

The Man of Courage

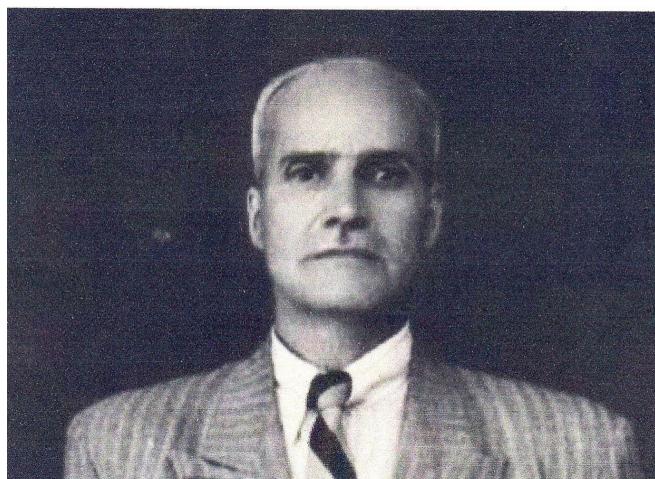
A Brief Account of the Bahá'í Life of Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá'im-Maqámí

Hasan Núshábádí

Translated by Adib Masumian

Foreword by the Translator

The subject of this article, written by the late Hasan Núshábádí (c. 1891–2 February 1962),¹ is Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá'im-Maqámí (1868–4 January 1954). This gentleman was the great-grandson of Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim Faráhání, the Qá'im-Maqám (c. 1779–26 June 1835), an outstanding man of letters and the first Prime Minister of Persia to serve under Muhammad Sháh (r. 1834–1848). He was, moreover, the first of the Qá'im-Maqám's many descendants to accept the Bahá'í Faith. According to the signature which Núshábádí himself appended to this article, he finished writing it on 6 February 1954—but it did not appear in print until much later, eventually being published in the *Áhang-i-Bádi'* magazine in 1974,² more than a decade after Núshábádí's death.



Hasan Núshábádí

On page 27 of his original article, Núshábádí has included a sidebar that features four statements made in praise of Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá'im-Maqámí—the first by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the other three on Shoghi Effendi's behalf. These statements were extracted from correspondence that was addressed to Núshábádí himself. I have rendered the contents of this sidebar in full, but have chosen to move them towards the end of this translation as Appendix A.

Throughout his article, Núshábádí has interspersed facsimiles of a few Tablets from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addressed to Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá’im-Maqámí. I have provisionally translated these Tablets and included those renderings at the end of this translation as Appendix B. In the same vein, Núshábádí has quoted the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá throughout the body of his article; these, too, I have rendered provisionally. In the near future, I intend to submit all these renderings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words to the Bahá’í World Center for their review, with the hope that they will eventually be approved for wider use.

The reader may like to know that the title Núshábádí chose for his article, *Rajul-i-Rashíd* (“The Man of Courage”), seems to have been taken from a 28 October 1943 letter to Núshábádí from Shoghi Effendi’s secretary, in which Shoghi Effendi is quoted as referring to Qá’im-Maqámí with that epithet: “Convey my assurances to that man of courage, and send him my greetings and salutations.” The complete translation of this letter appears in Appendix A, Item 3.

There appears to be an inexplicable printing error in Núshábádí’s article that affects certain portions of pages 32 (the last sentence of the right column, as well as that of the left column) and 33 (the first two lines of the right column), where there are jarring breaks in the otherwise logical flow of Núshábádí’s account that cannot be reconciled with their surrounding context. These unfortunate disjunctions have rendered the affected sentences effectively unintelligible, and I have had to omit them from the translation as a result.

For the convenience of the reader, I have taken the liberty of converting all dates in this article, which Núshábádí has given according to the Persian solar Hijrí calendar, to their equivalent dates in the Gregorian calendar.

Throughout this article, Núshábádí has made the occasional parenthetical remark to clarify certain details. I have retained all of these comments with their original parentheses. Beyond this device, however, I felt that the reader might benefit from still further clarification of other points. In these cases, I have added my own commentary and wrapped it in brackets.

Beyond those I have thanked in the endnotes, I am grateful to Salim Rahmani, the son of the late Hasan Núshábádí, for providing me with the above photograph of his esteemed father; to my parents, Bijan and Farnaz Masumian, for their suggested improvements to the general accuracy of this translation; and to Naeem Nabiliakbar for helping me to better understand the numerous poems and countless expressions included throughout this article whose meanings were not immediately obvious to me.

—Adib Masumian

* * *

When the Sun of the Concourse on High and the Day-Star of the horizon of grandeur cast the ray of bounty and grace from the realm above upon this lowly earth, it brimmed with such brilliant light as to become the envy—the very focal point—of the entire universe. This bestowal of light caused every atom, and all the realities of the realms of the seen and the unseen, to tremble with joy, and breathed a fresh spirit into every despondent and despairing frame. That Sun adorned every pure mind, every stainless heart, and every receptive soul with the splendors of Its perfections—those exalted attributes of faith. Through the emanation of Its warmth; the bestowal of Its resplendence; and the steadily increasing measure of Its power and might, which It confers upon all things, the atoms which constitute every illustrious person and compose every noble being have been stirred to motion. With Its all-encompassing power, Its hidden confirmations, and Its manifest influence, that Sun has clad the hearts of every eminent man with abundant verdure; indeed, It has adorned them with the roses and plants of the knowledge of God, and embellished them with the flowers and fruits of grace and bounty.

Among those important, high-ranking individuals and distinguished, noble souls who have—through the effects which the light of God and His heavenly favors have exercised upon them—attained the pinnacle of unfading glory and the peak of perpetual joy, was a man by the name of Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá’im-Maqámí. The most manifest, the most immaculate emergence of this most great Sun—and the ray of dazzling light It cast upon him—elevated this man to the highest of stations. The trappings of this world—its riches, its luxuries, and its sundry affairs—were powerless to keep him back from the Kingdom of glory. Outward signs of influence, visible demonstrations of power, failed to render him deprived of service to the divine threshold. Until the very end of his life, he shone, even as a brilliant star, in the heaven of faith and certitude, the firmament of firmness and steadfastness, and the empyrean of unwavering adherence to the Covenant. May God shower the outpourings of His grace upon his grave and upon them who are shown His mercy, and may He shed light upon light from the heaven of favor and bounty upon his resting-place!



Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá'im-Maqámí

To write an account of the life and character of that man—among the most excellent of his day, a chosen one of the All-Merciful—is a task that requires a capable and incisive pen, a profound and brilliant mind, and a knowledgeable and consummate writer, particularly one who has the time, the level of concentration, and the peace of mind necessary to devote to it. Alas, to accomplish such a task would surely be impossible for this feeble servant, who is bereft of all these things! In keeping, however, with the spirit of the adage, “That which is not fully understood should not be discarded altogether,” both the dictates of my conscience and the request of Manúhir Khán Qá'im-Maqámí—that illustrious son of the noble deceased under discussion—demand that I write in these pages a brief summary of the information, the reminiscences, and the observations he has gathered.

From the year 1914 to the end of his life—a period spanning nearly forty years—I was in contact with Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá'im-Maqámí, and had the bounty of listening to his wise discourses and reading his exquisite writings. Whenever I was in Tíhrán or Arák, I would have the pleasure of being in his presence most of the time—and when I would travel, hardly a week would go by when I would not receive a handwritten note or two from him, and my eyes would not be illumined thereby. He would unravel all kinds of mysteries, and speak in the most eloquent way. Every one of his writings was, in its own right, a novel creation, possessed of such qualities as would make his readers keenly alert to—and give them pause to reflect upon—whatever matter he was discussing. With the information and knowledge at his disposal, he was able to shed light on all subjects, whether material or spiritual. He would detect the most subtle of points, and make clear those truths which have remained hidden from the eyes and minds of most men.

Indeed, he would impart a kind of wisdom and insight that empowered one's mind, instilled it with joy, and imbued it with life.

Let us now return to the subject at hand. The noble name of the man under discussion here was Mírzá Áqá Khán, more widely known as Qá'ím-Maqámí. He was the son of the late Mírzá Buhlúl Khán, who was the son of the late Mírzá Muhammad Vazír, who was the son of the late Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim Faráhání, the Qá'ím-Maqám, who served as the Prime Minister of Persia during the reign of Muhammad Sháh. Mírzá Áqá Khán came from a distinguished family; indeed, concerning his great-grandfather, Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, the Qá'ím-Maqám, Bahá'u'lláh wrote the following in His *Words of Paradise*:³

His Majesty Muhammad Sháh, despite the excellence of his rank, committed two heinous deeds. One was the order to banish the Lord of the Realms of Grace and Bounty, the Primal Point; and the other, the murder of the Prince of the City of Statesmanship and Literary Accomplishment.⁴

By "the Prince of the City of Statesmanship and Literary Accomplishment" was meant Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, the Qá'ím-Maqám. Concerning that illustrious statesman, 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated the following:

Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, the Qá'ím-Maqám, was the foremost man of Persia and a highly capable individual, so much so that he influenced Fath-‘Alí Sháh to appoint Muhammad Sháh—his great-grandson—as the crown prince, rather than one of his seventy sons. In brief, he had overwhelming influence. Every member of the government, irrespective of their rank, was powerless before him, and none dared to interfere in his affairs. For instance, when the Qá'ím-Maqám would see a government official, he would research their clothing, and discover that it cost a thousand túmáns. He would then investigate their salary, and learn that it was six-hundred túmáns. He would then wonder to himself, "How can a person with a salary of six-hundred túmáns afford to buy clothing which costs a thousand túmáns? Where has this money come from?" Such was the attention to detail he paid, and inwardly the government officials resented him for it. They colluded with Hájí Mírzá Áqásí, and prevailed upon him the need to take measures against the Qá'ím-Maqám. As a result, Hájí Mírzá Áqásí said to Muhammad Sháh, "The influence of Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim is such that, if he should desire it, he could throw the monarchy into disarray in just two hours. Just as he deprived your uncles of their right to kingship, he can do the same to you. A person who wields such immense influence is dangerous to the monarchy." It was for this reason that Muhammad Sháh put him to death, and what he did was a terrible thing indeed. Had he not killed the Qá'ím-Maqám, Persia would now be superior to the nations of today.⁵



Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim Faráhání, the Qá'im-Maqám

And in another connection, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has said:

Hájí Mírzá Áqásí harbored the utmost enmity towards Mírzá [‘Abbás Núrí].⁶ He regarded [Mírzá ‘Abbás Núrí] as a friend of the Qá'im-Maqám, and thus considered him his own rival, inasmuch as [Mírzá ‘Abbás Núrí] would demonstrate the sincerest fellowship and loving-kindness towards the Qá'im-Maqám (Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim). This matter, too, gave rise to [Hájí Mírzá Áqásí's] feelings of animosity and hatred.⁷

And Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Barrár,⁸ who was eventually martyred, recounted that when he and Qá'im-Maqámí were in the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá one day, the Master⁹ said:

At one time, the ministers, actuated by their animosity, accused ‘Abbás [Núrí] of committing treacherous behavior, and they concocted a plot to demonstrate that, according to relevant ledgers and documents, he owed the government a large debt which amounted to several thousand túmáns. The Qá'im-Maqám became aware of this development, and, unbeknownst to Mírzá [‘Abbás], he consulted ‘Abbás's ledgers and reviewed them thoroughly, and in so doing was able to confute the accusation with which ‘Abbás had been charged. ‘Abbás's innocence and integrity were thus proven and made evident to those ministers who opposed him. Despite the assistance and service the Qá'im-Maqám rendered unto ‘Abbás, he never disclosed it to him, and kept the matter ever hidden from him.¹⁰

In brief, Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá’im-Maqámí was an eminent, valorous descendant of Mírzá Abu’l-Qásim, the Qá’im-Maqám. His greatness, his grandeur, his exalted rank, his pure intent, his ability, his intelligence, his prudence, his worthiness, his command of the pen, his creative prowess in writing, his advocacy of the truth, and his support of justice—all these he inherited, in complete and perfect measure, from his illustrious forefather. He was, moreover, well-known to high and low alike for the unconditional generosity he would show his fellow men, the helping hand he would extend to the weak and the downtrodden, and the aid he would render to the poor and the destitute.

