

***by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá***

[Photograph]

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Memorials

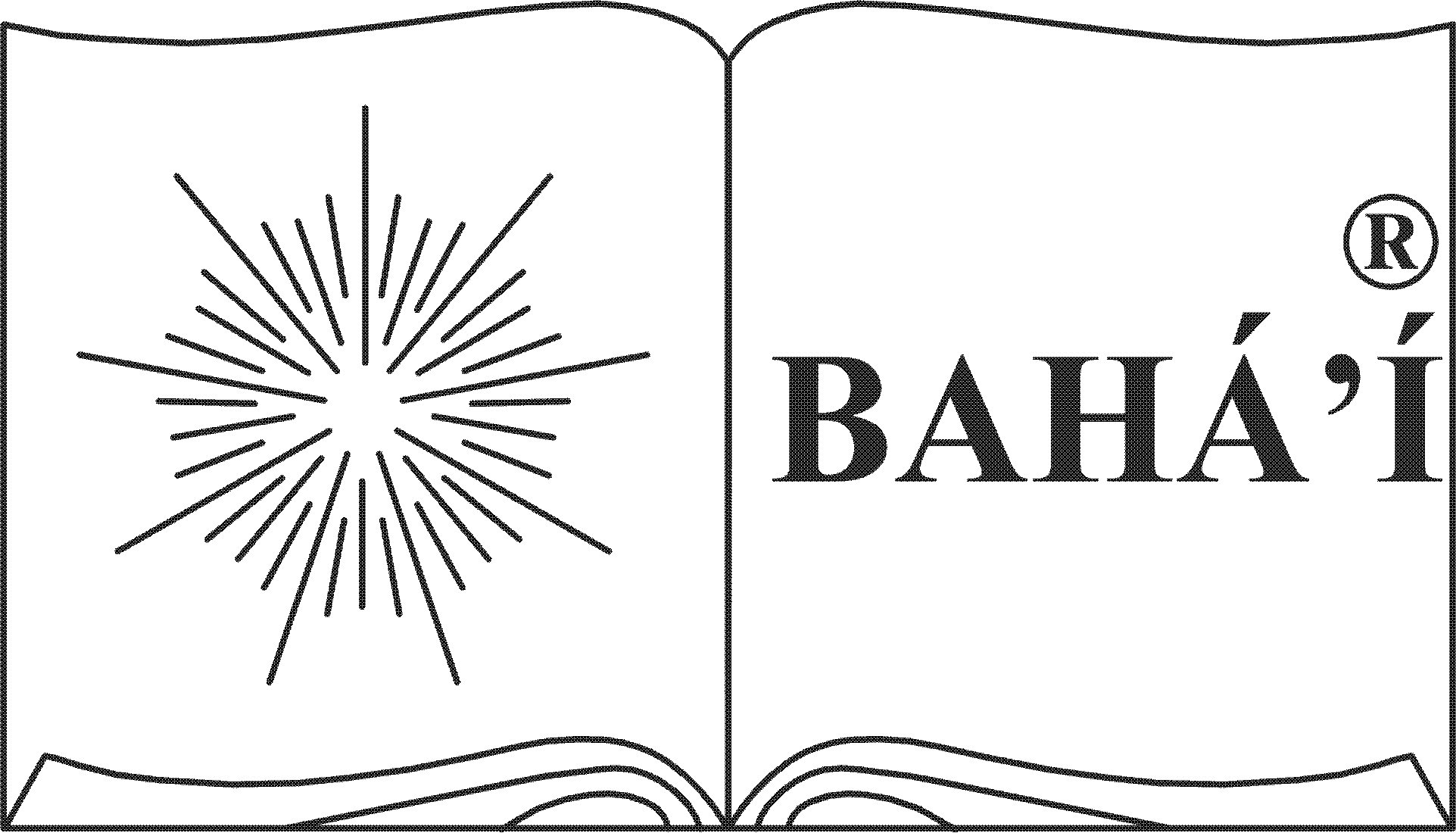
of the

Faithful

***by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá***

Translated from the original Persian text

and annotated by Marzieh Gail



***Bahá’í Publishing Trust***

**Wilmette, Illinois**

*Bahá’í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-2886*

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of the Bahá’ís of the United States of America

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First softcover edition 1997

00 99 98 97 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Card Number: 77-157797

ISBN 0-87743-242-2

Printed in the United States of America

This translation is dedicated to

Shoghi Effendi

Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith

*Love alters not with his brief hours*

Acknowledgments

For consultation on certain Persian and Arabic terms, grate-

ful acknowledgment is made to Ali-Kuli Khan, Nabílu’d-

Dawlih, Mrs. Bahia Gulick, and Allah K. Kalántar, as well

as to Dr. Amín Banání, who helpfully compared the Per-

sian original with the present text.

The translator

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*Nota bene*. There is no standard English Qur’án text. The

original and several translations were used by the translator, with

the preference given to Rodwell. Súrih and verse numbers are as

in Rodwell.

Proem

This is a book about people who were trying to get into prison i

rather than to escape from it, because they were prisoners of a

great love. Their love was for Bahá’u’lláh, Whom the nineteenth

century world bound with chains and tried to silence by shut-

ting Him, ultimately, in the Crusaders’ stronghold at ‘Akká.

Like the eye of the storm, He is the center of these accounts,

but hardly appears in them—remaining, as the Guardian has

described Him, “transcendental in His majesty, serene, awe-

inspiring, unapproachably glorious.”

The reader will probably find himself in these pages, whether ii

he is the jeweler from Baghdad, one of the dishwashers, or the

professor who could not endure the arrogance of his compeers.

Mystic, feminist, cleric, artisan, merchant prince are here. Even

modern Western youth will be found here, for example in the

chapter on dervishes. For this is more than the brief annals of

early Bahá’í disciples; it is, somehow, a book of prototypes; and

it is a kind of testament of values endorsed and willed to us by

the Bahá’í Exemplar, values now derided, but—if the planet is

to be made safe for humanity—indispensable. These are short

and simple accounts, but they constitute a manual of how to

live, and how to die.

The task of putting these biographies into English was given iii

me by the Guardian many years ago, when I was on a pilgrim-

age to the Bahá’í world center in Haifa. Shortly afterward the

Guardian sent me, to Ṭihrán, the text from which this transla-

tion was made. According to its Persian title page, this was the

first Bahá’í book to be printed in Haifa under the Guardian-

ship. A Persian introduction states that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote the

book in 1915, and granted permission to M. A. Kahrubá’í to

have it published. The text, which is dated 1924, bears the seal

of the Haifa Bahá’í Assembly. A second title page, in English,

describes the work as “An account, from the pen of ‘Abdu’l-

Bahá, of the lives of some of the early Bahá’í believers who

passed away during His lifetime,” although the work was actu-

ally recorded from His utterances.

iv Here, then, almost half a century after His passing, is a new

book given to the world by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

v We wonder how many of us, at the close of unbelievably

painful and arduous years, would devote the waning time not

to our own memories but to the lives of some seventy compan-

ions, many of them long dead, to save them from oblivion.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá was present at many of these scenes, yet time after

time He effaces Himself to focus on some companion, often on

one so humble that the passing years would surely have refused

him a history. And if, to the cynical, these believers seem better

than ordinary men, we should remember that the presence of

the Manifestation made them so, and that they are being looked

at through the eyes of the Master—Who said that the imper-

fect eye beholds imperfections, and that it is easier to please

God than to please people.

vi Thus the book is still another token of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá s par-

tiality for the human race. The love He personified was not

blind but observant, not impersonal but warm and tender; it

was a continual attitude of unobtrusive care. Such love, from

such a Being, does not end with one life span. He left the world

half a century ago, and most of those who longed for Him so

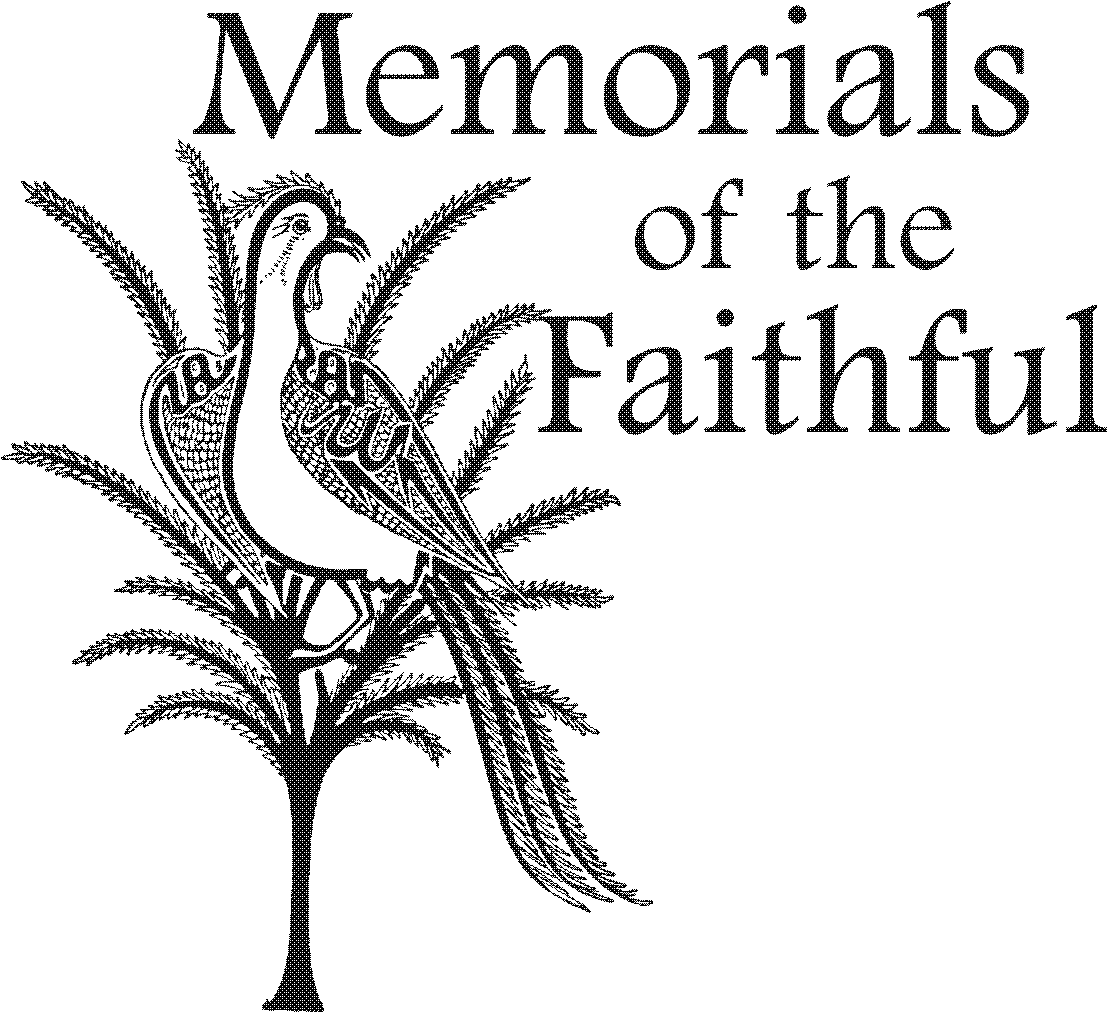
much that the hostile said they were not Bahá’ís, but `Abdu’1-

Bahá’ís, are now vanished from our sight. But still, His love is

here, for new millions to find.

The translator

*Keene, New Hampshire, December 1969*



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1  
Nabíl-i-Akbar

There was, in the city of Najaf, 1.1

among the disciples of the widely known mujtahid, Shaykh

Murtaḍá, a man without likeness or peer. His name was Áqá

Muḥammad-i-Qá’iní, and later on he would receive, from the

Manifestation, the title of Nabíl-i-Akbar.[[1]](#footnote-1) This eminent soul

became the leading member of the mujtahid’s company of dis-

ciples. Singled out from among them all, he alone was given

the rank of mujtahid—for the late Shaykh Murtaḍá was never

wont to confer this degree.

He excelled not only in theology but in other branches of 1.2

knowledge, such as the humanities, the philosophy of the Illu-

minati, the teachings of the mystics and of the Shaykhí School.

He was a universal man, in himself alone a convincing proof.

When his eyes were opened to the light of Divine guidance,

and he breathed in the fragrances of Heaven, he became a flame

of God. Then his heart leapt within him, and in an ecstasy of

joy and love, he roared out like a leviathan in the deep.

With praises showered upon him, he received his new rank 1.3

from the mujtahid. He then left Najaf and came to Baghdad,

and here he was honored with meeting Bahá’u’lláh. Here he

beheld the light that blazed on Sinai in the Holy Tree. Soon he

was in such a state that he could rest neither day nor night.

1.4 One day, on the floor of the outer apartments reserved for

the men, the honored Nabíl was reverently kneeling in the pres-

ence of Bahá’u’lláh. At that moment Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥasan-‘Amú, a

trusted associate of the mujtahids of Karbilá, came in with

Zaynu’l-‘Ábidín Khán, the Fakhru’d-Dawlih. Observing how

humbly and deferentially Nabíl was kneeling there, the Ḥájí

was astonished.

1.5 “Sir,” he murmured, “what are you doing in this place?”

1.6 Nabíl answered, “I came here for the same reason you did.”

1.7 The two visitors could not recover from their surprise, for it

was widely known that this personage was unique among

mujtahids and was the most favored disciple of the renowned

Shaykh Murtaḍá.

1.8 Later, Nabíl-i-Akbar left for Persia and went on to Khurásán.

The Amír of Qá’in—Mír ‘Alam Khán—showed him every cour-

tesy at first, and greatly valued his company. So marked was

this that people felt the Amír was captivated by him, and in-

deed he was spellbound at the scholar’s eloquence, knowledge,

and accomplishments. One can judge, from this, what honors

were accorded to Nabíl by the rest, for “men follow the faith of

their kings.”

1.9 Nabíl spent some time thus esteemed and in high favor, but

the love he had for God was past all concealing. It burst from

his heart, flamed out and consumed its coverings.

1.10 *A thousand ways I tried*

*My love to hide—*

*But how could I, upon that blazing pyre*

*Not catch fire!*

1.11 He brought light to the Qá’in area and converted a great

number of people. And when he had become known far and

wide by this new name, the clergy, envious and malevolent,

arose, and informed against him, sending their calumnies on to

Ṭihrán, so that Náṣiri’d-Dín Sháh rose up in wrath. Terrified of

the Sháh, the Amír attacked Nabíl with all his might. Soon the

whole city was in an uproar, and the populace, lashed to fury,

turned upon him.

That enraptured lover of God never gave way, but with- 1.12

stood them all. At last, however, they drove him out—drove

out that man who saw what they did not—and he went up to

Ṭihrán, where he was a fugitive, and homeless.

Here, his enemies struck at him again. He was pursued by 1.13

the watchmen; guards looked everywhere for him, asking after

him in every street and alley, hunting him down to catch and

torture him. Hiding, he would pass by them like the sigh of the

oppressed, and rise to the hills; or again, like the tears of the

wronged, he would slip down into the valleys. He could no

longer wear the turban denoting his rank; he disguised himself,

putting on a layman’s hat, so that they would fail to recognize

him and would let him be.

In secret, with all his powers he kept on spreading the Faith 1.14

and setting forth its proofs, and was a guiding lamp to many

souls. He was exposed to danger at all times, always vigilant

and on his guard. The Government never gave up its search for

him, nor did the people cease from discussing his case.

He left, then, for Bukhárá and ‘Ishqábád, continuously teach- 1.15

ing the Faith in those regions. Like a candle, he was using up

his life; but in spite of his sufferings he was never dispirited,

rather his joy and ardor increased with every passing day. He

was eloquent of speech; he was a skilled physician, a remedy for

every ill, a balm to every sore. He would guide the Illuminati

by their own philosophical principles, and with the mystics he

would prove the Divine Advent in terms of “inspiration” and

the “celestial vision”. He would convince the Shaykhí leaders

by quoting the very words of their late Founders, Shaykh Aḥmad

and Siyyid Káẓim, and would convert Islamic theologians with

texts from the Qur’án and traditions from the Imáms, who

guide mankind aright. Thus he was an instant medicine to the

ailing, and a rich bestowal to the poor.

1.16 He became penniless in Bukhárá and a prey to many troubles,

until at the last, far from his homeland, he died, hastening

away to the Kingdom where no poverty exists.

1.17 Nabíl-i-Akbar was the author of a masterly essay demon-

strating the truth of the Cause, but the friends do not have it in

hand at the present time. I hope that it will come to light, and

will serve as an admonition to the learned. It is true that in this

swiftly passing world he was the target of countless woes; and

yet, all those generations of powerful clerics, those shaykhs like

Murtaḍá and Mírzá Ḥabíbu’lláh and Áyatu’lláh-i-Khurásání and

Mullá Asadu’lláh-i-Mázindarání—all of them will disappear

without a trace. They will leave no name behind them, no sign,

no fruit. No word will be passed down from any of them; no

man will tell of them again. But because he stood steadfast in

this holy Faith, because he guided souls and served this Cause

and spread its fame, that star, Nabíl, will shine forever from the

horizon of abiding light.

1.18 It is clear that whatever glory is gained outside the Cause of

God turns to abasement at the end; and ease and comfort not

met with on the path of God are finally but care and sorrow;

and all such wealth is penury, and nothing more.

1.19 A sign of guidance, he was, an emblem of the fear of God.

For this Faith, he laid down his life, and in dying, triumphed.

He passed by the world and its rewards; he closed his eyes to

rank and wealth; he loosed himself from all such chains and

fetters, and put every worldly thought aside. Of wide learning,

at once a mujtahid, a philosopher, a mystic, and gifted with

intuitive sight, he was also an accomplished man of letters and

an orator without a peer. He had a great and universal mind.

1.20 Praise be to God, at the end he was made the recipient of

heavenly grace. Upon him be the glory of God, the All-Glori-

ous. May God shed the brightness of the Abhá Kingdom upon

his resting-place. May God welcome him into the Paradise of

reunion, and shelter him forever in the realm of the righteous,

submerged in an ocean of lights.

2  
Ismu’lláhu’l-Aṣdaq

Among the Hands of the Cause 2.1

of God who have departed this life and ascended to the Su-

preme Horizon was Jináb-i-Ismu’lláhu’l-Aṣdaq. Another was

Jináb-i-Nabíl-i-Akbar. Still others were Jináb-i-Mullá ‘Alí-Akbar

and Jináb-i-Shaykh Muḥammad-Riḍáy-i-Yazdí. Again, among

others, was the revered martyr, Áqá Mírzá Varqá.

Ismu’lláhu’l-Aṣdaq was truly a servant of the Lord from the 2.2

beginning of life till his last breath. When young, he joined the

circle of the late Siyyid Káẓim and became one of his disciples.

He was known in Persia for his purity of life, winning fame as

Mullá Ṣádiq the saintly. He was a blessed individual, a man

accomplished, learned, and much honored. The people of

Khurásán were strongly attached to him, for he was a great

scholar and among the most renowned of matchless and unique

divines. As a teacher of the Faith, he spoke with such eloquence,

such extraordinary power, that his hearers were won over with

great ease.

After he had come to Baghdad and attained the presence of 2.3

Bahá’u’lláh, he was seated one day in the courtyard of the men’s

apartments, by the little garden. I was in one of the rooms just

above, that gave onto the courtyard. At that moment a Persian

prince, a grandson of Fatḥ-‘Alí Sháh, arrived at the house. The

prince said to him, “Who are you?” Ismu’lláh answered, “I am

a servant of this Threshhold. I am one of the keepers of this

door.” And as I listened from above, he began to teach the

Faith. The prince at first objected violently; and yet, in a quar-

ter of an hour, gently and benignly, Jináb-i-Ismu’lláh had qui-

eted him down. After the prince had so sharply denied what

was said, and his face had so clearly reflected his fury, now his

wrath was changed to smiles and he expressed the greatest sat-

isfaction at having encountered Ismu’lláh and heard what he

had to say.

2.4 He always taught cheerfully and with gaiety, and would re-

spond gently and with good humor, no matter how much pas-

sionate anger might be turned against him by the one with

whom he spoke. His way of teaching was excellent. He was

truly Ismu’lláh, the Name of God, not for his fame but because

he was a chosen soul.

2.5 Ismu’lláh had memorized a great number of Islámic tradi-

tions and had mastered the teachings of Shaykh Aḥmad and

Siyyid Káẓim. He became a believer in Shíráz, in the early days

of the Faith, and was soon widely known as such. And because

he began to teach openly and boldly, they hung a halter on him

and led him about the streets and bázárs of the city. Even in

that condition, composed and smiling, he kept on speaking to

the people. He did not yield; he was not silenced. When they

freed him he left Shíráz and went to Khurásán, and there, too,

began to spread the Faith, following which he traveled on, in

the company of Bábu’l-Báb, to Fort Ṭabarsí. Here he endured

intense sufferings as a member of that band of sacrificial vic-

tims. They took him prisoner at the Fort and delivered him

over to the chiefs of Mázindarán, to lead him about and finally

kill him in a certain district of that province. When, bound

with chains, Ismu’lláh was brought to the appointed place, God

put it into one man’s heart to free him from prison in the mid-

dle of the night and guide him to a place where he was safe.

Throughout all these agonizing trials he remained staunch in

his faith.

Think, for example, how the enemy had completely hemmed 2.6

in the Fort, and were endlessly pouring in cannon balls from

their siege guns. The believers, among them Ismu’lláh, went

eighteen days without food. They lived on the leather of their

shoes. This too was soon consumed, and they had nothing left

but water. They drank a mouthful every morning, and lay fam-

ished and exhausted in their Fort. When attacked, however,

they would instantly spring to their feet, and manifest in the

face of the enemy a magnificent courage and astonishing resis-

tance, and drive the army back from their walls. The hunger

lasted eighteen days. It was a terrible ordeal. To begin with,

they were far from home, surrounded and cut off by the foe;

again, they were starving; and then there were the army’s sud-

den onslaughts and the bombshells raining down and bursting

in the heart of the Fort. Under such circumstances to maintain

an unwavering faith and patience is extremely difficult, and to

endure such dire afflictions a rare phenomenon.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Ismu’lláh did not slacken under fire. Once freed, he taught 2.7

more widely than ever. He spent every waking breath in calling

the people to the Kingdom of God. In Iraq, he attained the

presence of Bahá’u’lláh, and again in the Most Great Prison,

receiving from Him grace and favor.

He was like a surging sea, a falcon that soared high. His 2.8

visage shone, his tongue was eloquent, his strength and stead-

fastness astounding. When he opened his lips to teach, the proofs

would stream out; when he chanted or prayed, his eyes shed

tears like a spring cloud. His face was luminous, his life spiri-

tual, his knowledge both acquired and innate; and celestial was

his ardor, his detachment from the world, his righteousness,

his piety and fear of God.

2.9 Ismu’lláh’s tomb is in Hamadán. Many a Tablet was revealed

for him by the Supreme Pen of Bahá’u’lláh, including a special

Visitation Tablet after his passing. He was a great personage,

perfect in all things.

2.10 Such blessed beings have now left this world. Thank God,

they did not linger on, to witness the agonies that followed the

ascension of Bahá’u’lláh—the intense afflictions; for firmly

rooted mountains will shake and tremble at these, and the high-

towering hills bow down.

2.11 He was truly Ismu’lláh, the Name of God. Fortunate is the

one who circumambulates that tomb, who blesses himself with

the dust of that grave. Upon him be salutations and praise in

the Abhá Realm.

3  
Mullá ‘Alí-Akbar

3.1 Yet another Hand of the Cause was

the revered Mullá ‘Alí-Akbar, upon him be the glory of God,

the All-Glorious. Early in life, this illustrious man attended

institutions of higher learning and labored diligently, by day

and night, until he became thoroughly conversant with the learn-

ing of the day, with secular studies, philosophy, and religious

jurisprudence. He frequented the gatherings of philosophers,

mystics, and Shaykhís, thoughtfully traversing those areas of

knowledge, intuitive wisdom, and illumination; but he thirsted

after the wellspring of truth, and hungered for the bread that

comes down from Heaven. No matter how he strove to perfect

himself in those regions of the mind, he was never satisfied; he

never reached the goal of his desires; his lips stayed parched; he

was confused, perplexed, and felt that he had wandered from

his path. The reason was that in all those circles he had found

no passion; no joy, no ecstasy; no faintest scent of love. And as

he went deeper into the core of those manifold beliefs, he dis-

covered that from the day of the Prophet Muḥammad’s advent

until our own times, innumerable sects have arisen: creeds differ-

ing among themselves; disparate opinions, divergent goals,

uncounted roads and ways. And he found each one, under some

plea or other, claiming to reveal spiritual truth; each one belie-

ving that it alone followed the true path—this although the

Muḥammedic sea could rise in one great tide, and carry all

those sects away to the ocean floor. “No cry shalt thou hear

from them, nor a whisper even.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

Whoso ponders the lessons of history will learn that this sea 3.2

has lifted up innumerable waves, yet in the end each has dis-

solved and vanished, like a shadow drifting by. The waves have

perished, but the sea lives on. This is why ‘Alí Qabl-i-Akbar

could never quench his thirst, till the day when he stood on the

shore of Truth and cried:

*Here is a sea with treasure to the brim;*

*Its waves toss pearls under the great wind’s thong.*

*Throw off your robe and plunge, nor try to swim,*

*Pride not yourself on swimming—dive headlong.*

3.3 Like a fountain, his heart welled and jetted forth; meaning

and truth, like soft-flowing crystal waters, began to stream from

his lips. At first, with humility, with spiritual poverty, he gar-

nered the new light, and only then he proceeded to shed it

abroad. For how well has it been said,

*Shall he the gift of life to others bear*

*Who of life’s gift has never had a share?*

3.4 A teacher must proceed in this way: he must first teach himself,

and then others. If he himself still walks the path of carnal

appetites and lusts, how can he guide another to the “evident

signs”[[4]](#footnote-4) of God?

3.5 This honored man was successful in converting a multitude.

For the sake of God he cast all caution aside, as he hastened

along the ways of love. He became as one frenzied, as a vagrant

and one known to be mad. Because of his new Faith, he was

mocked at in Ṭihrán by high and low. When he walked through

the streets and bázárs, the people pointed their fingers at him,

calling him a Bahá’í. Whenever trouble broke out, he was the

one to be arrested first. He was always ready and waiting for

this, since it never failed.

3.6 Again and again he was bound with chains, jailed, and threat-

ened with the sword. The photograph of this blessed individual,

together with that of the great Amín, taken of them in their

chains, will serve as an example to whoever has eyes to see.

There they sit, those two distinguished men, hung with chains,

shackled, yet composed, acquiescent, undisturbed.

3.7 Things came to such a pass that in the end whenever there

was an uproar Mullá ‘Alí would put on his turban, wrap him-

self in his ‘abá and sit waiting, for his enemies to rouse and the

farráshes to break in and the guards to carry him off to prison.

But observe the power of God! In spite of all this, he was kept

safe. “The sign of a knower and lover is this, that you will find

him dry in the sea.” That is how he was. His life hung by a

thread from one moment to the next; the malevolent lay in

wait for him; he was known everywhere as a Bahá’í—and still

he was protected from all harm. He stayed dry in the depths of

the sea, cool and safe in the heart of the fire, until the day he

died.

After the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, Mullá ‘Alí continued on, 3.8

loyal to the Testament of the Light of the World, staunch in

the Covenant which he served and heralded. During the life-

time of the Manifestation, his yearning made him hasten to

Bahá’u’lláh, Who received him with grace and favor, and show-

ered blessings upon him. He returned, then, to Írán, where he

devoted all his time to serving the Cause. Openly at odds with

his tyrannical oppressors, no matter how often they threatened

him, he defied them. He was never vanquished. Whatever he

had to say, he said. He was one of the Hands of the Cause of

God, steadfast, unshakable, not to be moved.

I loved him very much, for he was delightful to converse 3.9

with, and as a companion second to none. One night, not long

ago, I saw him in the world of dreams. Although his frame had

always been massive, in the dream world he appeared larger

and more corpulent than ever. It seemed as if he had returned

from a journey. I said to him, “Jináb, you have grown good and

stout.” “Yes,” he answered, “praise be to God! I have been in

places where the air was fresh and sweet, and the water crystal

pure; the landscapes were beautiful to look upon, the foods

delectable. It all agreed with me, of course, so I am stronger

than ever now, and I have recovered the zest of my early youth.

The breaths of the All-Merciful blew over me and all my time

was spent in telling of God. I have been setting forth His proofs,

and teaching His Faith.” (The meaning of teaching the Faith

in the next world is spreading the sweet savors of holiness; that

action is the same as teaching.) We spoke together a little more,

and then some people arrived and he disappeared.

3.10 His last resting-place is in Ṭihrán. Although his body lies

under the earth, his pure spirit lives on, “in the seat of truth, in

the presence of the potent King.”[[5]](#footnote-5) I long to visit the graves of

the friends of God, could this be possible. These are the ser-

vants of the Blessed Beauty; in His path they were afflicted;

they met with toil and sorrow; they sustained injuries and suf-

fered harm. Upon them be the glory of God, the All-Glorious.

Unto them be salutation and praise. Upon them be God’s ten-

der mercy, and forgiveness.

4  
Shaykh Salmán

4.1 In 1266 a.h.[[6]](#footnote-6) the trusted messen-

ger, Shaykh Salmán, first heard the summons of God, and his

heart leapt for joy. He was then in Hindíyán. Irresistibly at-

tracted, he walked all the way to Ṭihrán, where with ardent love

he secretly joined the believers. On a certain day he was passing

through the bázár with Áqá Muḥammad Taqíy-i-Káshání, and

the farráshes followed him and discovered where he lived. The

next day, police and farráshes came looking for him and took

him to the chief of police.

“Who are you?” the chief asked. 4.2

“I am from Hindíyán,” replied Salmán. “I have come to 4.3

Ṭihrán and am on my way to Khurásán, for a pilgrimage to the

Shrine of Imám Riḍá.”

“What were you doing yesterday,” the chief asked, “with 4.4

that man in the white robe?”

Salmán answered, “I had sold him an ‘abá the day before, 4.5

and yesterday he was to pay me.”

“You are a stranger here,” the chief said. “How could you 4.6

trust him?”

“A money-changer guaranteed the payment,” Salmán replied. 4.7

He had in mind the respected believer, Áqá Muḥammad-i-Ṣarráf

(money-changer).

The chief turned to one of his farráshes and said, “Take him 4.8

to the money-changer’s and look into it.”

When they reached there the farrásh went on ahead. “What 4.9

was all this,” he said, “about the sale of an ‘abá and your vouch-

ing for the payment? Explain yourself.”

“I know nothing about it,” the money-changer replied. 4.10

“Come along,” said the farrásh to Salmán. “All is clear at 4.11

last. You are a Bábí.”

It happened that the turban which Salmán had on his head 4.12

was similar to those worn in Shúshtar. As they were passing a

crossroads, a man from Shúshtar came out of his shop. He

embraced Salmán and cried: “Where have you been, Khájih

Muḥammad-‘Alí? When did you arrive? Welcome!”

Salmán replied, “I came here a few days ago and now the 4.13

police have arrested me.”

“What do you want with him?” the merchant asked the 4.14

farrásh. “What are you after?”

4.15 “He is a Bábí,” was the answer.

4.16 “God forbid!” cried the man from Shúshtar. “I know him

well. Khájih Muḥammad-‘Alí is a God-fearing Muslim, a Shí‘ih,

a devout follower of the Imám ‘Alí.” With this he gave the farrásh

a sum of money and Salmán was freed.

4.17 They went into the shop and the merchant began to ask

Salmán how he was faring. Salmán told him: “I am not Khájih

Muḥammad-‘Alí.”

4.18 The man from Shúshtar was dumbfounded. “You look ex-

actly like him!” he exclaimed. “You two are identical. However,

since you are not he, give me back the money I paid the farrásh.”

4.19 Salmán immediately handed him the money, left, went out

through the city gate and made for Hindíyán.

4.20 When Bahá’u’lláh arrived in Iraq, the first messenger to reach

His holy presence was Salmán, who then returned with Tablets

addressed to the friends in Hindíyán. Once each year, this blessed

individual would set out on foot to see his Well-Beloved, after

which he would retrace his steps, carrying Tablets to many cit-

ies, Iṣfahán, Shíráz, Káshán, Ṭihrán, and the rest.

4.21 From the year 69 until the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh in 1309

a.h.,[[7]](#footnote-7) Salmán would arrive once a year, bringing letters, leaving

with the Tablets, faithfully delivering each one to him for whom

it was intended. Every single year throughout that long period,

he came on foot from Persia to Iraq, or to Adrianople, or to the

Most Great Prison at ‘Akká; came with the greatest eagerness

and love, and then went back again.

4.22 He had remarkable powers of endurance. He traveled on

foot, as a rule eating nothing but onions and bread; and in all

that time, he moved about in such a way that he was never

once held up and never once lost a letter or a Tablet. Every letter

was safely delivered; every Tablet reached its intended recipient.

Over and over again, in Iṣfahán, he was subjected to severe tri-

als, but he remained patient and thankful under all conditions,

and earned from non-Bahá’ís the title of “the Bábís’ Angel

Gabriel.”

Throughout his entire life, Salmán rendered this momen- 4.23

tous service to the Cause of God, becoming the means of its

spread and contributing to the happiness of the believers, an-

nually bringing Divine glad tidings to the cities and villages of

Persia. He was close to the heart of Bahá’u’lláh, Who looked

upon him with especial favor and grace. Among the Holy Scrip-

tures, there are Tablets revealed in his name.

After the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, Salmán remained faith- 4.24

ful to the Covenant, serving the Cause with all his powers.

Then, as before, he would come to the Most Great Prison every

year, delivering mail from the believers, and returning with the

answers to Persia. At last, in Shíráz, he winged his way to the

Kingdom of glory.

From the dawn of history until the present day, there has 4.25

never been a messenger so worthy of trust; there has never been

a courier to compare with Salmán. He has left respected survi-

vors in Iṣfahán who, because of the troubles in Persia, are pres-

ently in distress. It is certain that the friends will see to their

needs. Upon him be the glory of God, the All-Glorious; unto

him be salutations and praise.

5  
Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí, the Afnán

5.1 In the days of Bahá’u’lláh, during

the worst times in the Most Great Prison, they would not per-

mit any of the friends either to leave the Fortress or to come in

from the outside. “Skew-Cap”[[8]](#footnote-8) and the Siyyid[[9]](#footnote-9) lived by the sec-

ond gate of the city, and watched there at all times, day and

night. Whenever they spied a Bahá’í traveler they would hurry

away to the Governor and tell him that the traveler was bring-

ing in letters and would carry the answers back. The Governor

would then arrest the traveler, seize his papers, jail him, and

drive him out. This became an established custom with the

authorities and went on for a long time—indeed, for nine years

until, little by little, the practice was abandoned.

5.2 It was at such a period that the Afnán, Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥam-

mad-‘Alí—that great bough of the Holy Tree[[10]](#footnote-10)—journeyed to

‘Akká, coming from India to Egypt, and from Egypt to Mar-

seilles. One day I was up on the roof of the caravanserai.

Some of the friends were with me and I was walking up and

down. It was sunset. At that moment, glancing at the distant

seashore, I observed that a carriage was approaching. “Gentle-

men,” I said, “I feel that a holy being is in that carriage.” It was

still far away, hardly within sight.

“Let us go to the gate,” I told them. “Although they will not 5.3

allow us to pass through, we can stand there till he comes.” I

took one or two people with me and we left.

At the city gate I called to the guard, privately gave him 5.4

something and said: “A carriage is coming in and I think it is

bringing one of our friends. When it reaches here, do not hold

it up, and do not refer the matter to the Governor.” He put out

a chair for me and I sat down.

By this time the sun had set. They had shut the main gate, 5.5

too, but the little door was open. The gatekeeper stayed out-

side, the carriage drew up, the gentleman had arrived. What a

radiant face he had! He was nothing but light from head to

foot. Just to look at that face made one happy; he was so confi-

dent, so assured, so rooted in his faith, and his expression so

joyous. He was truly a blessed being. He was a man who made

progress day by day, who added, every day, to his certitude and

faith, his luminous quality, his ardent love. He made extraordi-

nary progress during the few days that he spent in the Most

Great Prison. The point is that when his carriage had come

only part of the way from Haifa to ‘Akká, one could already

perceive his spirit, his light.

After he had received the endless bounties showered on him 5.6

by Bahá’u’lláh, he was given leave to go, and he traveled to

China. There, over a considerable period, he spent his days

mindful of God and in a manner conformable to Divine good

pleasure. Later he went on to India, where he died.

The other revered Afnán and the friends in India felt it ad- 5.7

visable to send his blessed remains to Iraq, ostensibly to Najaf,

to be buried near the Holy City; for the Muslims had refused

to let him lie in their graveyard, and his body had been lodged

in a temporary repository for safekeeping. Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh,

who was in Bombay at the time, was deputized to transport the

remains with all due reverence to Iraq. There were hostile Per-

sians on the steamship and these people, once they reached

Búshihr, reported that the coffin of Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí the

Bábí was being carried to Najaf for burial in the Vale of Peace,

near the sacred precincts of the Shrine, and that such a thing

was intolerable. They tried to take his blessed remains off the

ship, but they failed; see what the hidden Divine decrees can

bring about.

5.8 His body came as far as Basra. And since that was a period

when the friends had to remain in concealment, Siyyid Asadu’-

lláh was obliged to proceed as if he were going on with the

burial in Najaf, meanwhile hoping in one way or another to

effect the interment near Baghdad. Because, although Najaf is a

holy city and always shall be, still the friends had chosen an-

other place. God, therefore, stirred up our enemies to prevent

the Najaf burial. They swarmed in, attacking the quarantine

station to lay hold of the body and either bury it in Basra or

throw it into the sea or out on the desert sands.

5.9 The case took on such importance that in the end it proved

impossible to bring the remains to Najaf, and Siyyid Asadu’lláh

had to carry them on to Baghdad. Here, too, there was no

burial place where the Afnán’s body would be safe from moles-

tation at enemy hands. Finally the Siyyid decided to carry it to

the shrine of Persia’s Salmán the Pure,[[11]](#footnote-11) about five farsakhs out

of Baghdad, and bury it in Ctesiphon, close to the grave of

Salmán, beside the palace of the Sásáníyán kings. The body

was taken there and that trust of God was, with all reverence,

laid down in a safe resting-place by the palace of Nawshíraván.

5.10 And this was destiny, that after a lapse of thirteen hundred

years, from the time when the throne city of Persia’s ancient

kings was trampled down, and no trace of it was left, except for

rubble and hills of sand, and the very palace roof itself had

cracked and split so that half of it toppled to the ground—this

edifice should win back the kingly pomp and splendor of its

former days. It is indeed a mighty arch. The width of its entry-

way is fifty-two paces and it towers very high.

Thus did God’s grace and favor encompass the Persians of 5.11

an age long gone, in order that their ruined capital should be

rebuilt and flourish once again. To this end, with the help of

God, events were brought about which led to the Afnán’s being

buried here; and there is no doubt that a proud city will rise up

on this site. I wrote many letters about it, until at last the holy

dust could be laid to rest in this place. Siyyid Asadu’lláh would

write me from Basra and I would answer him. One of the pub-

lic functionaries there was completely devoted to us, and I di-

rected him to do all he could. Siyyid Asadu’lláh informed me

from Baghdad that he was at his wits’ end, and had no idea

where he could consign this body to the grave. “Wherever I

might bury it,” he wrote, “they will dig it up again.”

At last, praised be God, it was laid down in the very spot to 5.12

which time and again the Blessed Beauty had repaired; in that

place honored by His footsteps, where He had revealed Tablets,

where the believers of Baghdad had been in His company; that

very place where the Most Great Name was wont to stroll. How

did this come about? It was due to the Afnán’s purity of heart.

Lacking this, all those ways and means could never have been

brought to bear. Verily, God is the Mover of heaven and earth.

