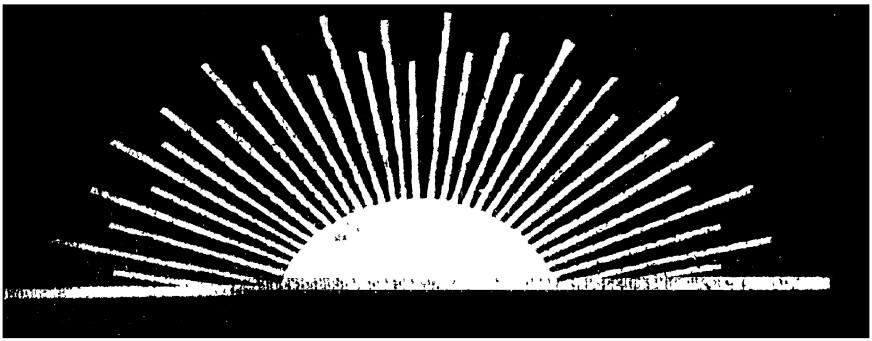
UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY
OU_170168
UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



297.481/NUD 16800
Nabils, N
The dawn-Breaker
1953
23 OCT 1968

OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

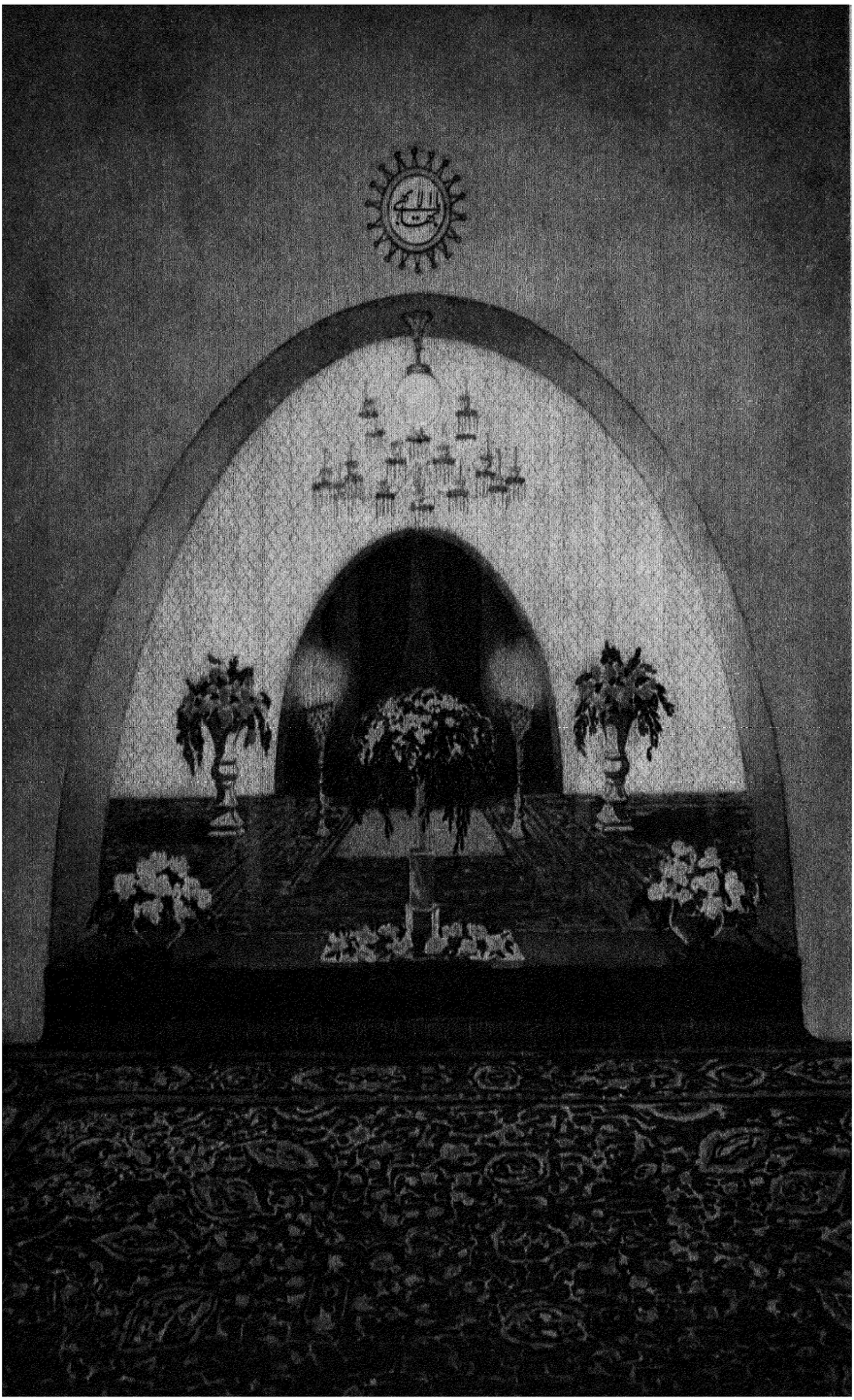
Call No. 297.481 N11D Accession No. 16000