This generous soul spent his childhood with his noble father, the late Mírzá Buhlúl Khán, in the village of Dirman, situated some three or four leagues northwest of Sultán-Ábád (Arák). He had the disposition of a nobleman, and was possessed of a lordly mien. He presided over the village with great authority, and enjoyed free rein not only over the inhabitants of that village, but even over the members of their families. No one in that village, relative or otherwise, dared to oppose him. From a local tutor, he received instruction in Persian, Arabic, literature, and calligraphy. He also studied painting,¹¹ and in all these domains he developed outstandingly superior proficiency. He used to say:

I was a youth when the itinerant teacher of the divine Cause, the late Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh Qumí, arrived at our village to teach the Faith. Since my father was an open-minded man who associated freely with people of all creeds, and never eschewed the company of any group, Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh came to our home. I was very young then, and also proud, prejudiced, and rather troublesome. When I heard, therefore, that our guest was a Bábí, I became seized with fervid excitement. Wishing to commit a righteous act, I resolved to kill this man, and prepared my firearm accordingly. Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh became aware of my intent the moment I set out to act upon it, and he said, “Have you not read that your great forefather once stated, ‘Treat your guest politely and with hospitality, even should he be an infidel’?”¹² Praised be God, for you are a learned and intelligent youth.” In brief, he showed me great kindness and gradually calmed me down. With consummate skill and vigilance, he dispelled every trace of repulsion I had felt towards him. He taught the Word of God to me and my cousin, Ḥabíbu’lláh Iḥtishám-Nízám, and guided us aright. I had become totally won over to the Cause. I developed, moreover, a great fondness for Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh, and came to regard myself as a student at his feet.

Eventually, Qá’im-Maqámí left the village and moved to Arák, where he faced great tests. He was thrown into such dire financial hardship that, for some time, he had to work as an artist and do other low-paying jobs in Arák and Burújird. Yet, in spite of the severe adversity he suffered, Qá’im-Maqámí pursued his livelihood with a high-minded and self-sufficient attitude, paying no

mind to the affairs of wealthy folk. The noble martyr, Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar, would often relate this anecdote:

As Qá’im-Maqámí contended with great hardship and privation, some charitable people wished to render him assistance. They pooled their resources and raised fifty túmáns, which they gave to Qá’im-Maqámí. He, however, refused to accept this sum of money, and returned it to his donors. Though beset with dire hardship, he went on living his life contentedly. He was untroubled by those around him, and burned like a ball of fire in his ardor for the Cause. He persisted in this way until, one night, the Blessed Beauty [Bahá’u’lláh] appeared to him in a dream. Calling his attention to a certain hill situated in the area where he lived, the Blessed Beauty instructed Qá’im-Maqámí to excavate it and dig up a number of antiques and other valuable objects hidden underneath. This experience prompted Qá’im-Maqámí to begin digging that hill, and he ultimately did unearth many precious articles from that spot. This discovery led Qá’im-Maqámí to become enormously wealthy; indeed, he gradually came to be considered one of the richest people in all of Arák. He acquired complete control of several reputable villages in the district of Faráhán, and would purchase large amounts of water, land, and real estate in the city of Arák itself. He employed a great number of people, friend and stranger alike, who earned enough money through this employment to have good and stable lives. In short, Qá’im-Maqámí had total certitude and unshakable faith, and the eye of God’s grace and bounty was directed towards him—which is to say nothing of his noble lineage, his remarkable capability, his innate perceptiveness, his characteristic generosity, and his courageous disposition. With his abundant wealth, Qá’im-Maqámí not only became known to the inhabitants of Arák, but even gained renown among the ministers and statesmen in the capital [Tíhrán]. All conducted themselves humbly before him, some going so far as to shower him with flattery.

In those days, Qá’im-Maqámí founded a governmental postal service that serviced Arák, Maláyir, Burújird, Hamadán, and Kirmánsháh—a radius which extended all the way to the ‘Iráqí border. Every few leagues, a central office was set up. Each of these offices had a few halters for horses, and for every halter there were four horses, as well as a number of carriages, stagecoaches, carts, and storehouses filled with fodder and forage. The employees of these offices—inspectors, writers, coachmen, and hostlers—were all the well-wishers of Qá’im-Maqámí, and took pride in his attitude of service towards others. They praised him for his gentlemanly character, his greatness, his compassion, and his generosity, and well-nigh regarded him as their master.

Qá’im-Maqámí’s central office was in Arák, and he had his own private carriage drawn by four horses. He traveled to many places; he would mount his carriage and set off, and there were always a great number of attendants and servants in the *bírúní*,¹³ ready to receive him upon his

return. Hardly a day would go by that ten, or twenty, or even thirty people—friend and stranger alike, from within the vicinity and from without—would not sit at his table as guests, partake of his food, and be thoroughly nourished thereby. His center of operations was situated on the road in Arák known as Qá’im-Maqámí Street, which was also home to numerous residences and other buildings that he owned. From dawn to dusk, these places would be teeming with people—such as petitioners and others wishing to file grievances—and Qá’im-Maqámí’s servants would attend to them diligently, comporting themselves with great power and equanimity.

Qá’im-Maqámí himself, however, lived very simply, and did not at all care for such trivialities as fine food and exquisite clothing. How often would his guests dine on a sumptuous feast laid out on his table, consisting of all sorts of delectable dishes, while Qá’im-Maqámí would content himself with some bread, which he would eat with broth, or cheese, or yogurt! In his demeanor and choice of clothing, he was remarkably immaculate and unpretentious, so much so that those who heard his name—even if they had yet to see him for themselves—would be rendered incredulous, upon actually beholding him, that this man, looking as he did, was truly Qá’im-Maqámí. He himself used to relate this anecdote:

At one point, a chieftain of the Bakhtiyári tribe became the governor of Arák. Having not yet seen me, he showed me great respect and consideration; furthermore, he treated the Bahá’ís with kindness, and protected them from the wickedness of their enemies. On a certain day, however, it so happened that he and I had a chance encounter in Arák. The mere act of beholding my clothes and the rest of my outward appearance was enough to make him suddenly grow cold with me, and prompt him to immediately change his general attitude and demeanor towards me. Indeed, from that very moment he laid the foundation of opposition. He imprisoned a number of the Bahá’ís of Ámirih¹⁴ and Mashhad-i-Zulf-Ábád,¹⁵ seized their money, and then turned his attention to the Bahá’ís of other areas to do the same to them. It was at this point that I returned to Tíhrán, where I worked assiduously to have this governor removed from office and regain the sum of money he took. I then said, “This is the penalty he has incurred for taking such unreasonable offense to my outworn clothes.”

Qá’im-Maqámí was an outspoken man, undaunted when expressing his views. In his articulation of the truth, whether orally or in writing, he feared no one. He would invariably present the truth in a way that was clear and unvarnished, and would never capitulate to others to satisfy their personal interests and desires. In upholding the truth, he was never intimidated by the indignation and animosity felt by his audience. He would never blandish his readers and listeners, nor would he ever deceive them or lead them astray. He would always enunciate truths and discuss subjects plainly and candidly—irrespective of whether this would please or displease his interlocutors—and, regardless of the consequences, he would never, under any circumstances, dissemble his faith or conceal his beliefs. He was known to all as a Bahá’í. Yet, since people needed him, or

feared his level of influence, or simply considered him a good and charitable soul, they would conduct themselves humbly before him and show him great reverence. They truly did love him, and would often express their devotion to him. He was a man of iron will and trenchant speech; he held incisive opinions, and always acted with firm resolve. Courage, bravery, valor, and stoutheartedness were the traits that so distinctly characterized Qá’im-Maqámí, and a great spirit, an open heart, an abundance of intellect, and a generous character the innate virtues which defined that illustriously reputable man.

Qá’im-Maqámí would oftentimes recite this couplet:¹⁶

A whale should fight in the sea, if that be his wish
For from small creeks and ponds come only tiny fish

And he tended to follow that by also reciting this couplet:¹⁷

From these companions so feeble and shallow I’ve become distressed
I pray that with Rustam¹⁸ and the Lion of God¹⁹ I might be blessed!

In addition, he was given to reciting this hemistich:²⁰

That one is a man who keeps his lips closed and his arms wide open

What consummate mastery Qá’im-Maqámí enjoyed over his own self! By the sheer force of his will, he was able to abandon the most ingrained of habits and behaviors. He placed great importance upon a person’s lineage, as well as their inborn character and inherited disposition, and to that effect he would often say.²¹

He who comes from lowborn stock the ray of the good shall never abut
To train the unfit and unworthy is to crown the dome with a walnut²²

Qá’im-Maqámí had an uncanny ability to place his trust in God, and in the face of adversities and hardships, he remained even as a mountain of steadfastness and fortitude. He paid little mind to the accidents and difficulties, the severities and calamities, and the toil and affliction which befell him. Of him it can truly be said that he clearly exemplified the spirit of this couplet:²³

Our hearts will be as open shells
Should He the pearls of grace bestow;
Our lives will ready targets be
Were He to hurl the darts of woe.

His faith, his character, his conduct—how perfectly did all these align with this brilliantly demonstrative utterance of [the Imám] ‘Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, in which he enumerated five abilities and two traits that characterize faithful spirits and sanctified, heavenly souls:

As to souls that are sanctified and faithful, these possess five abilities: patience in calamity, poverty in wealth, bounty in misery, glory in abasement, and thankfulness in misfortune. Two traits do these souls also possess: resignation and submission.²⁴

Qá’im-Maqámí truly exemplified this *hadith*. When calamity struck, he remained patient. At the advent of misfortune, he remained thankful. Even while he was wealthy he saw himself as poor, and in the midst of his poverty he regarded himself as wealthy and independent. In times of glory and bounty he considered himself abased, and in moments of abasement he deemed himself noble and glorious. What a generous man he was! What submission, what contentment he evinced in the face of God’s decree, and how little he cared for the transitory affairs of this world!

During the time in which this illustrious and honorable man remained in Arák, a great number of that city’s inhabitants professed their belief in the Faith. They regarded themselves as Bahá’ís, and began to attend Bahá’í gatherings. The generality of Bahá’ís, however, would refer to these people as “Qá’im-Maqámí Bahá’ís.” In those days, the Bahá’ís—and the Faith in general—enjoyed freedom in that land, and the enemies of the Faith were not as inclined to harass them, except on occasions when Qá’im-Maqámí himself was away.

There was a certain Áqá Núr, a *mujtahid* who enjoyed great influence. This man was an inveterate enemy of the Cause and of Bahá’ís in general, and was staunchly opposed to Qá’im-Maqámí in particular. Yet, the character of Áqá Núr was such that he eventually began to demonstrate kindness and contrition, and style himself a supporter and advocate of the Cause and its followers.

In brief, Qá’im-Maqámí feared no one but God; he never capitulated or adhered to the opinions of others. His ability to trust in God was uncanny; indeed, he was completely resigned to whatever God had ordained for him. He was given to saying, “Whatever must be, will be. Who, then, should man fear, and for what reason?” Though he had many enemies, and was encompassed by manifold dangers, Qá’im-Maqámí would often walk the streets and alleys in the dead of night, alone and unaccompanied. At one time, the late Hájí Ghulám-‘Alí Káshí, a teacher of the Cause, said to him:

You, good sir, have enemies! When the night has fallen, do not go out for strolls in the streets and bazaars by yourself. You have so many servants—bring one or two of them along to accompany you!

To this, Qá’im-Maqámí replied:

Jináb-i-Hájí, what can I do? My nature is different from the nature of others. However much others wish not to be afraid, they feel fear nonetheless, and however much I wish to be afraid, I simply do not feel fear.