I loved the Afnán very much. Because of him, I rejoiced. I 5.13

wrote a long Visitation Tablet for him and sent it with other

papers to Persia. His burial site is one of the holy places where

a magnificent Mashriqu’l-Adhkár must be raised up. If pos-

sible, the actual arch of the royal palace should be restored and

become the House of Worship. The auxiliary buildings of the

House of Worship should likewise be erected there: the hospi-

tal, the schools and university, the elementary school, the ref-

uge for the poor and indigent; also the haven for orphans and

the helpless, and the travelers’ hospice.

5.14 Gracious God! That royal edifice was once splendidly decked

forth and fair. But there are spiders’ webs today, where hung

the curtains of gold brocade, and where the king’s drums beat

and his musicians played, the only sound is the harsh cries of

kites and crows. “This is verily the capital of the owl’s realm,

where thou wilt hear no sound, save only the echo of his re-

peated calls.” That is how the barracks were, when we came to

‘Akká. There were a few trees inside the walls, and on their

branches, as well as up on the battlements, the owls cried all

night long. How disquieting is the hoot of an owl; how it sad-

dens the heart.

5.15 From earliest youth until he grew helpless and old, that sa-

cred bough of the Holy Tree, with his smiling face, shone out

like a lamp in the midst of all. Then he leapt and soared to

undying glory, and plunged into the ocean of light. Upon him

be the breathings of his Lord, the All-Merciful. Upon him,

lapped in the waters of grace and forgiveness, be the mercy and

favor of God.

6  
Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥasan, the Afnán

Among the most eminent of those 6.1

who left their homeland to join Bahá’u’lláh was Mírzá Ḥasan,

the great Afnán, who during the latter days won the honor of

emigrating and of receiving the favor and companionship of

his Lord. The Afnán, related to the Báb, was specifically named

by the Supreme Pen as an offshoot of the Holy Tree. When still

a small child, he received his portion of bounty from the Báb,

and showed forth an extraordinary attachment to that dazzling

Beauty. Not yet adolescent, he frequented the society of the

learned, and began to study sciences and arts. He reflected day

and night on the most abstruse of spiritual questions, and gazed

in wonderment at the mighty signs of God as written in the

Book of Life. He became thoroughly versed even in such mate-

rial sciences as mathematics, geometry, and geography; in brief,

he was well grounded in many fields, thoroughly conversant

with the thought of ancient and modern times.

A merchant by profession, he spent only a short period of 6.2

the day and evening at his business, devoting most of his time

to discussion and research. He was truly erudite, a great credit

to the Cause of God amongst leading men of learning. With a

few concise phrases, he could solve perplexing questions. His

speech was laconic, but in itself a kind of miracle.

Although he first became a believer in the days of the Báb, it 6.3

was during the days of Bahá’u’lláh that he caught fire. Then his

love of God burned away every obstructing veil and idle thought.

He did all he could to spread the Faith of God, becoming

known far and wide for his ardent love of Bahá’u’lláh.

6.4 *I am lost, O Love, possessed and dazed,*

*Love’s fool am I, in all the earth.*

*They call me first among the crazed,*

*Though I once came first for wit and worth …*

6.5 After the ascension of the Báb, he had the high honor of

serving and watching over the revered and saintly consort of

the blessed Lord. He was in Persia, mourning his separation

from Bahá’u’lláh, when his distinguished son became, by mar-

riage, a member of the Holy Household. At this, the Afnán

rejoiced. He left Persia and hastened to the sheltering favor of

his Well-Beloved. He was a man amazing to behold, his face so

luminous that even those who were not believers used to say

that a heavenly light shone from his forehead.

6.6 He went away for a time and sojourned in Beirut, where he

met the noted scholar, Khájih Findík. This personage warmly

praised the erudition of the great Afnán in various circles, affirm-

ing that an individual of such wide and diverse learning was

rare throughout the East. Later on, the Afnán returned to the

Holy Land, settling near the Mansion of Bahjí and directing

all his thoughts toward aspects of human culture. Much of the

time he would occupy himself with uncovering the secrets of

the heavens, contemplating in their detail the movements of

the stars. He had a telescope with which he would make his

observations every night. He lived a happy life, carefree and

light of heart. In the neighborhood of Bahá’u’lláh his days were

blissful, his nights bright as the first morning in spring.

6.7 But then came the Beloved’s departure from this world. The

Afnán’s peace was shattered, his joy was changed to grief. The

Supreme Affliction was upon us, separation consumed us, the

once bright days turned black as night, and all those roses of

other hours were dust and rubble now. He lived on for a little

while, his heart smoldering, his eyes shedding their tears. But

he could not bear the longing for his Well-Beloved, and in a

little while his soul gave up this life and fled to the eternal one,

passed into the Heaven of abiding reunion and was immersed

beneath an ocean of light. Upon him be most great mercy,

plenteous bounty, and every blessing, as the ages and cycles

roll on. His honored tomb is in ‘Akká at the Manshíyyih.

7  
Muḥammad-‘Alíy-i-Iṣfahání

Muḥammad-‘Alí of Iṣfahán was 7.1

among the earliest of believers, guided to the Faith from its

very beginning. He was one of the mystics; his house was a

gathering place for them, and the philosophers. Noble, high-

minded, he was one of Iṣfahán’s most respected citizens, and

served as a host and sanctuary for every stranger, rich or poor.

He had verve, an excellent disposition, was forbearing, affable,

generous, a boon companion; and it was known throughout

the city that he enjoyed a good time.

Then he was led to embrace the Faith and caught fire from 7.2

the Sinaitic Tree. His house became a teaching center, dedi-

cated to the glory of God. Day and night the believers flocked

there, as to a lamp lit by heavenly love. Over a long period, the

sacred verses were chanted in that house and the clear proofs

set forth. Although this was widely known, Muḥammad-‘Alí

was not molested, because he was a kinsman of the Imám-

Jum‘ih of Iṣfahán. Finally, however, things came to such a pass

that the Imám-Jum‘ih himself sent him away, telling him: “I

can protect you no longer. You are in grave danger. The best

thing for you is to leave here, and go on a journey.”

7.3 He left his home then, went to Iraq, and entered the pres-

ence of the world’s Desired One. He spent some time there,

progressing every day; he had little to live on, but was happy

and content. A man of excellent disposition, he was congenial

to believers and others alike.

7.4 When Bahá’u’lláh and His retinue left Baghdad for Con-

stantinople, Muḥammad-‘Alí was in His company, and contin-

ued on with Him to the Land of Mystery, Adrianople. Not one

to be inconstant, he maintained his characteristic immutability

of heart. Whatever happened, he remained the same. In

Adrianople as well, his days passed happily, under the protec-

tion of Bahá’u’lláh. He would carry on some business which,

however trifling, would bring in surprisingly abundant returns.

7.5 From Adrianople, Muḥammad-‘Alí accompanied Bahá’u’lláh

to the fortress of ‘Akká, was put in jail there, and was num-

bered among Bahá’u’lláh’s fellow captives for the rest of his life,

achieving that greatest of all distinctions, to be in prison with

the Blessed Beauty.

7.6 He spent his days in utter bliss. Here, too, he carried on a

small business, which occupied him from morning till noon.

In the afternoons he would take his samovar, wrap it in a dark-

colored pouch made from a saddlebag, and go off somewhere

to a garden or meadow, or out in a field, and have his tea. Some-

times he would be found at the farm of Mazra‘ih, or again in

the Riḍván Garden; or, at the Mansion, he would have the

honor of attending upon Bahá’u’lláh.

7.7 Muḥammad-‘Alí would carefully consider every blessing that

came his way. “How delicious my tea is today,” he would com-

ment. “What perfume, what color! How lovely this meadow is, and

the flowers so bright!” He used to say that everything, even air and

water, had its own special fragrance. For him the days passed in

indescribable delight. Even kings were not so happy as this old

man, the people said. “He is completely free of the world,” they

would declare. “He lives in joy.” It also happened that his food was

of the very best, and that his home was situated in the very best

part of ‘Akká. Gracious God! Here he was, a prisoner, and yet

experiencing comfort, peace and joy.

Muḥammad-‘Alí was past eighty when he finally departed to 7.8

eternal light. He had been the recipient of many Tablets from

Bahá’u’lláh, and of endless bounty, under all conditions. Upon

him be the glory of God the Most Glorious. Upon him be

myriads of heavenly blessings; may God favor him with glad-

ness forever and ever. His luminous grave is in ‘Akká.

8  
‘Abdu’ṣ-Ṣáliḥ, the gardener

Among those who emigrated and 8.1

were companions in the Most Great Prison was Áqá ‘Abdu’ṣ-

Ṣáliḥ. This excellent soul, a child of early believers, came from

Iṣfahán. His noble-hearted father died, and this child grew up

an orphan. There was none to rear or care for him and he was

the prey of anyone who chose to do him harm. At last he be-

came adolescent, and older now, sought out his Well-Beloved.

He emigrated to the Most Great Prison and here, at the Riḍván,

achieved the honor of being appointed gardener. At this task he

was second to none. In his faith, too, he was staunch, loyal,

worthy of trust; as to his character, he was an embodiment of

the sacred verse, “Of a noble nature art thou.”[[12]](#footnote-12) That is how he

won the distinction of being gardener at the Riḍván, and of

thus receiving the greatest bounty of all: almost daily, he en-

tered the presence of Bahá’u’lláh.

8.2 For the Most Great Name was held prisoner and confined

nine years in the fortress-town of ‘Akká; and at all times, both

in the barracks and afterward, from without the house, the police

and farráshes had Him under constant guard. The Blessed

Beauty lived in a very small house, and He never set foot out-

side that narrow lodging, because His oppressors kept continual

watch at the door. When, however, nine years had elapsed, the

fixed and predetermined length of days was over; and at that

time, against the rancorous will of the tyrant, ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd,

and all his minions, Bahá’u’lláh proceeded out of the fortress

with authority and might, and in a kingly mansion beyond the

city, made His home.

8.3 Although the policy of Sulṭán ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd was harsher

than ever; although he constantly insisted on his Captive’s strict

confinement—still, the Blessed Beauty now lived, as everyone

knows, with all power and glory. Some of the time Bahá’u’lláh

would spend at the Mansion, and again, at the farm village of

Mazra‘ih; for a while He would sojourn in Haifa, and occa-

sionally His tent would be pitched on the heights of Mount

Carmel. Friends from everywhere presented themselves and

gained an audience. The people and the government authori-

ties witnessed it all, yet no one so much as breathed a word.

And this is one of Bahá’u’lláh’s greatest miracles: that He, a

captive, surrounded Himself with panoply and He wielded

power. The prison changed into a palace, the jail itself became

a Garden of Eden. Such a thing has not occurred in history

before; no former age has seen its like: that a man confined to a

prison should move about with authority and might; that one

in chains should carry the fame of the Cause of God to the

high heavens, should win splendid victories in both East and

West, and should, by His almighty pen, subdue the world. Such

is the distinguishing feature of this supreme Theophany.

One day the government leaders, pillars of the country, the 8.4

city’s ‘ulamás, leading mystics and intellectuals came out to the

Mansion. The Blessed Beauty paid them no attention what-

ever. They were not admitted to His presence, nor did He in-

quire after any of them. I sat down with them and kept them

company for some hours, after which they returned whence

they had come. Although the royal farmán specifically decreed

that Bahá’u’lláh was to be held in solitary confinement within

the ‘Akká fortress, in a cell, under perpetual guard; that He was

never to set foot outside; that He was never even to see any of

the believers—notwithstanding such a farmán, such a drastic

order, His tent was raised in majesty on the heights of Mount

Carmel. What greater display of power could there be than

this, that from the very prison, the banner of the Lord was

raised aloft, and rippled out for all the world to see! Praised be

the Possessor of such majesty and might; praised be He, weap-

oned with the power and the glory; praised be He, Who de-

feated His foes when He lay captive in the ‘Akká prison!

To resume: ‘Abdu’ṣ-Ṣáliḥ lived under a fortunate star, for he 8.5

regularly came into the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. He enjoyed

the distinction of serving as gardener for many years, and he

was at all times loyal, true, and strong in faith. He was humble

in the presence of every one of the believers; in all that time he

never hurt nor offended any one. And at the last he left his  
garden and hastened to the encompassing mercy of God.

The Ancient Beauty was well pleased with ‘Abdu’ṣ-Ṣáliḥ, and 8.6

after his ascension revealed a Visitation Tablet in his honor,

also delivering an address concerning him, which was taken

down and published together with other Scriptures.

8.7 Upon him be the glory of the All-Glorious! Upon him be

God’s gentleness and favor in the Exalted Realm.

9  
Ustád Ismá‘íl

9.1 Yet another from amongst that

blessed company was Ustád Ismá‘íl, the builder. He was the

construction overseer of Farrukh Khán (Amínu’d-Dawlih) in

Ṭihrán, living happily and prosperously, a man of high stand-

ing, well regarded by all. But he lost his heart to the Faith, and

was enraptured by it, till his holy passion consumed every in-

tervening veil. Then he cast caution aside, and became known

throughout Ṭihrán as a pillar of the Bahá’ís.

9.2 Farrukh Khán ably defended him at first. But as time went

on, he summoned him and said, “Ustád, you are very dear to

me and I have given you my protection and have stood by you

as best I could. But the Sháh has found out about you and you

know what a bloodthirsty tyrant he is. I am afraid that he will

seize you without warning, and he will hang you. The best

thing for you is to go on a journey. Leave this country, go some-

where else, and escape from this peril.”

9.3 Composed, happy, Ustád gave up his work, closed his eyes

to his possessions, and left for Iraq, where he lived in poverty.

He had recently taken a bride, and loved her beyond measure.

Her mother arrived, and by subterfuge, obtained his permis-

sion to conduct the daughter back to Ṭihrán, supposedly for a

visit. As soon as she reached Kirmánsháh, she went to the

mujtahid, and told him that because her son-in-law had aban-

doned his religion, her daughter could not remain his lawful

wife. The mujtahid arranged a divorce, and wedded the girl to

another man. When word of this reached Baghdad, Ismá‘íl,

steadfast as ever, only laughed. “God be praised!” he said. “Noth-

ing is left me on this pathway. I have lost everything, including

my bride. I have been able to give Him all I possessed.”

When Bahá’u’lláh departed from Baghdad, and traveled to 9.4

Rumelia, the friends remained behind. The inhabitants of

Baghdad then rose up against those helpless believers, sending

them away as captives to Mosul. Ustád was old and feeble, but

he left on foot, with no provisions for his journey, crossed over

mountains and deserts, valleys and hills, and in the end arrived

at the Most Great Prison. At one time, Bahá’u’lláh had written

down an ode of Rúmí’s for him, and had told him to turn his

face toward the Báb and sing the words, set to a melody. And so

as he wandered through the long dark nights, Ustád would sing

these lines:

*I am lost, O Love, possessed and dazed,*

*Love’s fool am I, in all the earth.*

*They call me first among the crazed,*

*Though I once came first for wit and worth.*

*O Love, who sellest me this wine,*[[13]](#footnote-13)

*O Love, for whom I burn and bleed,*

*Love, for whom I cry and pine—*

*Thou the Piper, I the reed.*

*If Thou wishest me to live,*

*Through me blow Thy holy breath.*

*The touch of Jesus Thou wilt give*

*To me, who’ve lain an age in death.*

*Thou, both End and Origin,*

*Thou without and Thou within—*

*From every eye Thou hidest well,*

*And yet in every eye dost dwell.*

9.5 He was like a bird with broken wings but he had the song

and it kept him going onward to his one true Love. By stealth,

he approached the Fortress and went in, but he was exhausted,

spent. He remained for some days, and came into the presence

of Bahá’u’lláh, after which he was directed to look for a lodging

in Haifa. He got himself to Haifa, but he found no haven there,

no nest or hole, no water, no grain of corn. Finally he made his

home in a cave outside the town. He acquired a little tray and

on this he set out rings of earthenware, and some thimbles,

pins and other trinkets. Every day, from morning till noon, he

peddled these, wandering about. Some days his earnings would

amount to twenty paras,[[14]](#footnote-14) some days thirty; and forty on his

best days. Then he would go home to the cave and content

himself with a piece of bread. He was always voicing his thanks,

always saying, “Praise be to God that I have attained such favor

and grace; that I have been separated from friend and stranger

alike, and have taken refuge in this cave. Now I am of those

who gave their all, to buy the Divine Joseph in the market place.

What bounty could be any greater than this!”

Such was his condition, when he died. Many and many a 9.6

time, Bahá’u’lláh was heard to express His satisfaction with Ustád

Ismá‘íl. Blessings hemmed him round, and the eye of God was

on him. Salutations be unto him, and praise. Upon him be the

glory of the All-Glorious.

10  
Nabíl-i-Zarandí

Still another of those who emi- 10.1

grated from their native land to be near Bahá’u’lláh was the

great Nabíl.[[15]](#footnote-15) In the flower of youth he bade farewell to his fam-

ily in Zarand and with Divine aid began to teach the Faith. He

became a chief of the army of lovers, and on his quest he left

Persian Iraq for Mesopotamia, but could not find the One he

sought. For the Well-Beloved was then in Kurdistán, living in a

cave at Sar-Galú; and there, entirely alone in that wasteland,

with no companion, no friend, no listening soul, He was com-

muning with the beauty that dwelt in His own heart. All news

of Him was completely cut off; Iraq was eclipsed, and in mourn-

ing.

When Nabíl discovered that the flame which had once been 10.2

kindled and tended there was almost out, that the believers

were few, that Yaḥyá[[16]](#footnote-16) had crawled into a secret hole where he

lay torpid and inert, and that a wintry cold had taken over—he

found himself obliged to leave, bitterly grieving, for Karbilá.

There he stayed until the Blessed Beauty returned from Kur-

distán, making His way to Baghdad. At that time there was

boundless joy; every believer in the country sprang to life; among

them was Nabíl, who hastened to the presence of Bahá’u’lláh,

and became the recipient of great bestowals. He spent his days

in gladness now, writing odes to celebrate the praises of his

Lord. He was a gifted poet, and his tongue most eloquent; a

man of mettle, and on fire with passionate love.

10.3 After a time he returned to Karbilá, then came back to

Baghdad and from there went on to Persia. Because he associ-

ated with Siyyid Muḥammad he was led into error and sorely

afflicted and tried; but like the shooting stars, he became as a

missile to drive off satanic imaginings,[[17]](#footnote-17) and he repulsed the evil

whisperers and went back to Baghdad, where he found rest in

the shade of the Holy Tree. He was later directed to visit

Kirmánsháh. He returned again, and on every journey was en-

abled to render a service.

10.4 Bahá’u’lláh and His retinue then left Baghdad, the “Abode

of Peace”, for Constantinople, the “City of Islám.” After His

departure, Nabíl put on the dress of a dervish, and set out on

foot, catching up with the convoy along the way. In Con-

stantinople he was directed to return to Persia and there teach

the Cause of God; also to travel throughout the country, and

acquaint the believers in its cities and villages with all that had

taken place. When this mission was accomplished, and the

drums of “Am I not your Lord?” were rolling out—for it was

the “year eighty”[[18]](#footnote-18)—Nabíl hurried to Adrianople, crying as he

went, “Yea verily Thou art! Yea verily!” and “Lord, Lord, here

am I!”

He entered Bahá’u’lláh’s presence and drank of the red wine 10.5

of allegiance and homage. He was then given specific orders to

travel everywhere, and in every region to raise the call that God

was now made manifest: to spread the blissful tidings that the

Sun of Truth had risen. He was truly on fire, driven by restive

love. With great fervor he would pass through a country, bring-

ing this best of all messages and reviving the hearts. He flamed

like a torch in every company, he was the star of every assem-

blage, to all who came he held out the intoxicating cup. He

journeyed as to the beat of drums and at last he reached the

‘Akká fortress.

In those days the restrictions were exceptionally severe. The 10.6

gates were shut, the roads closed off. Wearing a disguise, Nabíl

arrived at the ‘Akká gate. Siyyid Muḥammad and his wretched

accomplice immediately hurried to the Governorate and in-

formed against the traveler. “He is a Persian,” they reported.

“He is not, as he seems, a man of Bukhárá. He has come here

to seek for news of Bahá’u’lláh.” The authorities expelled him

at once.

Nabíl, despairing, withdrew to the town of Ṣafad. Later he 10.7

came on to Haifa, where he made his home in a cave on Mount

Carmel. He lived apart from friend and stranger alike, lament-

ing night and day, moaning and chanting prayers. There he

remained as a recluse, and waited for the doors to open. When

the predestined time of captivity was over, and the gates were

flung wide, and the Wronged One issued forth in beauty, in

majesty and glory, Nabíl hastened to Him with a joyful heart.

Then he used himself up like a candle, burning away with the

love of God. Day and night he sang the praises of the one

Beloved of both worlds and of those about His threshold, writ-

ing verses in the pentameter and hexameter forms, composing

lyrics and long odes. Almost daily, he was admitted to the pres-

ence of the Manifestation.[[19]](#footnote-19)

10.8 This went on until the day Bahá’u’lláh ascended. At that

supreme affliction, that shattering calamity, Nabíl sobbed and

trembled and cried out to Heaven. He found that the numeri-

cal value of the word “shidád”—year of stress—was 309, and

it thus became evident that Bahá’u’lláh foretold what had now

come to pass.[[20]](#footnote-20)

10.9 Utterly cast down, hopeless at being separated from Bahá’-

u’lláh, fevered, shedding tears, Nabíl was in such anguish that

anyone seeing him was bewildered. He struggled on, but the

only desire he had was to lay down his life. He could suffer no

longer; his longing was aflame in him; he could stand the fiery

pain no more. And so he became king of the cohorts of love,

and he rushed into the sea.

Before that day when he offered himself up, he wrote out 10.10

the year of his death in the one word: “Drowned.”[[21]](#footnote-21) Then he

threw down his life for the Well-Beloved, and was released from

his despair, and no longer shut away.

This distinguished man was erudite, wise, and eloquent of 10.11

speech. His native genius was pure inspiration, his poetic gift

like a crystal stream. In particular his ode “Bahá, Bahá!” was

written in sheer ecstasy. Throughout all his life, from earliest

youth till he was feeble and old, he spent his time serving and

worshiping the Lord. He bore hardships, he lived through mis-

fortunes, he suffered afflictions. From the lips of the Manifes-

tation he heard marvelous things. He was shown the lights of

Paradise; he won his dearest wish. And at the end, when the

Daystar of the world had set, he could endure no more, and

flung himself into the sea. The waters of sacrifice closed over

him; he was *drowned*, and he came, at last, to the Most High.

Upon him be abundant blessings; upon him be tender mer- 10.12

cies. May he win a great victory, and a manifest grace in the

Kingdom of God.

11  
Darvísh Ṣidq-‘Alí

11.1 Áqá Ṣidq-‘Alí was yet one more of

those who left their native land, journeyed to Bahá’u’lláh and

were put in the Prison. He was a dervish; a man who lived free

and detached from friend and stranger alike. He belonged to

the mystic element and was a man of letters. He spent some

time wearing the dress of poverty, drinking the wine of the

Rule and traveling the Path,[[22]](#footnote-22) but unlike the other Ṣúfís he did

not devote his life to dusty hashish; on the contrary, he cleansed

himself of their vain imaginings and only searched for God,

spoke of God, and followed the path of God.

11.2 He had a fine poetic gift and wrote odes to sing the praises

of Him Whom the world has wronged and rejected. Among

them is a poem written while he was a prisoner in the barracks

at ‘Akká, the chief couplet of which reads:

*A hundred hearts Thy curling locks ensnare,*

*And it rains hearts when Thou dost toss Thy hair.*

11.3 That free and independent soul discovered, in Baghdad, a

trace of the untraceable Beloved. He witnessed the dawning of

the Daystar above the horizon of Iraq, and received the bounty

of that sunrise. He came under the spell of Bahá’u’lláh, and

was enraptured by that tender Companion. Although he was a

quiet man, one who held his peace, his very limbs were like so

many tongues crying out their message. When the retinue of

Bahá’u’lláh was about to leave Baghdad he implored permis-

sion to go along as a groom. All day, he walked beside the con-

voy, and when night came he would attend to the horses. He

worked with all his heart. Only after midnight would he seek

his bed and lie down to rest; the bed, however, was his mantle,

and the pillow a sun-dried brick.

As he journeyed, filled with yearning love, he would sing 11.4

poems. He greatly pleased the friends. In him the name[[23]](#footnote-23) be-

spoke the man: he was pure candor and truth; he was love it-

self; he was chaste of heart, and enamored of Bahá’u’lláh. In

his high station, that of groom, he reigned like a king; indeed

he gloried over the sovereigns of the earth. He was assiduous in

attendance upon Bahá’u’lláh; in all things, upright and true.

The convoy of the lovers went on; it reached Constantinople; 11.5

it passed to Adrianople, and finally to the ‘Akká prison. Ṣidq-

‘Alí was present throughout, faithfully serving its Commander.

While in the barracks, Bahá’u’lláh set apart a special night 11.6

and He dedicated it to Darvísh Ṣidq-‘Alí. He wrote that every

year on that night the dervishes should bedeck a meeting place,

which should be in a flower garden, and gather there to make

mention of God. He went on to say that “dervish” does not

denote those persons who wander about, spending their nights

and days in fighting and folly; rather, He said, the term desig-

nates those who are completely severed from all but God, who

cleave to His laws, are firm in His Faith, loyal to His Covenant,

and constant in worship. It is not a name for those who, as the

Persians say, tramp about like vagrants, are confused, unsettled

in mind, a burden to others, and of all mankind the most coarse

and rude.

11.7 This eminent dervish spent his whole life span under the

sheltering favor of God. He was completely detached from

worldly things. He was attentive in service, and waited upon

the believers with all his heart. He was a servant to all of them,

and faithful at the Holy Threshold.

11.8 Then came that hour when, not far from his Lord, he stripped

off the cloak of life, and to physical eyes passed into the shad-

ows, but to the mind’s eye betook himself to what is plain as

day; and he was seated there on a throne of lasting glory. He

escaped from the prison of this world, and pitched his tent in a

wide and spacious land. May God ever keep him close and

bless him in that mystic realm with perpetual reunion and the

beatific vision; may he be wrapped in tiers of light. Upon him

be the glory of God, the All-Glorious. His grave is in ‘Akká.

12  
Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd and Áqá Riḍá

12.1 These two blessed souls, Mírzá

Maḥmúd of Káshán and Áqá Riḍá of Shíráz, were like two

lamps lit with God’s love from the oil of His knowledge. En-

compassed by Divine bestowals from childhood on, they suc-

ceeded in rendering every kind of service for fifty-five years.

Their services were countless, beyond recording.

12.2 When the retinue of Bahá’u’lláh left Baghdad for Con-

stantinople, He was accompanied by a great crowd of people.

Along the way, they met with famine conditions. These two

souls strode along on foot, ahead of the howdah in which

Bahá’u’lláh was riding, and covered a distance of seven or eight

farsakhs every day. Wayworn and faint, they would reach the

halting-place; and yet, weary as they were, they would imme-

diately set about preparing and cooking the food, and seeing to

the comfort of the believers. The efforts they made were truly

more than flesh can bear. There were times when they had not

more than two or three hours sleep out of the twenty-four;

because, once the friends had eaten their meal, these two would

be busy collecting and washing up the dishes and cooking uten-

sils; this would take them till midnight, and only then would

they rest. At daybreak they would rise, pack everything, and set

out again, in front of the howdah of Bahá’u’lláh. See what a

vital service they were able to render, and for what bounty they

were singled out: from the start of the journey, at Baghdad, to

the arrival in Constantinople, they walked close beside

Bahá’u’lláh; they made every one of the friends happy; they

brought rest and comfort to all; they prepared whatever any-

one asked.

Áqá Riḍá and Mírzá Maḥmúd were the very essence of God’s 12.3

love, utterly detached from all but God. In all that time no one

ever heard either of them raise his voice. They never hurt nor

offended anyone. They were trustworthy, loyal, true. Bahá’u’lláh

showered blessings upon them. They were continually entering

His presence and He would be expressing His satisfaction with

them.

Mírzá Maḥmúd was a youth when he arrived in Baghdad 12.4

from Káshán. Áqá Riḍá became a believer in Baghdad. The

spiritual condition of the two was indescribable. There was in

Baghdad a company of seven leading believers who lived in a

single, small room, because they were destitute. They could

hardly keep body and soul together, but they were so spiritual,

so blissful, that they thought themselves in Heaven. Sometimes

they would chant prayers all night long, until the day broke.

Days, they would go out to work, and by nightfall one would

have earned ten paras, another perhaps twenty paras, others

forty or fifty. These sums would be spent for the evening meal.

On a certain day one of them made twenty paras, while the

rest had nothing at all. The one with the money bought some

dates, and shared them with the others; that was dinner, for

seven people. They were perfectly content with their frugal life,

supremely happy.

12.5 These two honored men devoted their days to all that is best

in human life: they had seeing eyes; they were mindful and

aware; they had hearing ears, and were fair of speech. Their

sole desire was to please Bahá’u’lláh. To them, nothing was a

bounty at all, except service at His Holy Threshold. After the

time of the Supreme Affliction, they were consumed with sor-

row, like candles flickering away; they longed for death, and

stayed firm in the Covenant and labored hard and well to spread

that Daystar’s Faith. They were close and trusted companions

of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and could be relied on in all things. They were

always lowly, humble, unassuming, evanescent. In all that long

period, they never uttered a word which had to do with self.

12.6 And at the last, during the absence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, they

took their flight to the Kingdom of unfading glory. I sorrowed

much because I was not with them when they died. Although

absent in body, I was there in my heart, and mourning over

them; but to outward seeming I did not bid them good-by; this

is why I grieve.

12.7 Unto them both be salutations and praise; upon them be

compassion and glory. May God give them a home in Paradise,

under the Lote-Tree’s shade. May they be immersed in tiers of

light, close beside their Lord, the Mighty, the All-Powerful.

13  
Pidar-Ján of Qazvín

The late Pidar-Ján was among 13.1

those believers who emigrated to Baghdad. He was a godly old

man, enamored of the Well-Beloved; in the garden of Divine

love, he was like a rose full-blown. He arrived there, in Baghdad,

and spent his days and nights communing with God and chant-

ing prayers; and although he walked the earth, he traveled the

heights of Heaven.

To obey the law of God, he took up a trade, for he had 13.2

nothing. He would bundle a few pairs of socks under his arm

and peddle them as he wandered through the streets and bázárs,

and thieves would rob him of his merchandise. Finally he was

obliged to lay the socks across his outstretched palms as he went

along. But he would get to chanting a prayer, and one day he

was surprised to find that they had stolen the socks, laid out on

his two hands, from before his eyes. His awareness of this world

was clouded, for he journeyed through another. He dwelt in

ecstasy; he was a man drunken, bedazzled.

For some time, that is how he lived in Iraq. Almost daily he 13.3

was admitted to the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. His name was

‘Abdu’lláh but the friends bestowed on him the title of Pidar-

Ján—Father Dear—for he was a loving father to them all. At

last, under the sheltering care of Bahá’u’lláh, he took flight to

the “seat of truth, in the presence of the potent king.”[[24]](#footnote-24)

13.4 May God make fragrant his sepulcher with the outpouring

rains of His mercy and cast upon him the eye of Divine com-

passion. Salutations be unto him, and praise.

14  
Shaykh Ṣádiq-i-Yazdí

14.1 Another of those who emigrated

to Baghdad was Shaykh Ṣádiq of Yazd, a man esteemed, and

righteous as his name, Ṣádiq.[[25]](#footnote-25) He was a towering palm in the

groves of Heaven, a star flaming in the skies of the love of God.

14.2 It was during the Iraq period that he hastened to the pres-

ence of Bahá’u’lláh. His detachment from the things of this

world and his attachment to the life of the spirit are indescrib-

able. He was love embodied, tenderness personified. Day and

night, he commemorated God. Utterly unconscious of this

world and all that is therein, he dwelt continually on God, re-

maining submerged in supplications and prayers. Most of the

time, tears poured from his eyes. The Blessed Beauty singled

him out for special favor, and whenever He turned His atten-

tion toward Ṣádiq, His loving-kindness was clear to see.

14.3 On a certain day they brought word that Ṣádiq was at the

point of death. I went to his bedside and found him breathing

his last. He was suffering from ileus, an abdominal pain and

swelling. I hurried to Bahá’u’lláh and described his condition.

“Go,” He said. “Place your hand on the distended area and 14.4

speak the words: ‘O Thou the Healer!’”[[26]](#footnote-26)

I went back. I saw that the affected part had swollen up to 14.5

the size of an apple; it was hard as stone, in constant motion,

twisting, and coiling about itself like a snake. I placed my hand

upon it; I turned toward God and, humbly beseeching Him, I

repeated the words, “O Thou the Healer!” Instantly the sick

man rose up. The ileus vanished; the swelling was carried off.

This personified spirit lived contentedly in Iraq until the day 14.6

when Bahá’u’lláh’s convoy wended its way out of Baghdad. As

bidden, Ṣádiq remained behind in that city. But his longing

beat so passionately within him that after the arrival of

Bahá’u’lláh at Mosul, he could endure the separation no more.

Shoeless, hatless, he ran out alongside the courier going to

Mosul; ran and ran until, on that barren plain, with mercy all

about him, he fell to his rest.

May God give him to drink from “a wine cup tempered at 14.7

the camphor fountain,”[[27]](#footnote-27) and send down crystal waters on his

grave; may God perfume his dust in that desert place with musk,

and cause to descend there range on range of light.

15  
Sháh-Muḥammad-Amín

15.1 Sháh-Muḥammad, who had the

title of Amín, the Trusted One, was among the earliest of be-

lievers, and most deeply enamored. He had listened to the Di-

vine summons in the flower of his youth, and set his face to-

ward the Kingdom. He had ripped from his gaze the veils of

idle suppositions and had won his heart’s desire; neither the

fancies current among the people nor the reproaches of which

he was the target turned him back. Unshaken, he stood and

faced a sea of troubles; staunch with the strength of the Advent

day, he confronted those who tried to thwart him and block his

path. The more they sought to instill doubts in his mind, the

stronger he became; the more they tormented him, the more

progress he made. He was a captive of the face of God, en-

slaved by the beauty of the All-Glorious; a flame of God’s love,

a jetting fountain of the knowledge of Him.

15.2 Love smoldered in his heart, so that he had no peace; and

when he could bear the absence of the Beloved One no more,

he left his native home, the province of Yazd. He found the

desert sands like silk under his feet; light as the wind’s breath,

he passed over the mountains and across the endless plains,

until he stood at the door of his Love. He had freed himself

from the snare of separation, and in Iraq, he entered the pres-

ence of Bahá’u’lláh.

15.3 Once he made his way into the home of the Darling of man-

kind, he was emptied of every thought, released from every

concern, and became the recipient of boundless favor and grace.

He passed some days in Iraq and was directed to return to Per-

sia. There he remained for a time, frequenting the believers;

and his pure breathings stirred each one of them anew, so that

each one yearned over the Faith, and became more restless, more

impatient than before.

Later he arrived at the Most Great Prison with Mírzá Abu’l- 15.4

Ḥasan, the second Amín. On this journey he met with severe

hardships, for it was extremely difficult to find a way into the

prison. Finally he was received by Bahá’u’lláh in the public baths.

Mírzá Abu’l-Ḥasan was so overwhelmed at the majestic pres-

ence of his Lord that he shook, stumbled, and fell to the floor;

his head was injured and the blood flowed out.

Amín, that is Sháh-Muḥammad, was honored with the title 15.5

of the Trusted One, and bounties were showered upon him.

Full of eagerness and love, taking with him Tablets from

Bahá’u’lláh, he hastened back to Persia, where, at all times wor-

thy of trust, he labored for the Cause. His services were out-

standing, and he was a consolation to the believers’ hearts. There

was none to compare with him for energy, enthusiasm and zeal,

and no man’s services could equal his. He was a haven amidst

the people, known everywhere for devotion to the Holy Thresh-

old, widely acclaimed by the friends.

He never rested for a moment. Not one night did he spend 15.6

on a bed of ease, never did he lay down his head on comfort’s

pillow. He was continuously in flight, soaring as the birds do,

running like a deer, guesting in the desert of oneness, alone

and swift. He brought joy to all the believers; to all, his coming

was good news; to every seeker, he was a sign and token. He

was enamored of God, a vagrant in the desert of God’s love.

Like the wind, he traveled over the face of the plains, and he

was restive on the heights of the hills. He was in a different

country every day, and in yet another land by nightfall. Never

did he rest, never was he still. He was forever rising up to serve.

15.7 But then they took him prisoner in Ádhirbáyján, in the town

of Míyándu’áb. He fell a prey to some ruthless Kurds, a hostile

band who asked no questions of the innocent, defenseless man.

Believing that this stranger, like other foreigners, wished ill to

the Kurdish people, and taking him for worthless, they killed

him.

15.8 When news of his martyrdom reached the Prison, all the

captives grieved, and they shed tears for him, resigned to God

and undefended as he was in his last hour. Even on the counte-

nance of Bahá’u’lláh, there were visible tokens of grief. A Tab-

let, infinitely tender, was revealed by the Supreme Pen, com-

memorating the man who died on that calamitous plain, and

many other Tablets were sent down concerning him.

15.9 Today, under the shadowing mercy of God, he dwells in the

bright Heavens. He communes with the birds of holiness, and

in the assemblage of splendors he is immersed in light. The

memory and praise of him shall remain, till the end of time, in

the pages of books and on the tongues and lips of men.

15.10 Unto him be salutations and praise; upon him be the glory

of the All-Glorious; upon him be the most great mercy of God.

16  
Mashhadí Fattáḥ

16.1 Mashhadí Fattáḥ was personified

spirit. He was devotion itself. Brother to Ḥájí ‘Alí-‘Askar—of

the same pure lineage—through the latter he came into the

Faith. Like the twins, Castor and Pollux, the two kept together

in one spot, and both were illumined with the light of belief.

In all things, the two were united as a pair; they shared the 16.2

same certitude and faith, the same conscience, and made their

way out of Ádhirbáyján to Adrianople, emigrating at the same

time. In every circumstance of their life, they lived as one indi-

vidual; their disposition, their aims, their religion, character,

behavior, faith, certitude, knowledge—all were one. Even in

the Most Great Prison, they were constantly together.

Mashhadí Fattáḥ possessed some merchandise; this was all 16.3

he owned in the world. He had entrusted it to persons in

Adrianople, and later on those unrighteous people did away

with the goods. Thus, in the pathway of God, he lost whatever

he possessed. He passed his days, perfectly content, in the Most

Great Prison. He was utter selflessness; from him, no one ever

heard a syllable to indicate that he existed. He was always in a

certain corner of the prison, silently meditating, occupied with

the remembrance of God; at all times spiritually alert and mind-

ful, in a state of supplication.

Then came the Supreme Affliction. He could not tolerate 16.4

the anguish of parting with Bahá’u’lláh, and after Bahá’u’lláh’s

passing, he died of grief. Blessed is he; again, blessed is he.

Glad tidings to him; again, glad tidings to him. Upon him be

the glory of the All-Glorious.

17  
Nabíl of Qá’in

17.1 This distinguished man, Mullá

Muḥammad-‘Alí,[[28]](#footnote-28) was one of those whose hearts were drawn

to Bahá’u’lláh before the Declaration of the Báb; it was then

that he drank the red wine of knowledge from the hands of the

Cupbearer of grace. It happened that a prince, who was the son

of Mír Asadu’lláh Khán, prince of Qá’in, was commanded to

remain as a political hostage in Ṭihrán. He was young, far away

from his loving father, and Mullá Muḥammad-‘Alí was his tu-

tor and guardian. Since the youth was a stranger in Ṭihrán, the

Blessed Beauty showed him special kindness. Many a night the

young prince was Bahá’u’lláh’s guest at the mansion, and Mullá

Muḥammad-‘Alí would accompany him. This was prior to the

Declaration of the Báb.

17.2 It was then that this chief of all trusted friends was capti-

vated by Bahá’u’lláh, and wherever he went, spread loving praise

of Him. After the way of Islám, he also related the great miracles

which he had, with his own eyes, seen Bahá’u’lláh perform, and

the marvels he had heard. He was in ecstasy, burning up with

love. In that condition, he returned to Qá’in with the prince.

