time. When I returned to Iran and shared a report of my activities with the beloved National Assembly, they blessed me with the following response:

18 Rahmat 130 B.E./ 30 Tír 1352 Solar

Number. 9/4/08

Dear Mr., Zabihi,

Your cover letter dated 11/4/1352 along with your report regarding meetings and activities during your recent trip to Afghanistan was a source of joy. No doubt every step in the path of service that advance the Cause of God will attract Divine confirmations. The efforts of that servant of the Cause is engraved in our hearts and will never be forgotten. We will offer prayers at the Threshold of the All-Glorious Beloved, beseeching the continued success of our brother.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

Secretary

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Iran

Do not serve as do beggars in hope of reward

Hafiz knows how to train to move you forward

6. Priest from Ádhirbáyján

Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues with his teaching stories:

“A young priest from Ádhirbáyján came to Yazd. Every evening he would gather the employees of the hospital and the consulate together and engage in attacking all things holy in Islam. One of the more fanatical Muslims came to see me and said: ‘Mr. Zabihi, shame on our clerics. They do nothing but follow their own interests. This young priest gathers us every night and insults our sacred beliefs. I appealed to our clerics. They said, don’t go! But I said if I do not go, the hospital management will fire me. They said, that is fine! I asked, can you help

me get a job, so that I can leave the hospital? But they did not even respond. I am now asking you to please speak with the priest.” I consulted the Assembly and sought their permission to attend the meetings organised by the priest.

One night, along with Mr. Mihdí Afnán, Aḥmad Mahdavi and a new but inactive declarant named Kávih, I attended the meeting at the mission. On the way we consulted and decided that I should introduce myself as a Muslim, as otherwise he would not speak with me. Kávih the Calligrapher would attend as a Jew and the two Afnáns who were well-known, if asked, would say they were Bahá’ís. We entered and greeted everyone. Without the slightest movement or any trace of humility, he simply acknowledged us. It was a cold night and there was a fire near the priest. I tried to move the heater closer to me to warm up, but he moved his feet to prevent me from doing so. I then reached for the handle and pulled it from under his feet. He said: “Why are you here?” I answered: “To investigate the truth!” He replied: “What does that mean?” I said: “We have come to learn about what and where is God.” He asked: “What do you believe in that has led you to come after God?” I said: “I am a Muslim.” He then asked: “What about those two?” I replied: “They are Bahá’ís.” He continued: “Which one of you am I dealing with?” All three of my companions pointed to me and so he added: “What is missing in your religion that has led to your desire to search after truth?” I said: “Nothing, I have actually come to guide you to the Straight Path!”

On hearing these words, his prideful approach ruptured into anger and he screamed: “Guide me to the path of theft and adultery?” I responded: “You must prove that Islam is based on adultery.” He said: “What about the account involving Zayd, his wife and Muḥammad?” I replied: “Zayd was the servant of Khadíjih, who on declaring his faith was adopted by Muḥammad as His son, he then arranged for his marriage to a woman named Zaynab. Later, after Zayd divorced his wife, Muḥammad married her. This is not adultery. The Bible says, you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but not the log in your own eye?” I said: “Allegations such as the one mentioned by your honour have filled hundreds of books written for

the purposed of condemnation of Prophet Muhammad. However, similar books have also been written for the same purpose for the rejection of Jesus Christ. There is no need to go over them or even make any hints about them. Personally, I do not entertain such stories and shun debates which treat Manifestations of God disrespectfully. Such arguments do not lead anyone to spirituality neither do they guide anyone to the truth.” The priest remained silent.

I continued: “You said Muḥammad was a thief, you need to prove that too.” He said: “What about the incident involving the Hijaz tribe and the battle of Badr? Is that a lie too?” I said: “The facts about the battle of Badr are well known. That battle took place because of fighting men of the Caravan from Mecca were planning an attack. Muḥammad and his followers prevented them from what intended to do. We need to search deeper in the events of the past and should not be satisfied only with the arguments of the opponents. Even if we accept some events on their face values and ignore their positive intended outcome we need to extend the same to all Messengers of God.” He was listening, therefore, I continued and said: “Similarly, if a Christian might think relating negative stories, such as the one which was expressed and with false accusations and unproven allegations regarding one Manifestation of God, he should be ready to hear the same matching stories about Jesus Christ. However, I cannot fulfil this function. I, rather, concentrate on the positive aspects of the lives of the Manifestations of God which are full of self-sacrifice, devotion, and service to humanity in the path of God. I can relate many stories of this kind about both Prophet Muhammad and Jesus Christ.” ⁹³

At this point I felt the priest was greatly agitated. I was not willing to go any further and said: “Even if you continue to insult Muḥammad and His followers or I disrespect the Christ for a hundred years, they will remain holy beyond all measures. What we are doing is no different than us standing in front of the sun to darken the earth. The sun continues to shine and brighten the world. The Manifestations of God are like the sun. They are not affected by what you do or I say. Just as I consider Muḥammad as the Messenger of God, I consider

Christ as the son of God and a Divine teacher. Let us consult on principles and explore the Truth."

He wanted to avoid further discussion however, we found a way forward. I said: "Are the teachings of Christ still practical today?" He replied: "Why wouldn't they be?" I asked: "Is it not one of His teachings that if someone strikes one's face, one must turn the other cheek? Or that if someone is after your robe, you should give them your cloak too? I have never insulted anyone, never mind someone of your standing. But if I strike you, would you turn the other cheek? Or instead would you file a complaint with the authorities?" He stood up and said: "I would certainly complain!" I asked: "Then how are His teachings practical if you who guide the masses, are not willing to follow this teaching. Furthermore as time goes on, followers of any religion in their practise of the original teachings find them difficult to follow and inevitably start deviating from such teachings. If we examine the action of the followers of Jesus Christ in the West no exception could be detected. This is why we see much bloodshed and tyranny amongst them.." He said: "What about the teachings of Muḥammad, are they practical today?" I said: "No!" He inquired: "Then what teachings can lead humanity to salvation?" I replied: "The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh!" He mused: "I knew you were a Bahá'í, Muslims cannot argue. Why did you lie and introduce yourself as a Muslim?" I said: "Actually I am Christian too. Bahá'is accept all Manifestations of God and their teachings." In the midst of this, Áqá Muḥammad Afnán entered and said: "It is two thirty in the morning, I was worried about you." At this point we ended our meeting and returned home.

The following day, I met the priest in front of the hospital and greeted him. He said: "There is no need to greet me!" I explained: "I am minding my manners." He went to see a patient and, on his way back I greeted him again. Once more he said: "No need to!"

A few days later, I went to visit Siyyid 'Alí-Aṣghar Sukút. He now resides in Ṭihrán, but at the time, he was one of the Bahá'is of Yazd, who not only worked at the hospital but was also ill and hospitalised. The priest entered the room to pray for the patients and

said: "What is this liar doing here?" I responded: "Ladies and gentlemen, by liar he means me. I have spoken only the truth but he calls me a liar." I turned to him and said: "A believer may lie and later repent, but you who lack faith, what do you do?" He responded: "I lack faith?" I replied: "The Bible says so." He took a copy off the shelf and said: "Where? Show me!" I did not know the exact words of Christ. I said: "I will bring the exact verse tomorrow night, but I know the Bible states that whoever believes in me as much as a mustard seed, he does as I do."

The next day I sent for the Muslims and said: "You delegated me to defend you, but you failed to show up. You must come this evening." At dusk, I grabbed the Bible and along with Kávih, the famous calligrapher, headed to the home of the priest. When we entered, I noticed all Muslims were seated. The priest said: "I do not want you to come in!" I said: "But I am your guest." He retorted: "I do not want any guest!" I replied: "If that is the case, then I do not want you in my hometown of Yazd," and added: "Whatever I have said that may have offended you, please forgive me. Let us review a verse from the Book of Matthew." I opened the Bible to chapter 17 in the Book of Matthew and read the following:

"When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said: "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him." "You unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment. Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

I then addressed the priest saying: "I do not want to complicate matters, I am not ordering a mule to go to the mountain top, just to this table. Please do this so that those present in this room would realise you

are a follower of Christ.” The priest answered: “Even Christ did not do such a thing!” I said: “In that case either you lie, or the Bible, or Christ!” He kept silent so I said: “Never again insult the Prophet. Keep in mind that there are those who will respond to you!”

A few days later I travelled to Shiraz. I saw him on his bike. He saw me and said: “Why are you deep asleep in your vain imaginings?” I replied: “I am wide awake!” He continued: “Does not the Primal Point prophecy say that Him Whom God shall make manifest will appear in 2001? Why did He appear after 19 years? I said: “Why do you critique the teachings of other Faiths when you do not know those of your own? Christ said, the Son of Man will appear at dusk, midnight or dawn. Elsewhere He says, the Son of Man will come like a thief in the night. He also prophesies that the Son of Man will brighten the east and the west. Why did he make three different prophecies?” He replied: “Keep slumbering in ignorance,” and left.

After my return from Shiraz I was visiting ‘Alí-Muḥammad Izádí at his shop, when the priest came and sat on the floor. He said: “I have a request.” I replied: “Please go ahead.” He continued: “I have been ordered by London to buy a collection of Bahá’í books and send it for the church library. I heard you may be able to provide these for me.” I asked: “Do you have a list?” He gave me one, listing more than one hundred volumes, some of which I had never heard of. He told me he would pay whatever the costs may be, as well as whatever fees I may charge. I said: “It is possible to provide these books but as a Christian my Lord Christ has instructed me that His jewels should not be given to pigs. In light of this, I cannot give these books to you!” He said: “Do you mean I am a pig?” I said: “No, but there are those who do not use these books for the right reasons.” He did not discuss the matter any further and left.

Mr. Fanánápadhír, the son of Mírzá Faql’u’lláh Núrí of Isfahan, who resided in Yazd, was our mutual friend. The priest complained about me, so he arranged for us to meet at his home, lavishly hosted us and mediated to re-new our friendship. The priest said: “You have caused me a great deal of suffering.” I said: “I am not too happy about Islam either. In fact, 17 members of my family have been martyred [See

Endnote number 113] *at the hands of Muslims. I have done you a great favour and you should thank me for it because Yazd is full of zealot Muslims, and it is quite possible that they would retaliate against your insults and kill you. So, in reality, I have saved your life.*” He accepted what I said. We kissed and embraced each other. But he never accepted the Faith. In the words of Sa’di:

What use is there in preaching a black heart?

An iron nail cannot penetrate a rock

Chapter Four

Amazing Accounts

1. **Famine and the mention of the name of the Most Exalted Point**

Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) has written about a few amazing stories. The first one appears below:

“In 1314 (1935 AD), along with Ḥusayn-‘Alí Ittiḥádí, Ḥájí Asadu’lláh Dhabíhian and Ḥusayn Sá‘í, I visited the House of the Báb in Shiraz. This pilgrimage lasted ten days. Every day, Ḥájí Mirzá Buzurg Afnán showered us with great love and attention. The morning after we arrived in Shiraz, we went for a stroll. Suddenly my gaze fell on a mechanics shop. I approached the shop and stood there in reverence watching the owner. It was Mirzá Faḍlu’lláh Khan Ra’uḫfán, one of the Bahá’ís of Isfahan. He came out of the shop and asked where I was from? I said: “Yazd,” and he asked: “Have you come on pilgrimage?” I replied: “Yes.” He held me in his warm embrace, kissed my face, showered me with much affection and invited me to his home for dinner. However, out of prudence, I did not accept the dinner invitation, instead I visited him daily at his house or elsewhere. He later visited me in Yazd, which further strengthened our bonds of friendship.

During Riḍván in 1318 (1939), eighteen other Bahá’ís of Yazd and myself, returned to the Holy House. On the afternoon we arrived in Shiraz, one of the friends accompanied me to visit Mirzá Faḍl’u’lláh at his shop. He invited me to dinner. I told him there were 18 of us and that I could not come alone. He said: “You are all invited,” and immediately got on his bicycle to go to his home. On his return he said: “I arranged food for all of us.” I replied: “Let me consult my companions.” It was then decided that we visit the Holy House the next day, then afterwards go to his shop so that he could directly invite everyone. We did as planned, however, he also invited another group of pilgrims, bringing the total number of guests to eighty. Our friendship grew stronger by the day and consequently every time I

visited Shiraz after that, he was the first person I would visit. And when my wife went to Shiraz sometime later, Mr. Ra'úfiyán invited 100 guests in her honor.

I heard many amazing accounts about this great man and wanted to discuss them with him, but never got the chance to; until finally the National Assembly commissioned me to visit the friends in Nayriz. As soon as I arrived in Shiraz, I went to visit Mr. Sálíkiyán at his shop and also saw Mírzá Ḥasan Núsh-Ábádi,⁹⁴ the great teacher of the Cause who mentioned that Mr. Ra'úfiyán had a fireside at his home that evening and for me to join them. I accepted this invitation and it was a wonderful fireside; during which I learned a great deal from Mr. Ra'ufian and Mr. Núsh-Ábádi. The following day, I was sitting at Mr. Sálíkiyán's shop when Mr. Ra'úfiyán entered. I took advantage of the encounter and said: "I have heard a great deal about you from people, however I want to verify some things with you." He said: "They are not worth repeating." I appreciated his humility and insisted on hearing it directly from him. He agreed to share one or two experiences:



Illustration 29: At the House of the Báb in Shiraz

“In 1334 A.H. (1915 AD), in the midst of WWI, I accepted the Faith. Famine affected the whole country, particularly Isfahan. At the time, I had a small bicycle shop there. One morning on my way to work, I saw a crowd gathered around a dead mule, fighting over its flesh and bones. A little further along, I saw a man had lit a fire to roast a lamb’s shoulder bone. A bit further, I came to a cotton de-seeding workshop where a laborer was turning the wheel with great difficulty. Suddenly, he stopped, bile flowed from his mouth and he passed away. These three events affected me so deeply that I decided to spend the night at my shop and recite the verse, God sufficeth all things 334 times. The following afternoon Jináb-i Mírzá Faḍl’u’lláh Núrí, the father of Mr. Fanánápadhír came to my shop. We spoke for a short time and then he left. I went for a bath, I put on clean clothes and returned to work. That evening when there were no more shoppers around, I locked the shop from the inside and recited the same verse 150 times. Suddenly I saw a noble man enter the shop without unlocking the door. He instructed me to take the hand of a newborn child that was tied to a rope. I refused, saying: “No, I won’t take his hand!” He then said: “Then do not pray!” And left, without opening the door. Then my maternal aunt’s husband, who had passed away in Mashhad three years earlier, appeared and asked: “Did you recognize him?” I told him I did not, to which he replied: “that was Bahá’u’lláh, why do you dare chant this verse?” He too left, without opening or closing the shop door.

I was so afraid that I almost passed out. Shocked and overcome with emotions, I ran into the street. I wanted to shout out to everyone. but except for a guard, no one was around. I returned to my shop and remained sleepless until dawn, begging God’s forgiveness. At the break of day, Mírzá Faḍl’u’lláh Núrí brought a few papers to me. He said: “You have changed since yesterday. What has happened?” Tearfully, I described what had come to pass. He said: “Who are you to decide what must happen? God knows best.” He then turned to a page of the newspaper and showed me the images of the seven martyrs in Arák.⁹⁵ One of the photos showed a child who at the time of his beheading, had

raised his arms up. It was the same hand that the Blessed Beauty had shown me the night before and I refused to take."

2. Mírzá Muḥammad Mushrif

Mr. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues with his stories:

"The second one, is an exciting and unforgettable account: "The Master had ascended to the Abhá Kingdom, but no news of His Will had reached Iran yet. The community of the Greatest Name did not know who to turn to. One night I saw in a dream that I had passed on and was accompanied by people who had wings to a judgement. One of the judges asked: "Have you lied?" I said: "Yes." Then he asked: "Lies that harm the Cause?" I told him I did not know. He instructed me to open my mouth! Then he had my face cut from the corner of my lips to my earlobes, and the arteries in my throat opened; then everything was stitched back together again. Despite all this, I felt no pain. I went to another office where I saw Mírzá Mihdí Akhavan'us-Şafá.⁹⁶ The judge inquired how much I had borrowed from Mr. Akhavan'us-Şafá and I told him, two qiran (pennies), to which he replied: "No, 14 qiran!" I then responded: "If Mírzá, who is present, confirms that it was 14 qiran then that is correct." To which he replied: "I just wanted to test you."

When I arrived at the third office, I saw the beloved Master with two Siyyids standing on either side of him. I commented that I knew 'Abdu'l-Bahá but did not know the other two men. I was then informed that they were the King and the Beloved of Martyrs. When I approached the Master, He said: "Is that Áqá Faḍl'u'lláh?" I replied: "Yes," and the Master responded: "He has done well, let him go!" I said: "O' beloved Master, I cannot walk." The Master then ordered that I be taken in a carriage.

While waiting for the carriage, I saw a crowd gathering around. I inquired who they were and was told they were awaiting their judgement, to see where they would end up. The carriage arrived. We were asked: "Is Mírzá Muḥammad Mushrif here?" The Master said:

“Yes” and pointed to an entrance, saying: “Open the door and let them in!” When the door was opened, I saw flames of fire reaching up to the sky. Mirzá Muḥammad and his companions were sent in and I was placed in the carriage. I asked why there were six horses and was told, it was the Master’s orders. Just as I reached home, I woke up from my dream, delighted that the Master was happy with me.

I decided to get to know Mirzá Muḥammad Mushrif who was sent into the room burning with fire. I went to visit one of the friends and inquired who Mirzá Muḥammad Mushrif was? He told me that Mirzá was one of the steadfast servants of the Cause, who along with his son, Mirzá Asadu’lláh, had attained the presence of the beloved Master and remained faithful to the Covenant. I was surprised and wondered, what my dream was all about and what could be his claims? I asked for his address and went to meet him. Unfortunately, I found out that he was ill and hospitalized, so I went to visit him at the Mursalin Hospital. He was wearing his cloak and resting in his bed, looking not too ill. We greeted each other and he asked: “Are you a Bahá’i?” I told him I was, to which he replied: “Then chant a prayer.” I did so with utmost lowliness and humility. Mirzá said: “Please come over every day and pray.”

So, every day I would go over to the hospital and offer prayers. One day, Master Bahman, the head of Payman Company, came to visit Mirzá Muḥammad. I knew him. We greeted each other and I carried on with praying as always and then remained seated to listen to their conversation. Mirzá Muḥammad asked: “What Bahá’i news?” To which Master Bahman replied: “The Master’s Will has arrived.” On hearing this I inquired what it said and if he had a copy with him. He said: “Yes,” and handed it over to Mirzá Muḥammad, and told me: “Shoghi Effendi, the grandson of the Master is now the Guardian of the Faith.”

Mirzá Muḥammad Mushrif read a few lines of the Will and asked Master Bahman, what he thought about the document? He replied: “I have nothing to say. Our Master has expressed His Will and we are to follow as the servants.” Mirzá Muḥammad then turned to me and asked my opinion. I said: “He is the grandson of the Master and a

descendant of the Afnán's. Even if the Master had appointed the cane of Master Bahman as His successor, I would follow!" Mirzá Muḥammad folded the Will and said: "Master Bahman, I attained the presence of the Master along with my son. He showered us with his love. His grandson was a child at the time, and he is a mere youth now. I do not trust my life and possessions with a youth!" Just as he handed the Will back to Master Bahman, he suffered a stroke and died on the spot! I thought to myself, thank God my dream was a true vision. This is how the Devil intervened to prevent him from becoming a true servant in the last moment of his life."

Mr. Ra'úfiyán was a true lover who in the early days of his life as a Bahá'í travelled to Baghdad to visit the Master but did not reach his destination to attain His presence. Regardless, his home was the scene of many firesides and teaching efforts that have greatly advanced the Cause in Shiraz. He repaired car batteries. Among drivers he was known as Faql'u'lláh Bábí. When they would come to his shop for repairs, he would have his assistants carry out the work while he taught them the Faith. Whenever he found a receptive soul, he would complete the repairs the following day, so that he could host a fireside for the driver at his home that evening. He would host them as often as necessary and tell them: "Whenever you visit Shiraz, remember my home!" If the driver would not show too much interest in the Faith, he would ask: "Do you like money?" They would say yes, and he would reply: "I know a few prayers, which if you learn to recite, you will become rich." He would then write down the verses of Mustagháth, Subbúhun Quddúsun and visitation revealed by the Báb and instruct them to recite it daily. I pray the grace and blessings of the Almighty continue to shower these sincere, generous and courageous servants so that they continue to succeed to serve the Cause.

3. Jamál Burújirdí

Mr. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues with his stories. This is his recollection about one of the teachers of the Cause during the time of Bahá'u'lláh, Who called him Ism'ullah-Jamal (The name of God, Beauty). Bahá'u'lláh treated him with dignity but he squarely misunderstood it; and felt that he had certain spiritual power and qualities which became the cause of his downfall during the time of

the Master. The end of his life was regrettably very sad. Believers shunned and despised him, so did the society at large; he became a beggar in the streets of Tihrán at the end of his life. There is much to learn from Jamal's arrogance and his life story. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhábíhí writes:

“The life history of my father, Hájí Husayn son of Báqir, who was given the title of Sham‘ush-Shuhadá (Torch of Martyrs), is included in the ‘History of the Martyrs of Yazd’ authored by Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmirí, Abu’l-Qásim Baydá and Muḥammad-‘Alí Malik-Khusraví. This martyr of the Cause was the carrier of messages exchanged between the friends in Yazd and their Beloved in the Holy Land. After his martyrdom, some 260 envelopes containing letters carrying the seal of the Master were recovered. All letters were sent to the Bahá’í National Assembly in Tihrán. Some of these were used by Mr. Malik Khusraví in ‘Iqlim-i-Nur’ and the ‘Martyrs of Iran’ books. According to him, all the correspondence were rare and of historical value. One such letter was penned by Hájí Siyyid Javád Surush⁹⁷ in response to my sharing the news of Jamál Burújirdí⁹⁸ breaking the Covenant. I had the said letter in my possession and was keen to offer it to the Guardian. I was looking for a way to do this when Mr. Mulaví, one of our relatives, came to my home to let me know he was leaving for the Holy Land. I sent the letter with him. I have no news of its whereabouts.

When I went to visit the Guardian’s resting-place in London, I decided to take advantage of my time in Europe and went to see Mr. Mulaví, who was pioneering in Belgium, to inquire about the letter. However, he was away at the time.

One day at the home of Jináb-i Ḥaydar-‘Alí,⁹⁹ in Yazd, I met Jináb-i Mírzá Qábil Ábádihiyí¹⁰⁰. He was a famous teacher of the Cause and the recipient of many tablets issued by the Master. I mentioned the letter in our conversation. He said: “‘Alaviyyih Khánúm, the widow of the martyr, Mullá ‘Alí Ján,¹⁰¹ known as ‘Alí-u’l-‘Alí, was also on pilgrimage at the same time as I. One day when we both attained the presence of the Master, she sought permission to share some details about the pride and ego of Jamál Burújirdí and

the Master agreed.” She had said that her home was a place regularly visited by the pioneers and friends travelling through and Jamál Burújirdí was often amongst them. His ego was always obvious but as he was the recipient of the Master’s love, she tolerated him. One day as she was pacing in the yard, Jamál, who was seated inside, called her. When she entered the room, she saw that he had put on special clothes to look similar to the Blessed Beauty. He would move with his headwear back and forth in movements similar to those of Bahá’u’lláh. He asked her: ‘Alaviyyih Khánum, is there any difference between me and the Blessed Beauty?’ This question upset her so much that she left the room. After hearing her experience,, the Master smiled and narrated a famous story to ‘Alaviyyih Khánum, then He connected that story to the life of Jamál Burújirdí. This is the end of the story of ‘Alaviyyih Khánum as was shared by Mírzá Qábil, a famous teacher of the Cause.

I heard the following from Jináb-i Nayyir Humáyún in Kashan. As we were good friends, I had seen him in Yazd and Sirjan. But in 1921, when the Master ascended to the Abhá Kingdom, I saw him at the Kashan travelers’ lodge. That night we spoke about a range of topics, including Jamál Burujirdi breaking the Covenant. I shared what I had heard and read in the letter to my father. Jináb-i Humáyún said: “Much like a father who guides his son, I cared for him in Tíhrán. Shortly after the ascension of the Blessed Beauty he began to insist we must say Alláh ’u’-A’ẓam and not Alláh ’u’Abhá.”

Another account I heard was from a teacher of the Cause, Mírzá Áqá Raḥmání Sangsari. He said: “One day Jamál Burújirdí came to Shahríráz. I met him at the home of my maternal uncle, one of the survivors of Mazandaran fortress. Hearing Jamál’s words greatly saddened me. When he left, I asked my uncle with such deep faith and knowledge, how could you tolerate listening to him utter such nonsense and not say a word? He told me people like Jamál are the kind of clerics who corrupt the Cause. We must leave them to their own devices while we carry on our services.”

One evening, myself and Lutfu’lláh Khán Muwhibat (a faithful servant of the Covenant and recipient of many tablets, who also worked

as an illuminator of the Holy Writings) were riding in a horse-drawn carriage along with his son. In those days, carriages provided transportation from the Guard Machine neighborhood to the intersection of Ḥasan-Ábád. When we reached Chirágh-Gáz street, now known as Amír-Kabír, the carriage stopped to let a few passengers get on and off. An old man appeared, wearing a torn cloak. He was carrying a cane and approached the carriage saying: "I am old, blind and helpless, have mercy on me." Jináb-i Muwhibat gave him ten Shahi's (equivalent to half a qiran) and said: "Oh old man, I hope you have worse days ahead." I asked who he was and Jináb-i Muwhibat said: "My father, Jamál Burújirdí!" I was at once both sorry and alarmed and prayed: Dear God, protect your servants to the last breath. Suffering in absolute misery and poverty, he finally passed away near the old ruins around Ṭihrán's Telegraph Office. One of the kind Bahá'ís went to his death bed to give him a last chance to repent, saying: "You were so favored during the days of the Blessed Beauty and attained such high station, why did you break the Covenant during the Master's ministry to bring yourself to this state? You still have a chance to remedy this deficit and seek refuge at the Holy Threshold so that you may be forgiven." He replied: "Once I am better, I will share some experiences with you." But it was too late and three days later he passed away, to reach the eternal depths of misery.

I mentioned this because we must always remain vigilant and mindful. We must beg God that His mercy and grace may surround the friends until their very last breath. The Covenant is of utmost importance. Many souls stray far from it at the end of their lives and condemn their soul to eternal damnation. Outstanding believers, including Ḥájí Amín, remained ever mindful of the power of the Covenant, and feared tests of faith. During his last days, he submitted a letter to the Master requesting: "I am old and my days are numbered. I beg the Almighty to protect me from the Insistent Self." The Master replied that 'Abdu'l-Bahá beseeches the Almighty for the same bounty.

*If God is not pleased with His servants
Not all humanity's intercession will be relevant*

4. Surveying personal residences

Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues with his stories:

During the first days of the Registry Office in Yazd, the government issued an order and assigned a few surveyors to register boundaries to personal properties. Mr. Islam was one such officer. He was an extremist Shaykhí from Ná’ín. Whenever he found a Bahá’í home, he would harass the residents. Due to his position, they had no choice but to refrain from any response.

One afternoon news reached us that the surveyor had come to register the boundaries. When I met the officer, Mírzá Muḥammad, he greeted me saying: “It’s late now, I will return tomorrow morning.” The next morning, I was ready to receive him. When he entered, he inspected all parts of our property and when we were standing on the roof he said: “Please allow me to settle your account now.” I replied: “Let’s sit inside.” He responded: “Are you a Bahá’í?” I confirmed that I was. He said: “Your neighbor told me yesterday that he lives next door to Mr. Zabihi, and I asked what he thought of you? He told me that you were a strong Bahá’í.” I then said: “It is true, I am a Bahá’í but not so well-known. If you have the time, we could speak together.” He accepted and so I began with the following verse by Farahmand Muqbilin (Ilhám):

Midst ocean waves you leave me bounded

Then demand vigilance to keep aloft and dry

Then I continued: “I may be known as a Bahá’í by others, but before my Master I feel inadequate, as I do not act as one.” He replied: “Whomever is a Bahá’í but denies it, lacks intelligence.” At this point Mr. Islam arrived. I received him warmly and offered him tea and pomegranate.



Illustration 30: Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí and his Sons, Ḥabíb and Adíb with Mr. Zabihi

While eating, he noticed a book and inquired if I was a scholar? I told him that I was not. He continued: "Then what is that book?" I replied: "It is a Bahá'í book." He pressed: "What is Bahá'í?" I said: "Bahá'í means Bahá'í." He asked: "May I study this book?" I picked up the book and gave it to him. He looked at it and exclaimed: "Look at this nonsense!" On hearing these words, I grabbed the book from him, saying: "This is not nonsense, it is the Word of God." He replied: "What a fool!" I retorted: "I am not a fool; it is you who calls the Words of God nonsense!" He put his plate down and ran into the street shouting: "Why don't you murder this dog? He openly declares he is a Bahá'í." Regardless of their prejudices, our neighbors said: "We know, but they do us no harm, and respect our women and children."

On hearing these words, he left and took Mirzá Muḥammad along with him. The next day I described this incident for Mr. Muḥammad-Ḥasan Akhavan'uṣ-Ṣafá and added: "I want to file a complaint at the Islamic court." He advised: "You have already dealt with him accordingly, why do you want to file a complaint? In

addition, that is *Mirzá Muḥammad Khudábandih*, a Bahá'í from Isfahan. He used to be a teacher of the Cause, but now in light of certain considerations, he does not attend Bahá'í activities."

That afternoon on my way home I saw Mr. Islam standing at the entrance to our alley. In order to avoid any conflict, I waited to see whether he would leave. He did not. When he saw me, he said: "Mr. Zabihi, I have to inspect your neighbor's home, you need to come along." Relying on God's protection, I went and took one of my sons with me.

He asked me: "How many children do you have?" I told him four or five. He inquired: "Who takes care of their expenses?" I replied: "The One who provides for all creatures." With every step, he repeated: "O Lords of Time! O Sign of the Age! Provide the means." We entered the house of our neighbor, Mr. Mutivvalí, who received us with kindness and invited us to have breakfast on the roof. He was a Muslim, but in response to Islami's mantras, he whispered profanities. He pointed to a thin woman working on the roof and said: "She may seem smaller in stature than a child, but she has borne nine children." Islam asked: "Are they all Muslims?" Mr. Mutivallí said: "Yes, they are." Islam said: "May God increase their numbers." He then turned to me and said: "What is your house number?" Since it had just been assigned, I did not remember. In response to this he said: "How could a man who does not know his own house number, know anything about religion?" I exclaimed: "Pardon me but so far no one's property was assigned a number, so you mean they had no faith either?"

When he was finished his task, Mr. Mutivallí told me: "You must stay and talk to Islam so he learns who is right." I said: "I do not want to cause havoc in your home," but he insisted. Then Islam said: "Zabihi, don't leave, I want to talk to you." I replied: "But I don't want to talk to you!" He asked why and I explained: "Despite the fact that you entered my home with no permission and I received you warmly, you insulted the sacred writings that are more precious to me than my own life, calling them nonsense." He replied: "That's in the past already. Now, are you really a Bahá'í?" I clarified that I was

most definitely a Bahá'í. He said: "Do you declare yourself as one everywhere?" I said: "Everyone knows me as one." He said: "What if someone asks you?" I said: "Who?" He continued: "Someone at the mosque or at a Rawḍih Khaní?" I told him: "I do not frequent such places because one day when the son of Mirzá Sayḥún Ḥakím warmly invited me and a friend to a Rawḍih Khaní at his home, we saw them rinse 18 cups in our presence to cleanse it from our impurities. So, we noted we were not welcome at their Rawḍih Khaní, and so we remain deprived of such bounties."

A number of the locals were there listening to these exchanges. They divided into two groups. Some commented that it was a praiseworthy act to rinse the cups, while the other group disagreed. Mr. Islam said: "You lie, you do not bear any love for the martyred Imam Ḥusayn." I responded: "I have never lied to you, but all that you utter is nothing but lies. We have a tablet of Visitation that Bahá'u'lláh has revealed in honor of Imam Ḥusayn. I will offer you a copy so that you see for yourself the exalted station he occupies among the Bahá'ís."

At this juncture, Mirzá Muḥammad entered the room. Islam said: "Now I really want to talk." I suggested that we set aside all prejudice and enmity so that we could have a proper discussion. Mirzá Muḥammad Khudábandih said: "Love blinds us." I asked: "What do you mean?" He explained: "Jewish leaders are so inebriated with Judaism that they have ignored Christ and Muḥammad. The love for Moses gave rise to animosity towards Jesus and Muḥammad. If they were just, they would have investigated the truth and come to view all religions as one." Our conversation lasted until 8 pm.

Mr. Islam said: "I have debated with and debunked Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmíri's arguments." I asked: "Just like you have with me?" Mr. Mutivallí added: "Mr. Islam, Zabihi is who he is. We like him. You may debate with him anytime you wish." I echoed: "Anytime."

When we left the house, Mr. Islam said: "Give me the Tablet of Visitation that you mentioned." I said: "I will do as I promised. You too promised to continue our exchanges, so you must come again."

However, he never did. I saw him once while walking down the street. As soon as he saw me, he hid behind a wall. I never heard from him, until one day when I was invited by the Office of Registry to meet with them at Maryam-Ábád desert.

The night before that meeting I had a dream. I was in a desert where a crowd had gathered. There was a bloodthirsty wolf, but it did not attack me, even though I was afraid of it. The next morning when we went to Maryam-Ábád, I saw Mr. Islam among a crowd. He asked me: "Do you represent Siyyid 'Alí Kámravá?" I said: "Yes." He continued: "Which part of the land belongs to him?" I answered: "I do not know, but you can determine based on the numbers assigned." That was the last time I saw him.

An iron nail cannot penetrate a rock!

5. Declaration after second marriage

Mr. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) continues with his stories:

Around 1345 in the Solar calendar (1966 AD), Mr. Núrbakhsh, a Bakhtiyári, found a piece of paper among his father's documents. He showed it to a Bahá'í and came to realize that his father was a believer. The piece of paper was his declaration card. A representative of the National Assembly asked Mr. Núrbakhsh if there were any Bahá'ís in his locality and when he indicated that he didn't know, the assembly member asked if he would welcome a visit from a Bahá'í to which Mr. Núrbakhsh replied: "By all means."

The National Assembly, with the assistance of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Isfahan, decided to send me to the Bakhtiyári regions.¹⁰² I gladly began my journey towards the Shahr-i Kurd and sent a message that the guest they were awaiting had arrived. It was not long before Mr. Núrbakhsh came to the town to meet me and with much joy told me that he had come to take me to the Bakhtiyár area, saying: "You are my guest". He purchased two tickets and we headed to Bakhtiyári. As he refused to let me pay for

my bus ticket, I refrained from having dinner on the way to ensure I did not further impose on him.

It was 28 Šafar (June 18th) when we arrived in the settlement of Núrbaḵḥsh. The local tradition was that they would mourn sitting under trees on the outskirts of the village. The village elders, as a means to prevent trees from being cut down in the area, told people that this was a tradition which saints of the past had followed. After that, the trees were considered holy and were used by the locals as their places of entertainment.

That night Mr. Núrbaḵḥsh invited 30 guests for dinner. The next day he announced: "I have pledged to sacrifice a lamb under one of the trees and arrange a feast for the locals." He invited me to go to the desert also, however I declined as I felt it was wise for me to remain at his home. That evening, he invited 30 more guests for dinner and the following day, the niece of the Commander-in-Chief who was now a frail woman; invited me to dine at her home. While there, I talked about the Bahá'í Faith. She accepted the Cause, however since she smoked opium, it was decided to register her as a Bahá'í after she gave up the habit.

The next day I went to Shahr-i Kurd¹⁰³ and told the local Bahá'is that much hardship had been put on Mr. Núrbaḵḥsh. He had missed out on his work and spent a great deal of money. As a result, the Local Assembly in Isfahan learned of this and sent him two sets of duvets.

The following autumn I returned to the Bakhtiyári mountains and this time spent nine days at the home of Mr. Núrbaḵḥsh. During my stay teaching continued unabated. By the time I left seven souls had accepted the Faith. One person however did not declare. I inquired as to the reason and he said: "Because I do not love my wife and I want to remarry. As the Bahá'í Faith does not allow multiple wives, I will declare after I have remarried so that I do not lose my voting rights."

The weather on the day of our departure was awful. The road was covered by the snow and we were told we could not travel. I asked if there were any other options and was told there were, but they were exceedingly difficult. A few years ago twelve travelers had lost their

lives. I had no choice but to extend my stay by one more night and travel by horse. This gave me the opportunity to share the Faith with the brother-in-law of Mr. Núrbakhsh. At the outset, he was not too keen but gradually he was pleased. Unbeknown to me he spent the night in my room. I came to know this, when in the morning I performed my obligatory prayer, he removed his duvet and said: "May it be accepted!"

Despite the cold weather we went to see the holy trees together. I asked about the significance of the rocks arranged around the trees and he explained that it was a shrine. I then asked what he thought about what I had shared with him the previous night? He answered: "In all fairness, you are right, but on the other hand I could also say that those who come here in the name of clerics and rob the masses in the name of God, are also right."

We walked together for about seven or eight hours. By the time we reached Chúnih Qum, we were exhausted. At the same time, we were happy to reach this place, with more than 14,000 residents. We tried to find somewhere to stay overnight however, we were told there was nothing available, not even a teahouse. With much persistence though, we managed to sleep at a traditional restaurant. Unfortunately, there were no blankets or any means for us to keep warm. Therefore, we spent all night in prayer, until the morning, when Áqá Şádiq, our guide, came and started a fire so we could warm up.

While standing in the restaurant I suddenly noticed a man pushing a jeep. The vehicle had neither doors nor windows and would not start. I approached him and asked if he would drive us to Shahr-i-Kurd? He said: "The road conditions are unsafe, and I cannot guarantee anyone's safety." However, we insisted and eventually he agreed to take us. The journey was arduous, but we managed to reach our destination by noon. On arrival, I went to the Bahá'í center and rested for three days in order to recover from the journey.

The night we had slept at the restaurant, our guide had mentioned that the locals were prejudice against the Faith, and no teaching should take place. However, later when he discovered that the restaurant owner had not given us anything to keep us warm, he became quite angry. After

our departure, the locals told the owner that since two Bahá'ís had stayed there, his restaurant was now unclean. Subsequently the poor man had to spend 28,000 Tumans, more than double the 12,000 Tumans we had paid him, to repair and repaint!

6. Ḥusayn Dhabíhí (Zabihi)

The amazing stories expressed by my father finishes here and it would be proper to share a story about another member of my family. Mr. Abu'l-Faḍl Rahmání,¹⁰⁴ one of the Bahá'ís living in Houston, USA, shared the following memory of Ḥusayn, my brother:

“After a month of stay (November 1995), I travelled to the UK to visit the resting-place of the beloved Guardian, and my brother, Hádí Rahmání. As usual, dear Ḥusayn had made all the arrangements for my stay. The last day, 22 December 1995, he picked me up from my brother's house and drove me to his own loving home so that I could spend the night and be driven to the airport at 5 am the next day. Ḥusayn's kindness always put me to shame.

One night he told his wife and children, that he was a Bahá'í because of me. The late Dr. Dávudí,¹⁰⁵ used to say this also. When Ḥusayn began attending Bahá'í activities, Dr. Dávudí would say: “It is because of Rahmání that Ḥusayn is with us.” He would say this regardless of how many times I insisted that it is a sin to say that - as according to Bahá'u'lláh, faith is a Divine gift that God bestows on His servants. That being said, in truth it was because Ḥusayn had parents who were among the most spiritual teachers of the Cause.

However, the situation was such that Ḥusayn was unable to attend Bahá'í events because for years he was busy working as a truck driver which took him often to very remote parts of the country. Similarly, this continued even after he formed the Aṭlasir Company in Ṭíhrán with Mr. Jumihrí. In this capacity he once again had to go far and wide, installing communication and electrical towers. Around this time Ḥusayn and I were friends and lived in the same neighborhood called Amír-Ábád.

One day Ḥusayn passed our home on his way to work. He saw me standing on the balcony and called out: "How are you?" I answered: "Well." Ḥusayn asked if I was going somewhere? I told him I had to deliver mail to Mr. Abu'l-Qásim Faiḍi(Faizi), on behalf of my brother who received all his mail at his work, Naw-Nahálán Company ¹⁰⁶. As I did not have a car, I was taking a taxi to the home of his niece, Qudsiyyih Khánum, the wife of Mr. Fayḍ'u'lláh Mahjúr. Ḥusayn said: "I know it's been 43 years that you have been friends with Mr. Faiḍi (Faizi), but I am not interested in seeing him nor Kháḍi' or the rest of them. Regardless, I will take you to his place. However, promise not to tell him that I brought you. Bring the mail!" As we often would joke together, I told him to get lost and got into his car. When we arrived, I got out of the car and entered the house while Ḥusayn waited in the shade of a tree. On seeing Mr. Faiḍi(Faizi), I noticed he was not his usual self. He suffered from diabetes, so jokingly I said: "Do you allow your mailman to leave?" He smiled and said: "Let's have lunch together." I declined however, explaining that I was in a hurry. He inquired why and I told him that someone was waiting to drive me back home. Mr. Faizi asked who he was, and I explained that he was not someone he was acquainted with. Mr. Faizi went on to ask the person's name and I divulged it was Ḥusayn Dhabiḥi (Zabihi). He asked: "Which Zabihi? Do you mean the son of 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, the teacher of the Cause?" I said: "The one and the same." Mr. Faizi exclaimed: "Then let me come and offer my greetings to his wonderful father." When I reached the gate, Ḥusayn gave me an angry look as if to say, why did you say I was here!



Illustration 31: Mr. and Mrs. Ross Garcia with ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) in Oldenburg, Germany

Mr. Faizi embraced Ḥusayn and stared deep into his eyes. After a few moments he inquired about his dear father and Ḥusayn told him that he was well but had gone to Mazandaran. We bade each other farewell and left. Ḥusayn did not talk to me until we reached my home. Begrudgingly, he said goodbye and then left. I assumed he would never talk to me again.

The next morning, I awoke at dawn to carry out my duties. I heard the doorbell’s ring and hurried to the door to avoid waking up the children. It was Ḥusayn. He came up the steps crying and kept kissing me. I became worried and asked him what was wrong? Finally, he said: “Nothing is wrong. Yesterday I was upset with you for taking me to Mr. Faizi but last night after having dinner with my family, I went straight to bed and dreamed that I was at your home. We were standing right here with Mr. Faizi dressed in beautiful clothes. I asked, where did these fine clothes come from and you told me that they belonged to the Guardian and he had given them to Mr. Fazi. I woke up feeling such joy that I had to come and share my dream with you. First of all, I feel you were upset with me yesterday. Please forgive me. As of right now I am at your service. Whenever you have any needs I am at your disposal.” I prepared some breakfast for us and later shared

this experience with the Amír-Ábád Assembly, informing them that Ḥusayn has become a new man. Ḥusayn became a highly active Bahá'í and also a member of the local pioneering committee.

Allow me to share more details; The Amír-Ábád Assembly decided to form several assemblies along the path of the Blessed Beauty's travels throughout the province of Mazandaran; namely, Maḥmúd-Ábád, Sa'adat-Ábád, Salúdiḥ (Núr), Dárkalá, and Tákur (Núr). After much effort, all assemblies were formed. I should share with you in confidence that even though Ḥusayn had no money, he would borrow large sums and assist pioneers to purchase brick or cement factories. We used to spend every Thursday driving up north to visit and strengthen the newly formed assemblies. When we did not have enough believers in Tákur to form an assembly, we had to draw on Mr. 'Abdu'l-Vaḥháb Dhabíḥi (Zabihi), who knew the relatives of the Master living in the area; Nízam and Ḥamíd Awrangí who travelled through these regions on a regular basis. In addition, we needed Mrs. Ghaffári, however as she could not take part in the elections for personal reasons, this led to the honor of my election to the Assembly of Tákur in Núr. Fortunately, her circumstances improved, and she was able to move back to Tákur, so I returned to Tihrán.

On my return, Mr. Jalál Asásí came to see me, saying that he had been looking for me over the past three days. He said that I had been elected to the Amír-Ábád Assembly and must attend their meeting that evening. On hearing this, I resigned from the Tákur Assembly before joining the Assembly of Amír-Ábád."

Chapter 5

Memories of Mr. Zabihi

1. Spirit of Sacrifice

His approach to living life and his dealings with others have left us with many memories, a few of which will be shared here. The best advice Mr. Zabihi would offer his children and friends was that: If your major objective in life is to achieve fame, wealth, scholarship, etc., you should pursue it while serving the Cause and with absolute adherence to the teachings of the Cause.

One night at a Yazd Assembly meeting he got into an argument with a fellow member, Mr. Yigáníh, which resulted in both being terribly upset. On his return home he remembered the words of the Blessed Beauty, to the effect that if a person is upset with someone else, it is best to resolve it before retiring for the night. He then decided to not sleep and to pray instead. The next morning, before dawn, he left home to go to Mr. Yigáníh's house in order to resolve their dispute. On his way there he ran into Mr. Yigáníh, who had also come to the same conclusion. They embraced each other and the matter was laid to rest.

When the Guardian instructed the Yazd Assembly to gather statistics on the believers in the surrounding villages, the Assembly consulted as to whom must carry out the task. Everyone had an excuse, so as a result my father was assigned to it. However, he refused to receive financial assistance and opted instead to let the Assembly know if he incurred expenses. After 2-3 months he returned with the list, as well as an inventory of his expenses, totaling three Tumans; all of which was spent on books that the Assembly wanted to send to one of the villages. When the members inquired about his own expenses he responded: "I am the Guardian's servant so I will invoice him!" However, the following day he made an appointment with Dr. Afnán at his office regarding wounds and infectious blisters on his legs and feet. This was due to the fact that lacking the funds for transportation, he had walked from village to village instead of imposing on the funds of the Faith.

Mr. Hishmatu'lláh Mushrifzádi, one of the Bahá'ís living in Canada, shared a memory from his childhood growing up in Kerman, when my father was pioneering in Bam. My father formed children's classes in the neighboring communities and would travel every four weeks to each class to manage their development and assign them specific tasks, to be carried out before his next visit. On one such occasion he assigned them to learn about the most important preparation for travel teaching trips. The students began to research but found no answer. They inquired from their elders, which led to a commotion among the Bahá'ís in Kerman. Four weeks passed after which they provided their responses, these included: superior knowledge, financial resources, public speaking skills, and so on. My father approved of all of them, then proceeded to take out some papers, in his own handwriting, which contained a Tablet of the Master as follows: ¹⁰⁷

“O thou who art turning thy face towards God! Close thine eyes to all things else, and open them to the realm of the All-Glorious. Ask whatsoever thou wishest of Him alone; seek whatsoever thou seekest from Him alone. With a look He granteth a hundred thousand hopes, with a glance He healeth a hundred thousand incurable ills, with a nod He layeth balm on every wound, with a glimpse He freeth the hearts from the shackles of grief. He doeth as He doeth, and what recourse have we? He carrieth out His Will, He ordaineth what He pleaseth. Then better for thee to bow down thy head in submission, and put thy trust in the All-Merciful Lord” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá)



Illustration 32: Hand of the Cause of God, Dr. Giachery and his wife during their first visit to Iran. The first from the right is the martyr of the Cause, Dr. Dávudí.