Author Nabils, N

Title The Dawn-Breakers 1932

This book should be returned on or before the date last marked below.

THE DAWN-BREAKERS



THE DAWN-BREAKERS

NABÍL'S NARRATIVE OF THE EARLY DAYS OF THE BAHÁ'Í REVELATION



"I stand, life in hand, ready; that perchance, through God's loving-kindness and grace, this revealed and manifest Letter may lay down his life as a sacrifice in the path of the Primal Point, the Most Exalted Word."—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.



TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL PERSIAN

AND EDITED BY

SHOGHI EFFENDI

BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING COMMITTEE

New York

COPYRIGHT, 1932, BY NATIONAL SPIRITUAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE
UNITED STATES AND CANADA

MANUFACTURED COMPLETE BY
KINGSPORT PRESS, INC
KINGSPORT, TENNESSEE
United States of America

To

The Greatest Holy Leaf

The Last Survivor of a Glorious and Heroic Age

I Dedicate This Work

in Token of a

Great Debt of Gratitude and Love

TABLE OF PRINCIPAL CONTENTS OF THE NARRATIVE

PART ONE: PRE-REVELATION DAYS

CHAPTER I: THE MISSION OF SHAYKH AḤMAD-I-AḤSÁ'Í

PAGE

His departure from Bahrayn to 'Iráq 1
His visit to Najaf and Karbilá 2
His journey to Shíráz 4
His stay in Yazd 5
a. His correspondence with Fath-'Alí Sháh 5
b. His relations with Hájí 'Abdu'l-Vahháb 6
c. The anecdote of Mírzá Mahmúd-i-Qamsarí 8
d. The arrival of Siyyid Kázim-i-Rashtí 10
His pilgrimage to Mashhad 12
His triumphal entry into Ṭihrán 13
His departure to Kirmánsháh 13
His return to Karbilá 17
His journey to Mecca and Medina, and his death 18

CHAPTER II: THE MISSION OF SIYYID KÁZIM-I-RASHTÍ

His relations with Hájí Siyyid Muḥammad-Báqir-i-Rashtí 19
His allusions to the Promised One 24
The anecdote of Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí 25
a. Siyyid Kázim's visit to the Báb 25
b. The Báb's attendance at the teaching classes of Siyyid Kázim 27
c. The Báb's visit to the shrine of Imám Ḥusayn 30
d. Shaykh Ḥasan's visit to Shíráz and Máh-Kú 30
e. His meeting with Bahá'u'lláh in Karbilá 32
References to the Promised One in the works of Siyyid Kázim 33
The siege of Karbilá 35
The allusions of Siyyid Kázim to his unfaithful disciples 36
The account related by Shaykh Abú-Turáb 39
The exhortations of Siyyid Kázim to his disciples 40
The meeting of Siyyid Kázim with the Arab shepherd 43
Death of Siyyid Kázim 45

PART TWO: THE REVELATION OF THE BÁB

CHAPTER III: THE DECLARATION OF THE BÁB'S MISSION

The arrival of Mullá Ḥusayn in Karbilá 47
Significance of the year '60 48
Departure of Mullá Ḥusayn for Najaf and Búshihr 50
Interview of Mullá Ḥusayn with the Báb in Shíráz 52
Arrival of Mullá 'Alíy-i-Basṭámí and his companions in Shíráz 66