17.3 Later on that eminent scholar, Áqá Muḥammad of Qá’in

(whose title was Nabíl-i-Akbar) was made a mujtahid, a doctor

of religious law, by the late Shaykh Murtaḍá; he left, then, for

Baghdad, became an ardent follower of Bahá’u’lláh, and has-

tened back to Persia. The leading divines and mujtahids were

well aware of and acknowledged his vast scholarly accomplish-

ments, the breadth of his learning, and his high rank. When he

reached Qá’in, he began openly to spread the new Faith. The

moment Mullá Muḥammad-‘Alí heard the name of the Blessed

Beauty, he immediately accepted the Báb. “I had the honor,”

he said, “of meeting the Blessed Beauty in Ṭihrán. The instant

I saw Him, I became His slave.”

In his village of Sar-Cháh, this gifted, high-minded man 17.4

began to teach the Faith. He guided in his own family and saw

to the others as well, bringing a great multitude under the law

of the love of God, leading each one to the path of salvation.

Up to that time he had always been a close companion of 17.5

Mír ‘Alam Khán, the Governor of Qá’in, had rendered him

important services, and had enjoyed the Governor’s respect and

trust. Now that shameless prince turned against him in a rage

on account of his religion, seized his property and plundered

it; for the Amír was terrified of Náṣiri’d-Dín Sháh. He ban-

ished Nabíl-i-Akbar and ruined Nabíl of Qá’in. After throw-

ing him in prison and torturing him, he drove him out as a

homeless vagrant.

To Nabíl, the sudden calamity was a blessing, the sacking of 17.6

his earthly goods, the expulsion into the desert, was a kingly

crown and the greatest favor God could grant him. For some

time he remained in Ṭihrán, to outward seeming a pauper of

no fixed abode, but inwardly rejoicing; for this is the character-

istic of every soul who is firm in the Covenant.

He had access to the society of the great and knew the con- 17.7

dition of the various princes. He would, therefore, frequent

some of them and give them the message. He was a consolation

to the hearts of the believers and as a drawn sword to the en-

emies of Bahá’u’lláh. He was one of those of whom we read in

the Qur’án: “For the Cause of God shall they strive hard; the

blame of the blamer shall they not fear.”[[29]](#footnote-29) Day and night he

toiled to promote the Faith, and with all his might to spread

abroad the clear signs of God. He would drink and drink again

of the wine of God’s love, was clamorous as the storm clouds,

restless as the waves of the sea.

17.8 Permission came, then, for him to visit the Most Great Prison;

for in Ṭihrán, as a believer, he had become a marked man.

They all knew of his conversion; he had no caution, no pa-

tience, no reserve; he cared nothing for reticence, nothing for

dissimulation. He was utterly fearless and in terrible danger.

17.9 When he arrived at the Most Great Prison, the hostile watch-

ers drove him off, and try as he might he found no way to

enter. He was obliged to leave for Nazareth, where he lived for

some time as a stranger, alone with his two sons, Áqá Qulám-

Ḥusayn and Áqá ‘Alí-Akbar, grieving and praying. At last a

plan was devised to introduce him into the fortress and he was

summoned to the prison where they had immured the inno-

cent. He came in such ecstasy as cannot be described, and was

admitted to the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. When he entered there

and lifted his eyes to the Blessed Beauty he shook and trembled

and fell unconscious to the floor. Bahá’u’lláh spoke words of

loving-kindness to him and he rose again. He spent some days

hidden in the barracks, after which he returned to Nazareth.

17.10 The inhabitants of Nazareth wondered much about him.

They told one another that he was obviously a great and distin-

guished man in his own country, a notable and of high rank;

and they asked themselves why he should have chosen such an

out-of-the-way corner of the world as Nazareth and how he

could be contented with such poverty and hardship.

17.11 When, in fulfillment of the promise of the Most Great Name,

the gates of the Prison were flung wide, and all the friends and

travelers could enter and leave the fortress-town in peace and

with respect, Nabíl of Qá’in would journey to see Bahá’u’lláh

once in every month. However, as commanded by Him, he

continued to live in Nazareth, where he converted a number of

Christians to the Faith; and there he would weep, by day and

night, over the wrongs that were done to Bahá’u’lláh.

His means of livelihood was his business partnership with 17.12

me. That is, I provided him with a capital of three krans;[[30]](#footnote-30) with

it he bought needles, and this was his stock-in-trade. The women

of Nazareth gave him eggs in exchange for his needles and in

this way he would obtain thirty or forty eggs a day: three needles

per egg. Then he would sell the eggs and live on the proceeds.

Since there was a daily caravan between ‘Akká and Nazareth,

he would refer to Áqá Riḍá each day, for more needles. Glory

be to God! He survived two years on that initial outlay of capi-

tal; and he returned thanks at all times. You can tell how de-

tached he was from worldly things by this one fact: the Nazarenes

used to say it was plain to see from the old man’s manner and

behavior that he was very rich, and that if he lived so modestly

it was only because he was a stranger in a strange place—hid-

ing his wealth by setting up as a peddler of needles.

Whenever he came into the presence of Bahá’u’lláh he re- 17.13

ceived still more evidences of favor and love. For all seasons, he

was a close friend and companion to me. When sorrows at-

tacked me I would send for him, and then I would rejoice just

to see him again. How wonderful his talk was, how attractive

his society. Bright of face he was; free of heart; loosed from

every earthly tie, always on the wing. Toward the end he made

his home in the Most Great Prison, and every day he entered

the presence of Bahá’u’lláh.

On a certain day, walking through the bázár with his friends, 17.14

he met a gravedigger named Ḥájí Aḥmad. Although in the best

of health, he addressed the gravedigger and laughingly told him:

“Come along with me.” Accompanied by the believers and the

gravedigger he made for Nabíyu’lláh Ṣáliḥ. Here he said: “O

Ḥájí Aḥmad, I have a request to make of you: when I move on,

out of this world and into the next, dig my grave here, beside

the Purest Branch.[[31]](#footnote-31) This is the favor I ask.” So saying, he gave

the man a gift of money.

17.15 That very evening, not long after sunset, word came that

Nabíl of Qá’in had been taken ill. I went to his home at once.

He was sitting up, and conversing. He was radiant, laughing,

joking, but for no apparent reason the sweat was pouring off

his face—it was rushing down. Except for this he had nothing

the matter with him. The perspiring went on and on; he weak-

ened, lay in his bed, and toward morning, died.

17.16 Bahá’u’lláh would refer to him with infinite grace and lov-

ing-kindness, and revealed a number of Tablets in his name.

The Blessed Beauty was wont, after Nabíl’s passing, to recall

that ardor, the power of that faith, and to comment that here

was a man who had recognized Him, prior to the advent of the

Báb.

17.17 All hail to him for this wondrous bestowal. “Blessedness

awaiteth him and a goodly home … And God will single out

for His mercy whomsoever He willeth.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

18  
Siyyid Muḥammad-Taqí Manshádí

Muḥammad-Taqí came from the 18.1

village of Manshád. When still young, he learned of the Faith

of God. In holy ecstasy, his mind turned Heavenward, and his

heart was flooded with light. Divine grace descended upon him;

the summons of God so enraptured him that he threw the peace

of Manshád to the winds. Leaving his kinsfolk and children, he

set out over mountains and desert plains, passed from one halt-

ing-place to the next, came to the seashore, crossed over the sea

and at last reached the city of Haifa. From there he hastened

on to ‘Akká and entered the presence of Bahá’u’lláh.

In the early days he opened a small shop in Haifa and car- 18.2

ried on some trifling business. God’s blessing descended upon

it, and it prospered. That little corner became the haven of the

pilgrims. When they arrived, and again at their departure, they

were guests of the high-minded and generous Muḥammad-Taqí.

He also helped to manage the affairs of the believers, and would

get together their means of travel. He proved unfailingly reli-

able, loyal, worthy of trust. Ultimately he became the interme-

diary through whom Tablets could be sent away and mail from

the believers could come in. He performed this service with

perfect dependability, accomplishing it in a most pleasing way,

scrupulously despatching and receiving the correspondence at

all times. Trusted by everyone, he became known in many parts

of the world, and received unnumbered bounties from

Bahá’u’lláh. He was a treasury of justice and righteousness,

entirely free from any attachment to worldly things. He had

accustomed himself to a very spare way of life, caring nothing

for food or sleep, comfort or peace. He lived all alone in a single

room, passed the nights on a couch of palm branches, and

slept in a corner. But to the travelers, he was a spring in the

desert; for them, he provided the softest of pillows, and the

best table he could afford. He had a smiling face and by nature

was spiritual and serene.

18.3 After the Daystar of the Supreme Concourse had set, Siyyid

Manshádí remained loyal to the Covenant, a sharp sword con-

fronting the violators. They tried every ruse, every deceit, all

their subtlest expedients; it is beyond imagining how they show-

ered favors on him and what honors they paid him, what feasts

they prepared, what pleasures they offered, all this to make a

breach in his faith. Yet every day he grew stronger than before,

continued to be staunch and true, kept free from every un-

seemly thought, and shunned whatever went contrary to the

Covenant of God. When they finally despaired of shaking his

resolve, they harassed him in every possible way, and plotted

his financial ruin. He remained, however, the quintessence of

constancy and trust.

18.4 When, at the instigation of the violators, ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd be-

gan his opposition to me, I was obliged to send Manshádí away

to Port Said, because he was widely known among the people

as the distributor of our mail. I then had to relay the correspon-

dence to him through intermediaries who were unknown, and

he would send the letters on as before. In this way the treacher-

ous and the hostile were unable to take over the mail. During

the latter days of ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd, when a commission of inves-

tigation appeared and—urged on by those familiars-turned-

strangers—made plans to tear out the Holy Tree by the roots;

when they determined to cast me into the depths of the sea or

banish me to the Fezzan, and this was their settled purpose;

and when the commission accordingly tried their utmost to get

hold of some document or other, they failed. In the thick of all

that turmoil, with all the pressures and restraints, and the foul

attacks of those persons who were pitiless as Yazíd,[[33]](#footnote-33) still the

mail went through.

For many long years, Siyyid Manshádí befittingly performed 18.5

this service in Port Said. The friends were uniformly pleased

with him. In that city he earned the gratitude of travelers, placed

those who had emigrated in his debt, brought joy to the local

believers. Then the heavy heat of Egypt proved too much for

him; he took to his bed, and in a raging fever, cast off the robe

of life. He abandoned Port Said for the Kingdom of Heaven,

and rose up to the mansions of the Lord.

Siyyid Manshádí was the essence of virtue and intellect. His 18.6

qualities and attainments were such as to amaze the most ac-

complished minds. He had no thought except of God, no hope

but to win the good pleasure of God. He was the embodiment

of “Keep all my words of prayer and praise confined to one

refrain; make all my life but servitude to Thee.”

May God cool his feverish pain with the grace of reunion in 18.7

the Kingdom, and heal his sickness with the balm of nearness

to Him in the Realm of the All-Beauteous. Upon him be the

glory of God the Most Glorious.

19  
Muḥammad-‘Alí Sabbáq of Yazd

19.1 Early in youth, Muḥammad-‘Alí

Sabbáq became a believer while in Iraq. He tore away hinder-

ing veils and doubts, escaped from his delusions and hastened

to the welcoming shelter of the Lord of Lords. A man to out-

ward seeming without education, for he could neither read nor

write, he was of sharp intelligence and a trustworthy friend.

Through one of the believers, he was brought into the presence

of Bahá’u’lláh, and was soon widely known to the public as a

disciple. He found himself a corner to live in, close beside the

house of the Blessed Beauty, and mornings and evenings would

enter the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. For a time he was supremely

happy.

19.2 When Bahá’u’lláh and His retinue left Baghdad for Con-

stantinople, Áqá Muḥammad-‘Alí was of that company, and

fevered with the love of God. We reached Constantinople; and

since the Government obliged us to settle in Adrianople we left

Muḥammad-‘Alí in the Turkish capital to assist the believers as

they came and went through that city. We then went on to

Adrianople. This man remained alone and he suffered intense

distress for he had no friend nor companion nor anyone to care

for him.

19.3 After two years of this he came on to Adrianople, seeking a

haven in the loving-kindness of Bahá’u’lláh. He went to work

as a peddler, and when the great rebellion[[34]](#footnote-34) began and the op-

pressors drove the friends to the extreme of adversity, he too

was among the prisoners and was exiled with us to the fortress

at ‘Akká.

He spent a considerable time in the Most Great Prison, after 19.4

which Bahá’u’lláh desired him to leave for Sidon, where he en-

gaged in trade. Sometimes he would return and be received by

Bahá’u’lláh, but otherwise he stayed in Sidon. He lived respected

and trusted, a credit to all. When the Supreme Affliction came

upon us, he returned to ‘Akká and passed the remainder of his

days near the Holy Tomb.

The friends, one and all, were pleased with him, and he was 19.5

cherished at the Holy Threshold; in this state he soared to abid-

ing glory, leaving his kin to mourn. He was a kind man, an

excellent one: content with God’s will for him, thankful, a man

of dignity, long-suffering. Upon him be the glory of the All-

Glorious. May God send down, upon his scented tomb in ‘Akká,

tiers of celestial light.

20  
‘Abdu’l-Ghaffár of Iṣfahán

20.1 Another of those who left their

homeland to become our neighbors and fellow prisoners was

‘Abdu’l-Ghaffár of Iṣfahán. He was a highly perceptive indi-

vidual who, on commercial business, had traveled about Asia

Minor for many years. He made a journey to Iraq, where Áqá

Muḥammad-‘Alí of Ṣád (Iṣfahán) brought him into the shelter

of the Faith. He soon ripped off the bandage of illusions that

had blinded his eyes before, and he rose up, winging to salva-

tion in the Heaven of Divine love. With him, the veil had been

thin, almost transparent, and that is why, as the first word was

imparted, he was immediately released from the world of idle

imaginings and attached himself to the One Who is clear to see.

20.2 On the journey from Iraq to the Great City, Constantinople,

‘Abdu’l-Ghaffár was a close and agreeable companion. He served

as interpreter for the entire company, for he spoke excellent

Turkish, a language in which none of the friends was profi-

cient. The journey came peacefully to an end and then, in the

Great City, he continued on, as a companion and friend. The

same was true in Adrianople and also when, as one of the pris-

oners, he accompanied us to the city of Haifa.

20.3 Here, the oppressors determined to send him to Cyprus. He

was terrified and shouted for help, for he longed to be with us

in the Most Great Prison.[[35]](#footnote-35) When they held him back by force,

from high up on the ship he threw himself into the sea. This

had no effect whatever on the brutal officers. After dragging

him from the water they held him prisoner on the ship, cruelly

restraining him, and carrying him away by force to Cyprus. He

was jailed in Famagusta, but one way or another managed to

escape and hastened to ‘Akká. Here, protecting himself from

the malevolence of our oppressors, he changed his name to

‘Abdu’lláh. Sheltered within the loving-kindness of Bahá’u’lláh,

he passed his days at ease, and happy.

But when the world’s great Light had set, to shine on forever 20.4

from the All-Luminous Horizon, ‘Abdu’l-Ghaffár was beside

himself and a prey to anguish. He no longer had a home. He

left for Damascus and spent some time there, pent up in his

sorrow, mourning by day and night. He grew weaker and weaker.

We despatched Ḥájí ‘Abbás there, to nurse him and give him

treatment and care, and send back word of him every day. But

‘Abdu’l-Ghaffár would do nothing but talk, unceasingly, at ev-

ery hour, with his nurse, and tell how he longed to go his way,

into the mysterious country beyond. And at the end, far from

home, exiled from his Love, he set out for the Holy Threshold

of Bahá’u’lláh.

He was truly a man long-suffering, and mild; a man of good 20.5

character, good acts, and goodly words. Greetings and praise

be unto him, and the glory of the All-Glorious. His sweet-

scented tomb is in Damascus.

21  
‘Alí Najaf-Ábádí

21.1 Also among the emigrants and near

neighbors was Áqá ‘Alí Najaf-Ábádí. When this spiritual young

man first listened to the call of God he set his lips to the holy

cup and beheld the glory of the Speaker on the Mount. And

when, by grace of the light, he had attained positive knowl-

edge, he journeyed to the Most Great Prison, where he wit-

nessed the substance of knowledge itself, and arrived at the

high station of indubitable truth.

21.2 For a long time he remained in and about the sacred city; he

became the proverbial Ḥabíbu’lláh the Merchant, and spent

his days relying upon God, in supplication and prayer. He was

a man meek, quiet, uncomplaining, steadfast; in all things pleas-

ing, worthy of praise. He won the approval of all the friends

and was accepted and welcome at the Holy Threshold. During

his latter days, when he felt that a happy end was in store for

him, he again presented himself at the holy city of the Most

Great Prison. Upon arrival he fell ill, weakened, passed his hours

in supplicating God. The breath of life ceased within him, the

gates of flight to the supreme Kingdom were flung wide, he

turned his eyes away from this world of dust and went onward

to the Holy Place.

21.3 ‘Alí Najaf-Ábádí was tender and sensitive of heart, at all times

mindful of God and remembering Him, and toward the close

of his life detached, without stain, free from the contagion of

this world. Sweetly, he gave up his corner of the earth, and

pitched his tent in the land beyond. May God send upon him

the pure savors of forgiveness, brighten his eyes with beholding

the Divine Beauty in the Kingdom of Splendors, and refresh

his spirit with the musk-scented winds that blow from the Abhá

Realm. Unto him be salutation and praise. His sweet and holy

dust lies in ‘Akká.

22  
Mashhadí Ḥusayn and Mashhadí Muḥammad-i-Ádhirbáyjání

Mashhadí Ḥusayn and Mashhadí 22.1

Muḥammad were both from the province of Ádhirbáyján. They

were pure souls who took the great step in their own country:

they freed themselves from friend and stranger alike, escaped

from the superstitions that had blinded them before, strength-

ened their resolve, and bowed themselves down before the grace

of God, the Lord of Life. They were blessed souls, loyal, unsul-

lied in faith; evanescent, submissive, poor, content with the

will of God, in love with His guiding Light, rejoicing over the

great message. They left their province and traveled to

Adrianople. Here beside the holy city they lived for quite a

time in the village of Qumruq-Kilísá. By day, they supplicated

God and communed with Him; by night, they wept, bemoan-

ing the plight of Him Whom the world hath wronged.

When the exile to ‘Akká was under way, they were not present 22.2

in the city and thus were not arrested. Heavy of heart, they

continued on in that area, shedding their tears. Once they had

obtained a definite report from ‘Akká, they left Rumelia and

came here: two excellent souls, loyal bondsmen of the Blessed

Beauty. It is impossible to tell how translucent they were of

heart, how firm in faith.

22.3 They lived outside ‘Akká in Bágh-i-Firdaws, worked as farm-

ers, and spent their days returning thanks to God because once

again they had won their way to the neighborhood of grace and

love. But they were natives of Ádhirbáyján, accustomed to the

cold, and they could not endure the local heat. Furthermore,

this was during our early days in ‘Akká, when the air was nox-

ious, and the water unwholesome in the extreme. They both

fell ill of a chronic, high fever. They bore it cheerfully, with

amazing patience. During their days of illness, despite the as-

sault of the fever, the violence of their ailment, the raging thirst,

the restlessness, they remained inwardly at peace, rejoicing at

the Divine glad tidings. And at a time when they were offering

thanks with all their heart, they hurried away from this world

and entered the other; they escaped from this cage and were

released into the garden of immortality. Upon them be the mercy

of God, and may He be well pleased with them. Unto them be

salutations and praise. May God bring them into the Realm

that abides forever, to delight in reunion with Him, to bask in

the Kingdom of Splendors. Their two luminous tombs are in

‘Akká.

23  
Ḥájí ‘Abdu’r-Raḥím-i-Yazdí

Ḥájí ‘Abdu’r-Raḥím of Yazd was a 23.1

precious soul, from his earliest years virtuous and God-fearing,

and known among the people as a holy man, peerless in ob-

serving his religious duties, mindful as to his acts. His strong

religious faith was an indisputable fact. He served and wor-

shiped God by day and night, was sound, mild, compassion-

ate, a loyal friend.

Because he was fully prepared, at the very moment when he 23.2

heard the summons from the Supreme Horizon—heard the

drumbeats of “Am I not your Lord?”—he instantly cried out,

“Yea, verily!” With his whole being, he became enamored of

the splendors shed by the Light of the World. Openly and boldly

he began to confirm his family and friends. This was soon known

throughout the city; to the eyes of the evil ‘ulamás, he was now

an object of hate and contempt. Incurring their wrath, he was

despised by those creatures of their own low passions. He was

molested and harassed; the inhabitants rioted, and the evil

‘ulamás plotted his death. The government authorities turned

on him as well, hounded him, even subjected him to torture.

They beat him with clubs, and whipped him. All this went on,

by day and night.

He was forced, then, to abandon his home and go out of the 23.3

city, a vagrant, climbing the mountains, crossing over the plains,

until he came to the Holy Land. But so weak he was, and wasted

away, that whoever saw him thought he was breathing his last;

when he reached Haifa, Nabíl of Qá’in hurried to ‘Akká, and

desired me to summon the Ḥájí at once, because he was in his

death agony and failing fast.

23.4 “Let me go to the Mansion,” I said, “and ask leave.”

23.5 “It would take too long,” he said. “And then ‘Abdu’r-Raḥím

will never see ‘Akká. I long for him to have this bounty; for him

at least to see ‘Akká, and die. I beg of You, send for him at

once!”

23.6 Complying with his wish, I summoned ‘Abdu’r-Raḥím. When

he came, I could hardly detect in him a whisper of life. At

times he would open his eyes, but he spoke no word. Still, the

sweet savors of the Most Great Prison restored the vital spark,

and his yearning to meet Bahá’u’lláh breathed life into him again.

I looked in on him the next morning and found him cheerful

and refreshed. He asked permission to attend upon Bahá’u’lláh.

“It all depends,” I answered, “on whether He grants you leave.

God willing, you shall be singled out for this cherished gift.”

23.7 A few days later, permission came, and he hastened to the

presence of Bahá’u’lláh. When ‘Abdu’r-Raḥím entered there,

the spirit of life was wafted over him. On his return, it was

clear that this Ḥájí had become a different Ḥájí entirely: he was

in the bloom of health. Nabíl was dumbfounded, and said:

“How life-giving, to a true believer, is this prison air!”

23.8 For some time, ‘Abdu’r-Raḥím lived in the neighborhood.

He spent his hours remembering and praising God; he chanted

prayers, and carefully attended to his religious duties. Thus he

saw few people. This servant paid special attention to his needs,

and ordered a light diet for him. But it all came to an end with

the Supreme Affliction, the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh. There was

anguish then, and the noise of loud weeping. With his heart on

fire, his eyes raining tears, he struggled weakly to move about;

so his days went by, and always, he longed to make his exit

from this rubbish heap, the world. At last he broke away from

the torment of his loss, and hurried on to the Realm of God,

and came to the assemblage of Divine splendor in the King-

dom of Lights.

Unto him be salutations and praise, and mercy ineffable. 23.9

May God scatter on his resting-place rays from the mysterious

Realm.

24  
Ḥájí ‘Abdu’lláh Najaf-Ábádí

Once he had become a believer, 24.1

Ḥájí ‘Abdu’lláh left his native Persia, hastened to the Holy Land,

and under the sheltering grace of Bahá’u’lláh found peace of

heart. He was a man confident, steadfast and firm; certain of

the manifold bounties of God; of an excellent disposition and

character.

He spent his days in friendly association with the other be- 24.2

lievers. Then for a while he went to Ghawr, near Tiberias, where

he farmed, both tilling the soil and devoting much of his time

to supplicating and communing with God. He was an excel-

lent man, high-minded and unsullied.

Later he returned from Ghawr, settled near Bahá’u’lláh in 24.3

Junayna, and came often into His presence. His eyes were fixed

on the Abhá Kingdom; sometimes he would shed tears and

moan, again he would rejoice, glad because he had achieved his

supreme desire. He was completely detached from all but God,

happy in God’s grace. He would keep a vigil most of the night,

remaining in a state of prayer. Then death came at the appointed

hour, and in the shadowing care of Bahá’u’lláh he ascended,

hurried away from this world of dust to the high Firmament,

soared upward to the secret land. Unto him be salutations, mercy

and praise, in the neighborhood of his exalted Lord.

25  
Muḥammad-Hádíy-i-Ṣaḥḥáf

25.1 Yet one more among those who

emigrated and came to settle near Bahá’u’lláh was the book-

binder, Muḥammad-Hádí. This noted man was from Iṣfahán,

and as a binder and illuminator of books he had no peer. When

he gave himself up to the love of God he was alert on the path

and fearless. He abandoned his home and began a dreadful

journey, passing with extreme hardship from one country to

another until he reached the Holy Land and became a prisoner.

He stationed himself by the Holy Threshold, carefully sweep-

ing it and keeping watch. Through his constant efforts, the

square in front of Bahá’u’lláh’s house was at all times swept,

sprinkled and immaculate.

25.2 Bahá’u’lláh would often glance at that plot of ground, and

then He would smile and say: “Muḥammad-Hádí has turned

the square in front of this prison into the bridal bower of a

palace. He has brought pleasure to all the neighbors and earned

their thanks.”

25.3 When his sweeping, sprinkling and tidying was done, he

would set to work illuminating and binding the various books

and Tablets. So his days went by, his heart happy in the pres-

ence of the Beloved of mankind. He was an excellent soul,

righteous, true, worthy of the bounty of being united with his

Lord, and free of the world’s contagion.

One day he came to me and complained of a chronic ail- 25.4

ment. “I have suffered from chills and fever for two years,” he

said. “The doctors have prescribed a purgative, and quinine.

The fever stops a few days; then it returns. They give me more

quinine, but still the fever returns. I am weary of this life, and

can no longer do my work. Save me!”

“What food would you most enjoy?” I asked him. “What 25.5

would you eat with great appetite?”

“I don’t know,” he said. 25.6

Jokingly, I named off the different dishes. When I came to 25.7

barley soup with whey (ásh-i-kashk), he said, “Very good! But

on condition there is braised garlic in it.”

I directed them to prepare this for him, and I left. The next 25.8

day he presented himself and told me: “I ate a whole bowlful

of the soup. Then I laid my head on my pillow and slept peace-

fully till morning.”

In short, from then on he was perfectly well for about two 25.9

years.

One day a believer came to me and said: “Muḥammad-Hádí 25.10

is burning up with fever.” I hurried to his bedside and found

him with a fever of 42° Centigrade. He was barely conscious.

“What has he done?” I asked. “When he became feverish,” was

the reply, “he said that he knew from experience what he should

do. Then he ate his fill of barley soup with whey and braised

garlic; and this was the result.”

I was astounded at the workings of fate. I told them: “Be- 25.11

cause, two years ago, he had been thoroughly purged and his

system was clear; because he had a hearty appetite for it, and

his ailment was fever and chills, I prescribed the barley soup.

But this time, with the different foods he has had, with no

appetite, and especially with a high fever, there was no reason

to diagnose the previous chronic condition. How could he have

eaten the soup!” They answered, “It was fate.” Things had gone

too far; Muḥammad-Hádí was past saving.

25.12 He was a man short of stature, lofty of station and mind.

His heart was pure, his soul luminous. During all those days

when he served the Holy Threshold, he was loved by the friends

and favored by God. From time to time, a smile on His lips,

the Blessed Beauty would speak to him, expressing kindness

and grace.

25.13 Muḥammad-Hádí was loyal always, and he accounted all

things other than God’s good pleasure as fiction and fable, noth-

ing more. Blessed is he for this gift bestowed upon him, glad

tidings to him for the place to which he shall be led; may it do

him good, this wine-cup tempered at the camphor fountain,

and may all his strivings meet with thanks and be acceptable to

God.[[36]](#footnote-36)

26  
Mírzá Muḥammad-Qulí

Jináb-i-Mírzá Muḥammad-Qulí[[37]](#footnote-37) 26.1

was a loyal brother of the Blessed Beauty. This great man was

known even from his childhood for nobility of soul. He was

newly born when his distinguished father passed away, and thus

it came about that from the beginning to the end of his days, he

spent his life in the sheltering arms of Bahá’u’lláh. He was de-

tached from every selfish thought, averse to every mention ex-

cept to whatever concerned the Holy Cause. He was reared in

Persia under the care of Bahá’u’lláh, and in Iraq as well, espe-

cially favored by Him. In the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, it was he

who would pass around the tea; and he waited upon his Brother

at all times, by day and night. He was always silent. He always

held fast to the Covenant of “Am I not your Lord?” He was

encompassed by loving-kindness and bounty; day and night he

had access to the presence of Bahá’u’lláh; he was invariably pa-

tient and forbearing, until in the end he reached the very heights

of Divine favor and acceptance.

He kept always to his own way of being. He traveled in the 26.2

company of Bahá’u’lláh; from Iraq to Constantinople he was

with the convoy and at the halting-places it was his task to pitch

the tents. He served with the greatest diligence, and did not

know the meaning of lethargy or fatigue. In Constantinople as

well, and later in the Land of Mystery, Adrianople, he contin-

ued on, in one and the same invariable condition.

26.3 With his peerless Lord, he then was exiled to the ‘Akká for-

tress, condemned by order of the Sulṭán to be imprisoned for-

ever.[[38]](#footnote-38) But he accepted in the same spirit all that came his way—

comfort and torment, hardship and respite, sickness and health;

eloquently, he would return thanks to the Blessed Beauty for

His bounties, uttering praise with a free heart and a face that

shone like the sun. Each morning and evening he waited upon

Bahá’u’lláh, delighting in and sustained by His presence; and

mostly, he kept silent.

26.4 When the Beloved of all mankind ascended to the Kingdom

of Splendors, Mírzá Muḥammad-Qulí remained firm in the

Covenant, shunning the craft, the malice and hypocrisy which

then appeared, devoting himself entirely to God, supplicating

and praying. To those who would listen he gave wise advice;

and he called to mind the days of the Blessed Beauty and grieved

over the fact that he himself lived on. After the departure of

Bahá’u’lláh, he did not draw an easeful breath; he kept com-

pany with no one, but stayed by himself most of the time, alone

in his small refuge, burning with the fires of separation. Day by

day he grew feebler, more helpless, until at the last he soared

away to the world of God. Upon him be peace; upon him be

praise and mercy, in the gardens of Heaven. His luminous grave

is in Naqíb, by Tiberias.

27  
Ustád Báqir and Ustád Aḥmad

And again among those who left 27.1

their homeland were two carpenters, Ustád Báqir and Ustád

Aḥmad. These two were brothers, of pure lineage, and natives

of Káshán. From the time when both became believers each

held the other in his embrace. They harkened to the voice of

God, and to His cry of “Am I not your Lord?” they replied,

“Yea, verily!”

For a time they stayed on in their own country, occupied 27.2

with the remembrance of God, characterized by faith and knowl-

edge, respected by friend and stranger alike, known to all for

righteousness and trustworthiness, for austerity of life and the

fear of God. When the oppressor stretched forth his hands

against them, and tormented them beyond endurance, they

emigrated to Iraq, to the sheltering care of Bahá’u’lláh. They

were two most blessed souls. For some time they remained in

Iraq, praying in all lowliness, and supplicating God.

Then Ustád Aḥmad departed for Adrianople, while Ustád 27.3

Báqir remained in Iraq and was taken as a prisoner to Mosul.

Ustád Aḥmad went on with the party of Bahá’u’lláh to the Most

Great Prison, and Ustád Báqir emigrated from Mosul to ‘Akká.

Both of the brothers were under the protection of God and free

from every earthly bond. In the prison, they worked at their

craft, keeping to themselves, away from friend and stranger alike.

Tranquil, dignified, confident, strong in faith, sheltered by the

All-Merciful, they happily spent their days. Ustád Báqir was the

first to die, and some time afterward his brother followed him.

27.4 These two were firm believers, loyal, patient, at all times

thankful, at all times supplicating God in lowliness, with their

faces turned in His direction. During that long stay in the prison

they were never neglectful of duty, never at fault. They were

constantly joyful, for they had drunk deep of the holy cup; and

when they soared upward, out of the world, the friends mourned

over them and asked that by the grace of Bahá’u’lláh, they should

be favored and forgiven. These two were embosomed in bounty,

and Divinely sustained, and the Blessed Beauty was well pleased

with them both; with this provision for their journey, they set

out for the world to come. Upon them both be the glory of God

the All-Glorious; to each be a seat of truth[[39]](#footnote-39) in the Kingdom of

Splendors.

28  
Muḥammad Ḥaná-Sáb

28.1 This man of dignity and rank, Áqá

Muḥammad, was yet another among those who abandoned their

homes, and was one of the earliest believers. From the dawn

tide, he was widely known as a lover of the Most Great Light.

He was then in Iṣfahán, and he shut his eyes to this world and

the next as well,[[40]](#footnote-40) and opened them to the beauty of Him Who

is the embodiment of all that is lovable.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Áqá Muḥammad could no longer find rest, for he had come 28.2

alive through the musk-laden breathings of God; his heart was

alight, he could inhale the holy fragrance, he had an eye to see,

an ear to hear. He guided a number of souls, remaining true

and loyal to the great Cause. He endured terrible persecution

and torment, but did not falter. Then he found favor in the eyes

of the King of Martyrs and became a trusted attendant of the

Beloved of Martyrs,[[42]](#footnote-42) serving them for some years. He was

confirmed in his work, so that on many occasions the King of

Martyrs expressed satisfaction with him, saying, “This man is

one of those souls who are at rest; he is indeed well-pleased with

his Lord, and well-pleasing unto Him.[[43]](#footnote-43) His faith is unalloyed,

he loves God, he has a good character, and leads a good life. He

is also an agreeable companion, and an eloquent one.”

After the King of Martyrs was put to death, Áqá Muḥammad 28.3

stayed on for a time in Iṣfahán, consumed with mourning for

him. Finally he emigrated to the Most Great Prison, where he

was received by Bahá’u’lláh, and won the high honor of sweep-

ing the ground about the Threshold. He was patient, forbear-

ing, a true friend and companion. Then the Supreme Affliction

came upon us, and Áqá Muḥammad was in such anguish that

he was unable to rest for a moment. At every dawn he would

rise and would sweep the ground about the house of Bahá’u’lláh,

his tears pouring down like rain, chanting prayers as he worked.

28.4 What a holy being he was, how great a man! He could not

bear the separation very long, but died, and hastened onward

to the world of lights, to the assemblage where the beauty of

God is unveiled. May God shed upon his grave rays from the

realm of forgiveness, and lull his spirit in the heart of Paradise.

May God exalt his station in the gardens above. His bright tomb

is in ‘Akká.

29  
Ḥájí Faraju’lláh Tafríshí

29.1 Yet another of those who came out

of their homeland to live in the neighborhood of Bahá’u’lláh

was Faraju’lláh of Tafrísh. This blessed individual was from ear-

liest youth the servant of Bahá’u’lláh, and with his esteemed

father, Áqá Luṭfu’lláh, he emigrated from Persia to Adrianople.

Áqá Luṭfu’lláh was a staunch believer, lovingly devoted to the

Blessed Beauty. Patient, long-suffering, completely indifferent

to this world and its vanities, he lived content in the neighbor-

hood of Bahá’u’lláh; and then humbly at the Threshold, with a

contrite heart, he abandoned this fleeting life and soared away

to the boundless realms beyond. His sweet-scented dust is in

Adrianople.

29.2 As for Ḥájí Faraju’lláh, he lived on in that city, until the day

when merciless oppressors banished Bahá’u’lláh to ‘Akká, and

in His company the Ḥájí came here to the Most Great Prison.

Later on, when hardship was changed into ease, he engaged in

trade, becoming a partner to Muḥammad-‘Alí of Iṣfahán. For

some time he prospered and was happy. Then he was given leave

to go, and journeyed to India, where he spent a long period

before he winged his way into the gardens of forgiveness, and

entered the precincts of ineffable mercy.

This servant of the Blessed Beauty was one with the believ- 29.3

ers in their afflictions and calamities; he had his share of the

anguish. The favors of Bahá’u’lláh compassed him about, and

he rejoiced in that boundless grace. He was among the com-

panions, a close associate of the friends, and he had a docile

heart. Although his body was thin and sickly, he was thankful,

accepted it, was patient, and endured the trials of God’s path.

Unto him be greetings and praise; may he receive Heavenly gifts

and blessings; upon him be the glory of God the All-Glorious.

His pure sepulcher is in Bombay, India.

30  
Áqá Ibráhím-i-Iṣfahání  
and his brothers

And among those who emigrated 30.1

and came to settle in the Holy Land was Áqá Ibráhím, one of

four honored brothers: Muḥammad-Ṣádiq; Muḥammad-Ibrá-

hím; Áqá Ḥabíbu’lláh; and Muḥammad-‘Alí. These four lived

in Baghdad with their paternal uncle, Áqá Muḥammad-Riḍá,

known as ‘Aríḍ. They all lived in the same house, and remained

together day and night. Bird-like, they shared the one nest; and

they were always fresh and full of grace, like flowers in a bed.

30.2 When the Ancient Beauty arrived in Iraq their house was in

the neighborhood of His, and thus they had the joy of watch-

ing Him as He came and went. Little by little the manner of

that Lord of hearts, what He did and what He did not do, and

the sight of His lovesome face, had its effect; they began to

thirst after the Faith and to seek His grace and favor. They pres-

ented themselves at the door of His house, as if they were flowers

blooming there; and they were soon enamored of the light that

shone out from His brow, captives of the beauty of that dear

Companion. They needed no teacher, then; by themselves, they

saw through the veils that had blinded them before, and won

the supreme desire of their hearts.

30.3 As commanded by the Blessed Beauty, Mírzá Javád of Turshíz

went to their house one night. Mírzá Javád had hardly opened

his mouth when they accepted the Faith. They did not hesitate

for an instant, for they had amazing receptivity. This is what is

meant by the Qur’ánic verse: “… whose oil would well nigh

shine out, even though fire touched it not! It is light upon light.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

That is, this oil is so fully prepared, so ready to be lit, that it

almost catches fire of itself, though no flame be at hand; which

means that the capacity for faith, and the deserving it, can be

so great, that without the communication of a single word the

light shines forth. This is how it was with those pure-hearted

men; truly they were loyal, staunch, and devoted to God.

30.4 The eldest brother, Muḥammad-Ṣádiq, accompanied Ba-

há’u’lláh from Iraq to Constantinople, and from there to

Adrianople, where he lived happily for some time, close to his

Lord. He was humble, long-suffering, thankful; there was al-

ways a smile on his lips; he was light of heart, and his soul was

in love with Bahá’u’lláh. Later he was given leave to return to

Iraq, for his family was there, and he remained in that city for a

while, dreaming and remembering.

Then a great calamity occurred in Iraq, and all four brothers 30.5

with their noble uncle were taken prisoner. Victimized, captive,

they were brought to Mosul. The uncle, Áqá Muḥammad-Riḍá,

was an old man, illumined of mind, spiritual of heart, a man

detached from all worldly things. He had been extremely rich in

Iraq, enjoying comforts and pleasures, but now in Ḥadbá’—

Mosul—he became the chief victim among the prisoners, and

suffered dire need. He was destitute, but remained dignified,

patient, content, and thankful. Keeping to himself in an out-

of-the-way place, he praised God day and night until he died.

He gave up his heart to his heart’s Love, burst from the shackles

of this inconstant world and ascended to the Kingdom that

endures forever. May God immerse him in the waters of for-

giveness, make him to enter the garden of His compassion and

good pleasure, and keep him in Paradise till the end of time.