Mr. Mushrifzádih would say that: *“This Tablet was not only my sole resource during travelling teaching trips, but also all other affairs throughout my entire life.”*

Another such memory was shared by Mrs. Saná’yi, a Bahá’í residing in Bábulzar:

“During one of his teaching trips, Mr. Zabihi went to one of the poorer areas of Khúzistán, where the friends did not have much money. They lived on wheat. In order to not impose on anyone, he told them his diet required him to eat wheat and so during his stay that was all he ate. He then headed to Ahváz. One of the friends sent a sack of wheat to Ahváz and informed the Bahá’ís that Mr. Zabihi must only eat wheat! Mr. Zabihi explained to the friends that because of the situation in the other village he had limited his diet to wheat; but in Ahváz he could eat meat also.”

On another occasion in the Holy Land, I met Mrs. Victory, who along with her husband, was serving there at the time. They now reside in Canada. She shared many memories of my father. One of them, if I remember correctly, is as follows:

“In one of the subsidiaries in Mazandaran, my family was informed of the arrival of a travel teacher. I immediately headed to the home where this person was residing, however I did not see any newcomers among the visitors. The host informed me that he was busy in the yard. I told him that I did not see any travel teacher there, just an old man who was busy washing his clothes. The host said: “That is him.” This first encounter of mine with this man of extraordinary simplicity, contentment, and humility, had such an impact on me that it led to a lifetime of friendship with this kind friend, compassionate father and knowledgeable mentor. As it so happened, the day after this encounter I went to see the head of a government office to investigate a critical matter. I felt concerned and unable to go alone. I spent days praying about it however found no solution. I shared this matter with the guest. After encouraging me to rely and trust in the bounties and mercy of the Blessed Beauty, he offered to accompany me to this meeting. The next day, we went to the office and through his wisdom and insight the matter was dealt with and resolved.”

2. Words of the Guardian

During the early days of the revolution, my father was hospitalized at Mitháqíyyih hospital and while there formed a deepening class for the employees. One day, an armed Mullá suddenly entered the class and inquired about the rooms. My father inquired about his identity and was told that he was a representative of the temporary Islamic government. On hearing this, he joyfully exclaimed: *“I am happy because this is the fulfilment of part of the prophecies of the Guardian and I am sure the rest will come to pass in the course of time.”* Of course this verbal statement and some others which come later are considered as pilgrim’s notes which are not parts of the authoritative texts.



Illustration 33: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi)

The prophecies are as follows: About fifty years before the revolution, when my father visited the Holy Land and attained the Guardian’s presence, he inquired about the news from ‘Ulama. My father replied: “Out of Bahá’u’lláh’s mercy they were rendered powerless.” The Guardian responded and went on to explain that they were powerless at that time, and they will be defeated in the future. The dawn of their demise has broken.



Illustration 34: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) among the friends in Shahsavár

As my father suffered a great deal at the hands of the clergy, he was overjoyed on hearing these words however, when the Guardian noticed

his happiness, he said that nay! They will gain power; they will have glory and will rule. Then three times he pointed to my father's chest with his index finger and continued to make a remark that he will be a witness to this. On hearing these words, my father remembered with deep sadness the martyrdom of his own father, the confiscation of their belongings and the suffering throughout his life at the hands of the clergy. In this distracted and deep state of sadness he suddenly heard the laughter in the Guardian's voice as he said something to this effect that before too long they will face such a misery that there will be no trace of them anywhere.

3. Permission to copy the Tablet of the Temple

The following story is part of a letter written by Mr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Iftikhárí from Brazil:

"I met him in Zábul, the capital of Sistán, next to Balúchistán. This was during the 45th Month Plan of pioneering laid out by the beloved Guardian. He had travelled to lovingly encourage and assist the twenty families who had pioneered there from all parts of the country, including ourselves. Over the next twenty years, this friendship grew stronger. Had it not been for our pioneering overseas, this friendship would have undoubtedly continued to grow.

His stay lasted for some time, but never did he mention anything about the honor of receiving permission from the beloved Guardian to copy the Tablet of the Temple in his own handwriting. Sometime after his departure I received a letter from him that included the Tablet, mentioning he had permission to share this with the friends, in order to solve their problems. He had also included the instructions for folding and reciting this potent prayer. We followed his exact instructions and benefited a great deal. It is impossible to describe them in detail. I will simply suffice to say that it changed my life. In addition to removal of all material and spiritual difficulties in our pioneering post, all of which are His blessings and mercy, I made great strides in my career. Undeservedly, I obtained the honor of pilgrimage to the Holy Land and was able to remain a pioneer for over 30 years in a country designated by the Guardian in his plan.

Although I can not equate this journey with the station of pioneering, however I remain delighted that much like a tiny ant I offered my insignificant bit to the Glorious Solomon of Love, and count as a weak servant of His servants in this land.

The great Zabihi had attained many honors. He was one of the trusted supporters of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís in Iran, who was commissioned to look into a range of affairs and challenges in various spots around the country. As his intention was pure and sincere, he was successful in every case. He was assigned to annually inspect the Holy House in Tákur and remain there for two to three months each time. Undeservedly, my family and I accompanied him in this great task. One year he invited us to visit and serve at this holy place. I do not need to explain how delighted we were to accept this invitation. I sent my family along with him and after arranging my affairs, joined them two weeks later.

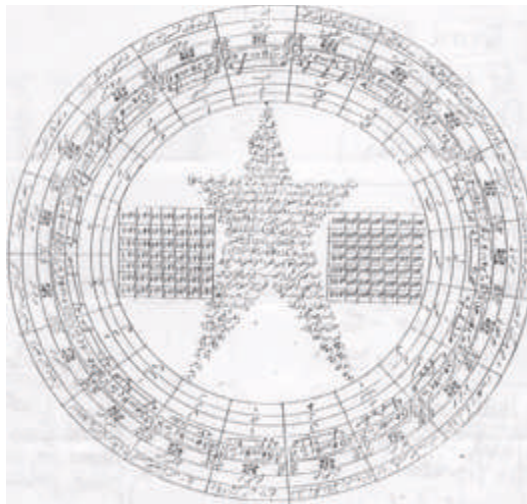


Illustration 35: Tablet of the Temple

This bounty is a long and detailed account that goes far beyond this brief letter however, I will share a glimpse. The descendants of the Holy family who lived there were not Bahá'ís, except for Ma'sumih Khánum. The manner in which Mr. Zabihi dealt with them, made them all, both young and old, to love and respect him. One instance involved a young member of that family who accepted the

Cause and sometime later, married a Bahá'í girl. Their wedding took place in Behjat -Ábád , one of the many homes belonging to Mr. Zabihi. It was a spiritually glorious and uplifting experience. Often times, I would come home after work and find him in our home involved in both the entertainment and spiritual education of children. The meals we shared with him are among the most treasured and unforgettable moments in our family life. My wife repeatedly told me, I feel in my heart as though someone is praying for me, and it is because of those prayers that I succeed in everything I do. My wife would ask, could it be anyone but Mr. Zabihi? My wife and children are among those who admired Mr. Zabihi and remember him with a great deal of respect and affection."

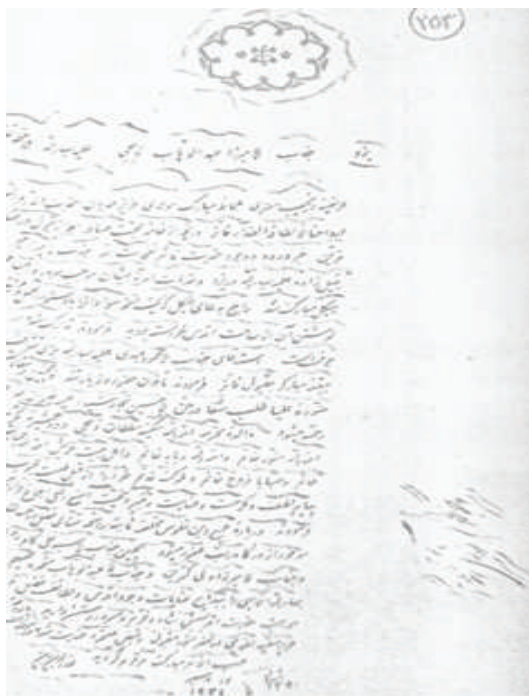


Illustration 36: Letter written on behalf of the Guardian authorizing Mr. Zabihi to copy the Tablet of the Temple

One of the honors of my father was to handwrite the Tablet of the Temple. ¹⁰⁸ In the beginning, the Blessed Beauty bestowed the honor of writing and wrapping this potent tablet to Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin, and then to Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn, the martyr. However, following his

martyrdom this process stopped. Before further details, a brief description about the conditions for its writing and wrapping will be offered. In a tablet addressed to Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin, the Blessed Beauty instructs that it must be written with musk and saffron, or red ink. Rose water and some tree gum must be used to secure it. It should be folded along with the Prayer for the Temple. Whoever receives this great gift, after ablutions must be seated in privacy facing the Point of Adoration and with great humility recite the verse on the first line, then mention the names of God on the second line, and finally recite the prayer written in the center of the Temple, and then while folding it nineteen times repeat the following verse: "He is the Protector, the Victorious, the Helper, the Assister." Keep it folded, and if opened to copy, repeat this process. Whoever writes this Tablet should be rewarded with one mithqal of gold ... meaning he must be rewarded as it will benefit the carrier. Verily He is the Powerful, the Wise; however, great attention must be paid to ensure it is copied exactly as the original. It should be explained that if anyone writes the Tablet for someone else, the receiver must offer him the equivalent of a mithqal of gold.

During the ministry of the Guardian, The Afnáns in Yazd submitted a request, asking his permission to allow this process to resume through the son of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn, meaning 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi). The Guardian accepted this request and sent a copy of the Tablet along with the relevant instructions to 'Abdu'l-Vahháb in Yazd. After receiving this communication, that same evening 'Abdu'l-Vahháb went to the bazaar, arranged for all the materials necessary for this task and produced one copy. It is important to note that until that day, he was not literate enough to write, but through Divine confirmation and the permission he received from the Guardian, he was able to live up to this responsibility.

4. Ḥájí Muḥammad Ismá‘íl Gunduli

My father used to share many stories about the early believers. The following is one such instance:

Ḥájí Muḥammad Ismá‘íl Gunduli, ¹⁰⁹ one of the wealthy believers in Yazd, attained the presence of the Master. One day during lunch, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked Ḥájí which one of the two he favored more: chicken breast or martyrdom. Ḥájí replied: “To tell you the truth, the chicken breast, I do not want to face martyrdom.” The Master assured him by saying that he will not face the martyrdom. Ḥájí felt a sense of closeness with the Master and told Him: “Your life in the Holy Land is not worthy of you. Please grace us in Yazd with your presence, so that I may provide a more comfortable life for you. I have a large home with maids and servants, a spacious yard with a marble fountain filled with colorful fish, a naturally air-conditioned basement, and more.” The Master replied saying that the Blessed Beauty did too, but all was looted.

One day during the Yazd episode, Ḥájí was busy at home meeting with one of his employees in charge of digging a well, who happened to be a Bahá’í. They were informed that there was chaos in the alley, and enemies were about to attack his home. Ḥájí responded: “I am not in danger.” He was warned once more that they were closer and about to set his entrance door on fire. Ḥájí continued to ignore the warnings. The Bahá’í employee told Ḥájí that the Master had promised his safety, but what about himself? He then hid in the well and Ḥájí went after him when he slipped. The employee noticed that Ḥájí was stuck in the mud and tried to carry him to the next well, despite his large size.

The Ḥájí was so heavy that the employee gave in halfway and hid him in the belly of the well (a hole in the wall of the well) and he remained on the side. The attackers entered the house but since they could not find the Ḥájí, they searched the well and saw the employee. They shot at him, but only pierced through his clothing. They continued to search for Ḥájí, carrying a handheld oil lamp. Ḥájí could see them in the dark, but they could not see him, so they left the well. After some time, Ḥájí emerged from the well with some difficulty and headed

back to his home. On the way, he heard the attackers talking about his plentiful wealth and full house. On his return, he noticed that the attackers took everything with them, even the marble slabs and fish in his fountain.



Illustration 37: A few friends, from right, Mr. Ash‘arí, Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) with Furúghíyyih, Mr. Sálíkíyán and Maḥmúd Mishkí

When he saw this scene, he felt overcome. He suddenly recalled the voice of the Master uttering these words: *The Blessed Beauty did too, but all was looted*. He immediately rose and danced with joy, praising God that his property was now alongside those of the Blessed Beauty.

5. The Holy House in Tákur

On Naw-Ruz 1336 (1957 AD) in the solar calendar, the National Spiritual Assembly commissioned my father to move to Tákur, ¹¹⁰ Mazandaran. The goal of the Assembly was to take back this holy place from Nizámu'd-Dín Awrangí, the ruler of Tákur. The previous custodians of the house were Áqá Mírzá Faḍl'u'lláh Nizám'ul-Mamálík, the paternal cousin of the Master, succeeded by his son, Áqá Mírzá Ḥasan Awrangí, both faithful believers, and more recently, Nizámu'd-Dín, the son of Mírzá Ḥasan, who was not a Bahá'í.

My father left for Tákur. Sometime later, my mother joined him; and four of their children who were students, remained in Yazd. In those days there was no road to Tákur, therefore the journey was a challenge. The trip would commence initially by car, then after spending a night at an inn, they would continue by mule, going through narrow mountainous paths. This leg of the journey took a further two days, with another overnight stay at a remote lodging before finally reaching Tákur. Likewise, all household materials needed to set up home had to be transported in the same manner.



**Illustration 38: House of Tákur, the home of Bahá'u'lláh
destroyed at the hands of the enemies of the Cause**

When my father settled in Tákur, he established a friendly relationship with Nizámu'd-Dín and his family, and over the years, with the

village dignitaries. He won their trust and as a result he was able to reside at the holy house. My father then began to take the necessary steps to improve the condition of the house and its surrounding gardens, all of which were more or less approved by Nizámu'd-Dín. Eventually though the Faith held the rights to this holy place.

One of the essential elements in developing Tákur was the building of a dam to protect it from floods. This was accomplished through collaboration with some engineers, namely: Mr. Khabírpúr, Ra'ufí, and Ĥarírí, from Beta Company. The project manager was Mr. Faḍl'u'lláh Fá'iz, and the site manager, Ustad 'Abdu'lláh Báqirí. As it was the summer holidays the schools were closed and I was in Tákur, in charge of managing the hours and payments of the laborers. Rocks and lime were needed to build the dam, and we had to prepare the lime locally. Mules carried the limestone rocks and dry bushes to the area to be smelted. It took two days and nights to produce the lime and, in this way, the dam was built.

The reader may imagine how happy I was to be able to stay in the "Blessed House" and to stroll in the surrounding gardens while calling to mind that perhaps the Blessed Beauty when was a child stayed in this house and walked in the same gardens. It was in this house that He wrote the following letter/tablet to one of the aristocrats of Mazandaran when he was eight years old. 111

"He is the Beloved

God willing you are abiding under the shadow of His mercy and Divine blessings with ease and comfort. As it outwardly appears, I am a child and cannot write properly. However, as this unlettered one holdeth firmly unto the Divine Tree, he can read and write without instruction. This is manifest in the realm of essence before the people of insight. The wayward have not been aware of this mystery and never will be."



Illustration 39: Pear tree planted by the hand of the Blessed Beauty

To know that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had been in the same house, seeing the framed handwriting of Mírzá Buzurg above the entrance and experiencing Tákur and the Orang Mountains, evoked emotions in him beyond description.

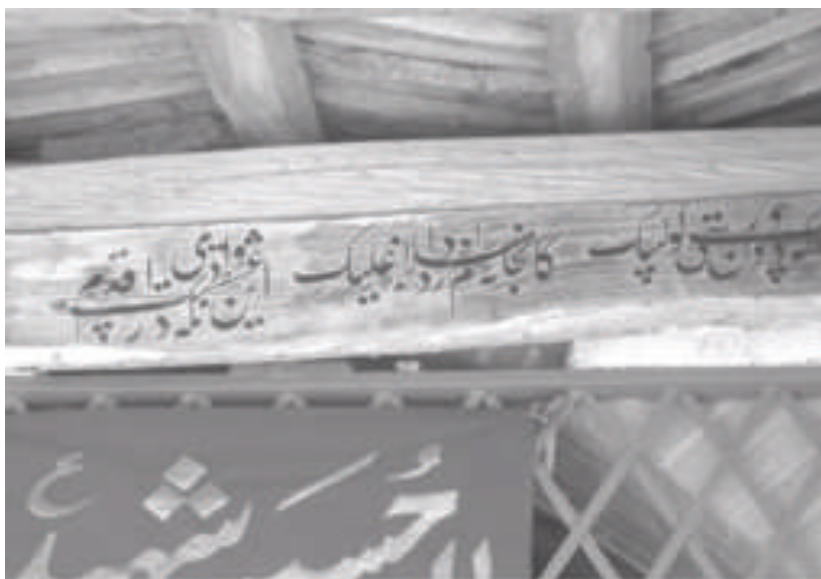


Illustration 40: The verse above was written by Mírzá Buzurg Núrí at the entrance of the house of Tákur.

*When at the Beloved's threshold, offer up your soul
Here no longer stand greetings age old
This is the valley of love, withhold your step
This is the land of divine, shed all you bear* 112

During his time there, my father's friendship with Nizámu'd-Dín's family grew so strong that he became like one of the family members. They trusted him to the extent that he was allowed to research their documents and submit those deemed important to the National Assembly. These included the marriage certificate of the Blessed Beauty and 70 other original tablets revealed by the Blessed Beauty and the Master.

After about two years my mother returned to Yazd to care for her three children who were still attending school. My father remained in Tákur for a few more years and organized all affairs pertaining to the holy place. However, he eventually moved away and one of the friends from Sangesar was assigned to serve as the custodian of the holy place in his stead. Each year however he returned to spend three or four months there. The rest of his time was spent travel teaching around the country. Over time, with the assistance of Mr. Mithaqíyyih and my brother Husayn, a clinic, public bath, and custodian's quarters were built. In addition to electricity, a water well, tank and pipelines were installed to improve the lives of the locals.



Illustration 41: A wall of the house that was recently destroyed

Sadly, with the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the holy house and its surrounding gardens were razed to the ground. The land around the house was divided and several buildings were erected. The bath was left unused and the locals began to use an old unsanitary reservoir for communal bathing instead. The clinic still stands, which continues to help the locals access medical services and there is a paved road that enables travel from Tíhrán to Tákur in just a few hours.



Illustration 42: Building the dam in Tákur, from right: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi), Malik Khusraví, Ustád ‘Abdu’lláh Báqirí and two laborers.



Illustration 43: The clinic built by Mr. Mithaqíyyih and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Zabihi, now used by Tákur residents

6. The final days

One of the last memories of my father was shared by my siter Pari in her letter dated 28 Azar 1374 (Nov 1995). She writes:

“The last time my father was instructed by the National Assembly to visit the friends in Gunbad Kavús and Bandar Turkman, he happened to hear the news of the execution of the seven friends in Yazd. He knew each of them and was so overcome with sadness that he suffered an intestinal hemorrhage. Against his wishes, he returned to Tihrán and rested at home. Since the treatments failed, with the aid of some of the friends, he was hospitalized at the Mihr Hospital (despite the fact that medical facilities were oversubscribed with war casualties).

Regardless of his physical weakness and non-stop hemorrhage, his spirit was stronger than ever before. With his amiable personality and good humor, he was tactful towards all around him, particularly doctors and nurses, however, he continued to proclaim the Faith. Everyone was in awe of his behavior and treatment of others. Even one of the nurses, who was Assyrian, kept changing her shifts so she could spend more time with him. His condition was such that during the 26 days of his hospitalization, not one moment was spent alone. His children and grandchildren who were still in Iran, kept him company. Mr. Dihqaní, his son in law, spent many nights in the hospital with him; despite the illness of his wife, Ishráq. He more than made up for the absence of his sons, Husayn and Zia, who lived overseas.

One day when I was alone with him, I was summoned to the finance office of the hospital so had no choice but to leave him alone. On my return, my cousins who happened to arrive for a visit, had noticed a few strangers gathering around him, inquiring about his identity. Apparently, a rumor was circulating at the hospital that he was a well-published scholar. No one knows how this rumor started. Part of it could have been

due to his striking appearance, with his rather long white hair, and kind demeanor - which attracted attention and drew people to him. Despite such attention, compared to others at the hospital, his physical condition worsened by the day. One of the doctors recommended surgery however the chances of recovery were low. During the operation, they reached the conclusion that unfortunately nothing could be done. What bothered him the most was his inability to bathe himself. He was used to showering before offering prayers every dawn. While hospitalized he insisted on going to the bath to wash every day, however he could not stand or move on his own.



Illustration 44: Convention in Tihrán, second from the right, Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi)

Despite those days of chaotic and uncertain conditions, friends came to visit him at the hospital. They included Kúrush Talá’í, a member of the Tihrán Assembly, and Dr. Cyrus Rawshaní, who delivered a bouquet on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly. The only question he could manage to ask Dr. Rawshaní was: “What news?” The Dr. replied: “The second muezzin has raised the call for prayer.” Which my father understood to mean that the members of the next National Spiritual Assembly had been elected.

During this period, not once did he mention death or dying. Despite his critical condition and advanced age, I could not bring myself to think of my father's death. The night before his passing, he addressed me and calmly said: "Death is real and can happen at any moment, my only request is that you siblings remain united. Nothing should come between you." He asked me to see to this and I have tried my best, hoping with the assistance of my dear ones, that we honor our father's last request.

After some time, on 29 Aban 1359 (Nov 20th, 1980) he had a good appetite and ate well. The nurse took care of his injections and cleared his lungs so that he could breathe easier. My father was relaxed and resting. I was with him. The light was dim, due to the conditions of war, and I watched the I.V. attached to his hand. Suddenly at 9 pm he called out my name. I asked him a question and he immediately responded. After a few seconds, he closed his eyes and I thought he had peacefully gone back to sleep. However, I noticed his I.V. drip had stopped. I quickly put my head on his chest to check his heartbeat. I did not hear anything. It was then that I knew I had lost him. Everyone seemed to know that he had been close to the end. The nurses were expecting his passing; so as soon as I called them, I was no longer allowed to stay in the room. This was the end of his earthly life. He had departed and left us all. I felt especially alone. It was he, who after my sibling's departure from Iran, kept me company. Even after 15 tumultuous years, I continue to miss him, his expressions, gestures, memories. I regret not doing my best as his child.

He was independent, and always would say that he was pleased with all of his children; whom he loved dearly. At the time most of them lived far away, but he never expressed any remorse. It was only on the last night of his life that he mentioned their names and whispered a few words to bid them farewell in their absence. But I still believed it was not real; just a dream."



**Illustration 45: Hand of the Cause of God, Abu'l-Qásim Faizi and
'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabihí (Zabihi)**

At this point, I wish to share a dream of my own: It was dawn in my dream. The room in front of me was a palatial banquet hall, like the ones we see in movies – but it also resembled a hospital. There were two beds in the hall, one looked grand and kingly, the other, was a hospital bed. My father was resting on one of the beds, and on the other lay a great personage. I awoke and shared the dream with my wife. I had no idea what it meant however, I told her that I thought my father and an important person among his friends would die today. Later while we were having breakfast the phone rang bearing the news of his passing. A few hours later another call came from the UK informing us that the Hand of the Cause of God, Mr. Faidí, had passed away also!



Illustration 46: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) together with Mr. Adib Taherzadeh in front of the House of Worship in Germany

7. A Bahá’í Centre in memory of Dhabíhí (Zabihi)

In a 1995 letter signed by the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Saudi Arabia, Mrs. Náhid Ráwháni (Akhtari) informed us that in Guri, Georgia, a Bahá’í Centre has been purchased at number 19, Vaḥdat (unity) St. in the name of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi). At the time, the National Assembly of Saudi Arabia was in charge of the expansion of the Faith in Georgia.

Chapter Six

Yazd and the Circumstances of the Family

1. Conditions in Yazd

The extreme heat and dry conditions in Yazd make this place unparalleled. The adobe architecture, with its' narrow, windy alleys, high walls and windwards on rooftops; all signal the city's resistance to the burning heat of summer, and historical attacks, by enemies on the city. Its' self-sufficient population have long worked on building Yazd with little or no imported resources. They have used building materials that are native to the area; and the city's agricultural irrigation, drinking water, and world-famous aqueducts, are among the outstanding achievements of its' dedicated hard-working natives.



Illustration 47: Yazd, a desert city with no greenery or trees

Its population, though frank and had the reputation for being somewhat fanatical, are hospitable and intelligent. Since the early days of the Bahá'í Era, a significant portion of its population accepted the Faith and selflessly labored to expand their community. The Bahá'í

Centre was large and included many halls, a spacious garden, sports grounds for youth, a cemetery, a Bahá'í public bath and Bahá'í schools; all of which were developed by the local Bahá'í community.



Illustration 48: Some of the Bahá'ís of Yazd with Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí and his son, Adíb, in the front center, and Ḥabíb in the back row third from the right

The homes of most of the Bahá'ís had large yards and meeting places which accommodated hundreds of participants. The Local Spiritual Assembly oversaw the ongoing operation of committees, task forces, classes, conferences and gatherings. The Assembly, committees and task forces held several lengthy consultations each week. Organized Bahá'í children's classes grades 1 through 12, as well as seminars and final examinations were as important as academic education in the life of all Bahá'í children and youth. However, during the period 1954-1955 AD, the Faith continued to expand at a steady pace, so much so that it was noticeable to those outside of the community. Unfortunately, persecutions also remained part of the lives of the members of the Bahá'í community.

2. One family and 17 martyrs

Yazd has many martyrs. ‘The History of Yazd Martyrs’ written by Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí, describes some of these cases. Yazd has had four group martyrdoms. The first happened during the lifetime of the Blessed Beauty, the second, during the ministry of the Master, the third during the ministry of the Guardian, and the last, during the leadership of the Universal House of Justice. In the families of Hájí Ḥusayn Turk and ‘Ali Akbar Kašhi, a total of 17 individuals were martyred. [The names and their relationship with Mr. Dhabíhí (Zabihi) of these martyrs have been described in the Endnote 113]: ¹¹³

3. ‘Ishq-Ábád Exiles

During WWII, some of the Bahá’ís of ‘Ishq-Ábád in Russia were exiled to Iran, first to Mashhad and then to Yazd. At that time Yazd was an exceedingly small city whose citizens were known for being closed minded and prejudiced. The arrival of the exiles did not only impact the Bahá’í community, but also the society at large. The newcomers were trained in both artistic crafts and industry. They brought with them modern tools and instruments and began to work in new fields. Even the women opened shops and travelled through the city on bicycles without wearing hijábs. They brought with them things that the people of Yazd had never seen or heard of. Their courage and temerity, particularly that of the women, resolved many conflicts at sensitive junctures in time. The presence of these Bahá’ís at community events improved dynamics and their incorporation of arts and music uplifted gatherings.



Illustration 49: Some of the Bahá'í youth in earlier times



Illustration 50: Some of the Bahá'í youth in Yazd prior to the 1979 revolution

In an issue of *Payam-i- Bahá'í* magazine, ¹¹⁴ the memoirs of a young girl, Farzánih Dhabíhí Muqaddam were published. In them she tells of an event in 1938 a translation of which is as follows:

“February 4th, 1938 is a horrific date, I shall never forget. Two officers came to our home to arrest my father, Ghulam-Ismá‘íl Uf Dhabíhí. We awoke abruptly and were all at once afraid. My father was not home. He was attending an assembly meeting at the home of Díya‘u‘lláh Rashti. My older brother was not at home either so my mother along with our neighbor, Mr. Ghulám-Husayn Shahrívar,

consoled us. However, when the neighbor returned home, he found himself under arrest also. It was 1 AM when my father returned home. Calmly he turned to my mother and said: “Máh-Faríd Khánum sent these few chocolates for you.” The officer turned to my father and asked, whether he had any guns or knives in the house. To which my father smiled and said: “We are Bahá’ís and do not act in opposition to the government. You may search our home and if you find anything that violates that fact, you may hold me accountable.” The two officers stayed until 5 am during which time they thoroughly searched through the entire 3 rooms and the hallway of our home.



Illustration 51: A few Bahá’ís of Yazd

All the while my brother Dhabihu’lláh, my younger sister, Malakih, and I, were standing transfixed by the wall. We could not sit until they finally took my father away. The officers, found nothing and told my father: “You must come with us to the Politics Office but don’t worry, you will return home in the morning.” However, in reality it was 1946, eight years later before we received word from him via a letter. We lived in Yazd at that time. The previous year, 1945 my paternal aunt, Sultan Fu’adi (Bushruiyih), went on pilgrimage to visit with her son, Mírzá Badi’ Bushruiyih, and his family. During this trip the Guardian asked her if there was any news of her brother? My

aunt told him that there was not, and the Guardian responded by saying: “You will see him!” She shared this message with us, with assurances not to worry ourselves. However, it was some time after before we received the letter from my father in Siberia. In the letter he specifically instructed us as follows: “My dear wife and beloved children, wherever you are, remain fully obedient to the instructions of the Local Spiritual Assembly.”

We were deeply relieved and grateful to know he was still alive. He had been transferred to Kazakhstan, in Siberia, from a prison in ‘Ishq-Ábád. At the time of his arrest, he was a young and handsome man, however when he was finally released in 1947, and returned to us in Mashhad; he was an old and frail man with white hair, relying on a cane. Nevertheless, we were delighted to see him and thanked the Blessed Beauty that he was free and able to reunite with his family.

My older brother, Isma’il, finished medical school in ‘Ishq-Ábád and was now working at Tasha’us Hospital. The state had summoned him to ‘Ishq-Ábád on 22 July 1938, where he was interrogated by the KGB then exiled to Iran. The same summer (1317 Solar calendar), the rest of us, my mother, Malihih, my brother, Dhabih’u’lláh, my sister, Malakih, and myself, were also exiled to Iran. We only brought as much belongings with us that we could load in our car. Everyone was facing some form of discrimination at this time, not only the persecuted Bahá’ís. Some were imprisoned, while others were exiled to Iran.

When we lived in ‘Ishq-Ábád our home was large and faced the Mashriq’ul-Akhkár. Every morning when we awoke, we were delighted to see the beautiful dome and minarets in the distance. Nothing surpassed this, however now we were forced to leave ‘Ishq-Ábád and move to Iran; a land we knew nothing of. In addition to the upheaval of the exile, we had no idea of my father’s whereabouts. Only God knows what we went through.

I remember well when we were living in Mashhad that I used to hide under trees to cry. When we arrived in the city in 1938, my brother Isma’il, who had arrived ahead of us, was somewhat

familiar with the conditions of the city and its inhabitants. My cousin, Bibi Fatimih, accompanied him to meet us. With tears in her eyes she told my mother: "What place is this we have come to?" She was overcome with emotion. She took us to her home in Mashhad and arranged one of the rooms for us to live in.

We were fortunate to have some of both our paternal and maternal relatives in the city. My maternal aunt, Mehrangiz Khánum, and her husband, Siyyid Riḍa Pish-Áhang, both served at the local Bahá'í Centre. They too were from 'Ishq-Ábád. Although my brother had studied medicine, he took any job available to him. My younger brother, Dhabih'u'llah, set about finding a job also.

Fariman is a city about 20 kilometres from Mashhad. It was under construction for the Crown Prince. The Head of Finance in Fariman, 'Aziz'u'llah Mehrbanzád was the maternal cousin of my mother and he gave jobs to the youth who came from Russia. My brother, who was 16 at the time, began to work there. However, the harsh working conditions overwhelmed these young people and one day my brother and two of his friends tried to escape back to Russia. Unfortunately, they were caught at the border and after much torture, they were transferred to the Mashhad prison. At the time, many youths from Russia were accused of espionage and placed in prison. So, although my brother was not alone, he was the youngest prisoner there.

This all happened during the reign of Riḍá Shah, when his government was concerned about the large number of people moving from Russia to Mashhad. They considered this situation a threat to national security and therefore decided that all those who had a male member of their family with them, should be exiled to their place of birth. As my father was from Bushruiyih, they decided to send us there. We consulted the Mashhad Local Assembly and decided to appeal to the Ministry of Intelligence and request that they transfer us to Yazd, the birthplace of our grandparents.

Our mother was born in 'Ishq-Ábád. Her parents, Siyyid Kázim Yazdi and Bibi Fáṭimih, were the first custodians of the House

of Worship. In light of this, we were exiled to Yazd, while my younger brother remained detained in the Mashhad prison. It took three days of arduous journey for us, and our truck load of belongings, to arrive in Yazd. A few friends and members of the Local Assembly came to meet us. We were taken to Tawfiq school and accommodated in a room and a hallway. This was the site of a Bahá'í school which has now been closed by the government. The Assembly housed all the new arrivals in this building. On our arrival we joined a few other families in transition to Yazd. The four of us lived in the room and we had a large balcony where we could sleep at night. Due to the hot climate in Yazd, many people spent their days in their basements and their nights on the roof of their houses.

There were also a few single young men housed at the school. We all lived together and enjoyed each other's company in this strange new place. The local Bahá'ís, especially the Arjumand Afnán family, were hospitable, helpful and loving. They provided us with many opportunities, including Bahá'í classes and dinner parties. But we were closely watched by the Yazd authorities. Each family was assigned one or two city police officers who watched and monitored our comings and goings. Single individuals were assigned one officer and our family of four were assigned two. They spent most evenings at our homes.

Over time more than 70 exiles were living in Yazd. Some were housed at another campus, called Hushangi school, and two of the families who had arrived earlier, at another location. The adults were looking for employment and the children attended school. One day an order was issued that the children be expelled. Our mothers were greatly saddened by this, and we were all terribly upset. Our parents took us with them to their carpet weaving workshops and other places of work. Gratefully, a few days later, a new circular readmitted us to school.

Following the above introduction, I want to share the following incredible account from our days in Yazd: In 1318 Solar calendar (1939 AD), 53 leftists were arrested and detained in Tíhrán. Top state authorities were frightened to see large numbers

of Russians and decided to exile them. This included certain national policies affecting Yazd. The two key officials in the city were: The Head of Law Enforcement, Colonel Qahrimání (who was a very powerful man), and Ahmadpur, the Head of Intelligence. So, it came to pass that without prior notice, the officers that had been assigned to our family, attacked our home early one morning. We were told to gather our belongings because we had to leave Yazd! Their orders were to use any means necessary to take us to the local police station. Anyone passing by who was riding a camel or mule was stopped and forced to carry our belongings. Our depressed mother had no idea what to do. Anxious and tearful she went to her maternal uncle, the late Ḥusayn ‘Alí Nirú (‘Askar Uf), who at that time was living next to the Tawfiq School campus, to tell him the dreadful news. He calmed her down and agreed to keep all our fragile items; advising us not to take too much with us. We were all in tears when we bade him farewell, to go with the officers. After a short while the exiles were rounded up in front of the Yazd Police Station. We were all devastated and distraught. The local population, whose community we were now a part of, had informed one another and rushed to gather around us. They used to call us “Rusiuka”, meaning: the Russian exiles – and although the majority were fanatical Muslims, they still liked having us in their city.

I will never forget when as children we would accompany our mothers through the streets and the bazar. Everyone used to run to their homes and say: The Rusikas are coming! Then they would all come out to watch us with great curiosity. They were interested in how we dressed and walked. We were the talk of the town; and so on that awful day when we were rounded up, the locals gathered around to watch us.

The youth, even the young girls, loaded our belongings on to two trucks. They then took us to the compound where we were documented and checked, all were present. They made us sign papers and told us that we were being sent away for employment - among other promises - then handed us over to three armed

gendarmes. One of them was named Lieutenant Mukhtári. He said: "None of you can leave the bus without my permission!" All of the women, children and youth were made to get on the buses. There were about 50 of us in all on the two vehicles. The rest had to sit on top of the loaded trucks. Before we left, one of the officers told a Bahá'í to: "Leave and never come back! We shall uproot the Bahá'ís!" To which the Bahá'í friend replied: "Nasir'ud-Din Shah thought so too! What became of him?"

After we got on the bus, anxiety and worry lead to our youth taking up their instruments and they began singing Bahá'í songs as we bade Yazd goodbye. It was a surreal experience. Women were in tears. We spent one night on the road. The next morning, we entered a caravanserai near a small village named Anarak or Rubat Pusht-Bádám. This caravanserai had two cafes. Men and youth entered the larger one and women and children, the smaller one. The entire time we were watched and monitored. Each morning we were given bread, boiled beetroot, or turnip with carrots. The villagers would bring us everything cooked so we would buy it. But there was no meat. The first few days they brought some, but then concern for their short supplies meant they kept all the meat to themselves.

One day an officer summoned one of the villagers, who was a shepherd to the caravanserai. He had refused to bring us meat, and on his arrival, he was tied up in the center of the caravanserai and bastinadoed. We were overcome by this scene. My younger sister, Malikih, who was about 11 years of age, began to cry. The officer stopped the lashings and had the shepherd bring us a sheep. They killed the sheep right there and then and sold its meat to our families. But the villagers were right. Our long stay there meant they would not have enough meat themselves.

There was little room for women and children, and we used to sleep almost on top of each other. It was a dark and cramped room with only one entrance. It was also infested with lice and each day we had to hide behind the walls of the ruins in the village and shake our clothes in the sun to rid ourselves of

them. All our cleaning was done by the river outside the caravanserai and each evening we would gather in the room occupied by the men. It had a window and we used to gather there to offer prayers, play music, share stories and socialize before retiring for the night. We were confined in our world, while the authorities were plotting against us!

One morning, after a week had passed, a messenger came from Yazd with instructions for our officer to transfer us as soon as possible, to a place called Biyábának (Jundug). At dawn, the officer summoned us all and we were told to prepare for the next phase of our journey. He read out the names of some of the youth and told them they must leave in the first group. The name of my brother and maternal uncle were on the list. Once again, my little sister began to shed tears at the prospect of separation from two more family members. At this point they brought a few camel herders along with some rope. The officer instructed them to choose the camels to transport the youth as soon as possible. The herders were hesitant to travel to an unknown place deprived of water and greenery and released their camels, then claimed they could not retrieve them. In response, the officer ordered their lashing. They were laid on the ground and whipped. We were distraught to witness this scene. The children were crying. At dusk, the officer let them go but demanded that they return at dawn with their camels, otherwise they would be placed in prison.

God only knows how we felt as we returned to our rooms. We began to pray. We were no longer able to enjoy sharing stories or laughter together. We had no idea what awaited us. But the camel herders knew. A few of them returned the next day and brought their camels along with them. Reluctantly they awaited their instructions to transfer us. They knew we were innocent victims at the mercy of the government's ominous plans. A few of our youth were ordered to transfer our belongings from the trucks to the camels. During this process, one of the families that worked as barbers to support their seven members, had their mirror shattered. On seeing this, the mother and daughters began to cry. We followed suit. In the midst of all this, one of the officers rushed

to halt the process. A news directive had arrived from Yazd. We all surmised that it must be good news. He turned to us saying: "Go to sleep, tomorrow we will travel in the same buses and trucks we came with." However, he did not tell us where we were going. They began to treat our youth in a friendly manner and returned our goods to the trucks. The truck and bus drivers who were monitored along with us, were also feeling relieved and happy.

It was around noon the following day when we embarked on our journey. As night began to fall, we stared out the windows, wondering where we were being taken and what would become of us. Much like the night, we were kept in the dark. Unspoken questions and concerns filled our demeanor. Sometimes tears flowed and other times smiles brightened our faces. Those were difficult hours. Soon the dark night revealed lights shining from afar. We knew we were close to a town and soon it became clear we were on our way to Yazd. The city we now considered home. We began to cheer - and as we did when we left Yazd – began to sing as we approached the city; only this time our hearts were filled with joy. When we reached the main street, past the city square, the bus pulled to a stop. We were staring out the windows wondering what awaited us when we saw the Chief of Police and Head of Security awaiting our arrival. As soon as the bus doors opened, the Chief entered saying: "Welcome back to Yazd, we're stuck with you!" He got off and the bus began to move again. When it reached the same spot where we began our journey, it stopped. We disembarked one by one, to spend the night at the homes of local Bahá'ís and returned in the morning to unload the trucks.

The hospitality and love displayed by the friends was unforgettable. In our absence they had prayed, begging the Blessed Beauty for our safety. Some of the Zoroastrians in Yazd had done the same, hoping for our safe return. The night after our arrival, the Bahá'í community arranged for a celebratory dinner, praising the Almighty for the bounty of our return and the opportunity to reunite with the friends. Yazd was no longer the city we were exiled to. It was our city of hope. We returned to our homes and continued our lives once more. We no longer cared

whether we were under surveillance or not, we were simply happy to be alive and have Bahá'í friends who cared for us.

After our return to Yazd, the gendarmerie officer visited us in our homes and befriended many of us, in particular my brother. He respected us and in return, we each thanked him in our own way. During the first days of our encounter, due to the false reports from the capital and the mandate he was given, the officer treated us with doubt and suspicion. However, once he began to interact with us, his perception changed and he became more friendly. Each of us, according to our means, gave him a gift. This approach led to our friendship. He invited some of us to his home and hosted us for dinner.

Through this relationship we came to know that when we were taken to Rubát Pusht Báddám, the officer in charge of our group was awaiting instructions as to his next mission. Then the orders arrived telling him to transfer us to Jundúq, via camel. This order was issued with the sole purpose that all of us, including the animals, would perish. They had planned to send the youth first, so that perhaps the women and children could be spared. I am not certain what happened, but it is quite possible that the officer in charge of our group had reported to his superiors that we were innocent and intentionally delayed carrying out his duties. Or perhaps the National Assembly had made an appeal. Whatever the reason, the authorities revised their decision and ultimately changed the orders issued in the capital. We remained in Yazd until the end of WWII.

Most of our youth were unemployed. My brother who was a graduate in medicine worked with a Bahá'í doctor, named Dr. 'Abdu'l-Kháliq Yazdi [Dr. Malakútiyán, the son of Mullá 'Abdu'l-Ghani]. ¹¹⁵ After some time, all the youth were conscripted to the military at the army base in Kerman. Their term of service lasted two years. It is interesting to note that just as Ridá Shah had ordered to exile and annihilate us, he too was exiled through Kerman. Ironically, some of our youth were among his escorts."

4. Bahá'ís of 'Adasiyyih

Much like the story of the 'Ishq-Ábád exiles in Yazd and its Bahá'í community, the Bahá'ís of 'Adasiyyih had a similar impact. 'Adasiyyih was a village in Jordan, which was managed by the beloved Master. In order to develop this village, 'Abdu'l-Bahá invited a number of Bahá'í families from the Yazd suburbs, such as Maryam-Ábád and Mihdí-Ábád, to move there. Under his supervision they began to engage in agricultural projects. Based on the Master's instructions, they established a dam on the Lizard River, so that the water could be used to irrigate 'Adasiyyih and the surrounding areas. This resulted in the production of enough food for not only Bahá'ís, but the general population of 'Adasiyyih and nearby villages. The King of Jordan, Amir 'Abdu'llah said that if he owned this village, there would be enough fruit and vegetables to feed the entire country!¹¹⁶ The Bahá'ís of 'Adasiyyih were among the first to own stone built homes with telephones and other modern amenities. There was a large Bahá'í Centre with a garden. Meetings were held there, and this is where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed during his visits. The economic conditions of the Bahá'ís who lived there continued to improve.

After the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the beloved Guardian felt that the resident Bahá'ís in 'Adasiyyih who were mostly from Yazd would serve the Faith better in Iran. Therefore, he asked them to return to their original communities. They did so and brought along with them their modern belongings; setting up shops, making watches, glasses, and other things that were rare in Yazd. In the Maryam-Ábád and Mihdí-Ábád villages, they employed modern agriculture and dug deep wells to irrigate the land. As a result, many changes were implemented. At this time, the Guardian instructed Dr. 'Abbás Afnán to go to Yazd and his arrival brought further positive changes, in addition to those brought by the 'Adasiyyih Bahá'ís. Classes were established to teach Arabic, English, arts, crafts, carpentry, wiring, sewing, glass painting, First Aid, and so on.



Illustration 52: A few Bahá'í families from 'Ishq-Ábád enjoying a picnic at Arsun garden in Yazd

The goal was to have every Bahá'í youth learn a trade so that they could become effective and self-sufficient pioneers, especially in the Gulf countries. This brought a new wave of modernization to Yazd. Some Bahá'ís pioneered to other countries and a few began to serve in cities across Iran. After the 1979 revolution, the authorities arrested, detained, tortured - and even executed a few of these friends - they displayed an unparalleled spirit of heroism and steadfastness among the Bahá'ís. A few of these friends include the martyrs: Faríd Behmardí, Hedáyat Sáyávushí and Jamshíd Sáyávushí. May they rest in peace.

5. The Circumstances Surrounding the Zabihi family

The first Zabihi home was in a cul-du-sac in the Gazurgah neighborhood. To reach this home, one had to pass through the H̄usayniyyih. When memorials were taking place, none of us, particularly our father, could walk through. On such occasions, he either could not leave the house at all, or had to spend the night away

at the home of our relatives. Our house had a yard, a fountain pool with two rooms on one side, and an indoor pool and kitchen on the other. One room was our family living room, and the other was more formal. Here we kept our library, prayed, and received guests. In addition, the room housed weaving looms to produce fabric – as did the indoor pool room. Both of these rooms benefited from high dome ceilings. In addition, between the pool and the kitchen was a water well about forty meters deep that provided for our needs.



Illustration 53: ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zabihi) and family

We washed our clothes in a brook that ran a few meters underground. Under both rooms there were two basements. During summer months they served as both our cold room to store fruit, and a place to rest during the daytime heat. In the summer months our family slept on the rooftop. It had no fence around it and so to protect the children my father used to tie one end of a string to our toes and the other to his, so that if one of us got up, he too would get up to protect us. Our bathroom was in the corner, a few steps lower than our yard.

6. The Remains of Our Paternal Home

My sister, Ishráq, has written the following story:

“I have so many memories of my father. From the first moments of my life until the last days of his life, all are filled with precious memories that go far beyond any attempt to record them. I will share one memory from his last days, a month or two before his passing, that points to his good intentions and loving heart.

My grandfather, Hájí Husayn Shahid, titled Sham‘ush-Shuhadá, (Candle of Martyrs) along with my grandmother and their son and daughters, lived in the Burzi (Zoroastrian) neighborhood of Yazd. On the same occasion when Hájí Muḥammad Husayn was martyred in ‘Abbás-Ábád, Yazd, the enemies ransacked their home, broke the doors and windows, and even uprooted their sole pomegranate tree. A few years later, my grandmother (Sakíniḥ Sulṭán) sold the house to a Zoroastrian and left the area. Years later, following marriage, my father bought a small house in Gazurgah, where all of us, except for Mehri, were born. But my father’s wish was to purchase his paternal home and move there. But we were not able to afford the high price. In addition, Zoroastrians do not often, or easily, part with property.

One day my father approached the owner, Mr. Hurmuzdyár Suruṣhí, who was his contemporary and had inherited the house. My father shared his wish and said: “Return my father’s home to me!” He replied: “This is my father’s home too, and it reminds me of him, but since we were playmates and good friends growing up, I accept.” My father told him that he could not afford anything more than the price which he could sell his house in Gazurgah for. My father sold our home for 3,500 Tumans whereas Mr. Suruṣhí had priced his home for 6,000 Tumans however, he told my father: “‘Abdu’l-Vahháb I know you like your father’s home and do not have anything except 3,500 Tumans, so I will keep my word and sell you my house for 3500 Tumans.”