PAGE
Arrival of Quddús in Shíráz 69
The early days of the Báb 72
a. His birth 72
b. His school-days 75
c. His marriage 76
d. His stay in Búshihr 77
Letters of the Living 80
Reference to Ṭáhirih 81
Explanation of the term Bálá-Sarí 84
Dismissal of Mullá Ḥusayn 85
Departure of Mullá 'Alíy-i-Bastámí from Shíráz 87
Story of 'Abdu'l-Vahháb 87
Sufferings of Mullá 'Alíy-i-Basṭámí 89
The Báb's farewell address to the Letters of the Living 92
The Báb's parting words to Mullá Ḥusayn 96

CHAPTER IV: MULLÁ ḤUSAYN'S JOURNEY TO ṬIHRÁN

Visit of Mullá Ḥusayn to Isfáhán 97
a. His relations with the disciples of Ḥájí Siyyid Muhammad-Báqir 97
b. Story of the Sifter of Wheat 99
c. Conversion of Mullá Ṣádiq-i-Khurásání 100
His stay in Káshán and Qum 101
His experiences in Ṭihrán 101
a. His relations with Ḥájí Mírzá Muhammad-i-Khurásání 102
b. His meeting with Mullá Muhammad-i-Núrí, and his message to Bahá'u'lláh . 104

CHAPTER V: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S JOURNEY TO MÁZINDARÁN

His reference to Mírzá Buzurg 109
His visit to Núr prior to Mullá Ḥusayn's arrival in Ṭihrán 111
a. His meeting with Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Núrí 111
b. The two dreams of Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Núrí 111
His visit to Núr after Mullá Ḥusayn's arrival in Ṭihrán 112
a. His relations with His uncle 'Azíz 113
b. His meeting with Mullá Muhammad 113
c. His conversation with a dervish 117
d. The effects of Bahá'u'lláh's visit to Núr 118
The Vazír's dream of Bahá'u'lláh 119
The relations of Bahá'u'lláh with Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí 120

CHAPTER VI: MULLÁ ḤUSAYN'S JOURNEY TO KHURÁSÁN

The instructions of the Báb to the Letters of the Living 123
The first believers of Khurásán 125
Mullá Ḥusayn's letter to the Báb 126

CHAPTER VII: THE BÁB'S PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA AND MEDINA

Incident related by Ḥájí Abu'l-Ḥasan-i-Shírází 130
Reference to Journey in the Persian Bayán 130
Arrival at Jaddih, and an incident on the way to Mecca 132
The circumambulation of the Ka'bih by the Báb 134
His declaration to Mírzá Muḥíṭ-i-Kirmání 134
His message to the Sherif of Mecca, and the account related by Ḥájí Níyáz-i-Baghdádí 138
His visit to Medina 140

CHAPTER VIII: THE BÁB'S STAY IN SHÍRÁZ AFTER THE PILGRIMAGE

PAGE
The Báb's return to Búshihr and farewell to Quddús . . . 142
Visit of Quddús to the Báb's maternal uncle in Shíráz . . . 143
Meeting of Quddús with Mullá Ṣádiq-i-Khurásání . . . 144
Afflictions which befell Quddús and Mullá Ṣádiq . . . 145
a. Interrogation by Ḥusayn Khán of Mullá Ṣádiq . . . 146
b. Account of an eye-witness regarding the persecution . . . 147
Return of the Báb to Shíráz . . . 150
a. Incident related by leader of the Báb's escort . . . 150
b. The Báb's meeting with Ḥusayn Khán . . . 151
c. Declaration of the Báb in the Masjid-i-Vakíl . . . 154
Reference to those who embraced the Faith in Shíráz . . . 156
The Báb's communication to the believers in Karbilá . . . 158
Arrival of the believers at Kangávar, and their meeting with Mullá Ḥusayn . . . 159
Their departure with Mullá Ḥusayn for Isfáhán . . . 159
Departure of Mullá Ḥusayn for Shíráz . . . 160
Arrival of six believers at Shíráz . . . 161
Account related by Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Qazvíní . . . 162
Meeting of Nabíl with Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Qazvíní . . . 169

CHAPTER IX: THE BÁB'S STAY IN SHÍRÁZ AFTER THE PILGRIMAGE
(Continued)