As for Muḥammad-Ṣádiq, he too, in Mosul, was subjected 30.6

to hardships on God’s path. He too was a soul at rest, well-

pleased with his Lord and well-pleasing unto Him. In the end

he too replied to the voice of the King of Glory: “Lord, here am

I!” and came to fulfill the verses: “O thou soul who art well-

assured, return unto thy Lord, well-pleased, and well-pleasing

unto Him. Enter thou among My servants; enter Thou My Para-

dise.”[[45]](#footnote-45)

And Muḥammad-‘Alí, once he was freed from captivity, has- 30.7

tened from Mosul to the Holy Land, to the precincts of inex-

haustible grace. Here he still lives. Although he suffers hard-

ship, his heart is at peace. As for his brother Ibráhím, referred to

above, he also came on from Mosul to ‘Akká, but to a region

close by. There with patience, calm, contentment, but diffi-

culty, he engaged in trade, meanwhile mourning the ascension

of Bahá’u’lláh by day and night. Lowly and contrite, with his

face turned toward the mysterious realms of God, he wore his

life away. At the end, consumed by the years, hardly able to

move about, he came to Haifa, where he found a corner of the

travelers’ hospice to live in, and spent his time humbly calling

upon God, entreating Him, offering praise. Little by little, eaten

away with age, his person began its dissolution, and at the end

he stripped off the garment of flesh and with his unclothed

spirit took flight to the realm of the All-Merciful. He was trans-

ported out of this dark life into the shining air, and was plunged

in a sea of lights. May God brighten his grave with spreading

rays, and lull his spirit with the fannings of Divine compassion.

Upon him be the mercy of God, and His good pleasure.

30.8 As for Áqá Ḥabíbu’lláh, he too was made a captive in Iraq

and was banished away to Mosul. For a long time, he lived in

that city, subjected to hardships, but remaining content, and

his faith increasing day by day. When famine came to Mosul

life was harder than ever on the outsiders, but in the remem-

brance of God their hearts were at rest,[[46]](#footnote-46) and their souls ate of

food from Heaven. Thus they endured it all with astonishing

patience, and the people wondered at those strangers in their

midst who were neither distressed nor terrified as the others were,

and who continued to offer praise day and night. “What amaz-

ing trust,” the people said, “they have in God!”

30.9 Ḥabíb was a man with a great store of patience and a joyous

heart. He accustomed himself to exile and he lived in a state of

yearning love. After the departure from Baghdad, the prisoners

of Mosul were constantly made mention of by Bahá’u’lláh; with

regard to them, He expressed His infinite favor. A few years

afterward, Ḥabíb hastened away to the encompassing mercy of

God, and found a nest and refuge on the boughs of the celestial

Tree. There, in the Paradise of all delights, with wondrous songs

he poured out his praise of the bountiful Lord.

31  
Áqá Muḥammad-Ibráhím

Muḥammad-Ibráhím, who bore 31.1

the title of Manṣúr—Victorious—was a coppersmith. This man

of God, yet another among the emigrants and settlers, was a

native of Káshán. In the early flowering of his youth he recog-

nized the newborn Light and drank deep of the holy cup that is

“tempered at the camphor fountain.”[[47]](#footnote-47) He was a man of pleas-

ing disposition, full of zest and the joy of life. As soon as the

light of faith was lit in his heart, he left Káshán, journeyed to

Baghdad, and was honored with coming into the presence of

Bahá’u’lláh.

Áqá Muḥammad had a fine poetic gift, and he would create 31.2

verses like stringed pearls. In Zawrá—that is, Baghdad, the

Abode of Peace—he was on amicable terms with friend and

stranger alike, ever striving to show forth loving-kindness to all.

He brought his brothers from Persia to Baghdad, and opened a

shop for arts and crafts, applying himself to the welfare of oth-

ers. He, too, was taken prisoner and exiled from Baghdad to

Mosul, after which he journeyed to Haifa, where day and night,

lowly and humble, he chanted prayers and supplications and

centered his thoughts on God.

31.3 He remained a long time in Haifa, successfully serving the

believers there, and most humbly and unobtrusively seeing to

the travelers’ needs. He married in that city, and fathered fine

children. To him every day was a new life and a new joy, and

whatever money he made he spent on strangers and friends.

After the slaying of the King of Martyrs, he wrote an elegy to

memorialize that believer who had fallen on the field of an-

guish, and recited his ode in the presence of Bahá’u’lláh; the

lines were touching in the extreme, so that all who were there

shed tears, and voices were raised in grief.

31.4 Áqá Muḥammad continued to live out his life, high of aim,

unvarying as to his inner condition, with fervor and love. Then

he welcomed death, laughing like a rose suddenly full-blown,

and crying, “Here am I!” Thus he quitted Haifa, exchanging it

for the world above. From this narrow slip of land he hastened

upward to the Well-Beloved, soared out of this dust heap to

pitch his tent in a fair and shining place. Blessings be unto him,

and a goodly home.[[48]](#footnote-48) May God sheathe him in mercies; may he

rest under the tabernacles of forgiveness and be brought into

the gardens of Heaven.

32  
Zaynu’l-‘Ábidín Yazdí

One of the emigrants who died 32.1

along the way to the Holy Land was Zaynu’l-‘Ábidín of Yazd.

When, in Manshád, this devoted man first heard the cry of

God, he was awakened to restless life. A holy passion stirred

him, his soul was made new. The light of guidance flamed from

the lamp of his heart; the love of God sparked a revolution in

the country of his inner self. Carried away by love for the Loved

One’s beauty, he left the home that was dear to him and set out

for the Desired Land.

As he traveled along with his two sons, gladdened by hopes 32.2

of the meeting that would be his, he paused on every hilltop, in

every plain, village and hamlet to visit with the friends. But the

great distance stretching out before him changed to a sea of

troubles, and although his spirit yearned, his body weakened,

and at the end he sickened and turned helpless; all this when he

was without a home.

Sick as he was, he did not renounce the journey, nor fail in 32.3

his resolve; he had amazing strength of will, and was deter-

mined to keep on; but the illness worsened with every passing

day, until at last he winged his way to the mercy of God, and

yielded up his soul in a longing unfulfilled.

Although to outward eyes he never drained the cup of meet- 32.4

ing, never gazed upon the beauty of Bahá’u’lláh, still he achieved

the very spirit of spiritual communion; he is accounted as one

of those who attained the Presence, and for him the reward of

those who reached that Presence is fixed and ordained. He was a

stainless soul, faithful, devoted and true. He never drew a breath

except in righteousness, and his single desire was to worship his

Lord. He walked the ways of love; he was known to all for stead-

fast loyalty and pure intent. May God fill up reunion’s cup for

him in a fair country, make him to enter the everlasting King-

dom, and console his eyes with beholding the lights of that

mysterious Realm.

33  
Ḥájí Mullá Mihdíy-i-Yazdí

33.1 Yet another who left his homeland

was Mullá Mihdí of Yazd. Although to all appearances this ex-

cellent man was not of the learned class, he was an expert in the

field of Muslim sacred traditions and an eloquent interpreter of

orally transmitted texts. Persevering in his devotions, known for

holy practices and nightly communings and vigils, his heart was

illumined, and he was spiritual of mind and soul. He spent

most of his time repeating communes, performing the obliga-

tory prayers, confessing his failings and supplicating the Lord.

He was one of those who penetrate mysteries, and was a con-

fidant of the righteous. As a teacher of the Faith he was never at

a loss for words, forgetting, as he taught, all restraint, pouring

forth one upon another sacred traditions and texts.

33.2 When news of him spread around the town and he was

everywhere charged, by prince and pauper alike, with bearing

this new name, he freely declared his adherence and on this

account was publicly disgraced. Then the evil ‘ulamás of Yazd

rose up, issuing a decree that he must die. Since the mujtahid,

Mullá Báqir of Ardikán, refused to confirm the sentence of those

dark divines, Mullá Mihdí lived on, but was forced to leave his

native home. With his two sons, one the great martyr-to-be,

Jináb-i-Varqá, and the other Jináb-i-Ḥusayn, he set out for the

country of his Well-Beloved. In every town and village along

the way, he ably spread the Faith, adducing clear arguments and

proofs, quoting from and interpreting the sacred traditions and

evident signs.[[49]](#footnote-49) He did not rest for a moment; everywhere he

shed abroad the attar of the love of God, and diffused the sweet

breathings of holiness. And he inspired the friends, making them

eager to teach others in their turn, and to excel in knowledge.

He was an eminent soul, with his heart fixed on the beauty 33.3

of God. From the day he was first created and came into this

world, he single-mindedly devoted all his efforts to acquiring

grace for the day he should be born into the next.[[50]](#footnote-50) His heart was

illumined, his mind spiritual, his soul aspiring, his destination

Heaven. He was imprisoned along his way; and as he crossed

the deserts and climbed and descended the mountain slopes he

endured terrible, uncounted hardships. But the light of faith

shone from his brow and in his breast the longing was aflame,

and thus he joyously, gladly passed over the frontiers until at

last he came to Beirut. In that city, ill, restive, his patience gone,

he spent some days. His yearning grew, and his agitation was

such that weak and sick as he was, he could wait no more.

He set out on foot for the house of Bahá’u’lláh. Because he 33.4

lacked proper shoes for the journey, his feet were bruised and

torn; his sickness worsened; he could hardly move, but still he

went on; somehow he reached the village of Mazra‘ih and here,

close by the Mansion, he died. His heart found his Well-Be-

loved One, when he could bear the separation no more. Let

lovers be warned by his story; let them know how he gambled

away his life in his yearning after the Light of the World. May

God give him to drink of a brimming cup in the everlasting

gardens; in the Supreme Assemblage, may God shed upon his

face rays of light. Upon him be the glory of the Lord. His sanc-

tified tomb is in Mazra‘ih, beside ‘Akká.

34  
His Eminence Kalím (Mírzá Músá)

34.1 Jináb-i-Mírzá Músá was the true

brother of Bahá’u’lláh, and from earliest childhood he was reared

in the sheltering embrace of the Most Great Name. He drank in

the love of God with his mother’s milk; when yet a suckling, he

showed an extraordinary attachment to the Blessed Beauty. At

all times he was the object of Divine grace, favor and loving-

kindness. After their distinguished father died, Mírzá Músá was

brought up by Bahá’u’lláh, growing to maturity in the haven of

His care. Day by day, the youth’s servitude and devotion in-

creased. In all things, he lived according to the commandments,

and he was entirely severed from any thoughts of this world.

34.2 Like a bright lamp, he shone out in that Household. He

wished neither rank nor office, and had no worldly aims at all.

His one supreme desire was to serve Bahá’u’lláh, and for this

reason he was never separated from his Brother’s presence. No

matter what torments the others inflicted, his loyalty equaled

the cruelty of the rest, for he had drunk the wine of unadulter-

ated love.

Then the voice was heard, crying out of Shíráz, and from a 34.3

single utterance of Bahá’u’lláh’s his heart was filled with light,

and from a single gust that blew over the gardens of faith, he

caught the fragrance. At once, he began to serve the friends. He

had an extraordinary attachment to me, and was at all times

concerned for my well-being. In Ṭihrán he occupied himself

day and night with propagating the Faith and gradually became

well known to everyone; habitually he spent his time in the

company of blessed souls.

Bahá’u’lláh then left Ṭihrán, journeying to Iraq, and of His 34.4

brothers the two who were in His company were Áqáy-i-Kalím[[51]](#footnote-51)

and Mírzá Muḥammad-Qulí. They turned their faces away from

Persia and the Persians, and closed their eyes to comfort and

peace; in the Beloved’s path they chose with all their hearts to

bear whatever calamity should be their lot.

Thus they arrived in Iraq. During the days when Bahá’u’lláh 34.5

had vanished from sight, that is, when He was on the journey

to Kurdistán, Áqáy-i-Kalím lived on the edge of an abyss; his

life was constantly in danger, and each day that passed was worse

than the one before; still, he bore it all, and knew no fear. When

at last the Blessed Beauty returned out of Kurdistán, Áqáy-i-

Kalím resumed his post by the Holy Threshold, rendering ev-

ery service within his power. For this he became known far and

wide. At the time when Bahá’u’lláh left Baghdad for Constan-

tinople, Áqáy-i-Kalím was with Him and continued to serve

along the way, as he did on the further journey from Con-

stantinople to Adrianople.

It was during the sojourn in this latter city that he detected 34.6

from Mírzá Yaḥyá the odor of rebellion. Day and night he tried

to make him mend his ways, but all to no avail. On the con-

trary, it was astonishing how, like a deadly poison, the temptings

and satanic suggestions of Siyyid Muḥammad worked on Mírzá

Yaḥyá, so that Áqáy-i-Kalím finally abandoned hope. Even then

he never ceased trying, thinking that somehow, perhaps, he could

still the tempest and rescue Mírzá Yaḥyá from the gulf. His heart

was worn away with despair and grief. He tried everything he

knew. At last he had to admit the truth of these words of Saná’í:

*If to the fool my lore you’d bring,*

*Or think my secrets can be told*

*To him who is not wise—*

*Then to the deaf go harp and sing,*

*Or stand before the blind and hold*

*A mirror to his eyes.*

34.7 When all hope was gone, he ended the relationship, saying:

“O my brother, if others are in doubt as to this affair, you and I

both know the truth. Have you forgotten the loving-kindness

of Bahá’u’lláh, and how He trained us both? What care He

took with your lessons and your penmanship; how constantly

He saw to your spelling and your composition, and encouraged

you to practice the different calligraphic styles; He even guided

your copy with His own blessed fingers. Who does not know

how He showered favors on you, how He brought you up in the

haven of His embrace. Is this your thanks for all His tender-

ness—that you plot with Siyyid Muḥammad and de-

sert the shelter of Bahá’u’lláh? Is this your loyalty? Is this the

right return for all His love?” The words had no effect whatever;

on the contrary, with each passing day, Mírzá Yaḥyá disclosed a

greater measure of his concealed intent. Then at the end, the

final rupture took place.

34.8 From Adrianople, Áqáy-i-Kalím went on with the convoy of

Bahá’u’lláh, to the fortress of ‘Akká. His name was specifically

listed in the Sulṭán’s decree, and he was condemned to perpetual

banishment.[[52]](#footnote-52) He devoted all his time in the Most Great Prison

to serving Bahá’u’lláh, and had the honor of being continually

in his Brother’s presence, also keeping company with the be-

lievers; until at last he left this world of dust and hastened to the

holy world above, dying with lowliness and contrition, as he

supplicated his Lord.

It happened that during the Baghdad period, the well-known 34.9

Ílkhání, son of Músá Khán-i-Qazvíní, received through Siyyid

Javád-i-Ṭabáṭabá’í an audience with Bahá’u’lláh. Siyyid Javád

on that occasion made a plea in the Ílkhání’s behalf, saying:

“This Ílkhání, ‘Alí-Qulí Khán, although a sinner and a lifelong

creature of his passions, has now repented. He stands before

You with regret as to his former ways, and from this day forward

he will not so much as draw a breath that might be contrary to

Your good pleasure. I beg of You, accept his repentance; make

him the object of Your grace and favor.”

Bahá’u’lláh replied: “Because he has chosen you as interces- 34.10

sor, I will hide away his sins, and I will take steps to bring him

comfort and peace of mind.”

The Ílkhání had been a man of unlimited wealth, but he had 34.11

wasted it all on the desires of the flesh. He was now destitute, to

such a point that he did not even dare to step outside his house,

because of the creditors waiting there to fall upon him.

Bahá’u’lláh directed him to go to ‘Umar Páshá, the Governor of

Damascus, and obtain from him a letter of recommendation to

Constantinople. The Ílkhání complied, and he received every

assistance from the Governor of Baghdad. After utter despair,

he began to hope again, and left for Constantinople. When he

arrived at Díyárbakr[[53]](#footnote-53) he penned a letter on behalf of two Arme-

nian merchants. “These two are about to leave for Baghdad,”

his letter said. “They have shown me every courtesy, and have

also asked me for an introduction. I had no refuge or shelter

except Your bounty; thus I beg of You to show them favor.” The

superscription, that is, the address he had written on the enve-

lope was: “To His Eminence Bahá’u’lláh, Leader of the Bábís.”

The merchants presented this letter to Bahá’u’lláh at the head

of the bridge, and when He inquired about it their reply was:

“In Díyárbakr, the Ílkhání gave us particulars as to this Cause.”

Then they accompanied Him to His house.

34.12 When the Blessed Beauty entered the family apartments,

Áqáy-i-Kalím was there to meet Him. Bahá’u’lláh cried out,

“Kalím, Kalím! The fame of the Cause of God has reached as

far as Díyárbakr!” And He was smiling, jubilant.

34.13 Mírzá Músá was indeed a true brother to the Blessed Beauty;

this is why he remained steadfast, under all conditions, to the

very end. Unto him be praise and salutations, and the breath of

life, and glory; upon him be mercy and grace.

35  
Ḥájí Muḥammad Khán

Another of those who left their 35.1

homes and came to settle in the neighborhood of Bahá’u’lláh

was Ḥájí Muḥammad Khán. This distinguished man, a native

of Sístán, was a Balúch. When he was very young, he caught

fire and became a mystic—an ‘áríf, or adept. As a wandering

dervish, completely selfless, he went out from his home and,

following the dervish rule, traveled about in search of his

murshid, his perfect leader. For he yearned, as the Qalandar

dervishes would say, to discover that “priest of the Magi”,

or spiritual guide.

Far and wide, he carried on his search. He would speak to 35.2

everyone he met. But what he longed for was the sweet scent of

the love of God, and this he was unable to detect in anyone,

whether Gnostic or philosopher, or member of the Shaykhí sect.

All he could see in the dervishes was their tufted beards, and

their palms-up religion of beggary. They were “dervish”—poor

in all save God—in name only; all they cared about, it seemed

to him, was whatever came to hand. Nor did he find illumina-

tion among the Illuminati; he heard nothing from them but

idle argument. He observed that their grandiloquence was not

eloquence and that their subtleties were but windy figures of

speech. Truth was not there; the core of inner meaning was ab-

sent. For true philosophy is that which produces rewards of ex-

cellence, and among these learned men there was no such fruit

to be found; at the peak of their accomplishment, they became

the slaves of vice, led an unconcerned life and were given over

to personal characteristics that were deserving of blame. To him,

of all that constitutes the high, distinguishing quality of hu-

mankind, they were devoid.

35.3 As for the Shaykhí group, their essence was gone, only the

dregs remained; the kernel of them had vanished, leaving the

shell behind; most of their dialectics was lumber and superflu-

ities by now.

35.4 Thus at the very moment when he heard the call from the

Kingdom of God, he shouted, “Yea, verily!” and he was off like

the desert wind. He traveled over vast distances, arrived at the

Most Great Prison and attained the presence of Bahá’u’lláh.

When his eyes fell upon that bright Countenance he was in-

stantly enslaved. He returned to Persia so that he could meet

with those people who professed to be following the Path, those

friends of other days who were seeking out the Truth, and deal

with them as his loyalty and duty required.

35.5 Both going and returning, the Ḥájí betook himself to each

one of his friends, foregathered with them, and let each one

hear the new song from Heaven. He reached his homeland and

set his family’s affairs in order, providing for all, seeing to the

security, happiness and comfort of each one. After that he bade

them all goodbye. To his relatives, his wife, children, kin, he

said: “Do not look for me again; do not wait for my return.”

35.6 He took up a staff and wandered away; over the mountains

he went, across the plains, seeking and finding the mystics, his

friends. On his first journey, he went to the late Mírzá Yúsuf

Khán (Mustawfíyu’l-Mamálik), in Ṭihrán. When he had said

his say, Yúsuf Khán expressed a wish, and declared that should

it be fulfilled, he would believe; the wish was to be given a son.

Should such a bounty become his, Yúsuf Khán would be won

over. The Ḥájí reported this to Bahá’u’lláh, and received a firm

promise in reply. Accordingly, when the Ḥájí met with Yúsuf

Khán on his second journey, he found him with a child in his

arms. “Mírzá,” the Ḥájí cried, “praise be to God! Your test has

demonstrated the Truth. You snared your bird of joy.” “Yes,”

answered Yúsuf Khán, “the proof is clear. I am convinced. This

year, when you go to Bahá’u’lláh, say that I implore His grace

and favor for this child, so that it may be kept safe in the shelter-

ing care of God.”

Ḥájí Muḥammad then went to the blissful future martyr, 35.7

the King of Martyrs, and asked him to intercede, so that he,

the Ḥájí, might be allowed to keep watch at the doorway of

Bahá’u’lláh. The King of Martyrs sent in this request by letter,

after which Ḥájí Khán duly arrived at the Most Great Prison

and made his home in the neighborhood of his loving Friend.

He enjoyed this honor for a long time, and later, in the Mazra‘ih

garden as well, he was very frequently in Bahá’u’lláh’s presence.

After the Beloved had ascended, Ḥájí Khán remained faithful

to the Covenant and Testament, shunning the hypocrites. At

last, when this servant was absent on the journeys to Europe

and America, the Ḥájí made his way to the travelers’ hospice at

the Ḥaẓíratu’l-Quds; and here, beside the Shrine of the Báb, he

took his flight to the world above.

May God refresh his spirit with the musk-scented air of the 35.8

Abhá Paradise, and the sweet savors of holiness that blow from

the highest Heaven. Unto him be greetings and praise. His bright

tomb is in Haifa.

36  
Áqá Muḥammad-Ibráhím Amír

36.1 Muḥammad-Ibráhím Amír came

from Nayríz. He was a blessed person; he was like a cup filled

with the red wine of faith. At the time when he was first made

captive by the tender Loved One, he was in the flower of his

youth. Then he fell a prey to the oppressors, and following the

upheaval in Nayríz and all the suffering, his persecutors laid

hold of him. Three farráshes pinned his arms and tied his hands

behind him; but the Amír by main strength burst his bonds,

snatched a dagger from a farrásh’s belt, saved himself and ran

away to Iraq. There he engaged in writing down the sacred verses

and later won the honor of serving at the Holy Threshold. Con-

stant and steadfast, he remained on duty day and night. During

the journey from Baghdad to Constantinople, from there to

Adrianople, and from there to the Most Great Prison, he was

always at hand to serve. He married the handmaid of God,

Ḥabíbih, who also served at the Threshold, and his daughter

Badí‘ih became the helpmeet of the late Ḥusayn-Áqá Qahvih-

chí.

36.2 Thus the Amír was steadfast in service throughout his life;

but after the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh his health steadily declined,

and at last he left this world of dust behind him and hastened

away to the unsullied world above. May God illumine the place

where he rests with rays from the all-highest Realm. Unto him

be salutations and praise. His bright shrine is in ‘Akká.

37  
Mírzá Mihdíy-i-Káshání

This honored man, Mírzá Mihdí, 37.1

was from Káshán. In early youth, under his father’s tutelage, he

had studied sciences and arts, and had become skilled in com-

posing both prose and verse, as well as in producing calligraphy

in the style known as shikastih.[[54]](#footnote-54) He was singled out from his

fellows, head and shoulders above the rest. When still a child,

he learned of the Lord’s Advent, caught fire with love, and be-

came one of those who “gave their all to purchase Joseph.” He

was chief of the yearning seekers, lord of lovers; eloquently, he

began to teach the Faith, and to prove the validity of the Mani-

festation.

He made converts; and because he yearned after God, he 37.2

became a laughingstock in Káshán, disparaged by friend and

stranger alike, exposed to the taunts of his faithless compan-

ions. One of them said: “He has lost his mind.” And another:

“He is a public disgrace. Fortune has turned against him. He is

done for.” The bullies mocked him, and spared him nothing.

When life became untenable, and open war broke out, he left

his homeland and journeyed to Iraq, the focal center of the

new Light, where he gained the presence of all mankind’s Be-

loved.

He spent some time here, in the friends’ company, compos- 37.3

ing verses that sang the praises of Bahá’u’lláh. Later he was given

leave to return home, and went back to live for a while in Káshán.

But again, he was plagued by yearning love, and could bear the

separation no more. He returned, therefore, to Baghdad, bring-

ing with him his respected sister, the third consort.[[55]](#footnote-55)

37.4 Here he remained, under the bountiful protection of

Bahá’u’lláh, until the convoy left Iraq for Constantinople, at

which time Mírzá Mihdí was directed to remain behind and

guard the Holy House. Restless, consumed with longing, he

stayed on. When the friends were banished from Baghdad to

Mosul, he was among the prisoners, a victim along with the

others. With the greatest hardship, he got to Mosul, and here

fresh calamities awaited him; he was ill almost all the time, he

was an outcast, and destitute. Still he endured it for a consider-

able period, was patient, retained his dignity, and continually

offered thanks. Finally he could bear the absence of Bahá’u’lláh

no longer. He sought permission, was granted leave to come,

and set out for the Most Great Prison.

37.5 Because the way was long and hard, and he suffered cruelly

on the journey, when he finally reached the ‘Akká prison he was

almost helpless, and worn to the bone. It was during the time

when the Blessed Beauty was imprisoned within the citadel, at

the center of the barracks. Despite the terrible hardships, Mírzá

Mihdí spent some days here, in great joy. To him, the calamities

were favors, the tribulations were Divine Providence, the chas-

tisement abounding grace; for he was enduring all this on the

pathway of God, and seeking to win His good pleasure. His

illness worsened; from day to day he failed; then at the last,

under sheltering grace, he took his flight to the inexhaustible

mercy of the Lord.

This noble personage had been honored among men, but for 37.6

God’s love he lost both name and fame. He bore manifold mis-

fortunes with never a complaint. He was content with God’s

decrees, and walked the ways of resignation. The glance of

Bahá’u’lláh’s favor was upon him; he was close to the Divine

Threshold. Thus, from the beginning of his life till the end, he

remained in one and the same inner state: immersed in an ocean

of submission and consent. “O my Lord, take me, take me!” he

would cry, until at last he soared away to the world that no man

sees.

May God cause him to inhale the sweet scent of holiness in 37.7

the highest Paradise, and refresh him with the crystalline wine

cup, tempered at the camphor fountain.[[56]](#footnote-56) Unto him be saluta-

tions and praise. His fragrant tomb is in ‘Akká.

38  
Mishkín-Qalam

38.1 Among the exiles, neighbors, and

prisoners there was also a second Mír ‘Imád,1[[57]](#footnote-57) the eminent cal-

ligrapher, Mishkín-Qalam.2[[58]](#footnote-58) He wielded a musk-black pen, and

his brows shone with faith. He was among the most noted of

mystics, and had a witty and subtle mind. The fame of this

spiritual wayfarer reached out to every land. He was the leading

calligrapher of Persia and well known to all the great; he en-

joyed a special position among the court ministers of Ṭihrán,

and with them he was solidly established.[[59]](#footnote-59) He was famed

throughout Asia Minor; his pen was the wonder of all calligra-

phers, for he was adept at every calligraphic style. He was be-

sides, for human virtues, a bright star.

38.2 This highly accomplished man first heard of the Cause of

God in Iṣfahán, and the result was that he set out to find

Bahá’u’lláh. He crossed the great distances, measured out the

miles, climbing mountains, passing over deserts and over the

sea, until at last he came to Adrianople. Here he reached the

heights of faith and assurance; here he drank the wine of certi-

tude. He responded to the summons of God, he attained the

presence of Bahá’u’lláh, he ascended to that apogee where he

was received and accepted. By now he was reeling to and fro

like a drunkard in his love for God, and because of his violent

desire and yearning, his mind seemed to wander. He would be

raised up, and then cast down again; he was as one distracted.

He spent some time under the sheltering grace of Bahá’u’lláh,

and every day new blessings were showered upon him. Mean-

while he produced his splendid calligraphs; he would write out

the Most Great Name, Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá, O Thou Glory of the

All-Glorious, with marvelous skill, in many different forms, and

would send them everywhere.[[60]](#footnote-60)

He was then directed to go on a journey to Constantinople, 38.3

and set out with Jináb-i-Sayyáḥ. When he reached that Great

City, the leading Persians and Turks received him with every

honor at first, and they were captivated by his jet black, calli-

graphic art. He, however, began boldly and eloquently to teach

the Faith. The Persian ambassador lurked in ambush; betaking

himself to the Sulṭán’s vazírs he slandered Mishkín-Qalam. “This

man is an agitator,” the ambassador told them, “sent here by

Bahá’u’lláh to stir up trouble and make mischief in this Great

City. He has already won over a large company, and he intends

to subdue still more. These Bahá’ís turned Persia upside down;

now they have started in on the capital of Turkey. The Persian

Government put 20,000 of them to the sword, hoping by this

tactic to quench the fires of sedition. You should awaken to the

danger; soon this perverse thing will blaze up here as well. It

will consume the harvest of your life; it will burn up the whole

world. Then you can do nothing, for it will be too late.”

38.4 Actually that mild and submissive man, in that throne city

of Asia Minor, was occupied solely with his calligraphy and his

worship of God. He was striving to bring about not sedition

but fellowship and peace. He was seeking to reconcile the fol-

lowers of different faiths, not to drive them still further apart.

He was of service to strangers and was helping to educate the

native people. He was a refuge to the hapless and a horn of

plenty to the poor. He invited all comers to the oneness of hu-

mankind; he shunned hostility and malice.

38.5 The Persian ambassador, however, wielded enormous power,

and he had maintained close ties with the ministers for a very

long time. He prevailed on a number of persons to insinuate

themselves into various gatherings and there to make every kind

of false charge against the believers. Urged on by the oppres-

sors, spies began to surround Mishkín-Qalam. Then, as in-

structed by the ambassador, they carried reports to the Prime

Minister, stating that the individual in question was stirring up

mischief day and night, that he was a troublemaker, a rebel and

a criminal. The result was, they jailed him and they sent him

away to Gallipoli, where he joined our own company of vic-

tims. They despatched him to Cyprus and ourselves to the ‘Akká

prison. On the island of Cyprus, Jináb-i-Mishkín was held pris-

oner in the citadel at Famagusta, and in this city he remained, a

captive, from the year 85 till 94.

38.6 When Cyprus passed out of Turkish hands, Mishkín-Qalam

was freed and betook himself to his Well-Beloved in the city of

‘Akká, and here he lived encompassed by the grace of Bahá’u’lláh,

producing his marvelous calligraphs and sending them about.

He was at all times joyous of spirit, ashine with the love of

God, like a candle burning its life away, and he was a consola-

tion to all the believers.

After the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, Mishkín-Qalam remained 38.7

loyal, solidly established in the Covenant. He stood before the

violators like a brandished sword. He would never go half way

with them; he feared no one but God; not for a moment did he

falter, nor ever fail in service.

Following the ascension he made a journey to India, where 38.8

he associated with the lovers of truth. He spent some time there,

making fresh efforts every day. When I learned that he was get-

ting helpless, I sent for him at once and he came back to this

Most Great Prison, to the joy of the believers, who felt blessed

to have him here again. He was at all times my close compan-

ion. He had amazing verve, intense love. He was a compen-

dium of perfections: believing, confident, serene, detached from

the world, a peerless companion, a wit—and his character like

a garden in full bloom. For the love of God, he left all good

things behind; he closed his eyes to success, he wanted neither

comfort nor rest, he sought no wealth, he wished only to be free

from the defilement of the world. He had no ties to this life, but

spent his days and nights supplicating and communing with

God. He was always smiling, effervescing; he was spirit per-

sonified, love embodied. For sincerity and loyalty he had no

match, nor for patience and inner calm. He was selflessness it-

self, living on the breaths of the spirit.

If he had not been in love with the Blessed Beauty, if he had 38.9

not set his heart on the Realm of Glory, every worldly pleasure

could have been his. Wherever he went, his many calligraphic

styles were a substantial capital, and his great accomplishment

brought him attention and respect from rich and poor alike.

But he was hopelessly enamored of man’s one true Love, and

thus he was free of all those other bonds, and could float and

soar in the spirit’s endless sky.

Finally, when I was absent, he left this darksome, narrow 38.10

world and hastened away to the land of lights. There, in the

haven of God’s boundless mercy, he found infinite rewards. Unto

him be praise and salutations, and the Supreme Companion’s

tender grace.

39  
Ustád ‘Alí-Akbar-i-Najjár

39.1 Ustád ‘Alí-Akbar, the Cabinet-

Maker,[[61]](#footnote-61) was numbered among the just, a prince of the right-

eous. He was one of Persia’s earliest believers and a leading

member of that company. From the beginning of the Cause a

trusted confidant, he loosed his tongue to proclaim the Faith.

He informed himself as to its proofs, and went deep into its

Scriptures. He was also a gifted poet, writing odes in eulogy of

Bahá’u’lláh.

39.2 Exceptionally skilled in his craft, Ustád produced highly in-

genious work, fashioning carpentry that, for intricacy and pre-

cision, resembled mosaic inlay. He was expert in mathematics

as well, solving and explaining difficult problems.

39.3 From Yazd, this revered man traveled to Iraq, where he

achieved the honor of entering the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, and

received abundant grace. The Blessed Beauty showered favors

upon Ustád ‘Alí, who entered His presence almost every day.

He was one of those who were exiled from Baghdad to Mosul,

and he endured severe hardships there. He remained a long time

in Mosul, in extremely straitened circumstances but resigned to

the will of God, always in prayer and supplication, and with a

thankful tongue.

Finally he came from Mosul to the Holy Shrine and here by 39.4

the tomb of Bahá’u’lláh he would meditate and pray. In the

dark of the night, restless and uneasy, he would lament and cry

out; when he was supplicating God his heart burned within

him; his eyes would shed their tears, and he would lift up his

voice and chant. He was completely cut off from this dust heap,

this mortal world. He shunned it, he asked but one thing—to

soar away; and he hoped for the promised recompense to come.

He could not bear for the Light of the World to have disap-

peared, and what he sought was the paradise of reunion with

Him, and what his eyes hungered to behold was the glory of the

Abhá Realm. At last his prayer was answered and he rose up-

ward into the world of God, to the gathering-place of the splen-

dors of the Lord of Lords.

Upon him be God’s benediction and praise, and may God 39.5

bring him into the abode of peace, as He has written in His

book: “For them is an abode of peace with their Lord.”[[62]](#footnote-62) “And to

those who serve Him, is God full of kindness.”[[63]](#footnote-63)

40  
Shaykh ‘Alí-Akbar-i-Mázgání

40.1 This chief of free souls, of wan-

derers for the love of God, was only an infant when, in Mázgán,

he was suckled at the breast of grace. He was a child of the

eminent scholar, Shaykh-i-Mázgání; his noble father was one

of the leading citizens of Qamṣar, near Káshán, and for piety,

holiness, and the fear of God he had no peer. This father em-

bodied all the qualities that are worthy of praise; moreover his

ways were pleasing, his disposition good, he was an excellent

companion, and for all these things he was well known. When

he threw off restraint and openly declared himself a believer,

the faithless, whether friend or stranger, turned their backs on

him and began to plot his death. But he continued to further

the Cause, to alert the people’s hearts, and to welcome the new-

comers as generously as ever. Thus in Káshán the fame of his

strong faith reached as high as the Milky Way. Then the pitiless

aggressors rose up, plundered his possessions and killed him.

40.2 ‘Alí-Akbar, the son of him who had laid down his life in the

pathway of God, could live in that place no longer. Had he

remained, he too, like his father, would have been put to the

sword. He passed some time in Iraq, and received the honor of

being in the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. Then he went back to Per-

sia, but again he longed to look upon Bahá’u’lláh, and with his

wife he set out over the deserts and mountains, sometimes riding,

sometimes on foot, measuring off the miles, passing from one

shore to the other, reaching the Holy Place at last and in the

shade of the Divine Lote-Tree finding safety and peace.

When the beauty of the Desired One had vanished from this 40.3

world, ‘Alí-Akbar remained loyal to the Covenant and pros-

pered under the grace of God. By disposition and because of

the intense love in his heart, he yearned to write poetry, to fash-

ion odes and ghazals, but he lacked both meter and rhyme:

*I planned a poem, but my Beloved told me,*

*“Plan only this, that thine eyes should behold Me.”*

With rapturous longing, his heart desired the realms of his com- 40.4

passionate Lord; consumed by burning love, he left this world

at last, and pitched his tent in the world above. May God send

down upon his grave, from the Kingdom of His forgiveness, a

heavy rain[[64]](#footnote-64) of blessings, bestow a great victory upon him, and

grant him mercies, pressed down and running over, in the re-

treats of Heaven.

41  
Mírzá Muḥammad, the servant at the Travelers’ Hospice

41.1 This youth of God was from Iṣfa-

hán, and from an early age was known to its leading divines

for his excellent mind. He was of gentle birth, his family was

known and respected, and he was an accomplished scholar.

He had profited from philosophy and history alike, from

sciences and arts, but he thirsted after the secret of reality,

and longed for knowledge of God. His feverish thirst was

not allayed by the arts and sciences, however limpid those

waters. He kept on seeking, seeking, carrying on debates in

gatherings of learned men until at last he discovered the

meaning of his longing dream, and the enigma, the invio-

lable secret, lay open before him. Suddenly he caught the

scent of fresh flowers from the gardens of the splendor of

God, and his heart was ashine with a ray from the Sun of

Truth. Whereas before, he was like a fish taken from the wa-

ter, now he had come to the wellspring of eternal life; be-

fore, he was a questing moth; now he had found the candle

flame. A true seeker after truth, he was instantly revived by

the supreme Glad Tidings; his heart’s eye was brightened by

the new dawn of guidance. So blinding was the fire of Di-

vine love that he turned his face away from his life, its peace,

its blessings, and set out for the Most Great Prison.

41.2 In Iṣfahán he had enjoyed every comfort, and the world

was good to him. Now his yearning for Bahá’u’lláh freed

him from all other bonds. He passed over the long miles, suffered

intense hardships, exchanged a palace for a prison, and in the

‘Akká fortress assisted the believers and attended upon and served

Bahá’u’lláh. He who had been waited upon, now waited on oth-

ers; he who had been the master was now the servant, he who

had once been a leader was now a captive. He had no rest, no

leisure, day or night. To the travelers he was a trusted refuge; to

the settlers, a companion without peer. He served beyond his

strength, for he was filled with love of the friends. The travelers

were devoted to him, and the settlers grateful. And because he

was continuously busy, he kept silent at all times.

Then the Supreme Affliction came upon us and the absence 41.3

of Bahá’u’lláh was not to be endured. Mírzá Muḥammad could

not stay quiet, day or night. He wasted away, like a candle burn-

ing down; from the fiery anguish, his liver and heart were

inflamed, and his body could bear no more. He wept and sup-

plicated day and night, yearning to soar away to that undiscov-

ered country. “Lord, free me, free me from this absence,” he

would cry, “let me drink of reunion’s cup, find me a lodging in

the shelter of Thy mercy, Lord of Lords!”

At last he quit this dust heap, the earth, and took his flight 41.4

to the world that has no end. May it do him good, that cup

brimming with the grace of God, may he eat with healthy re-

lish of that food which gives life to heart and soul. May God

lead him to that happy journey’s end and grant him an abun-

dant share in the gifts which shall then be bestowed.[[65]](#footnote-65)

42  
Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Vakíl

42.1 One of the captives who were sent

on from Baghdad to Mosul was Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Vakíl. This

righteous soul was among those who became believers in

Baghdad. It was there he drank from the cup of resignation to

the will of God and sought his rest in the shade of the celestial

Tree. He was a man high-minded and worthy of trust. He was

also an extremely capable and energetic administrator of im-

portant affairs, famous in Iraq for his wise counsel. After he

became a believer, he was distinguished by the title of Vakíl—

deputy. It happened in this way:

42.2 There was a notable in Baghdad by the name of Ḥájí Mírzá

Hádí, the jeweler. He had a distinguished son, Áqá Mírzá Músá,

who had received from Bahá’u’lláh the title “Letter of Eter-

nity”. This son had become a staunch believer. As for his father,

the Ḥájí, he was a princely individual known for his lavish open-

handedness not only in Persia and Iraq but as far away as India.

To begin with he had been a Persian vazír; but when he saw

how the late Fatḥ-‘Alí Sháh eyed worldly riches, particularly the

worldly riches of Persian vazírs, and how he snatched whatever

they had accumulated, and how, not content with confiscating

their costly vanities and lumber, he punished and tortured them

right and left, calling it a legal penalty—the Ḥájí dreaded that

he too might be catapulted into the abyss. He abandoned his

position as vazír, and his mansion, and fled to Baghdad. Fatḥ-

‘Alí Sháh demanded that the Governor of Baghdad, Dávúd

Páshá, send him back, but the Páshá was a man of courage and

the Ḥájí was widely known for his able mind. Accordingly, the

Páshá respected and helped him and the Ḥájí set up in business

as a jeweler. He lived with pomp and splendor, like a great prince.