We moved to our new home and spent twenty happy years there. My father was delighted to own his paternal home however, eventually my siblings and I, either due to education or marriage, had to move to Ṭíhrán so the house was rented out. My father often said that he wanted to offer this house to the Faith, however. I

should mention that half the house was in my mother's name. This was because half of our first home was my mother's dowry. When purchasing the second home, my father kept the same arrangement and because of the Islamic revolution, it was not possible to transfer ownership to the institutions of the Faith. So, we decided to sell the property and donate the sum to the Universal House of Justice. However, we still had to resolve the issue of my mother's share. Furthermore, the grandchildren were spread throughout the globe and it was not possible to arrange the legal paperwork. The Islamic government refused to accept legal representation where Bahá'is were involved. Another challenge was that the tenant was a Muslim who refused to evacuate the property.

As I mentioned earlier, this account demonstrates my father's good intentions and loving heart. In 1359 (Sept. 1980), two months before his passing, one of the friends who knew my father's wishes, had a contact at the right office in Yazd and informed him that he could sell his house without going through the usual process. He asked for the deed. This was sent to him. He sold the house and sent the total sum to my father in Tíhrán. He donated the total sum to the Faith. A week later, Mr. 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn Taslímí came to visit him and brought along the receipt for his donation. He said: "Mr. Zabihi, your generous donation was received." The following week the authorities kidnapped Mr. Taslimi and we never saw him again.



Illustration 54: Zabihi family in Tīhrán in 1961

That evening, as I climbed the steps and entered the house, I saw my father pacing. As soon as he saw me, he came close to the stairs and said: “I have nothing left to do. I have accomplished all that I was supposed to. Look, here is the receipt. I have nothing more to do in this world.” During the same meeting with Mr. Taslimi, he was instructed by the National Assembly to visit the friends in Gunbad Kávus and Bandar Turkman. The next day he went on his trip however when he returned, he was extremely ill and passed away a short time later.”

7. The Prayer That Was Answered

In the early years of the 1950's a Muslim mother and her sons were murdered in Abarqú, a city between Yazd and Shiraz. This was incited by an influential local landlord. Once again, the Bahá'ís were used as scapegoats. Meanwhile, Prime Minister 'Alí Razm-Árá was pursuing a particular plan, agenda and scheme. In order to carry out his plan, he needed to distract the masses by creating chaos. Perhaps the best option for Razm-Árá was to blame the Bahá'ís for the murder of a Muslim family.

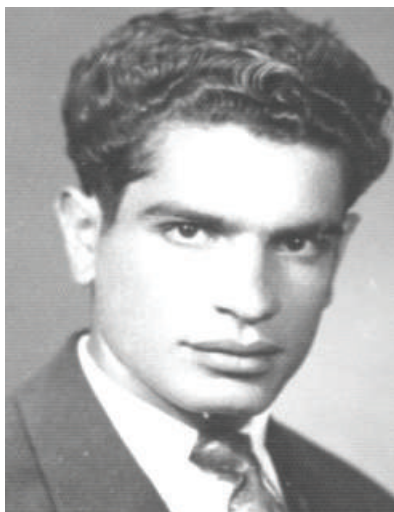


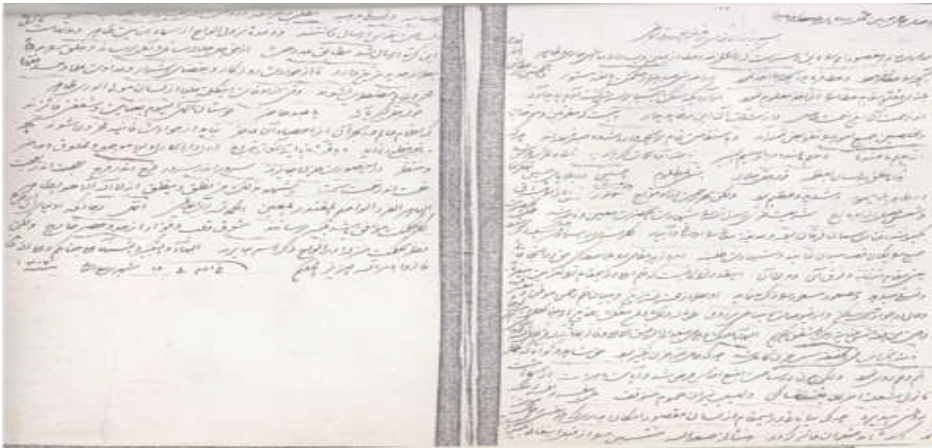
Illustration 55: Dīyá'u'lláh Dhabīhī (Zia'u'llah Zabihi) in Graz, Austria, 1961

Rumors pointed to plans to take falsely accused Bahá'ís from Kerman, to Yazd and from there to Qum; and while in Shahr-i-Ray release them among the angry and vengeful crowds. The clerics had already incited the masses between Shahr-i-Ray and Ṭīhrán and prepared them for violence. The plan was to allow the blood thirsty marchers to strike and stab them to death. This plan was reported to the Guardian. He called for a national prayer campaign at a specific time. The accused were brought from Kerman to Yazd and awaited their transfer to Ṭīhrán the next day. The prayer meetings took place at several spots around Yazd. I remember the one for our area was held at the home of Na'ímí family. Tearfully and ardently, we prayed for their freedom. The next morning when we headed to school, we saw the custodian standing by the entrance. He informed us that school was closed, due to the Prime Minister having been assassinated (March 7th, 1951). In this manner, our loved ones were spared severe torture and martyrdom. God's will works in mysterious ways. [At this point documenting a brief history of the development of the Faith in Yazd since its inception seems useful. For this purpose refer to the Endnote one hundred and seventeen. ¹¹⁷ Also names and relationships of some relatives of 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Zabihi (Dhabīhī) have been in the Endnote one hundred and eighteen.]¹¹⁸

Chapter 7

Tablets

We will present in this chapter original handwritten versions of the tablets revealed by the Blessed Beauty or the Master addressed to Zabihi family, a typeset version of each Tablet as well as its approved provisional translation. The provisional translations appearing in this chapter are done by Foad Seddigh which have been approved by the Bahá'í World Center for their publication. At the end of the chapter a family tree will be given:



Tablet No. 1: This Tablet is revealed by Bahá'u'lláh addressed to Husayn (Turk) [AQA, vol. 3, 645-648]

بسم ربنا الاقدس الاعظم العلّی الابهی

حمد محبوب عالم و مقصود امم را لایق و سزااست که لازال اخذ و عطا از یمین و یسار اراده اش جاری و ظاهر اخذ نماید آنچه را عطا فرمود و عطا فرماید آنچه را اخذ نمود در اخذش صد هزار حکمت بالغه مستور و همچنین در عطایش بلندی و علو مقام عطا را از اخذ معلوم نمود از آردی که سنگ آسیا بر سرش گشته آدم پدید آرد از زحمت آن این نعمت حاصل و از شدت آن این رخا پدیدار این است که مفرّبین و موحدین و مخلصین جمیع امور را تفویض نموده اند و باستقامت تمام بر آنچه وارد شده صبر نموده اند چه که آنّه یعلم ما عندنا لا نعلم ما عنده و هو العلیم الخبیر نامه آن دوست مکرّم رسید تلقاء عرش عرض

شد هذا ما نطق لسان العظمة قوله جلّ جلاله بسمی المظلوم یا حسین در بلایای حسین تفکر نما در ظاهر بلا مینمود و شدید و عظیم بود ولكن بحر رحمت از او موج و نور مبین از او مشرق و شمس فضل از او بازغ شریعت غزای رسول الله را شهادت آن حضرت معین و ناصر شد عمل آن حضرت بکینونته آفتاب آسمان فرقان بوده و حقیقه معانی را او ساقی و آبیار اگر سرّی از اسرار بلایای فی سبیل ذکر شود جمیع رایگان قصد میدان نمایند و شهادت طلبند امروز هر مقامی را ملاحظه کنی حق در آنجا قائم یعنی مقام آب و فوق آن و دون آن اینقدر ترا کافی است که قلم اعلی در این مقام ترا تعزیت میفرماید و تسلی میدهد و مصعود مسعود را ذکر مینماید او بطراز محبة الله مزین و ببيان قلم رحمن موقن و معترف و حال در جوار رحمت ساکن و از فیوضات لا یتناهی مرزوق طوبی له و لک و لمن معک و للذین ارسلنا لکلّ واحد لوحاً لاحت من افقه شمس عنایة ربّک المشفق الکریم البهاء علیک و علی من سعد الی الرفیق الاعلی و فاز بما قدّرله من لدی الله ربّ العالمین انتهی نامه آنجناب فی الحقیقه سبب حزن کامل شد چه که حامل خبر حزن انگیز بود حق شاهد و گواه که کمال هم و غم روی نمود ولكن چون در ساحت امنع اقدس عرض شد و آیات باهرات از سماء مشیت نازل شعله احزان بغتة ساکن و لهیب نیران هموم متوقف بل بیفسرد افسردنی که روشنی نپذیرد چه که بیاناتی در این مقام از لسان مقصود امکان جاری که هر نفسی رجای موت نمود که شاید بمثل آن فائز گردد هنیئاً لمن سعد الیه منتسبین را از قبل این فانی تکبیر و سلام برسانید و تسلی بدهید مطلب دیگر آنکه در وقت تشریف بردن آنجناب اسامی چندی نوشته و بساحت اقدس ارسال داشتند و وعده نزول الواح از سماء عنایت ظاهر و متهاست نازل شده این کره ارسال شد مطابق عدد حب ۱۰ از حق جلّ جلاله سائل و آمل برسانند و خلق را بدعاً بطراز جدید مزین دارد تا از حوادث روزگار و بغضای اشرار و عداوت علما و حسد فقها محزون و مضطرب نشوند وقتی از اوقات این کلمه علیا از لسان مولی الوری ظاهر قوله جلّ کبریائه یا عبد حاضر دوستان الهی الیوم بعنایت و شفقتی فائزند که اقلام عالم و ابحر آن از احصاء آن عاجز نباید از حوادث فانیه محزون شوند آنچه در قلب خطور نماید و یا قوه خیالیّه آنرا ترتیب دهد لدی الله از برای اولیا موجود و مخلوق و حاضر و منتظر در اینصورت حزن جائز نه سرور اندر سرور فرح اندر بهجت اندر بهجت نعمت اندر نعمت است یشهد بذلک من نطق و ینطق انه لا اله الا هو الظاهر الباهر الفرد الواحد المقنن المعین الحمد لله ربّ العالمین انتهی رجای آنکه اولیای آن ارض را اگر بحکمت موافق باشد تکبیر برسانند شوق قلب و فؤاد از حدّ و حصر خارج ولكن نظر بحکمت منزله در الواح ذکر اسم جائز نه البهاء و التّکبیر و الثّناء علی جنابکم و علی الذّین فازوا بامر الله العزیز الحکیم . خادم فی ۱۸ شهر ربیع الثّانی سنه ۱۳۰۲ (آثار قلم اعلی ج ۳ – لوح شماره 350 صفحات 645 – 648)

A provisional translation of the Tablet is as follows:

In the Name of our Lord, the Most Holy, the Most Great, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious.

Praise beseemeth the Best-Beloved of the world and the Object of the longing of the nations, from the right and left sides of Whose Will signs of both giving and taking have been everlastingly manifested. He taketh away that which He hath given and giveth that which He hath taken away. A thousand traces of wisdom lie hidden in that which He taketh away. Likewise, the exaltation of the station of bestowal can be discerned from those things He taketh away. From the flour that

hath borne the heavy weight of the millstone, He bringeth forth a human being. From this toil great blessing is attained, and from adversity ease. For this reason, the well-favored of God, the believers in His Unity, and the pure ones, one and all commit their affairs unto Him; with complete constancy they are patient over that which hath been inflicted upon them, for He knoweth that which lieth within us, but we know not that which lieth within Him. He is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

The letter of that noble friend arrived and was mentioned in His presence. This is what the Tongue of Grandeur uttered:

“In My name, the Wronged One! O Husayn,¹ ponder thou the afflictions of the other Husayn! ² It appeared to be calamity, punishing and fierce. However, therefrom the sea of mercy surged, the radiant light became resplendent, and the sun of grace grew luminous. His martyrdom lent potency and assistance to the perspicuous Law of the Messenger of God.³ In essence, this action alone was the sun of the heaven of the religion of the Qur’án ⁴ and watered the rose-garden of inner meanings. Should any one of the hidden mysteries of affliction in His path be recounted, then everyone would rush forward without hesitation to the arena of martyrdom. Now shouldst thou consider any station, thou wouldst behold therein God’s Presence, in the station of the Father and in any station above or below this. It should be sufficient unto thee that in this Station, the Supreme Pen condoleth with and consoleth thee and maketh mention of the auspicious soul who hath ascended to the Kingdom. He was adorned with the ornament of the love of God, attained unto that which proceeded from the Pen of the All-Merciful, and recognized his Lord. Now he abideth within the precincts of the mercy of God, and partaketh of the limitless outpourings of His grace. Well is it with him and with thee, and with all those who are with thee, and with anyone among them for whom We have dispatched a Tablet from the horizon of which shone forth the sun of the loving-kindness of thy Lord, the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful. May the glory of God be upon thee and upon him who hath ascended unto the Exalted Throne and attained unto that which hath been decreed for him by God, the Lord of all mankind ”.

Thy letter caused much sadness indeed for it bore sorrowful news. God beareth me witness that it produced the utmost grief. As soon, however, as it was mentioned in His holy and inaccessible Presence, and luminous verses were revealed from the heaven of His will, the fire of sadness was instantly abated and its flame stilled; nay, it was quenched in such wise that its flame will never again

be ignited. Such utterances have flowed from the tongue of the Desire of the world as to cause every soul to long for death, perchance he may attain unto their like. Well is it with him who hath ascended unto Him. Convey greetings on behalf of this lowly one to thy relations and do thou console them. Further, thou didst write a few names supplicating His blessing when thou left this place; they were forwarded to His holy Presence. A promise was then given that Tablets would be revealed from the heaven of His loving-kindness. It hath been quite some time since these Tablets were revealed and were dispatched to the number of Ḥub ⁵. I beseech God that they may reach their destination and adorn the people with a new garment, so that they would be neither saddened nor perturbed by the happenings of this world, whether it be the hatred of the wicked-doers, the enmity of the learned, or the jealousy of the divines.

This exalted Word was uttered some time ago from the tongue of the Lord of all men:

“O servant-in-attendance!⁶ The friends of God have today been blessed by such loving-kindness and tenderness that all the pens of the world and the seas of ink would prove incapable of recounting it. The friends should not be saddened by fleeting events. Whatever the human heart can conceive or the power of the imagination can devise hath been created and lieth ready and waiting for the benefit of His loved ones. This being the case, sadness is in no wise permitted. Rather, it is delight upon delight, joy upon joy, ecstasy upon ecstasy, and favor upon favor. He Who hath spoken in the past and Who speaketh now in the present beareth witness: ‘Verily, there is none other God save Him, the Manifest, the Evident, the Incomparable, the Single, the All-Powerful, the Helper. Praise be unto God, the Lord of all men’”.

We cherish the hope that thou wilt greet the believers there, provided that the dictates of wisdom warrant it. The longing of my heart and soul is boundless. In order to observe the wisdom that hath been mentioned in the sacred Writings, particular names should not be mentioned. May the glory of God and greetings and praise be upon thee and upon them who have attained unto the Cause of God, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

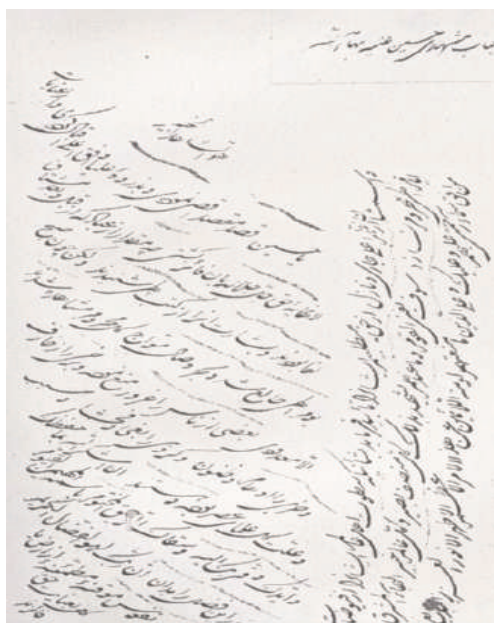
Khádīm, 18 Rabí‘u’th-Thání 1302 (4 February 1885)

Notes :

1. The name of the recipient of the Tablet is Ḥusayn.
2. It refers to Imam Ḥusayn, the third Imam of Shi‘ah.

3. The Messenger of God is the title of Prophet Muḥammad in the Qur'án.
4. The religion of Qur'án is Islam and its believers are Muslims.
5. Number of 'ḥub' is ten. It means that ten tablets were revealed.
6. Servant-in-Attendance is Mírzá Áqá Ján Khádím'u'lláh.

Tablet No. 2 : This Tablet is revealed by Bahá'u'lláh addressed to Husayn (Turk):



هو الشاهد الخبير

یا حسین قصد مقصد اقصی نمودی و به ذروه علیا و افق اعلی اقبال کردی و از عنایات لا نهاییه حقّ جلّ جلاله به آن فائز گشتی. چه مقدار از عباد که از قیل و بعد مشتاق لقا بودند و بشارت آن را از کتب الهی شنیدند و لکن چون صبح یوم الهی طالع شد و بحر وصال مّوّاج، کلّ محروم مشاهده شدند الاّ معدودی. بعضی از ناس را غرور منع نمود و برخی را زخارف و حزبی را اوهام و ظنون و گروهی را بغی و فحشا؛ و سبب و علت کلّ علمای عصر بوده و هستند. آن اشکر الله بما حفظک ایّدک و قرّیک الیه و سقاک الرّحیق المختوم باسمه القیوم. قدر این فضل را بدان ان ربک لهو الفضال الکریم. نفوس موقنه مطمئنه از ارض یا کلّ به عنایت حقّ فائزند و اسمشان از قلم اعلی جاری و نازل. از حقّ می طلبیم ایشان را تائید فرماید به شانی که سطوت اهل عالم ایشان را از فیوضات ایّام الهی محروم نسازد. سوف یفنی القوم و ما عندهم. یشهد بذلک کلّ منصف بصیر و کلّ عالم خبیر. البهاء المشرق من افق سماء رحمتی علیهم و علیک و علی الذین ما منعتهم لومة اللائمین عن هذا الامر الاعظم الاطهر الانور العزیز البدیع

A provisional translation of the Tablet is as follows:

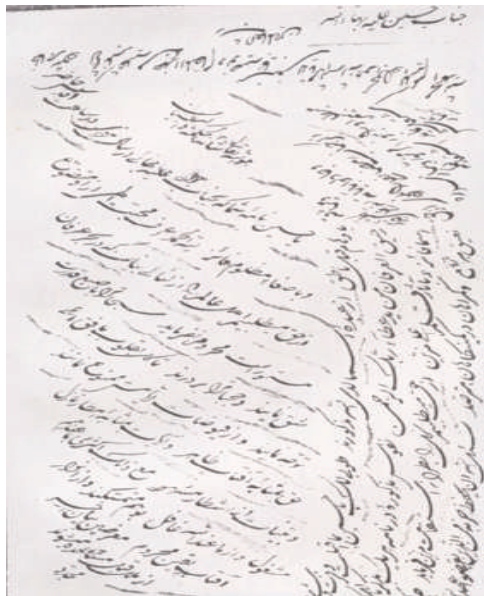
He is the Witness, the All-Informed.

O Ḥusayn! Thou didst direct thy steps towards the Supreme Purpose, turn thy face towards the Most Sublime Summit and the Dayspring of Glory, and attain unto the infinite loving-kindness of God, glorified be His grandeur. Countless people have been eager to meet Him, both in the past and at the present time, and had heard His glad-tidings in the Books of God. However, when the morn of the Day of God broke and the sea of reunion surged, all were seen to be deprived of meeting Him except a few; some souls were prevented by their vainglory, some by worldly possessions, others by vain-imaginings and doubts, and yet others by inequity and rebellion. The cause of all this have ever been the divines of the age. Render thanks unto God for protecting thee, assisting thee, drawing thee nigh unto Him, and making thee to quaff the sealed wine in His name, the Self-Subsisting. Appreciate the value of such a bounty. Verily, thy Lord is the All-Bountiful, the All-Generous. The true and well-assured souls from the Land of Yá 1 are recipients of the loving-kindness of God and been honored by having their names set forth by the Supreme Pen. I entreat God to confirm them to such an extent that the ascendancy of the people of the world may not deter them from the bounties of the Day of God. Soon will such people and what they possess be brought to naught. Every discerning and fair-minded person and every wise and informed soul beareth witness unto this. The resplendent Glory shining from the horizon of the heaven of My mercy be upon them and upon thee and upon those who have not been deterred by the blame of the blamers from this Cause, the most glorious, the most pure, the most luminous, the mighty, the wonderful.

Notes

1. Land of Yá is Yazd.

Tablet No. 3 : A Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh addressed to Husayn (Turk):



جناب حسین علیہ بهاء الله

هو الله تعالى شأنه الحكمة و البیان

یا حسین نامه شما که به جناب جواد علیہ بهائی ارسال نمودی در ساحت اقدس حاضر و به اصغا
مظلوم فائز. لله الحمد عرف محبت الهی از او متضوع. از حق می طلبیم اهل عالم را از لئالی
بیان که در بحر عرفان مستور است محروم نفرماید. سبحات را به اصبع قدرت شق نمایند و
حجبات را بردرند تا کلّ به قلوب به افق اعلى توجه نمایند و از فیوضات ایامش ممنوع نمانند.
حق بمثابه آفتاب ظاهر و آیات بمثابه امطار نازل و بینات از اشطار مشهود. مع ذلک اکثری بما
عندهم مشغول و از ما عندالله غافل. به وهم متمسکند و از انوار آفتاب یقین محروم. معرضین
بیان اخسر از ملل قبل مشاهده میشوند. مجدّد به او هام قبل ناطق. از عبده اسماء لدی الله مذکورند.
طوبی لک یا حسین بما اقبلت و فزت و شربت رَحیق العرفان من ید عطاء ربّک الرحمن. نفوس
مذکوره در نامه هر یک به ذکر مالک اسماء فائز و به آثار قلم اعلى مزین. از حقّ می طلبیم کلّ
را به طراز استقامت مزین فرماید. چه که نعیق مرتفع و گمراهان در کمینگاهان مترصد. نسل
الله ان یحفظ حزبه من الذین نقضوا عهدالله و میثاقه و جادلوا باتاته. انه على کل شیء قدير. ذکر
جناب رمضانعلی را نمودی. از حقّ می طلبیم او را به نور امر منور و به نار سدره مشتعل نماید.
اشتعالی که اثمارش ظاهر شود. انا نکبر علیه من هذا المقام و نوصیه بما ینبغی لایام الله انه هو
الجواد الکریم. الحمد لله ربّ العالمین .

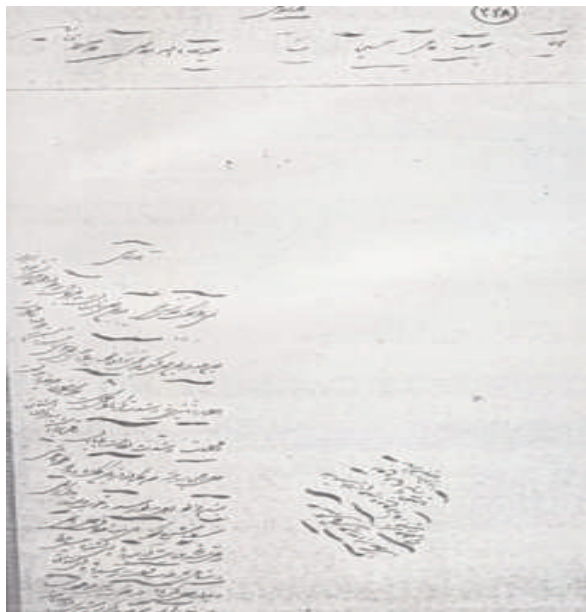
A provisional translation of the Tablet is as follows:

Jináb-i Ḥusayn, the glory of God be upon him.

He is God, Exalted be He, the Lord of majesty and power.

O Ḥusayn! The letter thou hast sent to Jináb-i Javád, My Glory be upon him, was presented to the Holy Court, and was heard by this Wronged One. Praise be unto God! The fragrance of the love of God was diffused therefrom. I beseech God not to deprive the people of the world from the pearls of utterance which lie concealed in the depth of the ocean of the knowledge of God, that they may rend asunder the veils with the fingers of power, and may tear such veils so that all may turn unto the Supreme Horizon with sanctified hearts and would not be debarred from the abundant grace of His days. God is manifest like the sun before the eyes of men, His revealed verses have showered down like copious rain, and His testimonies are evident in every land. Despite all this, countless souls have busied themselves with the tales and traditions current amongst them and have remained heedless of that which is revealed by God; they have clung to vain-imaginings and have been dispossessed of the light of the sun of certitude. The followers of the Bayán who have turned aside are regarded as such as have suffered losses far greater than others. Once again they are promoting the vain-imaginings of the past. In the sight of God, they are regarded among them who are the worshippers of names. Well is it with thee, O Ḥusayn, that thou hast turned towards Him, attained His Presence, and quaffed the brimful chalice of the wine of the knowledge of God which hath been proffered by the fingers of the grace of thy Lord, the All-Merciful. Every one of them whose name appeared in thy letter hath been honored by the mention of the King of Names and hath been adorned by that which is revealed by the Supreme Pen. I beseech God to adorn them with the ornament of constancy, as the clamors of the infidels have been raised and wayward souls are awaiting the opportunity to hunt down their prey. We entreat God to protect His people from those who have broken His Covenant and Testament, and from them who have caviled at His signs. He is, verily, powerful over all things. Thou hast mentioned Ramaḍán-‘Alí. We beseech God to shed the light of His Cause upon him and to enkindle him with the flame of the Burning Bush to such a degree that its effects would become apparent. We greet him from this Station and exhort him to observe that which beseemeth the days of God. Verily, He is the Bountiful, the Generous. Praise be unto God, the Lord of all the worlds.

Tablet No. 4 : A Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: [MKT, vol. 5, pp. 38-39]:



هو الأبهى

ای ناظر بملکوت تقدیس الهی، در این فصل تابستان در ماه حزیران در بعد از ظهر که حرارتش چون
نیران این عبد در این محلّ گرم که تحمّل نتوان نمود بیاد احبّای الهی خوش و مسرور و مستیشرم که ابداً
حرارت هواء را تأثیری نه و شدّت گرما را حکمی نیست بلکه نیران حدیقه جنانست و طراوت و شدّت
لطف بی‌پایان و قلم برداشته و بذکر آن مشتاق جمال رحمن پرداخته که بلکه از اثر این کلک و مداد نفحه
خوشی بمشام فؤاد اهل وداد رسد و قلوب و صدور بذکر الهی منبسط و منشرح گردد ای بنده صادق جمال
ابهی در ظلّ سدره عنایت آرمیده‌ئی و ای تشنه سلسبیل عطا در شاطی بحر عذب فرات رسیده‌ئی و ای
مشتاق دیدار جمال کبریاء در ملکوت ابهی موعودی و ای ناظر الی الله بموهبت کبری مبشری و البهاء
علیک ع ع جناب اخوی آقا حسن علیه بهاء الله الأبهی را از قبل این عید بایده اذکار تکبیر اعظم اعلی
ابلاغ فرمائید و همچنین سائر منتسبین و اقربا را (مکاتیب جلد 5 ص 38-39)

A provisional translation of this tablet is as follows:

He is the All-Glorious.

O thou who hast kept thine eyes directed towards the Holy Divine Kingdom! In this summertime, in the month of June ¹ in the afternoon hours when the heat is like fire, this Servant is happy, joyful, and gladdened by the remembrance of the loved ones of God in this place of unbearable heat. The hot weather hath no effect and the extreme heat is of no consequence; on the contrary, this scorching heat is

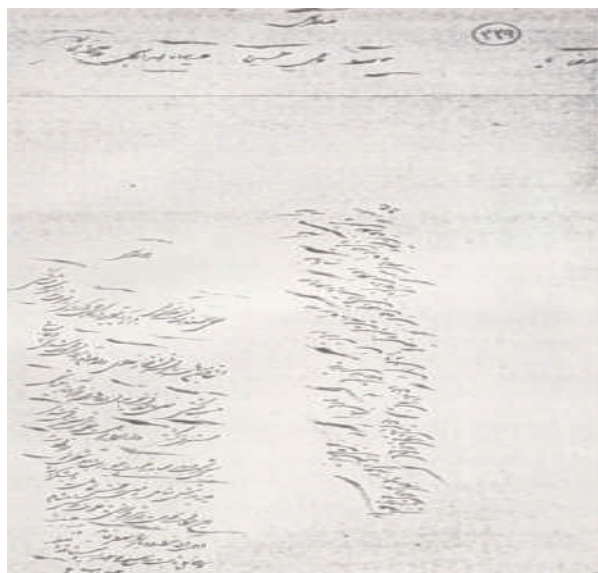
like a rose garden of delight, and in the utmost freshness and beauty. Now I have taken up My pen and am making mention of that ardent lover of the Beauty of the All-Merciful; haply from the traces of this pen and ink, a sweet smell may reach the nostrils of the loving friends and souls that thereby their breasts and hearts may become dilated with the remembrance of God. O true servant of the Abhá Beauty! Thou hast reposed beneath the shade of the tree of His loving-kindness. O thou who thirstest for the crystalline waters of His bestowals! Thou hast attained unto the shores of the fresh and thirst-subduing sea. O thou who desirest to meet the Blessed Beauty! Thou art expected in the Abhá Kingdom. O thou who hast turned towards God! Thou art given the glad-tidings of the Most Great Favor. Glory be upon thee.

Convey unto Áqá Ḥasan, thy brother, may the Glory of the Most Glorious be upon him, on behalf of this Servant the most wondrous greetings of the Most Glorious, the Most Exalted. Also extend greetings to thine other relatives and kindred.

Note:

1. Ḥazírán, the Arabic name of the Gregorian month of June, used in Iraq and the Levant.

Tablet No. 5 : A Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: ...[MKT, vol. 5, pp.9-10]:



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هو الأبهي

ای بنده آستان مقدس الهی، یاد آر ایامیرا در درگاه حق گذراندی و بشرف خدمت مشرف گشتی و تاج این مباحثات را بر فرق افتخار نهادی و از خدام آستان محسوب شدی و بیاسبانی منسوب گشتی فضل و الطاف خفیه چنان احاطه نموده که در آثار جلیه اش مستغرق گشتی و از انوار موهبت عظیمه اش مستشرق شدی پس در شب و روز بمحامد و نعوت چنین ربّ ودود مشغول شو که لحظات عین عنایتش شامل و فیض رحمتش کاملست و بشکرانه این الطاف بخدمت امرش بکوش تا نفحات قدسش مشام اهل آن خطّه و دیار را معطر نماید و البهاء علیک و علی کلّ ثابت راسخ علی عهد الله و میثاقه العظیم
عبدالبهاء

ع

جناب حاجی حسین منشادی علیه بهاء الله الأبهي را از قبل این عبد تکبیر برسان و بگو آن اشتیاق و احتراق از فراق پرتوی از وصالست و آن ناله و حرقت از فرقت نشانه وصلت است از درگاه احدیت استدعا می‌نمائیم که اجر زیارت در حق آنجناب عنایت فرماید و در ملکوت ابهائش فائز کند و قبول در درگاه احدیت گردید و مشمول نظر عنایت شوید و البهاء علیک ع (مکاتیب جلد 5 ص 9 – 10)

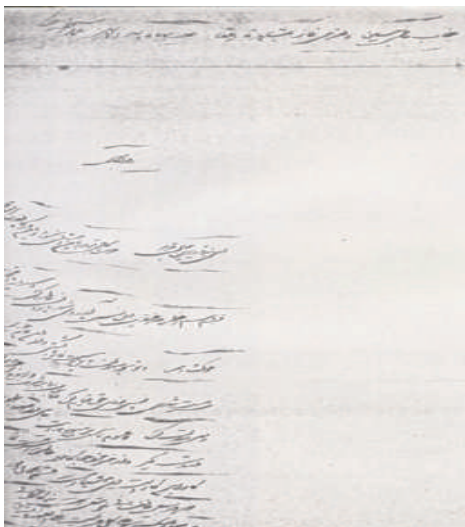
A provisional translation of this tablet is as follows:

He is the All-Glorious.

O servant of the Holy Threshold of God! Call to memory the days thou didst spend in His presence, wast honored to serve him and to have this crown of glory placed upon thy head, and wast counted amongst the servants of His Threshold and recognized as one of the keepers at His door. His loving-kindness encompassed thee to such an extent that thou wast immersed in His glorious signs and illumined with His exalted grace. Therefore be thou occupied with the praise and acclamation of such a loving Lord, for the glances of the eyes of His loving-kindness are cast upon thee and His merciful bounties are perfect. To yield thanks for such a favor, strive thou to serve His Cause such that His holy fragrance may perfume the nostrils of the people of that land. Glory be upon thee and upon them who are steadfast and firm in the Covenant of God and His great Testament.

Convey greetings on behalf of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Jináb-i Hájí Ḥusayn Manshádí, may the glory of the Most Glorious be upon him, and say: “The longing and fire in thy heart because of separation are rays of reunion, and lamentation, wailing, and burning with the fire of separation are signs of union with the Beloved. I beseech the Threshold of the One True God to ordain for thee the recompense of attaining His presence in His Abhá kingdom. May thou gain acceptance before His Threshold of Oneness, and may the eye of God’s loving-kindness turn towards thee.”

Tablet No. 6 : A Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: ...[MKT, vol. 5, pp.14-15]:



هو الأبهى

ای بنده دیرین جمال قدم، خوشا بحال تو که باین آستان منسوبی و باین درگاه از بندگان محسوب
قسم باسم اعظم که عنقریب این نسبت آرزوی شهریاران عالم گردد و سرمایه افتخار ملوک امم
و تو بچه سهولت باین موهبت فائز گشتی و از این جام عنایت سرمست شدی پس بوفای حق قیام
کن و احباب را بر ثبوت و رسوخ بر عهد و پیمان الهی دلالت کن و عموم ناس بر منهج هدایت.
جامی از صهباء طهور در دست گیر و از خمر مزاجها کافور عالم را سرمست نما کار این کار
است ای هشیار مست قسم بجمال انور که در سیل جانفشانی خوش است نه کامرانی و البهاء
علیک و علی کلّ من ثبت علی العهد و الميثاق ع (مکاتیب جلد 5 ص 14- 15)

A provisional translation of this tablet is as follows:

He is the All-Glorious.

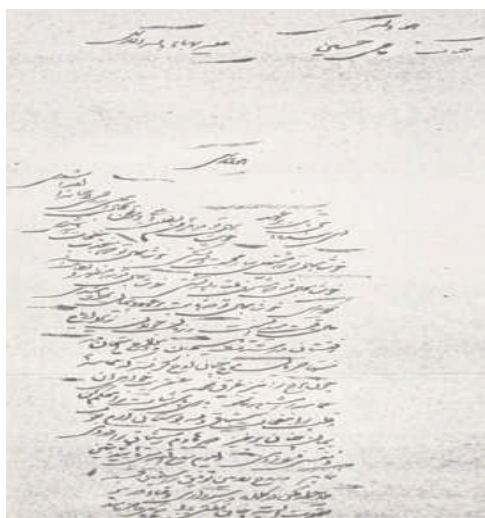
O long-standing servant of the Ancient Beauty! Well is it with thee who hast been associated with His Threshold and counted as one of His servants. I swear by the Most Great Name that soon such affiliation shall become the object of the longing of the kings of the world and the source of pride for the sovereigns of nations. Behold how easily thou hast attained unto this bounty and been intoxicated with this wine of loving-kindness. Arise then in faithfulness to the Lord, to lead the friends of God to stand firm and become immovable in the Covenant of God and His Testament, and guide all souls to the straight Path. Hold thou fast unto a brimful chalice of pure wine and inebriate the people of the world with the beverage that is tempered at the camphor fountain.¹ This is the real service, O thou who art mindful yet intoxicated with the divine drink! I swear by the Luminous Beauty, that which is delightful in the path of the Beloved is self-

sacrifice, not material ease and comfort. The glory of God be upon thee and upon them who are steadfast in the Covenant of God and His Testament.

Note:

1. Kamfur or Kafur is a white substance added to wine in order to make it sweet in taste and odour. It is mentioned in the Qur'án that in Paradise, the faithful will be given the drink which is mixed with kamfur. For example see: Al-Insan, 76:5 'But a wine cup tempered at the camphor fountain the just shall quaff.' According to Rodwell translation

Tablet No. 7 : A Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá: ...[MKT, vol. 5, pp.12-13]



هو الأبهى

ای بنده حقّ ثابت بر عهد، خوشا بحال تو که مؤمن بطلعت اعلی و موقن بجمال ابهی روحی
لاحبائنه الفدا شدی خوشا بحال تو که مشتعل بنار محبت الله گشتی خوشا بحال تو که منجذب بنفحات
الله شدی خوشا بحال تو که مشرف بقاء الله گشتی خوشا بحال تو مظهر الطاف الله گردیدی خوشا
بحال تو که ثابت بر عهد و پیمان یزدان شدی حال وقت میدانست و زمان جولان زیرا اریاح
افتتان در شدت هیجان و امواج امتحان در منتها جریان موج چنان اوج گرفته که عمامه چون
برج را نیز غرق نموده عنقریب خواهی آن عمامه را مشاهده نمود باری پای ثبات را محکم کن
و قلب را بنفحات میثاق الله بوستان ارم بقوت پیمان چنان برخیز که هادم میثاق را در دمی و
نفسی فرار دهی الیوم روح القدس تأیید ثابتین نماید و روح الامین توفیق راسخین بخشد ملاحظه
مکن که کلاه در سر داری و قبا در بر بقوت الهیه چنان نطقی یابی که کلّ عاجز مانند ع
(مکاتیب جلد 5 ص 12-13)

A provisional translation of this tablet is as follows:

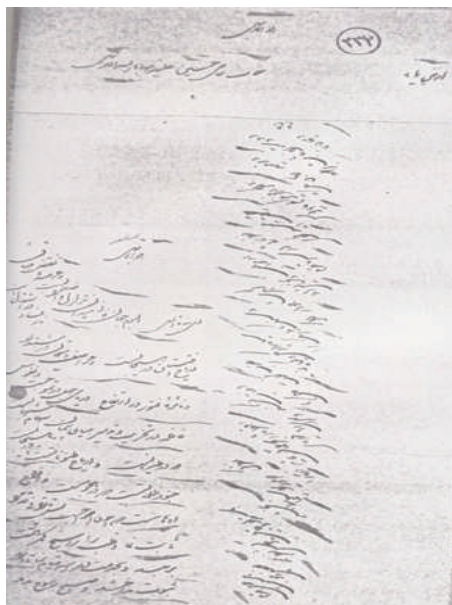
He is the All-Glorious.

O servant of God who art steadfast in His Covenant! Well is it with thee for having believed in the countenance of the Exalted One, and embraced the station of the Abhá Beauty, may My soul be a ransom for His loved ones. Well is with thee for having been enkindled with the fire of the love of God. Well is it with thee for having been attracted unto the fragrant breezes of God. Well is it with thee for having been honored by attaining unto the divine Presence. Well is it with thee for having received His overflowing bounties. Well is it with thee for having stood firm in the Covenant of God and His Testament. Now is the time to rush forth unto the arena of service and spur on thy charger for the gales of tests are fiercely blowing and the billows of trials are violently surging. The waves have risen so high that even towering turbans have been submerged. Thou wilt soon behold that turban. In any event, make firm thy feet in constancy and make thy heart a rose garden through the fragrant breezes of the Covenant of God. Rise up in service in such wise that it would cause them who strike at the root of the Covenant to instantly run away. In this day, the Holy Spirit will assist those who stand firm in the Covenant, and the Faithful Spirit will confirm them who are unwaveringly firm. Consider not that thou wearest a hat upon thy head, and a coat on thy body.¹ Soon, through the strengthening grace of God, thou wilt acquire such power of oration that no one will be able to challenge thee.

Notes

Clothes worn by laymen, in contrast with the turban mentioned earlier, which is worn by the clergy

Tablet No. 8 : A Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: [MKT, vol. 5, pp.10-11]



هو الأبهى

ای بنده الهی، الیوم جهان فانی میدان تزلزل و اضطرابست و عرصه نقض میثاق اریاح افتتان در هیجانست و عواصف امتحان در اشتداد نار فساد در اشتعال است و نائره فتور در ارتفاع دریای جهل در تموج است و نفوس غافله در تخریب و تدمیر بنیان پیمان سهام شبهاست که در طیرانست و اریاح ظنونات است که در هیجانست جنود ظلمات است که در هجوم است و افواج اوهام است که چون امواج است پس تا توانی قدم را ثابت نما و قلب را راسخ کمر همت بر بند و بخدمت امرالله قیام نما تا انوار ثبوت بدرخشد و صبح رسوخ بدمد باستعداد و قابلیت خویش نظر منما بفضل و موهبت جمال قدم نظر کن که موری را سلیمانی بخشد و قطرهئی را بحر عمان نماید ذره را آفتاب کند و سراپرا دریای عذب فرات خاک سیاه را پر گل و گیاه نماید و سنگ بیرنگ را گوهر شاهوار اگر در مواهب و بخشایش او نظر نمائی از سر تا قدم حقیقت امید گردی و اگر در خود نگریم مأیوس و نومید. زبان بگشا و دوستان را ثابت بر عهد و پیمان نما ع ع (مکاتیب جلد 5 ص 10-11)

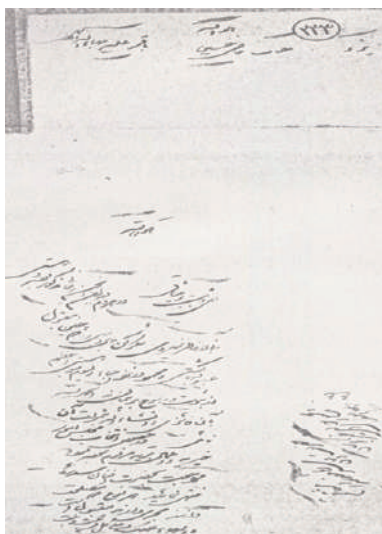
A provisional translation of this tablet is as follows:

He is the All-Glorious.

O servant of God! Today, the fleeting world hath become the field of vacillation and agitation, and the arena of Covenant-breaking. The gales of trials are blowing, and the winds of tests are raging. The fire of sedition is blazing, and the flames of defection are leaping high. The sea of ignorance is rolling, the wayward souls

are engaged in the destruction of the foundation of the Covenant and its annihilation, and the arrows of doubt are flying in every direction. The tempests of idle fancies are stirring, the army of darkness is in full assault, and the hosts of vain imaginings are like waves continuously lapping on the shore. Therefore, strive with all thy might, to make thy steps steady and thy heart immovable, gird up thy loins, and arise to serve the Cause of God, so that the lights of steadfastness may shine and the morn of firmness break forth. Look not upon thy capacities, rather fix thy gaze upon the grace and bounty of the Blessed Beauty which causeth an ant to become Solomon, a drop to become an ocean, an atom to become the sun, a mirage to become a body of fresh water, the black earth to become a garden full of flowers and herbs, and a colorless stone to become a jewel worthy of kings. Shouldst thou examine His bestowals and grace, thou wouldst become the essence of hope. Should we look upon ourselves, we would become dispirited and hopeless. Loosen thy tongue and make the friends to become firm in His Covenant and Testament.

Tablet No. 9: A Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: [MKT, vol. 5, p.74]:



هو الله

ای ثابت بر میثاق، در هر دم در این انجمن رحمانی مذکور بوده و هستی آنی از خاطر نمیروی
شکر کن جمال ابهی را که چنین مقبول عبدالبهاء گشتی و محمود در نزد احباء. الیوم موهبتی
اعظم از ثبوت و رسوخ بر پیمان نه الحمد لله بآن فائزی و انشاءالله بثمرات آن نائل در خصوص
انتخاب مجلس امور خیریّه و اعمال بریّه مرقوم نموده بودید مراجعت بحضرت افنان سدره منتهی
نمائید هر نوع که مصلحت دانند مجری دارند مقبول است و البهاء علیک و علی کلّ من ثبت و

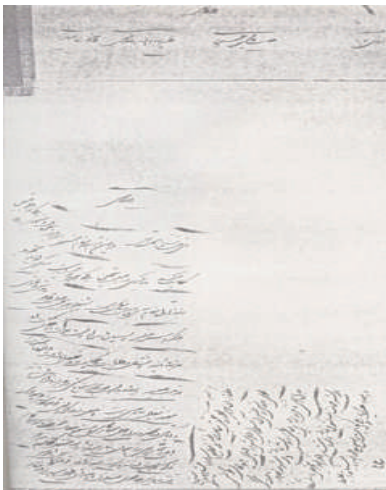
بَلْتَع ع حضرات افنان سدره مقدّسه را مشتاقیم و بجمیع احبّای الهی تکبیر برسان و البهاء
علیک ع ع (مکاتیب جلد 5 ص 74)

A provisional translation of this tablet is as follows:

He is God.

O thou who dost stand firm in the Covenant! Thou art remembered in this spiritual assemblage, and art not absent from My mind for a moment. Be thankful to the Abhá Beauty that thou hast been accepted by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and art praised by the friends. Today there is no grace greater than being firm and immovable in the Covenant. Praise be unto God that thou hast attained unto that. God grant that thou mayest also attain unto its results. Thou hast written regarding the election of the committee for benevolent purposes, philanthropic deeds and public affairs; thou shouldst refer this to Jináb-i Afnán, the twig of the Divine Tree. Whatever he deemeth prudent is acceptable. The glory of God be upon thee and upon whomever is firm in the Covenant. Convey my longing to the Afnáns, the twigs of the Holy Tree, and convey my greetings to all the friends. Glory be upon thee.