Departure of Mullá Ḥusayn for Khurásán . . . 170
Siyyid Yaḥyá's interviews with the Báb . . . 173
Conversion of Mullá Muhammad-'Alíy-i-Zanjání . . . 178
Visits of Quddús to Kirmán, Ṭihrán, and Mázindarán . . . 179
a. His relations with Ḥají Siyyid Javád-i-Kirmání . . . 180
b. His visit to Ṭihrán . . . 182
c. His stay in Bárfurúsh . . . 183
Visit of Mullá Ṣádiq to Yazd . . . 184
a. His relations with Mírzá Ahmad-i-Azghandí . . . 184
b. His experience in the Masjid of Yazd . . . 186
Sufferings of Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí and others . . . 187
Reference to Ḥájí Siyyid Javád-i-Karbilá'í . . . 189
Account related by Shaykh Sultán-i-Karbilá'í . . . 190
Advent of the second Naw-Rúz . . . 191
References to the mother and to the wife of the Báb . . . 191
Ḥusayn Khán's activities . . . 194
a. Report of the chief of his emissaries . . . 194
b. Ḥusayn Khán's directions to 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Khán . . . 195
Arrest of the Báb, and outbreak of the plague . . . 196
a. Flight of Ḥusayn Khán . . . 196
b. Recovery of the son of 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Khán . . . 197
c. Release of the Báb . . . 197
Farewell of the Báb to His relatives, and His departure from Shíráz . . . 198

CHAPTER X: THE BÁB'S SOJOURN IN IṢFÁHÁN

His letter to Manúchihr Khán . . . 199
The welcome extended by the Imám-Jum'ih . . . 201
a. Honours accorded by the people to the Báb . . . 202
b. Deference shown the Báb by the Imám-Jum'ih . . . 202
c. The Báb's commentary on the Súrih of Va'l-'Asr . . . 202
d. The Báb's interview with Manúchihr Khán . . . 203
Fears of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí . . . 204

PAGE
The Báb's visit to Manúchihr Khán 205
Reference to Mullá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Harátí 208
Banquet offered to the Báb by Mírzá Ibráhím 208
Death warrant of the Báb issued by the 'ulamás of Isfáhán 209
The plan of Manúchihr Khán for the departure and return of the Báb to Iṣfáhán . . 211
Meeting of the believers with the Báb 212
The Báb's prediction of the approaching death of Manúchihr Khán 213
Last days of Manúchihr Khán 214
Dismissal of the believers 214
Gurgín Khán's communication to Muhammad Sháh 215
Departure of the Báb for Káshán 216

CHAPTER XI: THE BÁB'S STAY IN KÁSHÁN

Dream of Ḥájí Mírzá Jání 217
The Báb's three days at the home of Ḥájí Mírzá Jání 219
a. Reference to Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Báqí 221
b. The meeting of Mihdí with the Báb 221

CHAPTER XII: THE BÁB'S JOURNEY FROM KÁSHÁN TO TABRÍZ

His approach to Qum 223
His stay at the village of Qumrúd 224
His arrival at the fortress of Kinár-Gird 225
His stay at the village of Kulayn 226
a. Arrival of a number of believers 227
b. Joy of the Báb at the gift and message from Bahá'u'lláh 227
c. An incident of the journey 228
d. Muhammad Sháh's letter to the Báb 229
e. Fears, designs, and motives of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí 231
Last stage of the Báb's journey to Tabríz 235
a. Arrival of the believers at the village of Síyáh-Dihán 235
b. Intervention of Ḥujjat-i-Zanjání 236
c. The Báb's farewell to His guards 236
d. The Báb welcomed by His youthful disciple 237
The Báb's arrival at Tabríz 238
a. Enthusiastic reception by the people of Tabríz 239
b. The Báb's meeting with Ḥájí Muhammad-Taqíy-i-Mílání and Ḥájí 'Alí-'Askar 239
c. Account related by Ḥájí 'Alí-'Askar 240

CHAPTER XIII: THE BÁB'S INCARCERATION IN THE CASTLE OF MÁH-KÚ

Account related by Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Yazdí 243
Situation of Máh-Kú, and character of its people 243
Attachment of inhabitants of Máh-Kú to the Báb 244
Arrival of Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí, and the Báb's message to him 245
Dream of 'Alí Khán-i-Máh-Kú'í 247
Change in the attitude of 'Alí Khán 247
Reference to the Persian Bayán 248
Visit of the Báb's disciples to Máh-Kú 250
Incidents in the life of the Báb at Máh-Kú 252
Dream of the Báb prior to the declaration of His Mission 253
Misfortunes befall Muhammad Sháh and his government 253
Departure of Mullá Ḥusayn from Mashhad on his pilgrimage to Máh-Kú 254
a. Motive of his departure 254