Qá’im-Maqámí made two journeys to attain the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—may the souls of all else but Him be sacrificed for His sake—and he had sweet and fond memories of those occasions. The first of these journeys was to ‘Akká, and the second was to Paris. On the former, he was accompanied by Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Barrár, the eventual martyr. On that occasion, as the two of them were being dismissed from the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, He instructed them to travel to Áshtíyán²⁵ to teach the Faith. As soon as he entered Arák, Qá’im-Maqámí—in dutiful obedience to the Master’s instructions—set off for Áshtíyán with conspicuous majesty and power, accompanied as he was by a number of horsemen. Yet, as fate would have it, he was seized with violent abdominal pain shortly after entering Áshtíyán, and was forced to return whence he had come. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá placed great confidence in Qá’im-Maqámí, and consistently showed him loving-kindness. In brief, Qá’im-Maqámí was indeed one favored at the sacred threshold.

Towards the beginning of the year 1914, when I was in Kirmánszáh with that soul who has since ascended to God, Ikhvánu’s-Şafá²⁶—may the Almighty immerse him in the oceans of His supreme mercy—Qá’im-Maqámí was also in that city, managing the extensive and reputable postal service he owned there. His chief of operations, who represented him on most occasions, was a man of elegant stature and exquisite appearance. He had a thick, full beard, and sported a green turban. A silver-tongued sort of man, his expression generally exuded confidence while also conveying a kind of meekness. It was this deceptive appearance, as well as his undertaking of important affairs for Qá’im-Maqámí’s business, that made him the object of the attention, respect, and trust of the Bahá’ís. Indeed, he had even been elected as the chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly.

When we arrived at Kirmánszáh, the entire city quickly went into an uproar. A number of the enemies of the Faith, accompanying the wicked Mashhadí ‘Abdu’r-Rasúl, raided our residence, intending to beat us, kill us, and plunder our possessions. Yet, shortly thereafter, the assailants dispersed, having failed to accomplish their purpose, and this flame of enmity was thus extinguished.²⁷ In consequence of this incident, Qá’im-Maqámí dismissed the *siyyid* from his business. The incident itself was kept secret, and its cause remained unknown, until the

following year, when I was in Arák. One day, Qá’im-Maqámí and I were sitting in a room discussing all sorts of topics, when the conversation turned to the subject of the upheaval of Kirmánsháh, which ultimately forced Ikhvánu’ṣ-ṣafá to depart from that city. Qá’im-Maqámí observed, ‘Neither you, nor Ikhvánu’ṣ-ṣafá, nor any of the other Bahá’ís realized that this corruption, this unfortunate occurrence, originated from within.’ I was rendered incredulous upon hearing this, refusing to accept that the Bahá’ís themselves were, effectively, responsible for kindling this fire. Qá’im-Maqámí reacted to my disbelief by remarking, ‘You are quite naive.’ With that, he arose and left the room to retrieve from his coffers a Tablet in the handwriting of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which he brought back with him. The word ‘confidential’ had been written at the top of the paper, and was followed by these blessed words:

Find a suitable way to dismiss Siyyid Faraju’lláh from his post, for he appears to be a deeply troubled individual. In Tíhrán, he secretly made the acquaintance of numerous Azalís, and this is a fact to which he himself now readily admits.

Qá’im-Maqámí then explained:

This blessed Tablet was placed in a stamped and sealed envelope, and it reached me by way of travelers who had come from Khalaj-Ábád.²⁸ Once I had read its contents, I went immediately to carry out the instructions that had been given me. Since, however, I could not legally dismiss the man without proof of criminal or treacherous activity, I retained the services of a detective and dispatched him to investigate the *siyyid*. The detective unearthed a number of the *siyyid*’s administrative perfidies. In addition, I successfully persuaded Monsieur Molitor²⁹—the head of the entire postal service—to agree to the course of action I had been instructed to take. I then dismissed the *siyyid* from his post, and, until this very moment, no one had been apprised of the matter.

Qá’im-Maqámí often did things of this nature—things to which only he and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá were privy. They were secrets between a servant and his Master.

As I mentioned previously, for as long as Qá’im-Maqámí himself was present in Arák, no one in that city would dare harass the Bahá’ís there. It is precisely for that reason that, as soon as Qá’im-Maqámí would travel outside the city, the wicked hosts of hatred and oppression would begin to assail them.

In the winter of 1914, a man named Hází Mírzá Hasan Burújirdí—who later came to be known as Níkú—fled from Burújird to Arák, wearing a beard and the garb of a Muslim cleric. Since Qá’im-Maqámí was not in the area at the time, Burújirdí went to the residence of Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar, the eventual martyr, who was always ready to receive and serve the Bahá’ís who entered his home. Burújirdí’s father owned some religious endowments, and, having recently passed

away, the clerics of Burújird now wished to seize those endowments from his son. To this end, those clerics charged Burújirdí with being a Súfi and a Bábí. Furthermore, they declared him an infidel and began to pursue him. Owing to these developments, Burújirdí had fled to Arák with two aims in mind: the first, to seek refuge from danger; and the second, to appeal to Qá’im-Maqámí to take the necessary measures to regain his father’s endowments—a course of action he himself could not take, as he had now been branded both an infidel and a fugitive. As Qá’im-Maqámí was not in Arák at the time, however, Burújirdí had no recourse but to remain in the residence of Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar for some time and await Qá’im-Maqámí’s return.

Burújirdí would, in the meantime, attend Bahá’í gatherings and have discussions with seekers. While a member of the Islamic clergy himself, he had also had a predilection for Sufism and other forms of mysticism, and because he was innately opposed to Muslim clerics—a sentiment that was only exacerbated by their seizing his father’s endowments, their condemning him as an infidel, and their forcing him to flee his home—his heart had become filled to the brim with resentment towards them. As a result, at every Bahá’í gathering, and in his conversations with seekers, he would heap blame upon the clerics and speak ill of them. Wherever he went, moreover, he would recite the *hadith* “most of His enemies will be the divines”³⁰ and expound its meaning.

This continued until word of Burújirdí’s behavior reached the clerics of Arák, and it is possible that the clerics of Burújird had instructed their counterparts in Arák to be on the lookout for such behavior. At any rate, it was this news that aroused the excitement of the aforementioned *mujtahid*, Áqá Núr. He dispatched a number of coarse and heartless officials to the residence of Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar to abduct both the guest [Burújirdí] and his host [Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar], in the most severe and humiliating way, and have them brought to him. As fate would have it, however, Burújirdí had already left Arák. When the poor Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar heard a knock at the door, he opened it right then and there—scantly clad in simple house clothes though he was, with mere sandals on his feet, and no shawl or other overgarment to cover him—and welcomed his guests, who inquired after Burújirdí. The very moment Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar informed them that Burújirdí had already left, they began to beat him. They forcibly removed him from his home—denying him even the opportunity to put on his tunic, robe, shoes, and hat—and dragged him a great distance to the residence of Áqá Núr, passing through streets and a bazaar on the way. When the shopkeepers of the bazaar beheld the unyielding cruelty that the henchmen of Áqá Núr were demonstrating, as well as the hapless and wretched state of Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar, each and every one of them closed their shops, took up a weapon, and headed to the residence of Áqá Núr—and they may well have done this at the prompting of his henchmen—imagining that the *mujtahid* would condemn Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar to death, and that they would carry out his sentence.

Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar used to relate this account:

This incident took place during Naw-Rúz. I was taken to the room of Áqá Núr; he hurled many words of rebuke and censure at me, and even threatened me with death. He asked, “Why did you allow Mírzá Hasan Burújirdí into your home?” and then said, “If you do not recant your belief in the Bahá’í religion, I will issue an edict for your death.” The words of Áqá Núr, as well as the sight of the thronging crowd—armed to the teeth, their faces contorted in conspicuous wrath—removed every doubt that these people had resolved to kill me, and robbed me of all hope that I would make it out of this situation alive. The chief of police, however, had just been apprised of what was taking place. He and a number of other police officers arrived on the scene, and freed me from the clutches of Áqá Núr. The armed policemen surrounded me; thereupon the chief of police began to move, and the other police officers and I quickly followed him close behind. We proceeded in this way until we reached the precinct. The chief of police instructed me to promise that I not teach the Faith in prison from this point forward, lest those hostile to the religion have a pretext on which to pursue their machinations. When this incident was still fresh, Qá’im-Maqámí’s deputy immediately relayed, by way of telegraph, the details of what had taken place to Qá’im-Maqámí, who was then in Tihrán. Without the slightest delay, Qá’im-Maqámí sent three threatening telegrams—one addressed to the *mujtahid*, another to the governor of the province, and the other to the chief of police.

According to Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar, the thrust of Qá’im-Maqámí’s telegram to Áqá Núr was as follows:

To the *mujtahid*, Áqá Núr—do not be fooled by the rogues in your midst. Mírzá-‘Alí Akbar Barrár serves as my treasurer, and I have entrusted a sum of 12,000 túmáns to his care. If I find that he has been harmed in the slightest, you will be held responsible—both for his blood and for the reimbursement of my money.

Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar used to say:

These telegrams were even as water that is poured upon fire; they put everyone in their place. Shortly after sending them, Qá’im-Maqámí began to take effectual measures in Tihrán. By order of the central authority, I was released from prison after the elapse of just one week.

During the winter months towards the beginning of 1916, when he was living in the village of Sháh-Ábád, located in Faráhán County, Qá’im-Maqámí fell so ill that he was confined to bed. So grave was his condition that the Bahá’ís of Sháh-Ábád and Mashhad-i-Zulf-Ábád despaired that he would not recover. They held prayer gatherings, and implored God to heal him—and the darts

of their prayers seemed to have hit their target squarely, for Qá’im-Maqámí soon rallied from his critical state.

At that time, in what would have been January or February 1916, a number of villainous people suborned a group of wicked souls to go to the residence of Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Barrár in Arák one night. These people inflicted the crudest torment imaginable upon that great man, as well as six others who were in his home at the time—two of these being his wife and his young sister-in-law, and the remaining four the boys of that sister-in-law,³¹ the oldest of whom was twelve years of age and the youngest just forty-five days old—and eventually beheaded them. The murderers then fled the scene, and their identities remained unknown until Qá’im-Maqámí returned to Arák.

From the very beginning of the spring of 1916, Qá’im-Maqámí worked assiduously to discover the identities of Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar’s murderers. He made considerable expenses, and invested a great deal of time in this endeavor; indeed, he took every measure at his disposal, and truly labored in his pursuit of justice. He even arranged for a highly capable interrogator to come from Tíhrán, and this interrogator subjected a number of suspects to questioning. One of these suspects was a man named Mukhtár Khán Qazvíní, who served as the interpreter for the chief of the Russian army. With remarkable tact and prudence, Qá’im-Maqámí convinced the Russians to break their ties with this man, and subsequently had him removed from his post. Mukhtár Khán was thrown into jail temporarily, and then, accompanied by an escort, he was transferred to Tíhrán, where he was imprisoned.

Also among the murderers was Muṣṭafá Khán, who by this time had fled to Khurásán. With the assistance of Muhaqqiqu’d-Dawlih ‘Atá’í—then the head of the postal service operating in that province, where he enjoyed immense power and influence—Qá’im-Maqámí identified the residence in Mashhad where the fugitive had taken refuge, and sent ‘Atá’í a telegram in which he summoned Muṣṭafá Khán to Tíhrán. ‘Atá’í then dispatched someone to Muṣṭafá Khán’s residence; he was arrested and then conducted, with an escort, to Tíhrán, where he was finally imprisoned.

In brief, through his prudence, competence, ambition, and bravery, this courageous man, Qá’im-Maqámí, was able—in just a short span of time—to identify the perpetrators of this terrible murder, summon them, and have them all, one after the other, incarcerated in the capital’s prison, where they were to receive a condign punishment. Prejudice and bribery, however, ultimately carried the day. After a prolonged period, during which these criminals did suffer intense torment, they were eventually released.