Tablet No. 10 : A Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: ...[MKT, vol. 5, pp. 23-24] :



هو الأبهى
ای قلب متعلّق بحبّ الهی، در این ایّام دو مقام مشهود و دو مرتبه معروف و مشهور یکی از اعلیٰ
علّیین حکایت کند و دیگری از اصل سجّین یکی جوهر توحید است و دیگری اوساخ تحدید رتبه

اول مقام فنای در جمال مبارک است و اشتعال بنار محبت جمال قدم و جوش و خروش بذکر اسم اعظم و نسیان مادون او و نشر نفحات و اعلاى کلمات او و رتبه ثانیه اشتغال بروایات و حکایت و قصص و اشارت و القاء شبّهات در قلوب ضعیفه اینقدر بدان که آنچه استماع کنی که غیر از ذکر جمال قدم باشد مقصد اشغال بما لا یغنی است و غفلت از ذکر الهی تو که هوشیار و بیداری و ایّامی در محضر دیدار جمال مختار بودی و مستمع خطاب حضرت پروردگار باید احبّای الهی را چنان بنار موقده ربّانیّه مشتعل گردانید که جز ذکر دوست از مغز و پوست بسوزاند تو در ساحت اقدس مدّت مدیدی که بودی سلوک و اخلاق و اطوار و اسرار و رفتار و گفتار آن جوهر انوار و حقیقت جامعه ساطعه از مطلع اسرار را مشاهده و استماع نمودی و روش و دهش آن سلطان آفرینش را دیدی باید بجان بکوشی و بدل بجوشی تا کلّ را برضای مبارک دلالت نمائی و بر شریعه بقا هدایت کنی و بر نشر نفحات الله تشویق نمائی و بر انتشار آثار الله تحریر نمائی و البهاء علیک و علی کلّ ثابت راسخ علی عهد الله و میثاقه الغلیظ ع ع (مکاتیب جلد 5 ص 24-23)

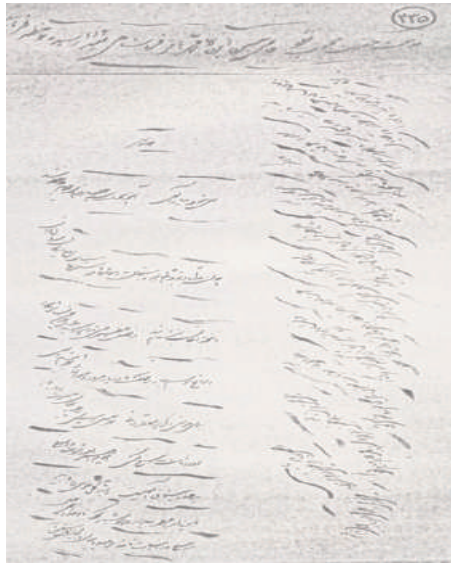
A provisional translation of the Tablet is as follows:

He is the All-Glorious.

O possessor of a heart attached to the love of God! Two stations can be discerned and two positions are well known and reputed at this time: one doth reflect the heights of heaven and the other doth express the essence of the lowest abyss; one is the quintessence of oneness and the other is the defilement of limitations. The first is the station of non-existence before the Blessed Beauty, enkindlement with the fire of love of the Ancient Beauty, being filled with enthusiasm in the mention of the Greatest Name, forgetting aught else besides Him, diffusing the divine fragrances, and exalting His words; while the second is becoming busy with traditions, stories, tales, and allusions, and placing doubts in weak hearts. What thou shouldst know is this, that whatever thou mayest hear other than the mention of the Ancient Beauty is nothing but the pursuit of what is of no benefit and waywardness from the mention of God. Thou, who art vigilant and awake, didst spend some time visiting the court of the Unconstrained Beauty, and wert privileged to be addressed by the Lord of mankind, shouldst endeavour to enkindle the friends of God with the divinely kindled fire in such wise that it would burn away all else save the mention of the Lord. Thou didst spend a considerable length of time at His holy Court; thou didst behold the conduct, disposition, manners, and behaviour of that Essence of light, and the perfect Reality emanating from the Dayspring of mysteries; thou didst hearken to His utterances and didst witness the conduct and generosity of that Sovereign of creation. Thou must endeavour with thine entire being and cry out from the depth of thy heart so that thou mayest lead everyone to His good-pleasure, guide them to His everlasting Faith, encourage

them to the diffusion of the fragrance of God, and urge them to spread the signs and tokens of God. The Glory of God rest upon thee and upon them who are firm and unassailable in the Covenant of God and His firm Testament.

Tablet No. 11 : A Tablet from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: [MKT, vol. 5, pp. 25-26]



هو الأبهی

ای متوجّه بدیار الهی، آنچه بجناب سیّد جواد مرقوم نموده بودید ملاحظه شد چون مدّ بر توجّه الی الله و اشتعال بنار موقده در سدره سینا بود روح و ریحان مبذول داشت و نفحه ایقان استشمام شد از فضل عظیم حیّ قدیم امیدواریم که چون نسائم اسحار و لواقح موسم بهار بر ممالک و دیار مرور و عبور نمائی بهر مشام رسی بیوی خوش ذکر الله معطرّ نمائی بهر نفسی رسیدی بر عهد و پیمان حضرت پروردگار او را ثابت و راسخ کنی الیوم اهمّ امور ثبوت و رسوخ بر عهد و میثاق الهی است البتّه کلّ نفوس را باید باین امر اعظم بیدار و هوشیار کرد تا آنکه چون جبل راسخ و راسیات ثابته بر عهد و پیمان و ایمان الهی مستقیم مانند در خصوص رؤیائی که تعبیرش را خواسته بودید تعبیرش این است که دخول در دریا عریان و برهنه دلیل این است که انشاءالله حقیقت امرالله بی‌ستر و حجاب ظاهر و باهر گردد و از آلودگی مفتریات مفتترین و مرجفین منزّه و مقدّس شود و انشاءالله شما نیز موفق بآن خواهید شد که آثار عزّت امرالله در حیّز انظار اهل عالم مشهود و عیان گردد جمیع احبّای الهی را در اطراف بکمال اشتیاق از قبل این عبد تکبیر ابدع ابهی ابلاغ فرمائید و بگوئید ای احبّای الهی یوم ثبوت و رسوخ است و وقت استقامت و رکوز ملاحظه شداید بلا را ننمائید اگر جمیع این عباد را غرق دریا نمایند و یا گمشده صحرا کنند شما ثابت و راسخ باشید و بر نصرت امرالله ببیان لسان و حسن احوال و اطوار و وصایای الهی قیام نمائید و البهاء علیک ع (مکاتیب جلد 5 ص 25-26)

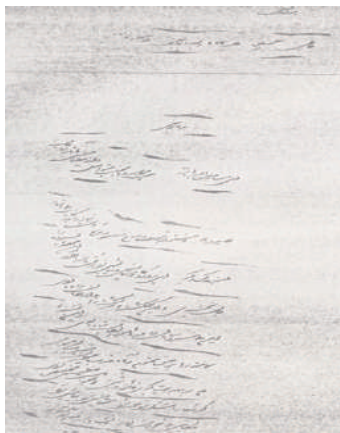
A provisional translation of the Tablet is as follows:

He is the All-Glorious.

O thou who hast turned towards the Divine Realm! I noted what thou hast written to Siyyid Javád. Thy letter indicated that thou hast turned thy eyes towards God, and hast been enkindled with the blazing fire raging in the burning Tree upon Sinai; thus it produced much gladness and joy, and from it the sweet scent of certitude was inhaled. I cherish the desire that by the great bounties of the All-Living and Everlasting God thou mayest pass over cities and lands like the early morning zephyr and the gentle breezes of spring, and mayest perfume every nostril with the fragrance of the mention of God and strengthen whomever thou dost meet in the Covenant of God and His Testament. Today, firmness in the Covenant and Testament is the most important of all things. It is essential to awaken all souls to this reality and make them vigilant so that they stand firm and steadfast as mountains.

Thou hast requested the interpretation of thy dream in which thou wert plunged naked into a sea. This doth mean that, God willing, the truth of the Cause of God will be made apparent and manifest without any veils and coverings, and will be sanctified from the calumnies of the agitators and slanderers; God willing thou wilt also attain unto it so that the glory of the Cause of God may be seen and may become apparent before the eyes of the peoples of the world. Convey wonderful Abhá greetings to the friends in that area and tell them: "O ye beloved of God! Today is the day of steadfastness and firmness, of perseverance and tenacity. Regard ye not the severity of afflictions. Should they plunge these servants into the sea or send them to uninhabitable deserts, ye should stand firm and immovable, and arise to make the Cause of God triumphant by the power of your utterance, your good deeds and character, and in conformity with Divine admonitions." The glory of God be upon thee.

Tablet No. 12 : A Tablet revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: [MKT, vol. 5, pp. 26-27] :



هو الأبهى

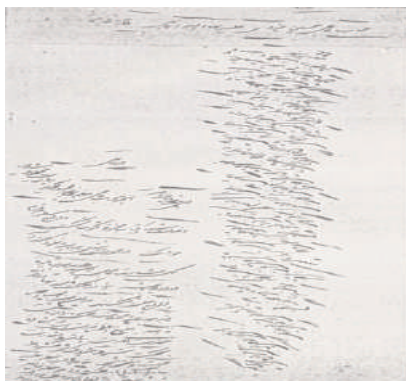
ای مسافر من الله الى الله، چند مراسله آنجناب متواصل و از مضامینش آثار روحانیت ظاهر و باهر و شئون ثبوت و رسوخ مشهود و لائح دست نیاز را بدرگاه ربّ بی‌انبار بلند کن و بگو ای پروردگار ستایش و نیایش ترا لائق و سزاوار که این مرده افسرده را جان بخشیدی و این گمگشته سرگشته را بدارالامان راه دادی این بی سر و سامان را در مأمن الطاف پناه دادی و این تشنه سوخته را برحیق مختوم و ماء عذب حیوان سیراب فرمودی چه که بهدایت کبری فائز داشتی و بموهبت عظمی مخصّص کردی کردگارا شکر ترا حمد ترا ستایش ترا، نیایش ترا، مکاتیبی که خواسته‌اید انشاءالله بعد ارسال می‌شود ع ع (مکاتیب جلد 5 ص 26-27)

A provisional translation of the Tablet is as follows:

He is the All-Glorious.

O thou who hast travelled from God unto God! Several of thy dispatches were received; from their contents signs of spirituality and evidences of firmness and steadfastness could be observed. Raise thou thy suppliant hands at the threshold of the Incomparable Lord and say: “O my God! Praise and devotion beseemeth Thee for having revived this lifeless and dispirited being, for having led this wanderer and long-lost being to a place of safety, for having provided a refuge for this destitute and homeless one in the safe shelter of Thy loving-kindness, and for having quenched the thirst of this parched-lipped soul with the unsealed wine and fresh and living waters, inasmuch as Thou didst make him attain unto the most great guidance and favored him with the most glorious grace. O my God! I yield Thee thanks, praise, and devotion for this.” The letters thou hast requested, God willing, will be dispatched later.

Tablet No. 13 : A Tablet from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: [MKT, vol. 5, pp. 31-33]



هو الأبهى

ای موقن بآیات الله، آنچه بجناب حاجی مرقوم نموده بودید ملحوظ گردید و بی‌نهایت محظوظ شدیم و خدمات شما در کتاب محفوظ مکتوب گشت و در لوح مسطور مرقوم طوبی لک از حرارت و اشتعال احباء الله و نفوذ کلمه الله کمال بشارت حاصل امیدواریم که یوماً فیوماً در ازدیاد باشد ولی از حکمت مأمور بها در زُبُر و الواح غفلت نکنند که این قضیه بسیار مهمّ. البتّه صد البتّه مراعات حکمت را از دست ندهند تبلیغ اعظم خدمت است در آستان حضرت احدیّت ولی شرط مقارنت بحکمت شرط متروک شود مشروط عبث و مفقود شود جناب آقا میرزا منظر علیه بهاء الله اوّل باید حکمت را ملاحظه نمایند و ثانیاً آنچه حضرت افنان سدره علیه بهاء الله الأبهی مصلحت دانسته امر نمودند معمول دارند احبّای الهی را از قبل این عبد تکبیر ابدع ابهی برسانید و بگوئید که ای دوستان الهی بعنایات ظاهره باهره حضرت رحمن مستبشر گردید و از نسائم جانبخش حدائق ملکوت ابهی مهتر در ظلّ سدره مبارکه هستید که ظلّ ظلیلش از ملکوت اعلی تا حضيض ادنی ممدود و مستظّلین در مقام محمود. ربّ نور قلوب احبّانک بانوار عطائک و عطر مشام ارفائک بنفحات قدس عبقت من ریاض علانک و ایدهم علی اطاعة امرک و التّبوت و الرّسوخ علی عهدک و میثاقک و الاشتعال بالنّار الموقدة فی سدره ربّانیّتک اّک انت الحافظ الکریم الرّحیم المختار از جمله حکمت باید ملاحظه حکومت نمود نوعی حرکت نکرد که سبب دلگیری و وحشت شود چه کلّ بنصّ قاطع مأمور باطاعت و انقیاد بحکومتند ع (مکاتیب جلد 5 ص 31-33)

A provisional translation of the Tablet is as follows:

He is the All-Glorious.

O thou who hast attained certitude in the signs of God! What thou hast written to Jináb-i Hájí hath been noted; it is the cause of infinite delight. Thy services were written in the Guarded Book and were recorded in the Written Tablet. Well is it with thee. The news of the enkindlement and ardor of the loved ones of God

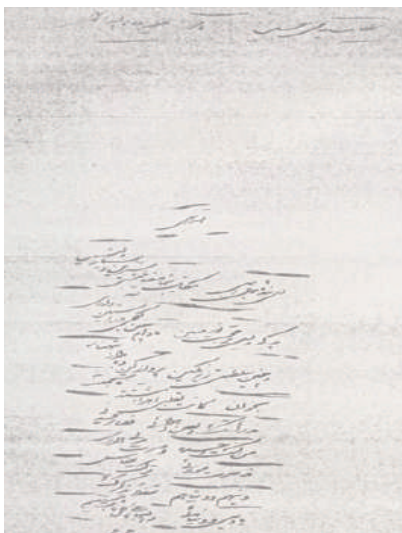
and of the penetrating power of the Word of God was the cause of utmost joy and delight. We cherish the hope that they may increase day by day. However, wisdom, to which everyone is directed in the Books and Tablets, should not be neglected. The matter of wisdom is very important and of course should not be abandoned under any circumstances. Teaching the Cause of God is regarded as the greatest service at the threshold of the Incomparable God, provided that it conformeth to the condition placed upon it, which is nothing but wisdom. Should the condition be ignored, the act conditioned upon it would come to naught. Jináb-i Áqá Mírzá Manẓar, the glory of God be upon him, should firstly observe wisdom and then follow that which the Afnán of the Holy Tree, the glory of the Most Glorious be upon him, would deem prudent. Convey the most wondrous Abhá greetings on behalf of this Servant to the friends and tell them: “O ye loved ones of God! Be ye gladdened by the manifest and evident loving-kindness of the All-Merciful, be ye stirred by the fragrant breeze which hath wafted over the gardens of the Abhá kingdom. Ye are sheltered under the shadow of the Blessed Tree, the shade of which hath been extended from the Kingdom on high to the lowest depths, and ye are sheltered beneath shadow of the Praised Station.

¹ O My Lord! Illumine the hearts of Thy loved ones by the light of Thy loving-kindness and perfume the nostrils of Thy thralls by the fragrant breeze wafting over Thy lofty gardens; confirm them so that they may attain unto obedience to Thy Cause, unto firmness and steadfastness in Thy Covenant and Thy Testament, and unto enkindlement by the fire raging in Thy Divine Tree. Thou art verily the All-Protecting, the All-Bounteous, the Compassionate, the Unconstrained.” One instance of wisdom is to have regard for the government; no one should make any move in a way that would vex or alarm the government, because everyone hath been admonished, according to the explicit Text, to obey the government and submit unto it.

Notes

1. Praised Station/Glorious Station: Praised Station is an Islamic concept which appears in the Qur’án. Refer to the verse in Surih Al-Asra 17:79: “And watch unto it in the night: this shall be an excess in service:25 it may be that thy Lord will raise thee to a glorious station.” It has been mentioned that this station is Prophet Muḥammad in the Day of Resurrection Who will intercede on behalf of believers. In this Dispensation, the Praised Station is reserved for the Blessed Beauty and is a reference to Him.
- 2.

Tablet No. 14 : A Tablet from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: [MKT, vol. 5, p.1]



الله ابهى

ای بنده جمال ابهى، مکاتیب شما مضامینش شیرین و بسیار دلنشین چه که دلیل بر محبت نور
مبین مادام چنین گنجی در آستین داری و چنین سلطنتی زیر نگین پرواز کن و باواز شهناز
بخوان

فاستجمعت مذ رأتك العين اهوائى	كانت لقلبي اهواء مشتتة
و صرت مولی الوری مذ صرت مولانی	فصار یحسدنی من كنت احسده
شغلاً بذكرک یا دینی و دنیائی	ترکت للناس دینهم و دنیاہم
و البہاء علی کل ثابت مستقیم ع ع (مکاتیب عبدالبہاء، جلد 5، صفحہ 1)	

A provisional translation of the Tablet is as follows:

God is the Most Glorious.

O servant of the Abhá Beauty! The contents of thy letters were sweet and most pleasing as they were an indication of love for the Resplendent Light. As long as thou dost possess such a treasure and dost bear such a sovereignty under thy seal thou shouldst soar and sing melodiously these lyric lines:

I had several competing desires in my heart;

When my eye met thee, it caused the desires to merge together.

Whomever I envied would in reality have envied me;

I became the master of all people when thou didst become my master.

I left this world and the next to the people;

So that my thoughts might be wholly occupied with thee who art to me both this world and the next.

The glory of God be upon everyone who is firm and steadfast.

Chapter 8

Endnotes

1. The provisional translation of a quote: This quotation is taken from the tablet which appears in the page 235 of the book “ ‘Áqibat Bikhiyr.” (از خدام آستان محسوب شدی و به پاسبانی منسوب گشتی) (عاقبت بخیر)
For the original Tablet and its provisional translation refer Tablet number 5, Chapter 7.
2. **The provisional translation of a quote:** This quotation has been taken from a tablet in the honour of the father of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí (Zahihi) and grandfather of Dia’u’lláh Dhabíhí – The tablet appears in the page 239 of the book: “ ‘Áqibat Bikhiyr.” and page 238 of the book “Taríkh Amrí Yazd”, (last line). For the original tablet and its provisional translation refer to Tablet number 7 which appears in Chapter 7.

”ملاحظه مكن كه كلاه در سردارى و قبا در بر به قوت الهيه چنان نطقى يابى كه كلّ عاجز مانند”

“... Consider not that thou wearest a hat upon thy head, and a coat on thy body.1 Soon, through the strengthening grace of God, thou wilt acquire such power of oration that no one will be able to challenge thee....” (Provisional translation by F.S. approved by the BWC for publication)
3. **Seventeen Martyrs:** For a brief account of the lives of these seventeen souls refer to the Endnote note number 113.
4. **Payám-i Bahá’í** is a reputed periodical which is published in Persian in France and distributed around the world. This magazine has continued providing this service over a period of about forty years since its inception.
5. **The Passage:** The following passage appears in one of the Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh which is in a compilation of Tablets commissioned by the Universal House of Justice both in Persian and in English:

در مجموعه الواح حضرت بهاءالله که بعد از کتاب اقدس نازل شده در لوح مقصود صفحه 105 جمالمقدم میفرماید قوله الاعز: " از حقّ جلّ جلاله میطلبم که اهل ارض را آگاه نماید و عاقبترا بخیر منتهی فرماید ... "

English counterpart of the Persian compilation is called: "Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas" which has been commissioned by the Universal House of Justice. The following quote appears in the above-mentioned book at the bottom of the page 171 and top of page 172. Bahá'u'lláh says: "...I beseech God, exalted be His glory, that He may graciously awaken the peoples of the earth, may grant that the **end of their conduct may be profitable unto them, ...**"

6. **Mr. 'Azíz Ismayn Yazdí** was the son of Áqá Muḥammad who was in turn the son of Hájí 'Abdu'r-Raḥím Qannád Yazdí. 'Azíz was born in Alexandria in 1909 to Bahá'í parents who had traveled to Alexandria as directed by Bahá'u'lláh. He did his early schooling in Egypt and then in Haifa and England and returned to Iran and he embarked on his pioneering spiritual adventure. During this period, Mr. Yazdi served as an Auxiliary Board member in Africa (was appointed in 1954), a Counsellor for Central and East Africa (was appointed in 1968), and as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa, and later of Kenya. His last pioneering place was Nairobi in Kenya. He was appointed to the International Teaching Center and served in that capacity from 1973 to 1988. He passed away on April 19, 2004.

Mr. 'Azíz Yazdí was given his name by 'Abdu'l-Bahá when the Master visited Alexandria in 1910. Later in 1919, 'Abdu'l-Bahá called Mr. Yazdi's family to Haifa and he was in the presence of the Master until His passing in 1921. It may be that the Yazdí family was one of the first few to be acquainted with the contents of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Mr. Yazdí studied banking in Egypt and electrical engineering in England. In 1941 he married Soraya Khamsí, with whom he had four children. Pursuing service to the Faith, Mr. Yazdí lived in a number of countries including Egypt, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Great Britain, Uganda, Kenya, Israel, and finally Canada.

'Alí M. Yazdí (1899-1978), brother of 'Azíz, a noted Bahá'í lecturer and writer, served on many national committees of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and was, for thirty years, chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Berkeley, California. Marion Carpenter Yazdí, whom he married in 1926.

In 1856, a youth by the name Shaykh 'Alí, only fourteen years old, came into contact with the new Faith, heard the Message and wholeheartedly accepted it. He was the eldest son of the well-to-do and highly respected

Hájí ‘Abdu'r-Rahím Yazdí. The family was alarmed. But Shaykh ‘Alí was ablaze. To distract him from the Bábí Faith, his family sent him to Kirmán with enough goods to start a business. The shop was successful but soon rumors floated back that he was meeting with the Bábís. ‘Abdu'r-Rahím went to Kirmán and brought him home. Throughout this difficult time when calumnies and persecutions heaped upon Bábís by their enemies, Shaykh ‘Alí displayed a kindness and fearlessness remarkable in a person so young. As time passed, his character, his behavior, his attitude and his actions gradually won over the whole family. One by one they joined the Faith. Now meetings were held in the Yazdí home though the need for secrecy remained paramount. Teachers came from other cities, each with new tales. Some who came from Baghdád spoke of Bahá'u'lláh. Later they came from Adrianople, and then from ‘Akká.

Hájí Muḥammad, who like his brother, Shaykh ‘Alí, had joined the Faith when he was fourteen, left for the Holy Land with a friend, a donkey, lots of faith and very little money. He and his companion set out to see Bahá'u'lláh and traveled over steep, rugged mountains and across hot, arid plains until they arrived in ‘Akká, around 1870. Shaykh ‘Alí, while still a young man, was sent by Bahá'u'lláh to Khartoum to help Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí. He stayed on to teach, and died there. Hájí ‘Abdu'r-Rahím, left Yazd after he had been tortured, beaten and bastinadoed. The story of this ‘precious soul’, as the Master called him, his arrival in ‘Akká, and his life there, is told with tender compassion by ‘Abdu'l-Bahá in Memorials of the Faithful. Each member of the Yazdí family was given an assignment by Bahá'u'lláh and sent out to accomplish it. Hájí Muḥammad, and two other youthful believers were sent to Egypt where they worked hard for many years and eventually built up a prosperous business. Through these believers--all young people--the Faith was first established in Alexandria, Cairo and Port Said. Although they were not free to openly teach the Faith, they were on good terms with the population and were generally well-liked and respected. Hájí Muḥammad was the son of Hájí ‘Abdu'r-Rahím, the father of ‘Azíz Yazdí, and son-in-law of Mr. ‘Alí Manshádí who was in turn a son of Hájí Ḥusayn Turk. (Extracted from Bahá'í World vol. 6, pp.499-501)

7. **Hájí Ḥusayn Turk** is maternal grandfather of ‘Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí and paternal grandfather of the ‘Azíz Yazdí'mohter. In this book there are a number of family trees which illustrate the relationship between the two families. For example refer to Ill. 2, Family Tree No. 1, page 19; and Ill. 3, Family Tree No. 2, page 22
8. **Tabriz:** It is a city in northwestern Iran, serving as the capital of East Ádhirbayján Province. It is the fifth-most-populous city in Iran. In the Quru River valley in Iran's historic Ádhirbayján region between long ridges of volcanic cones in the Sahand and Eynali mountains, Tabriz's elevation

ranges between 1,350 and 1,600 metres (4,430 and 5,250 ft) above sea level. The valley opens up into a plain that gently slopes down to the eastern shores of Lake Urumia, 60 kilometres (37 miles) to the west of Tabriz. With cold winters and temperate summers, Tabriz is considered a summer resort. It was named World Carpet Weaving City by the World Crafts Council in October 2015 and Exemplary Tourist City of 2018 by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

With a population of over 1.7 million (2016), Tabriz is the largest economic hub and metropolitan area in northwest Iran. The population is overwhelmingly Ádhirbayjáni who speak the Ádhirbayjáni language, though Persian is spoken by residents as a second language. Tabriz is a major heavy industries hub for automobiles, machine tools, refineries, petrochemicals, textiles and cement production industries. The city is famous for its handicrafts, including hand-woven rugs and jewellery. Local confectionery, chocolate, dried nuts and traditional Tabrizi food are recognised throughout Iran as some of the best. Tabriz is also an academic hub and a site for some of the most prestigious cultural institutes in Northwest Iran.

9. **Manshád:** is a village in Miyankuh Rural District, in the Central District of Mehriz County, Yazd Province, Iran. At the 2006 census, its population was 430. Manshád is located in the southwest of Yazd city in Iran. It has relatively pleasant climate in that region and it is located about 50 km south west of Yazd.

Details of the heart burning events of Yazd and the explanation of the martyrs of Manshád is extracted and translated from [TAY], p. 386 which appear below:

Manshád and its believers: Indeed Manshád is one of the places of Yazd for summer retreat, its distance from Yazd is about 36 km and it has a pleasant weather, and a place where one can see some greenery; it has nice views, has a cool water without salt and other minerals. Most people of Yazd for change of weather and environment during summer when Yazd is very hot go to Manshád. People of Manshád are very religious. Always the learned and holy people from Manshád, relative to other places between mountains, have been larger in number. For religious affairs other places are in need of Manshád and in public utilities such as public bath and mosque and Takíyyih and Ḥusayniyyih and Ruḏihkhaní, Manshád is far ahead of other places between mountains. At the beginning of the revelation of the Báb, the souls of all else save Him be a ransom for Him, a group of the learned and sanctified people accepted His faith and indeed at the beginning, in Yazd people turned to the Báb in less numbers compared to Manshád. Indeed Raḏíu'r-Rúḥ and his brothers, Ḥaḏrat-i Ákhúnd Mullá Ḥusayn and Ákhúnd Mullá 'Alí-Akbar and Mullá Bábáyí each one had the position of being the first to believe in Yazd. At the end, all four brothers and some of

their male children and grandchildren were martyred like Jináb-i Ákhúnd Mullá Ghafúr and Ḥaḍrat-i Ákhúnd Mullá Muḥammad who became martyrs. Others among the believers of Manshád were very religious, sanctified and spiritual like late Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn son of Áqá Siyyid Riḍá (whose story was related before travelled to Tabriz) and late Ḥaḍrat-i Shah Muḥammad Manṣhádi Amín-i Iláhi and others. Although all the calls are coming from the king that is Ḥaḍrat-i Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ who was indeed such an effective and holy person like of him is rare. One day this lowly one (Hájí Muḥammad Táhir Málmírí, the author TAY) had the honor of being in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and recalls Him saying that He liked Manṣhád, this was because of Jináb-i Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ. Now you may imagine the spiritual qualities and the enlightenment of the believers of Manshád. In recent upheaval (1903) in Yazd and surrounding areas; eighteen people were martyred in Yazd while in Manṣhád it was thirty people.

10. **Takíyyih** is a building used for worship and mourning in Islamic communities, including the observance of the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn, the third Imam for Shi'iah Muslims.
11. **Mecca:** Officially Makkah al-Mukarramah, and commonly shortened to Makkah is a city and administrative center of the Mecca Province of Saudi Arabia, and the holiest city in Islam. It is 70 km inland from Jeddah, a port on the Red Sea, in a narrow valley 277 m (909 ft) above sea level. Its last recorded population was 1,578,722 in 2015. Its estimated metro population in 2020 was 2.042 million, making it the third-most populated city in Saudi Arabia after Riyadh and Jeddah. Pilgrims more than triple this number every year during the Ḥajj pilgrimage, observed in the twelfth Hijri month of Dhul-Ḥijjah.

Mecca is reputedly the birthplace of the Islamic prophet Muḥammad. The Hira cave atop the Jabal al-Nur ("Mountain of Light") is just outside the city and where Muslims believe the Qur'án was first revealed to Muḥammad. Visiting Mecca for the Hajj is an obligation upon all able Muslims. The Great Mosque of Mecca, known as the Masjid al-Haram, is home to the Ka'bah, believed by Muslims to have been built by Abraham and Ishmael. It is one of Islam's holiest sites and the direction of prayer for all Muslims called qibla. Hajj is one of the fifth pillars of Islam and is binding for whoever is wealthy enough and has the means to do it.

In the Islamic view, the beginnings of Mecca are attributed to the Biblical figures, Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael. The civilization of Mecca is believed to have started after Ibráhím (Abraham) left his son Ismá'il (Ishmael) and wife Hájar (Hagar) in the valley. Some people from the Yemeni tribe of Jurhum settled with them, and Ismá'il reportedly married two women, one

after divorcing the first, on Ibráhím's advice. Ka'bah was built by Ibráhím but was destroyed several times and was rebuilt. Sometime in the 5th century AD, the Ka'bah was a place of worship for the deities of Arabia's pagan tribes. Mecca's most important pagan deity was Hubal, which had been placed there by the ruling Quraish tribe and remained until the Conquest of Mecca by Prophet Muḥammad. In the 5th century, the Quraish took control of Mecca, and became skilled merchants and traders. In the 6th century, they joined the lucrative spice trade, since battles elsewhere were diverting trade routes from dangerous sea routes to more secure overland routes. The Byzantine Empire had previously controlled the Red Sea. Another previous route that ran through the Persian Gulf via the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was also being threatened by exploitations from the Sassanid Empire, and was being disrupted by the Lakhmids, the Ghassanids, and the Roman–Persian Wars. Mecca's prominence as a trading center also surpassed the cities of Petra and Palmyra. The Sassanids however did not always pose a threat to Mecca, as in 575 AD they protected it from a Yemeni invasion, led by its Christian leader Abraha. The tribes of southern Arabia asked the Persian king Khusrau I for aid, in response to which he came south to Arabia with foot-soldiers and a fleet of ships near Mecca.

12. **Karbila:** Karbila or Karbala is a city located in Iraq, about 100 km south of Baghdad. It is a holy city for Shí'ih sect of Islam due to housing the shrine of Imam Ḥusayn, the third Imam of Shí'ih and a grandson of Prophet Muhammad. It was a desert without any settlement in the first century of Islam. The Battle of Karbala was fought on 10 October 680 (10 Muḥarram in the year 61 AH of the Islamic calendar) between the army of the second Umayyad Caliph Yazid the first and a small army led by Ḥusayn ibn 'Alí, the grandson of the Islamic Prophet Muḥammad, at that location which was a desert then.

Prior to his death, the Umayyad caliph Mu'áwiyah the first had nominated his son Yazid as his successor. Yazid's nomination was contested by the sons of a few prominent companions of Prophet Muḥammad, including Ḥusayn, the son of fourth Caliph 'Alí, and 'Abdu'llah ibn Zubayr, son of Zubayr ibn al-'Awam. Upon Mu'awíyah's death in 680 AD, Yazid demanded allegiance from Ḥusayn and other dissidents. Ḥusayn did not give allegiance and traveled from Medina to Mecca. The people of Kufa, an Iraqi garrison town and the center of 'Alí's caliphate, were averse to the Syria-based Umayyad caliphs and had a long-standing attachment to the house of 'Alí. They proposed Ḥusayn overthrow the Umayyads. On Ḥusayn's way to Kufa with a retinue of about 70 men, his caravan was intercepted by a 1,000-strong army of the caliph at some distance from Kufa. He was forced to head

north and encamp in the plain of Karbala on 2 October, where a larger Umayyad army of 4,000 men arrived soon afterwards. Negotiations failed after the Umayyad governor, Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, refused Ḥusayn a safe passage without submitting to his authority, a condition declined by Ḥusayn. Battle ensued on 10 October during which Ḥusayn was killed along with most of his relatives and companions, while his surviving family members were taken prisoner. It is believed that Imam Ḥusayn has been buried there. But his enemies ploughed the land to remove any trace of him. Years later, a shrine was built there and the sincere Shi‘iah go for pilgrimage which is considered a sign of devotion.

13. **Mashhad:** Is a city in the eastern province of **Khurásán** and its provincial capital. The importance of this city is due to the shrine of Imam Ridá, the eighth Imam of **Shi‘iah**. Whoever visits this shrine thinks that he would receive some benediction. Therefore people keep visiting this place several times in the course of their lives; repeated visits are a sign of devotion and consecration.
14. **A Tablet of visitation and supplication** for the two brothers who were sons of Hájí Zaynal could be found in Makátíb ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, vol. 3, page 261, as follows:

مناجات طلب مغفرت بجهت متصاعد الى الله آقا ابوالقاسم و فائز بقاء در مقعد صدق آقا محمد ابراهيم
منشادی علیهما بهاء الله الابهي
هو الله

الهي الهي انّ هذين الاخيرين السليبين الجليلين ينتسبان الى عبدك الذي لبي للنداء المرتفع من ملكوتك الاعلى وقال
ربنا اننا سمعنا منادياً ينادي للايمان ان آمنوا بربكم فامّنا ربنا فاغفر لنا ذنوبنا و ثبت ثبوت شوامخ الجبال و استقام
استقامة المخلصين على امرك يوم الوصال و خرج من وطنه مع سليله مقبلاً اليك متوكلاً عليك منجذباً بنفحات
اياك شاكراً على نعمائك و طوى الاودية و المهاد و قطع الخزون و الجبال و تحمّل كلّ مشقة و بلاء حتى سلّم
الروح في الطريق و تجرّع كأس الفداء الطافحة بالرحيق الانيق و اسلم الروح و هو متوقّد بنار الاشتياق منجذب الى
نير الافاق و ترك هذين السليبين الجليلين احدهما من سمى بابي القاسم الذي اخترته لخدمتك في الروضة الغناء و
جزيرتك الخضراء و كان في الليل و النهار يخدم الازهار و الاشجار و يسقي سفاية المسجد الحرام و لا يعرف
التعب و الملل و لا النصب و الكلال بل يواظب على الحديقة النوراء بكلّ تبذلّ و تضرع و ابتهاج و شقيقه الآخر
من سمى بابراهيم قام على خدمتك في الغدوّ و الاصل و لم يفتر في عبوديتك اثناء الليل و النهار و كان مواظباً على
الاشجار في الجنيّة التي شرفتها في امد منيد بسطوع الانوار ربّ أنّه كان قرير العين بمشاهدة الجمال و فرح القلب
و منشراح الصدر لاصغاء الخطاب الى أن اشتدّت الرزية الكبرى و تبدل النهار بالليله الظلماء و ناح المأوى الاعلى و
ضجّ ضجيج الثكلى طلعات القدس في الفردوس الاعلى و قد ثبت هذان الاخوان على عهدك و ميثاقك و لم يزل
قدمهما من عواصف الامتحان و قواصف الافتتان و خما عتيتك العليا بقلب خافق بحبك و لسان ناطق بذكرك و
دمع دافق من الحرمان و قلب مضطرب بنيران الحسرات الى أن تركا الحضيض الاننى و عرجا الى ملكوتك الأبهى

مستقيمين على أمرك ثابتين على عهدك منجنين بنفحاتك مرتلين لأياتك معتمدين على عفوك و غفرانك رب
 ارفع لهما الدرجات و أدخلهما فى ملكوت الاسماء و الصفات و اغرقهما فى بحر الرحمة فى بحبوحة الجنان و زد
 لهما الفضل و الاحسان و اجعلهما سراجين و هاجين فى زجاجة الملكوت و آيتين لامعتين بنور المغفرة فى عتبة
 اللاهوت اذك أنت الكريم اذك أنت الرحمن اذك أنت العفو الغفور لا اله الا أنت الكريم الوهاب ٢٦ رمضان

ع ١٣٣٧

Supplication seeking forgiveness for the one who hath ascended towards God, Áqá Abu'l-Qásim, and for the one who attained unto meeting Him in the seat of Truth, Áqá Muḥammad Ibráhím-i-Manshádí, the Glory of the Most Glorious be upon them.

He is God.

O My God! O My God! These two illustrious brothers are related to Thy servant who responded to the message which was raised from Thy Celestial Kingdom. He said: “O our Lord! we have indeed heard the voice of one that called. He called us to the faith – “Believe on your Lord” - and we have believed’¹ O our Lord! Forgive our sins, make us stand firm like lofty mountains, and enable us to remain steadfast with the steadfastness of them who are wholly devoted to Thy Cause in the day of union.” He forsook his homeland, together with his son, turning towards Thee, wholly relying upon Thee, attracted by the breezes of Thy days, and thankful for Thy favors. He travelled through valleys and plains, passed over hills and mountains, and endured every suffering and affliction until he surrendered his life upon the way, drank the chalice of sacrifice that was brimming with the choicest wine, and gave up his soul. He was aflame with the fire of longing and was attracted to the Daystar of the world. He left as a legacy these two distinguished sons, one of whom was known by the name Abu'l-Qásim, whom Thou didst choose for Thy service in Thy luxuriant garden and Thy Green Island.² He cared for the flowers and trees by day and by night; he watered the plants with such tender care as is reserved for the Sacred Mosque. He was heedless of toil, lethargy, fatigue or weariness; rather, he watched over the rose garden of splendour with the utmost devotion, lowliness, and fervour. The other brother, who was named Ibráhím, rose up in Thy service both morn and eve and wavered not in servitude to Thee whether in the day time or in the night season. He cared for the trees in Junaynih, a spot that was honored for many days by Thy shining presence shedding light upon it. O My God! His eyes were solaced by beholding Thy beauty; his heart found delight and his breast was dilated at hearkening to Thy call. He continued thus, until the Most Great Affliction occurred, whereupon day changed to darkest

night, the Concourse on high moaned, and the sanctified beings in the supreme heavens bitterly cried aloud. These two brothers stood firm in Thy Covenant and Testament; their feet did not falter by reason of the gales of trials and the whirlwinds of tests. Both served Thine exalted Threshold with hearts throbbing with Thy love and tongues uttering Thy mention, with tears streaming down because of their sorrows, and hearts burning with the fire of bereavement. And all this until they left the nether world and ascended unto the Abhá Kingdom, steadfast in Thy Cause, firm in Thy Covenant, attracted to Thy breezes, chanting Thy verses, and confident of Thy pardon and forgiveness. O My God! Elevate their stations and let them abide in the Kingdom of Names and Attributes. Immerse them in the ocean of Thy mercy in the midmost paradise, bestow upon them bounty and favors, make them two bright lights in the globe of Thy Kingdom, two signs shining with the light of forgiveness at the threshold of the unseen realm. Thou art verily the Generous. Thou art verily the Compassionate, the Merciful. Thou art verily the Pardoner, the Forgiver of sins. There is none other God save Thee, the Generous, the All-Bountiful. 26 Ramaḍán 1337 AH.

(Provisional translation by F.S. approved for publication by the BWC)

Notes

1. This is a verse from the Qur'án: 'O our Lord! we have indeed heard the voice of one that called. He called us to the faith - 'Believe on your Lord' - and we have believed'. ' Qur'án 3:193(Rodwell translation)
 2. Garden of Riḍván in 'Akká.
15. **Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Darábí's visit to Yazd:** In the Dawn-Breakers, there is no mention of Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Darábí's visit to Yazd prior to his travel to Shiraz for meeting the Báb. (Refer to pages 172-177 of the Dawn-Breakers). Probably this is taken from other history books. After his travel to Shiraz and believing in the Báb, he did not go back to Yazd either. He travelled to Burujird to see his father, Siyyid Ja'far Kashfí, in order to give him the message of the new Faith. Siyyid Ja'far became a believer but openly did not disclose his belief. He never opposed the Báb nor did he say a negative thing about Him. Siyyid Yaḥyá returned to Yazd in the month of March 1850. He proclaimed the Faith openly and people gathered around him and this was the time when Hájí Husayn Turk and Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ became believers. Siyyid Yaḥyá travelled to Nayriz from Yazd and many great souls in Nayriz and surrounding areas accepted the message of the new religion which he was proclaiming.

16. This poem is from Ṣádiq-i Tafrishī with the pen name Ṣádiq (1160 A.H. & 1747 A.D)

بر وزن مثنوی مولوی (بحر رمل مسدس مقصور)، اثر آقا صادق تفرشی متخلص به صادق (1160ق/1747م). این منظومه از نوع مثنویهایی است که در ادبیات فارسی به نام سوزوگداز شهرت یافته‌اند. در پاره‌ای از کتابهای نام منظومه صادق تفرشی را سوز و گداز نیز دانسته و ضبط کرده‌اند.

17. There is no evidence that Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí returned to Yazd after attaining the presence of the Báb in Shiraz in 1845. The book: the Dawn-Breakers is silent on this issue and mentions that he travelled from Shiraz to Burújird to meet his father. His father was one the most eminent learned of his time, Siyyid Ja‘far Kashfī, in order to convey the message of the new Revelation to him. Apparently, Siyyid Yaḥyá sent his assessment of the claims of the Báb from Shiraz to Mírzá Luṭf-‘Alí Khán, the court chamberlain, to be conveyed to the king. He did not return to Yazd to proclaim the claim of the Báb until 1850. Refer to the Dawn-Breakers page 177.

18. **Ákhúnd Mullá Riḍá -i- Manshádi (Raḍíu‘r-Rúḥ)** ([TAY], pp. 38-42)

Mullá Riḍá Manshádi was one of the believers of Bábí dispensation who pledged his allegiance to Vahíd and later accepted the Bahá‘í Faith. Bahá‘u’lláh bestowed upon him the title (appellation) of Raḍíu‘r-Rúḥ. He was a learned and pious man, highly skilled in the Science of Medicine, Islamic Jurisprudence, Philosophy and Literature. Additionally, he was highly talented in the art of Persian calligraphy. He had three brothers. All three brothers accepted the Faith and during the massacre of 1903 in Yazd, in which nearly one hundred believers were martyred, all these three brothers were among the martyrs. Raḍíu‘r-Rúḥ’s brothers, Áqá Mullá Ḥusayn and Mullá ‘Alí-Akbar were also among the learned ones. Their father was renowned Mullá Ḥájí Muḥammad Muṭṭahid of Manshád. The entire family became Bahá‘í as a result of his accepting the Faith. Late Mullá Ḥájí Muḥammad was not very active in the Faith.

Progressively life become hard for them as being Bahá‘ís and the government was planning to arrest him along with his brothers, hence Raḍíu‘r-Rúḥ and brothers had no option save leaving the town for Shiraz. Instead, authorities detained their father and although he was very respected in Miyan-kuh and Manshád, nevertheless with abuse, insult and humiliation, he was taken to Banádak. There he was interrogated but he did not respond and kept quiet. While Deputy Governor grew angry, people who were in the gathering asserted that Mullá Ḥájí Muḥammad was among

respected Mujtahids in town and should not have been treated with indignity. Obviously, he was insulted and that's why he was silent. The Deputy Governor offered apologies and permitted him to leave. He did not utter any word in the meeting and finally returned to Manshád. After sometimes Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ and brothers returned from Shiraz. As Manshád was not a safe place for him, he lived in hiding. Occasionally at night he went to Mehriz and stayed at Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad Baqir's residence. In those days, life was extremely hard for friends and some of the believers were living in hiding, some were arrested and a great number killed and martyred.

When news came that the Bábí leadership had established itself in Baghḍád after 1852, many of the Bábís of the area travelled there. Several of them stayed while others returned bringing the news that it was not Mírzá Yahyá, rather it was Bahá'u'lláh who had won their respect and admiration in Baghḍád. Among those who returned were Mullá Muhammad-Ridá Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ Manshádí. Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ hid in the caves of mountains of Manshád for four and half years. Three years and seven months of that time, he lived in a cave on the summit of a mount known as Murád-'Alí. Except his brother, Áqá Mullá Bábí, no one else had any idea of his whereabouts. Once in a few days with great caution in the middle of the night, some food was taken to him. After sometimes, few people found out about his hiding place on the mountain, therefore he changed his place and lived in a cave near Turks' farms on the southern side of the mountain for thirteen months. Gradually the intensity of calamities subsided. He, then went to Mehriz for few days and stayed in the house of Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad Báqir until such a time that he travelled to Baghḍad for the purpose of attaining the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. After staying some time in Baghḍád, Bahá'u'lláh asked him to go back to Yazd. Finally, when he arrived in Manshád, started his medical practice. Gradually his practice became famous for quality treatment and people from far and wide used to come to Manshád for medical advice. For this reason, he became very popular and also started teaching the Faith to those who were ready. As a result, some prominent people accepted the Faith. However, his brothers along with few other Bahá'ís were captured because being Bahá'ís and taken to Tezerjan which was the administrative centre for the area and were detained for few days. After extortion of some money from them, which was based on their wealth, they were released.

Martyrdom: After taking leave from the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghḍád, Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ left for Yazd. He visited some friends for few days in that city, then went to Manshád and started his medical practice. After a

while when the fame of his expertise spread, Hájí Rasúl Mehrizi, who was the administrative head in charge as well as the governor and head of police of Manshád and Miyan-kuh sent a messenger to Rađíu'r-Rúh that they had a patient who needed treatment. He was requested to go there. The note that the governor sent to him was very respectful, saying his patient was bed ridden and was needed urgently. It appeared that Rađíu'r-Rúh intuitively felt the threat as he said this journey was dangerous for him. He briefly gave final instruction to his family and left for Mehriz. When he mounted, his mule did not move forward and actually was moving backward. The animal started to cause trouble. He addressed the mule saying: "Do you want to kill me here, it is too early, wait until we arrive in Mehriz." Finally, after arriving in Mehriz, he directly went to Hájí Rasúl's residence. Respectfully, he was given a place in the guest room and a message was sent to the inner quarter of residence that Ákhúnd Mullá Riđá -i- Manshádi has arrived.