PAGE
b. His visit to Ṭihrán 255
c. His arrival at Máh-Kú and dream of 'Alí Khán 256
Words of the Báb to Mullá Ḥusayn 258
Accusation against 'Alí Khán, and the Báb's consequent transference to Chihríq . . 259
Farewell of the Báb to Mullá Ḥusayn 260

CHAPTER XIV: MULLÁ ḤUSAYN'S JOURNEY TO MÁZINDARÁN

Departure of Mullá Ḥusayn for Ṭihrán 261
His stay at the home of Quddús in Bárfurúsh 261
Observations regarding Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí and Mullá Ḥusayn 263
Instructions of Quddús to Mullá Ḥusayn 265
Interview of Mullá Ḥusayn with the Sa'idu'l-'Ulamá' 266
Departure of Mullá Ḥusayn, and his arrival at Mashhad 267

CHAPTER XV: ṬÁHIRIH'S JOURNEY FROM KARBILÁ TO KHURÁSÁN

Allusion to Bahá'u'lláh 269
Epistle of the Báb to the believers 269
Response of Ṭáhirih to the appeal of the Báb 269
a. Her activities in Karbilá 270
b. Her activities in Baghdád 271
c. Her stay in Kirmánsháh and Hamadán 272
d. Her confinement in Qazvín 273
(1) Her reply to Mullá Muhammad 273
(2) Arrival of Mullá 'Abdu'lláh, and murder of Mullá Taqí 276
(3) Imprisonment of the accused in Ṭihrán, and intervention and confinement of Bahá'u'lláh 278
(4) Appeal to Muhammad Sháh 280
(5) Execution of first Bahá'í martyr in Persia 280
(6) Attitude of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, and intervention of Ṣadr-i-Ardibílí . . . 280
(7) Massacre of Qazvín 282
(8) Effects of the massacre in Ṭihrán 283
e. Her deliverance by Bahá'u'lláh 284
(1) Her removal to Ṭihrán 284
(2) Effects of her departure from Qazvín 285
(3) Her attitude towards the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh 285
f. Her departure for Khurásán 286
(1) Instructions of Bahá'u'lláh to Áqáy-i-Kalím 286
(2) Her departure from Ṭihrán 287

CHAPTER XVI: THE CONFERENCE OF BADASHT

Departure of Bahá'u'lláh from Ṭihrán 288
The disturbances at Mashhad 288
Departure of Quddús for Mázindarán 290
Meeting of Bahá'u'lláh with Quddús in Sháh-Rúd 292
Their arrival at Badasht 293
a. Significance of the gathering in Badasht 293
b. Incident related by Shaykh Abú-Turáb 293
c. Differences among the believers 297
d. Reconciliation achieved by Bahá'u'lláh 297
e. Departure from Badasht 298
The incident in Níyálá as related by Bahá'u'lláh 299
Outcome of that incident 300

CHAPTER XVII: THE BÁB'S INCARCERATION IN THE CASTLE OF CHIHRÍQ

PAGE

Attitude of the people of Chihríq towards the Báb 302
The Báb's instructions to an attendant 303
Acceptance of the Message by 'ulamás and government officials 303
a. Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí and his brother 303
b. Mírzá Asadu'lláh 304
c. A dervish from India 305
Believers dismissed from Chihríq 306
Incident concerning Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí 307

CHAPTER XVIII: EXAMINATION OF THE BÁB AT TABRÍZ

His visit to Urúmíyyih 309
His arrival at Tabríz 311
His examination by the 'ulamás 315
Indignity inflicted upon Him 319
His return to Chihríq, and His epistle to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí 323