I will, at this juncture, quote verbatim from a letter concerning this matter that Qá’im-Maqámí wrote me some years ago for my information:

The murderers of Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Barrár and his relatives consisted of the following four individuals: first, Muṣṭafá Khán, who is currently still alive, and is the son of ‘Abbás-Qulí Khán, who is the cousin of Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí Khán, the *mujtahid*; second, Mírzá Áqáy-i-Sarábandí, who today identifies as a genuine dervish and lives in the city of Bárfurúsh in Mázandarán, where he now works in the department of finance; third, Mukhtár Khán, who served as the interpreter for the chief of the Russian army, and died in the vicinity of Káshán; and fourth, Mírzá Muḥammad, who is currently still alive, and is the son of Áqá Yúsuf Dallál. At a time when all four of these individuals had been incarcerated, Mashhadí Ḥusayn-‘Alí Ṣarráf Turk—the brother-in-law of Mukhtár Khán, and a man with whom I was acquainted—approached me with a sum of 4,000 túmáns, which he intended to pay me to secure their release. I rejected his offer, and informed the Local Spiritual Assembly of what had taken place. More than likely, that man handed over this same sum of money to the Ṣadru'l-Ulamá³², an Azalí, who then arranged for the release of these four individuals.

The following verses illustrate the matter succinctly:³³

At every moment from this tree a new fruit is born
Fresher is that which will come than what came before

On a certain day in the summer of that same year, when Qá’im-Maqámí was still busily engaged in finding the murderers of the aforementioned members of the Barrár family, the news was given that, on that very morning, the Bahá’í wife of the late Mírzá Mihdí Khan, who served as the interpreter at the royal court, had been murdered in Mashhad-i-Zulf-Ábád—situated a distance of seven leagues from Arák—and that the identity of the murderer was still unknown. Qá’im-Maqámí immediately tasked his cousin, the late Ḥabíbu'lláh Khán Iḥtishám-Nizám, who was a Bahá’í, with the responsibility of investigating this incident. Accompanied by representatives of the government and deputies of the police force, and riding in Qá’im-Maqámí’s personal carriage, Iḥtishám-Nizám set off for the scene of the crime to discover the identity of its perpetrator. Just a few hours after entering the area, Iḥtishám-Nizám and his men identified the murderer and obtained a confession from him. Afterwards, they conducted him to the city in which he lived and put him in prison. In those days, the late Tunikábuní,³⁴ the Sipah-Sálár-i-A‘zam,³⁵ was serving as the Prime Minister of Persia. Qá’im-Maqámí and Iḥtishám-Nizám worked diligently and secured a death sentence, issued from the central authority in Tíhrán, for this murderer. In response, the clerics of the area raised a great uproar and incited people to action. The shopkeepers and merchants closed their stores and bazaars, and gathered in the local mosque to bewail the plight which they felt had now befallen their Islamic faith. They fiercely protested this death sentence that had been handed down by the government, raising such objections as these:

The murderer was a Muslim, and the victim was a Bahá'í. The murderer was a man, and the victim was a woman. In a Muslim country, a Muslim cannot be put to death for killing an infidel, neither can a man be put to death for shedding the blood of a woman.

In brief, these people earnestly wanted the murderer to be released. Yet, these objections were met with this response:

This country is upheld by a constitution, and according to the principles enshrined in that constitution, all the citizens of Persia possess equal rights before the law. Concerning, however, the fact that the murderer was a man and the victim was a woman—we must consider that the woman was pregnant, and thus conclude that two people were, in fact, murdered in this incident.

At any rate, the protestors persisted in raising their objections, until at last they dispersed, defeated and despairing the futility of their resistance. The murderer was hanged soon thereafter.

Qá'im-Maqámí would often relate this account:

At one time, the wicked denizens of Arák incited a certain dervish to heinous action. He would roam the streets and bazaars, raising obnoxious commotions and heaping all manner of insults and curses upon the Cause. This behavior deeply bothered the Bahá'ís of Arák, but they were without any recourse. However much they complained to the government and the police, it was of no avail. This continued until a certain day, on which I happened to be supervising the construction of some buildings with an umbrella in hand, when I was informed that this dervish was raising a great clamor in the middle of a large marketplace. I was told, moreover, that he was denigrating the Cause, and that a considerable crowd had gathered around him. Without even willing it, I headed at once in the direction of the marketplace until I reached it.

There I saw the dervish, a tall and heavy-set man with a substantial beard; he was standing in the middle of the marketplace, making an uproar and uttering slanderous remarks, with hundreds of shopkeepers and malicious onlookers circled around him. With unmitigated audacity, I broke through the crowd and made my way to the center of the scene. With one hand, I grabbed the dervish by his long beard, and with the other, I struck him on the head repeatedly with my umbrella. Witnessing the state I was in at that moment, each and every one of the onlookers ran off in a different direction. At one point, I realized that one of my hands had gone numb, whereupon one of the attendants—who was not even a Bahá'í—approached us, wrested the dervish's beard from my grasp, and began to strike him on the head himself. I then overtook the attendant and said,

“Bring him to my home.” The attendant dragged the dervish, bit by bit, until we reached my residence. I locked the dervish in the bathroom, and there he remained until nightfall. I then summoned him, counseled him, and showed him love and tenderness. Furthermore, I gave him a sum of money, put *givih*³⁶ on his feet, mounted him on the back of one of my servants, and said to him, “When you have made it out of Arák, dismount my servant and then return to the city.”

After a few days, the people noticed that the dervish was nowhere to be found, having vanished without a trace. This realization roused them to fervid excitement, and at the instigation of the clerics, they closed their shops. On the pretext that I had apparently killed the dervish, and had then cast him into a well, these people wished to ransack my home and exact blood money as restitution for his supposed murder. Assessing the situation, I realized that a terrible thing had come to pass. I dispatched a number of people to the outskirts of the city to find the dervish, but it was to no avail—they all returned empty-handed.

During this time, the dervish himself learned of the furor that had been raised by the people of Arák. He made his way back to the city at once and headed straight for the bazaar. As he paced back and forth from one end of the bazaar to the other, he hurled all sorts of obscene insults at those who had incited him to his previous behavior, shouting and saying:

It was you all who provoked me to denigrate this group of people [the Bahá’ís]! And yet, when I fell into the clutches of Qá’im-Maqámí, and he beat my head and battered my brain, where did you all go? Not one of you came to my aid to save me, at the very least, from his torment. At that moment, you were not Muslims—but now you have become Muslims, and have raised a great clamor with the aim of obtaining blood money, for my sake, through the plunder you aspire to commit. I applaud your sense of honor, and commend you a hundred times on this degree of devotion to Islam!

Despite their best efforts, the people of Arák were powerless to put out the flame which so fiercely animated this dervish. Eventually, they approached me and implored me to silence him. I then sent for the dervish; he came to me, and I successfully persuaded him to leave Arák.

By virtue of his complete faith, his unshakable conviction, his pure intent, his iron will, his resolute decision-making, his ability to trust in God wholeheartedly, and his open-handed attitude towards others, this honorable man, Qá’im-Maqámí, enjoyed success in everything he set out to do, and the angels of heavenly confirmations unfailingly came to his aid. None dared to

oppose him; indeed, no one ever profited by contending with him. In brief, it was in those days that Qá’im-Maqámí gradually left Arák and relocated to Tíhrán, where he was engaged in serving the Cause.

It was towards the beginning of autumn in 1916 when I myself left Arák for Tíhrán. Qá’im-Maqámí said to me:

The coming winter will bring dire scarcity and famine. The Bahá’ís must be made aware of this fact, and urged to prepare, to the greatest extent possible, wintertime provisions and victuals for themselves and their families. In assemblies and gatherings, advise the Bahá’ís openly and privately even to sell their furniture, and to buy and hold on to wheat, barley, *sangak* bread,³⁷ lima beans, and maize.

He also said:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá appeared to me in a dream and stated, “Scarcity and famine are in store this year. Woe betide the wealthy among the Bahá’ís if even one of their impoverished brethren should starve to death!”

Owing to Qá’im-Maqámí’s persistence and insistence—as well as this poor servant’s efforts to share the aforementioned anecdote with others and urgently exhort them to act accordingly, believing as I did in the significance of Qá’im-Maqámí’s dreams and remarks—the Bahá’ís were eventually persuaded to prepare their wintertime provisions by whatever means necessary, even if it meant selling their rugs and other furnishings. In addition, those who had been charged with spiritual affairs began to raise funds to support the poor during the winter. To that end, these individuals solicited funds from every one of the most eminently wealthy Bahá’ís, and successfully secured written commitments from them to donate large sums of money. Ultimately, a record of all these commitments was given to Qá’im-Maqámí; he calculated the total sum of these donations, and committed to match that amount from his own funds. With all this money, Qá’im-Maqámí purchased an ample supply of food in the name of the poor, and kept it in storage. Furthermore, he appointed a special committee that would visit the homes of every Bahá’í in Tíhrán, determine the number of people in each family, and make a note of their income and expenses. Those who could not make ends meet, or did not even have a cent to their name, did not escape the vigilant attention of Qá’im-Maqámí; every one of those needy souls received rations. Indeed, from the first sign of privation and paucity until the following spring, Qá’im-Maqámí saw to it that provisions were regularly given to every family that needed them. Even on the eve of the Persian New Year, he provided each and every one of these families with rice and shortening, so that they could cook themselves a proper meal and enjoy the holiday in high spirits.

In brief, Qá’im-Maqámí did not allow even one Bahá’í to go hungry or live in dire straits—and this at a time when so many other people starved to death. Those poor souls would go to the slaughterhouse, drink whatever blood they could find, and ultimately die. Others would repair to the wilderness and eat grass—and there, too, would they perish. It was even heard that some of these people would kill and eat their own children, and also those of others. And yet, as far as the impoverished Bahá’ís were concerned, not one of them starved to death.³⁸

It can truly be said that all these blessings allotted to the Bahá’ís, poor and rich alike—inasmuch as the poor were rescued from hunger, and the rich were made the recipients of God’s grace and guidance—stemmed from the prudence, the purity of heart, the effectual measures, and the generosity of this noble man.

I shall never forget when, sometime during the winter months of late 1918 and early 1919, Mírzá Maḥmúd Furúghí—may God exalt his station and cause him to abide within the precincts of His mercy—had come to Tíhrán, and this roused the Bahá’ís there to great excitement. Qá’im-Maqámí, who was then diligently engaged in teaching the Faith to the *mujtahids*, clerics, and other such leaders of Arák—all of whom in those days resided in Tíhrán—began at once to make extensive preparations to receive Furúghí and have him meet with the aforementioned religious leaders. On a certain day, he extended formal, written luncheon invitations to such people as ‘Aḍudu’s-Sultán, the son of Muẓaffari’d-Dín Sháh; Sihámu’s-Sultán Bayát; Hájí Siyyid Ahmád, the *mujtahid*, and Hájí Siyyid Maḥmúd, the *mujtahid*, both the sons of Hájí Áqá Muhsin ‘Iráqí; Hájí Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí Khán, the *mujtahid*; and other clerics, seminarians, and businessmen—nearly some seventy people in all. Qá’im-Maqámí also invited a few Bahá’ís, including Mírzá Rahím Khán Arjmand, Hájí Abu’l-Hasan Amín, and others. Jinab-i-Furúghí himself attended; it was a glorious and majestic gathering, convened in Qá’im-Maqámí’s parlor. As soon as each and every one of those invited took their seats, they began to engage one another in conversation and debate that extended through the afternoon. With the utmost lucidity and straightforwardness, proofs which vindicated the Faith were adduced to all those present, and the truth and grandeur of the Cause were convincingly demonstrated.

In consequence of this gathering, a Tablet was revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—may the souls of all creation be sacrificed for His grace—in Qá’im-Maqámí’s honor, wherein He conferred the most tender of mercies upon that quintessence of purity and faithfulness.