He was one of the most remarkable men of his time, for within

his palace he carried on a life of gratification and opulence, but

he left his pomp, style and retinue behind, occupied himself

with his business affairs and realized great profits.

The door of his house was always open. Turks and Persians, 42.3

neighbors, strangers from far places, all were his honored guests.

Most of Persia’s great, when they came on pilgrimage to the

Holy Shrines, would stop at his house, where they would find a

banquet laid out, and every luxury ready to hand. The Ḥájí

was, indeed, more distinguished than Persia’s Grand Vazír; he

outshone all the vazírs for magnificence, and as the days passed

by he dispensed ever more largesse to all who came and went.

He was the pride of the Persians throughout Iraq, the glory of

his fellow nationals. Even on the Turkish vazírs and ministers

and the grandees of Baghdad he bestowed gifts and favors; and

for intelligence and perceptivity he had no equal.

Because of the Ḥájí’s advancing years, toward the end of his 42.4

days his business affairs declined. Still, he made no change in

his way of life. Exactly as before, he continued to live with

elegance. The prominent would borrow heavily from him, and

never pay him back. One of them, the mother of Áqá Khán

Maḥallátí, borrowed 100,000 túmáns[[66]](#footnote-66) from him and did not

repay one penny, for she died soon after. The Íl-Khán, ‘Alí-

Qulí Khán, was another debtor; another was Sayfu’d-Dawlih, a

son of Fatḥ-‘Alí Sháh; another, Válíyyih, a daughter of Fatḥ-

‘Alí Sháh; these are only a few examples out of many, from

among the Turkish amírs and the great of Persia and Iraq. All

these debts remained unpaid and irrecoverable. Nevertheless,

that eminent and princely man continued to live exactly as be-

fore.

42.5 Toward the close of his life he conceived a remarkable love

for Bahá’u’lláh, and most humbly, would enter His presence. I

remember him saying one day, to the Blessed Beauty, that in

the year 1250 and something over, Mírzá Mawkab, the famed

astrologer, visited the Shrines. “One day he said to me,” the

Ḥájí continued, “‘Mírzá, I see a strange, a unique conjunction

in the stars. It has never occurred before. It proves that a mo-

mentous event is about to take place, and I am certain that this

event can be nothing less than the Advent of the promised

Qá’im.’”

42.6 Such was the situation of that illustrious prince when he

passed away, leaving as heirs a son and two daughters. Think-

ing him to be as wealthy as ever, the people believed that his

heirs would inherit millions, for everyone knew his way of life.

The Persian diplomatic representative, the latter-day mujtahids,

and the faithless judge all sharpened their teeth. They started a

quarrel among the heirs, so that in the resulting turmoil they

themselves would make substantial gains. With this in view

they did whatever they could to ruin the heirs, the idea being to

strip the inheritors bare, while the Persian diplomat, the muj-

tahids, and the judge would accumulate the spoils.

42.7 Mírzá Músá was a staunch believer; his sisters, however,

were from a different mother, and they knew nothing of the Cause.

One day the two sisters, accompanied by the son-in-law of the

late Mírzá Siyyid Riḍá, came to the house of Bahá’u’lláh. The

two sisters entered the family apartments while the son-in-law

settled down in the public reception rooms. The two girls then

said to Bahá’u’lláh: “The Persian envoy, the judge, and the faith-

less mujtahids have destroyed us. Toward the close of his life,

the late Ḥájí trusted no one but Yourself. We ourselves have

been remiss and we should have sought Your protection before;

in any case we come now to implore Your pardon and help.

Our hope is that You will not send us away despairing, and that

through Your favor and support we shall be saved. Deign, then,

to look into this affair, and to overlook our past mistakes.”

Replying, the Blessed Beauty declared with finality that in- 42.8

tervention in affairs of this kind was abhorrent to Him. They

kept on pleading with Him, however. They remained a whole

week in the family apartments, clamoring every morning and

evening for favor and grace. “We will not lift our heads from off

this Threshold,” they said. “We will seek sanctuary here in this

house; we will remain here, by the door of Him Who guards

the angels, until He shall deign to look into our concerns and to

save us from our oppressors.”

Each day, Bahá’u’lláh would counsel them, saying, “Mat- 42.9

ters of this kind are in the hands of the mujtahids and the

government authorities. We do not interfere in such affairs.”

But they kept on with their importunities, insisting, imploring,

begging for help. It happened that the house of Bahá’u’lláh was

bare of worldly goods, and these ladies, accustomed to the best

of everything, could hardly be satisfied with bread and water.

Food had to be procured for them on credit. Briefly, from every

direction, there were problems.

Finally one day Bahá’u’lláh summoned me to His presence. 42.10

“These esteemed ladies,” He said, “with all their exactions, have

put Us to considerable inconvenience. There is no help for

it—you will have to see to this case. But you must solve this

entire, complicated matter in a single day.”

The next morning, accompanied by Áqáy-i-Kalím, I went to 42.11

the house of the late Ḥájí. We called in appraisers and they

collected all the jewels in an upper apartment; the ledgers and

account books having to do with the properties were placed in a

second room; the costly furnishings and art objects of the house

in a third. A number of jewelers then went to work and set a

value on the gems. Other experts appraised the house, the shops,

the gardens, the baths. As soon as they began their work I came

out and posted someone in each room so that the appraisers

could duly complete their tasks. By this time it was nearly noon.

We then had luncheon, after which the appraisers were directed

to divide everything into two equal parts, so that lots could be

cast; one part would be that of the daughters, and one that of

the son, Mírzá Músá.[[67]](#footnote-67) I then went to bed, for I was ill. In the

afternoon I rose, had tea, and repaired to the family apartments

of the mansion. Here I observed that the goods had been di-

vided into three parts. I said to them: “My instructions were

that everything should be divided into two parts. How is it that

there are three?” The heirs and other relatives answered as one:

“A third must certainly be set aside. That is why we have di-

vided everything into three. One share is for Mírzá Músá, one

for the two daughters, and the third we place at Your disposal;

this third is the portion of the deceased and You are to expend it

in any way You see fit.”

42.12 Greatly disturbed, we told them, “Such a thing is out of

the question. This you must not require, for it cannot be

complied with. We gave our word to Bahá’u’lláh that not so

much as a copper coin would be accepted.” But they, too,

swore upon oath that it must be as they wished, that they

would agree to nothing else. This servant answered: “Let us

leave this matter for the present. Is there any further dis-

agreement among you?” “Yes,” said Mírzá Músá, “what has be-

come of the money that was left?” Asked the amount, he an-

swered: “Three hundred thousand túmáns.” The daughters said:

“There are two possibilities: either this money is here in the

house, in some coffer, or buried hereabouts—or else it is in

other hands. We will give over the house and all its contents to

Mírzá Músá. We two will leave the house, with nothing but our

veils. If anything turns up we, as of now, freely accord it to him.

If the money is elsewhere, it has no doubt been deposited in

someone’s care; and that person, well aware of the breach of

trust, will hardly come forward, deal honorably by us, and re-

turn it—rather, he will make off with it all. Mírzá Músá must

establish a satisfactory proof of what he says; his claim alone is

not evidence.” Mírzá Músá replied: “All the property was in

their hands; I knew nothing of what was going on—I had no

hint of it. They did whatever they pleased.”

In short, Mírzá Músá had no clear proof of his claim. He 42.13

could only ask, “Is such a thing possible, that the late Ḥájí

had no ready funds?” Since the claim was unsupported, I felt

that pursuing it further would lead to a scandal and produce

nothing of value. Accordingly I bade them: “Cast the lots.”

As for the third share, I had them put it in a separate apart-

ment, close it off, and affix a seal to the door. The key I

brought to Bahá’u’lláh. “The task is done,” I said. “It was

accomplished only through Your confirmations. Otherwise

it could not have been completed in a year. However, a

difficulty has arisen.” I described in detail the claim of Mírzá

Músá and the absence of any proof. Then I said, “Mírzá

Músá is heavily in debt. Even should he expend all he has,

still he could not pay off his creditors. It is best, therefore, if

You Yourself will accept the heirs’ request, since they persist

in their offer, and bestow that share on Mírzá Músá. Then

he could at least free himself from his debts and still have some-

thing left over.”

On the following day the heirs appeared and implored the 42.14

Blessed Beauty to have me accept the third share. “This is out

of the question,” He told them. Then they begged and entreated

Him to accept that share Himself and expend it for charitable

purposes of His own choice. He answered: “There is only one

purpose for which I might expend that sum.” They said, “That

is no concern of ours, even if You have it thrown into the sea.

We will not loose our hold from the hem of Your garment and

we will not cease our importunities until You accede to our re-

quest.” Then He told them, “I have now accepted this third share;

and I have given it to Mírzá Músá, your brother, but on

the condition that, from this day forward, he will speak no more

of any claim against yourselves.” The heirs were profuse in their

thanks. And so this weighty and difficult case was settled in a

single day. It left no residue of complaints, no uproar, no fur-

ther quarrels.

42.15 Mírzá Músá did his best to urge some of the jewels on

me, but I refused. Finally he requested that I accept a single

ring. It was a precious ring, set with a costly pomegranate

ruby, a flawless sphere, and unique. All around the central

stone, it was gemmed with diamonds. This too I refused,

although I had no ‘abá to my back and nothing to wear but

a cotton tunic that bespoke the antiquity of the world, nor

did I own a copper coin. As Ḥáfiẓ would say: “An empty

purse, but in our sleeve a hoard.”

42.16 Grateful for the bounty he had received, Mírzá Músá

offered Bahá’u’lláh everything he possessed: orchards, lands,

estates—but it was refused. Then he appointed the ‘ulamás

of Iraq to intercede for him. They hastened to Bahá’u’lláh in

a body and begged Him to accept the proffered gifts. He

categorically refused. They respectfully told Him: “Unless

You accept, in a very short time Mírzá Músá will scatter it all to

the winds. For his own good, he should not have access to this

wealth.”

42.17 Then in his own hand, Mírzá Músá penned deeds of gift,

made out according to each of the five creeds, in Arabic and

Persian; two copies he made, and chose the ‘ulamás as his wit-

nesses. Through certain ‘ulamás of Baghdad, among them the

famed scholar ‘Abdu’s-Salám Effendi, and the erudite and widely

known Siyyid Dávúd Effendi, he presented the deed of gift to

Bahá’u’lláh. The Blessed Beauty told them: “We are appoint-

ing Mírzá Músá himself as Our deputy.”

After Bahá’u’lláh’s departure for Rumelia, Mírzá Músá, with 42.18

a promissory note, purchased from the Government the tithes

of Hindíyyih, a district near Karbilá, and suffered a terrible

loss, close to 100,000 túmáns. The Government confiscated his

properties and sold them for next to nothing. When told of the

matter, Bahá’u’lláh said, “Do not speak of this, ever again. Do

not so much as utter a word about those estates.” Meanwhile

the exile from Adrianople to ‘Akká took place. Mírzá Muḥam-

mad went to the Government authorities and said to them:

“I am the deputy (vakíl) of Bahá’u’lláh. These properties do

not belong to Mírzá Músá. How is it that you have taken

them over?” But he had no documents to support him, for

the title deeds were in ‘Akká, and on this account the Gov-

ernment rejected his claim. However, in the process, he be-

came known to all as Mírzá Muḥammad the Deputy. This is

how he received the title.

When we were in Adrianople, Mírzá Músá sent on the ruby 42.19

ring, through Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar, and the Blessed Beauty di-

rected us to accept it. After we reached ‘Akká the believers fell

ill, and lay suffering in their beds. I sent the ring to India, to

one of the friends, asking him to sell it with all possible speed

and forward the proceeds to us in ‘Akká to be expended on

the sick. That blessed individual never sent us a penny. Two

years later he wrote to say that he had sold the ring for twenty-

five pounds and had spent that sum on the pilgrims. This, when

the ring was of such great value. I made no complaint. Rather,

I praised God, thanking Him that out of all that wealth not a

fleck of dust had settled on my robe.

42.20 Mírzá Muḥammad was taken prisoner and sent away from

Baghdad to Mosul, where he fell a prey to fearful ills. He had

been rich; in God’s path he was now poor. He had enjoyed his

ease and comfort; now, for the love of God, he suffered pain

and toil. He lived on for a time in Mosul, suppliant, resigned,

and lowly. And then, severed from all save God, irresistibly

drawn by the gentle gales of the Lord, he rose out of this dark

world to the land of light. Unto him be salutations and praise.

May God shed down upon him the waters of forgiveness, and

open before his grave the gates of Heaven.

43  
Ḥájí Muḥammad-Riḍáy-i-Shírází

43.1 Ḥájí Muḥammad-Riḍá came from

Shíráz. He was a man spiritually minded, lowly, contrite, the

embodiment of serenity and faith. When the call of God was

lifted up, that needy soul hurried into the shelter of heavenly

grace. As soon as he heard the summons, “Am I not your Lord?”

he cried out: “Yea, verily!”[[68]](#footnote-68) and became as a lamp to the people’s

feet.

43.2 For a long time he served the Afnán, Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad-

‘Alí, and was his loyal and close companion, trusted in all things.

Later, following a journey to distant countries, he went to the

Holy Land, and there in utter submission and lowliness bowed

his head before the Sacred Threshold and was honored with

entering the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, where he drank in endless

bounties from cupped hands. For quite a time he remained there,

attending upon Bahá’u’lláh almost every day, encompassed by

holy favor and grace. He was outstanding as to character, and

lived after the commandments of God: tranquil and long-

suffering, in his surrender to God’s will he was selflessness itself.

He had no personal aims whatever, no feeling of attachment to

this fleeting world. His one desire was to please his Lord, his

one hope, to walk the holy path.

He went on, then, to Beirut, serving the honored Afnán in 43.3

that city. He spent a long time in this wise, returning again and

again to enter the presence of Bahá’u’lláh and gaze upon

that Most Great Beauty. Later, in Sidon, he fell ill. Unable

to make the journey to ‘Akká, in perfect acquiescence and

contentment he ascended to the Abhá Kingdom, and was

plunged in the ocean of lights. By the Supreme Pen, endless

bounty was bestowed upon his memory. He was indeed one

of the loyal, the steadfast, a solid pillar of servitude to Bahá’-

u’lláh. Many and many a time, from the lips of the Blessed

Beauty, we heard his praise.

Unto him be greetings and praise, and the glory of the 43.4

All-Glorious. Upon him be compassion and most great mercy

from the Lord of the High Heavens. His shining grave is in

Sidon, near the place called the Station of John the Holy.

44  
Ḥusayn Effendi Tabrízí

44.1 This youth was from Tabríz, and

he was filled with the love of God like a cup flowing and brim-

ming over with red wine. In the flower of his youth he left

Persia and traveled to Greece, making his living as a merchant

there; till a day came when, guided by Divine bounty, he went

from Greece to Smyrna, and there he was given the glad tidings

of a new Manifestation on earth. He shouted aloud, was fren-

zied, was drunk with the music of the new message. He es-

caped from his debits and credits, set out to meet the Lord of

his heart, and entered the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. For some

time, a trusted attendant and companion, he served the

Blessed Beauty. He was then directed to seek a lodging in

the city of Haifa.

44.2 Here he faithfully waited upon the believers, and his home

was a way station for Bahá’í travelers. He had an excellent dis-

position, a wonderful character, and high, spiritual aims. He

was friendly with friend and stranger alike; he was kind to people

of every nation and wished them well.

44.3 When the Most Great Light ascended to the Concourse

above, Ḥusayn Effendi remained faithful to Him, steadfast and

firm; and as before, he continued to be a close friend to the

friends. Thus he lived for a considerable period, and felt him-

self better off than the kings of the earth. He became the son-

in-law of Mírzá Muḥammad-Qulí, brother of the Blessed

Beauty, and remained for a time peaceful and serene. He care-

fully avoided any occasion of being seduced into error, for he

dreaded that the tempest of afflictions might mount in fury,

surge ever higher, and sweep many a soul into the fathomless

gulf.[[69]](#footnote-69) He would sigh and mourn, for this fear was with him at

all times. At last he could bear the world no longer, and with

his own hands stripped off the garment of life.

Praise be unto him, and salutations, and the mercy of God, 44.4

and Divine acceptance. May God pardon him and make him

to enter the highest Heaven, the Paradise that towers above all

the rest. His sweet-scented grave is in Haifa.

45  
Jamshíd-i-Gurjí

Yet another of the emigrants and 45.1

settlers was the valiant Jamshíd-i-Gurjí, who came from Geor-

gia, but grew up in the city of Káshán. He was a fine youth,

faithful, trustworthy, with a high sense of honor. When he heard

of a new Faith dawning, and awoke to the tidings that on Persia’s

horizons the Sun of Truth had risen, he was filled with holy

ecstasy, and he longed and loved. The new fire burned away

those veils of uncertainty and doubt that had closed him round;

the light of Truth shed down its rays, the lamp of guidance

burned before him.

45.2 He remained in Persia for a time, then left for Rumelia, which

was Ottoman territory, and in the Land of Mystery, Adrianople,

won the honor of entering the presence of Bahá’u’lláh; it was

there that his meeting took place. His joy and fervor were bound-

less. Later, at Bahá’u’lláh’s command he made a journey to

Constantinople, with Áqá Muḥammad-Báqir and Áqá ‘Abdu’l-

Ghaffár. In that city, the tyrannous imprisoned him and put

him in chains.

45.3 The Persian ambassador informed against Jamshíd and Ustád

Muḥammad-‘Alí-i-Dallák as enemy leaders and fighters. Jamshíd

he described as a latter-day Rustam[[70]](#footnote-70) while Muḥammad-‘Alí, ac-

cording to the envoy, was a ravening lion. These two respected

men were first imprisoned and caged; then they were sent

out of Turkish territory, under guard to the Persian frontier.

They were to be delivered over to the Persian Government

and crucified, and the guards were threatened with terrible

punishments should they once relax their vigilance and let

the prisoners escape. For this reason, at every stopping place

the victims were kept in some almost inaccessible spot. Once

they were thrown into a pit, a kind of well, and suffered

agonies all through the night. The next morning Jamshíd

cried out: “O you who oppress us! Are we Joseph the Prophet

that you have thrown us in this well? Remember how He

rose out of the well as high as the full moon? We too walk

the pathway of God, we too are down here for His sake, and

we know that these depths are the heights of the Lord.”

45.4 Once arrived at the Persian frontier, Jamshíd and Muḥam-

mad-‘Alí were handed over to Kurdish chiefs to be sent on to

Ṭihrán. The Kurdish chiefs could see that the prisoners were

innocent men, kindly and well-disposed, who had fallen a

prey to their enemies. Instead of dispatching them to the

capital, they set them free. Joyfully, the two hastened away

on foot, went back to Bahá’u’lláh and found a home close by

Him in the Most Great Prison.

Jamshíd spent some time in utter bliss, receiving the grace 45.5

and favor of Bahá’u’lláh and ever and again being admitted to

His presence. He was tranquil and at peace. The believers were

well-pleased with him, and he was well-pleased with God. It

was in this condition that he hearkened to the celestial bid-

ding: “O thou soul who art well-assured, return unto thy Lord,

well-pleased with Him, and well-pleasing unto Him.”[[71]](#footnote-71) And to

God’s cry: “Return!” he replied, “Yea, verily!” He rose out of

the Most Great Prison to the highest Heaven; he soared away

to a pure and gleaming Kingdom, out of this world of dust.

May God succor him in the celestial company,[[72]](#footnote-72) bring him into

the Paradise of Splendors, and safe in the Divine gardens, make

him to live forevermore.

Salutations be unto him, and praise. His grave, sweet as musk, 45.6

is in ‘Akká.

46  
Ḥájí Ja‘far-i-Tabrízí and his brothers

46.1 There were three brothers, all from

Tabríz: Ḥájí Ḥasan, Ḥájí Ja‘far, and Ḥájí Taqí. These three were

like eagles soaring; they were three stars of the Faith, pulsing

with the light of the love of God.

46.2 Ḥájí Ḥasan was of the earlier day; he had believed from the

new Luminary’s first dawning. He was full of ardor, keen of

mind. After his conversion he traveled everywhere, through the

cities and villages of Persia, and his breath moved the hearts of

longing souls. Then he left for Iraq, and on the Beloved’s first

journey, attained His presence there. Once he beheld that beau-

teous Light he was carried away to the Kingdom of Splendors;

he was incandescent, he became a thrall of yearning love. At

this time he was directed to go back to Persia. He was a peddler,

a vendor of small wares, and would travel from city to city.

46.3 On Bahá’u’lláh’s second journey to Iraq, Ḥájí Ḥasan longed

to behold Him again, and there in Baghdad was once more

bedazzled by His presence. Every so often he would journey to

Persia and then return, his thoughts centered on teaching and

furthering the Cause. His business fell apart. His merchandise

was carried away by thieves, and thus, as he put it, his load was

lifted from him—he was disencumbered. He shunned every

worldly tie. He was held fast as by a magnet; he fell hopelessly,

madly in love with the tender Companion, with Him Who is

the Well-Beloved of both worlds. He was known everywhere for

the ecstasy he was in, and experienced strange states of being;

sometimes, with utmost eloquence, he would teach the Faith,

adducing as proofs many a sacred verse and holy tradition, and

bringing sound and reasonable arguments to bear. Then his

hearers would comment on the power of his mind, on his wis-

dom and his self-possession. But there were other times when

love suddenly flamed within him, and then he could not re-

main still for an instant. At those times he would skip, and

dance, or again in a loud voice he would cry out a verse from

the poets, or a song. Toward the end of his days he became a

close friend of Jináb-i-Muníb; the two exchanged many a re-

condite confidence, and each carried many a melody in his breast.

On the friends’ final journey he went to Ádhirbáyján, and 46.4

there, throwing caution to the winds, he roared out the Great-

est Name: “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá!” The unbelievers there joined

forces with his relatives, and they lured that innocent, that man

in his ecstasy, away to a garden. Here, they first put questions

to him and listened to his answers. He spoke out; he expounded

the secret verities of the Faith, and set forth conclusive proofs

that the Advent had indeed come to pass. He recited verses

from the Qur’án, and traditions handed down from the

Prophet Muḥammad and the Holy Imáms. Following that,

in a frenzy of love and longing rapture, he began to sing. It

was a shahnáz melody he sang; the words were from the po-

ets, to say that the Lord had come. And they killed him; they

shed his blood. They wrenched and hacked his limbs apart

and hid his body underneath the dust.

As for Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ja‘far, the gently born, he too, like 46.5

his brother, was bewitched by the Blessed Beauty. It was in Iraq

that he entered the presence of the Light of the World, and he

too caught fire with Divine love and was carried away by the

gentle gales of God. Like his brother, he was a vendor of small

wares, always on a journey from one place to the next. When

Bahá’u’lláh left Baghdad for the capital of Islám, Ḥájí Ja‘far was

in Persia, and when the Blessed Beauty and His retinue came to

a halt in Adrianople, Ja‘far and Ḥájí Taqí, his brother, arrived

there from Ádhirbáyján. They found a corner somewhere and

settled down. Our oppressors then stretched out arrogant hands

to send Bahá’u’lláh forth to the Most Great Prison, and they

forbade the believers to accompany the true Beloved, for it was

their purpose to bring the Blessed Beauty to this prison with

but a few of His people. When Ḥájí Ja‘far saw that they had

excluded him from the band of exiles, he seized a razor and

slashed his throat.[[73]](#footnote-73) The crowds expressed their grief and horror

and the authorities then permitted all the believers to leave in

company with Bahá’u’lláh—this because of the blessing that

came from Ja‘far’s act of love.

46.6 They stitched up his wound but no one thought he would

recover. They told him, “For the time being, you will have to

stay where you are. If your throat heals, you will be sent on,

along with your brother. Be sure of this.” Bahá’u’lláh also

directed that this be done. Accordingly, we left Ja‘far in the hos-

pital and went on to the ‘Akká prison. Two months later, he

and his brother Ḥájí Taqí arrived at the fortress, and joined the

other prisoners. The safely delivered Ḥájí grew more loving,

more ardent with every passing day. From dusk till dawn he

would stay awake, chanting prayers, shedding his tears. Then

one night he fell from the roof of the caravanserai and ascended

to the Kingdom of miracles and signs.

46.7 Ḥájí Taqí, born under a fortunate star, was in every sense a

true brother to Ḥájí Ja‘far. He lived in the same spiritual condi-

tion, but he was calmer. After Ḥájí Ja‘far’s death, he would stay

in one room, all alone. He was silence itself. He would sit there,

all alone, properly and courteously, even during the night. One

midnight he climbed up to the roof to chant prayers. The next

morning they found him where he had fallen, on the ground by

the wall. He was unconscious, and they could not tell whether

this was an accident or whether he had thrown himself down.

When he came to himself he said: “I was weary of this life, and

I tried to die. Not for a moment do I wish to linger in this

world. Pray that I may go on.”

This, then, is the life story of those three brothers. All three 46.8

were souls well-assured; all three were pleased, and pleasing

unto God.[[74]](#footnote-74) They were flames; they were captives of the Faith;

they were pure and holy. And therefore, cut off from the world,

turning their faces toward the Most High Kingdom, they as-

cended. May God wrap them in the garment of His grace in

the realm of forgiveness, and immerse them in the waters of

His mercy forever and ever. Greetings be unto them, and praise.

47  
Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, the Afnán

47.1 Among those souls that are right-

eous, that are luminous entities and Divine reflections, was

Jináb-i-Muḥammad-Taqí, the Afnán.[[75]](#footnote-75) His title was Vakílu’d-

Dawlih. This eminent Bough was an offshoot of the Holy

Tree; in him an excellent character was allied to a noble lin-

eage. His kinship was a true kinship. He was among those

souls who, after one reading of the Book of Íqán, became

believers, bewitched by the sweet savors of God, rejoicing at

the recital of His verses. His agitation was such that he cried

out, “Lord, Lord, here am I!” Joyously, he left Persia and hur-

ried away to Iraq. Because he was filled with longing love, he

sped over the mountains and across the desert wastes, not

pausing to rest until he came to Baghdad.

47.2 He entered the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, and achieved accep-

tance in His sight. What holy ecstasy he had, what fervor, what

detachment from the world! It was beyond description. His

blessed face was so comely, so luminous that the friends in Iraq

gave him a name: they called him “the Afnán of all delights”.

He was truly a blessed soul, a man worthy to be revered. He

never failed in his duty, from the beginning of life till his last

breath. As his days began, he became enamored of the sweet

savors of God, and as they closed, he rendered a supreme

service to the Cause of God. His life was righteous, his speech

agreeable, his deeds worthy. Never did he fail in servitude, in

devotion, and he would set about a major undertaking with

alacrity and joy. His life, his behavior, what he did, what he

left undone, his dealings with others—were all a way of teach-

ing the Faith, and served as an example, an admonishment to

the rest.

After he had achieved the honor, in Baghdad, of meeting 47.3

Bahá’u’lláh, he returned to Persia, where he proceeded to

teach the Faith with an eloquent tongue. And this is how to

teach: with an eloquent tongue, a ready pen, a goodly char-

acter, pleasing words, and righteous ways and deeds. Even

enemies bore witness to his high-mindedness and his spiri-

tual qualities, and they would say: “There is none to com-

pare with this man for his words and acts, his righteousness,

trustworthiness, and strong faith; in all things he is unique;

what a pity that he is a Bahá’í!” That is: “What a pity that he

is not as we are, perverse, uncaring, committing sins, en-

grossed in sensuality, the creatures of our passions!” Gra-

cious God! They saw with their own eyes that the moment

he learned of the Faith he was transformed, he was severed

from the world, he began to emit rays from the Sun of Truth;

and still, they failed to profit by the example he set.

During his days in Yazd he was, outwardly, engaged in 47.4

commercial pursuits, but actually teaching the Faith. His

only aim was to exalt the Word of God, his only wish, to

spread the Divine sweet savors, his only thought, to come

nearer and ever nearer to the mansions of the Lord. There

was no remembrance on his lips but the verses of God. He

was an embodiment of the good pleasure of Bahá’u’lláh, a

dawning-point of the grace of the Greatest Name. Many

and many a time, Bahá’u’lláh expressed to those about Him,

His extreme satisfaction with the Afnán; and consequently,

everyone was certain that he would in future initiate some highly

important task.

47.5 After the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, the Afnán, loyal and

staunch in the Covenant, rendered even more services than he

had before; this in spite of many obstacles, and an overwhelm-

ing load of work, and an infinite variety of matters all claiming

his attention. He gave up his comfort, his business, his proper-

ties, estates, lands, hastened away to ‘Ishqábád and set about

building the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár; this was a service of very great

magnitude, for he thus became the first individual to erect a

Bahá’í House of Worship, the first builder of a House to unify

man. With the believers in ‘Ishqábád assisting him, he succeeded

in carrying off the plan. For a long period in ‘Ishqábád, he had

no rest. Day and night, he urged the believers on. Then they

too exerted their efforts, and made sacrifices above and beyond

their power; and God’s edifice arose, and word of it spread

throughout East and West. The Afnán expended everything he

possessed to rear this building, except for a trifling sum. This is

the way to make a sacrifice. This is what it means to be faithful.

47.6 Afterward he journeyed to the Holy Land, and there beside

that place where the chosen angels circle, in the shelter of the

Shrine of the Báb, he passed his days, holy and pure, supplicat-

ing and entreating the Lord. God’s praise was always on his lips,

and he chanted prayers with both his tongue and heart.

He was wonderfully spiritual, strangely ashine. He is one of

those souls who, before ever the drumbeat of “Am I not your

Lord?” was sounded, drummed back: “Yea, verily Thou art!”[[76]](#footnote-76)

It was in the Iraq period, during the years between the seventies

and the eighties of the Hijra, that he first caught fire and

loved the Light of the World, beheld the glory dawning in

Bahá’u’lláh and witnessed the fulfillment of the words, “I am

He that liveth in the Abhá Realm of Glory!”

The Afnán was an uncommonly happy man. Whenever I 47.7

was saddened, I would meet with him, and on the instant,

joy would return again. Praise be to God, at the last, close by

the Shrine of the Báb, he hastened away in light to the Abhá

Realm; but the loss of him deeply grieved ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

His bright grave is in Haifa, beside the Ḥaẓíratu’l-Quds, 47.8

near Elijah’s Cave. A tomb must be erected there, and built

solidly and well. May God shed upon his resting-place rays

from the Paradise of Splendors, and lave that holy dust with

the rains that beat down from the retreats of the Exalted Com-

panion. Upon him be the glory of the All-Glorious.

48  
‘Abdu’lláh Baghdádí

When he was very young, people 48.1

thought of ‘Abdu’lláh Baghdádí as a libertine, solely devoted to

pleasure. He was regarded by all as the sport of inordinate de-

sires, mired down in his physical passions. But the moment he

became a believer, he was carried away by the sweet savors of

God, and was changed into a new creation. He found himself

in a strange rapture, completely transformed. He had been of

the world, now he was of Heaven; he had lived by the flesh,

now he lived by the spirit; he had walked in darkness, now he

walked in light. He had been a slave to his senses, now he

was a thrall of God. He had been clay and earthenware before,

now he was a dear-bought pearl; a dull and lusterless stone be-

fore, now a ruby glowing.

48.2 Even among the nonbelievers, people were astonished at the

change. What could have come over this youth, they wanted to

know; how did it happen that he was suddenly detached from

the world, eager and devoted? “He was tainted, corrupted,” they

said; “today he is abstemious and chaste. He was sunk in his

appetites, but is now the soul of purity, living a righteous life.

He has left the world behind him. He has broken up the feast,

dismissed the revelers, and folded the banquet cloth away. His

mind is distracted by love.”

48.3 Briefly, he let go his pleasures and possessions, and jour-

neyed to ‘Akká on foot. His face had turned so bright, his na-

ture so luminous, that it was a joy to look at him. I used to say:

“Áqá ‘Abdu’lláh, what condition are you in?” And he would

answer to this effect: “I was in darkness; now, by the favor of

the Blessed Beauty, I am in light. I was a heap of dust; He

changed me to a fertile field. I was in constant torment; I am

now at peace. I was in love with my chains; He has broken

them. I was avid for this one and that; now I cling to the Lord.

I was a bird in a cage; He let me out. Today, though I live in the

desert, and I have the bare ground for my bed and pillow, it

feels like silk. In the old time, my coverlet was satin, and my

soul was on the rack. Now I am homeless, and happy.”

48.4 But his burning heart broke when he saw how victimized

was Bahá’u’lláh, how patiently He suffered. ‘Abdu’lláh yearned

to die for Him. And thus it came about that he offered up his

life for his tender Companion, and hastened away, out of this

dark world to the country of light. His luminous grave is in

‘Akká. Upon him be the glory of the All-Glorious; upon him

be mercy, out of the grace of the Lord.

49  
Muḥammad-Muṣṭafá Baghdádí

Muḥammad-Muṣṭafá was a blazing 49.1

light. He was the son of the famous scholar Shaykh Muḥammad-

i-Shibl; he lived in Iraq, and from his earliest youth was clearly

unique and beyond compare; wise, brave, deserving in every

way, he was known far and wide. From childhood, guided by

his father, he had lit the light of faith in the chapel of his heart.

He had rid himself of the hindering veils of illusion, gazed about

with perceptive eyes, witnessed great new signs of God and,

regardless of the consequences, had cried aloud: “The earth hath

shone out with the light of her Lord!”[[77]](#footnote-77)

Gracious God! The opposition was powerful, the penalty 49.2

obvious, the friends, every one of them, terrified, and off in

some corner hiding their belief; at such a time this intrepid

personality boldly went about his business, and like a man,

faced up to every tyrant. The one individual who, in the year

seventy, was famed in Iraq for his love of Bahá’u’lláh, was this

honored person. A few other souls, then in Baghdad and its

environs, had crept away into nooks and crannies and, im-

prisoned in their own lethargy, there they remained. But

this admirable Muḥammad-Muṣṭafá would boldly, proudly

come and go like a man, and the hostile, because of his physi-

cal strength and his courage, were afraid to attack him.

49.3 After Bahá’u’lláh’s return from His journey to Kurdistán, the

virile strength and bearing of that gallant individual was still

further enhanced. Whenever leave was granted, he would at-

tend upon Bahá’u’lláh, and would hear from His lips expres-

sions of favor and grace. He was the leader, among all the friends

in Iraq, and after the great separation, when the convoy of the

Beloved left for Constantinople, he remained loyal and staunch,

and withstood the foe. He girded himself for service and openly,

publicly, observed by all, taught the Faith.

49.4 As soon as Bahá’u’lláh’s declaration that He was “He Whom

God Shall Manifest”[[78]](#footnote-78) had become known far and wide, Mu-

ḥammad-Muṣṭafá—being among those souls who had be-

come believers prior to this Declaration, and before the call

was raised—cried out: “Verily, we believe!” Because, even

before this Declaration, the very light itself pierced through

the veils that had closed off the peoples of the world, so that

every seeing eye beheld the splendor, and every longing soul

could look upon its Well-Beloved.

49.5 With all his strength, then, Muḥammad-Muṣṭafá arose to

serve the Cause. He rested neither day nor night. After the

Ancient Beauty had departed to the Most Great Prison; after

the friends had been taken prisoner in Baghdad and sent

away to Mosul; after the hostility of outstanding enemies

and the opposition of the populace of Baghdad, he did not

falter, but continued to stand his ground. A long time passed

in this way. But with his yearning for Bahá’u’lláh, the tu-

mult in his heart was such that he set out alone for the Most

Great Prison. He reached there during the period of extreme

restrictions, and had the honor of entering the presence of

Bahá’u’lláh.

He asked then for leave to find a lodging somewhere in the 49.6

neighborhood of ‘Akká, and was permitted to reside in Beirut.

There he went and faithfully served the Cause, assisting all the

pilgrims as they arrived and departed. He was an excellent ser-

vitor, a generous and kindly host, and he sacrificed himself to

see to their affairs as they passed through. For all this he became

known everywhere.

When the Sun of Truth had set and the Light of the Con- 49.7

course on high had ascended, Muḥammad-Muṣṭafá remained

loyal to the Covenant. He stood so firm against the waverers

that they dared not draw a breath. He was like a shooting star,

a missile hurled against the demons;[[79]](#footnote-79) against the violators, an

avenging sword. Not one of the violators so much as dared pass

through the street where he lived and if they chanced to meet

him they were like those described in the Qur’án: “deaf, dumb,

blind: therefore they shall not retrace their steps from error!”[[80]](#footnote-80)

He was the very embodiment of: “The blame of the blamer

shall not deflect him from the path of God, and the terrible

might of the reviler shall not shake him.”

Living in the same manner as before, he served the believers 49.8

with a free mind and pure intent. With all his heart, he assisted

the travelers to the Holy Land, those who had come to circu-

mambulate that place which is ringed around by the Company

on high. Later he moved from Beirut to Iskandarún, and there

he spent some time, until, drawn as if by a magnet to the Lord,

detached from all save Him, rejoicing in His glad tidings, hold-

ing fast to the cord that none can sever—he ascended on the

wings of the spirit to his Exalted Companion.

49.9 May God lift him up to the highest Heaven, to the fellow-

ship of glory.[[81]](#footnote-81) May God bring him into the land of lights, the

mysterious Kingdom, the assemblage of the splendors of the

mighty, all powerful Lord. Upon him be the glory of the All-

Glorious.

50  
Sulaymán Khán-i-Tunukábání

50.1 Sulaymán Khán was the emigrant

and settler who was given the title of Jamáli’d-Dín. He was

born in Tunukábán, into an old family of that region. He was

cradled in wealth, bred to ease, reared in the comfortable ways

of luxury. From his early childhood he had high ambitions and

noble aims, and he was honor and aspiration personified. At

first he planned to outdistance all his fellows and achieve some

lofty rank. For this reason he left his birthplace and went to the

capital, Ṭihrán, where he hoped to become a leader, surpassing

the rest of his generation.

50.2 In Ṭihrán, however, the fragrance of God was borne his way,

and he listened to the summons of the Well-Beloved. He was

saved from the perturbations of high rank; from all the din and

clatter, the glory, the pomps and palaces, of this heap of dust,

the world. He threw off his chains, and by God’s grace, discov-

ered peace. To him, the seat of honor was now no different

from the place where people removed their slippers at the door,

and high office was a thing soon gone and forgotten. He was

cleansed from the stain of living, his heart was eased, for he

had burst the shackles that held him to this present life.

Putting on the garments of a pilgrim, he set out to find 50.3

his loving Friend, and came to the Most Great Prison. Here

for a time he rested, under the protection of the Ancient Beauty;

here he gained the honor of entering the presence of Bahá’u’lláh,

and listened to momentous teachings from His holy lips. When

he had breathed the scented air, when his eyes were illumined

and his ears attuned to the words of the Lord, he was permitted

to make a journey to India, and bidden to teach the true seekers

after truth.

Resting his heart on God, in love with the sweet savors of 50.4

God, on fire with the love of God, he left for India. There he

wandered, and whenever he came to a city he raised the call of

the Great Kingdom and delivered the good news that the Speaker

of the Mount had come. He became one of God’s farmers,

scattering the holy seed of the Teachings. This sowing was fruit-

ful. Through him a considerable number found their way into

the Ark of Salvation. The light of Divine guidance was shed

upon those souls, and their eyes were brightened with behold-

ing the mighty signs of God. He became the focal point of

every gathering, the honored guest. To this day, in India, the

results of his auspicious presence are clear to see, and those

whom he taught are now, in their turn, guiding others to the

Faith.

Following his Indian journey, Sulaymán Khán came back to 50.5

Bahá’u’lláh, but when he arrived, the ascension had taken place.

Continuously, he shed his tears, and his heart was a thurible

for sorrow. But he remained loyal to the Covenant, well rooted

in Heaven.