Immediately a cup of tea dozed with poison was sent to him. He murmured what a unique refreshment Hájí Rasúl has offered him! Any way he drank the tea as he knew if he did not drink that tea, naturally he was going to be killed in another way. While his younger brother, Áqá Bábáyi was in his company, however he asked Hájí Rasúl's servant to pack the carpet as it might become dirty and should leave the room. He did so. It took until two hours in the morning that he passed away. His body was taken away on the back of the same mule and buried in Manshád cemetery. His martyrdom took place in the year 1284 A.H. (1867). Towards the end of His life, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, revealed a detailed Tablet of visitation in his honour. The original copy of the said Tablet in His handwriting is in Tíhrán in the possession of Áqá Mirzá Hádi Khán, the son of Rađíu'r-Rúh. After sometime, 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructed Hájí Amín to raise the grave of Rađíu'r-Rúh in an excellent style and engrave a particular verse revealed by Him on his tombstone. Hájí Amin wrote to Manshád and left the construction of the grave to late Hájí 'Alí Muḥammad Manshádi. Although Hájí 'Alí was the police head and contact point in Manshád but Hájí Ḥusayn-'Alí Manshádi and few trouble makers were against him. He said that he has no objection to embark on the building but he was afraid that Hájí Ḥusayn-'Alí and other trouble makers might stop him or after the construction of the tomb, they may destroy it. On that day, the writer (Haji Tahir Malmiri) was in Manshád and was planning to leave but he stayed the night as Spiritual Assembly had an extra-ordinary session; they invited Hájí 'Alí-Muḥammad to consult with. After discussion Hájí 'Alí said, although everyone knew to what extent Hájí Ḥusayn-'Alí and trouble makers were moving against him

but if the Assembly decided to build it, he also was ready. ([TAY], pp. 38-42) also refer to [ROB-e], vol. I, p. 85)

19. In the month of March 1850, Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí's was in Yazd proclaiming the Cause of God and giving the news of the New Revelation. For his activities and events refer to Dawn-Breakers page 466.
20. **Navváb-i-Raḍaví** was the cleric in Yazd who stirred up the people and the government against Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí. In the book Dawn-Breaker we read: "The leading 'ulamás and notables of the city all came on that day to greet him and to offer their best wishes. Navváb-i-Raḍaví, the meanest and most prominent among his adversaries, was present on that occasion, and maliciously hinted at the extravagance and splendour of that reception. "The Sháh's imperial banquet," he was heard to remark, "can scarcely hope to rival the sumptuous repast you have spread before us. I suspect that in addition to this national festival which to-day we are celebrating, you commemorate another one besides it." Vahíd's bold and sarcastic retort provoked the laughter of those who were present. All applauded, in view of the avarice and wickedness of the Navváb, the appropriateness of his remark. The Navváb, who had never encountered the ridicule of so large and distinguished a company, was stung by that answer. The smouldering fire which he nourished in his mind against his opponent now blazed forth with added intensity, and impelled him to satisfy his thirst for revenge." (The Dawn-Breakers, [TDB] p. 466)
21. **Mullá Ḥusayn** was the older brother of Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ (for a short report of his life see Endnote number 18)
The atrocities on the believers of Manshád was tremendous. As a sample, we have extracted and translated an event in Manshád from TAY as appears below:
"Under any event, in those days every day there was a wrongdoing and mischief. Some days enemies would attack and the friends observed wisdom and reduce the number of meetings and as much as possible would not pass through the main streets and the shopping centre. Once in a while the enemies became busy with their own affairs and forgot all about the friends and this would allow them to hold more meetings and lead more people along the straight path. In those days during one summer, Navváb-i-Raḍaví came to Manshád in the farm of Ráḥat-Ábád in the house of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥasan Shirazi. The next day, he sent his men to bring before him some of the prominent believers and he was sitting in the hall of the building near the entrance and was conversing in utmost vain with a few of Mullás of Manshád and trouble makers when they brought some of the

believers and made them stand outside in front of the building. He did not pay any attention to them for half an hour and continued talking to Mullás and trouble makers who were sitting in front of him. Then he looked at them with anger and said introduce them to him. They introduced them to him one by one. The last person was Áqá Hájí Siyyid Taqí Manshádi who was introduced. He said that this Hájí Áqá Siyyid Taqí is so ugly whom I do not want to see again, and that sent him away from Manshád. They pulled him and took him away instantly and exiled him. Then he ordered that others be beaten on their heads and ordered to open their shawl (1) and turbans and put them around their necks and to pulled them along the path around the big pool. These wronged ones were: Haḍrat-i Ákhúnd Mullá Ḥusayn, the older brother Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ; Haḍrat-i Ákhúnd Mullá Ali-Akbar the other brother; Haḍrat-i Ákhúnd Mullá Áqá Bá báyi, the youngest brother of Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ; Haḍrat-i Áqá Muḥammad, the son of Mullá Aḥmad, the paternal cousin of Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ; Haḍrat-i Áqá Siyyid Taqí, the second person by this name, and his father Áqá Siyyid Aḥmad; Haḍrat-i Áqá Muḥammad Ḥusayn known as Turk and Hájí Zaynal turk his brother. They tied the shawl(1) each one of them around his own neck of were circling them around the pool, they had given the task of beating on the head of these wronged ones to a man who was walking behind them. This continued for half an hour, at this time someone by the name Riḍá son of Ḥusayn-‘Alí Manshádi who was very rude, was thinking of himself to be one of the men of Navváb Raḍaví went, murmured something in the ear of Navváb and came down. Then he said that bring these people near him, and that you should open the shawl from around their necks because I have arranged the matter with Navváb. So they removed the shawls and brought them near Riḍá son of Ḥusayn-‘Alí, then he murmured something in the ear of each one of them to this effect that for each one to pay a sum of ten tumans and some of them less and some others higher than this amount and asked them to pay. Those helpless people accepted the deal. He wanted something on top of that for himself. Then he asked for surety and after that they were released to go home and pay the required amount. All paid up and they became free. Áqá Siyyid Taqí did not return to Manshád; he started his journey to the Holy Land and was able to serve the Master. (Extracted and translated from [TAY], pp. 113-114).

For the details of the martyrdom of Ákhúnd Mullá Ḥusayn, see Endnote number 23.

(1) Shawl: A long piece of cloth wound by men as a belt round the waist; sash, scarf.

22. Refer to page 386 “*Tárikh* Amrí Yazd [TAY]” reported and quoted by Haji Muhammad Tahir Malmiri when he was on pilgrimage. In page 386 TAY, Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí has written that when he was on pilgrimage

to the Holy Land, he recalled the Blessed Beauty saying that He loved Manshád because of Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ.

23. **Ákhúnd Mullá Ḥusayn** (martyrdom): One of the sanctified souls who deserves every kind of praise is Ḥaḍrat-i Ákhúnd Mullá Ḥusayn the older brother of Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ. His age reached eighty five but he was very weak. His throat was very narrow from childhood to the extent that he had difficulty swallowing one grain of lentil. Always he would eat liquid food and it would take two hours to finish. Despite such physical limitation, he endured lots of hardship in the path of the Cause of God. At the end, Ḥájí Siyyid Mírzá, the Imam who leads Friday prayers, in the public bath of Manshád twisted the breechcloth, made it wet to become heavier, and started beating it upon the body of Mullá Ḥusayn such that he almost fainted and some people had to carry him away from the public bath and delivered him to his family at his house. At home he went straight to bed and he could not control members of his body anymore and became paralyzed. He was in this condition for sometime until he passed away.

All the sacrifices that the people of Yazd have made are because of the Blessed Beauty and in the second degree because of the Afnáns in Yazd. My pen and utterance cannot adequately describe what Afnáns have done in Yazd for the Faith. Although to the letter, they have not taught the Faith to anyone, but with their morals, deeds and behaviour; this lowly servant is unable to describe their noble action. The presence of majestic enlightened group of believers in Yazd is the manifest signs of their behaviour. Their very existence in Yazd has been the cause of turning many people to the Faith. High and low have testified that these blessed souls are manifest signs, uplifted banners, pure lineage and the source of felicity, chastity and faithfulness. Although they would not cry out outwardly to their belief, however all the people of Yazd were certain that they were Bahá'ís and they were the twigs of the Blessed tree (Extracted and translated from TAY, pp. 132-133)

24. **An-Najaf**, just 19 miles from Babylon and in the geographic neighbourhood of the “cradle of civilization,” was founded in 791AD when it was chosen as the final burial place of one of the "Twelve Imams," ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Martyr of Mihrab, Commander of the Faithful. He was the 4th Caliph of Islam, cousin of the prophet Muḥammad and the 1st Imam of Shí'ih Islam. Najaf is one of the sacred cities of Iraq, the Door of the Greatest Prophet's Knowledge, the capital of his jurisprudence, the son of the Ka'aba. It is also a source of (marjaiyyah) authority and (taqlid) imitation acting according to that authority, a cradle of scientific and literary movements, mother of sciences, piety, poetry, and (jihad) holy war.

THE LOCATION OF THE CITY: Najaf is located on the edge of the western plateau of Iraq, at southwest of Baghdad the capital city of Iraq, with 160

km far from the capital. It is almost 70 meters above sea level, and is situated on the longitude of 19 degrees and 44 minutes, as well as on the latitude of 31 degrees and 59 minutes. This city is bordered from north and northwest by Karbala city (which is 80 km far from the city), and from the east by Kufah city (which is 10 km far from the city).

FOUNDATION : Indeed, nowadays Najaf is the same Najaf Al-Kufah. Ancient time there was an Arabian town in which they spread the Christian monasteries in the city before the Islamic conquer, but the city changed and became a big city, its range was expanded and its inhabitants became crowded, this is because of the existence of Imam Ali's holy shrine which gave the city a mark of holiness and respect. The city then became a center of religious leadership along with a resort of scientific figures. Najaf is an Arabic name, which has been derived from (Al-Manjuf), its plural is Najaaf (means a place where water can not overtop), because it is a highland similar to a hill which it used to block or prevent water to things close to it. Also the word Najaf refer to a hill. Najaf was given various names one of which is Zahurul Kufah.

THE EXPANSION AND CONSTRUCTION: In the year 170 A.H. after the appearance of Commander of Faithful Imam Ali's holy shrine, Najaf became a city with a big number of buildings, as the constructional work of the city continued gradually until it became a well developed city. Constructional works of Najaf is divided into 3 stages:

FIRST: Construction stage of the Buwaihi State which extended from year 338 A.H. until 9th century of Hijri, which represents a prosperity and vigor of Najaf, whereas he built a first fence, surrounded the city, then Abu Muhammed bin Sahlaan Alwazir Al-Buwaihi built the second fence in year 400 A.H.

SECOND: This stage which occurred between 9th century A.H. until the middle of 13th century A.H. In this period, the buildings of the city became old and its brilliance disappeared, due to the war between Turks and Persians.

THIRD: This is the last stage which began from the middle of the 13th century A.H. when splendor and promotion returned to the city. Meanwhile, many constructional, cultural, and service changes occurred after the district became subsidiary to the Karbala province.

- Between year 550 A.H.- 656 A.H. Abbasid Caliph An-Naasir Li Deenillah, paid a great attention to the city. The construction work included repairing of Imam Ali's holy shrine.
- The domestic Company founded a railway in year 1325 A.H. which connected the city with Kufah.

- In year (1325 A.H. / 1908 A.D.) A Railway was set up by a national company which connects between Najaf and Kufah.
- In year 1348 A.H. / 1929 A.D. Najaf connected to the Kufah by water pipes, as pumps were also installed to push water to it. While before the city was depending on canal, wells and small rivers to take its water from Furat River which is far from the city.
- In year 1350 A.H. / 1931 A.D. during the period of the successor Sayyid Ja'far Hamandi, the regional government opened five doors in the city fence and planned for a wide square in the southern part of the city, then the merchants and inhabitants of the city began to build palaces, houses, coffeehouses, gardens, and shops.
- The city Emirs established various schools, gardens, and parks, and a wide hospital. This new district was called (Al-Ghaziya) which was derived from the name of the king Ghazi.
- Railway was taken away in the year 1948 A.H. When it became easier for the cars to carry people between Najaf and Kufah as the road is made between them.

It is the capital of Najaf Governorate. It is widely considered amongst the holiest cities of Shia Islam and one of its spiritual capitals, whilst also remaining the center of Shia political power in Iraq.

Summarized from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Al-Najaf>

25. **Hájí Husayn Turk** was very brave, steadfast and committed to the protection of the friends of God. We will quote a few of such instances from the published literature which clearly demonstrates such qualities:

Hájí Husayn Turk's visit to Bághdád: Translated from the book “Zuhúr'ul-Haqq”, vol. 3, page 194:

“Áqá Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí Nahrí along with his nephew and Áqá Mírzá Muḥammad Ḥasan from Isfahan reached Bághdád and returned after a while and took along the musk laden breezes from Iraq with them. In this way people like Áqá Muḥammad Javád Farhádí, Mírzá Muṣṭafá Naráqí, Mullá Muḥammad Ridá Raḍíu'r-Rúḥ, Áqá Siyyid ‘Abdu'l-Báqí Káshí, Shátir Ridá Ardikání with Hájí Husayn Turk and Áqá Husayn Hájí Rajab Manshádí one after another travelled to Bághdád, benefited from the divine knowledge, and returned to their homeland.”

In “Tárikh Amrí Yazd [TAY]” pp. 170 and 171, the following account has been recorded which has been translated and shown below:

“Another one of the brave and audacious believers was Hádírat-i Hájí Muḥammad-Husayn Turk Manshádí who was one the earlier believers (from the time of the Báb). One day, he was passing

through the street of Manshád, all of a sudden workers of Shaykh Muḥammad Sabzivári arrested him and took him away to the house of the Shaykh. Shaykh told him how is that you, Ḥájí Ḥusayn, understood the return of Imam Ḥusayn while myself having much knowledge did not get it? He answered without any hesitation: “look what happened when Abú Dhar became a believer during the time of Muḥammad while Abú Jahl with all his knowledge did not?” Shaykh became very agitated and angry then ordered to scourge him with many whip lashes and ordered him to be locked up in a room then he informed Ibráhim Khan, the governor of Yazd. The government people came, took him away to the government house; the governor ordered him to be imprisoned for forty days. Then he asked him to pay a sum as penalty and after the payment he was released. There were three brothers: Ḥájí Zaynal, Áqá Ḥasan and Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ḥusayn. They were known as Turks and were very sanctified souls. They were not amongst the men of learning but they were the essence of the love of God. After the martyrdom of the seven martyrs of Yazd, Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ḥusayn travelled to Tīhrán and stood in front of the carriage of Náṣiri’-d-Dín Sháh and said O king! Have you ever heard that anyone has given the care and protection of his flock of sheep to a wolf? And started crying such that he made all those who were around him very sad and disturbed. The king asked repeatedly what had happened. The old man who was overwhelmed by crying was unable to mutter a word. At the end when he gained his composure said: “which sins did the people of Yazd commit that the Point of Adoration of the world (Náṣiri’-d-Dín Sháh) dominated Jalálu’-d-Dawlih over them?” He asked: “What did he do, O aged man?” He said: “This wolf tore apart the divine flock of lamb. They cut off the head of seven men in one day. There was not any act of tyranny that he did not commit. A learned man of seventy years of age he murdered with his own hand with bullets from his gun. There was not any crime that he did not commit. He plundered the property of the people.” He continued with his explanation while he was crying. As a result of his action, Náṣiri’-d-Dín Sháh deposed Jalálu’-d-Dawlih. Then he returned to Yazd. He was a true gentleman. The sons of the Ḥájí Zayanl were: Áqá Abu’l-Qásim who was the gardener of the garden of Ridván in ‘Akká until his last breath; and the other son was Áqá Muḥammad Ibráhím who was serving the Ancient Beauty in the blessed House from the time he was a youth until the end of his life. The family of these three brothers were engaged in serving the cause in Manshád, the Holy Land, and Egypt:

they were true believers and the servant of humanity. One of them was late Áqá ‘Alí-Muḥammad, the son of Áqá Ḥasan Turk who was the Sheriff of Manṣhád for twenty five years while he was in charge of the town no body dared to harm the Bahá’ís particularly he protected the survivors of the martyrs. Members of his family, specially Áqá ‘Alí-Akbar, his eldest son, protected the friends of God in Manṣhád.”

In the book: “Zuhúr’u’l-Haq [ZHQ]”, vol. 5, pp. 263-264, the following account has been recorded which is being translated and shown below:

“Atrocities in Manṣhád in 1299 AH (1882): In Manṣhád through the mischief of Navváb-i Raḍaví and agitation and incitement of mullás, the enemies of the Faith and hoodlums started to harm the friends. At the beginning they started with the believers who were meek and low profile in the society and heaped upon them all kinds of verbal abuse and belittling them. Then they became bolder, started plundering their houses and properties, and to set in fire some houses. Some of these people had to flee to other regions and some went to Shiraz some to Tihrán and others to Rafsanjan, Kirman, Bavánát and Abádih. Hájí Ḥusayn Turk with three others went to Isfahan and others who could not go away stayed on and accepted all the hardship. Hájí Ḥusayn Turk with his companions tried to plead to the government and to demand justice. One day they stood on the way of Zilu's-Sultán waiting for him to show up and as soon as the prince drew near to them Hájí raised his hand up for pleading for justice, moaned and groaned. He complained about the tyranny and oppression of the ruling class, and complained that the governor is turning blind eyes to their atrocities thereby allowing them to do whatever they wanted. Zilu's-Sultán pulled the bridle of his horse and stopped and said: “Hey old man, what has happened?” Hájí Ḥusayn Turk said: “I am nearly eighty years of age and am known for years with the name Bábí. How would it be possible to change such reputation? Also this is the case with many other people of Manṣhád. Now if we deserve to be killed please order they kill us all at once, otherwise you should produce an atmosphere of tranquillity and peace so that we pray for your good health and well being.” The prince consoled him and told him to go to the government house the next day so that he would make arrangements for his affairs and those of others. The next day Hájí and companions went to the government house and complained about Navváb-i Raḍaví. The prince sent a telegram to Ibrahim Khalil who was the governor on his behalf to this

effect that it would appear that the rule of Yazd is in the palm of others and if it is not the case why is it that the subjects have dispersed and fled to the countryside? You have to bring well being and peace to Manshád and those who have oppressed others should be punished and then wrote an edict and gave it to them to take along and submit it to the governor as follows: “ You have to console the wronged ones of Manshád and protect them from the mischief of the oppressors and punish the evil doers.” Hájí Husayn took the edict and returned to Yazd and gave it to Ibrahim Khalil, the governor. The governor had no other choice but to punish a few of evil-doers and made it illegal for anyone to bother them. This was the cause of the further enmity of tyrants; Mírzá Imam jum‘ih made a new plot against the faithful. At midnight he fired some rounds in the air from his pistol and started shouting so that the neighbours would gather around him and he put the blame on the Bahá’ís whom he claimed wanted to kill him.”

26. **Náṣiri’d-Dín Sháh** was the Sháh of Qájár, Iran from 5 September 1848 to 1 May 1896 when he was assassinated. He was the son of Muḥammad Sháh Qájár and Malik Jahán Khanum and the third longest reigning monarch in the Iranian history after Shapúr II of the Sassanid dynasty and Tahmasp I of the Safavid Dynasty.

Born: July 16, 1831, Tabriz, Iran

Buried: May 2, 1896, Shah ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím shrine, Tīhrán, Iran

Assassinated: May 1, 1896, Tīhrán, Iran

Children: Muẓaffari’d-Dín Sháh Qajar, and others

Náṣiri’d-Dín Sháh, (born July 16, 1831, near Tabriz, Iran—died May 1, 1896, Tīhrán), Shah of Iran (1848–96) who began his reign as a reformer but became increasingly conservative, failing to understand the accelerating need for change or for a response to the pressures brought by contact with the West. Although a younger son of Muḥammad Shah, Náṣiri’d-Dín Sháh was named heir apparent through the influence of his mother. Serious disturbances broke out when he succeeded to the throne on his father’s death in 1848, but these were quelled through the efforts of his chief minister, Mírzá Taqi Khan. Under Taqi Khan’s influence, Náṣiri’d-Dín Sháh began his rule by instituting a series of needed reforms. Taqi Khan, however, was later forced from power by his enemies, who included Náṣiri’d-Dín’s mother, and was disgraced, imprisoned, and finally murdered. In 1852 an attempt was made on Náṣiri’d-Dín Sháh’s life by two Bábís; he responded with a fierce, cruel, and prolonged persecution of the members of this religion. Unable to regain territory lost to Russia in the early 19th century, Náṣiri’d-Dín Sháh sought compensation by seizing Herat, Afghanistan, in 1856. Great Britain regarded the move as a threat to British India and declared war on Iran, forcing the return of Herat as well as Iranian

recognition of the kingdom of Afghanistan. Násiri'd-Dín Sháh was effective in certain areas. He introduced telegraph and postal services, built roads, opened the first school offering education along Western lines, and launched Iran's first newspaper. He visited Europe in 1873, 1878, and 1889 and was impressed with the technology he saw there. In the later years of his rule, however, he steadfastly refused to deal with the growing pressures for reforms. He also granted a series of concessionary rights to foreigners in return for large payments that went into his own pockets. In 1872 popular pressure forced him to withdraw one concession involving permission to construct such complexes as railways and irrigation works throughout Iran. In 1890 he made an even greater error in granting a 50-year concession on the purchase, sale, and processing of all tobacco in the country, which led to a national boycott of tobacco and the withdrawal of the concession. This last incident is considered by many authorities to be the origin of modern Iranian nationalism. Increasingly unpopular among various Iranian factions, Násiri'd-Dín Sháh was assassinated in Tíhrán by a follower of Jamál'ul- Dín Afghání.

27. **Jalálu'd-Dawlih:** Sulṭán Ḥusayn Mírzá entitled Jalálu'd-Dawlih (1868 – 1913) was a grandchild of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh and a son of prince Mas'ud Mírzá entitled Zilu's-Sulṭán who was in turn the son of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh and Hamdam'ul-Mulk (Kawkab'u-Dawlih daughter of Mírzá Taqí khan Amir Kabir.) Zilu's-Sulṭán who was the governor of Isfahan and ruled almost half of Iran, appointed his son Sulṭán Ḥusayn Mírzá, Jalálu'd-Dawlih, to the position of the governor of Yazd (1890 – 1892). In this period the martyrdom of the seven martyrs of Yazd took place (1891). This was due to the fatwa given by the clergy and the whole-hearted support by the governor. Shortly after this, due to complains about his rule and poor management of the affairs of the city he was removed from the office. However, he was appointed once again to the governorship of Yazd in 1903-1905. During his second tenure, the horrendous events of the martyrdom of nearly one hundred Bahá'ís in Yazd and surrounding villages took place with utmost cruelty by unruly mobs instigated by the clergy. The governor was so weak that could not intervene or it was not to his advantage to stop the clergy. In the Writings he is referred to as the “Tyrant of the land of Ya” (refer to the Tablet of the World and other Tablets). After he was deposed, numerous individuals claimed that he owed them large sums of money and they established it by genuine documents that he could not reject or deny and also he was not in a position to pay his debt. One of them was a Bahá'í by the name Mullá Bahrám. During the reign of Muhammad-'Alí Sháh he supported the constitutionalists. The king sent him to Europe in exile. He was in Geneva with his brother and father when they met 'Abdu'l-Bahá; he

repented from his past cruel action against the Bahá'ís and tried to put the blame on others. Refer to the memoirs of the Juliet Thompson for 28 August 1911. He passed away in 1913.

28. **Martyrdom of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn son of Báqir:** Details of events that lead to the martyrdom of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn son of Báqir entitled Sham‘ush-Shuhadá have been reported in the following books:

- (i) Yádnámih Bayḍayi Núrá, [YBN] pp. 123-130, 135-136, 146-147
- (ii) Táríkh Shuhadáyi Yazd [TSY], pp. 508-514.
- (iii) Táríkh Amrí Yazd [TAY], pp. 162, 235-244

The following is a summary which is translated from: Táríkh Amrí Yazd [TAY], p.162. “**Haji Muḥammad Ḥusayn son of Báqir:** A brief history of the life of Ḥaḍrat-i Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn son of Báqir is as follows that after he accepted the Faith, he had no rest. Day and night, he was constantly arranging meetings for the loved ones of God either in town or in the farm of Mihdi -Ábád. He was so ablaze with the fire of the Cause of God which he could not sit still for a moment. He was busy transcribing Tablets. His hand-writing was not so good but there are many manuscripts of the Tablets available with the friends in his hand-writing. This kind of life continued until he moved to ‘Abbás-Ábád and became busy with the work of the management of the farm and yet he spent considerable length of time for the service to the faith and he was there when his martyrdom took place.”

29. It seems there is a little exaggeration here. Probably several hundred, instead of several thousand, is more accurate statement.
30. **Mullá Bahrám Akhtar-Khávarí:** The life history of Mullá Bahrám Akhtar-Khávarí, or in short Mullá Bahrám, is recorded in Maṣábíḥ-i-Hidáyat, [MAH] vol 4, pages 376-446; it is presented here in very condensed form. Mullá Bahrám should be regarded as the foremost Bahá'í teacher from Zoroastrian background. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says in a Tablet something to the effect that Mullá Bahrám is the mercy of God and a bounty of the Lord; you should appreciate him greatly (To see the tablet, refer to [MAH], vol 4, p. 377). His name was Bahrám, his father’s name Bahman, his grandfather’s name Jamshíd. He was borne in 1275 AH (1858) in Maryam-Ábád, Yazd; his mother’s name was Sultán khánum Máhyár. As he grew older, he followed the profession of farming but followed rigorously the religion of his ancestors which was Zoroastrian. He was not fanatical about it; he was meditating deeply on the contents of the text of the Zoroastrian Scriptures. Soon he realized that the advent of some holy beings had been prophesied: Húshidar Máh, Húshidar Búmi, Sháh Bahrám Varjávand and Dustúr

Pashútān, so he was always in search of new ideas. Mírzá Isá khán, one of minister of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh asked the government of Yazd to send seven Zoroastrian of Yazd to Tíhrán for the advancement of a farm; Mullá Bahrám was one them; he was considered an expert in shooting rifle, in development of domestic animals and in agriculture. He heard about the name of Faith for the first time in Yazd when one of the believers was martyred, then in Tíhrán he heard the name again. After finishing his work in Tíhrán, he travelled to Kashán to work for Kaykhusru Khudádád who was a Bahá'í. His employer found him fair in his views and genuinely interested in seeking the truth, so he started teaching him the Faith. This was the first time that he came in contact with the history and teachings of the Faith. After two and a half years he returned to Yazd and met Mullá Qalandar then a bond of friendship developed between them and in the meantime he heard more about the Faith. Finally, Hájí Muḥammad-Táhir Málmírí had serious, deep and long discussions with him in 1301 AH (1884) which lead to his acceptance of the Faith. From this point onwards he was on fire and wherever he went he started the conversation about the Faith. He brought so many of the fellow Zoroastrian into the Faith. When he read the Lawhí Mánikhí (Manekji) Šáhib, the fire of love of God in his heart inflamed, he forgot totally about himself. The first opposition came, from inside his family, from his wife until she passed away a few years later. Mullá Bahrám was a witness to the events of seven martyrs of Yazd. Dustúr Tir-Andaz was one of the learned in the Zoroastrian community of Yazd and was aware of his association with the Bahá'ís and tried to harm him. So Mullá Bahrám travelled to Bombay for one year to allow the enmity to cool off. Upon his return, he was chosen as one of the members of the Anjuman-i Náṣiri, a quasi government organization to look after the interests of Zoroastrians. For the second time he went to Bombay. When he returned, Afnans made arrangements such that Jalálu'd-Dawlih to meet Mullá Bahrám. In 1320 (1902) about one year before the great massacre of Bahá'ís to occur, Jalálu'd-Dawlih asked him to develop the land and property he had in Píshkúh which had very little water, was in poor condition and he had bought it at very low price. He told Bahá'ís that because of the name of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (page 417 MH, Vol. 4) he called it 'Abbás-Ábád. With the encouragement of Mírzá Maḥmúd Afnan, Mullá Bahrám, with Khusru Mihrabán and 15 other Zoroastrian families, moved to the farm and made a contract with Jalálu'd-Dawlih for the development of the farm. Next year when the time for harvest approached, the upheaval of Yazd started and 84 people (page 418 MH, Vol. 4) were martyred. Jalálu'd-Dawlih wanted to collect back all the papers and documents which had been written and the contract drawn and signed from Mullá Bahrám; but he resisted and the government officials and the people of Jalálu'd-Dawlih started beating him up to force him to submit all his legal documents. Since his life was in danger, Mullá Bahrám left Yazd for Tíhrán while he had no money or riches

of this world with him. He arrived in Tīhrán without money, exhausted, nearly sick and quite weak. So he started to work for Arbáb Jamshid, a wealthy and influential Zoroastrian in Tīhrán. In Tīhrán he was elected as one of the members of the Spiritual Assembly. Afterwards, he went on pilgrimage and met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He passed away in 1349 AH (1930) when he was 79 years old.

31. **‘Abbás-Ábád:** Form [TAY], p. 234: “‘Abbás-Ábád was the property of prince Sultán Ḥusayn Mīrzá entitled Jalálu’d-Dawlih. He asked Áqá Siyyid Mihdi Afnan and Áqá Siyyid Maḥmúd Afnan to send some of the Bahá’ís from Zoroastrian background such as Mullá Bahrám and his brother Aqa Kayumarth and Siyah Bakhsh and several others to send them over there. Although they were working in Afnan’s farms and they had certain arrangements with them, nonetheless, Afnans sent them to ‘Abbás-Ábád. Also he asked if some others for having shops and others in construction, butchery, and other trades to be sent over there. Therefore, Afnans sent Hájí Siyyid Javad-i Muḥammad-Ábádi and Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn son of Báqir and Hájí Aḥmad, the shoe-maker and Áqá ‘Alí-Akbar the butcher and several other Bahá’ís over there to become engaged.” Also refer to [MAH], vol. 4, p. 417.
32. **Events of 1903 in Yazd:** By 1903, the Bahá’í community of Iran had experienced almost five decades of relative ease. Not that there was no persecution at all in this period rather whatever happened was local or confined to a smaller region. The last widespread persecution of its members had occurred in 1852-53. During the period of half a century, the Bábí community had changed its character from not hesitating to defend itself under attack and aggression, to a peace-loving Bahá’í community that had grown considerably in numerical strength. Yazd was well-known throughout Iran for its devoted Muslim believers to the extent that they could be called fanatical (those who disregard any form of rational thinking in what they believe) and prone to exploitation by the clergy. Therefore there was always a repressive atmosphere towards the Bahá’ís of the city. At first matters were moderated by the fact that several of the leading religious figures in Yazd were indifferent to the new religion while others were supporters, like Mīrzá Muḥammad Ridá , or even secret believers, like Áqá Siyyid Abu’l-Qásim Mujtahid. However as the older generation of the divine learned died, their leadership in Yazd fell into the hands of the mujtahid Shaykh Muḥammad-Ḥasan Sabzivári and his son Shaykh Muḥammad-Taquí who together with Sayyid ‘Alí Mudarris were much opposed to the Bahá’ís. Perhaps the most interesting development in Yazd during this period was the conversion of large numbers of Zoroastrians. The first conversion occurred in Káshán. Several other Zoroastrians had become very much attracted to the Bahá’í Faith in Tīhrán during the time that Mīrzá Abu’l-Faḍá’l-i Gulpaygání had been working for Manikji Limji Hatari, the first

Parsi agent in Tīhrán. But real progress in this area of Zoroastrian conversions did not occur until Mullá Bahrám Akhtar-Khávarí became a Bahá'í in about 1298AH(1881). Since he had a thorough knowledge of Zoroastrian prophecies, he, together with Hájí Qalandar, developed a successful approach to teaching Zoroastrians of Yazd and some of the villages around.

There were also conversions in many of the villages around Yazd. In Yazd, Maryam-Ábád and Mihdí-Ábád, Bahá'í schools were established. In 'Alí-Ábád, Husayn-ábád, 'Izz-Ábád, Sharaf-Ábád and Hurmuzak strong Bahá'í communities grew up.

If there was no incitement from the rank of the clergy, the populace lived in peace with the Bahá'ís. Somehow early in twentieth century the situation changed. Áqá Najafí of Isfahan had written letters to all major cities in Iran encouraging the Mullás to follow his lead in harassing the Bahá'ís. The newly appointed prayer leader of Yazd, Sayyid Muḥammad Ibráhím, arrived in Yazd on 12 June, 1903 and was anxious to prove his orthodoxy and to consolidate his authority. Therefore, before even arriving at the city, he circulated rumours about a general massacre of the Bahá'ís. The day after his arrival witnessed the first attacks against several Bahá'í shopkeepers. The first murder of a Bahá'í took place on 15 June when Hájí Mírzá Ḥalabí-Sáz was brutally killed. After that, for a week, the city was calm but soon the Bahá'í-killing spread to the nearby villages and cities. During the next month, wave upon wave of mob attacks left hundreds of Bahá'ís homeless, nearly 100 of them dead, and many more injured to the extent that in Manshád alone thirty believers, more than anywhere else lost their lives.

We will insert here, part of a lengthy Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which has been revealed specifically for the events of Yazd and elsewhere for the year 1903.

مختصر واقعه مؤلمه شهیدان در یزد و اصفهان
هُوَ اللَّهُ

در این عصر انوار که قرن حضرت پروردگار است و از پرتو شمس حقیقت انوار مدنیت در جمیع آفاق در انتشار و کمالات انسانی و فضائل رحمانی مانند بارقه صبح در شرق و غرب بقسمی منتشر که درندگی و خونخوارگی در بین بشر از عوائد متروکه گشته بلکه در ممالک متمدنه بکلی فراموش شده تعرضات مذهبیّه بکلی زائل و تعصبات جاهلیّه باطل گردیده در بین شعوب و قبائل غیر از محاربات دولیّه و افکار سیاسیّه منازعه و معارضه و مضاربه‌ئی باقی نمانده جمیع امم و ملل در مهد امن و امان مستریح و کافه طوائف از شرّ ستمکاران امین و در حصن حصین. در ایران چون ندای الهی بلند شد و صبح نورانی دمید و شمس حقیقت درخشید نفوسی از اسفل درکات جهل نجات یافته باعلی در جات انسانی فائز گشتند و مرکزسنوحات رحمانی شدند روح مجسم گشتند و عدل مصوّر گردیدند و باخلاق روحانی و فضائل آسمانی در جهان انسانی جلوه نمودند و اما پیروان مذهب قدیم که بر تعالیم و تقالید عتیقه باقی و بر قرار ماندند روز بروز بر جهل و نادانی افزودند قسمیکه گرگان درنده گشتند و کلاب گزنده شدند در خونخوارگی از سباع ضاریه و ذناب

کاسره گوی سبقت ربودند و بنای تعرّض باین نفوس مبارکه گذاشتند هر روز فتنه‌ی بر پا نمودند و هر ساعت ستمی آغاز کردند هر وقتی آتش فساد برافروختند و پاکانرا بنار حقد و حسد بسوختند سرها بنیزه نمودند و باطفال ستیزه کردند مال و منال تالان نمودند و خانه و کاشانه تاراج کردند اطفال و نسوان از وطن اخراج نمودند عزیزان ذلیل گشتند امیران فقیر شدند نازنینان اسیر گشتند. از جمله واقعه جدیده یزد و اصفهان است که تازه رخ داده و دلها آزرده و آشفته گشته جمیع اهل انصاف از استماعش خون گریستند و گریبان دریدند با وجود آنکه بهائیان شجیعند و دلیر و هر یک در میدان حرب و ضرب مقاوم جمّ غفیر و چون جنگ بر خیزند صولتی انگیزند که صفوف اعدا را فوراً درهم شکنند زیرا تجربه شده که در شجاعت مثل و مانند ندارند ولی چون بامر مبرم الهی مأمور بصلح عمومی هستند و مکلف بمظلومیت کبری لهذا اگر ستمکاری دست تطاول بگشاید و مانند گرگ تیز جنگ هجوم نماید احبّای الهی مانند اغنام تسلیم شوند ابداً مقاومت ننمایند بلکه تیغ و شمشیر را بشهد و شیر مقابله نمایند زخم بجگرگاه خورند، دست قاتل را ببوسند و در سبیل الهی جانفشانی نمایند، از برای ستمکار استغفار کنند و طلب عفو از پروردگار نمایند این روش و سلوک سبب گشته که آن حیوانهای درنده و مار و عقرب گزنده روز بروز بر جسارت افزودند و بخون مظلومان دست خویش آلودند و راه جفا پیموند و ابداً رحم ننمودند این واقعه جدید و ظلم شدید بر وقوعات سابقه بیفزود و مصائب و بلاهای قدیمه را محو نمود. مختصر اینست که چون در این ایام علمای شیعه یعنی مذهب قدیم در ایران ملاحظه نمودند که ندای الهی بلند شد و شرق و غرب بحرکت آمد انوار شمس حقیقت چنان سطوع نمود که چشمها روشن شد رایت امر الله مرتفع گردید نفوس فوج فوج در ظلّ کلمه الله در آیند و شیعیان بهائیان کردند حتی اسرائیلیان چنان شور و وهی یافتند که عنقریب نفسی از ایشان در ایران باقی نماند مگر آنکه مهتدی بهدایت کبری گردد و همچنین فارسیان که ملت قدیمه ایرانند و منکر جمیع انبیاء از ابراهیم و موسی و همچنین منکر حضرت مسیح و حضرت رسول الله بودند حال اکثر مقرّ و معترف بجمیع کتب و رسل و انبیای الهی گشتند و در نهایت صدق و صفا از زمره بهائیان شدند. خلاصه این قضیه بسیار سبب حقد و حسد علمای سوء شده بقسمیکه صبر و تحمّل بر باد رفته در هر نفسی آتشی افروزند و فتنه‌ی بر پا نمایند و بانواع وسائل جهله قوم و هزله و رذله پر لومرا بر ریختن خون مظلومان تشویق و اجبار نمایند یکی از آن علماء سوء شخصی موجود در اصفهان نجفی و پدرش چون بخون حضرت سلطان الشهداء و محبوب الشهداء دست بیالود حضرت بهاء الله پدر را ذنب و پسر را ابن ذنب لقب فرمود هر کس متحیر بود که حکمت این لقب چه چیز است و چه خواهد کرد تا آنکه در این ایام ظاهر شد بدایت این فتنه از جهلای امت و علمای سوء در ایران در ولایت رشت در ماه مارس سنه ۱۹۰۳ که مطابق ماه محرّم سنه ۱۳۲۱ واقع برپا گشت اول علمای جهلا عوام خلق را از ارادل و اوباش تشویق بر تالان و تاراج احباب کردند و تحریض بر اذیت و جفا اشرار بطمع غارت اموال مانند گرگ بر اغنام الهی هجوم نمودند و یکنفر از احبّای الهی را که تازه فوت نموده از زیر خاک بیرون آوردند قطعه قطعه کرده آتش زدند و حال آنکه آنمظلوم با جمیع خلق در مدّت حیات بوفاء و ملاطفت کبری سلوک می نمود و جمیع اهالی مملکت حتی اعداء و نفس علمای جهلا بر حسن اخلاق و اطوار و امانت و محبّت آن بزرگوار شهادت میدادند و میگفتند که این شخص بزرگوار است و خوش رفتار و وفادار ولی بهائیت و جرمش این بود که بهائی یعنی زمینی بود آسمانی گشت جسمانی بود روحانی شد ناسوتی بود لاهوتی گردید سبحان الله چه قدر عجیب است که قرآن را تلاوت مینمایند و وصایا و نصایح الهی را می شنوند با وجود این درنده و خونخوارند و این سبعت را از لوازم شریعت غرا می شمروند و اسلامرا در نظر جمیع ملل

رذیل و رسوا مینمایند باری حکومت عادلۀ پادشاه ایران هر چند خواست هزله رذله را از ادبیت و جفا منع نماید چاره نتوانست اموال بهائیان را نهب و غارت نمودند و احباب را سخت اذیت کردند این سبب شد که در سائر بلاد ایران علمای ملت نیز بتحریر و تشویق جهال پرداختند از آنجمله این ذنب در اصفهان. این شخص باوجود آنکه مبلغ موفوری بانواع وسائل جمع نموده و کلّ را از دست ابناء ملت ربوده و منهک در جمیع شهواتست و کلّ شهادت سوء نیت او میدهند مع ذلک جهله عوام پیروی کنند و محض غارت اموال احبّا متابعت او نمایند و دست تطاول گشایند و قوّت بازو بیازمایند این شخص چون علوّ امر الله و ارتقاع کلمۀ الله را مشاهده نمود آتش حسد و بغضا در سینه اش شعله شدید زد و علم فساد بلند نمود بعناد برخاست و بتدبیر بتشویش افکار و تخدیش اذهان پرداخت تلغرافی بنام حضرت صدر اعظم ایران ترتیب داد و بقدر چهار صد نسخه در نصف شب بر جمیع دیوارهای شهر بواسطه نفوسی از معتمدین خویش بچسباند مضمون تلغراف اینکه شیخ تقی که حجّة الاسلام است باید محافظت دین نماید این تلغراف صرف تصنع و افترا بود ولی چون صبح دمید و هرکس از ارادل و اوباش این تلغراف را بدید و یا بشنید بهیجان آمد کلّ رو بخانه شیخ تقی نهادند او نیز فوراً بفتوای قتل مظلومان زبان گشود معلوم است در چنین حالتی و چنین هیجانی مقتدای عوام چنین فتوائی دهد چه فساد و فتنه ای بر پا شود..." [MKT, vol. 3, pp. 122-(127-122 صفحه 127)]

33. **Pool:** The pool was a man-made body of water which served as an open reservoir and also was used for irrigating the land at lower elevation. The pool was filled from a smaller stream from an aqueduct.
34. The book: Yádnámiy-i-Baydá'-i-Núrá' [YBN], edited by Dr. Vahid Ra'fati which contains partly the history written by Baydá'-i-Núrá'.
35. **Township of Taft:** The township of Taft is located in the southwest of Yazd province. To its west is Fars province. One of the most important mountains of the province named as Shir Kuh, with an elevation of 4,075 m. is located here. The weather of Taft is moderate and many kinds of fruit trees are planted there. The name of Taft is mentioned in many historical and mystical books of the 9th century AH., along with the name of Shah Nematullah-i-Vali.
36. **Hadrat Vála:** It means His highness. It is a preface for highly placed people as a sign of respect. In this case Jalálu'd-Dawlih.
37. **Qapán** wood was a piece of lumber: 7 feet long, and "4x4" inch wide, that was used to either weigh or carry heavy loads.
38. This Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá appears in the book "Yádnámiy-i-Baydá'-i-Núrá', [YBN] pp. 146-147.

به واسطه جناب حاجی سیّد جواد

عباس آباد یزد جناب حاجی حسین علیه بهاء الله

هو الله

ای ثابت بر پیمان، آنچه به جناب حاجی نگاشتید ملاحظه گردید. جمیع تعریف و توصیف عباس آباد بود که الحمد لله حضرت والا در نهایت مهربانی هستند و احباء نیز در غایت صدق و همت به خدمت پرداختند. این خبر سبب روح و ریحان بی پایان شد زیرا از اعظم اوامر الهی و تعالیم رحمانی این است که باید متبوع مهربان باشد و تابع صادق و غیور و خیرخواه. چون این دو جمع گردد، روح و ریحان و عزت بی پایان و راحت دو جهان و مسرت وجدان و سبب حصول آرزوی دل و جان. یارانی را که در آنجا به خدمت پرداختند، از قبل عبدالبهاء بگو: بکوشید و به نار محبت الله برافروزید و در آن قریه جلوه ای نمائید که عباس آباد بهاء آباد گردد. و علیک التحیة و الثناء ع

The provisional translation of this tablet is as follows:

*In care of Jináb-i Hájí Siyyid Javád,
'Abbás-Ábád, Jináb-i Hájí Husayn, the glory of God be upon him!
He is God.*

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! What thou didst write to Jináb-i Hájí was noted. It was full of praises for 'Abbás-Ábád, explaining that his Highness (1) is most kind, and the friends of God have arisen to render services in the utmost degree of truthfulness and high resolve. This news induced limitless joy and happiness, because one of the greatest commands of God and His teachings is that the leader must be kind, and the follower truthful, brave and a well-wisher. Should these two become combined, they would result in joy, happiness, everlasting glory and tranquility in both worlds, a joyful conscience, and attainment unto the longing of heart and soul. Convey thou, on behalf of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, greetings to the friends who are engaged in services there and say: "Make ye a mighty effort! Be ye enkindled with the fire of the love of God, and adorned with grace in that village so that 'Abbás-Ábád may become Bahá-Ábád." Upon thee be salutation and praise!

(1) Prince Husayn Mírzá Jalálu'd-Dawlih

(Provisional translation by F.S. approved for publication by the BWC)

39. This Tablet has been published in the page 33 of the book: "Aqibat Bikhayr", revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in honour of Sakínih Sulţán (Nanih jún). It is also published in the book: Makátib-i 'Abdu'l-Bahá, [MKT] vol. 5, p. 98:

هو الله ای کنیز جمال ابھی، آنشمع شهدا فیض تجلی از ساحت کبریا گرفت و بشرف حضور در ملکوت ابھی ماثول یافت در مدت زندگانی بخدمات مقربین درگاه کبریا قیام داشت و بعبودیت آستان مقدس مؤید تو قرینه محترمه آن پاک جانی باید بر روش و سلوک او زندگانی نمائی تا سبب روح و ریحان او در جهان جاودانی گردی و علیک البهاء الأبهی ع ع

He is God.

O handmaid of the Abhá Beauty! That bright candle among the martyrs obtained manifest grace from God's holy Court and was given the honor of attaining unto His presence in the Abhá kingdom. During his lifetime, he rose up to the well-favoured of God, and he was confirmed in attaining unto servitude to His Sanctified Threshold. Thou art the respected companion of that pure soul. Thou shouldst live in accordance with his behavior and conduct so that thou mayest become the cause of his joy and gladness in the eternal realm. The Glory of the Most Glorious be upon thee.