Among the Master’s other utterances addressed to Qá’im-Maqámí is the following:

No ingenious method remains that you have not employed to secure the good-pleasure of God.³⁹

And in a blessed Tablet which He revealed for this lowly servant, He declared:

Qá’im-Maqámí is, in truth, the foremost servant of the Cause of the All-Merciful.⁴⁰

As was mentioned previously, one of Qá’im-Maqámí’s most outstanding qualities was his generosity. In that respect, he was truly like a cloud that liberally gave its copious rain, exemplifying this blessed utterance:

It behoveth the loved ones of the Lord to be the signs and tokens of His universal mercy and the embodiments of His own excelling grace. Like the sun, let them cast their rays upon garden and rubbish heap alike, and even as clouds in spring, let them shed down their rain upon flower and thorn.⁴¹

He would freely give money to friend and stranger alike, and this he did without mentioning it to anyone or holding them in his debt. In the hand of Qá’im-Maqámí, the coin was no different from the pebble. When he gave alms with his right hand, his left hand did not know of this charity.⁴² Such silent magnanimity differed vastly from the behavior of most people, who flaunt their wealth and boast of their good works to others with zest and relish. As the poet has said:⁴³

The clam bears a thousand pearls and doesn’t even sigh
Yet the hen gives just one egg and lets out a cry

When he was residing in Arák, Qá’im-Maqámí knew all the poor and destitute people of the area; he was well aware of their living situations, and was apprised of their essential needs. When winter would arrive, or at the onset of any other time in which the privation these souls faced grew particularly serious, Qá’im-Maqámí would fill his pockets with several kinds of coins, and—in the dead of night—he would put on a cloak, which he would pull over his face to conceal it; walk the streets and alleyways, alone and unaccompanied; and knock, one by one, on the doors of the homes of the impoverished. The moment these people would open their doors, Qá’im-Maqámí—acting in such a way as to prevent them from recognizing him—would withdraw his hand from underneath his cloak, give each family a sum of money that was commensurate to their needs, and immediately depart without uttering so much as a single word. He never spoke of this exploit with others, nor did he ever mention it to the recipients of his gifts. It was an undertaking that he continually repeated every few nights, until his beneficiaries were eventually liberated from their dire state.

How truthful, how well-intentioned, how compassionate, and how generous he was! Just as Qá’im-Maqámí showed mercy and kindness to the poor and weak—serving as their powerful advocate and mighty support—so too did he show severe retribution to the traitors and oppressors, irrespective of their class or rank. To the former, his actions were the greatest display

of clemency, and to the latter they constituted the most grievous vengeance. He would speak, he would write, he would pursue, he would insist, and he would importune until at last he would make clear the realities of things, and demonstrate the cruelty, the oppression, the treachery, and the trickery of the wicked. In this respect, he paid no mind to what others may have thought of him. He spoke frankly, uninhibited by formal deference or ceremonial reserve. He was not overly cautious, he never engaged in flattery, and he avoided expressing himself in figurative terms.⁴⁴

Qá’im-Maqámí was always prepared to spend enormous sums of money and incur great losses if it resulted in some truth coming to the fore. How numerous are the instances in which he would enter into a legal dispute with someone and expend his funds, at times sustaining financial loss in the process, to vindicate himself in a court of law! As soon as Qá’im-Maqámí would make his case, and justice would subsequently be served, he would nonetheless donate the money demanded of him by the plaintiff—money which was rightfully his to begin with—either to that plaintiff or to some other party.

Qá’im-Maqámí was both the embodiment of justice and the emblem of grace. On the one hand, he was given to sentiments of spirituality; on the other, he carried out the most prudent plans when dealing with material matters. How intelligent he was, and how well he understood people! It was as if he could read the secrets hidden in the hearts of men, and was totally apprised of the beliefs, the thoughts, the degrees of faith, and the measure of character possessed by whoever crossed his path.

How unfailingly correct was his judgment! Indeed, whatever he said, that was itself the truth. Notwithstanding, a number of those who were not well acquainted with Qá’im-Maqámí would, at the first chance they had, balk at his remarks, and let loose a deluge of cavils and complaints. In the end, however, it would become clear that the opinions and remarks of Qá’im-Maqámí reflected the truth.

At one point, Qá’im-Maqámí traveled to America to tend to personal business. On his return, he stopped at the Holy Land and attained the presence of the dear Guardian—may our souls be a sacrifice for his loving-kindness. During his sojourn there, he derived an ample share of mighty spiritual power and received abundant celestial blessings from the Most Great Spirit of God, Whose influence pervaded that spot. In a letter dated 3 November of that year [1926],⁴⁵ he wrote:

The *Iṭṭilá’át* newspaper⁴⁶ reported that that dastardly fiend, Ávárih,⁴⁷ had been expelled from the Faith, along with some twenty or thirty of his cohorts who had identified themselves as such. I was reminded of a day in Haifa, when I had returned from my journey to America. I was sent a magazine to which a certain Kháliṣí-Zádih, Mírzá ‘Abdu’lláh Muballigh, and Ávárih himself had contributed. The next morning, I went at

once to sit by an almond tree that had grown close to the Shrine of the Báb. There I began to compose a polemical treatise against the aforementioned individuals, saying to myself all the while, “If I should reach Persia, I will strangle Ávárih.” I had written six or seven pages when Áqáy-i-Afnán approached me and said, “The Guardian has stated, ‘Leave Ávárih to himself. That disloyal soul must live long enough to behold the glorification of the Cause and witness the exaltation of the Revelation of the Ancient Beauty [Bahá’u’lláh].’” This blessed command from the Guardian induced me to obey him.

We were discussing the generous character of Qá’im-Maqámí, as well as the sincere acts of service he was known to render. He would give and not speak of it, and never—under any circumstances—did he vaunt his charity. During his aforementioned journey to America, great indeed were the sums he bestowed and the funds he donated for the glorification of the Cause of God—an amount which, to this day, is unknown to all but God Himself. It was only with the passage of much time that an instance or two of this charity would be heard from others. As an example, for months it was advertised in the American periodical, *Bahá’í News*, that Qá’im-Maqámí had donated a sum of 12,000 dollars and earmarked it for the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár⁴⁸ in the United States.⁴⁹ Yet, no one ever heard a word from Qá’im-Maqámí himself about this contribution. Even when the matter was mentioned in his presence, he was inwardly displeased with it, and always attempted to change the subject.

In Arák, on the same Qá’im-Maqámí Street mentioned previously, there were three buildings made of brick, consisting of more than twenty upper and lower rooms, a spacious and stately salon, many acres of land, and several gardens which adorned the front of the structure. Qá’im-Maqámí donated this structure to the Faith, and it now serves as a Bahá’í center and a gathering place for the Bahá’ís. In the village of Sháh-Ábád, too—which is in the vicinity of Arák—Qá’im-Maqámí purchased a highly reputable house, and then donated it to be converted into a Bahá’í center. In brief, one can hardly enter a corner of the counties of Arák and Faráhán and not see some mark left behind by that departed soul.

Furthermore, the considerable offerings, virtually unrivaled in their value, made by Qá’im-Maqámí to the Bahá’ís of Tíhrán for the construction of the national Bahá’í center are especially noteworthy—so much so that, to this day, this donation remains a byword among the Bahá’ís.

How compassionate, how kind he was! What care, what love he showed! It can truly be said that Qá’im-Maqámí was kinder and more sympathetic than any father was to his own child. Those who came to visit him could hardly have their fill of the privilege of seeing him, and they never tired of hearing him speak. He would relate anecdotes; tell parables; make witticisms; narrate stories; cite episodes from various histories; give accounts of the things he witnessed and experienced firsthand; and discuss the most precise details of those matters, whether of the past or of the future, that were pertinent to the Cause. He was thoroughly familiar with all the high-

ranking statesmen and leaders of the government, belonging to bygone ages and the present day alike. Indeed, so vividly would he portray the events of their lives, and so intimately would he describe their personal characteristics, that one received the impression that he had raised those people himself.

Qá’im-Maqámí enjoyed a peerlessly masterful ability to identify and appraise antiques. The chronicles and narratives of each and every one of the kings, rulers, ministers, sages, and notables of ages past—the details of their lives; their distinguishing features; the causes of their victories and defeats; and the factors which propelled them to grandeur, accelerated their influence, noised abroad their fame, and seated them upon the throne of glory and sovereignty—were known well to him. When appropriate, he would relate accounts from their lives, and in so doing add to the knowledge possessed by his interlocutors. How eloquent he was—how sweet the words he spoke! To converse and consort with him, in brief, was to benefit immensely.

Qá’im-Maqámí’s correspondence and other writings, moreover, are replete with a delightful sweetness. What follows are a few passages from Qá’im-Maqámí’s letters addressed to this devoted servant of his—letters which he only composed during the past few months, and which were sent to Shíráz and Kirmán—with the hope that they will acquaint the reader with the views and epistolary style of that supremely righteous man.⁵⁰

In a letter dated 25 June [1953], he writes:

In the prime of your youth, you considered yourself an old man. Repent for your ways! Preoccupation has consequences. In the span of a single night, such worry turned white the hair of Áqáy-i- . . . and made him old. I saw Mírzá . . . when he was at death’s door. At this time, when the weight of age and separation had well-nigh bound him to the ground, I fulfilled his heart’s desire; as a result, he became even as a youth, cheerful and thoroughly robust. It so happens that . . . was discussing a Tablet from the Blessed Beauty, known as the Lawh-i-Vafá, that was written in the hand of Jináb-i-Mu‘allim, which contains many complaints about some of the friends and “Balaam, son of Beor,” a derisive epithet used for Yahyá Azal. Bahá’u’lláh instructed that this Tablet be written with a solution of diamond and gold, and then published and disseminated. It surprised me greatly that this Tablet had heretofore not been seen or published. . . .

Mr. Núshábádí! I saw that, because the friends in those days did not have complete faith in Bahá’u’lláh, they went to the bazaar and told a few goldsmiths and jewellers that they were looking for a solution consisting of diamond. In response, these craftsmen told the friends that they did not have any, and that such a thing was impossible to create. The friends accepted this answer without questioning it. Unlike these days, those friends did not think that, if such a solution were indeed impossible to create, Bahá’u’lláh would not

have instructed them to procure it—whereas, with six months' time and a hundred túmáns, one can certainly acquire this solution.

Mr. Núshábádí! The source of sadness and happiness is one and the same. Likewise, God is one, and the intellect and the self are also the same. “O thou assured soul! Return unto thy Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing!”⁵¹ All this wrangling and discord, then, stem from selfishness, as well as a lack of knowledge and insight. I have previously stated that the exalted prophets have spoken in self-evident terms and revealed holy books. Owing to the jarring intensity of their revelations, these prophets elected not to disclose the entire extent of their commandments and prohibitions, or to divulge the full nature of their own realities. Those things which the early believers were unable to comprehend were locked away as hidden knowledge and treasured mysteries, but it has been promised to man that these things will be unveiled to them on the Day of Resurrection. I now pose these questions to your good self: which of those mysteries and secrets are still hidden and concealed from the people of Bahá, and what matter is there pertaining to the future that they were not informed of previously and continues to be unknown to them? The Ten-Year Crusade constitutes the best example of a clear path forward for this Most Great Cause. Whatever has remained hidden from or ostensibly insoluble to the friends of God, they have attempted to explain away with palatable interpretations that smack of mysticism. They have preferred not to make a real effort to grasp the truth; had it been otherwise, they would have seen how simple it would have been to procure that diamond solution. . . .

You see how those who have denied the prophets and turned away from Bahá'u'lláh appear to be blind . . . though such people have been able to unravel a mere fraction of the mysteries of nature by perusing the words of the prophets and sages, their pride and selfishness have prompted them to meddle with such things as are clearly explosive, like the dynamite formerly used to demolish mountains and similar obstacles—explosives which cause earthquakes and bring about lightning and thunder. Those destructive, fruitless crafts of steel⁵² carry a kind of bomb which has at its core an atomic nucleus—a nucleus that is split, thus setting off the bomb that houses it, when exposed to dampness in the air. All the bullets and bombs with which countless aircraft carriers have been outfitted amount to an outlay of hundreds of millions of dollars. This notwithstanding, the proponents of this warfare are utterly oblivious to what tomorrow has in store for them.