50.6 Not long before His passing, Bahá’u’lláh had said: “Should

someone go to Persia, and manage to convey it, this message

must be delivered to Amínu’s-Sulṭán:[[82]](#footnote-82) ‘You took steps to help

the prisoners; you freely rendered them a befitting service;

this service will not be forgotten. Rest assured that it will

bring you honor and call down a blessing upon all your affairs.

O Amínu’s-Sulṭán! Every house that is raised up will one day

fall to ruin, except the house of God; that will grow more mas-

sive and be better guarded day by day. Then serve the Court of

God with all your might, that you may discover the way to a

home in Heaven, and found an edifice that will endure for-

ever.’” After the departure of Bahá’u’lláh, this message was con-

veyed to Amínu’s-Sulṭán.

50.7 In Ádhirbáyján the Turkish clerics had brought down Áqá

Siyyid Asadu’lláh, hunted him down in Ardabíl and plotted to

shed his blood; but the Governor, by a ruse, managed to save

him from being physically beaten and then murdered: he sent

the victim to Tabríz in chains, and from there had him con-

ducted to Ṭihrán. Amínu’s-Sulṭán came to the prisoner’s assis-

tance and, in his own office, provided Asadu’lláh with a sanctu-

ary. One day when the Prime Minister was ill, Náṣiri’d-Dín

Sháh arrived to visit him. The Minister then explained the situ-

ation, and lavished praise upon his captive; so much so that the

Sháh, as he left, showed great kindness to Asadu’lláh, and spoke

words of consolation. This, when at an earlier time, the captive

would have been strung up at once to adorn some gallows-tree,

and shot down with a gun.

50.8 After a time Amínu’s-Sulṭán lost the Sovereign’s favor. Hated,

in disgrace, he was banished to the city of Qum. Thereupon

this servant dispatched Sulaymán Khán to Persia, carrying a

prayer and a missive written by me. The prayer besought God’s

aid and bounty and succor for the fallen Minister, so that he

might, from that corner of oblivion, be recalled to favor. In the

letter we clearly stated: “Prepare to return to Ṭihrán. Soon will

God’s help arrive; the light of grace will shine on you again;

with full authority again, you will find yourself free, and Prime

Minister. This is your reward for the efforts you exerted on be-

half of a man who was oppressed.” That letter and that prayer

are today in the possession of the family of Amínu’s-Sulṭán.

From Ṭihrán, Sulaymán Khán journeyed to Qum, and ac- 50.9

cording to his instructions went to live in a cell in the shrine

of the Immaculate.[[83]](#footnote-83) The relatives of Amínu’s-Sulṭán came

to visit there; Sulaymán Khán inquired after the fallen Min-

ister and expressed the wish to meet him. When the Minis-

ter learned of this, he sent for Sulaymán Khán. Placing all

his trust in God, Sulaymán Khán hastened to the Minister’s

house and, meeting him in private, presented the letter from

‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The Minister rose, and received the letter with

extreme respect. Then addressing the Khán he said: “I had

given up hope. If this longing is fulfilled, I will arise to serve;

I will preserve and uphold the friends of God.” Then he

expressed his gratitude, indebtedness and joy, and added,

“Praise be to God, I hope again; I feel that by His aid, my

dream will come true.”

In brief, the Minister pledged himself to serve the friends, 50.10

and Sulaymán Khán took his leave. The Minister then desired

to give him a sum of money to defray the expenses of his jour-

ney, but Sulaymán Khán refused, and despite the Minister’s

insistence, would accept nothing. The Khán had not yet reached

the Holy Land on his return journey when Amínu’s-Sulṭán was

recalled from exile and immediately summoned to the Pre-

miership again. He assumed the position and functioned with

full authority; and at first he did indeed support the believers,

but toward the end, in the case of the Yazd martyrdoms, he was

neglectful. He neither helped nor protected the sufferers in any

way, nor would he listen to their repeated pleas, until all of

them were put to death. Accordingly he too was dismissed, a

ruined man; that flag which had flown so proudly was reversed,

and that hoping heart despaired.

50.11 Sulaymán Khán lived on in the Holy Land, near the Shrine

which the Exalted Assembly circle about. He kept company

with the believers until the day of inescapable death, when he

set out for the mansions of Him Who liveth, and dieth not. He

turned his back on this heap of dust, the world, and hurried

away to the country of light. He broke out of this cage of

contingent being and soared into the endless, placeless Realm.

May God enfold him in the waters of His mercy, cause His

forgiveness to rain down upon him, and bestow on him the

wonders of abounding grace. Salutations be unto him, and

praise.

51  
‘Abdu’r-Raḥmán, the coppersmith

51.1 This was a patient and long-endur-

ing man, a native of Káshán. He was one of the very earliest

believers. The down was not yet upon his cheek when he drank

of the love of God, saw with his own eyes the heavenly table

spread out before him, and received his faith and his portion of

abounding grace.

In a little while he left his home and set out for the rose 51.2

garden that was Baghdad, where he achieved the honor of

entering the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. He spent some time in

Iraq, and won a crown of endless favor: he would enter the

presence of Bahá’u’lláh and many a time would accompany

Him on foot to the Shrine of the Two Káẓims; this was his great

delight.

‘Abdu’r-Raḥmán was among the prisoners exiled to Mosul, 51.3

and later he fairly dragged himself to the fortress at ‘Akká. Here

he lived, blessed by Bahá’u’lláh. He carried on a small business,

trifling, but he was content with it, happy and at peace. Thus,

walking the path of righteousness, he lived to be eighty years

old, at which time, serenely patient, he soared away to the

Threshold of God. May the Lord enfold him there with His

bounty and compassion, and clothe him in the garment of

forgiveness. His luminous grave is in ‘Akká.

52  
Muḥammad-Ibráhím-i-Tabrízí

This man, noble and high-mind- 52.1

ed, was the son of the respected ‘Abdu’l-Fattáḥ who was in the

‘Akká prison. Learning that his father was a captive there, he

came with all speed to the fortress so that he too might have a

share of those dire afflictions. He was a man wise, understand-

ing, in a tumult from drinking the wine of the love of God, but

with a wonderful, basic serenity and calm.

52.2 He had inherited the nature of his father, and he exem-

plified the saying that the child is the secret essence of its

sire. For this reason, over a long period, he found delight in

the neighborhood of the Divine Presence, enjoying utter

peace. Daytimes, he would carry on his trade, and at night

he would come in all haste to the door of the house, to be with

the friends. He was close to all those who were staunch and

true; he was full of courage; he was grateful to God, abstemious

and chaste, expectant of and relying on the bounty and grace

of the Lord. He made his father’s lamp to shine, brightened the

household of ‘Abdu’l-Fattáḥ, and left descendants to remain

behind him in this swiftly passing world.

52.3 He always did what he could to provide for the happiness of

the believers; he always saw to their well-being. He was saga-

cious, grave, and steadfast. By God’s grace, he stayed loyal to

the end, and sound in faith. May God give him to drink from

the cup of forgiveness; may he sip from the spring of God’s

bounty and good pleasure; may God raise him up to the heights

of Divine bestowal. His sweet-scented tomb is in ‘Akká.

53  
Muḥammad-‘Alíy-i-Ardikání

In the flower of tender youth, Mu- 53.1

ḥammad-‘Alí, the illumined, heard the cry of God, and lost his

heart to heavenly grace. He entered the service of the Afnán,

offshoot of the Holy Tree, and lived happy and content. This

was how he came to the city of ‘Akká, and was for quite a time

present at the Sacred Threshold, winning a crown of lasting

glory. The eye of Bahá’u’lláh’s grace and favor was upon him.

He served with a loyal heart. He had a happy nature, a comely

face; he was a man believing, seeking, tested and tried.

During the days of Bahá’u’lláh, Muḥammad-‘Alí remained 53.2

steadfast, and after the Supreme Affliction his heart did not fail

him, for he had drunk the wine of the Covenant and his

thoughts were fixed on the bounties of God. He moved to Haifa

and lived, a firm believer, near the Ḥaẓíratu’l-Quds by the Holy

Shrine on Mount Carmel till his final breath, when death

came and the carpet of his earthly life was rolled up and put

away.

This man was a true servant of the Threshold, a good friend 53.3

to the believers. All were pleased with him, finding him an

excellent companion, gentle and mild. May God succor him in

His exalted Kingdom, and give him a home in the Abhá Realm,

and send upon him abounding grace from the gardens of

Heaven—the place of meeting, the place of the mystical con-

templation of God. His amber-scented dust is in Haifa.

54  
Ḥájí Áqáy-i-Tabrízí

54.1 Early in his youth this spiritual

man, who came from Tabríz, had sensed the mystic knowledge

and drunk the heady wine of God, and he remained staunch as

ever in the Faith during his years of helpless age.

54.2 He lived for a time in Ádhirbáyján, enamored of the Lord.

When he became widely known thereabouts as one bearing

the name of God, the people ruined his life. His relatives

and friends turned against him, finding a new excuse to hound

him with every passing day. Finally he broke up his home,

took his family and fled to Adrianople. He reached there

during the close of the Adrianople period and was taken pris-

oner by the oppressors.

54.3 Along with us homeless wanderers, and under the protec-

tion of the Ancient Beauty, he came to the Most Great Prison

and was a confidant and companion, sharing with us the

calamities and tribulations, humble and long-enduring. Af-

terward, when the restrictions were somewhat relaxed, he

engaged in trade, and through the bounty of Bahá’u’lláh

was comfortable and at peace. But his body had become en-

feebled from the earlier hardships, and all the suffering, and

his faculties had deteriorated; so that ultimately he fell ill,

beyond hope of a remedy; and not far from Bahá’u’lláh, and

shadowed by His protection, he hastened away from this

least of worlds to the high Heavens, from this dark place to

the land of lights. May God immerse him in the waters of

forgiveness; may He bring him into the gardens of Paradise,

and there keep him safe forevermore. His pure dust rests in ‘Akká.

55  
Ustád Qulám-‘Alíy-i-Najjár

This man, a carpenter and a mas- 55.1

ter craftsman, came from Káshán. For faith and certitude, he

was like a sword drawn from the scabbard. He was well known

in his own city as a man righteous, true and worthy of trust.

He was high-minded, abstemious and chaste. When he be-

came a believer, his urgent longing to meet Bahá’u’lláh could

not be stilled; full of joyous love, he went out of the Land of

Káf (Káshán) and traveled to Iraq, where he beheld the splen-

dor of the rising Sun.

He was a mild man, patient, quiet, mostly keeping to him- 55.2

self. In Baghdad, he worked at his craft, was in touch with the

friends, and sustained by the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. For

some time he lived in utter happiness and peace. Then those

who had been taken prisoner were sent away to Mosul, and

he was among the victims and like them exposed to the wrath

of the oppressors. He remained in captivity for quite a while

and when freed came to ‘Akká. Here too he was a friend to

the prisoners and in the Fortress he continued to practice his

skill. As usual he was inclined to solitude, apt to stay apart

from friend and stranger alike, and much of the time lived

by himself.

Then the supreme ordeal, the great desolation, came upon 55.3

us. Qulám-‘Alí took on the carpentry work of the Holy Tomb,

exerting all his sure powers. To this day, the glass roof which is

over the inner courtyard of the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh remains as

the product of his skill. He was a man crystal clear of heart. His

face shone; his inner condition was constant; at no time was he

changeable or unstable. He was staunch, loving, and true till his

last breath.

55.4 After some years in this neighborhood, he rose upward to

the neighborhood of the all-embracing mercy of God, and be-

came a friend to those who dwell in the high Heavens. He had

the honor of meeting Bahá’u’lláh in both worlds. This is the

most precious bestowal, the costliest of all gifts. To him be

salutations and praise. His bright grave is in ‘Akká.

56  
Jináb-i-Muníb, upon him be the  
Glory of the All-Glorious

56.1 His name was Mírzá Áqá and he

was spirit itself. He came from Káshán. In the days of the Báb,

he was drawn to the sweet savors of God; it was then he caught

fire. He was a fine youth, handsome, full of charm and grace.

He was a calligrapher second to none, a poet, and he had as

well a remarkable singing voice. He was wise and perceptive;

staunch in the Faith of God; a flame of God’s love, severed

from all but God.

56.2 During the years when Bahá’u’lláh resided in Iraq, Jináb-

i-Muníb left Káshán and hastened to His presence. He went

to live in a small and humble house, barely managed to subsist,

and set about committing to writing the words of God. On his

brow, the bestowals of the Manifestation were clear to see. In all

this mortal world he had only one possession, his daughter; and

even his daughter he had left behind in Persia, as he hurried

away to Iraq.

At the time when, with all pomp and ceremony, Bahá’u’lláh 56.3

and His retinue departed from Baghdad, Jináb-i-Muníb accom-

panied the party on foot. The young man had been known in

Persia for his easy and agreeable life and his love of pleasure;

also for being somewhat soft and delicate, and used to having

his own way. It is obvious what a person of this type endured,

going on foot from Baghdad to Constantinople. Still, he gladly

measured out the desert miles, and he spent his days and nights

chanting prayers, communing with God and calling upon Him.

He was a close companion of mine on that journey. There 56.4

were nights when we would walk, one to either side of the

howdah of Bahá’u’lláh, and the joy we had defies description.

Some of those nights he would sing poems; among them he

would chant the odes of Ḥáfiẓ, like the one that begins, *“Come,*

*let us scatter these roses, let us pour out this wine,”*[[84]](#footnote-84) and that other:

*To our King though we bow the knee,*

*We are kings of the morning star.*

*No changeable colors have we—*

*Red lions, black dragons we are!*

The Blessed Beauty, at the time of His departure from 56.5

Constantinople, directed Jináb-i-Muníb to return to Persia

and promulgate the Faith. Accordingly he went back, and over

a considerable period he rendered outstanding services, esp-

ecially in Ṭihrán. Then he came again, from Persia to Adrianople,

and entered the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, enjoying the privilege

of attending upon Him. At the time of the greatest catastro-

phe, that is, the exile to ‘Akká, he was made a prisoner on this

Pathway and traveled, by now feeble and ill, with the party of

Bahá’u’lláh.

56.6 He had been stricken by a severe ailment and was pitifully

weak. Still, he would not agree to remaining behind in

Adrianople where he could receive treatment, because he

wanted to sacrifice his life and fall at the feet of his Lord. We

journeyed along till we reached the sea. He was now so feeble

that it took three men to lift him and carry him onto the

ship. Once he was on board, his condition grew so much

worse that the captain insisted we put him off the ship, but

because of our repeated pleas he waited till we reached

Smyrna. In Smyrna, the captain addressed Colonel ‘Umar

Bayk, the government agent who accompanied us, and told

him: “If you don’t put him ashore, I will do it by force,

because the ship will not accept passengers in this condi-

tion.”

56.7 We were compelled, then, to take Jináb-i-Muníb to the

hospital at Smyrna. Weak as he was, unable to utter a word,

he dragged himself to Bahá’u’lláh, lay down at His feet, and

wept. On the countenance of Bahá’u’lláh as well, there was

intense pain.

56.8 We carried Jináb-i-Muníb to the hospital, but the function-

aries allowed us not more than one hour’s time. We laid him

down on the bed; we laid his fair head on the pillow; we held

him and kissed him many times. Then they forced us away. It is

clear how we felt. Whenever I think of that moment, the tears

come; my heart is heavy and I summon up the remembrance of

what he was. A great man; infinitely wise, he was, steadfast,

modest and grave; and there was no one like him for faith and

certitude. In him the inner and outer perfections, the spiritual

and physical, were joined together. That is why he could receive

endless bounty and grace.

His grave is in Smyrna, but it is off by itself, and deserted. 56.9

Whenever this can be done, the friends must search for it,

and that neglected dust must be changed into a much-fre-

quented shrine,[[85]](#footnote-85) so that pilgrims who visit there may breathe

in the sweet scent of his last resting-place.

57  
Mírzá Muṣṭafá Naráqí

Among that company of pure and 57.1

goodly souls was Mírzá Muṣṭafá, a leading citizen of Naráq

and one of the earliest believers. His face shone with the love of

God. His mind was concerned with the anemones of mystic

meanings, fair as meadows and beds of flowers.

It was in the days of the Báb that he first set his lips to the 57.2

intoxicating cup of spiritual truth, and he had a strange tu-

mult in his brain, a fierce yearning in his heart. In the path of

God he threw down whatever he possessed; he gambled every-

thing away, gave up his home, his kin, his physical well-being,

his peace of mind. Like a fish on the sand, he struggled to reach

the water of life. He came to Iraq, joined the friends of his soul,

and entered the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. For some time he lived

there, joyful and content, receiving endless bounty. Then he

was sent back to Persia, where, to the utmost of his capacity, he

served the Faith. He was a whole and accomplished man,

staunch, firmly rooted as the hills; sound, and worthy of trust.

To him, in all that turmoil and panic, the wild dogs howling

were only buzzing flies; tests and trials rested his mind; when

cast into the fire of afflictions that broke out, he proved to be

shining gold.

57.3 On the day when the convoy of Bahá’u’lláh was leaving

Constantinople for Adrianople, Mírzá Muṣṭafá arrived from

Persia. There was no opportunity for him to reach Bahá’u’lláh

except once; and he was thereupon directed to return to Persia.

At such a moment he had the honor of being received.

57.4 When Mírzá Muṣṭafá reached Ádhirbáyján, he began to

spread the Faith. Day and night he remained in a state of prayer,

and there in Tabríz he drank of a brimming cup. His fervor

increased, his teaching raised a tumult. Then the eminent

scholar, the renowned Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Khurásání, came to

Ádhirbáyján and the two of them joined forces. The result was

such overwhelming spiritual fire that they taught the Faith

openly and publicly and the people of Tabríz rose up in wrath.

57.5 The farráshes hunted them down, and caught Mírzá

Muṣṭafá. But then the oppressors said, “Mírzá Muṣṭafá had

two long locks of hair. This cannot be the right man.” At

once, Mírzá Muṣṭafá took off his hat and down fell the locks

of hair. “Behold!” he told them. “I am the one.” They ar-

rested him then. They tortured him and Shaykh Aḥmad until

finally, in Tabríz, those two great men drained the cup of death

and, martyred, hastened away to the Supreme Horizon.

57.6 At the place where they were to be killed, Mírzá Muṣṭafá

cried out: “Kill me first, kill me before Shaykh Aḥmad, that I

may not see them shed his blood!”

57.7 Their greatness has been recorded for all time in the Writings

of Bahá’u’lláh. They received many a Tablet from Him, and

after their death He set down, with His exalted pen, the an-

guish they endured.

From youth till old age, this illustrious man, Mírzá Muṣṭafá, 57.8

devoted his entire life to service on the pathway of God. Today

he dwells in the all-glorious Realm, in the neighborhood of the

ineffable mercy of God, and he rejoices with exceeding glad-

ness, and he celebrates the praise of his Lord. Blessedness be

his, and a goodly home.[[86]](#footnote-86) To him be tidings of great joy, from

the Lord of Lords. May God grant him an exalted station, in

that high Company.

58  
Zaynu’l-Muqarrabín

This distinguished man was one of 58.1

the greatest of all the Báb’s companions and all the loved ones

of Bahá’u’lláh. When he lived under Islám, he was already famed

for his purity and holiness of life. He was talented and highly

accomplished in many directions. He was the leader and spiri-

tual exemplar of the entire population of Najaf-Ábád, and the

eminent of that area showed him unbounded respect. When he

spoke out, his was the deciding opinion; when he passed judg-

ment, it took effect; for he was known to all as the standard,

and the authority of last resort.

58.2 He had no sooner learned of the Báb’s Declaration than he

cried out from the depths of his heart, “O our Lord! we have

indeed heard the voice of one that called. He called us to the

Faith—‘Believe ye on your Lord’—and we have believed.”[[87]](#footnote-87) He

rid himself of all impeding veils; his doubts dispelled, he began

to extol and glorify the Beauty promised from of old. In his

own home, and at Iṣfahán, he became notorious for declaring

far and wide that the advent of the long-desired One had come

to pass. By the hypocrites, he was mocked, cursed and tormented.

As for the people, “the mass, as a snake in the grass”, who had

worshiped him before, now rose up to do him harm. Every day

brought on a fresh cruelty, a new torment from his oppressors.

He endured it all, and went on teaching with great eloquence.

He remained staunch, unmoved, as their wrath increased. In

his hands he held out a full cup of Divine glad tidings, offering

to all who came that heady draught of the knowledge of God.

He was utterly without fear, knew nothing of danger, and swiftly

followed the holy path of the Lord.

58.3 After the attempt on the Sháh, however, there was no shelter

anywhere; no evening, no morning, without intense affliction.

And since his staying on in Najaf-Ábád at such a time was a

great danger to the believers, he left there and traveled to Iraq.

It was during the period when the Blessed Beauty was in

Kurdistán, when He had gone into seclusion and was living in

the cave on Sar-Galú, that Jináb-i-Zayn arrived in Baghdad.

But his hopes were dashed, his heart grieved, for all was silence:

there was no word of the Cause of God, no name nor fame of

it; there were no gatherings, no call was being raised. Yaḥyá,

terror-stricken, had vanished into some dark hiding place. Tor-

pid, flaccid, he had made himself invisible. Try as he might,

Jináb-i-Zayn could find not one soul. He met on a single occa-

sion with His Eminence Kalím. But it was a period when great

caution was being exercised by the believers, and he went on to

Karbilá. He spent some time there, and occupied himself with

copying out the Writings, after which he returned home to Najaf-

Ábád. Here the foul persecutions and attacks of his relentless

enemies could hardly be endured.

But when the Trump had been sounded a second time,[[88]](#footnote-88) he 58.4

was restored to life. To the tidings of Bahá’u’lláh’s advent his

soul replied; to the drum beat, “Am I not your Lord?” his heart

drummed back: “Yea, verily!”[[89]](#footnote-89) Eloquently, he taught again, us-

ing both rational and historical proofs to establish that He Whom

God Shall Manifest—the Promised One of the Báb—had in-

deed appeared. He was like refreshing waters to those who

thirsted, and to seekers, a clear answer from the Concourse on

high. In his writing and speaking, he was first among the righ-

teous, in his elucidations and commentaries a mighty sign of

God.

In Persia his life was in imminent peril; and since remain- 58.5

ing at Najaf-Ábád would have stirred up the agitators and

brought on riots, he hastened away to Adrianople, seeking sanc-

tuary with God, and crying out as he went, “Lord, Lord, here

am I!” Wearing the lover’s pilgrim dress, he reached the Mecca

of his longing. For some time he tarried there, in the presence

of Bahá’u’lláh, after which he was commanded to leave, with

Jináb-i-Mírzá Ja‘far-i-Yazdí, and promulgate the Faith. He re-

turned to Persia and began to teach most eloquently, so that the

glad tidings of the Lord’s advent resounded to the high heavens.

In the company of Mírzá Ja‘far he traveled everywhere, through

cities flourishing and ruined, spreading the good news that the

Blessed Beauty was now manifest.

58.6 Once again, he returned to Iraq, where he was the center of

every gathering, and rejoiced his hearers. At all times, he gave

wise counsel; at all times he was consumed with the love of

God.

58.7 When the believers were taken prisoner in Iraq and banished

to Mosul, Jináb-i-Zayn became their chief. He remained for

some time in Mosul, a consolation to the rest, working to

solve their many problems. He would kindle love in people’s

hearts, and make them kind to one another. Later he asked

for permission to attend upon Bahá’u’lláh; when this was

granted he arrived at the Prison and had the honor of enter-

ing the presence of his Well-Beloved. He then busied him-

self with writing down the sacred verses, and encouraging

the friends. He was love itself to the emigrants, and warmed

the travelers’ hearts. He never rested for a moment, and received

new grace and bounty every day, meanwhile taking down the

Bahá’í Scriptures with faultless care.

58.8 From his early years till his last breath, this eminent man

never failed in service to the Manifestation. After the ascension

he was consumed with such grieving, such constant tears and

anguish, that as the days passed by, he wasted away. He remained

faithful to the Covenant, and was a close companion to this

servant of the Light of the World, but he longed to rise out of

this life, and awaited his departure from day to day. At last,

serene and happy, rejoicing in the tidings of the Kingdom, he

soared away to that mysterious land. There he was loosed from

every sorrow, and in the gathering-place of splendors he was

immersed in light.

58.9 Unto him be salutations and praise from the luminous Realm,

and the glory of the All-Glorious from the Concourse on high,

and great joy in that Kingdom which endures forever. May God

provide him with an exalted station in the Abhá Paradise.

59  
‘Aẓím-i-Tafríshí

This man of God came from the 59.1

district of Tafrísh. He was detached from the world, fearless,

independent of kindred and stranger alike. He was one of

the earliest believers, and belonged to the company of the

faithful. It was in Persia that he won the honor of belief, and

began to assist the friends; he was a servant to every believer, a

trusted helper to every traveler. With Músáy-i-Qumí, upon

whom be the glory of God, he came to Iraq, received his por-

tion of bounty from the Light of the World, and was honored

with entering the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, attending upon Him

and becoming the object of bestowals and grace.

After a time, ‘Aẓím and Ḥájí Mírzá Músá went back to Per- 59.2

sia, where he continued to render service to the friends, purely

for God’s sake. Without wage or stipend he served Mírzá

Naṣru’lláh of Tafrísh for a number of years, his faith and certi-

tude growing stronger with every passing day. Mírzá Naṣru’lláh

then left Persia for Adrianople, and in his company came Jináb-

i-‘Aẓím, and entered the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. He kept on

serving with love and loyalty, purely for the sake of God; and

when the convoy departed for ‘Akká, ‘Aẓím received the dis-

tinction of accompanying Bahá’u’lláh, and he entered the Most

Great Prison.

In the prison he was chosen to serve the Household; he be- 59.3

came the water carrier both within doors and on the outside.

He undertook many hard tasks in the barracks. He had no rest

at all, day or night. ‘Aẓím—“the great, the magnificent”—was

magnificent as to character. He was patient, long-suffering, for-

bearing, shunning the stain of this earth. And since he was the

family water carrier, he had the honor of coming into Bahá’-

u’lláh’s presence every day.

59.4 He was a good companion to all the friends, a consolation to

their hearts; he brought happiness to all of them, the present

and the absent as well. Many and many a time, Bahá’u’lláh was

heard to express His approval of this man. He always main-

tained the same inner condition; he was constant, never subject

to change. He was always happy-looking. He did not know the

meaning of fatigue. He was never despondent. When anyone

asked a service of him, he performed it at once. He was staunch

and firm in his faith, a tree that grew in the scented garden of

God’s tenderness.

59.5 After he had served at the Holy Threshold for many long

years, he hastened away, tranquil, serene, rejoicing in the tid-

ings of the Kingdom, out of this swiftly fading life to the world

that does not die. The friends, all of them, mourned his pass-

ing, but the Blessed Beauty eased their hearts, for He lavished

grace and praise on him who was gone.

59.6 Mercies be upon ‘Aẓím from the Kingdom of Divine co

passion; God’s glory be upon him, at nightfall and the rising

of the sun.

60  
Mírzá Ja‘far-i-Yazdí

This knight of the battlefield was 60.1

one of the most learned of seekers after truth, well versed in

many branches of knowledge. For a long time he was in the

schools, specializing in the fundamentals of religion and reli-

gious jurisprudence, and making researches into philosophy

and metaphysics, logic and history, the contemplative and the

narrated sciences.[[90]](#footnote-90) He began, however, to note that his fellows

were arrogant and self-satisfied, and this repelled him. It was

then that he heard the cry out of the Supreme Concourse, and

without a moment’s hesitation he raised up his voice and

shouted, “Yea, verily!”; and he repeated the words, “O our Lord!

We have heard the voice of one that called. He called us to the

Faith—‘Believe ye on your Lord’—and we have believed.”[[91]](#footnote-91)

When he saw the great tumult and the riots in Yazd, he left 60.2

his homeland and went to Najaf, the noble city; here for

safety’s sake he mingled with the scholars of religion, be-

coming renowned among them for his own wide knowledge.

Then, listening to the voice from Baghdad, he hastened there,

and changed his mode of dress. That is, he put a layman’s hat

on his head, and went to work as a carpenter to earn his living.

He traveled once to Ṭihrán, returned, and sheltered by the grace

of Bahá’u’lláh was patient and content, rejoicing in his garb of

poverty. In spite of his great learning he was humble, self-effac-

ing, lowly. He kept silent at all times, and was a good compan-

ion to every sort of man.

60.3 On the journey from Iraq to Constantinople, Mírzá Ja‘far

was one of Bahá’u’lláh’s retinue, and in seeing to the needs of

the friends, he was a partner to this servant. When we would

come to a stopping-place the believers, exhausted by the long

hours of travel, would rest or sleep. Mírzá Ja‘far and I would

go here and there to the surrounding villages to find oats, straw

and other provisions for the caravan.[[92]](#footnote-92) Since there was a famine

in that area, it sometimes happened that we would be roaming

from village to village from after the noon hour until half the

night was gone. As best we could, we would procure whatever

was available, then return to the convoy.

60.4 Mírzá Ja‘far was patient and long-suffering, a faithful atten-

dant at the Holy Threshold. He was a servant to all the friends,

working day and night. A quiet man, sparing of speech, in all

things relying entirely upon God. He continued to serve in

Adrianople until the banishment to ‘Akká was brought about

and he too was made a prisoner. He was grateful for this, con-

tinually offering thanks, and saying, “Praise be to God! I am in

the fully-laden Ark!”[[93]](#footnote-93)

60.5 The Prison was a garden of roses to him, and his narrow cell

a wide and fragrant place. At the time when we were in the

barracks he fell dangerously ill and was confined to his bed. He

suffered many complications, until finally the doctor gave him

up and would visit him no more. Then the sick man breathed

his last. Mírzá Áqá Ján ran to Bahá’u’lláh, with word of the

death. Not only had the patient ceased to breathe, but his body

was already going limp. His family were gathered about him,

mourning him, shedding bitter tears. The Blessed Beauty said,

“Go; chant the prayer of Yá Sháfí—O Thou, the Healer—and

Mírzá Ja‘far will come alive. Very rapidly, he will be as well as

ever.” I reached his bedside. His body was cold and all the signs

of death were present. Slowly, he began to stir; soon he could

move his limbs, and before an hour had passed he lifted his

head, sat up, and proceeded to laugh and tell jokes.

He lived for a long time after that, occupied as ever with 60.6

serving the friends. This giving service was a point of pride

with him: to all, he was a servant. He was always modest and

humble, calling God to mind, and to the highest degree full of

hope and faith. Finally, while in the Most Great Prison, he aban-

doned this earthly life and winged his way to the life beyond.

Greetings and praise be unto him; upon him be the glory of 60.7

the All-Glorious, and the favoring glances of the Lord. His lu-

minous grave is in ‘Akká.

61  
Ḥusayn-Áqáy-i-Tabrízí

This man who was close to the 61.1

Divine Threshold was the respected son of ‘Alí-‘Askar-i-Tabrízí.

Full of yearning love, he came with his father from Tabríz to

Adrianople, and by his own wish, went on with joy and hope to

the Most Great Prison. From the day of his arrival at the fortress

of ‘Akká he took over the coffee service, and waited upon the

friends. This accomplished man was so patient, so docile, that

over a forty-year period, despite extreme difficulties (for day

and night, friend and stranger alike thronged the doors), he

attended upon each and every one who came, faithfully help-

ing them all. During all that time Ḥusayn-Áqá never offended

a soul, nor did anyone, where he was concerned, utter a single

complaint. This was truly a miracle, and no one else could have

established such a record of service. He was always smiling, at-

tentive as to the tasks committed to his care, known as a man to

trust. In the Cause of God he was staunch, proud and true; in

times of calamity he was patient and long-suffering.

61.2 After the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh the fires of tests leaped up

and a whirlwind of violation battered the edifice down. This

believer, in spite of a close tie of kinship, remained loyal, show-

ing such strength and firmness that he manifested the words:

“In the Cause of God, the blame of the blamer shall he not

fear.”[[94]](#footnote-94) Not for a moment did he hesitate, nor waver in his faith,

but he stood firm as a mountain, proud as an impregnable cita-

del, and rooted deep.

61.3 The Covenant-breakers took his mother away to their own

place, where her daughter lived. They did everything they

could think of to unsettle her faith. To an extent beyond belief,

they lavished favors upon her, and plied her with kindnesses,

hiding the fact that they had broken the Covenant. Finally, how-

ever, that respected handmaid of Bahá’u’lláh detected the odor

of violation, whereupon she instantly quit the Mansion of Bahjí

and hurried back to ‘Akká. “I am the handmaid of the Blessed

Beauty,” she said, “and loyal to His Covenant and Testament.

Though my son-in-law were a prince of the realm, what would

that profit me? I am not to be won over by kinship and displays

of affection. I am not concerned with external tokens of friend-

liness from those who are the very embodiment of selfish desire.

I stand by the Covenant, and I hold to the Testament.” She

would not consent to meet with the Covenant-breakers again;

she freed herself completely from them, and turned her face to

God.

As for Ḥusayn-Áqá, never did he separate himself from 61.4

‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He had the utmost consideration for me and was

my constant companion, and it followed that his passing was a

formidable blow. Even now, whenever he comes to mind I grieve,

and mourn his loss. But God be praised that this man of God,

in the days of the Blessed Beauty, remained at all times in close

proximity to His House, and was the object of His good plea-

sure. Time and again, Bahá’u’lláh was heard to comment that

Ḥusayn-Áqá had been created to perform this service.

After forty years of serving, he forsook this swiftly passing 61.5

world and soared away to the realms of God. Greetings and

praise be unto him, and mercy from his bountiful Lord. May

his grave be encircled with lights that stream from the exalted

Companion. His resting-place is in Haifa.

62  
Ḥájí ‘Alí-‘Askar-i-Tabrízí

62.1 The distinguished ‘Alí-‘Askar was

a merchant from Tabríz. He was much respected in Ádhirbáyján

by all who knew him, and recognized for godliness and trust-

worthiness, for piety and strong faith. The people of Tabríz,

one and all, acknowledged his excellence and praised his char-

acter and way of life, his qualities and talents. He was one of

the earliest believers, and one of the most notable.

62.2 When the Trumpet first sounded, he fainted away, and at the

second blast, he was awakened to new life.[[95]](#footnote-95) He became a candle

burning with the love of God, a goodly tree in the Abhá gar-

dens. He led all his household, his other kindred and his friends

to the Faith, and successfully rendered many services; but the

tyranny of the wicked brought him to an agonizing pass, and

he was beset by new afflictions every day. Still, he did not slacken

and was not dispirited; on the contrary, his faith, his certitude

and self-sacrifice increased. Finally he could endure his home-

land no more. Accompanied by his family, he arrived in

Adrianople, and here, in financial straits, but content, he spent

his days, with dignity, patience, acquiescence, and offering

thanks.

Then he took a little merchandise with him from Adrianople, 62.3

and left for the city of Jum‘ih-Bázár, to earn his livelihood. What

he had with him was trifling, but still, it was carried off by

thieves. When the Persian Consul learned of this he presented a

document to the Government, naming an enormous sum as the

value of the stolen goods. By chance the thieves were caught

and proved to be in possession of considerable funds. It was

decided to investigate the case. The Consul called in Ḥájí ‘Alí-

‘Askar and told him: “These thieves are very rich. In my report

to the Government, I wrote that the amount of the theft was

great. Therefore you must attend the trial and testify conform-

ably to what I wrote.”

The Ḥájí replied: “Your Honor, Khán, the stolen goods 62.4

amounted to very little. How can I report something that is not

true? When they question me, I will give the facts exactly as

they are. I consider this my duty, and only this.”

“Ḥájí,” said the Consul, “We have a golden opportunity here; 62.5

you and I can both profit by it. Don’t let such a once-in-a-

lifetime chance slip through your hands.”

The Ḥájí answered: “Khán, how would I square it with God? 62.6

Let me be. I shall tell the truth and nothing but the truth.”

The Consul was beside himself. He began to threaten and 62.7

belabor ‘Alí-‘Askar. “Do you want to make me out a liar?” he

cried. “Do you want to make me a laughingstock? I will jail

you; I will have you banished; there is no torment I will spare

you. This very instant I will hand you over to the police, and I

will tell them that you are an enemy of the state, and that you

are to be manacled and taken to the Persian frontier.”

The Ḥájí only smiled. “Jináb-i-Khán,” he said. “I have given 62.8

up my life for the truth. I have nothing else. You are telling me

to lie and bear false witness. Do with me as you please; I will

not turn my back on what is right.”

When the Consul saw that there was no way to make ‘Alí- 62.9

‘Askar testify to a falsehood, he said: “It is better, then, for you

to leave this place, so that I can inform the Government that

the owner of the merchandise is no longer available and has

gone away. Otherwise I shall be disgraced.”

62.10 The Ḥájí returned to Adrianople, and spoke not a word as to

his stolen goods, but the matter became public knowledge and

caused considerable surprise.

62.11 That fine and rare old man was taken captive in Adrianople

along with the rest, and he accompanied the Blessed Beauty to

the ‘Akká fortress, this prison-house of sorrows. With all his

family, he was jailed in the path of God for a period of years;

and he was always offering thanks, because the prison was a

palace to him, and captivity a reason to rejoice. In all those

years he was never known to express himself except in thank-

fulness and praise. The greater the tyranny of the oppressors,

the happier he was. Time and again Bahá’u’lláh was heard to

speak of him with loving kindness, and He would say: “I am

pleased with him.” This man, who was spirit personified, re-

mained constant, true, and joyful to the end. When some years

had passed, he exchanged this world of dust for the Kingdom

that is undefiled, and he left powerful influences behind.

62.12 As a rule, he was the close companion of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. One

day, at the beginning of our time in the Prison, I hurried to the

corner of the barracks where he lived—the cell that was his

shabby nest. He was lying there, running a high fever, out of

his head. On his right side lay his wife, shaking and trembling

with chills. To his left was his daughter, Fáṭimih, burning up

with typhus. Beyond them his son, Ḥusayn-Áqá, was down

with scarlet fever; he had forgotten how to speak Persian, and

he kept crying out in Turkish, “My insides are on fire!” At the

father’s feet lay the other daughter, deep in her sickness, and

along the side of the wall was his brother, Mashhadí Fattáḥ,

raving and delirious. In this condition, ‘Alí-‘Askar’s lips were

moving: he was returning thanks to God, and expressing joy.

Praise be to God! He died in the Most Great Prison, still 62.13

patient and thankful, still with dignity and firm in his faith. He

rose up to the retreats of the compassionate Lord. Upon him be

the glory of the All-Glorious; to him be salutations and praise:

upon him be mercy and forgiveness forever and ever.

63  
Áqá ‘Alíy-i-Qazvíní

This eminent man had high ambi- 63.1

tions and aims. He was to a supreme degree constant, loyal and

firmly rooted in his faith, and he was among the earliest and

greatest of the believers. At the very dawn of the new Day of

Guidance he became enamored of the Báb and began to teach.

From morning till dark he worked at his craft, and almost every

night he entertained the friends at supper. Being host in this

way to friends in the spirit, he guided many seekers to the Faith,

attracting them with the melody of the love of God. He was

amazingly constant, energetic, and persevering.

Then the perfume-laden air began to stir from over the gar- 63.2

dens of the All-Glorious, and he caught fire from the newly

kindled flame. His illusions and fancies were burned away and

he arose to proclaim the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh. Every night there

was a meeting, a gathering that rivaled the flowers in their beds.

The verses were read, the prayers chanted, the good news of the

greatest of Advents was shared. He spent most of his time in

showing kindness to friend and stranger alike; he was a mag-

nanimous being, with open hand and heart.

63.3 The day came when he set out for the Most Great Prison,

and arrived with his family at the ‘Akká fortress. He had been

afflicted with many a hardship on his journey, but his longing

to see Bahá’u’lláh was such that he found the calamities easy to

endure; and so he measured off the miles, looking for a home

in God’s sheltering grace.

63.4 At first he had means; life was comfortable and pleasant. Later

on, however, he was destitute and subjected to terrible ordeals.