CHAPTER XIX: THE MÁZINDARÁN UPHEAVAL

Mullá Ḥusayn's departure from Mashhad 324
Death of Muḥammad Sháh 327
The Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá's appeal to the people of Bárfurúsh 328
Attack by the people of Bárfurúsh on Mullá Ḥusayn and his companions 329
Repulse of the attack by Mullá Ḥusayn 330
Account related by Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Furúghí 332
Surrender of the people of Bárfurúsh 336
Renewed attempts by Mullá Ḥusayn's companions to sound the adhán 338
Sortie from the caravanserai of the Sabzih-Maydán 338
Intercession of the notables of Bárfurúsh 339
Instructions given to Khusraw-i-Qádí-Kalá'í 339
Incident in the forest of Mázindarán 342
Arrival at the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí 343
Dream of the guardian of the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí 344
Attack and repulse of the horsemen of Qádí-Kalá 345
Visit of Bahá'u'lláh to the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí 348
Liberation of Quddús 350
Reference to the Black Standards 351
Confinement of Quddús in the house of Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí 351
Arrival of Quddús at the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí 352
Account related by Mírzá Muhammad-i-Furúghí 353
Incidents in the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí concerning Quddús 355
The Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá's appeal to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh 358
Encampment of the army of 'Abdu'lláh Khán-i-Turkamán near the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí 360
First sortie from the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí 362
Message of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá to Mullá Ḥusayn 363
Second sortie from the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí 366
Injury sustained by Quddús 367
Bahá'u'lláh's attempt to join the occupants of the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí 368
Reference to Bahá'u'lláh's activities prior to the declaration of His Mission 372

CHAPTER XX: THE MÁZINDARÁN UPHEAVAL (*Continued*)

Third sortie, and fall of Mullá Ḥusayn 378
Mullá Ḥusayn's last moments 379

PAGE
Reference to his burial and achievements . . . 381
Quddús' warning to his companions . . . 382
Betrayal by Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Mutavallí . . . 384
Attack by 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Lárijání . . . 386
Fourth sortie, and complete rout of the enemy . . . 387
Despatch of artillery from Ṭihrán . . . 389
Distress of the besieged . . . 389
Exhortations of Quddús to his companions . . . 391
Fifth sortie, and death of Ja'far-Qulí Khán . . . 394
Increasing distress of the companions . . . 395
A declaration by Quddús . . . 396
Sixth and last sortie . . . 396
Deliberation of the prince with chiefs of his staff . . . 396
Incident related by Áqáy-i-Kalím . . . 397
Desertion and capture of a number of the companions . . . 398
Oath taken by the prince to ensure safety of the besieged . . . 399
Abandonment of the fort . . . 400
Capture of a number of the companions . . . 403
General massacre . . . 404
Fate of three of the companions . . . 404
Martyrdom of Quddús . . . 410
List of the martyrs . . . 414

CHAPTER XXI: THE SEVEN MARTYRS OF ṬIHRÁN

Effects of the Mázindarán disaster on the Báb . . . 430
Despatch of Sayyáḥ to the shrine of Ṭabarsí . . . 432
The visit of Sayyáh to Ṭihrán, and meeting with Bahá'u'lláh . . . 433
Account of Nabíl's early life . . . 434
Execution of the Seven Martyrs . . . 436
a. Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí . . . 436
b. Mírzá Qurbán-'Alí . . . 449
c. Ḥájí Mullá Ismá'íl-i-Qumí . . . 453
d. Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Turshízí . . . 455
e. Ḥájí Muḥammad-Taqíy-ı-Kirmání . . . 457
f. Siyyid Murtadá . . . 458
g. Muhammad-Ḥusayn-i-Marághi'í . . . 458
Incidents related by Bahá'u'lláh . . . 459
Burial of the Seven Martyrs . . . 463

CHAPTER XXII: THE NAYRÍZ UPHEAVAL

Journey of Vaḥíd to Ṭihrán and Yazd . . . 465
Celebration of the Feast of Naw-Rúz in Yazd . . . 466
Activities of the Navváb-i-Raḍaví . . . 467
Tumult and dispersal of the enemy . . . 469
Declaration of Vaḥíd to the people of Yazd . . . 469
Repulse of the forces near the fort of Nárín . . . 470
Proclamation of Vaḥíd to the inhabitants of Yazd . . . 472
Sortie ordered by Vaḥíd . . . 472
Departure of Vaḥíd's wife for her father's home . . . 473
Vahíd's instructions to his servant Ḥasan . . . 474
Vahíd's departure for Nayríz . . . 474
Vaḥíd's appeal to the people of Nayríz . . . 479
First sortie from the fort of Khájih . . . 481
Second sortie from the fort of Khájih . . . 483

PAGE
Division of labour in the fort . . . 483
Interception of Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán's message . . . 484
Renewed appeal to Prince Fírúz Mírzá . . . 485
Third sortie from the fort of Khájih . . . 486
Names of martyrs . . . 487
Oath taken by enemy to conclude peace . . . 488
Vaḥíd's response to the enemy's invitation . . . 489
Vahíd's message to his companions, and treachery of Ḥájí Siyyid 'Ábid . . . 490
Capture of the companions . . . 493
Martyrdom of Vaḥíd . . . 494
Fate of Vaḥíd's companions . . . 495