You are convinced that a third World War, as well as the grievous torment and pointless punishment that would attend it, is inevitable. . . . I had previously written that no dream goes unrealized; famine and hunger are imminent.

In a letter dated 21 July [1953], Qá’im-Maqámí writes:

I returned home at midnight, and collapsed with such profound exhaustion that I slept soundly through the night, and had a most vivid dream as morning approached. The Blessed Beauty appeared to me as a youth; with the utmost humility, He came to me as I was seated on a rooftop, examining a piece of royal cloth about one-hundred centimeters in length, and said: “This is a piece of royal cloth, but I will depict for thee an exquisite crown, fashioned from the sun and moon themselves, that shall endure forever.” The Blessed Beauty then proceeded to illustrate for me a crown so magnificent as to overwhelm me with shame. The intensity of this reaction awoke me from my slumber, and impelled me to document this account.

Áqá Khán Qá’im-Maqámí

In a letter dated 26 October [1953], Qá’im-Maqámí writes:

That day when I was writing tender praises and spiritual laudations of . . . I was unaware of anything, when it came to the matter of death, apart from one’s descent into one’s grave, as well as one’s facing the consequences of one’s deeds in purgatory. Such was my state until just three nights ago, when I saw the Guardian—may our souls be offered up for his sake—in a dream. He had come to a willow-grove in Karaj, and said to me: “I have consulted your documents and investigated your dossiers; two-sixths of the real estate belongs to you,” to which I replied, “I have no objection to this.” Accompanying the Guardian were four Bahá’ís—indigent, pure, and clearly devoted to him. Suddenly, my eyes opened. . . .

I swear to you, Mr. Núshábádí, that during the time I spent in that liminal state, I would have paid no mind to thousands of the books of Asadí Túsí,⁵³ each one of which is worth the equivalent of a human life. With my eyes now open, and having regained the ability to write, I tell you that I now would not forfeit even the skin of donkeys from the New World, with which the shoes of *mullás* are made!⁵⁴ If you simply be patient, you, too, will enjoy an afterlife as exalted as mine.

Further to that letter, he wrote: “Patience is the remedy for every pain—patience.”

In a letter dated 26 July [1953], Qá’im-Maqámí writes:

So critical had my circumstances become that I resorted to using a pestle and mortar to slowly grind some pieces of dry bread, moistened only with a bit of *dúigh*,⁵⁵ which I would serve time and again to ten or twelve children to sustain them. Yet so happy was I

in spite of these dire straits—so assured, so joyous, and so rich in God—that I would give generously and substantially. I labored, for instance, intensely and by whatever means necessary, to supply Ḥabíbu’d-Dawlih ‘Iráqí with an annual provision of one-hundred túmáns. . . .

al-Ma’mún⁵⁶ entrusted his kingdom, which had belonged to his father⁵⁷ before him, to the Imám Ridá⁵⁸ by appointing him as his heir. When al-Ma’mún died sometime thereafter, all the Iranians began to kill the progeny of the Imáms, as well as any group that opposed them. As a result, things came to such a desperate pass that the Sipah-Sálár of al-Ma’mún fled to Mázandarán, only to be killed en route.

The relatives of the Imám Ridá, who are the ancestors of the Qá’im-Maqám, among them Sultán Siyyid Ahmád,⁵⁹ whose exalted tomb is located in the village of Hazávih,⁶⁰ inherited all of the books and belongings of the Imám Ridá, which they subsequently gathered. The Zoroastrian Shahrbánú, who was the wife of the Imám Husayn—peace be upon Him—traveled to Faráhán, and seized such mountainous lands as Hazávih, Mihr-Ábád,⁶¹ Sárúq,⁶² and Jíryá⁶³—which amounted to some ten leagues of land altogether—and began to promote Shí‘ism. With the passage of time, the pervasive influence of her efforts eventually waxed to such a degree that her descendants entered into the ministerial ranks of the Zand and Qájár dynasties. Were it not for the library of the Imám Ridá, which came into the possession of the Qá’im-Maqámí family through inheritance—or for Mírzá Ḥasan, the uncle of the great Qá’im-Maqám—all the Qá’im-Maqámís would have been slain by the blade of Áqá Muḥammad Khán Qájár⁶⁴ and Fath-‘Alí Khán Qájár.⁶⁵ . . .

Mr. Núshábádí! I swear on the legitimacy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station as Center of the Covenant that over the course of these four and a half years, in which time I have become an invalid, the extent of my wealth and the degree of my knowledge have grown so vastly that even an elixir concocted with gold and silver could never hope to rival their worth.

In a letter dated 29 September [1953], Qá’im-Maqámí writes:

The essential foundation of all the divine religions is one and the same. On a certain day when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, may the souls of all else but Him be offered up for His sake, went to the pilgrim-house at two o’clock in the afternoon to sate His appetite, He found that there was no food. He took the empty bowls which the pilgrims had used; sat on the floor; soaked up, with a morsel of bread, what was left at the bottom of the bowls; and ate it. He then said, “This is what is meant by the leftovers and secondhand articles of the believer.”

In a letter dated 2 November [1953], Qá’im-Maqámí writes:

Though my spirit is still filled with vim and vigor, yearning to plumb the depths of the earth and penetrate the highest reaches of heaven, yet physically I now lack the strength even to go from one room to another. How less imaginable, then, is the notion that I might successfully travel to meet with that Italian Hand of the Cause⁶⁶—an experienced, well-informed, and faithful individual.

According to the explicit utterance of the Ancient Beauty, glorified be His most great mention, the city of Kirmán has men whom we would consider real gems, and account as exceedingly active in and greatly devoted to this Cause. There is no doubt that, at this moment, some of these men are hidden and sitting in silence, while others are disheartened and veiled. Come on, man! Gird up the loins of your endeavor, and raise a cry that will apprise all who hear it! Certainly a few souls from the cities in that province will crane their necks from out the shops of their ignorance, and ask what all the commotion is about. Shout like the Biktáshí dervishes! By God, you will come to see, slowly but surely, that these are the promised men—the hidden men—who have been mentioned in the traditions and Tablets of the past.

Everyone has a station of some sort. What would that scoundrel, the late Ghulám-Husayn, do when performing a magic trick? One part of his act involved gaining your trust. He would snatch your diamond ring in the blink of an eye, and once he had made sure that you could not see what he was doing, he would just as quickly take the ring from out his pocket and present it to you. This is precisely how this world seems when compared with the next one. How appropriate is the Blessed Beauty’s analogy of the puppet-show to describe this world!⁶⁷ In the words of the late Qá’im-Maqám:

The vagaries of life grant glory at times and at others bear thorns
Many yet are the games of this sort which playful fate has in store

In sum, Qá’im-Maqámí would write his letters with great rapidity. Once he had filled a piece of paper with writing, he would not go back and read over it. Whatever he said or wrote always came to him naturally; it was never artificial or contrived. The last piece of correspondence I received from him is dated 18 December [1953].

Sadly, on 4 January [1954], I received a telegram from his pure and precious son, Manúhir Qá’im-Maqámí, with the news that he had passed away—news which set ablaze the spirit, the soul, and the body of this helpless one with the fire of distress and sorrow. God rest his soul! May He cause him to abide within the shelter of the mercy of his Lord, and may my life be a sacrifice for the earth which bears his body.

One thing which did offer some solace and comfort to this distraught soul of mine was the arrival of a most sublime telegram from our peerlessly kind Guardian—may the essences of all beings, and the realities of all things visible and invisible, be a sacrifice for his generosity—the text of which is reproduced below:⁶⁸

I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of that promoter and devotee of the Cause of God; his extensive services merit our great appreciation. I will pray for the progress of his soul in the Abhá Kingdom. Convey my sincerest condolences to the members of his family for this most regrettable loss. It would behoove the friends to hold fitting memorial services in his honor.

SHOGHI EFFENDI

Written with the utmost haste, and a mind bereft of focus, this biographical account is now complete. I implore the readers for their prayers.

This lowly and evanescent soul,
Hasan Núshábádí
6 February 1954

Appendix A: Núshábádí’s Sidebar, Consisting of Correspondence to Him from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi Regarding Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá’im-Maqámí

The tender kindnesses which have been extended to the late Qá’im-Maqámí in Tablets and letters addressed to this lowly servant are as follows:

Item 1

In a Tablet dated May or June 1921, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated: “Qá’im-Maqámí is, in truth, the foremost servant of the Cause of the All-Merciful.”

Item 2

The secretary of the Guardian has written:

In a letter dated 25 January 1925, you praised that precious host, Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá’im-Maqámí, and prayed that his endeavors be crowned with increasing success. In response, the Guardian has said:

Praised be God, Qá’im-Maqámí is the epitome of one who has always been divinely aided and confirmed, and ever been the quintessential recipient of sublime bounties and favors, to the extent that his character and the manner in which he lives his life redound to the glory of the Cause of God. I pray especially at the Shrine of the Báb, from the bottom of my heart and the depths of my soul, that you and he be granted increasing success in serving the Faith, and aided to achieve prosperity and glory.

Item 3

In a letter dated 28 October 1943, the Guardian’s secretary wrote:

Concerning Qá’im-Maqámí, the Guardian says:

Convey my assurances to that man of courage, and send him my greetings and salutations. I remember him constantly, at all times and under all conditions, and never forget him for so much as a single moment. I supplicate God on his behalf, praying unceasingly that confirmations and success be vouchsafed unto him.

Item 4

In a letter dated 12 April 1946, the Guardian’s secretary wrote:

Though that precious, veritably luminous being, Qá’im-Maqámí, is ostensibly far removed from the Holy Land, yet in reality he is here, physically present; he beholds this exalted spot, and is himself beheld therein. The Guardian does not forget Qá’im-Maqámí at any point, and prays ardently that he always be aided and confirmed.

The present author,
Hasan Núshábádí

Appendix B: Núshábádí’s Selection of Tablets from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Mírzá Áqá Khán Qá’im-Maqámí

Tablet 1

A typescript of the original Persian text of the following Tablet, which appears on page 23 of Núshábádí’s article, has been published in Vahid Rafati, Qá’im-Maqám Faráhání dar Áthár-i-Bahá’í, p. 272 (printed in Safiniy-i-‘Irfán, Daftar-i-Hizhdahum [no. 18]).

He is God

O you who are the scion of the Prince of the City of Statesmanship and Literary Accomplishment, and are descended from the ruler of the realms of reason and understanding! It has been some time since I last conversed and discussed inner secrets with you. Now, without premeditation, I have begun to write this letter, for I was suddenly reminded of that face and temperament of yours, and am apprised of the services you are rendering in the Cause. You are indeed firm in your belief with the utmost conviction, and serve the Cause with all your might. No ingenious method remains that you have not employed to secure the good-pleasure of God, and no strategy is there that you have not executed to exalt His Word. In truth, you are an illustrious descendant of your august ancestor, and unto the lineage of that supremely righteous man, you are even as a brilliant candle. We are deeply gladdened that that family has laid an unshakable foundation, and erected a mighty mansion, the highest room of which reaches the loftiest heavens. At such a sight the soul of that distinguished personage swells with pride in the Abhá Kingdom. What can I say? For through your sincere intentions, your prodigious efforts, your reverence for the truth, and your servitude at the threshold of God, that faithful friend exults with unbridled joy and fervor. Upon you be the glory of the All-Glorious.

Tablet 2

Vahid Rafati kindly provided the present translator with a typescript of the complete text of this Tablet, which appears on page 31 of Núshábádí's article. A brief passage from this Tablet has been published, also in typescript form, in Vahid Rafati, Ma'ákhidh-i-Ash'ár dar Áthár-i-Bahá'í, vol. 2, p. 43.