Most of the time his food was bread, nothing else; instead of

tea, he drank from a running brook. Still, he remained happy

and content. His great joy was to enter the presence of Bahá’-

u’lláh; reunion with his Beloved was bounty enough; his food

was to look upon the beauty of the Manifestation; his wine, to

be with Bahá’u’lláh. He was always smiling, always silent; but at

the same time, his heart shouted, leapt and danced.

63.5 Often, he was in the company of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He was an

excellent friend and comrade, happy, delightful; favored by

Bahá’u’lláh, respected by the friends, shunning the world, trust-

ing in God. There was no fickleness in him, his inner condition

was always the same: stable, constant, firmly rooted as the hills.

63.6 Whenever I call him to mind, and remember that patience

and serenity, that loyalty, that contentment, involuntarily I find

myself asking God to shed His bounties upon Áqá ‘Alí. Misfor-

tunes and calamities were forever descending on that estimable

man. He was always ill, continually subjected to unnumbered

physical afflictions. The reason was that when at home and serv-

ing the Faith in Qazvín, he was caught by the malevolent and

they beat him so brutally over the head that the effects stayed

with him till his dying hour. They abused and tormented him

in many ways and thought it permissible to inflict every kind of

cruelty upon him; yet his only crime was to have become a

believer, and his only sin, to have loved God. As the poet has

written, in lines that illustrate the plight of Áqá ‘Alí:

*By owls the royal falcon is beset.*

*They rend his wings, though he is free of sin.*

*“Why”—so they mock—“do you remember yet*

*That royal wrist, that palace you were in?”*

*He is a kingly bird: this crime he did commit.*

*Except for beauty, what was Joseph’s sin?*

Briefly, that great man spent his time in the ‘Akká prison, 63.7

praying, supplicating, turning his face toward God. Infinite

bounty enfolded him; he was favored by Bahá’u’lláh, much of

the time admitted to His presence and showered with endless

grace. This was his joy and his delight, his great good fortune,

his dearest wish.

Then the fixed hour was upon him, the daybreak of his hopes, 63.8

and it came his turn to soar away, into the invisible realm.

Sheltered under the protection of Bahá’u’lláh, he went swiftly

forth to that mysterious land. To him be salutations and praise

and mercy from the Lord of this world and the world to

come. May God light up his resting-place with rays from the

Companion on high.

64  
Áqá Muḥammad-Báqir and Áqá  
Muḥammad-Ismá‘íl, the tailor

64.1 These were two brothers who, in

the path of God, captives along with the rest, were shut in

the ‘Akká fortress. They were brothers of the late Pahlaván

Riḍá. They left Persia and emigrated to Adrianople, hasten-

ing to the loving-kindness of Bahá’u’lláh; and under His pro-

tection, they came to ‘Akká.

64.2 Pahlaván Riḍá—God’s mercy and blessings and splendors

be upon him; praise and salutations be unto him—was a man

to outward seeming untutored, devoid of learning. He was a

tradesman, and like the others who came in at the start, he cast

everything away out of love for God, attaining in one leap the

highest reaches of knowledge. He is of those from the earlier

time. So eloquent did he suddenly become that the people of

Káshán were astounded. For example this man, to all appear-

ances unschooled, betook himself to Ḥájí Muḥammad-Karím

Khán in Káshán and propounded this question:

64.3 “Sir, are you the Fourth Pillar? I am a man who thirsts after

spiritual truth and I yearn to know of the Fourth Pillar.”[[96]](#footnote-96)

64.4 Since a number of political and military leaders were

present, the Ḥájí replied: “Perish the thought! I shun all those

who consider me the Fourth Pillar. Never have I made such a

claim. Whoever says I have, speaks falsehood; may God’s curse

be on him!”

A few days later Pahlaván Riḍá again sought out the Ḥájí 64.5

and told him: “Sir, I have just finished your book, *Irshádu’l-*

*‘Avám* (Guidance unto the Ignorant); I have read it from cover

to cover; in it you say that one is obligated to know the Fourth

Pillar or Fourth Support; indeed, you account him a fellow knight

of the Lord of the Age.[[97]](#footnote-97) Therefore I long to recognize and know

him. I am certain that you are informed of him. Show him to

me, I beg of you.”

The Ḥájí was wrathful. He said: “The Fourth Pillar is no 64.6

figment. He is a being plainly visible to all. Like me, he has a

turban on his head, he wears an ‘abá, and carries a cane in his

hand.” Pahlaván Riḍá smiled at him. “Meaning no discourtesy,”

he said, “there is, then, a contradiction in Your Honor’s teach-

ing. First you say one thing, then you say another.”

Furious, the Ḥájí replied: “I am busy now. Let us discuss 64.7

this matter some other time. Today I must ask to be excused.”

The point is that Riḍá, a man considered to be unlettered, 64.8

was able, in an argument, to best such an erudite “Fourth Pil-

lar”. In the phrase of ‘Allámiy-i-Ḥillí, he downed him with the

Fourth Support.[[98]](#footnote-98)

Whenever that lionhearted champion of knowledge be- 64.9

gan to speak, his listeners marveled; and he remained, till his

last breath, the protector and helper of all seekers after truth.

Ultimately he became known far and wide as a Bahá’í, was

turned into a vagrant, and ascended to the Abhá Kingdom.

64.10 As for his two brothers: through the grace of the Blessed

Beauty, after they were taken captive by the tyrants, they were

shut in the Most Great Prison, where they shared the lot of

these homeless wanderers. Here, during the early days at ‘Akká,

with complete detachment, with ardent love, they hastened away

to the all-glorious Realm. For our ruthless oppressors, as soon

as we arrived, imprisoned all of us inside the fortress in the

soldiers’ barracks, and they closed up every issue, so that none

could come and go. At that time the air of ‘Akká was poison-

ous, and every stranger, immediately following his arrival, would

be taken ill. Muḥammad-Báqir and Muḥammad-Ismá‘íl came

down with a violent ailment and there was neither doctor nor

medicine to be had; and those two embodied lights died on the

same night, wrapped in each other’s arms. They rose up to the

undying Kingdom, leaving the friends to mourn them forever.

There was none there but wept that night.

64.11 When morning came we wished to carry their sanctified bod-

ies away. The oppressors told us: “You are forbidden to go out

of the fortress. You must hand over these two corpses to us. We

will wash them, shroud them and bury them. But first you must

pay for it.” It happened that we had no money. There was a

prayer carpet which had been placed under the feet of Ba-

há’u’lláh. He took up this carpet and said, “Sell it. Give the

money to the guards.” The prayer carpet was sold for 170 pias-

ters[[99]](#footnote-99) and that sum was handed over. But the two were never

washed for their burial nor wrapped in their winding sheets;

the guards only dug a hole in the ground and thrust them in, as

they were, in the clothes they had on; so that even now, their

two graves are one, and just as their souls are joined in the

Abhá Realm, their bodies are together here, under the earth,

each holding the other in his close embrace.

The Blessed Beauty showered His blessings on these two 64.12

brothers. In life, they were encompassed by His grace and favor;

in death, they were memorialized in His Tablets. Their grave is

in ‘Akká. Greetings be unto them, and praise. The glory of the

All-Glorious be upon them, and God’s mercy, and His benedic-

tion.

65  
Abu’l-Qásim of Sulṭán-Ábád

Another among the prisoners was 65.1

Abu’l-Qásim of Sulṭán-Ábád, the traveling companion of Áqá

Faraj. These two were unassuming, loyal and staunch. Once

their souls had come alive through the breathings of the Faith-

ful Spirit they hastened out of Persia to Adrianople, for such

was the unabating cruelty of the malevolent that they could no

longer remain in their own home. On foot, free of every tie,

they took to the plains and hills, seeking their way across track-

less waters and desert sands. How many a night they could not

sleep, staying in the open with no place to lay their heads; with

nothing to eat or drink, no bed but the bare earth, no food but

the desert grasses. Somehow they dragged themselves along and

managed to reach Adrianople. It happened that they came dur-

ing the last days in that city, and were taken prisoner with the

rest, and in the company of Bahá’u’lláh they traveled to

the Most Great Prison.

Abu’l-Qásim fell violently ill with typhus. He died about the 65.2

same time as those two brothers, Muḥammad-Báqir and

Muḥammad-Ismá‘íl, and his pure remains were buried outside

‘Akká. The Blessed Beauty expressed approval of him and the

friends, all of them, wept over his afflictions and mourned him.

Upon him be the glory of the All-Glorious.

66  
Áqá Faraj

66.1 In all these straits, Áqá Faraj was

the companion of Abu’l-Qásim. When, in Persian Iraq, he first

heard the uproar caused by the Advent of the Most Great Light,

he shook and trembled, clapped his hands, cried out in exulta-

tion and hastened off to Iraq. Overcome with delight, he en-

tered the presence of his holy Lord. He was gathered into the

loving fellowship, and blissfully received the honor of attend-

ing upon Bahá’u’lláh. Then he returned, bearing glad tidings

to Sulṭán-Ábád.

66.2 Here the malevolent were lying in wait, and disturbances

broke out, with the result that the sainted Mullá-Báshí and some

other believers who had none to defend them were struck down

and put to death. Áqá Faraj and Abu’l-Qásim, who had gone

into hiding, then hurried away to Adrianople, to fall, ultimately,

with the others and with their Well-Beloved, into the ‘Akká

prison.

66.3 Áqá Faraj then won the honor of waiting upon the Ancient

Beauty. He served the Holy Threshold at all times and was a

comfort to the friends. During the days of Bahá’u’lláh he was

His loyal servitor, and a close companion to the believers, and

so it was after Bahá’u’lláh’s departure: he remained true to the

Covenant, and in the domain of servitude he stood like a tow-

ering palm; a noble, superior man, patient in dire adversity,

content under all conditions.

Strong in faith, in devotion, he left this life and set his face 66.4

toward the Kingdom of God, to become the object of endless

grace. Upon him be God’s mercy and good pleasure, in His

Paradise. Greetings be unto him, and praise, in the meadows of

Heaven.

67  
The consort of the King of Martyrs

Among the women who came out 67.1

of their homeland was the sorrowing Fáṭimih[[100]](#footnote-100) Begum, widow

of the King of Martyrs. She was a holy leaf of the Tree of God.

From her earliest youth she was beset with uncounted or-

deals. First was the disaster which overtook her noble father

in the environs of Badasht, when, after terrible suffering, he

died in a desert caravanserai, died hard—helpless and far from

home.

The child was left an orphan, and in distress, until, by God’s 67.2

grace, she became the wife of the King of Martyrs. But since he

was known everywhere as a Bahá’í, was an impassioned lover of

Bahá’u’lláh, a man distracted, carried away, and since Náṣiri’d-

Dín Sháh thirsted for blood—the hostile lurked in their am-

bush, and every day they informed against him and slandered

him afresh, started a new outcry and set new mischief afoot.

For this reason his family was never sure of his safety for a single

day, but lived from moment to moment in anguish, foreseeing

and dreading the hour of his martyrdom. Here was the family,

everywhere known as Bahá’ís; their enemies, stony hearted ty-

rants; their government inflexibly, permanently against them;

their reigning Sovereign rabid for blood.

67.3 It is obvious how life would be for such a household. Every

day there was a new incident, more turmoil, another uproar,

and they could not draw a breath in peace. Then, he was

martyred. The Government proved brutal and savage to such a

degree that the human race cried out and trembled. All his pos-

sessions were stripped away and plundered, and his family lacked

even their daily bread.

67.4 Fáṭimih spent her nights in weeping; till dawn broke, her

only companions were tears. Whenever she gazed on her chil-

dren, she would sigh, wearing away like a candle in devouring

grief. But then she would thank God, and she would say:

“Praised be the Lord, these agonies, these broken fortunes are

on Bahá’u’lláh’s account, for His dear sake.” She would call to

mind the defenseless family of the martyred Ḥusayn, and what

calamities they were privileged to bear in the pathway of God.

And as she pondered those events, her heart would leap up, and

she would cry, “Praise be to God! We too have become com-

panions of the Prophet’s Household.”[[101]](#footnote-101)

67.5 Because the family was in such straits, Bahá’u’lláh directed

them to come to the Most Great Prison so that, sheltered in

these precincts of abounding grace, they might be compensated

for all that had passed. Here for a time she lived, joyful, thank-

ful, and praising God. And although the son of the King of

Martyrs, Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Ḥusayn, died in the prison, still his

mother, Fáṭimih, accepted this, resigned herself to the will of

God, did not so much as sigh or cry out, and did not go into

mourning. Not a word did she utter to bespeak her grief.

This handmaid of God was infinitely patient, dignified and 67.6

reserved, and at all times thankful. But then Bahá’u’lláh left the

world, and this was the supreme affliction, the ultimate anguish,

and she could endure no more. The shock and alarm were such

that like a fish taken from the water she writhed on the ground,

trembled and shook as if her whole being quaked, until at last

she took leave of her children and she died. She rose up into the

shadowing mercy of God and was plunged in an ocean of light.

Unto her be salutations and praise, compassion and glory. May

God make sweet her resting-place with the outpourings of His

heavenly mercy; in the shade of the Divine Lote-Tree[[102]](#footnote-102) may He

honor her dwelling.

*He is God!*[[103]](#footnote-103)

Thou seest, O my Lord, the assemblage of Thy loved ones, 67.7

the company of Thy friends, gathered by the precincts of Thine

all-sufficing Shrine, and in the neighborhood of Thine exalted

garden, on a day among the days of Thy Riḍván Feast—that

blessed time when Thou didst dawn upon the world, shedding

thereon the lights of Thy holiness, spreading abroad the bright

rays of Thy oneness, and didst issue forth from Baghdad, with

a majesty and might that encompassed all mankind; with a glory

that made all to fall prostrate before Thee, all heads to bow,

every neck to bend low, and the gaze of every man to be cast

down. They are calling Thee to mind and making mention of

Thee, their breasts gladdened with the lights of Thy bestowals,

their souls restored by the evidences of Thy gifts, speaking Thy

praise, turning their faces toward Thy Kingdom, humbly sup-

plicating Thy lofty Realms.

67.8 They are gathered here to commemorate Thy bright and

holy handmaid, a leaf of Thy green Tree of Heaven, a lumi-

nous reality, a spiritual essence, who ever implores Thy tender

compassion. She was born into the arms of Divine wisdom,

and she suckled at the breast of certitude; she flourished in the

cradle of faith and rejoiced in the bosom of Thy love, O mer-

ciful, O compassionate Lord! And she grew to womanhood in a

house from which the sweet savors of oneness were spread abroad.

But while she was yet a girl, distress came upon her in Thy

path, and misfortune assailed her, O Thou the Bestower, and

in her defenseless youth she drank from the cups of sorrow and

pain, out of love for Thy beauty, O Thou the Forgiver!

67.9 Thou knowest, O my God, the calamities she joyfully

bore in Thy pathway, the trials she confronted in Thy love,

with a face that radiated delight. How many a night, as oth-

ers lay on their beds in soft repose, was she wakeful, humbly

entreating Thy heavenly Realm. How many a day did Thy

people spend, safe in the citadel of Thy sheltering care, while

her heart was harried from what had come upon Thy holy

ones.

67.10 O my Lord, her days and her years passed by, and whenever

she saw the morning light she wept over the sorrows of Thy

servants, and when the evening shadows fell she cried and called

out and burned in a fiery anguish for what had befallen Thy

bondsmen. And she arose with all her strength to serve Thee, to

beseech the Heaven of Thy mercy, and in lowliness to entreat

Thee and to rest her heart upon Thee. And she came forth veiled

in holiness, her garments unspotted by the nature of Thy people,

and she entered into wedlock with Thy servant on whom Thou

didst confer Thy richest gifts, and in whom Thou didst reveal

the ensigns of Thine endless mercy, and whose face, in Thine

all-glorious Realm, Thou didst make to shine with everlasting

light. She married him whom Thou didst lodge in the assem-

blage of reunion, one with the Company on high; him whom

Thou didst cause to eat of all heavenly foods, him on whom

Thou didst shower Thy blessings, on whom Thou didst bestow

the title: Martyrs’ King.

And she dwelt for some years under the protection of that 67.11

manifest Light; and with all her soul she served at Thy Thresh-

old, holy and luminous; preparing foods and a place of rest

and couches for all Thy loved ones that came, and she had no

other joy but this. Lowly and humble she was before each of

Thy handmaids, deferring to each, serving each one with her

heart and soul and her whole being, out of love for Thy beauty,

and seeking to win Thy good pleasure. Until her house became

known by Thy name, and the fame of her husband was noised

abroad, as one belonging to Thee, and the Land of Ṣád

(Iṣfahán) shook and exulted for joy, because of continual

blessings from this mighty champion of Thine; and the

scented herbage of Thy knowledge and the roses of Thy

bounty began to burgeon out, and a great multitude was led

to the waters of Thy mercy.

Then the ignoble and the ignorant amongst Thy creatures 67.12

rose against him, and with tyranny and malice they pronounced

his death; and void of justice, with harsh oppression, they shed

his immaculate blood. Under the glittering sword that noble

personage cried out to Thee: “Praised be Thou, O my God,

that on the Promised Day, Thou hast helped me to attain this

manifest grace; that Thou hast reddened the dust with my blood,

spilled out upon Thy path, so that it puts forth crimson flowers.

Favor and grace are Thine, to grant me this gift which in all the

world I longed for most. Thanks be unto Thee that Thou didst

succor me and confirm me and didst give me to drink of this

cup that was tempered at the camphor fountain[[104]](#footnote-104)—on the Day

of Manifestation, at the hands of the cupbearer of martyrdom,

in the assemblage of delights. Thou art verily the One full of

grace, the Generous, the Bestower.”

67.13 And after they had killed him they invaded his princely house.

They attacked like preying wolves, like lions at the hunt, and

they sacked and plundered and pillaged, seizing the rich fur-

nishings, the ornaments and the jewels. She was in dire peril

then, left with the fragments of her broken heart. This violent

assault took place when the news of his martyrdom was spread

abroad, and the children cried out as panic struck at their hearts;

they wailed and shed tears, and sounds of mourning rose from

out of that splendid home, but there was none to weep over

them, there was none to pity them. Rather was the night of

tyranny made to deepen about them, and the fiery Hell of

injustice blazed out hotter than before; nor was there any

torment but the evil doers brought it to bear, nor any agony

but they inflicted it. And this holy leaf remained, she and

her brood, in the grip of their oppressors, facing the malice

of the unmindful, with none to be their shield.

67.14 And the days passed by when tears were her only compan-

ions, and her comrades were cries; when she was mated to an-

guish, and had nothing but grief for a friend. And yet in these

sufferings, O my Lord, she did not cease to love Thee; she did

not fail Thee, O my Beloved, in these fiery ordeals. Though

disasters followed one upon another, though tribulations com-

passed her about, she bore them all, she patiently endured them

all, to her they were Thy gifts and favors, and in all her massive

agony—O Thou, Lord of most beauteous names—Thy praise

was on her lips.

Then she gave up her homeland, rest, refuge and shelter, 67.15

and taking her young, like the birds she winged her way to this

bright and holy Land—that here she might nest and sing

Thy praise as the birds do, and busy herself in Thy love with all

her powers, and serve Thee with all her being, all her soul and

heart. She was lowly before every handmaid of Thine, humble

before every leaf of the garden of Thy Cause, occupied with

Thy remembrance, severed from all except Thyself.

And her cries were lifted up at dawn tide, and the sweet ac- 67.16

cents of her chanting would be heard in the night season and at

the bright noonday, until she returned unto Thee, and winged

her way to Thy Kingdom; went seeking the shelter of Thy

Threshold and soared upward to Thine everlasting sky. O my

Lord, reward her with the contemplation of Thy beauty, feed

her at the table of Thine eternity, give her a home in Thy neigh-

borhood, sustain her in the gardens of Thy holiness as Thou

willest and pleasest; bless Thou her lodging, keep her safe in the

shade of Thy heavenly Tree; lead her, O Lord, into the pavil-

ions of Thy godhood, make her to be one of Thy signs, one of

Thy lights.

Verily Thou art the Generous, the Bestower, the Forgiver, 67.17

the All-Merciful.

68  
Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá

68.1 Khurshíd Begum, who was given

the title of Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá,[[105]](#footnote-105) the Morning Sun, was mother-in-

law to the King of Martyrs. This eloquent, ardent handmaid of

God was the cousin on her father’s side of the famous Muḥam-

mad-Báqir of Iṣfahán, widely celebrated as chief of the ‘ulamás

in that city. When still a child she lost both her parents, and was

reared by her grandmother in the home of that famed and

learned mujtahid, and well trained in various branches of knowl-

edge, in theology, sciences and the arts.

68.2 Once she was grown, she was married to Mírzá Hádíy-i-

Nahrí; and since she and her husband were both strongly at-

tracted to the mystical teachings of that great luminary, the ex-

cellent and distinguished Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí,[[106]](#footnote-106) they left for

Karbilá, accompanied by Mírzá Hádí’s brother, Mírzá

Muḥammad-‘Alíy-i-Nahrí.[[107]](#footnote-107) Here they used to attend the Siyyid’s

classes, imbibing his knowledge, so that this handmaid became

thoroughly informed on subjects relating to Divinity, on the

Scriptures and on their inner meanings. The couple had two

children, a girl and a boy. They called their son Siyyid ‘Alí and

their daughter Fáṭimih Begum, she being the one who, when

she reached adolescence, was married to the King of Martyrs.

Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá was there in Karbilá when the cry of the 68.3

exalted Lord was raised in Shíráz, and she shouted back, “Yea,

verily!” As for her husband and his brother, they immediately

set out for Shíráz; for both of them, when visiting the Shrine of

Imám Ḥusayn, had looked upon the beauty of the Primal Point,

the Báb; both had been astonished at what they saw in that

transplendent face, in those heavenly attributes and ways, and

had agreed that One such as this must indeed be some very

great being. Accordingly, the moment they learned of His Di-

vine summons, they answered: “Yea, verily!” and they burst

into flame with yearning love for God. Besides, they had

been present every day in that holy place where the late Siyyid

taught, and had clearly heard him say: “The Advent is nigh, the

affair most subtle, most elusive. It behoves each one to search,

to inquire, for it may be that the Promised One is even now

present among men, even now visible, while all about Him are

heedless, unmindful, with bandaged eyes, even as the sacred

traditions have foretold.”

When the two brothers arrived in Persia they heard that the 68.4

Báb had gone to Mecca on a pilgrimage. Siyyid Muḥammad-

‘Alí therefore left for Iṣfahán and Mírzá Hádí returned to Karbilá.

Meanwhile Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá had become friends with the “Leaf

of Paradise”, sister to Mullá Ḥusayn, the Bábu’l-Báb.[[108]](#footnote-108) Through

that lady she had met Ṭáhirih, Qurratu’l-‘Ayn,[[109]](#footnote-109) and had begun

to spend most of her time in close companionship with them

both, occupied in teaching the Faith. Since this was in the early

days of the Cause, the people were not yet afraid of it. From

being with Ṭáhirih, Shams profited immeasurably, and was more

on fire with the Faith than ever. She spent three years in close

association with Ṭáhirih in Karbilá. Day and night, she was

stirred like the sea by the gales of the All-Merciful, and she

taught with an eloquent tongue.

68.5 As Ṭáhirih became celebrated throughout Karbilá, and the

Cause of His Supreme Holiness, the Báb, spread all over Persia,

the latter-day ‘ulamás arose to deny, to heap scorn upon, and to

destroy it. They issued a fatvá or judgment that called for a

general massacre. Ṭáhirih was one of those designated by the

evil ‘ulamás of the city as an unbeliever, and they mistakenly

thought her to be in the home of Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá. They broke

into Shams’s house, hemmed her in, abused and vilified her,

and inflicted grievous bodily harm. They dragged her out of

the house and through the streets to the bázár; they beat her

with clubs; they stoned her, they denounced her in foul lan-

guage, repeatedly assaulting her. While this was going on, Ḥájí

Siyyid Mihdí, the father of her distinguished husband, reached

the scene. “This woman is not Ṭáhirih!” he shouted at them.

But he had no witness to prove it,[[110]](#footnote-110) and the farráshes, the police

and the mob would not let up. Then, through the uproar, a

voice screamed out: “They have arrested Qurratu’l-‘Ayn!” At

this, the people abandoned Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá.

68.6 Guards were placed at the door of Ṭáhirih’s house and no

one was allowed to enter or leave, while the authorities waited

for instructions from Baghdad and Constantinople. As the in-

terval of waiting lengthened out, Ṭáhirih asked for permission

to leave for Baghdad. “Let us go there ourselves,” she told them.

“We are resigned to everything. Whatever happens to us is

the best that can happen, and the most pleasing.” With gov-

ernment permission, Ṭáhirih, the Leaf of Paradise, her mother

and Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá all left Karbilá and traveled to Baghdad,

but the snakelike mass of the populace followed them for some

distance, stoning them from a little way off.

When they reached Baghdad they went to live at the house 68.7

of Shaykh Muḥammad-i-Shibl, the father of Muḥammad-

Muṣṭafá; and since many crowded the doors there was an up-

roar throughout that quarter, so that Ṭáhirih transferred her

residence elsewhere, to a lodging of her own, where she con-

tinually taught the Faith, and proclaimed the Word of God.

Here the ‘ulamás, shaykhs and others would come to listen to

her, asking their questions and receiving her replies, and she

was soon remarkably well known throughout Baghdad, ex-

pounding as she would the most recondite and subtle of theo-

logical themes.

When word of this reached the government authorities, they 68.8

conveyed Ṭáhirih, Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá and the Leaf to the house

of the Muftí, and here they remained three months until word

as to their case was received from Constantinople. During

Ṭáhirih’s stay at the Muftí’s, much of the time was spent in

conversations with him, in producing convincing proofs as to

the Teachings, analyzing and expounding questions relative to

the Lord God, discoursing on the Resurrection Day, on the

Balance and the Reckoning,[[111]](#footnote-111) unraveling the complexities of

inner truths.

One day the Muftí’s father came in and belabored them vio- 68.9

lently and at length. This somewhat discomfited the Muftí and

he began to apologize for his father. Then he said: “You’re an-

swer has arrived from Constantinople. The Sovereign has set

you free, but on condition that you quit his realms.” The next

morning they left the Muftí’s house and proceeded to the pub-

lic baths. Meanwhile Shaykh Muḥammad-i-Shibl and Shaykh

Sulṭán-i-‘Arab made the necessary preparations for their jour-

ney, and when three days had passed, they left Baghdad; that

is, Ṭáhirih, Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá, the Leaf of Paradise, the mother

of Mírzá Hádí, and a number of Siyyids from Yazd set out for

Persia. Their travel expenses were all provided by Shaykh

Muḥammad.

68.10 They arrived at Kirmánsháh, where the women took up resi-

dence in one house, the men in another. The work of teaching

went on at all times, and as soon as the ‘ulamás became aware

of it they ordered that the party be expelled. At this the district

head, with a crowd of people, broke into the house and carried

off their belongings; then they seated the travelers in open how-

dahs and drove them from the city. When they came to a field,

the muleteers set them down on the bare ground and left, tak-

ing animals and howdahs away, leaving them without food or

luggage, and with no roof over their heads.

68.11 Ṭáhirih thereupon wrote a letter to the Governor of Kir-

mánsháh. “We were travelers,” she wrote, “guests in your city.

‘Honor thy guest,’ the Prophet says, ‘though he be an unbe-

liever’. Is it right that a guest should be thus scorned and de-

spoiled?” The Governor ordered that the stolen goods be re-

stored, and that all be returned to the owners. Accordingly the

muleteers came back as well, seated the travelers in the how-

dahs again, and they went on to Hamadán. The ladies of

Hamadán, even the princesses, came every day to meet with

Ṭáhirih, who remained in that city two months.[[112]](#footnote-112) There she

dismissed some of her traveling companions, so that they could

return to Baghdad; others, however, accompanied her to Qazvín.

68.12 As they journeyed, some horsemen, kinsfolk of Ṭáhirih’s,

that is, her brothers, approached. “We have come,” they said,

“at our father’s command, to lead her away, alone.” But Ṭáhirih

refused, and accordingly the whole party remained together until

they arrived in Qazvín. Here, Ṭáhirih went to her father’s house

and the friends, those who had ridden and those who had trav-

eled on foot, put up at a caravanserai. Mírzá Hádí, the husband

of Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá, had gone to Máh-Kú, seeking out the Báb.

On his return, he awaited the arrival of Shams in Qazvín, after

which the couple left for Iṣfahán, and when they reached there,

Mírzá Hádí journeyed on to Badasht. In that hamlet and its

vicinity he was attacked, tormented, even stoned, and was sub-

jected to such ordeals that finally, in a ruined caravanserai, he

died. His brother, Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí, buried him there,

along the roadside.

Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá remained in Iṣfahán. She spent her days 68.13

and nights in the remembrance of God and in teaching His

Cause to the women of that city. She was gifted with an elo-

quent tongue; her utterance was wonderful to hear. She was

highly honored by the leading women of Iṣfahán, celebrated for

piety, for godliness, and the purity of her life. She was chastity

embodied; all her hours were spent in reciting Holy Writ, or

expounding the Texts, or unraveling the most complex of spiri-

tual themes, or spreading abroad the sweet savors of God.

It was for these reasons that the King of Martyrs married her 68.14

respected daughter and became her son-in-law. And when Shams

went to live in his princely house, day and night the people

thronged its doors, for the leading women of the city, whether

friends or strangers, whether close to her or not, would come

and go. For she was a fire lit by the love of God, and she pro-

claimed the Word of God with great ardor and verve, so that

she became known among the non-believers as Fáṭimih, the

Bahá’ís’ Lady of Light.[[113]](#footnote-113)

And so time passed, until the day when the “She-Serpent” 68.15

and the “Wolf” conspired together and issued a decree, a fatvá,

that sentenced the King of Martyrs to death. They plotted as

well with the Governor of the city so that among them they

could sack and plunder and carry off all that vast treasure he

possessed. Then the Sháh joined forces with those two wild

animals; and he commanded that the blood of both brothers,

the King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs, be spilled out.

Without warning, those ruthless men—the She-Serpent, the

Wolf, and their brutal farráshes and constabulary—attacked;

they chained the two brothers and led them off to prison, looted

their richly furnished houses, wrested away all their possessions,

and spared no one, not even infants at the breast. They tor-

tured, cursed, reviled, mocked, beat the kin and others of the

victims’ household, and would not stay their hands.

68.16 In Paris, Ẓillu’s-Sulṭán[[114]](#footnote-114) related the following, swearing to

the truth of it upon his oath: “Many and many a time I warned

those two great scions of the Prophet’s House, but all to no

avail. At the last I summoned them one night, and with ex-

treme urgency I told them in so many words: ‘Gentlemen, the

Sháh has three times condemned you to death. His farmáns

keep on coming. The decree is absolute and there is only one

course open to you now: you must, in the presence of the

‘ulamás, clear yourselves and curse your Faith.’ Their answer

was: ‘Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá! O Thou Glory of the All-Glorious!

May our lives be offered up!’ Finally I agreed to their not curs-

ing their Faith. I told them all they had to say was, ‘We are not

Bahá’ís.’ ‘Just those few words,’ I said, ‘will be enough; then I

can write out my report for the Sháh, and you will be saved.’

‘That is impossible,’ they answered, ‘because we *are* Bahá’ís. O

Thou Glory of the All-Glorious, our hearts hunger for martyr-

dom! Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá!’ I was enraged, then, and I tried, by

being harsh with them, to force them to renounce their Faith,

but it was hopeless. The decree of the rapacious She-Serpent

and Wolf, and the Sháh’s commands, were carried out.”

After those two were martyred, Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá was hunted 68.17

down, and had to seek a refuge in her brother’s house. Although

he was not a believer, he was known in Iṣfahán as an upright,

pious and godly man, a man of learning, an ascetic who, her-

mit-like, kept to himself, and for these reasons he was highly

regarded and trusted by all. She stayed there with him, but the

Government did not abandon its search, finally discovered her

whereabouts and summoned her to appear; the evil ‘ulamás

had a hand in this, joining forces with the civil authorities. Her

brother was therefore obliged to accompany Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá to

the Governor’s house. He remained without, while they sent his

sister into the women’s apartments; the Governor came there,

to the door, and he kicked and trampled her so savagely that she

fainted away. Then the Governor shouted to his wife: “Princess!

Princess! Come here and take a look at the Bahá’ís’ Lady of

Light!”

The women lifted her up and put her in one of the rooms. 68.18

Meanwhile her brother, dumbfounded, was waiting outside the

mansion. Finally, trying to plead with him, he said to the Gov-

ernor: “This sister of mine has been beaten so severely that she

is at the point of death. What is the use of keeping her here?

There is no hope for her now. With your permission I can get

her back to my house. It would be better to have her die there,

rather than here, for after all, she is a descendant of the Prophet,

she is of Muḥammad’s noble line, and she has done no wrong.

There is nothing against her except her kinship to the son-in-

law.” The Governor answered: “She is one of the great leaders

and heroines of the Bahá’ís. She will simply cause another up-

roar.” The brother said: “I promise you that she will not utter a

word. It is certain that within a few days she will not even be

alive. Her body is frail, weak, almost lifeless, and she has suffered

terrible harm.”

Since the brother was greatly respected and trusted by high 68.19

and low alike, the Governor released Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá in his

custody, letting her go. She lived for a while in his house, crying

out, grieving, shedding her tears, mourning her dead. Neither

was the brother at peace, nor would the hostile leave them alone;

there was some new turmoil every day, and public clamor. The

brother finally thought it best to take Shams away on a pilgrim-

age to Mashhad, hoping that the fire of civil disturbances would

die down.

68.20 They went to Mashhad and settled in a vacant house near

the Shrine of the Imám Riḍá.[[115]](#footnote-115)

68.21 Because he was such a pious man the brother would leave

every morning to visit the Shrine, and there he would stay,

busy with his devotions until almost noon. In the afternoon

as well, he would hasten away to the Holy Place, and pray

until evening. The house being empty, Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá man-

aged to get in touch with various women believers and began

to associate with them; and because the love of God burned

so brightly in her heart she was unable to keep silent, so that

during those hours when her brother was absent the place came

alive. The Bahá’í women would flock there and absorb her lu-

cid and eloquent speech.

68.22 In those days life in Mashhad was hard for the believers,

with the malevolent always on the alert; if they so much as

suspected an individual, they murdered him. There was no se-

curity of any kind, no peace. But Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá could not

help herself: in spite of all the terrible ordeals she had endured,

she ignored the danger, and was capable of flinging herself into

flames, or into the sea. Since her brother frequented no one, he

knew nothing of what was going on. Day and night he would

only leave the house for the Shrine, the Shrine for the house; he

was a recluse, had no friends, and would not so much as speak

to another person. Nevertheless there came a day when he saw

that trouble had broken out in the city, and he knew it would

end in serious harm. He was a man so calm and silent that he

did not reproach his sister; he simply took her away from

Mashhad without warning, and they returned to Iṣfahán. Here,

he sent her to her daughter, the widow of the King of Martyrs,

for he would no longer shelter her under his roof.

Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá was thus back in Iṣfahán, boldly teaching 68.23

the Faith and spreading abroad the sweet savors of God. So

vehement was the fiery love in her heart that it compelled her to

speak out, whenever she found a listening ear. And when it was

observed that once again the household of the King of Mar-

tyrs was about to be overtaken by calamities, and that they

were enduring severe afflictions there in Iṣfahán, Bahá’u’lláh

desired them to come to the Most Great Prison. Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá,

with the widow of the King of Martyrs and the children, ar-

rived in the Holy Land. Here they were joyously spending their

days when the son of the King of Martyrs, Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-

Ḥusayn, as a result of the awful suffering he had been subjected

to in Iṣfahán, came down with tuberculosis and died in ‘Akká.

Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá was heavy of heart. She mourned his ab- 68.24

sence, she wasted away with longing for him, and it was all

much harder because then the Supreme Affliction came upon

us, the crowning anguish. The basis of her life was undermined;

candle-like, she was consumed with grieving. She grew so feeble

that she took to her bed, unable to move. Still, she did not rest,

nor keep silent for a moment. She would tell of days long gone,

of things that had come to pass in the Cause, or she would

recite from Holy Writ, or she would supplicate, and chant her

prayers—until, out of the Most Great Prison, she soared away

to the world of God. She hastened away from this dust gulf of

perdition to an unsullied country; packed her gear and jour-

neyed to the land of lights. Unto her be salutations and praise,

and most great mercy, sheltered in the compassion of her om-

nipotent Lord.

69  
Ṭáhirih

69.1 A woman chaste and holy, a sign

and token of surpassing beauty, a burning brand of the love of

God, a lamp of His bestowal, was Jináb-i-Ṭáhirih.[[116]](#footnote-116) She was

called Umm-Salmá; she was the daughter of Ḥájí Mullá Ṣáliḥ,

a mujtahid of Qazvín, and her paternal uncle was Mullá Taqí,

the Imám-Jum‘ih or leader of prayers in the cathedral mosque

of that city. They married her to Mullá Muḥammad, the son of

Mullá Taqí, and she gave birth to three children, two sons and a

daughter; all three were bereft of the grace that encompassed

their mother, and all failed to recognize the truth of the Cause.

69.2 When she was still a child her father selected a teacher for her

and she studied various branches of knowledge and the arts,

achieving remarkable ability in literary pursuits. Such was the

degree of her scholarship and attainments that her father would

often express his regret, saying, “Would that she had been a

boy, for he would have shed illumination upon my household,

and would have succeeded me!”[[117]](#footnote-117)

One day she was a guest in the home of Mullá Javád, a cousin 69.3

on her mother’s side, and there in her cousin’s library she came

upon some of the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá’í.[[118]](#footnote-118) De-

lighted with what he had to say, Ṭáhirih asked to borrow the

writings and take them home. Mullá Javád violently objected,

telling her: “Your father is an enemy of the Twin Luminous

Lights, Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim. If he should even

dream that any words of those two great beings, any fragrance

from the garden of those realities, had come your way, he would

make an attempt against my life, and you too would become

the target of his wrath.” Ṭáhirih answered: “For a long time

now, I have thirsted after this; I have yearned for these explana-

tions, these inner truths. Give me whatever you have of these

books. Never mind if it angers my father.” Accordingly, Mullá

Javád sent over the writings of the Shaykh and the Siyyid.

One night, Ṭáhirih sought out her father in his library, and 69.4

began to speak of Shaykh Aḥmad’s teachings. The very mo-

ment he learned that his daughter knew of the Shaykhí doc-

trines, Mullá Ṣáliḥ’s denunciations rang out, and he cried:

“Javád has made you a lost soul!” Ṭáhirih answered, “The

late Shaykh was a true scholar of God, and I have learned an

infinity of spiritual truths from reading his books. Further-

more, he bases whatever he says on the traditions of the Holy

Imáms. You call yourself a mystic knower and a man of God,

you consider your respected uncle to be a scholar as well, and

most pious—yet in neither of you do I find a trace of those

qualities!”

For some time, she carried on heated discussions with her 69.5

father, debating such questions as the Resurrection and the

Day of Judgment, the Night-Ascent of Muḥammad to Heaven,

the Promise and the Threat, and the Advent of the Promised

One.[[119]](#footnote-119) Lacking arguments, her father would resort to curses and

abuse. Then one night, in support of her contention, Ṭáhirih

quoted a holy tradition from the Imám Ja‘far-i-Ṣádiq;[[120]](#footnote-120) and since

it confirmed what she was saying, her father burst out laughing,

mocking the tradition. Ṭáhirih said, “Oh my father, these are

the words of the Holy Imám. How can you mock and deny

them?”

69.6 From that time on, she ceased to debate and contend with

her father. Meanwhile she entered into secret correspondence

with Siyyid Káẓim, regarding the solution of complex theologi-

cal problems, and thus it came about that the Siyyid conferred

on her the name “Solace of the Eyes” (Qurratu’l-‘Ayn); as for

the title Ṭáhirih (“The Pure One”), it was first associated with

her in Badasht, and was subsequently approved by the Báb, and

recorded in Tablets.