(Provisional translation by F.S. which has been approved by the BWC for publication)

40. **“Abá”** was a loose outer garment which was long, flowing over the body when it was made from wool it was used also for protection from cold.
41. See **“Tárikh-i Shuhadáy-i Yazd [TSY]”** written by Hájí Muḥammad Táhir Málmírí; and also **“Tarikh Amrí Yazd [TAY]”**, pp. 82-85.
42. **Ḥaḍrat Válá:** Jalálu'd-Dawlih see Endnote number 36
43. **The fort or the castle of the governor:** The governor of Yazd lived in a well-guarded castle with a garrison of soldiers to protect him in case of riots or when the fort would be attacked by hostile forces. It was like medieval forts in Europe. It could sustain such attacks for a while until reinforcement come to the aid of the inhabitants.
44. **Nasaqchi Báshi** was one of the posts of Safavid rule of Iran which continued until towards the end of the reign of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh; this post disappeared after his rule. The main duty of Nasaqchi Báshi was to maintain the order in soldiers' camp; in the city acted as a guard and the protector of peace. He was appointed by the Shah.
45. The text of the tablet of visitation for Áqá 'Alí-Aṣghar, the martyr:
<https://www.bahai.org/fa/library/authoritative-texts/abdul-baha/additional-tablets-talks-abdul-baha/529608493/529608493.xhtml?e031a750>

سبحانك اللهم يا الهى اناجيك فى سرى و ذاتى و كينونتى و حقيقتى و اذكرک بروحى و قلبى و لسانى و قلمى و عظمى و لحمى و دمى خفياً تى و جهارى مشتغلاً بنار محبة اوليائك و شغفاً بجوهر و دّ اصفيايك الذين انفقوا ارواحهم فى سبيلك و انفسهم فى محبتك دمايهم فى شوقهم اليك و استهدفوا السهام و استحلوا مرارة السنان و اشتهى رؤسهم الارتفاع على الرماح و قلوبهم ان يقطعوا ارباً ارباً فى اعلاء كلمتك غزاً ما فى جمالك و هياماً فى ولائك و شوقاً الى لقاءك و ولهاً فى بهائك و انجذاباً الى سمايك و استغراقاً فى بحر وفايك و منهم هذا الغلام الصبيح المليح الذى سميت به فى ملكوت الاسماء عليا اصغر و جعلته فى جبروت الصفا عليا اكبر لانه يا الهى لما شرب كأس العطاء من يد ساقى عنايتك و ثمل من صهباء محبتك و اشرق من ارجاء فؤاده انوار معرفتك و اخذته نشوة مدام الشوق الى لقاءك حتى سرع الى ميدان الفناء فى حبك و ركض من حجلة الزفاف الى مشهد الفداء فى سبيلك و من نمارق الراحة و السراء الى مهابط المشقة و الضراء و من وسادة العز و الوقار و هاد الذلة و الانكسار فى محبتك و احمر خده اللطيف الاسيل من دمه المسفوك و خضب سوالفه و غدايره بثاره المهدي و ريفتوى شر خلايئك و ليس ثياب النجيع بدلا عن الطراز اللطيف الذى لبسه فى ليلة الاقتران و اضطجع فى مضاجع الذل و الهوان على تراب المسكنة و الفقدان عوضاً عن فراش المسرة و الفرح و الامان توقاً الى افقك الابهى و رفيقك الابهى حتى شقوا صدره المنشرح بآيات محبتك و قطعوا كبده الحريق بنار عشقك و اصابوا قلبه المنير الرحيب بسهام البغضاء فى سبيلك و قطعوا رأس الشريف بخنجر الجفاء فى ولائك و نصبوه على ظباء لطغيان و حملوه الى امة الحنونة المظلومة و حليئة الجلبلة المحزونة و رموه فيساحة دارهم رحيب ترهيباً لهن و تهديداً بهن حتى يتزلزلن فى ايمانهن و تنزل اقدامهن على صراطك المستقيم ومنهجك القويم و لك الحمد يا الهى بما اثبت قلوبهن على ولائك حتى اخرجوا ذالك رأس الكريم من ماواهن و وضعن خارج البيت و ارجعن ذالك الجوهر اليتيم الى طغات خلقك و قلن: حاش لله رأس الذى قد ينه فى سبيل الله لا نسترجعه ابداً. و الجوهر المكنون و اللؤلؤ المخزون المصون الذى نثرناه فى محبة الله لا تستعيده مطلقاً يا ليت هذا الرأس الكريم اضمحل تحت سنايك الجياد و حشم تحت حوافر خيل اهل العناد. اى رب اجعل هذا الشهيد رشيداً فى ملكوتك و ركنأً شديداً فى جبروتك و كوكباً لامعاً فى افقك الابهى و نيراً بازغاً فى رفيقك الاعلى و روحاً خالصاً فى هيكل الوفا و نوراً لامعاً فى زجاجة دنى فتدنى و كان قاب قوسين او ادنى⁴⁶ و انزل بركاتك و صلواتك و تحياتك على الام التى حملته و النهود التى رضعته و الحضان التى ربته و افرغ عليها صبراً و سلوةً برحمتك الكبرى و موهبتك العظمى و جلل قرينته الجلبلة ورقه سدرتك المنتهى⁴⁷ بانوار العزة و الجلال و ظللها بغمام العزة و الجمال و كلل رأسها باكليل فضلك العظيم يا مولى العارفين و اشمل لحظات اعين رحمانيتك بكافة اقرباه كرامة له بوجودك يا مولى الورى و مقصود من فى الارض و السماء انك انت الرحمن و انك انت المنان لا اله الا انت العزيز المستعان. ع ع

46. A verse from the Qur'án : Surih An-Najm 53: 8-9.

47. **Sadratu'l-Muntahá:** It literally means the last tree beyond which no one could pass. In the Islamic literature it is a tree planted in heaven. In the Bahá'í Writings it refers to Manifestations of God .
48. An article in the Payám-i Bahá'í: This article of the Payám-i Bahá'í has been written by Mah Mihr Gulistanih (Vahdat) in the issue number 215, October 1997, pages 25-29.
49. **“The Twin Most Sublime Names” (Ismayn Iyyin):** This title was given by Bahá'u'lláh to two individuals. One was Hájí Áqá Muḥammad, the son of Áqá ‘Abdu’r-Raḥím Qannád Yazdí, and the second one was Siyyid ‘Alí, the son-in-law of Áqá ‘Alí-Akbar. Siyyid ‘Alí was married to Ḥubbíyyih the grand-daughter of Áqá ‘Abdu’r-Raḥím Qannád Yazdí (See Ill. 2, the Family Tree Number 1, in page 19). These two sublime names are Muḥammad and ‘Alí which have historical significance in the Islamic world and their combination is also the name of the Báb.
50. The day of the martyrdom of the Seven Martyrs of Yazd was on Monday, 18th May, 1981. The age of Áqá ‘Alí-Aṣḡhar on the day of his martyred was 24 years. (Tárikh Amri Yazd [TAY], p. 81) & Tárikh-i Shuhadáy-i Yazd [TSY], p. 47. In the group of Seven Martyrs of Yazd, there is another martyr by the same name who was not a brother of Áqá ‘Alí-Akbar Kashani; he was 19 years of age when he was martyred. Refer to Endnote number 113.
51. **‘Ishq-Ábád** (Ashgabat) was a small city in Turkmenistan, at a distance of less than 50 km from the Iranian border. In the nineteenth century it was under the Russian rule. It is now the capital of the independent country of Turkmenistan. Its current population is about one million. Because of the oppression of the clerics towards the Bahá'ís in Iran many of them immigrated to ‘Ishq-Ábád which soon swelled to a thriving Bahá'í community of nearly 2000. Such notable individuals such as Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl Gulpáyigání and Nabíl Akbar lived there for some time. The first Bahá'í temple was built in this city. Later in the twentieth century because of the take over of the communist regime in Russia, the Bahá'í community suffered a lot in that land, it was eventually dissolved and ceased to operate. In the twenty first century the Bahá'í communities in this country has started to operate once again.
52. Refer to the Diaries of Juliet Thompson for first of July, 1909 – page 22
53. **Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍá'il Gulpáyigání** (1844-1914) was the most famous Bahá'í scholar of his time. He was the principal of a theological school when accepted the Bahá'í Faith. He was a fair person amongst the clerics. He was known for his scholarly debate, the books he has written, his wide-spread

knowledge of the Qur'án, hadith, tafsir, the knowledge of the Old and the New Testament. The masterpiece of his books is Kitáb-i-Farái'd (Priceless Jewels). He responded to a cleric from Caucasia who had written refutation on the Kitáb-i-Íqán. He was imprisoned for being a Bahá'í, particularly in the year 1300 AH(1883). After that he left Tíhrán and travelled for sometime and eventually reached Ishq-Ábád. 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent him to America in 1901 to diffuse the misinformation given by Ibrahim Khayr'u'llah to the believers. Khayr'u'llah wanted to establish himself as the leader of the Bahá'í community in North America. Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍá'il passed away in Egypt in 1914.

54. A tablet revealed in the honour of Fátimih Khánum, the daughter of Sakínih Khánum. (Refer to Payám-i Bahá'í, issue number 215, October 1997, pp. 28-29)

و هذا نص لوح الزيارة لرفع الدرجات لامّة الله المتصاعدة الى ملكوت التقديس، قرّة
العين الشهيد فاطمه جان عليها بهاء الله الابهى
هو الله

الهي الهي ان هذه امة ولدت في حصن محبتك و رضعت
من ثدى معرفتك و نشأت في مهد عنايتك و راهفت تحت ظل فردانيتك و بلغت
رشدتها تحت لواء ربانيتك. رب انها ذاقّت صريرة شهادة ابائها و تجرعت منذ نعومه
اذا فرها كأس البلاء في سبيلك و ذاقّت علقم الجفا و حنظل الظلم و العدوان من
صغرها من ايدى تطاولت بالجور و الظلم و العدوان و لما بلغت رشدتها تحت ظلال
الطافك من قبل ان تاخذ نصيبها من حلاوة الحياة و تدرك رغد العيش في النشأة
الدنيا خلعت ثبات البقاء من دار الفناء و رجعت اليك مبتهلة الى ملكوتك متضرعة
الى جبروتك مشتاقة الى لقاءك منجذبة الى محفل التجلي مركز الانوار ملكوت
الاسرار. رب انها سليلة الشهيد و فلذة كبد من سرع الى مشهد الفدا و تجرع كأس
الشهادة الكبرى و هو ينادى ادركنى ادركنى يا ربى الرحمن و اقبل منى الفداء في
سبيلك يا عزيز يا علام قد فديت روحى في محبتك و قربت ثارى طلباً للقاءك و
احشمت الى حماك رب اجعل امتك هذه آية رحمتك و راية مغفرتك و يتبوع
فضلك و معين حياة ابدية الى ابد آباد و ممر القرون و الاحقاب انك انت الغفار انك
انت الغفور الرؤف الرحمن عبدالبهاء عباس

55. **Uda't-u Nafsi** It is an Arabic phrase which appears in several prayers in Arabic for protection. These prayers have been revealed for protection which are to be recited when anyone is about to leave his house or his town. This phrase simply means: "I have placed my being in Thy care and trust." As an example refer to "Ad'iyih-i Ḥaḍrat-i- Mabúb [AHM]", p. 197.

56. Refer to the book “ ‘Áqibat Bikhayr [ABK]”, p.71, a letter in the handwriting of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarfání dated 12 Muharram 1345 (23 July 1926)

12 محرم 1345 از حیفا به یزد جناب عبدالوهاب شهیدزاده زید عزة العالی

هو الله تعالى زاده شهید مجید آه و ناله ات به سمع دلبر عنایت واصل و مرام دل و جانیت میسر و حاصل چه که به یادت پرداختند و لبان چون لعل به دعایت گشودند که انشاء الله شفای الهی عنایت شود و فضل ایزدی شامل حال گردد. مطمئن باشید و همواره همدم ایات رحمانی شوید و متوسل لطف و مکرمت ربانی که ان فیض سبحانی پاینده است و از جهان بالا دائما پرتو افشان و تابنده و این به امر مبارک نگاشته شد. عبد ذلیل زرقانی خط اصل: حبیب روحانی از ملکوت اعلی توفیقات و امدادات موعوده حضرت معبود را از برای ان جناب راجی و امل مطمئن باشید و دلنتگ و مایوس نگردید حافظ و حارس حقیقی معین و ناصر شما است. امیدوارم که به آنچه شایسته این ظهور اعظم است موفق و نائل گردید. بنده استانش شوقی

57. Refer to the book “ ‘Áqibat Bikhayr [ABK]”, pp. 72-73, permission for pilgrimage:

یزد جناب عبدالوهاب نجل حضرت شهید مجید حاجی محمد حسین یزدی علیه بهاءالابهی ملاحظه نمایند دوست حقیقی عریضه مرسله تلقاء حضور وارد و به لحاظ انور محبوب یکتا حضرت ولی امر الله روحی لاحبائه الفداء فائز. مضمون بیان خضوع و خشوع و ثبوت و رسوخ بر محبت حی قیوم و تمنا و ارزوی حضور بقعه نورا بود لهذا مقبول و ممدوح و مشکور واقع. الحمد لله مقصود و مرام دل و جان حاصل گشت. شما را بشارت دهم که اذن تشریف از ساحت اقدس مبارک عنایت گشت. پس در کمال وجد و سرور و شادمانی و حبور قصد کوی دوست نمائید و از فیض لقاء و زیارت مقامات مبارکه نورا روح و ریحان کامل یابید و نصیب موفور برید. حسب الامر مبارک مرقوم گردید نورالدین زین رجب 1346 ژانویه 1928 خط مبارک: یار معنوی از درگاه محبوب عالمیان موفقیت آن جناب را سائل و امل و امیدوارم به آنچه آمل و آرزوی مقربین است نائل و فائز شوید بنده استانش شوقی

58. Refer to the book “ ‘Áqibat Bikhayr [ABK]”, p.73, permission for pilgrimage:

جناب عبدالوهاب ابن حاجی محمد حسین شهید یزدی علیه بهاءالله ملاحظه فرمایند. روحی لمحبتک الفداء عریضه مرقومه به ساحت قدس حضرت ولی امر الله ارواحنا لعنایاته الفداء واصل و به لحاظ انور فائز. استدعای تشریف به استان مقدس نموده اید، الحمد لله این مسئول به اجابت مقبول و شمس اذن از مطلع جود ساطع. لذا ان حضرت را بشارت دهم که ماذون حضورید حسب الامر مبارک مرقوم گردید نور الدین زین جمادی الاولی 1346 ، 2 نوامبر 1928 خط اصل: یار معنوی امیدوارم

در نهایت روح و ریحان اسباب مسافرت به ارض اقدس فراهم گردد و به آنچه امال و ارزوی دل شما است نائل و مفتخر گردید بنده استانش شوقی

59. Refer to the book “ ‘Āqibat Bikhayr [ABK]”, p. 72, permission for pilgrimage:

12 خرداد از حیفا جناب آقای عبدالوهاب ابن حاجی محمد حسین شهید یزدی زید عزه العالم هو الله تعالی حبیب فواد مسئلت ان جناب به سمع مبارک قبله اصحاب رسید و لسان اطهر ولی امر رب الارباب فدیت خدام بابه بذکر ان محب الاحباب گویا گردید که ایشان ماذون و مجازند که اول بهار به کوی یار رسند و طواف کعبه جمال مختار نمایند و از فیض دیدار دل و دیار دل دیده ای نوراً یابند تا با روانی پر روح و ریحان مراجعت به دیار عاشقان نموده از شمیم کوی دوست دل ها را رشک روضه رضوان کنند و جان ها را همدم محبوب در دو جهان. لهذا به فرمایش همان غصن دوحه رب مقتدر این نوید جانپور نگرارش یافت. عبد ذلیل زرقانی خط اصل: برادر روحانی امید و طید ان است که به فضل و عنایت غیبی به خدمات باهره در مستقبل ایام موفق گردید و به آنچه علت و ارتقاء و اشتها ائین گرانبهاست مفتخر و موید شوید قدم را ثابت نمائید و در کمال اطمینان در ترویج کلمه الله سعی بلیغ مبذول دارید بنده استانش شوقی

60. Refer to the book “ ‘Āqibat Bikhayr [ABK]”, pp. 73-74, permission for pilgrimage:

یزد جناب آمیرزا عبدالوهاب ذبیحی ملاحظه فرمایند یار روحانی تحریر منیر در پیشگاه حضور وارد و به لحاظ انور مقصود عالمیان حضرت ولی امرالله روحی لالطافه الفداء فائز از مضمون آثار خلوص و محبت ان دلبر بی چون ظاهر و نمایان بود. باب رحمت و عنایت ان سر مکنون و رمز مخزون الحمد لله بر وجه یاران و محبان باز و مفتوح است و تائیدات و توفیقات ان جمال بی مثال شامل احوال بندگان استان مقدسش بوده و هست. لهذا مطمئن و مسرور و مستبشر باشید رؤیائی که مشاهده نموده اید دلیل بر الطاف الهیه است و فوز و مواهب رحمانیه. امیدواریم که انوار ان خواب از هویت قلب در بیداری ظاهر و باهر گردد. یک طاقه حریر تقدیمی ان حضرت و دو عدد دستمال ابریشمی تقدیمی امه الله ضجیعہ محترمه یکی حضور حضرت ورقه علیا و یک خدمت حضرت حرم مبارک واصل و قبوضات جداگانه مرقوم و در جوف است. جناب آحسین نجار و جناب آعلی اکبر مجنون و جناب عزیزالله نوہ آمحمد صادق و عموم فامیل و بازماندگان شهدا و جمیع احباء الهی را به نزول تائیدات سبحانیه اطمینان دهید و امیدوار نمائید و از قبل هیکل مبارک کل را به بدایع ذکر و ثنا ذاکر و مکبر شوید. اماء الرحمن و الدہ محترمه و قرینه معظمه و دو همشیره مکرمه و صبیہ نورانیہ علیهن بهاء الله الابهی را تکبیر ابدع اعلی از قبل وجود اقدس ابلاغ نمائید و بشارت به الطاف حق دهید. امید قلبی چنانست که هر یک به آنچه سزاوار کنیری درگاه جمال احدیت است موید و موفق گردند. انشاءالله راحتی

و اسایش افکار به فضل پروردگار برای ان حضرت به طور دلخواه فراهم شود و تشویش و اضطراب رفع و برطرف گردد. جناب علی اکبر ماذون حضور و تشریفند. حسب الامر مبارک مرقوم گردید نورالدین زین رجب 1347 ، 9 ژانویه 1929

61. Refer to the book “ ‘Áqibat Bikhayr [ABK]”, p.78, permission for pilgrimage:

حبيب روحانى، اميدوارم اسباب مسافرت به ارض اقدس بطور دلخواه فراهم گردد و به آنچه امال و آرزوى دل و جان است نائل گردى بنده استانش شوقى

62. **Munír Nabil-Zádih** was a dedicated teacher of the Cause of God. His life history is detailed in *Maṣābiḥ-i-Hidāyat* [MAH], Vol. 4, pp. 220-300. We will present a brief summary of his life history. Mírzá Munír Nabil- Zádih's grand father was Shaykh Muḥammad surnamed Nabil by the Báb. He was a respected merchant in Qazvin who accepted the message of the Báb and was the first one to do so in his family. Mr. Nabil-Zádih's father was Shaykh Muḥammad-‘Alí who believed in Bahá'u'lláh when there were great proponents of Mírzá Yahyá in Qazvin. Nabil-Zádih was also a nephew of Shaykh Kázim Samandar, one of the Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh. Mírzá Munír Nabil- Zádih was born in Qazvin in 1297 AH (1880). He was engaged in trade as a merchant in Rasht. He travelled to Baku for teaching the Cause of God in 1318 AH (1901) and then to Tbilisi (Capital of Georgia) and from there to Ashgabat and travelled to a number of cities in Turkmenistan and neighbouring countries. When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was in Egypt called him to His presence and then he started teaching the Cause in Afghanistan and in Khurásán. At the beginning of the Formative Age, he was teaching in Burma and he reported that the number of Bahá'is in Rangoon was 740 at that time. Finally he passed away in Tīhrán when he was 78 years old in 1328 Shamsi (1949). He has written a number of books one of which is *Tibiyyan-i Haqiqat*.
63. **Hájí Muḥammad-Ṭáhir Málmírí** known as Málmírí, a native of Yazd from the neighbourhood of Málmír. He was born about the year 1269 AH(1852). We will make a brief summary from the story of his life in the *Khátirát-i Málmírí* and *Masábiḥ-i Hidāyat*, vol 5, pp. 300-390. The name of his father was Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Ghafúr and the name of his mother was Ma’sumih. Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Ghafúr heard about the claims of the Báb from Siyyid Ja’far who was his brother-in-law and likewise accepted the message of the Báb. In this way, the new Faith spread among the members of the

family and Muḥammad-Ṭáhir accepted the message of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh as he grew up. He attended the kind of schools for young children which was available at the time. From tender age he started learning the craft of weaving and cloth making. He was eager to learn and spent his time studying the Writings of the new Faith and verses from the Qur'an, and verses from Torah in Hebrew. He started memorizing passages regarding prophesies for the new Faith from the Qur'an, Hadith, Zoroastrian books, and the Bible. Soon he became a capable teacher of the Cause. He was instrumental in helping many a soul to understand the Truth such as Hájí Muḥammad Afshár, Hájí Muḥammad Ismá'íl Gunduli, Hájí Mírzá Aḥmad Kázim Uf known as Shirazi and Hájí Ja'far Uyzdarání. In his conversations in firesides he related stories from the lives of prophets as was directed by Bahá'u'lláh during his pilgrimage. He was well known in Yazd and everyone knew that he was a Bahá'í. When he was walking in streets nobody dared do or say something disrespectful or denounce the Central Figures of the Faith. He survived the massacre of Yazd in 1903. He was arrested as a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Yazd on false charges and imprisoned and defended himself in court in Ṭihrán. He has written a number of books: Khátirát-i Málmírí, Tárikh Amri Yazd and Tarikh Shuhadáyi Yazd. He received nearly fifty Tablets from Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. For nearly 80 years he was teaching the Cause of God. He lived nearly one hundred years and passed away on 14 Khurdád 1332 Shamsi (4 June year 1953), 110 Badi', 1372 AH.

64. **Validity of Pilgrims' Notes:** Individuals who have gone on pilgrimage, particularly during the time of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, have admitted that their experience has been overwhelming and unusual. These souls when happened to be in the presence of the Manifestation of God, the Centre of the Covenant or Shoghi Effendi had a feeling that they were in a different world. So most of their observations or what they heard was an interaction between their personal feelings at the time and the reality of the situation. Some of them tried to leave for posterity what they heard during such occasions. We realize that whatever they recorded, were their recollections as a whole after they were dismissed from the Holy presence. At times, it may have taken some time before they could find a chance to write what they remembered. Therefore, what they recorded were not necessarily the exact words uttered by these Holy Beings; and apart from that, it was according to their own understanding of what was said. Although these notes might contain interesting materials but remain as personal information. It is obvious that such materials which are characterized as "pilgrim's notes" do not constitute a part of the

authoritative text. Also such pilgrim's notes cannot be in conflict with the body of the authoritative text of the Bahá'í Faith.

65. **Hájí 'Abdu'r-Raḥím Qannad Yazdí** was the father of Áqá Muḥammad Yazdí and grandfather of 'Azíz Yazdí. Refer to Ill. 2, the Family Tree Number 1, page 20.
66. **Keith Ransom-Kehler** was born Nannie Keith Bean on 14 February 1876. The family lived in the Cincinnati area. Her early education was at the Bartholomew in English and Classical School for Girls in Cincinnati and later attended Miss Grant's School in Chicago. She received a bachelor's degree in child psychology in 1898. In 1901, at the age of twenty-five, she married Ralph Ransom, a young painter. She attended Albion College in Michigan in 1903–04, earning a Master's degree in 1904, and then taught English literature there in 1904–05; In 1908, Ralph Ransom died, apparently of tuberculosis. In October 1910 Keith Ransom married James Howard Kehler, a successful and innovative advertising executive with an office on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Her husband died unexpectedly of a heart attack on 19 June 1923; Ransom-Kehler became a Bahá'í in May 1921. Shortly after becoming a Bahá'í, Keith Ransom-Kehler gained recognition as a Bahá'í speaker, writer, and administrator. In 1924–25 she served as secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Chicago. Early in 1926 Keith Ransom-Kehler went on pilgrimage to the Bahá'í holy places in Mandatory Palestine. On returning from her pilgrimage in the spring of 1926, Keith Ransom-Kehler intensified the pace of her activities. In 1920's and 30's she widely travelled to the West Indies, concentrating on Barbados. Her itinerary included Hawaii, Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, Java, Singapore, Burma, and India. She travelled to Iran in 1932. She was to submit a petition to Reza Shah Pahlavi (reigned 1925–41) to remove the ban on the entry and distribution of the Bahá'í literature in Iran and also to secure the lifting of all the limitations that had for years been imposed on the Iranian Bahá'í community. Keith Ransom-Kehler travelled widely throughout Iran for more than a year.

She had endured periods of extreme hardship. Thus, exhausted and weakened, she left Tīhrán, planning to visit several cities in the southern part of Iran before leaving the country. In Isfahan she maintained her usual busy schedule until she suddenly fell ill on 9 October 1933 after a full day of activities. Exposed to smallpox, possibly by cuddling a child recovering from the disease, she had no physical resistance. She died two weeks later, on 23 October. Shoghi Effendi called her the "*FIRST AND DISTINGUISHED MARTYR*" ¹ of the American Bahá'í martyr and appointed her a Hand of the Cause of God, "*INTERNATIONAL SERVICES ENTITLE HER EMINENT RANK*

AMONG HANDS OF CAUSE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH."² In 1940 Shoghi Effendi named her, along with May Maxwell and the indefatigable international teacher Martha Root, as one of "three heroines of the Formative Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh"³ to whom the Bahá'ís owe a debt of gratitude that "future generations will not fail to adequately recognize."

Notes

1. Cablegram of Shoghi Effendi, October 30, 1933; see page 3, Messages to America, 1932 to 1946.
 2. Cablegram of Shoghi Effendi, October 30, 1933; see page 3, Messages to America, 1932 to 1946.
 3. Letter of Shoghi Effendi, April 15, 1940; see page 40, Messages to America, 1932 to 1946.
 4. Also see Bahá'í World, vol. 5, pp. 389-411.
67. **Hájí Maḥmúd Qassábchí**, a dedicated Iraqi Bahá'í whose accepting the Faith in 1911 has a very interesting story behind it. He, during the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, assisted with renovation and reconstruction of the Most Great House which unfortunately did not take long to fall into the hands of the enemies of the Cause. Shortly after Shoghi Effendi assumed his stewardship as the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, Hájí Maḥmúd Qassábchí assisted with the construction of additional three rooms along the south side of the Báb's Sepulchre. Thus the shape of the building was changed from an oblong edifice to one perfectly square, which would better lend itself, in time, to embellishment by addition of an outer structure embodying the graceful, yet majestic and lofty features desired by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to honour the resting-place of the Martyr Prophet who heralded the advent of Bahá'u'lláh. Shoghi Effendi named a door on the eastern side for Hájí Maḥmúd Qassábchí of Iraq. In 1933 Qassábchí suffered a severe attack of paralysis which he narrowly survived and as a result of which he could hardly move or speak for the rest of his life. On September 11, 1947 Qassábchí, who had already grown frail and weak, fell ill, and two days later winged his flight to the Abhá Kingdom. On the morning of September 13, 1947 this faithful, steadfast and devoted Bahá'í who loved and served the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh until his last breath, passed away. He was buried at Salman Pak, about thirty miles southeast of Baghdad.
68. **Kavákib'ud-Duríyyih (meaning luminous stars)**; It is a Bahá'í history book in two volumes written by Áváríh who was a travel teacher of the Cause of God during the lifetime of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. But during the time of

the Guardian, he disobeyed him and placed himself and his ambitions above the decisions of the Chosen Branch, Shoghi Effendi. He did not want to heed, or correct his mistakes; and continued to create disunity in any community he entered. Eventually he was sanctioned and ex-communicated from the Faith and was counted amongst the Covenant Breakers. His two volumes of history authored by him was written before becoming a Covenant Breaker. The Master had seen the book and had made some corrections on the margins.

69. **Tablet of Ram** is one of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh in which He prohibits explicitly and unequivocally drinking of alcohol and alcoholic drinks.
70. **The Ḥadīth** is the collected traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, Shi'ih imams and even Prophet's companions based on their sayings and actions. There are six canonical ḥadīth collections that are widely accepted by Sunni Muslims and much more for Shi'ih Muslims; the two most famous are those of Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhārī (810–870) and Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (817–875), both of which have the same title aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ (The Authentic). Each ḥadīth usually begins with the chain of the narrators (isnād) going back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, or Shi'ih imams which is then followed by the text of the tradition itself. Al-Bukhārī compiled his compendium of hadiths with the utmost caution with regards to the authenticity of the hadith being transmitted. The hadiths relate to a broad range of subjects, from theological concerns such as revelation and the nature of God, to instructions on daily worship and rituals, to legal advice.
71. **Uṣūl al-Kāfī** (Arabic: **أصول الكافي**) is the title of the first section the Kitabi al-Kāfī which has three parts. It has universal acceptance among Shi'ih and all of the hadith mentioned there are regarded significant. In this part of al-Kāfī, we can find hadiths concerning the beliefs of Shi'ih, the biographies of Imams, and how a Muslim should behave. Uṣūl al-Kāfī is the most significant source of hadiths for the Shi'ih beliefs. It has frequently been published as a separate book, it has been translated by several people, and numerous commentaries have been written on it.

The author of Uṣūl al-Kāfī is Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kulayni al-Razi (329 AH and 940AD) known as Thiqat'ul-Islam al-Kulayni. He was a scholar of ḥadīth in the period of Minor Occultation. He was among the greatest Shi'ih ḥadīth scholars and the author of al-Kāfī, the most authentic Shi'ih ḥadīth collection. He was born after the martyrdom of Imam al-'Askari at the time of Imam al-Mahdi and met some hadith transmitters who directly had heard hadiths from Imam al-Hadi and Imam al-'Askari. It is said that al-Kulayni was very accurate in transmitting ḥadīths.

72. **Bihār al-Anvár** “بحار الأنوار”, is the initial word from a longer phrase which literally means: Seas of lights: the collection of pearls of the reports of the pure Imams. It is generally known by its shorter name as Bihār al-Anvár. It is the most comprehensive Shī'ih ḥadīth collection written under supervision of al-‘Allama al-Majlisi. Writing of this book which is a collection of Shī'ih teachings, lasted more than 30 years and a group of al-‘Allama al-Majlisi's students helped him in this task. The author has organized the book based on 25 general topics and thus in 25 volumes. However, nowadays it is published in 110 volumes. Al-Majlisi has tried to cover all common topics and issues in Bihār al-Anvár. Due to its maximum number of ḥadīths narrated from Shī'ih Imams, chaptering of topics, explanation of ḥadīths, various theological, historical, jurisprudential, exegetical, ethical, ḥadīth, and lexical researches, Bihār al-Anvár has a great position among researchers; so that regardless of its many volumes, since its first publication, many manuscript copies of that were written and with later development of printing industry, all or parts of it have been frequently printed.
73. **Ḥusayn** is a grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad. His father is ‘Alī ibn Abu Talib (cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad and His son-in-law); his mother is Fatimah, the daughter of Prophet Muḥammad and his older brother is Ḥasan.
74. ‘**Alī** is the son of Abu Talib (uncle of the Prophet Muḥammad). Imam ‘Alī is the cousin, son-in-law, and the successor of Prophet Muḥammad according to Shi‘ih. He is called the Commander of the Faithful. Fatimah, the daughter of Prophet Muḥammad was his wife. Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were his sons from Fatimah.
75. **Fāṭimih** was the daughter of Prophet Muḥammad and the wife of imam ‘Alī ibn Abu Talib.
76. **Salmán** al-Fārsī (Arabic: سلمان الفارسي) was a Zoroastrian and Persian who became one of the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad and of Imam ‘Alī, and was very much trusted by Him. The Prophet liked him and said about him, "Salman is one of us". His idea of digging a trench in the Battle of Khandaq brought victory to Muslims. He supported the successorship of Imam ‘Alī after the demise of the Prophet and opposed the incident of Saqífa. He was assigned as the governor of al-Mada’in in the time of the caliphate of Umar son of al-Khattab. He gave his salary to charity and knitted baskets for a living. After a long life, Salman passed away in 36 AH (656AD) in al-Madyan, where he is buried in a shrine known as "Salman-i Pák".

Based on some reports, Salmán was a Zoroastrian Iranian whose original name was Ruzbih. He converted to Christianity in his youth. After hearing the Christians foretelling the emergence of a prophet in the land of Arabs, he set off toward Hijaz. He was enslaved in the middle of the way and sold to a man from Banu Qurayza in Medina. He entered Medina when prophet Muhammad had recently emigrated to the city. Salman met the Prophet and after confirming the signs of prophethood converted to Islam. The Prophet bought and freed him and named him "Salmán".

77. **Abú Dhar** : His name Jundab son of Junáda son of Sufyán al-Ghifárí (Arabic: جُنْدَبُ بْنُ جُنَادَةَ بْنِ سُفْيَانَ الْغِفَارِيِّ) 33 AH (653 AD) known as Abú Dhar al-Ghifárí (أَبُو ذَرِّ الْغِفَارِيِّ) was one of the greatest companions of Prophet Muḥammad and a companion of Imam ‘Ali ; he was also one of those who were known as the four pillars of the Shi‘ih. He was a true companion of Prophet Muḥammad. Numerous virtues and excellences have been narrated for him by both Sunni and Shi‘ih. Abú Dhar criticized the actions of Uthman, the third Caliph. As a result, he was exiled to Syria and then to al-Rabadha, where he passed away.

Abú Dhar was among the first people who converted to Islam. According to some narrations, he was a monotheist before the emergence of Islam. According to a narration, Abú Dhar was the fourth one to believe in the Prophet. Also Imam ‘Ali has said about him that ordinary people are unable to achieve the knowledge of Abú Dhar. Imam ‘Ali also considers him among those people that Paradise awaits them. Abú Dhar passed away in 32 AH (653 AD), in al-Rabadha, in the time of Uthman's caliphate.

78. **Khurásán** is an eastern province of Iran bordering Turkmenistan to the north and Afghanistan to the east. Khurásán, historical region and realm comprising a vast territory now lying in north-eastern Iran, southern Turkmenistan, and northern Afghanistan. The historical region (which was much larger than the current province) extended, along the north, from the Ámú Daryá (Oxus River) westward to the Caspian Sea and, along the south, from the fringes of the central Iranian deserts eastward to the mountains of central Afghanistan; it was like a country by itself. Arab geographers even spoke of its extending to the boundaries of India. The history of the area stretches back to very ancient times. It was part of the Achaemenian Empire of the 6th to 4th century BCE and the Parthian empire, which spanned from the 3rd century BCE to the 3rd century CE. After the Arab conquest in 651–652 CE, the name was retained both as the designation of a definite province and in a looser sense. It was occupied by the Afghans from 1722 to 1730. Nádír Sháh, born in Khurásán, broke the Afghan supremacy and made

Mashhad the capital of his Iranian empire. Firduwsí, author of the *Sháh-námih* (“Book of Kings”), and Umar *Khayyám*, the celebrated poet and sage, were born in the region. *Khurásán*’s current Iranian frontiers were defined in 1881 and in a convention of July 8, 1893. *Khurásán*, as a result of its troubled history, is peopled by a great variety of ethnic groups: Turkmen in the northwest; Kurds around *Bujnúrd* and *Qúchán*; *Tímúris* and *Jamshídís* in the east, some of whom are still nomadic; farther southwest, *Heydarís*; and southeast, Baluch. The highlands in the south are home to a settled population of Iranian ethnicity. Here and there are found Berberis of Mongol origin, Arabs, Roma, and a few Jews in the towns.

Modern Iranian *Khurásán* is largely agricultural, producing fruits, cereals, cotton, tobacco, oil plants, saffron, and some silk. Livestock are plentiful; wool, lambskins, and goat hair are exported, and poultry is also raised. The mineral products include turquoise, salt, iron, copper, lead, zinc, chromium, magnesite, and coal. Cement, processed foods, ginned cotton, carded wool, sugar, pharmaceuticals, animal fodder, and textiles are the manufactured products. Handicrafts include jewellery, rugs and carpets, furs, dolls, glassware, and handloomed cloth. A railway and roads link Mashhad, a thriving city, with Iran’s capital, *Ṭíhrán*. (Extracted and summarized from *Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

79. “man” was an old unit of measuring weight. One “man” is about three kg.
80. This verse is from the *Qur’án*: (*Al-Hujarat* 49:6)
81. ***Shaykhís*** are followers of *Shaykh* Aḥmad al-Aḥsá’í (1753–1826), a Twelver Shi‘ih Islamic thinker who emphasized the esoteric and intuitional aspects of the religion. *Shaykh* Aḥmad cultivated followers in al-Aḥsa in eastern Arabia, Baḥrain, and Iraq, as well as in Yazd and *Kermanshah* in Iran. A separate school of Shi‘ism did not coalesce around his name until after his death, when he was succeeded by Siyyid Kázim Rashtí (d. 1844) in Karbala; for a time, esoteric *Shaykhísm* offered a challenge to the scholastic orthodoxy of the *Uṣúlí* school.

After Rashtí’s death, though many *Shaykhís* became Bábis, important *Shaykhí* communities continued to exist in the Persian Gulf, and in Kerman and Tabriz. The Tabriz *Shaykhís* diminished their doctrinal and ritual differences with the majority *Uṣúlí* school, and played a progressive role during Iran’s Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911). The Kerman *Shaykhís*, led by the Qajar noble Karím *Khan* Kermaní (1810–1871) and his descendants, remained esoteric. Kerman *Shaykhísm* proved conservative and often was supported by local governors.

In the twentieth century Shaykhísm became marginalized as a Shi‘ih sect and Shaykhis suffered persecution under the Islamic Republic of Iran after 1979. Shaykhí communities persist in Kermán and elsewhere. The Iḥqáqí family (based in Kuwait but originally from Tabriz) now produces most Shaykhi publications and claims many followers in southern Iraq. The movement also has been prominent in recent decades in Pakistan, where debates have raged over its orthodoxy and a Shaykhí Institute was founded in Faisalabad.

82. **Bam**, city in eastern Kermán province, Iran. The city, an agricultural center situated on the Silk Road and long famed for its large fortress, was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2004. Bam is located about 115 miles (185 km) southeast of the city of Kermán at an elevation of approximately 3,600 feet (1,100 meters) on the banks of the Bam River. The region around the city has long been known for its date palms, which are among the most productive in Iran, although cotton and various grains are also raised there.

The modern city is located immediately to the south of the site of the ancient citadel (arg) Arg-i Bam, once one of the world’s largest mud-brick complexes. Located on a hilltop, the citadel consisted of a series of three concentric walls made of mud brick and palm timbers, the outer wall of which enclosed the old city. Bam’s highest point, the citadel proper, rose to about 200 feet (60 meters) above its base. The walls of the fortress, some 40 feet (12 meters) high, were once surrounded by a deep moat. The citadel was established during the Sasanian dynasty (224–651 CE); even as late as the beginning of the 19th century, it was the strongest fortified place in Iran, having been used most extensively during the Iranian dynastic disputes of the 18th and 19th centuries. During that same period, the fortress fell into the hands of invading Afghan armies, and much of the population fled.

By the late 19th century the establishment of secure borders and a strong centralized state made such a military stronghold obsolete. The old city site was abandoned by the end of the century, though the fortress continued to be used as a military garrison until the 1930s. Beginning in the 1950s, the Iranian government began to restore the fortress, but in 2003 the region around Bam was struck by a massive earthquake that killed more than 26,000 people and devastated the modern city, and the fortress itself was largely destroyed. Pop. (2006) 75,215.

83. **Abarkuh** and the local populace call it Abarqu. It is a small town on the border between the Iranian provinces of Fars and Yazd. The town is placed as being in Fars on many maps while many writers place it within Yazd

province, the main township of Abarkuh district. It sits at an altitude of 1509 metres (4954 feet) and is some 140 kilometres (87 miles) to the west of the city of Yazd, and about 300 km north-east of Shiraz, on the main road that connects Yazd to Shiraz via Persepolis.

Abarku is home to a 4,500 year old cypress (Persian, sarv) tree that stands some 25 metres tall. Its trunk has a diameter of about 4.5 metres and a circumference of about 11.5 metres. Many Zoroastrians revere this ancient tree as sacred. Some tie ribbons on its branches and make a wish. When the wish is fulfilled, they return to untie the ribbon. The age of the tree is at least 4,000 years. For Zoroastrians, the cypress (Persian, sarv) is rich with symbolism. It is a symbol of life - a tree of life. Abarkuh is located in the desert region with hot and dry weather. This historic city once saw prosperous days as it was located on the ancient trade road, the Silk Road. The incidence of Abarqu which led to the arrest of the members of the Spiritual Assembly has been described by Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb and we will not go into further details.

84. **Bandar-i ‘Abbás**, port city and capital of Hormozgán province, on the Strait of Hormuz, the main maritime outlet for much of southern Iran. It lies on the northern shore of Hormuz Bay opposite the islands of Qeshm, Larak, and Hormuz. The inhabitants are mainly Arabs and African. The summer climate is oppressively hot and humid, and many inhabitants then move to cooler places; however, winter is pleasant.

Bandar-i ‘Abbás (“Port of ‘Abbás”) was established in 1623 by Sháh ‘Abbás I to replace the city of Hormuz, which had been captured by the Portuguese about 1514. During the 17th century it was the main port of Persia, but it lost this status in the 18th century to the rival “Port of Búshihr” (Bandar-i Búshihr). From about 1793 Bandar-i ‘Abbás was under lease to the rulers of Muscat, but in 1868 Iran canceled the contract and resumed direct control.

The port’s imports consist mainly of manufactured goods. Its exports include Kermán rugs, petroleum products, and agricultural produce. The city has a cotton mill, a fish cannery, and refineries for oil and gas. The roadstead is shallow and badly sheltered, and vessels must sometimes lie 4 miles (6.5 km) out. Despite the poor quality of its port facilities, the city boomed during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s when Iran’s more westerly ports were threatened. A new harbour and shipbuilding yard were under construction in the late 20th century west of the existing port, and a major rail link was completed in 1995. Pop. (2006) 379,301. (Extracted from Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

85. **Rafsanjan:** With a population of 400,000, Rafsanjan is located in the northwest of Kerman Province. About 45% of its population live in rural areas. The distance between Rafsanjan and the city of Kerman is 110 Kilometres. The city encompasses a land area of about 7678 square kilometres. Rafsanjan is surrounded by Zarand from the north, Shahr-i-Babak from the west, Bardseer from the south, and Kerman from the east. Rafsanjan is known for its good quality pistachio. This product constitutes one of Iran's most principal exports, and Rafsanjan is the epicentre of pistachio production and the largest exporter of this product worldwide. The desert region of Rafsanjan has relatively hot summers and chilling winters. There is an expanse of mountainous areas around the city that largely affect its climate. Rafsanjan's pistachio orchards are of high repute globally. Pistachio cultivation and trading is people's number one engagement. The city is also home to some of Iran's largest tiles and ceramics manufacturers. Rafsanjan is the hub of carpet production even though the rugs are offered for sale as Kermani rugs rather than Rafsanjani ones. Another remarkable employer is the nearby Sarcheshmeh copper mines complex known as Nicico. There are many monumental and historical buildings in this city including: castles, water reservoirs, caravanserais, arcades, bazaars, towers, mansions, natural freezers, temples, shrines, hills, mills and archaeological sites.
86. **Kirmán** is the name of a province and a city which is provincial capital and located in southeastern Iran. The city lies on a sandy plain, 5,738 feet (1,749 metres) above sea level, under barren rocky hills. Surrounded by mountains on the north and east, it has a cool climate and frequent sandstorms in the autumn and spring. The population is mostly Persian-speaking Muslims, with a Zoroastrian minority. Kirmán is the largest carpet-exporting centre of Iran. In the mid-1970s an industrial centre was established that included a cement plant, a textile factory, and a cold-storage plant. There is a thermoelectric plant; water is brought by qanats (underground aqueducts) from the surrounding hills. Kermán is linked by road to Bandar 'Abbás and Mashhad. It also has an airport. Kermán city was probably founded by Ardashír I (reigned 224-241 CE) of the Sásáníyán dynasty. Under the Šafavids, who took control in 1501, it came to be known as Kermán and was made capital of a province. The city was sacked by the Uzbeks in 1509 but was quickly rebuilt. Declining Šafavid power in the 17th and early 18th centuries allowed Kermán to be attacked and occupied by Afghan tribesmen in 1720. Kirmán was rebuilt under Fath-'Alí Sháh, the founder of the Qájár dynasty (ruled 1797-1834). Kermán province is bounded by the provinces of Fárs on the west, Yazd on the north, South Khurásán on the northeast,

Sístán va Balúchistán on the east, and Hormozgán on the south. It includes the southern part of the central Iranian desert, the Dasht-i Lút. The southern Lút is relatively dry and saline, while in the east are sand dunes and in the west, wind-carved ridges 180–240 feet (55-70 metres) high, called kalút. Elsewhere are wind-eroded *cuestas*, locally called *shahr lút*. The Halíl Rúd is the only river of importance. In the lowest depressions, the dry heat of summer is unsurpassed anywhere in the world, but most of the upland valleys enjoy a pleasant climate. The upland regions produce cereals, cotton, sugar beets, oilseeds, fruit, and vegetables. In the warm region below 3,600-4,500 feet (1,100-1,370 metres), rice, corn (maize), henna, and fruits are grown. Kermán exports a large percentage of the world's pistachios. Gum tragacanth is also gathered. Animal products are chiefly wool and *kork*, a kind of soft wool used in Kermán shawls. The province is rich in minerals such as copper, coal, chromium, lead, zinc, uranium, and aluminum, but difficulty of access has restricted mining on a large scale. Springs of crude oil have been found in the Kermán region. A gas pipeline from Bandar 'Abbás to Kermán and a network for the transmission of electricity have helped the development of industry in the province. Besides Kermán, the other towns of note are Báft, Bam, Rafsanján, Shahr-i Bábak, and Sirjan. Area province, 69,821 square miles (180,836 square km). Pop. (2006) city, 515,114; province, 2,652,413. (Extracted from *Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

87. **Falsafi:** The persecution and slaying of Bahá'ís was one of the daily activities of the clerics, monarchs and rulers of the Qájár dynasty (1789 – 1925). Mohammad Shah (was born on 5 January 1808 and died on 5 September 1848), the third king in the Qájár dynasty; he reigned from 1834 – 1848. The Cause of God which was instituted by the Báb was born during his reign. However, it was during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah (born on 16 July 1831 was assassinated on 1 May 1896), who reigned forty eight years (5 September 1848 – 1 May 1896), the Báb was martyred, Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned, and their followers were massacred in large numbers, waves of persecution proceeded one after another. During the rule of Reza Shah (from 16 December 1925 – 16 September 1941) who was the first king in the Pahlavi dynasty, persecution and slaying of Bahá'ís continued. The only difference with the past was that the government was not a party to the slaying of Bahá'ís. However, as a whole, persecution of Bahá'ís was not one of the political objectives of Riza Shah's era, as his main goal was to limit the influence of religious clerics. It was during his reign that the notion of *millat* [national identity] acquired its roots, and to some degree, the religious identity of *ummat* [body of believers] gave its place to *millat*. That is, the country was progressing along the direction that every citizen

considered himself an Iranian without concern for religious belief, political orientation or tribal affiliation. However, in the years after Riza Shah's demise, gradually that policy was forgotten and, once more, the idea of Ummat Islami [Body of Muslims] entered the political discourse. The founding of Fadáiyan-i Islam [Devotees of Islam] took place after Riza Shah was deposed and was an effort to combat leftist tendencies in Iran. After Riza Shah, the government and Mohammad Riza Shah's (he was the son of Reza Shah reigned from 1941-1979) policies returned back to the path of "Ummat Islami." With Riza Shah's exit, the clerics' long-held hatred of the Bahá'ís once again reared up its head and of course it was extended to other minority religions as well. In reality, the widespread perfidious belief that "any non-Islamic idea is a creation of foreigners" stemmed from the minds of the mullás. Through this method, they wanted to call "anti-Iranian" and "foreign" everything that was not Islamic or might prevent them from acquiring power through Shi'ih religious pretexts. This deceitful "Othering", and spreading the seeds of sedition and enmity, not only engulfed religious minorities, but also progressive nationalistic parties.

Beginning of 1955 Opposition to Bahá'ís: After the 28 Murdád (19 August 1953) coup d'état, which brought back Muḥammad Riḍá Shah back to power, the mullás insisted on their significant share in the revolt in his support in order for him to come back to power. Subsequently the Shah was forced to reward them, one of which was to give in to the request of mullás for the suppression of Bahá'ís. Two years after the coup d'état in 1953, due to the pressure from clerics and in particular Áyatu'llah Burújirdí, with the clear support from the Sháh a campaign against Bahá'ís started. A preacher by the name Hujjatu'l-Islam Muḥammad -Taqí Falsafi, started his sermons of hate from the pulpit of Masjid-i Sháh (Mosque of Sháh) against the Bahá'ís. In parallel with these sermons, a brutal attack on the lives of Bahá'ís started and the government confiscated Bahá'í properties in every city. In Tíhrán, in front of the cameras of both foreign and domestic reporters, General [Nader] Bátmánqulích, the chief of staff of the Iranian army, along with [General] Taymúr Bakhtiyár, the military commander of Tíhrán, took pickaxes and struck symbolically the dome of the National Bahá'í Centre and started the process of demolishing the dome of the National Bahá'í Centre. For many years afterwards, that building was impounded by the military and used for its own command centre. On the first day of the month of fasting, Ramaḍán (23 April 1955) hate sermons started and the destruction of the dome of the National Bahá'í centre started on 7 May 1955 and similarly the House of the Báb in Shiraz was partially destroyed. All Bahá'í gatherings and institutions reduces their activities and large

gatherings stopped. Large number of Bahá'ís employed by the government were dismissed. This cooperation of the government and the clergy to take action against Bahá'ís took place almost two decades earlier than the Islamic Revolution of Iran. The late Muḥammad Riḍá Shah could not foresee the future that through empowering the clergy and persecution of the loved ones of God eventually he was striking at the root of his sovereignty.