Tíhrán

Mírzá Áqáy-i-Qá'ím-Maqámí, upon him be the glory of the All-Glorious

He is God

O you who are firm in the Covenant! The letter you had written me was like an unrolled scroll;⁶⁹ it hinted at many a glad-tiding, and these allusions were clear as the most explicit of statements.

To state the matter briefly: during the days of the Festival of Rídván, celebrations are held in most of the provinces of Persia. These gatherings announce the joy and gladness of the friends, and demonstrate clearly their bliss and delight. Likewise, in America the Festival of Rídván is commemorated with conspicuous majesty and splendor. Every year, they hold a celebration in New York City to observe this Festival, and radiant gatherings are convened on each of the days thereof—gatherings from which arise melodies that hail the holiness of the veilless Beauty and reach the loftiest summits. I send you herewith a photograph of one of these impressive

celebrations, so that the friends may behold that radiant gathering and reflect on how the power of the Covenant has made such a thing possible—that they who were once estranged have now become loving friends. Our Persian compatriots, however, remain fast asleep in an afflictive nightmare, notwithstanding that a shining Moon such as this has shed light so brilliant over the horizon of their country that it has struck the land of America, and thrown into fervid commotion the whole of Europe.

No clamor in the city is there but the curling of the Companion's locks
No sedition in the world is there but the arching of the Friend's brows⁷⁰

Despite this, the Persians are heedless thereof. May God awaken them from their slumber!

At any rate, the Bahá'ís of Persia must still refrain from dispensing with tact altogether; on the contrary, they must observe it in all their affairs. They must not rend the veils entirely, for this would prompt other parties to arise with rancor and jealousy and stir up all manner of trouble.

Praised be God that in the days when Persia contended with famine and scarcity, and was beset with hardship and calamity, the committee charged with rendering aid to the poor bent every effort to offer them abundant assistance. The impoverished among the Bahá'ís, for their part, remained patient and thankful throughout this ordeal, and maintained their dignity in spite of it.

Praised be God that, with your help, the Tarbíyat schools were not disbanded. The Tarbíyat schools are of the utmost importance, and it is incumbent upon everyone to lend assistance to them. Mírzá Ḥasan Núshábádí is, in truth, like a powerful hand in the aid he renders with you, and a mighty limb in his endeavors to teach the Cause.

Praised be God that, in cooperation with Monsieur Molitor, the Bahá'ís have made a prodigious effort and striven with commendable exertion. Indeed, they evinced in their efforts the utmost endeavor, goodwill, purity, and detachment, and Tíhrán enjoyed plentiful abundance as a result. The trustworthiness and piety they demonstrated as they carried out their task revived the souls and astounded the minds of their fellow men. This is especially true of your own notable effort, through which the cost of one donkey's-load of wheat was lowered from forty-five túmáns to eighteen túmáns. As to the obstacles which the head of accounts throws before you, this is of no importance; God is your Helper and Sustainer.

I composed an extensive prayer to mourn the passing of that most noble soul, Ibn-i-Abhar, which was previously sent to you. He truly exhibited a spirit of great self-sacrifice, as well as unwavering firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant. Patient and grateful was he, and also dignified and valiant. His two dear sons must be shown reverence, and treated with courtesy and kindness in every respect. These two precious children are born of the Covenant, and well-

favored in the sight of the Day-Star of the world [Bahá'u'lláh]. Two weeks ago, I recited a prayer in remembrance of that man who lived his life as a living martyr. The relatives who have survived that great man should treat his peerlessly gentle children with perfect tenderness and solicitude.

You had written about a competition which took place in the middle of the month of Sha'bán. In the words of Rúmí:

That which the man does, the ape will too
Whatever from him it sees, that will it do

Else beware, for deceit's now afoot by these crows so sly
As they've learned how to lift the white falcon's cry

Though the hoopoe's call the grouse might learn to sound
Where's the hoopoe's mystery or Sheba's message to be found?⁷¹

Praised be God, Áqá Mírzá Ghulám-'Alí Daváfurúsh reached the Holy Land safely, and he presented a sum approximate to the amount you had mentioned in your correspondence. Furthermore, I recited a prayer imploring God's forgiveness and pardon for Arbáb Farajú'lláh. I perused, moreover, the letter from Arák, as well as the honorary certificate that was issued by the Tarbíyat school in recognition of your help and support;⁷² these both brought gladness to my heart.

Upon you be the glory of the All-Glorious.

1 July 1919
'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás

Tablet 3

The original Persian text of the following Tablet, which appears on p. 35 of Núshábádí's article, has been published in Makátib-i-Hadrat-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá, vol. 8, p. 64.

He is the Most Glorious

O you who are firm in the Covenant! I have not written to you for some time now; this is due only to the numerous preoccupations that have demanded my attention and the many calamities which have beset me. My heart and soul, however, are linked to you with a bond that can in no wise be weakened. At every moment I am reminded of you, and the thought of your services,

your devotion, and your thraldom bring me abounding joy. You truly are a descendant of that illustrious personage [the Qá’im-Maqám], and have wholly fulfilled his most ardent desire upon this earthly plane. He rejoices in the Abhá Kingdom with exceeding gladness, inasmuch as one has thankfully been raised up from his lineage who is the very emblem of true guidance, and the embodiment of the affections of the Concourse on High. What greater bounty is there than this? Render thanks unto God, for in that country [Persia] you are even as a banner of the Kingdom and a sign of celestial grace.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá harbors heartfelt fondness and feels fervent love for that blessed family, and his hope is that members from among its ranks may shine forth like brilliantly burning candles. You must, however, observe tact to the utmost, lest your endeavors elicit the fear and fright of the feeble and deprived.

Convey my kindest regards to that noble son of yours, Rúhu’lláh; I beseech the bounties of the Blessed Beauty to make him a flower of the Most Glorious Paradise.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá Abbás
23 September 1920

Tablet 4

A typescript of the original Persian text of the following Tablet, which appears on p. 37 of Núshábádí’s article, has been published in Vahid Rafati, Ma’ákhidh-i-Ash’ár dar Áthár-i-Bahá’í, vol. 3, pp. 197–198.

He is God

O you who are firm in the Covenant! Your letter, wondrous and replete with inner meaning, was perused. It was even as the warbling of the nightingale of fidelity, or the song of the bird of close familiarity, and it gave news of the uproar incited by the foolish and the clamor raised by the insolent. O kind friend! Until the foundations of the world have been made to quake, the revolutionizing cries of the Concourse on High shall never reach the ears of the unconscious.

No clamor in the city is there but the curling of the Companion’s locks
No sedition in the world is there but the arching of the Friend’s brows

And yet, the friends of God must not dispense with tact. In the words of Háfiz:

Knowest thou what say the harp and the lute?
“Quaff thy wine in private, lest they brand thee an infidel”⁷³

Though the fire of love burns like a flame, one that devours the veils and sets the world ablaze, yet must prudence be practiced to the greatest possible extent. Lodge a complaint with the local authorities, and request arbitration from the capital and the grand premiership, for the compassion of the king and the justice of the prime minister are a mighty refuge.

The fact of the matter, however, is that you must show faithfulness to them that oppress you, and be the well-wishers of them that wish you ill; that you be a kind friend to your foes, and a heavenly angel to the ferocious beasts; that you meet insult and abuse with greetings and salutations, and return swords and spears with friendliness and fellowship. Such are the attributes which characterize them that tread the path; such are the qualities that define those spiritual followers of the Ancient Beauty and the Greatest Name, may my life be a sacrifice for Him. This is the conduct He has enjoined; this is the teaching He has imparted.

Soon will these dark clouds be dissipated and this dust settle, and the Morn of Truth shine resplendent and the Sun of Reality cast its rays. Thereby shall this world be made the rose-garden of the All-Merciful, and the very envy of the Most Glorious Paradise.

Upon you be salutations and praise.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás

¹ **Translator’s note:** ‘Azízu’lláh Sulaymání has written a biography of Núshábádí in Persian, which is where these birth and death dates can be found. Refer to *Masábih-i-Hidáyat*, vol. 6, pp. 92–167.

² **Translator’s note:** Year 28, nos. 9 and 10 (Ádhar and Dey 1352 Shamsí, or 19 Qudrat to 2 Sultán 130 BE, corresponding to 21 November 1973 to 19 January 1974), pp. 18–39.

³ **Translator’s note:** The original Persian title being *Kalímát-i-Firdawsíyyih*.

⁴ **Translator’s note:** Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 65.

⁵ **Translator’s note:** From a talk given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Haifa on 22 January 1916. Published in ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Ishráq-Khávarí, *Rahiq-i-Makhtúm*, vol. 2 (2007 ed.), p. 392. Provisional rendering by the present translator.

⁶ **Translator’s note:** The father of Bahá’u’lláh.

⁷ **Translator’s note:** Passage from a talk delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Haifa in November 1917, the text of which has been published in ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Ishráq-Khávarí, *Ayyám-i-Tis’ih*, 1972 (5th ed.), pp. 62–67. This particular passage appears on pp. 63–64. Provisional rendering by the present translator.

⁸ **Translator’s note:** Due to the ambiguities of Persian orthography, it is unclear to the present translator whether this surname should be read as Barár, Birár, Barrár, or some other way. The choice of Barrár, here and throughout the rest of the translation, represents a mere guess.

⁹ **Translator’s note:** A title of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

¹⁰ **Translator’s note:** Provisional rendering by the present translator. As Núshábádí has not wrapped these words in quotation marks, it is possible that this is reported speech, rather than a direct quotation.

¹¹ **Translator’s note:** Alternatively, “drawing.” The original word here, *naqqáshí*, is ambiguous, and can refer either to painting or drawing.

¹² **Translator’s note:** A *hadith* attributed to the Prophet Muhammad—apparently one in a series of counsels addressed to the Imám ‘Alí, His cousin and son-in-law.

¹³ **Translator's note:** "The public or male quarters of wealthy households, used for the conduct of business, male religious ceremonies..., and parties for men" (Mohammad Ali Djamalzadeh and Hasan Javādī, "BĪRŪNĪ," *Encyclopedia Iranica*; available online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/biruni-male-quarters>).

¹⁴ **Translator's note:** A village in the Vafs Rural District of Kumiján County, which is to the immediate northwest of Arák County.

¹⁵ **Translator's note:** A village in the Farmahín Rural District of Faráhán County, which is to the immediate north of Arák County.

¹⁶ **Translator's note:** A passage from Nizámí Ganjaví's narrative poem, *Khusraw and Shírín*:

<https://ganjoor.net/nezami/5ganj/khosro-shirin/sh48/>

¹⁷ **Translator's note:** A passage from a *ghazal* (a kind of lyric poem) by Rúmí, included in his *Díván-i-Shams*:
<https://ganjoor.net/mouлави/shams/ghazalsh/sh441/>

¹⁸ **Translator's note:** A character from Firdawsi's *Sháhnámih*, the national epic of Iran.

¹⁹ **Translator's note:** A reference to the Imám 'Alí.

²⁰ **Translator's note:** A passage from a *ghazal* by Qá'ání: <https://ganjoor.net/ghaani/ghazalgh/sh34/>

²¹ **Translator's note:** A passage from the *Gulistán* of Sa'dí: <https://ganjoor.net/saadi/goletan/gbab1/sh4/>

²² **Translator's note:** In the time of Sa'dí (c. 1210–1291/2), it was believed that a person's pedigree determined their capacity for goodness. This belief still prevails among many Iranians to this day.

²³ **Translator's note:** A passage from a *qaṣidih* (a panegyric or didactic ode) by Sana'í:

<https://ganjoor.net/sanaee/divans/ghaside-sanaee/sh15/>. This rendering appears in the authorized translation of *The Four Valleys* produced under the auspices of the Bahá'í World Center and published in *The Call of the Divine Beloved: Selected Mystical Works of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 96.