69.7 Ṭáhirih had caught fire. She set out for Karbilá, hoping to

meet Siyyid Káẓim, but she arrived too late: ten days before

she reached that city, he passed away. Not long before his

death the Siyyid had shared with his disciples the good news

that the promised Advent was at hand. “Go forth,” he repeat-

edly told them, “and seek out your Lord.” Thus the most distin-

guished of his followers gathered for retirement and prayer, for

fasts and vigils, in the Masjid-i-Kúfih, while some awaited the

Advent in Karbilá. Among these was Ṭáhirih, fasting by day,

practicing religious disciplines, and spending the night in vigils,

and chanting prayers. One night when it was getting along to-

ward dawn she laid her head on her pillow, lost all awareness of

this earthly life, and dreamed a dream; in her vision a youth, a

Siyyid, wearing a black cloak and a green turban, appeared to

her in the heavens; he was standing in the air, reciting verses

and praying with his hands upraised. At once, she memorized

one of those verses, and wrote it down in her notebook when

she awoke. After the Báb had declared His mission, and His

first book, “The Best of Stories,”[[121]](#footnote-121) was circulated, Ṭáhirih was

reading a section of the text one day, and she came upon that

same verse, which she had noted down from the dream. In-

stantly offering thanks, she fell to her knees and bowed her fore-

head to the ground, convinced that the Báb’s message was truth.

This good news reached her in Karbilá and she at once began 69.8

to teach. She translated and expounded “The Best of Stories”,

also writing in Persian and Arabic, composing odes and lyrics,

and humbly practicing her devotions, performing even those

that were optional and supernumerary. When the evil ‘ulamás

in Karbilá got wind of all this, and learned that a woman was

summoning the people to a new religion and had already

influenced a considerable number, they went to the Governor

and lodged a complaint. Their charges, to be brief, led to vio-

lent attacks on Ṭáhirih, and sufferings, which she accepted and

for which she offered praise and thanks. When the authorities

came hunting for her they first assaulted Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá, mis-

taking her for Ṭáhirih. As soon, however, as they heard that

Ṭáhirih had been arrested they let Shams go—for Ṭáhirih had

sent a message to the Governor saying, “I am at your disposal.

Do not harm any other.”

The Governor set guards over her house and shut her away, 69.9

writing Baghdad for instructions as to how he should proceed.

For three months, she lived in a state of siege, completely iso-

lated, with the guards surrounding her house. Since the local

authorities had still received no reply from Baghdad, Ṭáhirih

referred her case to the Governor, saying: “No word has come

from either Baghdad or Constantinople. Accordingly, we will

ourselves proceed to Baghdad and await the answer there.” The

Governor gave her leave to go, and she set out, accompanied by

Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá and the Leaf of Paradise (the sister of Mullá

Ḥusayn) and her mother. In Baghdad she stayed first in the

house of Shaykh Muḥammad, the distinguished father of Áqá

Muḥammad-Muṣṭafá. But so great was the press of people

around her that she transferred her residence to another quar-

ter, engaged night and day in spreading the Faith, and freely

associated with the inhabitants of Baghdad. She thus became

celebrated throughout the city and there was a great uproar.

69.10 Ṭáhirih also maintained a correspondence with the ‘ulamás

of Káẓimayn; she presented them with unanswerable proofs,

and when one or another appeared before her she offered him

convincing arguments. Finally she sent a message to the Shí‘ih

divines, saying to them: “If you are not satisfied with these

conclusive proofs, I challenge you to a trial by ordeal.”[[122]](#footnote-122) Then

there was a great outcry from the divines, and the Governor

was obliged to send Ṭáhirih and her women companions to the

house of Ibn-i-Álúsí, who was muftí of Baghdad. Here she re-

mained about three months, waiting for word and directions

from Constantinople. Ibn-i-Álúsí would engage her in learned

dialogues, questions would be asked and answers given, and he

would not deny what she had to say.

69.11 On a certain day the muftí related one of his dreams, and

asked her to tell him what it meant. He said: “In my dream I

saw the Shí‘ih ‘ulamás arriving at the holy tomb of Imám

Ḥusayn, the Prince of Martyrs. They took away the barrier that

encloses the tomb, and they broke open the resplendent grave,

so that the immaculate body lay revealed to their gaze. They

sought to take up the holy form, but I cast myself down on the

corpse and I warded them off.” Ṭáhirih answered: “This is the

meaning of your dream: you are about to deliver me from the

hands of the Shí‘ih divines.” “I too had interpreted it thus,”

said Ibn-i-Álúsí.

Since he had discovered that she was well versed in learned 69.12

questions and in sacred commentaries and Texts, the two often

carried on debates; she would speak on such themes as the Day

of Resurrection, the Balance, and the Ṣiráṭ,[[123]](#footnote-123) and he would not

turn away.

Then came a night when the father of Ibn-i-Álúsí called at 69.13

the house of his son. He had a meeting with Ṭáhirih and

abruptly, without asking a single question, began to curse,

mock and revile her. Embarrassed at his father’s behavior, Ibn-i-

Álúsí apologized. Then he said: “The answer has come from

Constantinople. The King has commanded that you be set free,

but only on condition that you leave his realms. Go then, to-

morrow, make your preparations for the journey, and hasten

away from this land.”

Accordingly Ṭáhirih, with her women companions, left 69.14

the muftí’s house, saw to arranging for their travel gear, and

went out of Baghdad. When they left the city, a number of

Arab believers, carrying arms, walked along beside their con-

voy. Among the escort were Shaykh Sulṭán, Shaykh Muḥam-

mad and his distinguished son Muḥammad-Muṣṭafá, and

Shaykh Ṣáliḥ, and these were mounted. It was Shaykh

Muḥammad who defrayed the expenses of the journey.

When they reached Kirmánsháh the women alighted at one 69.15

house, the men at another, and the inhabitants arrived in a

continuous stream to seek information as to the new Faith.

Here as elsewhere the ‘ulamás were soon in a state of frenzy and

they commanded that the newcomers be expelled. As a result

the kad-khudá or chief officer of that quarter, with a band of

people, laid siege to the house where Ṭáhirih was, and sacked it.

Then they placed Ṭáhirih and her companions in an uncovered

howdah and carried them from the town to an open field, where

they put the captives out. The drivers then took their animals

and returned to the city. The victims were left on the bare ground,

with no food, no shelter, and no means of traveling on.

69.16 Ṭáhirih at once wrote a letter to the prince of that territory,

in which she told him: “O thou just Governor! We were guests

in your city. Is this the way you treat your guests?” When her

letter was brought to the Governor of Kirmánsháh he said: “I

knew nothing of this injustice. This mischief was kindled by

the divines.” He immediately commanded the kad-khudá to

return all the travelers’ belongings. That official duly surren-

dered the stolen goods, the drivers with their animals came

back out of the city, the travelers took their places and resumed

the journey.

69.17 They arrived in Hamadán and here their stay was a happy

one. The most illustrious ladies of that city, even the princesses,

would come to visit, seeking the benefits of Ṭáhirih’s teaching.

In Hamadán she dismissed a part of her escort and sent them

back to Baghdad, while she brought some of them, including

Shamsu’ḍ-Ḍuḥá and Shaykh-Ṣáliḥ, along with her to Qazvín.

69.18 As they traveled, some riders advanced to meet them, kins-

men of Ṭáhirih’s from Qazvín, and they wished to lead her away

alone, unescorted by the others, to her father’s house. Ṭáhirih

refused, saying: “These are in my company.” In this way they

entered Qazvín. Ṭáhirih proceeded to her father’s house, while

the Arabs who had formed her escort alighted at a caravanserai.

Ṭáhirih soon left her father and went to live with her brother,

and there the great ladies of the city would come to visit her; all

this until the murder of Mullá Taqí,[[124]](#footnote-124) when every Bábí in Qazvín

was taken prisoner. Some were sent to Ṭihrán and then returned

to Qazvín and martyred.

Mullá Taqí’s murder came about in this way: One day, when 69.19

that besotted tyrant had mounted his pulpit, he began to mock

and revile the great Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá’í. Shamelessly, gros-

sly, screaming obscenities, he cried out: “That Shaykh is the

one who has kindled this fire of evil, and subjected the whole

world to this ordeal!” There was an inquirer in the audience, a

native of Shíráz. He found the taunts, jeers and indecencies to

be more than he could bear. Under cover of darkness he betook

himself to the mosque, plunged a spearhead between the lips of

Mullá Taqí and fled. The next morning they arrested the de-

fenseless believers and thereupon subjected them to agonizing

torture, though all were innocent and knew nothing of what

had come to pass. There was never any question of investigat-

ing the case; the believers repeatedly declared their innocence

but no one paid them any heed. When a few days had passed

the killer gave himself up; he confessed to the authorities, in-

forming them that he had committed the murder because Mullá

Taqí had vilified Shaykh Aḥmad. “I deliver myself into your

hands,” he told them, “so that you will set these innocent people

free.” They arrested him as well, put him in the stocks, chained

him, and sent him in chains, along with the others, to Ṭihrán.

Once there he observed that despite his confession, the oth- 69.20

ers were not released. By night, he made his escape from the

prison and went to the house of Riḍá Khán—that rare and

precious man, that star-sacrifice among the lovers of God—the

son of Muḥammad Khán, Master of the Horse to Muḥammad

Sháh. He stayed there for a time, after which he and Riḍá Khán

secretly rode away to the Fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí in Mázindarán.[[125]](#footnote-125)

Muḥammad Khán sent riders after them to track them down,

but try as they might, no one could find them. Those two horse-

men got to the Fort of Ṭabarsí, where both of them won a

martyr’s death. As for the other friends who were in the prison

at Ṭihrán, some of these were returned to Qazvín and they too

suffered martyrdom.

69.21 One day the administrator of finance, Mírzá Shafí‘, called in

the murderer and addressed him, saying: “Jináb, do you belong

to a dervish order, or do you follow the Law? If you are a fol-

lower of the Law, why did you deal that learned mujtahid a

cruel, a fatal blow in the mouth? If you are a dervish and follow

the Path, one of the rules of the Path is to harm no man. How,

then, could you slaughter that zealous divine?” “Sir,” he replied,

“besides the Law, and besides the Path, we also have the Truth.

It was in serving the Truth that I paid him for his deed.”[[126]](#footnote-126)

69.22 These things would take place before the reality of this Cause

was revealed and all was made plain. For in those days no one

knew that the Manifestation of the Báb would culminate in the

Manifestation of the Blessed Beauty and that the law of retali-

ation would be done away with, and the foundation-principle

of the Law of God would be this, that “It is better for you to be

killed than to kill”; that discord and contention would cease,

and the rule of war and butchery would fall away. In those

days, that sort of thing would happen. But praised be God,

with the advent of the Blessed Beauty such a splendor of har-

mony and peace shone forth, such a spirit of meekness and

long-suffering, that when in Yazd men, women and children

were made the targets of enemy fire or were put to the sword,

when the leaders and the evil ‘ulamás and their followers joined

together and unitedly assaulted those defenseless victims and

spilled out their blood—hacking at and rending apart the bod-

ies of chaste women, with their daggers slashing the throats of

children they had orphaned, then setting the torn and mangled

limbs on fire—not one of the friends of God lifted a hand against

them. Indeed, among those martyrs, those real companions of

the ones who died, long gone, at Karbilá, was a man who, when

he saw the drawn sword flashing over him, thrust sugar candy

into his murderer’s mouth and cried, “With a sweet taste on

your lips, put me to death—for you bring me martyrdom, my

dearest wish!”

Let us return to our theme. After the murder of her impious 69.23

uncle, Mullá Taqí, in Qazvín, Ṭáhirih fell into dire straits. She

was a prisoner and heavy of heart, grieving over the painful

events that had come to pass. She was watched on every side,

by attendants, guards, the farráshes, and her foes. While she

languished thus, Bahá’u’lláh dispatched Hádíy-i-Qazvíní, hus-

band of the celebrated Khátún-Ján, from the capital, and

they managed, by a stratagem, to free her from that embroil-

ment and got her to Ṭihrán in the night. She alighted at the

mansion of Bahá’u’lláh and was lodged in an upper apartment.

When word of this spread throughout Ṭihrán, the Govern- 69.24

ment hunted for her high and low; nevertheless, the friends

kept arriving to see her, in a steady stream, and Ṭáhirih, seated

behind a curtain, would converse with them. One day the great

Siyyid Yaḥyá, surnamed Vaḥíd, was present there. As he sat with-

out, Ṭáhirih listened to him from behind the veil. I was then a

child, and was sitting on her lap. With eloquence and fervor,

Vaḥíd was discoursing on the signs and verses that bore witness

to the advent of the new Manifestation. She suddenly inter-

rupted him and, raising her voice, vehemently declared: “O

Yaḥyá! Let deeds, not words, testify to thy faith, if thou art a

man of true learning. Cease idly repeating the traditions of the

past, for the day of service, of steadfast action, is come. Now is

the time to show forth the true signs of God, to rend asunder

the veils of idle fancy, to promote the Word of God, and to

sacrifice ourselves in His path. Let deeds, not words, be our

adorning!”

69.25 The Blessed Beauty made elaborate arrangements for Ṭáhi-

rih’s journey to Badasht and sent her off with an equipage and

retinue. His own party left for that region some days afterward.

69.26 In Badasht, there was a great open field. Through its center a

stream flowed, and to its right, left, and rear there were three

gardens, the envy of Paradise. One of those gardens was as-

signed to Quddús,[[127]](#footnote-127) but this was kept a secret. Another was set

apart for Ṭáhirih, and in a third was raised the pavilion of

Bahá’u’lláh. On the field amidst the three gardens, the believers

pitched their tents. Evenings, Bahá’u’lláh, Quddús and Ṭáhirih

would come together. In those days the fact that the Báb was

the Qá’im had not yet been proclaimed; it was the Blessed

Beauty, with Quddús, Who arranged for the proclamation of a

universal Advent and the abrogation and repudiation of the

ancient laws.

69.27 Then one day, and there was a wisdom in it, Bahá’u’lláh fell

ill; that is, the indisposition was to serve a vital purpose. On a

sudden, in the sight of all, Quddús came out of his garden, and

entered the pavilion of Bahá’u’lláh. But Ṭáhirih sent him a

message, to say that their Host being ill, Quddús should visit

her garden instead. His answer was: “This garden is preferable.

Come, then, to this one.” Ṭáhirih, with her face unveiled,

stepped from her garden, advancing to the pavilion of Bahá’-

u’lláh; and as she came, she shouted aloud these words: “The

Trumpet is sounding! The great Trumpet is blown! The universal

Advent is now proclaimed!”[[128]](#footnote-128) The believers gathered in that tent

were panic struck, and each one asked himself, “How can the

Law be abrogated? How is it that this woman stands here with-

out her veil?”

“Read the Súrih of the Inevitable,”[[129]](#footnote-129) said Bahá’u’lláh; and 69.28

the reader began: “When the Day that must come shall have

come suddenly … Day that shall abase! Day that shall exalt!

…” and thus was the new Dispensation announced and the

great Resurrection made manifest. At the start, those who were

present fled away, and some forsook their Faith, while some fell

a prey to suspicion and doubt, and a number, after wavering,

returned to the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. The Conference of

Badasht broke up, but the universal Advent had been proclaimed.

Afterward, Quddús hastened away to the Fort of Ṭabarsí[[130]](#footnote-130) 69.29

and the Blessed Beauty, with provisions and equipment, jour-

neyed to Níyálá, having the intention of going on from there

by night, making His way through the enemy encampment and

entering the Fort. But Mírzá Taqí, the Governor of Ámul, got

word of this, and with seven hundred riflemen arrived in Níyálá.

Surrounding the village by night, he sent Bahá’u’lláh with eleven

riders back to Ámul, and those calamities and tribulations, told

of before, came to pass.

As for Ṭáhirih, after the breakup at Badasht she was cap- 69.30

tured, and the oppressors sent her back under guard to Ṭihrán.

There she was imprisoned in the house of Maḥmúd Khán, the

Kalántar. But she was aflame, enamored, restless, and could not

be still. The ladies of Ṭihrán, on one pretext or another, crowded

to see and listen to her. It happened that there was a celebration

at the Mayor’s house for the marriage of his son; a nuptial ban-

quet was prepared, and the house adorned. The flower of Ṭihrán’s

ladies were invited, the princesses, the wives of vazírs and other

great ladies. A splendid wedding it was, with instrumental music and

vocal melodies—by day and night the lute, the bells and songs.

Then Ṭáhirih began to speak; and so bewitched were the great

ladies that they forsook the cithern and the drum and all the

pleasures of the wedding feast, to crowd about Ṭáhirih and lis-

ten to the sweet words of her mouth.

69.31 Thus she remained, a helpless captive. Then came the at-

tempt on the life of the Sháh;[[131]](#footnote-131) a farmán was issued; she was

sentenced to death. Saying she was summoned to the Prime

Minister’s, they arrived to lead her away from the Kalántar’s

house. She bathed her face and hands, arrayed herself in a costly

dress, and scented with attar of roses she came out of the house.

69.32 They brought her into a garden, where the headsmen waited;

but these wavered and then refused to end her life. A slave was

found, far gone in drunkenness; besotted, vicious, black of heart.

And he strangled Ṭáhirih. He forced a scarf between her lips

and rammed it down her throat. Then they lifted up her

unsullied body and flung it in a well, there in the garden, and

over it threw down earth and stones. But Ṭáhirih rejoiced; she

had heard with a light heart the tidings of her martyrdom; she

set her eyes on the supernal Kingdom and offered up her life.

69.33 Salutations be unto her, and praise. Holy be her dust, as the

tiers of light come down on it from Heaven.

Guide to  
Persian pronunciation

a as in hat

á rhymes with mom; or awe

a as in Harry

aw rhymes with no

ch as in church

ḍ like z in zebra

dh like z in zebra

gh sounds like a French r

h as in hat

ḥ as in hat

N.B. Always pronounce the h. Example:

Teh-ron (Ṭihrán)

i rhymes with bet

í rhymes with meet

kh sounds like ch in Scottish loch

Q sounds like a French r

s like s in yes

ṣ like s in yes

t as in tea

ṭ as in tea

th like s in yes

u as “o” in short

ú sounds like moot

N.B. Equal emphasis on each syllable: Ṭá-heh-reh

Apostrophe denotes a pause: Bahá’ ... í

The Arabic-Persian alphabet not only represents sounds for

which there is no Western equivalent, but contains four differ-

ent z’s, three s’s, etc. This means that arbitrary marks, letters,

and combinations of letters must be used to transliterate Arabic

and Persian words into Western tongues. Pronunciation varies

all over the Middle East, and heretofore Western spelling has

gone according to the nationality of the orientalist, the English-

man writing shah, the Frenchman, chah, the German schah,

each nation contributing its own accent as well. To bring order

out of chaos, the above system was devised by orientalists, and

adopted by the Guardian for Bahá’í use. With it a uniform

Western spelling is achieved, and a student can tell at a glance

how the word is written in the original. Letters not shown are

pronounced as in English.

Glossary

‘Abá: Cloak, mantle

Abhá: Superlative of Bahá; Most Glorious; All-Glorious

Abjad reckoning: Numerical value of letters in the Arabic-Per-

sian alphabet

Afnán: The Báb’s kindred. Cf. *God Passes By*, 239; 328

The Ancient Beauty: A title of Bahá’u’lláh

The Blessed Beauty: A title of Bahá’u’lláh

Dawlih: State; government

Farmán: Order; command; royal decree

Farrásh: Attendant; footman

Farsakh: Same as parsang; a unit of measurement, varying from

three to four miles, according to the terrain

Fatvá: Judgment pronounced by a muftí

Ḥájí: Title of a Muslim who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca

Ḥaẓíratu’l-Quds: The Sacred Fold; Bahá’í administrative center

Imám: Title of the twelve Shí‘ih successors of Muḥammad.

Unlike the Caliph of the Sunní Muslims—an elected, out-

ward and visible head—the vicegerency of the Prophet is

to Shí‘ihs a purely spiritual matter, conferred by Muḥam-

mad and each of His successors until the twelfth. The

Imám is the “divinely ordained successor of the Prophet,

one endowed with all perfections and spiritual gifts, one

whom all the faithful must obey, whose decision is abso-

lute and final, whose wisdom is superhuman, and whose

words are authoritative.”

Imám: Prayer-leader

Imám-Jum‘ih: Prayer-leader in the Friday or cathedral mosque

Jináb: Courtesy title, varying in emphasis; somewhat equiva-

lent to Your Honor, His Honor

Kad-Khudá: Borough head; village head

Kalántar: Mayor

Lote-Tree: Refers to the Manifestation of God

Mashriqu’l-Adhkár: Dawning-place of the praise of God; Bahá’í

House of Worship

Muftí: Expounder of Muslim law

Mujtahid: Doctor of the law; cleric whose rank entitles him to

practice religious jurisprudence. Most Persian mujtahids

have received their diplomas from the leading jurists of

Karbilá and Najaf

Mullá: Muslim priest

Nabíl: Learned; noble. The Báb and Bahá’u’lláh sometimes re-

ferred to a person by a title whose letters, in the abjad

reckoning, had the same numerical value as the individual’s

name. E.g., the numerical value of the letters in Muḥam-

mad is 92, and that of the letters in Nabíl is also 92.

Qá’im: He Who Ariseth: a title of the Báb

Shaykhí School: A sect of Shí‘ih Islám. The Shí‘ihs were di-

vided into two main branches, the “Sect of the Seven”

and the “Sect of the Twelve”. Sprung from the latter

branch, the Shaykhí School was founded by Shaykh

Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim, forerunners of the Báb. The

Guardian writes in *God Passes By*, his history of the first

hundred years of the Bábí-Bahá’í Faith, p. xii: “I shall seek

to represent and correlate … those momentous happen-

ings which have insensibly, relentlessly, and under the very

eyes of successive generations, perverse, indifferent or hos-

tile, transformed a heterodox and seemingly negligible off-

shoot of the Shaykhí school … into a world religion …”

Ṣiráṭ: Bridge or path; denotes the religion of God

Siyyid: Title of the Prophet Muhammad’s descendants

‘Ulamá: Divines, scholars

**Memorials of the Faithful**

by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

This book by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, translated

into English a half century after His pass-

ing, was a labor of pure love, both in its

remembrance of the faithful ones who ex-

pended their lives in the path of Bahá-

’u’lláh, and to present and future gen-

erations of readers. Although in outward

form it is a collection of brief biographical

sketches, they do not concern the personal

transitory aspects of human life. It is the

quality of soul, the attributes of spirit, the

quintessential humanity and the reflection

of the Divine in man that is the focus here.

Those who are commemorated here

share one thing in common—they are im-

pelled by their love for Bahá’u’lláh. So

great is this magnetic force in their lives

that they travel vast distances and overcome

all barriers to be with Him and to share

His prison life. Despite peculiarities of

time and place, the reader will recognize

the timeless, universal human types.

Princes and paupers, professors and illiter-

ates, mystics and merchants, clerics and

feminists, artisans and peasants each arrive

by their own spiritual route, and by their

example teach us how to live and how to

die.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá says almost nothing about

Himself in this book. But occasional events

in the lives of these companions are inter-

woven with His own, and we have glimpses

of that essence of humanity and humility

that was His. His observant, warm and ten-

der love surrounds these faithful ones, and

through them, fills us with the same quali-

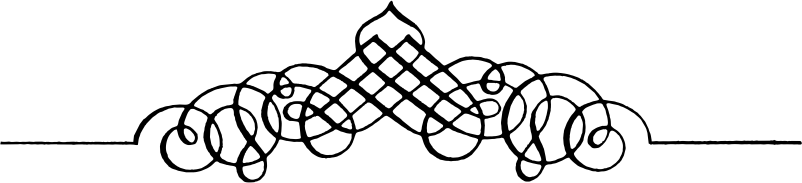
ties. This is a book to be savored slowly,

allowing the figurative language to create

its own spirit as these words of ‘Abdu’l-

Bahá trace the shape of the valley of love

and faithfulness.



**Calligraphic bird design**

Mishkín-Qalam, well-known Bahá’í cal-

ligraphist, is one of those extolled in this

book. He was the leading calligrapher of

Persia and enjoyed a special position among

the court ministers of Tihrán. Eventually

he shared imprisonment with Bahá’u’lláh

in the city of ‘Akká. The design of his used

in this book is an artistic arrangement of

the phrase “Bismi’lláhi’l-Bahíyyi’l-Abhá”

which means “In the name of God, the

Glorious, the Most Glorious.” Hand of the

Cause of God, Zikr’u’llah Khadem, de-

scribes it as a “bird of paradise in the form

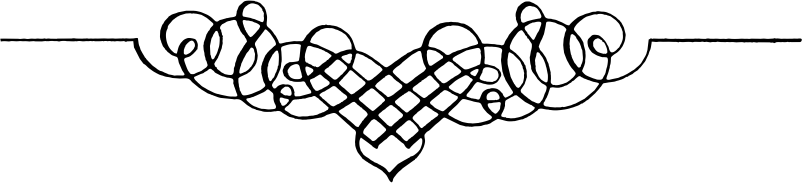
of the Greatest Holy Name sitting on the

tree of Toubá (tree of paradise) …. an

art form found in many Bahá’í houses in

Persia, framed and hung in a place of

honor.



*Jacket design by Conrad Heleniak*

*Book design by Eunice Braun*

1. For the author of *The Dawn-Breakers*, see Nabíl-i-Zarandí [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Nabíl, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 355, note 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. Qur’án 19:98. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Qur’án 3:91. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Qur’án 54:55. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 1849–1850. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 1853; 1892. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Áqá Ján. Cf. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Siyyid Muḥammad, the Antichrist of the Bahá’í Revelation. Cf. ibid.,

   pp. 164 and 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The Afnán are the kindred of the Báb. ibid., pp. 239, 328. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Herald of the Prophet Muḥammad. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Qur’án 68:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. This wine, Rúmí says elsewhere, comes from the jar of “Yea verily.” That

    is, it symbolizes the Primal Covenant established between God and man on

    the day of “Am I not your Lord?” On that day, the Creator summoned

    posterity out of the loins of Adam and said to the generations unborn, “Am I

    not your Lord?” Whereupon they answered, “Yea, verily, Thou art.” Cf.

    Qur’án 7:171. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The Turkish para was one-ninth of a cent. Cf. Webster, *New Interna-*

    *tional Dictionary*. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Nabíl, author of *The Dawn-Breakers*, is Bahá’u’lláh’s “Poet-Laureate, His

    chronicler and His indefatigable disciple.” Cf. *God Passes By*, p. 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Mírzá Yaḥyá, the community’s “nominal head”, was the “center provi-

    sionally appointed pending the manifestation of the Promised One.” ibid.,

    pp. 127–28. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. A reference to Islámic symbolism, according to which good is protected

    from evil: the angels repel such evil spirits as attempt to spy on Paradise, by

    hurling shooting stars at them. Cf. Qur’án 15:18, 37:10 and 67:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. A reference to the declaration of Bahá’u’lláh’s advent in 1863, as the Prom-

    ised One of the Báb. The Báb’s own advent had taken place in the “year

    sixty”—1844. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Bahá’í writings emphasize that the “divinity attributed to so great a Being

    and the complete incarnation of the names and attributes of God in so

    exalted a Person should, under no circumstances, be misconceived or misin-

    terpreted … that invisible yet rational God … however much we extol the

    divinity of His Manifestations on earth, can in no wise incarnate His infinite,

    His unknowable, His incorruptible and all-embracing Reality in … a mortal

    being.” Cf. Shoghi Effendi, *The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh*. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. According to the abjad reckoning, the letters of “shidád” total 309. 1892,

    the date of Bahá’u’lláh’s ascension, was 1309 a.h. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Gharíq. The letters composing this word total 1310, which Hijra year

    began July 26, 1892. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Terms used by the Ṣúfís. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ṣidq, truth. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Qur’án 54:55. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. This word has a number of meanings, including truthful, loyal and just. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Yá Sháfí. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Qur’án 76:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Nabíl of Qá’in was his title. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Qur’án 5:59. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The kran was 20 sháhís, or almost 8 cents. Cf. Webster, op. cit. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Mírzá Mihdí, the son of Bahá’u’lláh who, praying one evening on the

    barracks roof, fell to his death. Cf. *God Passes By*, p. 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Cf. Qur’án 13:28; 2:99; 3:67. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Yazíd (son of Mu‘ávíyih), ‘Ummayad Caliph by whose order the Imám

    Ḥusayn was martyred. Proverbial for cruelty. Cf. S. Haïm, *New Persian-En-*

    *glish Dictionary*, s.v. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The rebellion of Mírzá Yaḥyá, who had been named provisional chief of

    the Bábí community. The Báb had never appointed a successor or viceregent,

    instead referring His disciples to the imminent advent of His Promised One.

    In the interim a virtual unknown was, for security reasons, made the osten-

    sible leader. Following His declaration in 1863 as the Promised One of the

    Báb, Bahá’u’lláh withdrew for a time, in Adrianople, to allow the exiles a free

    choice as between Him and this unworthy half brother, whose crimes and

    follies had threatened to destroy the infant Faith. Terrified at being chal-

    lenged to face Bahá’u’lláh in a public debate, Mírzá Yaḥyá refused, and was

    completely discredited. As Bahá’í history has repeatedly demonstrated, this

    crisis too, however grievous, resulted in still greater victories for the Faith—

    including the rallying of prominent disciples to Bahá’u’lláh, and the global

    proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh’s mission, in His Tablets to the Pope and Kings.

    Cf. *God Passes By*, p. 28, Chapter X and *passim*. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Mírzá Yaḥyá had not been banished from Persia. Now, however, he was

    being exiled from Adrianople to Cyprus, and ‘Abdu’l-Ghaffár was one of the

    four companions condemned to go with him. Cf. Bahá’u’lláh’s *Epistle to the*

    Son of the Wolf, p. 166, and God Passes By, p. 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Cf. Qur’án 11:101; 11:100; 76:5; 76:22; 17:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Cf. *God Passes By*, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Cf. *God Passes By*, pp. 186; 193; 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Qur’án 54:55. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. This reference to two worlds, *du jihán*, may indicate the saying: Iṣfahán

    is half the world—*Iṣfahán niṣf-i-jihán*. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. For this definition of the Manifestation of God, see *God Passes By*, p. 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. These “twin shining lights” were two brothers, famous merchants of

    Iṣfahán. Because he owed them a large sum of money, the leading priest—

    Imám-Jum‘ih—of the city brought about their martyrdom. See Bahá’u’lláh’s

    Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, and God Passes By, pp. 200–201 and 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Qur’án 89:27–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Qur’án 24:35. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Qur’án 89:27–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Cf. Qur’án 13:28: “Truly in the remembrance of God are the hearts set

    at rest.” [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Qur’án 76:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Qur’án 13:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Qur’án 3:91. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Qur’án 29:19; 53:48; 56:62. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Mírzá Músá. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Cf. *God Passes By*, p. 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Some four hundred miles northwest of Baghdad. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Shikastih—broken—a cursive or half-shorthand script, is thought to have

    been invented at the close of the seventeenth century, in Hirát. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Gawhar Khánum’s marriage to Bahá’u’lláh took place in Baghdad. She

    remained with her brother in that city when Bahá’u’lláh left Iraq and later

    proceeded to ‘Akká at His instruction. While traveling from Baghdad to Mosul,

    she was made captive together with other believers, among them Zaynu’l-

    Muqarrabín. Bahá’u’lláh makes reference to this captivity in His Tablet to the

    Sháh.

    Gawhar Khánum broke the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh following His pass-

    ing. She passed away during the Ministry of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Qur’án 76:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. A famed calligrapher who lived and wrote at the court of Sháh-‘Abbás,

    the Ṣafaví (1557–1628). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Mishk is musk. Mishkín-Qalam means either musk-scented pen, or jet

    black pen. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Qur’án 61:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. In some of this artist’s productions, the writing was so arranged as to take

    the forms of birds. When E. G. Browne was in Persia, he was told that “these

    would be eagerly sought after by Persians of all classes, were it not that they

    all bore, as the signature of the penman, the following verse:

    *Dar díyár-i-khaṭṭ sháh-i-ṣáḥib-‘alam*

    *Bandiy-i-báb-i-Bahá, Mishkín-Qalam.”*

    Cf. *A Year Amongst the Persians*, p. 227. The verse might be translated:

    *Lord of calligraphy, my banner goes before;*

    *But to Bahá’u’lláh, a bondsman at the door,*

    *Naught else I am,*

    *Mishkín-Qalam.*

    Note the wordplay on door, which makes possible the inclusion of the Báb’s

    name as well as Bahá’u’lláh’s. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ustád is a master, one who is skilled in an art or profession. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Qur’án 6:127. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Qur’án 3:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Qur’án 2:266, 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. For some of these Arabic phrases, see Qur’án 3:170; 4:12, 175; 5:16,

    17; 11:100, 101; 28:79; 41:35. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. The Baghdad period in Bahá’í history was from April 8, 1853, to May 3,

    1863. According to various estimates the túmán of the day ranged from $1.08

    to $1.60. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. This was in accord with the law of Islám. Cf. Qur’án 4:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Qur’án 7:171. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. For the tribulations following Bahá’u’lláh’s departure see *God Passes By*,

    chapter XV. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Persia’s Hercules. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Qur’án 89:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Qur’án 4:71. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Cf. *God Passes By*, p. 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Qur’án 89:27–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. The Afnán are the Báb’s kindred. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Qur’án 7:171. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Qur’án 39:69. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. The Promised One of the Báb. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Islamic symbolism: Satan is the “stoned one”; with shooting stars for

    stones, the angels repel demons from Paradise. Qur’án 3:31, 15:17, 34; 37:7;

    67:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Qur’án 2:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Qur’án 4:71. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. The Prime Minister. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Qum is the shrine city of Fáṭimih, “the Immaculate”. Sister of the eighth

    Imám, Imám Riḍá, she was buried here in 816 a.d. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. The remainder of the verse is: “*Let us split the roof of Heaven and draw a*

    *new design.*” [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Qur’án 52:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Cf. Qur’án 13:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Qur’án 3:190. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Cf. Qur’án 39:68. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Qur’án 7:171. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. *Manqúl va ma’qúl*: “desumed” versus “excogitated” knowledge. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Qur’án 3:190. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Bahá’u’lláh was accompanied by members of His family and twenty-six

    disciples. The convoy included a mounted guard of ten soldiers with their

    officer, a train of fifty mules, and seven pairs of howdahs, each pair sur-

    mounted by four parasols. The journey to Constantinople lasted from May

    3, 1863, to August 16. Cf. *God Passes By*, p. 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Qur’án 26:119; 36:41. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Cf. Qur’án 5:59. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Qur’án 39:68–69: “And there shall be a blast on the trumpet, and all

    who are in the heavens and all who are in the earth shall swoon away, save

    those whom God shall vouchsafe to live. Then shall there be another blast on

    it, and lo! arising they shall gaze around them: and the earth shall shine with

    the light of her Lord ….” [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. In Shaykhí terminology, the Fourth Support or Fourth Pillar was the

    perfect man or channel of grace, always to be sought. Ḥájí Muḥammad-

    Karím Khán regarded himself as such. Cf. Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i-Íqán* (*The*

    *Book of Certitude*), p. 184, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *A Traveller’s Narrative*, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. The promised Twelfth Imám. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. ‘Allámiy-i-Ḥillí, “the Very Erudite Doctor”, title of the famed Shí‘ih theo-

    logian, Jamálu’d-Dín Ḥasan ibn-i-Yúsuf ibn-i-‘Alí of Hilla (1250–1325 a.d.). [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. The Turkish ghurúsh or piaster of the time was forty paras, the para one-

    ninth of a cent. These figures are approximate only. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Accent the first syllable: FÁ-teh-meh. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Gibbon writes of the Imám Ḥusayn’s martyrdom and the fate of his

     Household, that “in a distant age and climate the tragic scene … will awaken

     the sympathy of the coldest reader.” [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. The Sadratu’l-Muntahá, translated *inter alia* as the Sidrah Tree which

     marks the boundary, and the Lote-Tree of the extremity. Cf. Qur’án 53:14. It

     is said to stand at the loftiest point in Paradise, and to mark the place beyond

     which neither men nor angels can pass. In Bahá’í terminology it refers to the

     Manifestation of God. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. This prayer was revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for the Consort of the King of

     Martyrs. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Qur’án 76:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Pronounced Shams-oz-Zohá. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. A forerunner of the Báb, and co-founder of the Shaykhí School. See

     glossary. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. His daughter, at a later date, became the consort of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Cf. *God*

     *Passes By*, p. 130, and *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 461. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. “Gate of the Gate”, a title of Mullá Ḥusayn, the first to believe in the

     Báb. For an account of his sister, cf. *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 383, note. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. “Solace of the Eyes”. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Persian women of the day went heavily veiled in public. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Qur’án 7:7; 14:42; 21:48; 57:25, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Cf. Nabíl, *The Dawn-Breakers*, chapter XV. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. The reference is to Muḥammad’s daughter, Fáṭimih, “the bright and fair

     of face, the Lady of Light.” [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Eldest son of the Sháh and ruler over more than two-fifths of the king-

     dom. He ratified the death sentence. Soon after these events, he fell into

     disgrace. Cf. *God Passes By*, pp. 200, 232. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. The eighth Imám, poisoned by order of the Caliph Ma’mún, a.h. 203,

     after the Imám had been officially designated as the Caliph’s heir apparent.

     His shrine, with its golden dome, has been called the glory of the Shí‘ih

     world. “A part of My body is to be buried in Khurásán,” the Prophet tradi-

     tionally said. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Pronounced TÁ-heh-reh. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Cf. *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 81, note 2, and p. 285, note 2. Certain lines,

     there translated by Shoghi Effendi, are incorporated here. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. A forerunner of the Báb, and first of the two founders of the Shaykhí

     School. See glossary. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Qur’án 17:1; 30:56; 50:19; etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. The sixth Imám. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. The “Aḥsanu’l-Qiṣaṣ”, the Báb’s commentary on the Súrih of Joseph, was

     called the Qur’án of the Bábís, and was translated from Arabic into Persian

     by Ṭáhirih. Cf. *God Passes By*, p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Qur’án 3:54: “Then will we invoke and lay the malison of God on those

     that lie!” The ordeal was by imprecation. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Qur’án 21:48; 19:37, etc. In Islám the Bridge of Ṣiráṭ, sharp as a sword

     and finer than a hair, stretches across Hell to Heaven. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Cf. *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 276. The murderer was not a Bábí, but a fer-

     vent admirer of the Shaykhí leaders, the Twin Luminous Lights. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Cf. *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 278. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. This refers to the doctrine that there are three ways to God: the Law

     (sharí‘at), the Path (ṭaríqat), and the Truth (ḥaqíqat). That is, the law of the

     orthodox, the path of the dervish, and the truth. Cf. R. A. Nicholson, *Com-*

     *mentary on the Mathnaví of Rúmí*, s.v. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. The eighteenth Letter of the Living, martyred with unspeakable cruelty

     in the marketplace at Bárfurúsh, when he was twenty-seven. Bahá’u’lláh con-

     ferred on him a station second only to that of the Báb Himself. Cf. *The*

     *Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 408–15. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Cf. Qur’án 74:8 and 6:73. Also Isaiah 27:13 and Zechariah 9:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Qur’án, Súrih 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. A systematic campaign against the new Faith had been launched in Per-

     sia by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities combined. The believers, cut

     down wherever they were isolated, banded together when they could, for

     protection against the Government, the clergy, and the people. Betrayed and

     surrounded as they passed through the forest of Mázindarán, some 300 be-

     lievers, mostly students and recluses, built the Fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí and

     held out against the armies of Persia for eleven months. Cf. *The Dawn-*

     *Breakers*, chapters XIX and XX; and *God Passes By*, p. 37 *et seq*. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. On August 15, 1852, a half-crazed Bábí youth wounded the Sháh with

     shot from a pistol. The assailant was instantly killed, and the authorities

     carried out a wholesale massacre of the believers, its climax described by

     Renan as “a day perhaps unparalleled in the history of the world.” Cf. Lord

     Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, pp. 501–2, and *God Passes By*, p. 62 *et*

     *seq.* [↑](#footnote-ref-131)