88. **Sarsaz** is a reference to the profession of this person under consideration; literally it means top maker. He used to make the top part of smoking pipes.
89. **Buq'at'ul-Khaḍrá** is the appellation or the name of the Bahá'í cemetery in Yazd which dates back to the time of Bahá'u'lláh. Originally Bahá'ís used to bury their dead in Muslim cemeteries. After a while, Muslims refused to allow the Bahá'ís to bury their dead in their cemetery as they regarded the Bahá'ís unclean. Eventually, Bahá'ís were allowed to have their own cemetery in Yazd which assumed the name “Buq'at'ul-Khaḍrá” which means green spot.
90. **Yazīd** ibn Mu'áwiyah ibn Abi Sufiyán (Arabic: يزيد بن معاوية بن أبي سفيان), romanized: Yazíd son of Mu'áwiyah son of Abú Sufiyyān; (646 – 683A.D.), commonly known as Yazíd-I, was the second caliph of the Umayyad Caliphate. He ruled from April 680 until his death in November 683. He is despised by the Shi'ih due to his action which led to the martyrdom of Imam Husayn. Also he is known to have deviated from the earlier practises of Islamic rulers.

Yazīd was the son of Mu'áwiyah who inherited his father's rule. He was the second of the dynastic rulers at the beginning of the Islamic era. His father Mu'áwiyah had obtained power over the Muslim community through deceit and treachery. During the last days of his reign he made the people pledge their support for his son Yazíd. Thereupon he installed him as his successor at an official ceremony.

Yazīd had inherited all the qualities of his character and the manner according to which rule the nations of Islam from his father, Mu'áwiyah, all that is, except for one thing: whereas, Mu'áwiyah governed by trickery and deceit, compromised with the demands of Islam even to the point of building mosques; Yazíd however committed the unseemly acts. Throughout his life and especially during his period of rule, became notorious for the killing the offspring of the Prophet of God and committed numerous other crimes at the tragedy of Karbalá.

The most abominable of these was ordering the murder of Imam Ḥusayn, his family and a group of his supporters, during the first year of his rule, and to make captive the family of Imam Ḥusayn. Moreover, in the second year

of his rule an event known as Harrah took place which was the scene of further atrocities on his part. After four years of government Yazíd left this world.

91. **Dr. Sulaymán Birjís** was a physician in Kashan who was attacked and killed by known assailants because of his Faith. He was born in 1276 Shamsi (1897) in a Bahá'í family in Káshán. His father, Ya'qúb Birjís, was one of the famous physicians of Káshán; When he was in Tíhrán and in the office of his uncle who was also a physician started as an apprentice to learn medical practise of his time. While in Tíhrán he came into contact with the Bahá'ís and became one of the of the followers of the Faith.

Ya'qúb Birjís's son, Sulaymán Birjís attended the school "Vahdat-i Bashar" which was established and run by the Bahá'ís of Káshán. One of the reasons for the fame of this school was that the teachers were familiar with English and French languages. Young Sulaymán when was nineteen years old travelled to Tíhrán to attend "Dar'ul-Funún" for studying medicine, and after completing his studies and apprenticeship he returned to Káshán to work at his father's medical practice. Dr. Sulaymán Birjís was known to respond to visit house-bound patients and he was assisting people who could not afford the medicine, giving them free of charge the medical care they needed; he was very popular in Káshán because of his care for the needy. Apart from his profession, he had a good knowledge of the Torah, Gospel and the Qur'an. One of the reasons which led to his murder was the threatening preaching from the pulpit by Shaykh Muḥammad Khálisí-zádih. He was very radical Islamist preacher born in Kázimayn, Iraq. He had a good connection with Aḥmad Shah but opposed Riḍá Shah and because of his opposition to the Court of the king, he was sent on exile several times to different places. He resided in Káshán from 1322 (1943) onwards. Another person who played a key role in the murder of Dr. Birjís was another preacher by the name of 'Ali Akbar Turbatí. Torbatí was sent in 1326 (1947) by Áyyatu'llah Burújirdí to Káshán.

He was inciting the fanatic Muslims to spill the blood of Bahá'ís and was telling them such action was consistent with the teachings of Islam. This led to the action of eight youths who caused the martyrdom of Dr. Birjís.

On Friday, 14th Bahman 1328 (3rd February, 1950) at 8:30 am two individuals by the names 'Abbás Tavassuli and 'Ali Naqí-Pur went to the office of Dr. Birjís where he was practising medicine and asked him to come and visit an old dying women who needed medical attention, they took Dr. Sulaymán Birjís to a house under this false pretext and then with the help of Háj Muḥammad Rasúl-zádih, Drúdgar, Riḍá Gulsurkhi and three others they

executed a pre-meditated murder of an innocent man. As soon as Dr. Sulaymán Birjís reached the place, eight individuals fell on him started beating him up, after that they cut him into pieces with eighty-one knife strokes then they dragged him on the roof top of the house and dropped him down.

After the incidence (according to their plan), four of the killers went to the police station and confessed to the killing and they were arrested. Then at the instigation of some people like Shaykh ‘Abdu’l-Karim Turbatí Waez, large crowds of mosques and bazaars gathered around the police station to force the release of the murders.

The killing of people under religious pretexts, can only be searched in the period of barbarism and the dark ages of the Middle Ages, and in the present period, progressive humanity is ashamed of such operations. Religious strife and killings are practiced only to secure the dominance of those who believe in prejudice. Some people have indicated that Fadáyyán Islam with the leadership of Navváb-i Şafaví has also been involved in this plot.

The trial of the murderers and preliminary investigation along with the alleged offenders were sent to Tíhrán. Despite the voluntary confession of all eight individuals, and outcome should have been punishment according to the law of the country, but they were set free at the end.

Áyyat’ulláh Burujirdí, Bihbahání and Faizí started exerting their maximum pressure for the release of these eight individuals. The Bahá’í community by writing to the Shah, Prime Minister, sent petition to Minister of Justice and the Chief of Police for justice. But such a plea was ignored and the Prime Minister was dismissed within two weeks. Then Mansúr and Razm Árá became prime ministers one after the other and they rejected the plea of the Bahá’í community. Navváb-i Şafaví came to the court room where trial was in progress and caused confusion and court proceedings closed and went on recess.

At the end, the court on 26 Shahrivar 1329 (17 September 1950), despite the confession of the murderers and countless witnesses, were exonerated and allowed to go free.

92. This is a prayer from Bahá’u’lláh – refer to Maşábih-i-Hidáyat, [MAH] vol. 9, p. 562.

"هو الله اى رب بدل عسر اولياتك باليسر و شدتهم بالرخاء و ذلهم بالعز و حزنهم بالفرح
الاكبر يا من بيدك زمام البشر انك انت الله الفرد الواحد المقتدر العليم الخبير"

93. **Tone and manner of debate:** In the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, teaching the Cause of God with wisdom is the duty of every Bahá'í. In Iran about a century ago, every individual tried to identify fair minded seekers of truth who were sincere and then started entering into conversation with them on spiritual matters. That was the general rule. However, once in a while, there were people who had double face and intended to bring harm to Bahá'ís. This was very rare, but it could happen. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí has tried to explain one of such instances. In such cases, the tone of the debate between Bahá'í believers and their adversaries, who had no intention of accepting the truth under any circumstances, was formal but polite and at times could be described as confrontational; and this was nearly a century ago. Talking about one's religion and politics are frowned at in the western world today and therefore people try to avoid it altogether; this is mainly due to the fact that it could lead to unpleasant confrontation. Documenting such debates, as has been done by 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí, is historically of some value, particularly when it covers the social norms of the time which were to some extent different than those of today. We should not judge such debates by our current standards. This story is not cited for the purpose of emulating it today.
94. **Áqá Mírzá Ḥasan Núsh-Ábádí:** Áqá Mírzá Ḥasan Núsh-Ábádí was one of the capable teachers of the Cause of God in Iran. As his name implies he was born, and had his early childhood, in Núsh-Ábád, one of the villages near Kashan. The full story of his life is covered in Maṣábíḥ-i-Hidáyat [MBH], vol. 6, pp. 96-167. He was born in 1270 Shamsi (1892). The name of his father was Luṭf-'Alí and the name of his mother was Ḥalímih Khátún and both believed in the New Revelation of God. Unfortunately due to the epidemic of cholera both parents passed away when he was 12 years old, he became an orphan while he had no brothers or sisters to look after him. He started travelling with Mírzá Mihdí Akhaván Šafá (one of the teachers of the Cause of God) as his assistant and then after learning from him how to teach the Cause of God, he started to travel for teaching the Cause independently. In 81 BE he travelled to the Holy Land for pilgrimage and met the Guardian. He has written a book: Baráhin (Proofs) nearly 800 pages which has not been printed or published, and also Rashahát 'Irfán (The sprinkles of the knowledge of God). He married Thábitih Khánum the daughter of Áqá Muḥammad Thábit Sharqí. He participated in Singapore conference in 115BE and in 1340 Shamsi (1961) passed away in Shiraz.
95. **Arák:** Arák, previously Sultánábád, city, capital of Markazí province, north-western Iran. It was founded as Sultánábád in 1808 by the Qájár ruler Fath-'Alí Sháh. By the end of the century, it had become an important centre of carpet production. During the reign of Riḍá Sháh Pahlavi (1925–41), the

local name Arák was adopted as the official name. In the late 20th century the city developed into a major industrial centre, producing steel, aluminium, petrochemical products, vehicles, and heavy machinery. Pop. (2011) 484,200. (Extracted from Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

Arák has offered a number of martyrs to the Faith. In here we will mention only the Seven Martyrs of Arák which took place in 1916. This presentation is based on what has been recorded in the book “The Life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Muḥammad-‘Alí Faizi [LAB]”: Jináb-i Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Barár, the son of Mullá Ḥusayn was from Kashan and was living in Sulṭán-Ábád who was martyred two year after the martyrdom of the Four Martyrs of Arak in the hands of those who worked for Hájí Siyyid Muḥammad Báqir and Áqá Díyá’. Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar grew up in this place and went on pilgrimage to visit ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. After his return, he continued with his profession which was trade, progressed well and obtained much wealth which attracted the enmity of the local people. During WWI when the Russian forces had reached near Sulṭán-Ábád and camped there, security was non-existent, the enemies of the Cause of God took advantage of the situation and on the night of 17th of Rabi‘uth-Thani 1334 (22 February 1916) murdered Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar and six members of his family. Those who were martyred were as follows:

- i. Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Barár who was sixty five years old.
- ii. Maryan khanum – his wife
- iii. ‘Abdu’l-Ḥusayn – his son of 12 years old
- iv. Mírzá Áqá – his son who was nine years old
- v. ‘Abdu’llah – his son who was six years old
- vi. ‘Abdu’r-Raḥím who was an infant of forty days old
- vii. Khurshíd khanum the sister of Maryam khanum who was fourteen years old

96. **Mírzá Mihdí Akhavan Šafá:** Mírzá Mihdí Akhavan Šafá was one of the travel teachers in Iran. The story of his life has been covered in Mašábíḥ-i-Hidáyat [MAH], vol 4, pp. 4-91. His father was Muḥammad Báqir who lived in Yazd and had many children of which three girls and six boys, all together nine children. Mírzá Mihdí was one of the nine who reached the age of young adults. Some of these children became believers in the new Faith and some followed their old religion of Islam. Mírzá Mihdí was one them who became a believer. Some of the siblings became also martyrs in the events of Yazd in 1321 AH(1903). Akhavan Šafá is the title that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá granted to this family. The trade that he learned was weaving. He survived the atrocities of 1903 in Yazd and Travelled to Ṭihrán and joined

the class and teaching group of Şadru'uş-Şudúr. After he finished the teaching class, started travel teaching and travelled in Iran for the sake of the promotion of the Cause of God. He travelled to the Holy land and visited 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He returned and continued with his service. He passed away in 1337 AH (1919).

97. **Hájí Siyyid Javád Surúsh:** There were two brothers in Yazd who were among the earlier believers of the Faith from the time of the Báb; they were sons of Siyyid Surúsh. Their names were Siyyid Ibrahim and Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad-'Alí. Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad-'Alí had four children, two boys and two girls. The names of the male children were Siyyid Javád and Siyyid 'Alí. Both of them, after obtaining permission from Bahá'u'lláh, travelled to 'Akká and visited His holy presence and with His permission made 'Akká as their place of residence. Hájí Siyyid Javád married Gohar khánum, the sister of Munírih khánum, the wife of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The daughter of Hájí Siyyid Javád, Bi Bi Riḍváníyyih, married Áqá Mírzá Ḥusayn, the son of Hájí 'Abdu'r-Raḥím Qannád. According to the instructions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and after the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, Hájí Siyyid Javád and his family moved to Port Sai'd. (Tárikh Amrí Yazd, [TAY] p. 152)
98. **Jamál Burújirdí:** Jamál Burújirdí was a learned cleric and mullá who became a Bahá'í and visited Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Adrianople and 'Akká. He was imprisoned in Iran for sometime. He was known by the name Ismu'llah Jamál. He received several tablets from Bahá'u'lláh. He was very proud, expected Bahá'ís to pay high respect for him, and to provide him with means for a comfortable living like the clergy class in Islam. However, his demise occurred after the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh and during the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Covenant Breakers pampered him and he thought he could make a division in the ranks of the believers to his own advantage. Eventually, he was sanctioned and Bahá'ís paid no attention to him. He died in misery and poverty.
99. **Mírzá Ḥaydar-'Alí Isfahani** (1834-1920). He was a native of Isfahan and his father was Mírzá Ḥusayn, a merchant. He accepted the message of the Báb when he was rather young, was considered as a Bábí for a while then he travelled to Adrianople and visited Bahá'u'lláh. He was there for seven months then he was sent to Istanbul to facilitate the travel of friends. His service to the Cause started from here and continued for half a century. Bahá'u'lláh towards the final year of His stay in Adrianople sent him to Egypt to teach the Cause with wisdom, but it did not take him long before the Iranian Consul General to arrest him, to deliver him to the Egyptian

authorities; he was introduced to them as a rebellious and dangerous element. He was exiled to Khartum in Sudan. He was there for thirteen years and after gaining his freedom, he was granted the permission to visit Bahá'u'lláh in Ákká after which he travelled back to Iran and was a successful travel teacher. Once again he visited Ákká in the early years during the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He again travelled to Iran and strengthened the understanding of the friends about the Covenant. When he was old and fragile he travelled to the Holy Land and resided there. He was known as the "Angel of Carmel". His famous publication is *Bihjatu's-Sudúr*. (The Delight of Hearts) and *Dalail'ul-Irfán* (Proofs of the knowledge of God). For further reading see *Eminent Bahá'is* by Hasan Balyuzi, [EMB] pp. 237-250: "Angel of Mount Carmel" He passed away in 1338 AH (1920). His life story is covered in *Maşábih-i-Hidáyat*, [MAH] vol 1, pp. 1-92.

100. **Qábil-i Ábádihiy:** Qábil-i Ábádihiy is a successful travel teacher from Ábádih (in the Province of Fars on the road between Shiraz-Isfahan) which is not too far from Shiraz. He was a poet as well. He lived during the time 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. The story of his life is covered in *Maşábih-i-Hidáyat* [MAH], vol. 2, pp. 158-189. He was borne in one of the villages of Ábádih in 1280 AH(1863). His given name was 'Abbás. The name of his father was Ghulam-'Alí. Mírzá 'Abbás had his early and basic education in Ábádih and when he was nineteens years old came into contact with the Bahá'í Faith and believed in Bahá'u'lláh. Despite the persecution in Ábádih, he continued to teach the Cause of God. He selected the pen name "Qábil" for himself which numerically is equivalent to 'Abbás. In 1337 A.H.(1919) along with 18 others, a total of nineteen Bahá'is , from Ábádih went on pilgrimage to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He has received several tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. During the time of the Guardian he was very active in the field of teaching. He passed away in 1315 Shamsi (1936).
101. **Mullá 'Alí Ján & 'Alaviyyih khanum:** Mullá 'Alí Ján, entitled "The lofty, the most exalted" is one of the radiant faces in the history of the Bahá'í Faith. He was among the learned and from the rank of clergy who accepted the Faith, a great teacher of the Cause of God and a martyr. He also left a devoted family behind. Mullá 'Alí Ján was borne in the village of Riykandih which was twelve km from the town of Sári (in the Province of Mazandaran) in the year 1262 AH (1846). Sári itself is not too far from the location of the Shrine of the Shaykh Tabarsi where a great campaign of devotion, bravery, self-sacrifice and endurance in the face of difficulties took place. When this campaign was underway, he was a child of tender age. The name of his father was Ja 'far and that his mother was Áminih.

Soon he lost both parents. He received the elements of basic education at home and then continued with advanced studies to become a priest. In 1284 AH (1868) he was convinced of the truth of the Faith. What attracted him initially to the Faith were the great prophecies that he read in the Islamic literature about ‘Akká. He could not understand its reason at that time. He investigated this matter and was led to the Bahá’í Faith. Then he was convinced of the truth of the Faith. At this time he was studying in Barfurúsh (Currently Bábul) which was not too far from Sári. After finishing his studies he became the priest (Imam Jum‘ih) of Máh-Furúzak. He gradually started acquainting his followers to the precepts of the Bahá’í faith. Then he started to teach the Faith openly as a result of which the great majority of the inhabitants of the village of Máh-Furúzak became Bahá’ís. About this time he married his cousin, ‘Alavíyyih khanum. The progress of the Faith in the surrounding villages alarmed the authorities. In the year 1300 AH (1883) when persecution of Bahá’ís was underway all over Iran, Mullá ‘Alí Ján, along with some other Bahá’ís from Máh-Furúzak, were arrested and sent to Tíhrán and were imprisoned. Finally he was put to death on 21 Sha’bán 1300 (23 June 1883). He became one of the heroes and outstanding martyrs of the Faith. Also his wife, ‘Alavíyyih khanum, and family members were arrested and sent to Sári and they were humiliated and then released. They ransacked their house and their properties. From this couple a devoted family followed. Buzurg ‘Alavíyan is another martyr from this family who drank from the cup of martyrdom during the start of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. (The story of his life is covered in *Maşábíh-i-Hidáyat* [MAH], vol. v, pp. 500-537). It should be stressed that ‘Alavíyyih khanum in the way of perfection and faith was not much less than her illustrious husband.

102. **Bakhtyári:** Bakhtyári, also spelled Bakhtiyári, one of the two nomad tribes of Iran; the second one is the Qashqáyí. The chiefs of Bakhtyári have been among the greatest tribal leaders in Iran and have long been influential in Persian politics. The Bakhtyári population of approximately 880,000 occupies roughly 25,000 square miles (65,000 square km) of plains and mountains in western Iran. They speak the Lurí dialect of Persian and are Shí‘it Muslims. Sedentarized Bakhtyáris live in towns and in many villages in Chahár Maḥál, in the Farídan district down to Isfahan, and in Khuzistan down to Ahváz. The nomads and some sedentary people live in the tribal territory, called the “Bakhtyári country”, an area of roughly 75,000 km² stretching from the Dez river, Shúshtar, and Rám Hurmuz on the west to Dárán and the outskirts of Shahr-i Kurd on the east.

The Bakhtyári nomads move between a summer abode (yiyláq) in the high mountains (summit, Zardakúh 4,548 m) and a winter abode (garmsír) in the western foothills adjoining the Khuzistan plain. The ecological boundary between the two zones coincides roughly with the course of the Áb-i Bázuft. Thus the Bakhtyári country falls into two different administrative provinces: Chahár Maḥál, where the summer quarters lie, and Khuzistan, in which the winter quarters are included.

Many of the Bakhtyári are nomadic, pastoral tent dwellers who are dependent on their flocks of sheep, goats, and cattle. They migrate their flocks 150 miles each year between their winter pastures in the plains and the summer pastures of the mountains. Agricultural products are mainly obtained by trade or as tax from dependent villages. There has been some urbanization among the Bakhtyári resulting from the oil industry.

The Bakhtyári are divided into two main tribal groups, the Chahár Lang ("Four Legs") and the Haft Lang ("Seven Legs"). Each of these groups is controlled by a single chiefly family that holds extensive political power and owns sizable herds and farmlands. The position of khán, or paramount leader, of the Bakhtyári is held for two years by the chief of the Haft Lang, with the chief of the Chahár Lang as his Ílbig, or deputy. For the next two years the two chiefs exchange their posts with each other.

A factor which further strengthened the power of the Bakhtyári kháns (chiefs) was the presence of British firms in Khuzistan from the end of the nineteenth century onward. The opening of the Lynch road through the south of the Bakhtyári country in 1897 was followed by the discovery and extraction of petroleum at Masjid-i Sulaymán and later at other places in the tribe's garmsír. These developments deprived several thousand nomads of traditional pastures but brought a bonanza to the greater chiefs. For their undertaking to maintain the security of the oil installations, these chiefs were rewarded with 5 percent of the shares of the First Exploration Company, and as a result became entitled to part of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's profits for twenty-five years and to substantial compensation after the company's withdrawal.

Bakhtyári chiefs have long been influential in Iranian politics. In 1909 Bakhtyári tribesmen under the Haft Lang chief Sardar Assad captured Tíhrán in their successful campaign to press for constitutional reforms in Iran. Many Bakhtyári have held prominent public offices since then, including governorates of provinces and important ministerial posts in the central government.

Bakhtyári women have long enjoyed a high degree of freedom that is atypical of Muslim women elsewhere. The daughters of tribal leaders are normally given at least an elementary education.

(Summarized from Encyclopaedia Iranica & Encyclopaedia Britannica)

103. **Shahr-i-Kurd:** It is a City in Chahár Maḥál and Bakhtyári Province. In fact Shahr-i Kurd is the capital city of the Province. It is the largest city in the Province, and is 90 km away from Iran's third largest city, Isfahan. This city is located to the northeast of this province, and is situated 543 km south of Tíhrán. Shahr-i-Kurd is in the midst of a plain surrounded by mountains. In the 7th Century AH Shahr-i-Kurd and its outskirts came under the rule of the Atábakán-i-Fárs and Luristán. It was in this area that a sentry post was set up to control both passenger traffic and see to their need. The ancient name of Shahr-i-Kurd has been heard since Zandiyyih era; however, according to the findings of archaeologists, and specifically with regard to the ancient hills around the city is dating back to millenniums B. C. Thanks to its special roadway location, Shahr-i-Kurd was used as a police station by Atábakán of Fars and Luristán. Currently, the people living in Shahr-i Kurd are of three major backgrounds: Bakhtyári, Qashqáyi and indigenous Persian speakers of Shahr-i Kurd; however, the people of Shahr-i Kurd speak Persian as a lingua franca. Shahr-i Kurd is assumed to be first developed by nomadic farmers because it encompasses vast meadows and several springs. It was founded by the immigrants from Isfahan, its suburbs, and the villages around Shahr-i Kurd, most of whom started to run businesses such as agriculture, horticulture, hat making, felt making, oil and wool trading, and other industries.

Shahr-i Kurd enjoys a semi-moist and moderate climate with moderate summers and very cold winters. The annual average temperature in Shahr-i Kurd is 11°C. Although the humidity level is moderate or high in winter, the amount of rainfall is close to zero in planting seasons, except for April and May.

Source: <https://www.itto.org/iran/city/Shahrekord/>

104. **Abu'l-Faḍl Raḥmání:** Abu'l-Faḍl Raḥmání is the brother of Jináb-i Hádí Raḥmání who was a counsellor and the manger of Naw Nahálán Company. Both of them are sons of Áqá Ja'far Raḥmání who was a native of Fars Province. Áqá Mírzá Ja'far Raḥmání was the son of Mírzá Hádí Shirazi. The father and son travelled to Ishq-Ábád in 1304 AH (1886) (Notice that the name of Mírzá Ja'far's father as well as that of his son was Hádí). At the

time of his arrival in Ishq-Ábád, Mírzá Ja‘far did not confess the Bahá’í belief, neither did his father. Hájí Mírzá Hádí was a devout Muslim and whenever and wherever heard the call to prayer "Adhán" he did the same with a loud voice. Hájí Mírzá Hádí and Áqá Ja‘far became engaged in trade in Ishq-Ábád. It did not take long before Hájí Mírzá Hádí contracted a disease and became very sick and passed away. After the death of his father, Áqá Ja‘far travelled to Khujand (now in Tajikistan) and established himself there. Then travelled to the Holy Land and built the Eastern traveller’s Hospice, during the time of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which served as a lodge for eastern pilgrims well into the time of the Guardian. It still stands and serves as pilgrim’s house which receives visitors. Áqá Ja‘far has received tablets from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (see *Tarikh Ishq-Ábád* pp. 341-342). Also the life history of Mírzá Ja‘far Raḥmání, the son of Hájí Mírzá Hádí is written by his son Jináb-i Hádí Raḥmání in *Áhang Badi‘* – year no. 28 , no. 11-12, year 1352, pp. 21-26.

105. **Dr. ‘Alí- Murád Dávúdí** was one of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly in the decade before the Islamic Revolution of Iran and was its Secretary. He was a professor of philosophy who made himself retired to devote his time to the service of the Cause. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution and in its early years, he was walking in a park where he was kidnapped and nothing was heard from him after that. Without any doubt he was killed and he is one of the recent martyrs of the Cause of God. Apart from his self-sacrifice and outstanding services to the Cause of God, he was a true scholar and the author of several books one of which is “Divinity and Revelation”.
106. **Naw Nahálán Company:** It is a trust company established by the Bahá’í Community of Iran which was inspired by the Master. Its origin was in the city of Qazvin. The story of the start of this company from its beginnings in the city of Qazvin to its developments as reported in the book “Yarán-i Qazvin [YAQ]” is being translated and summarize below. The aforementioned story in turn has used several articles in the magazine *Payam Bahá’í* numbers 266, 270 and 205; and also *Akhbár Amrí* (Bahá’í News), the publication of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran, year 46, annual number 4 and 5 for the solar year 1346 and 1967:

Naw Nahálán was establish with the efforts and initiative of Muḥammad Labíb, a school teacher in the Bahá’í School of Tavakkul in Qazvin, and a teacher in Bahá’í Children Classes. The humble beginning of this company started with the pocket money which the children were

receiving from the their parents and they could buy some coupons, whoever accumulated enough coupons worth one share of the company they would exchange the coupons for a share and in this manner such children would become shareholders of the company. This company had been approved by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. To confer blessing upon it, He Himself contributed two gold coins and symbolically He became a shareholder as well. The capital of the company continuously had upward trend in 1336 AH (1918) it was less than \$100. It became a habit that parents would purchase share as gifts in the name of their children and as a support for them when children performed well in their studies and other events. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in a tablet has made some remarks about this company, and in the same tablet He asks God to make this company of the Bahá’í children well rooted and let it continue into the future ... There are other tablets (refer to the tablet MKT3, p. 265). There are letters from the Guardian for this company as well in which he prays for the success of the company and the Bahá’í children who supported it. A few decades later, this company had grown in size substantially and had become a company with national outlook with sizeable capital. After Islamic Revolution of Iran, one of the first things they did was to occupy and confiscate the company, though the staff still were working there under their control and later they confiscated it altogether. It is mentioned that Abdu’l-Bahá once said that this company belongs to me. The capital of the company in 1979 was close to \$10 million and the number of the employees of the company was fifty five. It had a board of director consisting of seven individuals and a general manager. Jináb-i Hádí Rahmání was the last general manager of this company. Since it was also a business, it was lending money and assisting individuals who were in difficult situation. (Yarán Gazvin, [Yaq] pp. 631 - 636)

107. Prayer by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá quoted in the book: “ ‘Áqibat Bikhayr”, [ABK] p. 181 and also in the Muntakhabát-i Makátíb ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [MMA] vol. 1, in Persian, no. 22, page, 49. This collection of the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has been translated and published as a book called : “Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdul-Baha” [SWA] tablet number 22 in SWA.

ای متوجّه الی الله چشم از جمیع ماسوی ببرند و به ملکوت ابهی برگشا آنچه خواهی از او خواه و آنچه طلبی از او طلب به نظری صدهزار حاجتت روا نماید و به التفاتی صدهزار درد بی‌درمان دوا کند به انعطافی زخمها را مرهم نهد و به نگاهی دلها را از قید غم برهاند آنچه کند او کند ما چه توانیم کرد یفعل ما یشاء و یحکم ما یرید است پس سر تسلیم نه و توکل بر ربّ رحیم به

108. In the Bahá'í Faith we have prayers for protection, healing, and several other occasional prayers. There are similar prayers in Islam and particularly in Shí'h, Islam, which have been written by revered Shí'h Imams. It became a habit for some of the faithful believers in Islam, who were illiterate, to carry written versions of such prayers with them and particularly prayers for protection for children. These prayers were written, folded and placed in tiny bags and worn by the support of an arm band or worn like a necklace around one's neck. The Báb established procedures for writing His prayers and further restricted the manner by which His revealed prayers were to be written. Bahá'u'lláh further restricted the use of such practise except by His permission. In the age of enlightenment, one might think that a piece of paper on which something is written has no power of enactment. 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that the power of faith, belief and reliance upon the Words of God, exerts tremendous forces. This also holds true when we say any prayer; the physical aspect of saying a prayer has minimal effects, however, when it is strengthened by the power of faith it can produce wonderful results. (Refer to a Table from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Amr va Khalq*, vol. 4, pp. 68-69 – 128 BE; [AVK, vol. 4, pp. 68-69])

Haykal or Temple is nothing but a reference to a shape and in this case the shape of human body. It is possible to write the revealed Writings in a manner which at the end produces an image similar to the shape of a human being consisting of one head, two hands and two legs very much like five pointed star in which symmetry has been preserved but each point has a different size. Writing the revealed verses in this manner is one of the features of the religion of the Báb and we have many images of this nature which were produced by Him. A copy of two images of this kind have been placed at the end of this endnote. These images have been produced by the Báb Himself which are taken from the book “ ‘Ahd-i-Ala” by Abu'l-Qasim Afnan. In the first year of His revelation, the Báb instructed His male followers to write his Writings in the form of Haykal (Temple) and wear them on their chest. He instructed the same thing for female believers except

that He instructed them to write down His Writings in the form of a circle. In other words, the circle form for females and the temple form for male believers.

In particular there is a prayer for protection which is written in the form of Haykal (Temple) and is known as the prayer of temple (Du'a-i-Haykal). Refer to Illustration number 35. This is a copy of the "Prayer of Haykal" which has been produced by the Báb; this includes writing as well as symbols. The text of such Haykal can be examined in *Athrar'ul-'Athar*, vol. 4, p. 115. The first few sentences of this Tablet (in Arabic) are as follows:

«اذ انزل بك حاجة او أراد ان يحشر احد من اهل الحقيقة فاصنع على لوح قرطاس بيض
سبعة دوائر التي كان عرض كل ما بين الخطين بحد سواء بماء الأصفر سواء كان ذهباً او
زعفراناً واجلعه في تسعة عشر قسمة...» (اسرار الآثار ص 115 جلد 4)

One more thing to remember is that the Báb commanded His believers to transcribe His Writings with the utmost care in the way of calligraphy, and superior paper, ink, etc. As an example refer to the Persian Bayán, chapter 14 of vahid 3; 3:14. This should be applicable to the reproduction of the prayer of Haykal as well.

Also it should be remembered that apart from the prayer of haykal by the Báb which is used for protection, there is a Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh with the same name. In another Tablet, He gives detailed instructions how to write the prayer, the kind of ink and paper to use for this purpose and how to fold the paper. In the same Tablet, He confirms that if someone else to write the prayer for anyone, one mithqál of gold should be given to him as a gift. There are instructions regarding how to say the prayer. This Tablet which is addressed to Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín has been published in "Muḥaḍirát, vol. 1, page 416" by 'Abdu'l-Hámid-i Ishráq-Khávári.

These prayers which are short should not be mistaken with two other Tablets. One is the Tablet of Hayakil or Temples which is an explanation by Bahá'u'lláh about a Tablet of the Báb revealed for Asadu'lláh Dayyán. The second one is the Tablet of Haykal which is also called Súrih-i-Haykal which is a long Tablet. These two Tablets are not a part of the current discussion.



Illustration 57: Tablet in the form of haykal (temple) number 2
Source: ‘Ahdi-i ‘Ala, page 470

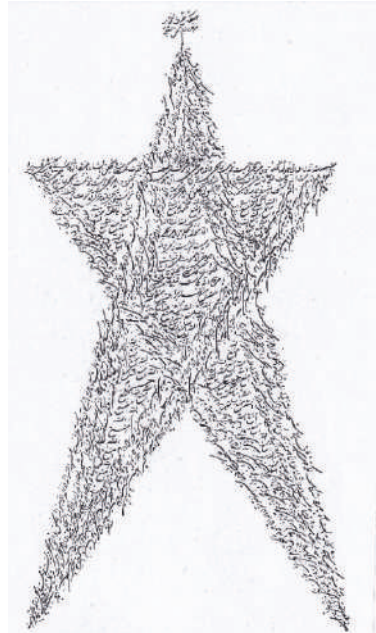


Illustration 58: Tablet in the form of haykal (temple) number 3
Source: ‘Ahdi-i ‘Ala, page 468

109. **Ḥájí Muḥammad Ismá‘íl Gundulí:** (The story of his life is translated and presented from Khátirát-i Málmírí, [KHM] pp. 35-37) He was the son-in-law of Ḥájí Muḥammad Afshár (The author of the book: The Sea of the Knowledge of God – Baḥr’ul-‘Irfan) who was a teacher of Cause and a firm believer during the time of Bahá’u’lláh and then ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Ḥájí Muḥammad Ismá‘íl was a religious man and was adhering tenaciously to the precepts and teaching of Islam. It was now a few years that Ḥájí Muḥammad Afshár (his father-in-law) had accepted the Faith but was keeping his belief hidden from him. Should he have become aware of his acceptance of the Bahá’í Faith, there would have been a great possibility that he would divorce his wife (the daughter of Ḥájí Muḥammad Afshár).

In one year that the Islamic month of Ramaḍan was in summer and the afternoon weather in Yazd was very hot Ḥájí Muḥammad Táhir Málmírí relates: “I was at the home of Áqá Muḥammad Riḍá Muḥammad-Ábádí Shahid; in the

afternoon, Hájí Muḥammad Afshár brought his son-in-law, who was fasting at the time, to the afore-mentioned house. Due to the heat of the air during daytime, we were sitting in the basement. As soon as Hájí Muḥammad Ismá'íl arrived, he lied down and covered himself up all-the-way from his toe to his head with his abá and he tried to sleep. Then Hájí Muḥammad Afshár though was a believer in the Faith started asking questions for the benefit of his-in-law so that he could hear both the questions and their answers. I was answering some of these questions. He was rejecting some and accepting some. This conversation and debate took about four hours. Hájí Muḥammad Ismá'íl was apparently awake under the cover of abá and was listening to our conversation. It was about two hours before sunset he, all of a sudden, removed the abá which was covering him and requested for tea and in this manner he broke his fast despite the fact that he was very much attached to the ordinances of Islam and strictly obeyed its laws. In this way he accepted the Faith very quickly and passed across the bridge and arrived at the garden of the acceptance of the New Revelation. He had an office in the Caravanserai Khájih and was engaged in trading.

After accepting the Faith he started immediately to teach the cause of God and openly announced his belief in the New Revelation. This caused some people to make an attempt to kill him. They encouraged a person by the name Javád Shekári to kill him when he was returning home from his office. So he was awaiting for an opportune time until one day they came face to face with each other and this place was not too far away from his house. Javád fired a bullet into his belly. But God protected him, he was saved which was the cause of astonishment of many people. Hájí Muḥammad Ismá'íl approached Jalálu'd-Dawlih, the governor, and complained. The government followed up the matter but the assailant fled away thereby was not punished.

However, Hájí Muḥammad Ismá'íl increased his enkindlement after this incidence which did not become the means for his despair. Rather, he made his house as the place for Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and his house for a number of years till the time of disturbances was the place of Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. He himself, when midnight approached used to go and open the door and await the arrival of the friends. The friends were engaged in prayers until early morning hours in that house. Indeed this blessed man was the cause of Exhilaration and happiness of the friends and he had no thoughts or intention save the exaltation of the Faith and its promotion. He had a good sense of humor and had very good manners. He was always smiling when meeting others be it a friend or a stranger. He did not have much knowledge but the way he argued he could convince the learned. This continued until the disturbances and intense atrocities in Yazd started and what he endured is recorded in the Tarikh Shuhadyi Yazd.

110. **Tákur** is a village in Núr County, Mazandaran Province, Iran. Mazandaran forms the southern-most shores of the Caspian Sea. Tákur's population is currently about fifty families. It is located about twenty km to the west of the city of Ámul and at about a distance of fifty km from the Caspian Sea. The province of Mazandaran has high mountain peaks in the south descending to the northern coastal plain bordering the sea and covered with lots of vegetation and enjoys good amounts of rain fall. Because of the dense sub-tropical jungles of the lower parts of the province (a stark contrast to the dry desert conditions in much of the rest of Iran), it was always a difficult area for invaders to penetrate. The Zoroastrian royalty and nobility fled to these parts after the Arab Islamic invasion of Iran in the seventh century. Bahá'u'lláh's family have descended from the last monarch of pre-Islamic Iran. Tákur was the ancestral home of Mírzá Buzurg, the Father of Bahá'u'lláh. Mírzá Buzurg was the master of calligraphy who was called the second Mír Imád. His good hand-writing and calligraphic capabilities eased his way to the court of Fath-‘Alí Sháh. Mírzá Buzurg Núrí, rose in the ranks of the civil servants to become the minister to a royal prince who was the commander of the royal guards. He became later a vizier (minister). He was given the village of Tákur in the Núr region in lieu of salary and he built a fine mansion there by the side of the Núr river as a family home. He worked for a time in the service of Fath-‘Alí Sháh. Mírzá Buzurg was the son of Mírzá Ridá-Qulí Big, son of Mírzá ‘Abbás, son of Hájí Muḥammad-Ridá Big, son of Áqá Muhammad-‘Ali, son of Áqá Fakḥr, son of Shahríyár-Hasan. Bahá'u'lláh spent some months in Tákur during summers when the weather in Tíhrán was very hot. Due to floods in one year the house of Mírzá Buzurg was washed away and then it was rebuilt.
111. The following note has been written by Bahá'u'lláh when he was about six or seven years old. Refer to the book: “ ‘Áqibat Bikhayr”, pp. 192-193; Payam Bahá'í, no 307, June 2005, pp. 20-21. Also another source is an article in the Book “The Best-Beloved of the World”, written by Abu'l-Qásim Afnán, page 180 states that He was eight years old when wrote that letter/Tablet.
- هوالمحبوب، انشاءالله در سایه رحمت رحمانی و قباب عنایت سبحانی ساکن و مستریح باشید
و بر حسب ظاهر من کوچکم و خط ندارم. ولكن چون این امی به سدره الهی متمسک است
بی علم میخواند و بی خط می نویسد و این در عالم باطن نزد اهل بصر مشهود است. اغیار
از این سر آگاه نبوده و نیستند.
112. **Mírzá Buzurg and Hájí Mírzá Áqásí:** The second Prime Minister of Muḥammad shah, Hájí Mírzá Áqásí, was antagonistic to Mírzá Buzurg. One reason which prompted his enmity was Mírzá Buzurg's particular friendship

with the Qá'im-Maqám, Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim of Farahán. In June 1835 the Qá'im-Maqám was put to death by the order of Muhammad Shah. Mírzá Buzurg wrote letters condemnatory of Hájí Mírzá Áqásí, which the Prime Minister eventually encountered, and retaliated with force. He had Mírzá Buzurg dismissed from the governorship of Burujird and Luristán. This post had been given to him by the Qá'im-Maqám. Next, Hájí Mírzá Áqásí stopped Mírzá Buzurg's annual allowance. Manuscripts exist in his superb and much-admired handwriting, in various collections both in and outside of Iran. There is one such scroll in the International Archives of the Bahá'í World Centre.

As for the history of the Faith in Tákur, it was twice attacked by the government troops and some of the Bahá'ís were taken prisoner.

113. **Seventeen or more martyrs:** On 23 day of Ramaḍán 1308 (May 2, 1891) two believers from Yazd went to a mosque to see one of their friends. The people in the mosque attacked them and took them to the government quarters demanding their execution. Jalálu'd-Dawlih, the governor of Yazd ordered to keep them in his prison for six days, then asked his father who was the governor of Isfahan what to do next; since no reply arrived then he fined them and ordered to pay some amount of money after which they were released. After the governor released them, a reply arrived from his father to keep them in jail and await further instructions. So the governor ordered his people to arrest these two men again and in addition they arrested five more Bahá'ís, a total of seven, and put them in jail. With a fatwa issued by the clergy for their killing because they considered them infidels, the governor ordered their execution which was carried out on 9 Shawwal 1308 (18 May 1891). Their names and ages in the order of their martyrdom are as follows:

- a) Áqá 'Alí-Aşghar Yúzdarání – 19 years of age.
- b) Mullá Mihdí Khuvaydakí – 60 years old.
- c) Áqá 'Alí Gázur-Gáhí – 30 years of age.
- d) Mullá 'Alí Sabzivarí – 45 years of age.
- e) Áqá Muhammad Báqir – 42 years old
- f) Áqá 'Alí-Aşghar Fahadani – 24 years old (brother of Áqá Hasan and Áqá 'Alí-Akbar Káshí)
- g) Áqá Hasan – 21 years old (brother of Áqá 'Alí-Aşghar #6 above and Áqá 'Alí-Akbar Káshí)

It should be noted that in the above list of seven martyrs of Yazd, the story of martyrdom of whom was given in the text. Three of these martyrs were related to ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí:

- i. Number 3 in the list: Áqá ‘Alí Gázur-Gáhí who was the parental cousin of the father of Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí’s wife.
- ii. Number 6 in the list: Áqá ‘Alí-Aşghar Fahadani, the paternal uncle of Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí’s wife.
- iii. Number 7 in the list: Áqá Hasan who was the parental uncle of Mr. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí’s wife.

For their relationship to ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí refer to Ill. 57, the Family Tree number 7, page 224.

Haji Muḥammad Ḥusayn Turk’s wife was Zahrá Sultán. She had a few brothers and sisters among whose families were several martyrs. We will list these individuals below and explain each case:

One of Zahrá Sultán’s sisters was Khadijih Sultán. She married Zayn’ul-‘Ábidin. This couple had six children three of whom were martyred, as follows (Shátir Husayn, Shátir Hasan & Aqa Ali Akbar):

- iv. Shátir Ḥusayn (Son of Khadijih Sultán and Zayn’ul-‘Ábidin): On the first day of troubles he went to the house of Şadr’ul-Ulama and was hiding for two days. On 2 Rabí’u’th-Thání 1321 (28 June 1930) he left the house of Şadr and in the very early hours of morning headed towards his own house located in the neighbourhood of Kushkak-Naw in Yazd. Just in front of his house before entering his house he was seen by a neighbour who reported it to thugs, they came and captured him, took him to a clergy man, got a fatwas for his killing, then took him to the government house and demanded the governor to kill him by placing him in front of a canon. The governor was forced to comply with their demand. The victim was placed in front of a canon which was fired and shredded him to pieces. He was 25 years old. A tablet of visitation was revealed in his honor which is printed on page 340 TAY. ([TAY], pp. 338 – 341).
- v. Shátir Hasan [son of Zaynu’l-‘Abidín and Khadijih Sultán. He should not be confused with Shátir Hasan, son of Ibráhim and a brother of Muḥammad Ismá‘íl, and also Shátir Na‘ib Hasan]. He was a Bahá’í from the Kushak-Naw quarter of Yazd who, during this period of unrest in his native town, had moved to the nearby village of Tazarján, where he was continuing his

profession as a baker. When the people of the village learned of the disturbances and turmoil in Yazd, they congregated and surrounded Shátir Hasan, beating him with stone and sticks, intending on killing him. With great difficulty and struggle, Shátir Hasan was able to escape the crazed mob and quickly left the village for Manshád. He arrived there on the same day, three hours before sunset, and took refuge in the home of the martyred Áqá `Alí-Akbar (son of Aqa Ibáhim) On the first day of troubles in Manshád, [26 June,] some three hours before sunset, the esteemed Shátir Hasan and another believer left Manshád, out of the fear of the foes, for the village of Darrih. They arrived there one hour before the sunset and took a room in Khadíjih Darvish's house. When the villagers became aware of the two newcomers that very night, they surrounded the house, and a few went inside and captured the two believers. hands of the two distinguished men were tied behind their back and they were forced to walk to the nearby village of Darrih; on the way, they sustain injuries from rocks, stones and sticks The being thrown at them, they were stoned so severely and repeatedly that before reaching their destination, they gave life to the Life-Giver. Shátir Hasan was thirty-five years old at the time of his martyrdom on 30 Rabí`u'l-Avval 1321 A.H. (26 June 1903).

- vi. Shátir 'Alí-Akbar, the son of Zaynu'l-'Abidín and Khadíjih Sultán (He should not be confused with 'Alí-Akbar son of Áqá Ibáhim.) He and his father Zaynu'l-'Abidín lived in the neighbourhood of Yazd and engaged in running a bakery. One day thugs came and took him to Navvab Radavi where he ordered him to curse the sacred figures of the Faith which he refused. Thus, Navvab ordered caning his feet very hard, pulling out his mustache, and after that threw him in a well. He was almost dead. His relatives arrived there and took him home and looked after him until he recovered. Then he moved to a village known as Hedash or Deh-Bala and started bakery there. He survived the atrocities of 1903. But some years later, a hooligan approached him and started using bad language, beating him and kicked him so hard at the side of his body as a result of which he offered up his life a few days later. He was 60 year old at the time of his martyrdom ([TAY], pp. 481-483)

- vii. Áqá `Alí-Muḥammad, the son of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Turk: Again, on the same Wednesday, 5 Rabí`u`th-Thání 1321 (July 1, 1903), the mob went to Kuzh neighborhood, situated on the outskirts of Manshád on the way to Káv-Afshád. At that time one of the believers, Áqá `Alí- Muḥammad, son of Hájí Ḥusayn Turk, was hiding from the bloodthirsty crowd in the home of Ḥusayn, son of Hasan ibn Panáh-`Alí. Four thugs entered the house; they located the honored Áqá `Alí- Muḥammad, and took him outside and one of the gunmen aimed his gun at Áqá `Alí- Muḥammad's head and fired. He immediately fell to the ground at which time the rest of the crowd began stoning him. At that moment, while the severely injured Áqá `Alí- Muḥammad was breathing his last breaths, one heartless individual opened Áqá `Alí- Muḥammad's mouth, filled it with sand and soil, and then kicked him in chest until he was dead. Áqá `Alí- Muḥammad was forty-five years old at the time of martyrdom. ([MAM], p. 25 & [TSY], 466).
- viii. Haji `Alí-Muḥammad Baqir: He was the father of `Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí. He was martyred in `Abbás-Ábád and the details of his martyrdom was discussed fully in the main text of the book.