²⁴ **Translator's note:** A passage from a *hadith* narrated by Kumayl ibn Ziyád. Shaykh Ahmad made repeated reference to this passage in his works; see *Javámi'u'l-Kalám*, vol. 1, sec. 2, p. 187, and *Sharḥu'l-'Ashriyyih*, p. 105. The present translator is grateful to Khazeh Fananapazir for acquainting him with the provenance of this passage, as well as these references to it.

²⁵ **Translator's note:** A small city in central Iran, some 40 miles northeast of Arák. Refer to C. E. Bosworth, "ĀŠTĀN," *Encyclopedia Iranica*; available online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/astian>

²⁶ **Translator's note:** See his biography in Sulaymání, *Masábih*, vol. 4, pp. 4–91.

²⁷ **Translator's note:** Núshábádí notes here, as a peripheral detail in the body of the article, that this incident has been recorded in a translation of a biographical account of Ikhvánu's-Şafá. Details that would help identify either the translation of the account, or the original account itself, have not been provided.

²⁸ **Translator's note:** There are multiple villages in Iran with this name, but ostensibly the village intended here is one in the Farmahín Rural District of Faráhán County, given its proximity to Arák.

²⁹ **Translator's note:** Lambert Molitor (1875–1959) was a Belgian civil servant who lived in Persia from 1901 to 1928 to help modernize their customs and postal service. One news outlet notes that, "For a period, [Lambert] was the superintendent of the customs houses in the cities of Kermanshah, Bushehr, Zahedan[,] and Zabol," adding that, "Belgian officials improved and modernized the customs service in Iran up until World War II broke out" (*The Financial Tribune*, "NLAI to Borrow Qajar Era Documents From Belgium," 16 October 2017: <https://financialtribune.com/articles/art-and-culture/74319/nbai-to-borrow-qajar-era-documents-from-belgium>).

Moojan Momen states that Molitor was, at one point, in charge of the post office in Tíhrán (*The Bahá'í Communities of Iran, 1851–1921: Volume 1: The North of Iran*, p. 74). Other scholarly references to Molitor are also made in Annette Destree, "BELGIAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS," *Encyclopedia Iranica*; available online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/belgian-iranian-relations>

³⁰ **Translator's note:** Twice in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, Bahá'u'lláh quotes this *hadith* and explicitly mentions the names of collections where it occurs: (1) "In the 'Aválím,' an authoritative and well-known book, it is recorded: 'A Youth from Baní-Háshim shall be made manifest, Who will reveal a new Book and promulgate a new law;' then follow these words: 'Most of His enemies will be the Divines' (*Íqán*, p. 241); and (2) "In 'Arba'ín' it is recorded: 'Out of Baní-Háshim there shall come forth a Youth Who shall reveal new laws. He shall summon the people unto Him, but none will heed His call. Most of His enemies will be the divines. ...'" (*Íqán*, p. 242).

³¹ **Translator's note:** Alternatively, these may have been the sons of Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar Barrár and his wife, rather than those of his sister-in-law; the wording of the original Persian is ambiguous.

³² **Translator's note:** Bahá'u'lláh refers to this man with the appellation "Sád-i-Isfaháni" (*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 86), and according to Adib Taherzadeh, his real name was Mírzá Murtidá. Taherzadeh describes him as "a

clergyman of low intelligence who became a Bábí and fell under the spell of Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Īsfahání” (*Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh*, vol. 4, p. 435).

³³ **Translator’s note:** A passage from a poem by Nizámí Ganjaví:

<https://ganjoor.net/nezami/5ganj/makhzanolasrar/sh48/>

³⁴ **Translator’s note:** Muḥammad Valí-Khán Tunikábúní, the ninth prime minister of Persia.

³⁵ **Translator’s note:** A title which roughly translates to “the most great general [of an army].”

³⁶ **Translator’s note:** A light summer shoe made of cotton.

³⁷ **Translator’s note:** A sort of bread baked on heated pebbles in a furnace.

³⁸ **Translator’s note:** Depending on how one reads this story, one may reach the conclusion that Qá’im-Maqámí was concerned only with the welfare of his fellow Bahá’ís during this famine, and was content to let his other compatriots waste away and perish. To make such an assessment, however, would hardly be fair. For one thing, wealthy and powerful as Qá’im-Maqámí was, he certainly did not have the resources to keep the entire population of Persia well-fed throughout such a dire and protracted period. More than likely, Núshábádí was using this anecdote to demonstrate the depth of Qá’im-Maqámí’s devotion to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—that the latter had charged him, through a dream, with such a prodigious undertaking, and that he readily bent every effort to accomplish it, is surely a testament to the strength of his faith. It also may well be the case that Qá’im-Maqámí was, in fact, able to feed others beyond just Bahá’ís during this period, and that Núshábádí simply did not mention this detail because he considered it peripheral to this faith-based narrative. This biography, after all, abounds with examples of Qá’im-Maqámí’s generosity to all those who needed it, irrespective of their religious affiliation. Perhaps the most obvious example of this indiscriminate charity is recounted on the next couple of pages, in which Núshábádí describes how Qá’im-Maqámí selflessly served as an anonymous benefactor to some of Arák’s poorest residents while he was living there.

³⁹ **Translator’s note:** The present translator has rendered the full Tablet from which Núshábádí has excerpted this passage, and included that rendering towards the end of this translation in Appendix B, Tablet 1.

⁴⁰ **Translator’s note:** From a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Núshábádí, written in May or June 1921. In his one sidebar to this article, Núshábádí makes a second reference to this Tablet; see Appendix A, Item 1.

⁴¹ **Translator’s note:** ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 257.

⁴² **Translator’s note:** In the manner of the New Testament: “But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth” (Matthew 6:3). A nearly identical sentiment is recorded in a *hadith* narrated by Abú Hurayrīh and attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad, which states that one who “practices charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given” is among the seven types of people who will be sheltered beneath God’s shade on the day when no shade but His shall exist (*Sahih Bukhári*, no. 504).

⁴³ **Translator’s note:** The identity of the poet appears to be unknown.

⁴⁴ **Translator’s note:** The term translated here as “expressing himself in figurative terms” is *majáz-gú’í* in the original Persian. The choice in English represents a literal rendering of a term unfamiliar to the present translator and which does not seem to have established usage in Persian. It is possible that Núshábádí intended to write *majíz-gú’í*, which means flattery, in which case he would have simply been reinforcing the word *mudáhinh* (also meaning flattery) which immediately precedes it.

⁴⁵ **Translator’s note:** Qá’im-Maqámí’s journey to America appears to have been reported, with reference to him as “Mirza Maqami,” in *Bahá’í News*, no. 17; the initial mention is made on p. 5. The present translator is grateful to Steven Kolins for locating this reference.

⁴⁶ **Translator’s note:** An Iranian daily newspaper founded in 1926.

⁴⁷ **Translator’s note:** The epithet with which Bahá’ís typically refer to ‘Abdu’l-Husayn Áyatí, a prominent Bahá’í historian and writer. Following Shoghi Effendi’s accession to the Guardianship, Áyatí defected from the Faith and wrote scathing polemics against it, earning him the title of Ávárih (“the wanderer”).

⁴⁸ **Translator’s note:** Literally, “dawning-place of the remembrances of God,” a term which refers to special Bahá’í houses of worship. For more information, refer to Vahid Rafati and Fariborz Sahba, “BAHAISM,” sec. ix., “Bahai Temples,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*; available online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bahaism-ix>

⁴⁹ **Translator’s note:** This largesse is noted in *Bahá’í News*, no. 17, p. 8, where it is mentioned as being worth “approximately ten thousand dollars.” The present translator is grateful to Steven Kolins for locating this reference.

⁵⁰ **Translator’s note:** All redactions in these letters, represented by spaced ellipses (...), appear to be Núshábádí’s.

⁵¹ **Translator’s note:** Qur’án 89:27–8.

⁵² **Translator’s note:** Likely a reference to bombers—aircrafts which carry and drop bombs.

⁵³ **Translator's note:** A Persian poet, linguist, and author from the 11th century. For more, see Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh, “ASADĪ TŪSĪ,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*; available online here: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/asadi-tusi>

⁵⁴ **Translator's note:** Apparently a humorous way of adding insult to injury, in that donkeys from the New World were notorious for the poor quality of their skin, and *mullás* infamous for their baseness by default, the make of their shoes—itself an innately base article of clothing—notwithstanding. The present translator is grateful to Mina Yazdani for sharing her illuminating insights on these remarks.

⁵⁵ **Translator's note:** A sour yogurt drink.

⁵⁶ **Translator's note:** The seventh caliph of the Abbasid dynasty. For more information, see C.E. Bosworth, “MA’MUN,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*; available online here: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/mamun-abul-abbas-abd-allah>

⁵⁷ **Translator's note:** Hárún al-Rashíd, the fifth caliph of the Abbasid dynasty. For more information, see C.E. Bosworth, “HĀRUN AL-RAŠID,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*; available online here: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/harun-al-rasid>

⁵⁸ **Translator's note:** The eighth Imám of Shí‘ih Islam. For more information, see W. Madelung, “ALĪ AL-REŽĀ,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*; available online here: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ali-al-reza>

⁵⁹ **Translator's note:** A descendant of the Imám Zaynū'l-Ábidín, the fourth Imám of Shí‘ih Islam. Sultán Siyyid Ahmad lived during the 10th century and was killed in the year 982.

⁶⁰ **Translator's note:** A village in the Amíriyyih Rural District of Arák County.

⁶¹ **Translator's note:** Another village in the Amíriyyih Rural District of Arák County.

⁶² **Translator's note:** A village in Faráhán County that also serves as the capital of that county’s Sárúq District.

⁶³ **Translator's note:** A village in the Sárúq District of Faráhán County.

⁶⁴ **Translator's note:** The ruler of Persia from 1789 to 1797 and founder of the Qájár dynasty. For more information, refer to John R. Perry, “ĀĞĀ MOHAMMAD KHAN QĀJĀR,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*; available online here: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/aga-mohammad-khan>

⁶⁵ **Translator's note:** The grandfather of Áqá Muhammad Khán Qájár. For more information, refer to ‘Abd-al-Hosayn Navā’í, “FATH-‘ALĪ KHAN QĀJĀR,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*; available online here: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/fath-ali-khan-qajar>

⁶⁶ **Translator's note:** It seems this can only be a reference to Ugo Giachery (1896–1989), whom Shoghi Effendi had appointed a Hand of the Cause nearly two years earlier in December 1951.

⁶⁷ **Translator's note:** Bahá'u'lláh describes this account in His *Lawh-i-Ra’ís*; refer to *Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 165ff.

⁶⁸ **Translator's note:** What Núshábádí provides here is a Persian translation of the telegram, which must have been originally written in English. Despite the present translator’s best efforts, he has not been able to locate the original English text of the telegram. As of this writing (16 April 2019), it is not among the holdings of the National Bahá’í Archives of the United States and the United Kingdom, nor those of the Research Department at the Bahá’í World Center. What is presented here, then, is the present translator’s rendering of this Persian translation of an originally English telegram back into English. The present translator hopes that this measure, inevitably inexact and inadequate as it is, will nonetheless suffice the reader until such time as the original English text of the telegram comes to light.

⁶⁹ **Translator's note:** Possibly indirect references to Qur’án 52:2–3.

⁷⁰ **Translator's note:** A passage from a *ghazal* by Sa‘dí: <https://ganjoor.net/saadi/divan/ghazals/sh105/>

⁷¹ **Translator's note:** Couplets from the *Mathnaví* of Rúmí; the first pair comes from Book I, no. 282, and the latter two pairs from Book IV, nos. 1700–1701.

⁷² **Translator's note:** The present translator is grateful to Soli Shahvar, an expert on the Tarbíyat schools, for helping him to understand ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s intended meaning here.

⁷³ **Translator's note:** A passage from a *ghazal* by Háfiz: <https://ganjoor.net/hafez/ghazal/sh200/>. Another well-known version of this poem uses the word *ta ‘dhir* (“to lash”), rather than *takfir* (“to condemn as an infidel”).