CHAPTER XXIII: MARTYRDOM OF THE BÁB

Motives of the Amír-Niẓám for execution of the Báb . . . 500
Order of the Amír-Nizám to Navváb Ḥamzih Mírzá . . . 504
Disposal by the Báb of His documents . . . 504
Arrival of the Báb at Tabríz . . . 506
Order issued by the Amír-Nizám . . . 506
Confinement of the Báb in the barracks . . . 507
Incident related by Siyyid Ḥusayn . . . 507
The Báb's warning to the Farrásh-Báshí . . . 509
Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí's refusal to recant . . . 509
Issue of the Báb's death-warrants . . . 510
Sám Khán's request from the Báb . . . 512
The Báb's miraculous escape . . . 513
Resignation of the Farrásh-Báshí . . . 513
Resignation of Sám Khán . . . 514
Renewed and final attempt on the Báb's life . . . 517
Account related by Ḥájí 'Alí-'Askar . . . 518
Transference of the Báb's remains to Ṭihrán . . . 519
Reference to Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Núrí . . . 522
Effects of the Báb's martyrdom . . . 523

CHAPTER XXIV: THE ZANJÁN UPHEAVAL

Reference to the Báb's afflictions . . . 527
Activities of Ḥujjat prior to his conversion . . . 529
Ḥujjat's acceptance of the Báb's Message . . . 531
Ḥujjat accused and summoned to Ṭihrán . . . 531
The Báb's message to Ḥujjat . . . 533
Renewed complaints against Ḥujjat, and his transference to Ṭihrán . . . 534
The Báb's arrival at Zanján and departure for Tabríz . . . 534
Ḥujjat's incarceration in Ṭihrán . . . 537
Ḥujjat's escape to Zanján . . . 539
The occasion for the enemy's attack on Ḥujjat and his companions . . . 540
The enemy's preparation for renewed assault . . . 543
Ḥujjat's entry into the fort of 'Alí-Mardán Khán . . . 545
Assault attempted by a siyyid . . . 546
Ḥujjat's admonitions to his companions . . . 546
Ṣadru'd-Dawlih commissioned by the Amír-Nizám to lay siege to the fort . . . 547
The sufferings, labours, and temptations of the besieged . . . 548
Heroism of Zaynab, a village maiden . . . 550
Effects of the shouted prayers of the companions . . . 553
Ḥujjat's petition to Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh . . . 554
Arrest of bearer of petition, and despatch of reinforcements . . . 555
Effect on the companions of the news of the Báb's martyrdom . . . 556

PAGE
Despatch of the Amír-Túmán with further reinforcements 556
Meeting of 'Azíz Khán-i-Mukrí with Ḥujjat 556
Storming of the fort 557
The Amír-Niẓám's warning to the Amír-Túmán 558
Repulse of the combined forces of the enemy 558
Death of Muḥsin 560
Nuptial celebrations in the fort 561
Death of five sons of Karbilá'í 'Abdu'l-Báqí 561
Umm-i-Ashraf's heroism 562
Assistance rendered by the women 563
Amír-Túmán's attempt to deceive the companions 564
Ḥujjat's advice to his companions 567
Resumption of the enemy's offensive 567
Wound sustained by Ḥujjat 569
Capture of the fort, and its effects upon the besieged 570
Repulse of further attacks on the companions 570
Consultation of the Amír-Túmán with his staff 571
Driving of underground passages 572
Death of Ḥujjat's wife and child 572
Death of Ḥujjat, and his interment 573
Last encounter 573
Treatment of survivors 574
Indignities inflicted on Ḥujjat's body, and fate of his kinsmen 578
Number of martyrs 580
Sources of information 580

CHAPTER XXV: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S JOURNEY TO KARBILÁ

Incidents related by Bahá'u'lláh 582
Nabíl's meeting with Mírzá Ahmad and Bahá'u'lláh in Kirmánsháh 587
Reference to Siyyid Basír-i-Hindí 588
Reason for Bahá'u'lláh's departure for Karbilá 591
Nabíl's departure with Mírzá Ahmad for Ṭihrán 592
Bahá'u'lláh's activities in Karbilá 593