Another sister of Zahrá Sulṭán was Zaynab Sulṭán. In her family there were several martyrs who are listed below:

- ix. Ghulám-Ḥusayn Dallal, son of Taqí: He was the son-in-law of Zaynab Sulṭán and the husband of Fátimih Sulṭán. Fátimih Sulṭán was the maternal cousin of `Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí's mother (Sakinih Sulṭán). On Saturday, 15 Rabí`u`th-Thání 1321 A.H. [11 July 1903], Áqá Ghulám-Ḥusayn, son of Áqá Taqí Dallal [broker], a Bahá'í from Yazd who had come to Manshád to escape the brutal events unfolding there, along with another Bahá'í were found hiding in one of the caves in the eastern mountains, behind the Turks' farm. Two hours after sunrise the mob surrounded the cave and called for the two believers to come out and surrender. Acquiescing, they emerged, whereupon Áqá Ghulám-Ḥusayn was killed instantly by a huge volley of gunfire and later on they separated his head from his body. He was 63 years old at the time of his martyrdom. ([TSY], pp. 476-478).

- x. Áqá ‘Alí the son of Ghulám-Husayn Dallal and Fátimih: Áqá ‘Alí’s wife was one of the daughters of Shátir Na’ib Hassan whose name was Salṭanat kḥanum. At beginning of the turmoil, he had suffered severe injuries and Shátir Hasan brought a physician to his house to stich the wounds of Áqá ‘Alí. All of a sudden a mob came and wanted to enter the house to kill Áqá ‘Alí. At the end the mob killed both Shátir Hasan and his son-in-law, Áqá ‘Alí. ([TAY], pp. 178-179)
- xi. Shátir Hasan had a government position as Shátir. He had two sons and three daughters. The older daughter was Rubab who was the wife of Áqá Mírzá Javád Šabbágh the martyr and the other one was Salṭanat kḥanum the wife of Áqá ‘Alí the martyr. Shátir Hasan was put to death in Yazd the same they that they killed Áqá ‘Alí. ([TAY], p.178)
- xii. Áqá Mírzá Javád Šabbágh was the son-in-law of Shátir Na’ib Hasan. He was hiding in a hay stack barn. They found him and with gun bullets they killed him. He was martyred in Hanza of Yazd on 13 July 1903 (17 Rabí‘u’tḥ-Thání 1321) He was 42 years old. He was survived by two children 11 and 9. His wife was Rubáb; her father, Shátir Hasan; her husband, Áqá Mírzá Javád; and her husband’s brother, Asadu’lláh were all martyred, ([TAY], pp. 443-446)
- xiii. Mírzá Asadu’lláh Šabbágh (son of Mullá Muḥammad Qannád), the brother of Áqá Mírzá Javád Šabbágh. He was a merchant and did not have any children of his own and was saying all the Bahá’í youths were his children. During troubles in Yazd, he was hiding in his neighbour’s house who was not a Bahá’í. The hooligans broke the door of his house and entered. They ransacked the house, found him at the end, and with a knife being thrust into his neck he was martyred in the neighbourhood of Pusht-i Bágh. On 25 June 1903 (29 Rabí‘‘u’l-Avval 1321 A.H.). He was 45 years old.([TAY], p.147 & pp. 259-260)
- xiv. Mírzá Ismá‘íl son of Mírzá Ibráhim Kḥabbáz: When troubles started, he was in his house in Khadijih farm in Mansḥád. The unruly mob found him, repeatedly stabbed him as a result of which he was martyred. He was 55 on the day of his

martyrdom 27 June 1903 (1 Rabí'u'th-Thání 1321) ([TAY], p.65 & p.391)

- xv. Shátir Hasan, the son of Mírzá Ibráhim Khabbáz and the brother of Mírzá Ismá'íl the martyr: On the first day of troubles in Manshád a few of the friends including three sons of Mírzá Ibráhim Khabbáz who were: Shátir Hasan, Áqá 'Alí-Akbar and Asadu'lláh (not to be confused with Mírzá Asadu'lláh Şabbágh) fled to the top of the mountains behind the farm of Turks. At night when Áqá 'Alí-Akbar and Shátir Hasan were climbing the mountains, they were both injured. Early in the morning, Shátir Hasan came down to fetch some water for his brother who was badly injured and could not move. Trouble makers spotted him, captured him and killed him with gun shots. He was 60 year old at the time of his martyrdom on 29 June 1903 (3 Rabí'u'th-Thání 1321A.H.) ([TAY], pp. 396-97)
- xvi. Áqá 'Alí-Akbar son of Mírzá Ibráhim Khabbáz and the brother of Mírzá Ismá'íl: He was martyred along with his brother on 29 June 1903 on top of the mountain where he was injured and lying down. He was 55 years old. ([TAY], p.398)
- xvii. Mírzá Asadu'lláh son of Mírzá Ibráhim Khabbáz and the brother of Mírzá Ismá'íl and Shátir Hasan (He should not be confused with Mírzá Asadu'lláh Şabbágh) : On 2 and 3 June he was with his other two brothers (Áqá 'Alí-Akbar and Shátir Hasan) who were martyred but he came down from the mountain top and went to town and was hiding in his cousin's house. He stayed there for two weeks until things were quiet. He and another friend left Manshád but on the way at night he slept by the road side and in the morning as they started their walk, they were found and taken to the nearby village of Ibráhim- Ábád. In that village some hooligans gathered around him and at the end he was killed with a volley of bullets on 8 July 1903 (12 Rabí'u'th-Thání) . He was 35 years old when he was martyred.
- xviii. Áqá Siyyid Báqir was son-in-law of Hájí Zaynal (the brother of Hájí Muḥammad Ḥusayn Truk): Áqá Siyyid Báqir, the son of Siyyid Aḥmad of Manshád thought the mobs would not harm him. When they came near his house he invited them in and offered them food and drink. They went away but came

back and took him to the house of the police chief of the town. He was imprisoned there. The thugs came and insisted that they would not kill him in Manṣhád and they took him outside of Manṣhád in Kav-Afshád and killed him with a volley of bullets. This was on July 11 1903 and 15 Rabí'u'th-Thání 1321 A.H. He was 52 years old. He was married to Fátimih Sultán, the daughter of Hájí Zaynal . ([TAY], p. 399)

- xix. Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn son of Siyyid Aḥmad, and the brother of Áqá Siyyid Baqir: On 4 Rabí'u'th-Thání 1301A.H. (30 June 1903), Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn came down from the mountain top where he was hiding and took refuge in the house of Siyyid Áqá'í. On Friday, 14 Rabí'u'th-Thání 1321 A.H. [10 July 1903], which was now the fourteenth day of the troubles, the vicious mob was searching every household in Manṣhád in hope of finding more Bahá'ís to kill. Siyyid Áqá'í informed Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn's wife of the day's events, indicating to her that soon his house would be searched and did not want Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn to be killed in his house. When Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn learned of the conversation from his wife, he told her that his death was near. He alone left the home that had been his family's refuge, bidding farewell to his wife and son. Taking the advice of his host, he changed his clothes and took refuge behind the pulpit of the nearby mosque. His host had asked him to remain there until the mob had finished searching his house. Then he would be able to return.

Although the anticipated search of the house did not result in any findings, a number of women in the neighborhood reported having seen Siyyid Ḥusayn in the mosque. Siyyid Ḥusayn, aware of his dire situation, had no choice but to leave the mosque, running a distance of two hundred yards and then climbing over a wall into a wheat field. He hid in the wheat but was spotted by a woman who told the mob. They entered the field and searched until they found Siyyid Ḥusayn. Upon finding him, the mob started striking him with wooden clubs, then several bullets were fired towards him and the honored Siyyid Ḥusayn fell down after the very first bullet struck him. Still some life was left on him when his family came and threw themselves on his body, and he embraced them tenderly. While holding his loved ones and several teardrops streaming from his

eyes, Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn's hallowed spirit left for the Exalted Paradise. At the time of his martyrdom his age was 40.([MAM], pp. 31-36 also [TAY], pp. 399-401)

- xx. Áqá Siyyid Javád, the son of Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn (He should not be confused with Áqá Siyyid Javád the son of Áqá Siyyid Taqí) : On 30th June, Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn, son of Áqá Siyyid Aḥmad (brother of Áqá Siyyid Baqir), was yet another Bahá'í who had taken refuge at the home of a Muslim friend, Siyyid Áqá'í. Two days before Manshád's convulsions, his eldest son, Siyyid Javád, who was only fourteen years old, had fallen while working in the farm fields with his grandfather, breaking one leg and severely injuring the other. His injuries were so severe that he could not move and was bedridden. This continued until 10 July when his father was martyred. When he heard the news of his father's martyrdom, the bedridden and broken-hearted Siyyid Javád pleaded for one last opportunity to visit and bid farewell to his father. Unfortunately, no one paid any attention to this poor boy, though he was only a short distance away from his fallen father. After Siyyid Ḥusayn's death, Siyyid Javád was taken back to his own home. He was constantly heard saying and praying, "How I wish that the enemies had seen me and taken my life on that day too! If only they would come now and cut my heart out allowing me to join that exalted soul!" Not a day went by that he did not wish for his own death. His wailing and lamenting were destined to be as ephemeral as his fleeting life, for he was to outlive his father's brutal martyrdom by only fourteen days. At last Friday, 28 Rabí'u'th-Thání 1321 A.H. (24 July 1903), his spirit soared to the Abhá Kingdom and his lifeless body in his bed was found by his mother who mourned for his death. .([MAM], pp. 33-35)

Now we will proceed to present a few family trees in order to illustrate the relationships.

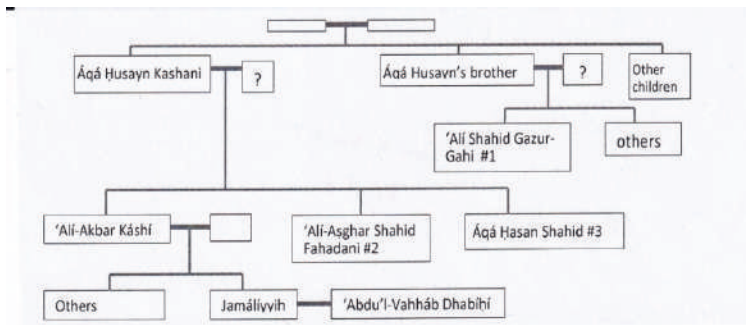


**Illustration 59: Family Tree Number 7: Three of the Seven Martyrs of Yazd
(Refer to: i, ii, & iii in the explanation given above)**

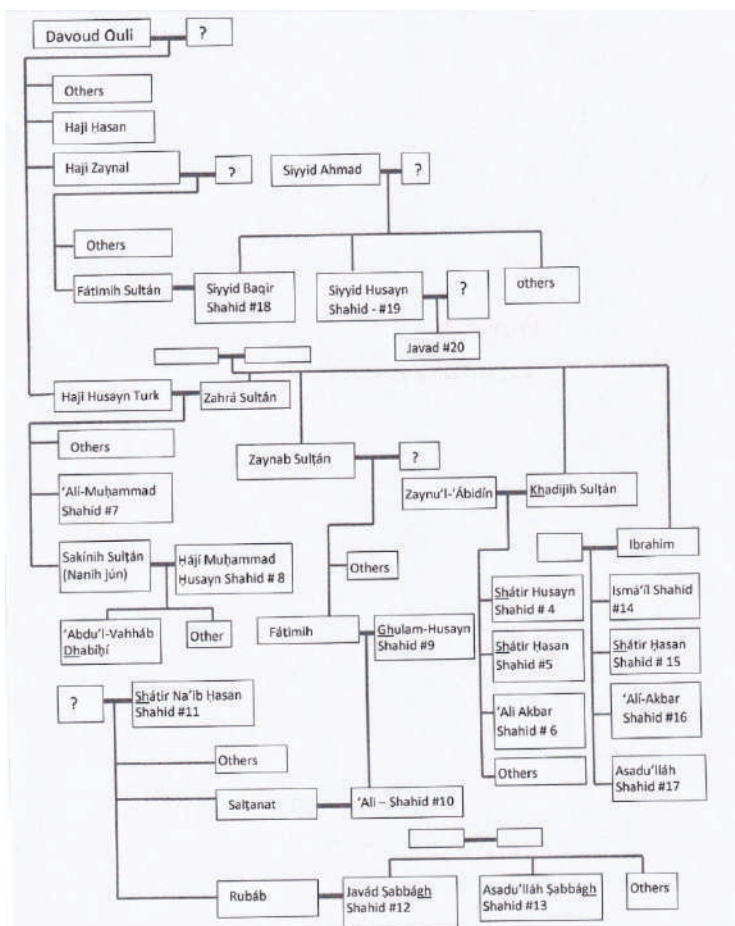


**Illustration 60: Family Tree number 8: Relationship
between the Martyrs in the Family**

114. Refer to Payam Bahá'í, issue number 360-370, August-September 2010, pp. 106-114.
115. **Ákhúnd Mullá 'Abdu'l-Ghaní Ardikání** was one of the outstanding believers of the early years, a sanctified soul and a respected personage of Ardikán. He was a learned person and always spent his time in devotion and contemplation. He was an erudite and an eloquent speaker. When he was a youth he was always looking for truth. For sometime he sought the companies Sufis but at the end his inquisitive mind led him to the Faith. After he heard the news of the Faith from Ákhúnd Rajab-'Alí, he abandoned his role as a Muslim clergy man and devoted all his effort and energy in the promotion of the new Faith. After accepting the Faith as the Truth, he started teaching the Faith which caused an uproar in Ardikán. Hooligans who were always ready to initiate evil deeds, one night smeared white mud on the doors of shops, public baths and mosques. The next day, they accused the Bahá'í that they have done that. Then, they gathered in the house of Shaykh 'Alí, the mujtahid of town, and complained about the 'Abdu'l-Ghaní and the Bahá'í. Shaykh 'Alí ordered to bring 'Abdu'l-Ghaní to his presence, so they went and fetched him. On the way they found an opportunity to severely beat up 'Abdu'l-Ghaní, using sticks, throwing stone at him and even strike him with knife. As a result of such vile behaviours of the mob, before reaching the house of mujtahid, he fainted. In this condition they took him to the house of Shaykh 'Alí. Mujtahid said take him away and the mob intended to take him at the edge of the town, kill him, burn him and throw him in a deep ditch. On the way they saw a government employee whom they thought had come to arrest them and all of them ran away. This man helped 'Abdu'l-Ghaní reaching home safely. He rested at home and recovered after sometime. He ignored the troubles and continued teaching the Faith. Ten years passed in this manner and he became well known as a Bahá'í teacher among the people of Ardikán. Because of these troubles, his relatives felt that it was not safe to stay in his own place and changed his residence to the place of Şadr'us-Şultán and after a while he moved to Yazd. He has received a number of tablets from Bahá'u'lláh. ([TAY]. pp. 120-121 & Amr-i Bahá'í dar Ardikán, [TAA] pp. 73- 75).
116. **Adasiyyih:** Some believes started buying parcels of land in Palestine and donate them to the Faith as early as the time of Bahá'u'lláh. Adasiyyih was a large size piece of farming land located in the north-west of Jordan which was acquired at the time of the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The earliest

settlers were Bahá'ís of Zoroastrian background who moved there from Yazd. This farming community developed under the guidance and specific instructions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. They introduced innovations in their agriculture practises which were later on taken up by other farmers in the area. The size of the community gradually increased. It became a model development community. 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructed those Bahá'í farmers to grow nourishing vegetables and asked them to focus, in particular, on growing corn. They produced food of high quantities, which they stored in pits built by the Romans many years earlier on the same land.

When World War I broke out and began to engulf the world. The Ottoman Empire was embattled, and the war came to Palestine where 'Abdu'l-Bahá lived. The community was ravished by famine. 'Abdu'l-Bahá brought food from the Bahá'í farming communities in Jordan and fed the starving people of Haifa, 'Akká, and the adjacent neighborhoods in the famine years of 1914 to 1918.

Due to unsettled political situation in Palestine, the Guardian decided to send the believers back to Iran, to their original communities. Many of them returned to Yazd.

117. **A Brief History of Faith in Yazd**

Before the time of the Báb

Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsayyī, the founder of the Shaykhí school, travelled to and resided in Yazd for a long period where he wrote the majority of his works. In this city, Siyyid Kazim joined him and become a prominent student and studied under him in Yazd and eventually succeeded him.

During the time of the Báb

After Mullá Husayn's second visit to Shiraz, in the way back to his hometown, the Báb instructed him to visit Yazd. It was in 1845 also Quddus visited Yazd briefly. Around this time Mirza Ahmad Azghandi, a prominent and one of the most notable believers had moved to Yazd. Also Mullá Sadiq Muqaddas Khurani visited the city shortly after the arrival of Mirza Ahmad Azghandí and delivered a talk at a masjid in which he quoted from the Writings of the Báb which resulted in him being accused of heresy and he was almost physically attacked. However, Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Azghandí managed to calm the crowd allowing him to leave the place unharmed.

In 1850 Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Darábí, entitled Vahíd, visited Yazd and successfully promoted the Bábí religion, gathering a large number of followers with people traveling from surrounding villages and nearby towns to hear him speak. The fledgling community began to experience opposition and persecution and Vahíd left Yazd and after his departure the house where

he was staying was vandalized. It was during this visit that Haji Husayn Turk and Raḍir-Ruḥ joined the faith.

In the time of Bahá'u'lláh

In July 1850 the Báb was martyred and in August 1852 two Bábís independently made an assassination attempt on the life of the Shah of Iran in retaliation for the execution of the Bab and killing large number of which was unsuccessful and this resulted in intense persecution of the Bábí community and many Bábís in Yazd where martyred, with many others leaving the city and immigrating to Baghdad. In 1854 , Hájí Mírzá Muhammad Taqi a cousin of the Báb settled in Yazd and he became a devoted Bábí after meeting Bahá'u'lláh his visit to Baghdad and meeting Bahá'u'lláh. He remained in Yazd until 1900. Several Bábí's from Yazd visited Baghdad during the 1850's and spoke highly of Bahá'u'lláh upon returning with Mullá Muhammad-Ridá Radiy-u'r-Rúh Manshádí delivering a copy of the Qaṣídiy-i-Varqá'íyyih (Ode of the Dove) to the believers of the Yazd. Also and Mírzá Husayn, elder brother of Varqá, brought a copy of the Hidden Words for the believers.

In the 1860's Bahá'u'lláh declared Himself to be Him Whom God shall make manifest as promised by the Báb and the majority of the Bábí's of Yazd accepted His claim becoming Bahá'ís. During the late 1860's Mullá Sádiq visited Yazd where he successfully convinced several members of the Afnán family, the family of the Báb, of Bahá'u'lláh's claims. In 1868 Hájí Muhammad-Ibrahim and Nabil Akbar visited Yazd and converted Afnan Kabir (Haji Hasan-.Ali, the uncle of the Bab) who became a prominent steadfast Bahá'í.

The community faced some persecution and at some point some of the clergy in Yazd sentenced a Bahá'í, Hájí Mullá Mihdí, to death however the mujtahid of Ardikan refused to confirm the sentence allowing Mihdí to flee to Yazd. Between 1882 and 1883 Mihdi's son, Varqa , returned to visit Yazd and was arrested and imprisoned then he was transferred to Isfahan. As of the early 1880's the principal of the Parsi School of Yazd, Ustad Javanmard, was a Bahá'í, and throughout the 1880's many Zoroastrians of Yazd either became Bahá'ís or were sympathetic to the religion. In 1888 Edward Granville Browne visited Yazd and met with members of the Bahá'í community such as Afnán-i-Kabír. Mirza Abul Fadail and 'Andalib visited Yazd in 1888 and met with Shaykh Muhammad, who was promoting the claims of Mírzá Yaḥyá among the Bahá'í community, and they engaged in a debate which ended with Shaykh Muhammad insulting them and leaving the meeting and he departed the city shortly afterwards.

In 1891 a political group based in Yazd began stirring dissent against the government of Persia and when the government began to take action against them the group decided to fabricate evidence implying that the Bábí community was responsible for the dissent. As a result Zillu's-Sultán, the eldest son of Nasiri-Din Shah, who was involved in the groups activities and was engaged in an attempt to usurp the throne instigated harsh persecution of the Bahá'í community of Yazd in order to distract from his involvement in the situation. On May 18, 1891, seven Bahá'ís were arrested and taken to the palace of Prince Jalálu'd-Dawla and the Prince asked them what their beliefs were and reassured them that he wanted to secure their release and did not intend to persecute them for their beliefs, however when they said they were Bahá'ís members of the Islamic clergy who were present but behind a curtain signed their death warrants based on their confession. The seven men were then publicly executed after refusing to recant their Faith with their remains being dragged through the streets and then burned. There was also widespread harassment of Bahá'ís with their properties being looted, and an estimated one thousand Bahá'ís fled the city to escape and camped in the open countryside with many of them dying from malnutrition. The persecution ultimately resulted in increased interest in the Faith in Yazd.

In the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

There were approximately five thousand Bahá'í households in Yazd as of 1903, and that year 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked Ibn-Abhar, Hand of the Cause, to visit the city and during his visit large gatherings were held which he spoke at to encourage the Bahá'í community, which enthused the Bahá'í community but also resulted in some opposition from the Muslim community.

The same year a telegram was forged purporting to be from the Prime Minister of Persia which prompted Shaykh Taqí, a religious authority in Isfahan, to issue a fatwa calling for Bahá'ís to be killed. Mírzá Ibráhím, the Imám-Jum'ih of Yazd, visited Isfahan and upon his return to Yazd on June 12, 1903, he issued an order for the massacre of Bahá'ís in Yazd, and many Bahá'ís in the city were killed and had their homes destroyed by mobs over the next two months.

In earl 1900 the Assembly of Yazd formed and started its operation in 1919 the Bahá'í community began raising funds which were used to assist relatives of the martyrs of Yazd and construct tombs.

In the time of Shoghi Effendi

In 1921 Muhammad 'Alí Afnán of Yazd was on pilgrimage in the Holy Land when 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed away and he remained in the Holy Land and was

able to associate with the newly appointed Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, Shoghi Effendi, until approximately May 1922 when Shoghi Effendi asked him to return to Yazd where he was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly and served for many years often as chairman.(1)

In 1930 Tarazullah Samandari and Martha Root visited Yazd during teaching tours of Iran. Zikrullah Khadem also visited Yazd in 1930 at the request of Shoghi Effendi, and in 1933 Keith Ransom Kehler visited Yazd during her visit to Iran made at the direction of Shoghi Effendi. As of the early 1930's a large Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds had been constructed by the Yazd Bahá'í community, and at some point four Bahá'í owned primary schools were established in the city however in 1935 the schools were closed down by order of the Persian Ministry of Education for closing to commemorate Bahá'í Holy Days. As of 1939 the Bahá'í community had constructed a public bathhouse for Yazd however that year a worker employed to see to the heating of the baths was injured in a work accident and as a result of prejudice against the Bahá'í community members of the Local Spiritual Assembly including the chairman were arrested but were released after only a short period of imprisonment.

In 1947 summer classes for Bahá'í youth were held in Yazd and as of the late 1940's there was a Yazd youth committee which began publishing a local youth bulletin.(2)

In 1950 a Bahá'í pioneered to a village outside of Yazd and a woman and her children were murdered shortly afterwards. The murder was attributed to his arrival and as a result all members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Yazd were arrested and sentenced to three years in prison. This caused the Yazd Bahá'í community to become inactive out of fear of retribution and Shoghi Effendi asked Dr. Abbas Afnán to pioneer to the city to stimulate the community in 1952. Afnán remained in the city for two years establishing deepening classes and holding art exhibitions to stimulate the arts and members of the community were inspired to become active again.

In the time of the Universal House of Justice

In early 1962 a pioneering conference was held in Yazd,(3) and throughout 1964 forty Bahá'í character training classes for youth and children were held in Yazd with three-hundred youth and children receiving instruction from thirty Bahá'ís serving as teachers.(4) As of 1966 the Islamic clergy in Yazd remained suspicious and belligerent towards the Bahá'í community and the Bahá'í community was sensitive to provoking hostility from them.

The Revolution in Iran which began in 1979 triggered persecution of the Bahá'í community and as of July 1980 members of the Yazd Local Spiritual Assembly had been arrested and five Bahá'ís were injured after being

attacked by a mob in the city. (5) On September 8, 1980, seven prominent Bahá'ís of Yazd including two Auxiliary Board members were martyred by revolutionary guards with the executions being justified on local radio with unsupported accusations of espionage and subversive activities.(6) After the martyrdoms the bodies were transported to a local hospital and then buried outside of the city limits the same day in order to prevent large amounts of Bahá'ís gathering for a funeral. Despite this two-hundred Bahá'ís gathered for the burial and were able to prepare the bodies for burial according to Bahá'í law. Two days after the martyrdom a trial of the Bahá'ís was televised in Yazd however during the broadcast the Bahá'ís defense was rendered inaudible prompting complaints even from non-Bahá'ís. (7)

In 1981 the assets of 117 Bahá'ís of Yazd were frozen and 150 prominent Bahá'í families were ordered to report to revolutionary authorities.(8) As of September 1981 a government official had reportedly privately advised the Bahá'ís that the persecution in Yazd would potentially be the pattern followed for persecution of Bahá'ís across the rest of the country. In October 1981 four Bahá'ís imprisoned in Yazd were released however the community was facing persecution in other forms such as being dismissed from jobs. As of 1982 over one hundred Bahá'í children had been expelled from schools in Yazd due to their religion,(9) and Bahá'ís had their properties looted with houses and furniture being confiscated and most Bahá'í men were forced to flee the city. As of 1984 some Bahá'ís remained imprisoned in Yazd and were being tortured by being regularly whipped with plastic tubes. Some died while imprisoned and their families were sometimes expelled from their homes after their relatives death. (10)

In 1992 several private homes and other properties belonging to Bahá'ís from eleven families were confiscated by Islamic revolutionary institutions on the basis of a religious edict filed by a former Imam of Yazd. A further ten families had been issued a notice to vacate their homes as they were to be seized by the government. The Universal House of Justice wrote that the seizures of Bahá'í properties in Yazd was distinct from seizures in other parts of the country as it was specifically based on a religious edict and the authorities in Yazd had ruled that no Bahá'ís could own properties in the city. As of 1998 houses and properties were still being routinely confiscated from Bahá'ís in Yazd.(11)

In 2005 another wave of persecution against the Bahá'í community of Yazd began with several Bahá'ís being arrested for short sentences. After this Bahá'ís in the city were assaulted, harassed and threatened and the Bahá'í cemetery of the city being destroyed with bodies being left exposed. In

December 2005 Dhabíhu'lláh Mahramí, a Bahá'í who had been imprisoned since 1995 on the charge of apostasy, died in a Yazd prison.(12)

In 2011 Bahá'í university students studying in Yazd were expelled from higher education due to their religion, and in 2014 a Bahá'í in Yazd had a business license refused due to his religion as it had apparently been ruled that Bahá'ís should not be granted them.(13) In 2016 Farhang Amiri was murdered in Yazd by two men who pretended to be interested in buying a van from him and after being arrested one of the men stated their motivation was the fact Amiri was a Bahá'í.(14) When the men were sentenced for the murder the court noted that according to the Islamic penal code Amiri was not equal to the accused for the purpose of retributive justice as he was not a Muslim.

In 2020 some Bahá'ís in Yazd were arrested and sentenced to imprisonment with the Bahá'í International Community noting this as a sign of persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran escalating.(15)

- (1). The Bahá'í World, Volume 18 (1979-1983), Pg(s) 710
- (2). The Bahá'í World, Volume 11 (1946-1950), Pg(s) 370.
- (3). Bahá'í News. (1962). No 377, pg 5.
- (4). Bahá'í News. (1964). No 405, pg 9.
- (5). Letter from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, dated 24 July 1980
- (6). Bahá'í News. (1980). No 596, pg 2.
- (7). Bahá'í News. (1981). No 600, pg 4.
- (8). letter from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, 11 August 1981
- (9). Bahá'í News. (1982). No 613, pg 4.
- (10). Letter from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, dated 21 May 1984
- (11). Letter from the Universal House of Justice/selected National Spiritual Assemblies, 24 September 1998
- (12). <https://news.bahai.org/story/415/>
- (13). <https://news.bahai.org/story/1031/>
- (14). <https://news.bahai.org/story/1133/>
- (15). <https://news.bahai.org/story/1433/>

118. In this section, the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí have been listed; and also those of his two sisters. We start with the listing of the children and grandchildren of 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Dhabíhí below:

- b. Dīyá'u'lláh Dhabíhí + Jutta Schliemann; Children: (1) Tanja, (2) Cora, (3) Kíyán
- i. Tanja + Kíyán Mirríkh Yazdí; Children: Samin Mirríkh Yazdí, Nadím Mirríkh Yazdi, Anísá Mirríkh Yazdí
 - ii. Cora Dhabíhí + Chad Stuart Smith; Children: Dayyán Smith, Liva Smith
 - 1) Dayyán Smith + Emilly Thábit
 - iii. Kíyán Dhabíhí + Irina Klenz ; Children: Amira Dhabíhí , Amin Dhabíhí
- c. Míhrangíz Dhabíhí + Walter Kovac; Children: Nádiya Kovac, Tina Kovac
- i. Nádiyá Kovac + Valid Elmuhandis; Children: Maya Elmuhandis , Jena Elmuhandis
- d. Báhirih Dhabíhí+ Sírús Kathírí; Children: (1) Samim Kathírí, (2) Şahbá Kathírí
- i. Samim + Asá Samúrí; Children: Kíyán
 - ii. Şahbá + Sára Şadiqí; Children: Ryan, Kímíyá
- e. Parvin
- f. Husayn Dhabíhí + Náhíd Munjazib; Children: (1) Umíd Dhabíhí, (2) Ármán Dhabíhí, (3) Sipíhr Dhabíhí, (4) Kámrán Dhabíhí , (5) Sháhrúkh Dhabíhí
- i. Umíd Dhabíhí + Níkdukht Faríd; Children: Nabíl Dhabíhí, Núra Dhabíhí, Navá Dhabíhí
 - ii. Sipíhr Dhabíhí + Shulih Núrání; Children: Shayan Dhabíhí, Emila Dhabíhí
 - 1) Shayan Dhabíhí + Erika Rúhí; Children: Azaria Zabihi
 - 2) Emila Dhabíhí + Nabíl Tálib
 - iii. Sháhrúkh Dhabíhí + Mairianne Hughes; Children: Sean Dhabíhí, Sasha Dhabíhí
 - 1) Sasha Dhabíhí + Ghazal Ma'súmábádí; Children: Fiona Dhabíhí, Rana Zabihi
- g. Ishráqíyyih Dhabíhí + 'Azíz'u'lláh Dihqání; Children: (1) Shaháb Dihqání, (2) Súsán Dihqání, (3) Mína Dihqání
- i. Shaháb Dihqání + Shumays Muhájir
 - ii. Súsán Dihqání + Mas'úd Mawlaví; Children: Roham, Mílan, Kámyár
 - iii. Mína Dihqání + Bernd Swirzynsky; Children: Níkán Swirzynsky, Kímíyá Swirzynsky

- h. Mulúqíyyih Dhabíhí + ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Núrání; Children: (1) Shulih Núrání, (2) Shahlá Núrání, (3) Said Núrání, (4) Suhiyl Núrání, (5) Shahín Núrání
- i. Shulih Núrání + Sipihr Dhabíhí; Children:
 - ii. Shahlá Núrání + Amír Jalíliyán; Children: Níkú Jalíliyán
 - 1) Níkú Jalíliyán + Sipihr Ayyatuláhi; Children: Kímíyá, Nader
 - iii. Said Núrání + Jávánshír Subhání; Children: Náşir Subhání , Nímá Subhání, Nadím Subhání
 - 1) Nadím Subhání + Shana Baese; Children: Amaya Subhání
 - iv. Suhiyl Núrání + Berta Martinez; Children: Said Núrání, Sháhin Núrání
 - 1) Said Núrání + Kadence Jimenez; Children: Vincent Núrání, Vída Núrání
 - 2) Sháhin Núrání + Magumi Kito; Children: Shayan Núrání , Sahar Núrání
 - v. Shahín Núrání + Bahá’ud-Dín Muhájir; Children: Layli Muhájir, Vidá Muhájir
 - 1) Layli Muhájir + Ferdinand Schubber
 - 2) Vidá Muhájir + Lisa McShane; Children: Mila Muhájir, Fin Muhájir
- i. Furúqíyyih Dhabíhí + Firaydún Naí’mí; Children: (1) Faraḥ Naí’mí, (2) Faríbá Naí’mí, (3) Fuád Naí’mí, (4) Faríd Naí’mí, (5) Farrukh Naí’mí
- i. Faraḥ Naí’mí + Ḥamíd Pijmán; Children: Navíd Pijmán , Umíd Pijmán
 - ii. Faríbá Naí’mí + Furúgh Ishráqí; Children: Suḥá Ishráqí, Samá Ishráqí
 - iii. Fuád Naí’mí + Faraḥ Farídíyán; Children: Shirvín Naí’mí, Melody Naí’mí, Shanta Naí’mí
 - 1) Shirvín Naí’mí + Nílúfar Rídayí
 - 2) Shanta Naí’mí + Garrett Meaker; Children: Mila Meaker
 - iv. Faríd Naí’mí + Súdábih Mudírí; Children: Pigáh Naí’mí, Fírúz Naí’mí
 - v. Farrukh Naí’mí + Kámrán Ma‘ání; Children: Húmán Ma‘ání, Rámín Ma‘ání

- 1) Húmán Ma‘ání + Michelle Glanfratti;
Children: Shírín Ma‘ání, Marjan Ma‘ání,
Amín Ma‘ání
- 2) Rámín Ma‘ání + Naghmih Mishki; Children:
Árám Ma‘ání, Samírā Ma‘ání, Mujdih Ma‘ání

The family members of the two sisters of ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí:
Munavvar and Rubáb are as follows:

- a. Munavvar + Muḥammad-‘Alí Munjazib; Children: (1) Nuṣrat
Munjazib, (2) Írán Munjazib, (3) Šáfá Munjazib, (4) Ináyat Munjazib,
(5) Riḍván Munjazib, (6) Rúhíyyih Munjazib, (7) Liqá Munjazib, (8)
Sultán Munjazib
 - i. Šáfá Munjazib + Ináyat’u’llah Shahídzádih;
Children: Kúrush Shahídzádih
 - ii. Ináyat Munjazib + Írán Safarjú; Children: Faramárz
Munjazib, Flur Munjazib
 - iii. Riḍván Munjazib + Aḥmad Mawlaví; Children: Bítá
Mawlaví , Kámyár Mawlaví, Mujdih Mawlaví
 - iv. Rúhíyyih Munjazib + Siyyid ‘Alí Akbar Púr-Aḥmadí;
Children: Farzániḥ Púr-Aḥmadí, Farzad Farhang Púr-
Aḥmadí
 - v. Liqá Munjazib + Ḥasan Nafcháhi-Aḥya’í; Children:
Maḥmúd Nafcháhi-Aḥya’í, Ṭáhirih Nafcháhi-Aḥya’í
 - vi. Sultán Munjazib + Aḥmad Shahid-Zádiḥ; Children:
Mahnáz Shahid-Zádiḥ , Muḥammad Shahid-Zádiḥ
- b. Rubáb + ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Muttahídiḥ; Children: (1) Parvíndukht
Muttahídiḥ, (2) ‘Aziz’u’lláh Muttahídiḥ, (3) Nayyirih Muttahídiḥ
 - i. ‘Aziz’u’lláh Muttahídiḥ + Rúhíyyih Muttahídiḥ;
Children: Mína Muttahídiḥ, Gítá Muttahídiḥ, Ruyá
Muttahídiḥ
 - ii. Nayyirih Muttahídiḥ + Ibráhím Wáhidíán; Children:
Jamshíd Wáhidíán, Farshíd Wáhidíán

119. **A story about Hájí Ḥasan:** It was mentioned that Hájí Ḥasan was a brother of Hájí Ḥusayn and Hájí Zaynal. The following story regarding Hájí Ḥasan appears in the book “Bahá’u’lláh The King of Glory” wirtten by Mr. Ḥasan Balyuzi, the Hand of the Cause of God, and it is reported below without any change:

“And there was Hájí Hasan-i Turk. He had attained the presence of Bahá’u’lláh first in Kirmansháh, and had been several times to Baghdád. A new life was, indeed, breathed into him. Although devoid of learning, he began to compose a commentary on the Báb’s Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’. But most of the time he said not a word. When his silence was commented on in the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, He observed that the Hájí’s turn to speak would come soon. Then one day Hájí Hasan came to Bahá’u’lláh, arrayed with a dagger, and asked for His permission to go with dagger drawn, to stand on the bridge and proclaim to all the Cause of God. Bahá’u’lláh told him kindly, but firmly: ‘Hájí, put aside your dagger. The Faith of God has to be given with amity and love to receptive souls. It does not need daggers and swords.’ ...” (BKG, 134)

120. In this book, very little has been narrated about Haji Hasan’s descendants. This brief note is meant to relate some stories about this side of the bigger family. The following contribution has been received by Mr. Dīyá’u’lláh Dhabíhí from Qudratu’lláh Vujdáni, the son of ‘Abdu’l-Ḥusayn Vujdáni who is a descendant of Hájí Dávúd Qulí; dated February and March 2008. The information contained in these communications has been extracted from that communication and with slight modification translated and presented below:

“Our great grandfather was Hájí Dávúd Qulí Tabrizí who was exiled from Tabriz to Yazd. He found the weather in Yazd harsh compared to that of Tabriz; so he requested that the authorities to send him to one of the surrounding mountains. It was explained to him that mountains near Yazd consisted of seven smaller regions. He was given the choice to select one of them and chose Manshád where he settled down in a neighbourhood called Turkish settlements. He had three sons; Husayn, Hasan and Zaynal. These three sons were school-age children and attended school in Banádak, a nearby community. One day as they had started out very early in the morning, they lay down to sleep along the way on one of the mountain passes. One of them dreamt a holy man who told him that he should dig an aqua duct at the foot of the mountain. The boys relayed this dream to their mullá as well as their father, however no steps were taken in this regard until the dream was repeated once more and again they told their father. On the basis of this dream Hájí Dávúd Qulí arranged to dig an aqua duct which proved itself to become one of the best aqua duct systems in Manshád, providing water to the Turk’s farm; even when there was some drought in the region.

Áqá Javád was the father of Hájí ‘Alí-Muḥammad who along with Fathu’llah-i-Fattáhi were the grandchildren of Hájí Hasan. ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb Dhabíhí was the grandchild of Hájí Husayn. Fáti and Idráki were the grandchildren of Hájí Zaynal; the mother of ‘Abdu’l-Ḥusayn

Vujdáni was Gáwhar Sulṭán from Gúr which was the village below the Turk's farms. On top of the Gúr mountain was a cave in which Haḍrat-i- Raḍi'u'r-Rúh hid for sometime, and from which location he was arrested. Gáwhar Sulṭán, Akbar and Husayn were the children of Ramadán. Siyyid Muḥammad, Siyyid Javád, and Siyyid Jalál were the grandchildren of Hájí Zaynal.

As regards Diyá'u'lláh's mother: Fáṭimih Tahzib was the daughter of Abu'l-Qásim Tahzib, who was the brother of Muḥammad- 'Alí Tahzib. Another sister, the mother of Aḥmad Tahzib, who passed away in Italy, and was a resident of Yazd, in Fahadan or Yuzdárán.

The mother of Bibi Zahrá khánum was a devoted Muslim. One night she dreamt that she would die the next day. In the morning, she dressed in clean clothes, had her lunch then passed away peacefully an hour later without any pain or discomfort. Her skin's color and her complexion did not change. In her will, she had requested to be buried according to the Muslim burial rites; she was buried in Misgar-Ábád in Tíhrán. The father of 'Abdu'l-Husayn and Gáwhar Sulṭán are buried in Turks' farm."

121. **'Abd'ul-Husayn - one of the sons of Hájí Zaynal Turk:** Áqá 'Ali-Akbar Yazdí, the martyred architect of the House of Worship in Ishq-Ábád, in his reputed history book: "Taríkh-i Ishq-Ábád [TIA]" has written a story about Hájí Husayn Truk which we have quoted elsewhere in the current book. The following story about 'Abd'ul-Husayn, the son of Hájí Zaynal, which appears in the page 449 of the book, has been translated and shown below:

“'Abd'ul-Husayn is the son of Hájí Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Turk whose father (Davúd Qulí) moved into Yazd from Ádhirbayján and got married in Manshád and settled there. Dávud Quli's children: Zaynu'l-'Ábidín (Hájí Zaynal), Hájí Muḥammad Husayn and Hájí Hasan are well known to whom references have been made as Turk. I have seen all of them quite often. These three brothers accepted the Message of the Báb early in His Ministry.”

He further writes in the page 462 of the history book: “In any event, I meant to mention 'Abd'ul-Husayn the son of Hájí Zaynu'l-'Ábidín, but I got carried away by narrating other stories and now come back to his story. 'Abd'ul-Husayn has three brothers; one of them lives in Manshád ('Alí-Muḥammad) the other two, Jináb-i Abu'l-Qásim and Áqá Muḥammad Ibráhím have served at the Holy Land for twenty seven years now. Abu'l-Qásim looks after the Garden of Ridván and Áqá Muḥammad Ibráhím serves at the mansion of Bahjí and Junayn. Seventeen years ago when I was on pilgrimage, I was conversing with

Áqá Muḥammad Ibráhím. In the course of our conversation he mentioned this amazing story: ‘Once, the Blessed Beauty was standing at one of the holy place (the picture of all such places have been taken as ordered by Him Whom God hath willed – ‘Abdu’l-Bahá). At that moment, around one particular place where there was a meadow and a thicket of canes in which all the shrubs had dried up. All of a sudden a fire broke out and formed a bon-fire. The Blessed Beauty ordered me to go and extinguish the fire. Immediately, I started moving towards the place where the fire was raging. On the way, as I was moving towards the fire, I wondered how I could quench such a big fire. Finally, I reached near the place where the fire was. While I was immersed in my thoughts to find a way to quench the fire, all of a sudden, some strong wind blew and the leaping flames of the fire started receding and moved away from me. I spread some dirt and sand over the burnt area and I remembered the verse from the Qur’án ‘We said: O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham’ (Al-Anbiya, 21:69). What I witnessed let me readily comprehend the meaning of this verse from the tongue of the point of the Will of God.”

‘Alí-Akbar, the Architect, and the author of the history book continues his story in the page 463 of the book: “ ‘Abd’ul-Ḥusayn immigrated to Ishq-Ábád in the year 1315 A.H. (1898) and his wife and children also joined him two years later in 1317 A.H. (1900). He has received tablets from the Blessed Beauty and the Most Great Branch. His wife is a devoted handmaiden of God.”

122. **Ḥájí Zaynu’l-‘Ábidín in Memorials of the Faithful:** ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His book: “Memorials of the Faithful [MFF]”, p. 83, has written tenderly about Ḥájí Zaynu’l-‘Ábidín who started off his journey to the ‘Akká with two of his sons (Abu’l-Qásim and Áqá Muḥammad Ibráhím) in order to serve the Blessed Beauty but he never made it to Akká and passed away on the way. We have quoted below the tender words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for him

“Zaynu’l-Ábidín Yazdí:

One of the emigrants who died along the way to the Holy Land was Zaynu’l-Ábidín of Yazd. When, in Manshad, this devoted man first heard the cry of God, he was awakened to restless life. A holy passion stirred him, his soul was made new. The light of guidance flamed from the lamp of his heart; the love of God sparked a revolution in the country of his inner self.

Carried away by love for the Loved One's beauty, he left the home that was dear to him and set out for the Desired Land.

As he traveled along with his two sons, gladdened by hopes of the meeting that would be his, he paused on every hilltop, in every plain, village and hamlet to visit with the friends. But the great distance stretching out before him changed to a sea of troubles, and although his spirit yearned, his body weakened, and at the end he sickened and turned helpless; all this when he was without a home.

Sick as he was, he did not renounce the journey, nor fail in his resolve; he had amazing strength of will, and was determined to keep on; but the illness worsened with every passing day, until at last he winged his way to the mercy of God, and yielded up his soul in a longing unfulfilled.

Although to outward eyes he never drained the cup of meeting, never gazed upon the beauty of Bahá'u'lláh, still he achieved the very spirit of spiritual communion; he is accounted as one of those who attained the Presence, and for him the reward of those who reached that Presence is fixed and ordained. He was a stainless soul, faithful, devoted and true. He never drew a breath except in righteousness, and his single desire was to worship his Lord. He walked the ways of love; he was known to all for steadfast loyalty and pure intent. May God fill up reunion's cup for him in a fair country, make him to enter the everlasting Kingdom, and console his eyes with beholding the lights of that mysterious Realm."

"جناب آقا زین العابدین یزدی

هو الله

و از جمله مهاجرین که در بین سفر بارض مقدّس در بین راه پیک اجل را لبیک گفت جناب آقا زین العابدین یزدی بود * این شخص خالص مخلص چون در منشاء نداء حق شنید باهتزاز و حرکت آمد نائره محبّت الله شعله زد دل و جان روح و ریحان یافت شمع هدایت در زجاجه قلب بر افروخت عشق الهی آشوب و فتنه در اقلیم وجود انداخت * انجذاب بجمال جانان چنان زمام از دست گرفت که ترک وطن محبوب نمود و بارض مقصود توجّه کرد * در بین راه با دو پسر خویش سیر و حرکت مینمود و بامید وصل

شادمانی و مسرت داشت و در هر کوه و بیابانی و قری و قصبه ئی با احبّا معاشرت میکرد * ولی بُعد مسافت طریق او را غریق دریای زحمت و مشقت نمود هر چند دل قوی داشت ولی تن ضعیف گشت و عاقبت مریض و ناتوان شد و علیل و بی سر و سامان گشت * با وجود مرض کلال نیاورد و ملال ندانست عزم شدید داشت و قوه اراده غریب * لهذا بیماری و ناتوانی روز بروز افزود عاقبت بجوار رحمت کبری پرواز نمود و در نهایت حسرت از فرقت جان داد هر چند بظاهر جام وصال ننوشتید و بمشاهده جمال نرسید ولی فی الحقیقه رُوح روح و ریحان یافت و از جمله فائزین محسوب و اجر لقاء از برای او مقدّر و محتوم * این شخص پاک جان در نهایت صدق و خلوص و ایمان و ایقان بود جز راستی نفسی بر نمی آورد و بغیر از خدا پرستی آرزویی نداشت طریق دوستی میپیمود و بحسن نیت و صداقت و ثبوت و استقامت معروف * سقاہ اللہ کأس الوصال فی ملکوت الجمال و ادخله فی عالم البقاء و قرّت عیناه بمشاهدة الانوار فی عالم الاسرار "

Chapter 9

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<u>'Áqibat Bikhayr</u> , wirtten by Díyá'u'lláh <u>Dhabíhí</u> , publisher: Yárán Publisher, 2018 (ABK)	ABK
<u>Ad'iyih-i Hadrat-i Mahbúb</u> (Prayers of the Beloved), Publisher: Mir'at, 2013, New Delhi (AHM)	AHM
<u>Áthár-i Qalam-i 'Alá</u> , vol. 3, Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, publisher: Muassisih- Ma'arif-i Bahá'í, Hamilton Ontario, Canada , 2006 (AQA)	AQA
<u>Amr va Khalq</u> , vol 4, written by Asadu'llah Fadil Mazandarani, Publisher, The National Publication Committee of Iran, 128BE (AVK)	AVK
<u>Bahá'í News</u> . (1962). National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. (BHN)	BHN
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