CHAPTER XXVI: ATTEMPT ON THE SHÁH'S LIFE, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Death of the Amír-Nizám 595
Bahá'u'lláh's return to Ṭihrán 596
Bahá'u'lláh's meeting with 'Azím 599
Attempt on the Sháh's life 599
Bahá'u'lláh's imprisonment in the Síyáh-Chál 607
Fate of would-be murderers 609
Reign of terror 610
Reference to Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán 610
Reference to the Amír-Nizám's repentance 614
Incident related by the Most Great Branch 616
Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán's martyrdom 618
Ṭáhirih's martyrdom 626
Siyyid Ḥusayn's martyrdom 631
Incidents in the Síyáh-Chál, as related by Bahá'u'lláh 631
Attempts to prove Bahá'u'lláh's complicity 635
'Azím's confession and death 637
Bahá'u'lláh's possessions plundered in Mázindarán 637
Effects of the turmoil in Yazd and Nayríz 642
Bahá'u'lláh's release and banishment to Baghdád 650

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FRONTISPIECE . . . . . The Inmost Shrine of the Báb
FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLETS WRITTEN TO THE NINETEEN LETTERS OF THE LIVING AND TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

First Letter of the Living: Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushrurú'í
Second Letter of the Living: Muḥammad Ḥasan (His Brother)
Third Letter of the Living: Muhammad-Báqir (His Nephew)
Fourth Letter of the Living: Mullá 'Alíy-i-Bastámí
Fifth Letter of the Living: Mullá Khudá-Bakhsh-i-Qúchání (later named Mullá 'Alí)
Sixth Letter of the Living: Mullá Ḥasan-i-Bajistání
Seventh Letter of the Living: Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Yazdí
Eighth Letter of the Living: Mírzá Múhammad Rawḍih-Khán-i-Yazdí
Ninth Letter of the Living: Sa 'Íd-i-Hindí
Tenth Letter of the Living: Mullá Mahmúd-i-Khu'i
Eleventh Letter of the Living: Mullá Jalil-i-Urúmí
Twelfth Letter of the Living: Mullá Aḥmad-i-Ibdál-i-Marághi'í
Thirteenth Letter of the Living: Mullá Báqir-i-Tabrizí
Fourteenth Letter of the Living: Mullá Yúsif-i-Ardibílí
Fifteenth Letter of the Living: Mírzá Hádí (Son of Mullá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb-i-Qazvíní)
Sixteenth Letter of the Living: Mírzá Muhammad-i Alíy-i-Qazvíní
Seventeenth Letter of the Living: Ṭáhirih
Eighteenth Letter of the Living: Quddús
Nineteenth Letter of the Living: The Báb Himself
Twentieth Letter of the Living: Bahá'u'lláh "Him Who Will Be Made Manifest"

PAGE

Muhammad-i-Zarandí surnamed Nabíl-i-A'Zam . . . . . Opposite page lxiii
Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsá'í . . . . . Opposite page 1
General View of Najaf 3
Fath-'Alí Sháh and Sons 6
Painting of Mírzá Buzurg (Father of Bahá'u'lláh) 11
View of Karbilá 26
Entrance to the Shrine of Ímám Ḥusayn in Karbilá 28
Shrine of Imám Husayn in Karbilá 29
View of Kázimayn 41
Section of the Masjid-i-Baráthá 43
Site of Siyyid Kázim's Resting Place (tombstone now removed) 44
Home of Mullá Ḥusayn in Bushrúyih 49
Views of the Masjid-i-Ílkhání 51
General View of Shíráz 52
Room in the Masjid-i-Ílkhání, Shíráz, in which the Báb and Mullá Ḥusayn met . . . 53
Orange Tree Planted by the Báb in the Courtyard of His House in Shíráz. 54
The Báb's Brazier and Samovar 55
The Room where the Báb was born in Shíráz 56
Outskirts of Shíráz where the Báb went to walk 56
Views of the Upper Room of the Báb's House in Shíráz where He Declared His Mission 58
Views of the Báb's House in Shíráz, showing His Bed Chamber, His Mother's Room, His Sitting Room 60
Views of the Báb's House in Shíráz where He Declared His Mission, showing Original Sash and Door, Entrance, and Steps Leading to the Declaration Chamber . . . 64
Views of the Public Bath in Shíráz, where the Báb went as a Child 71

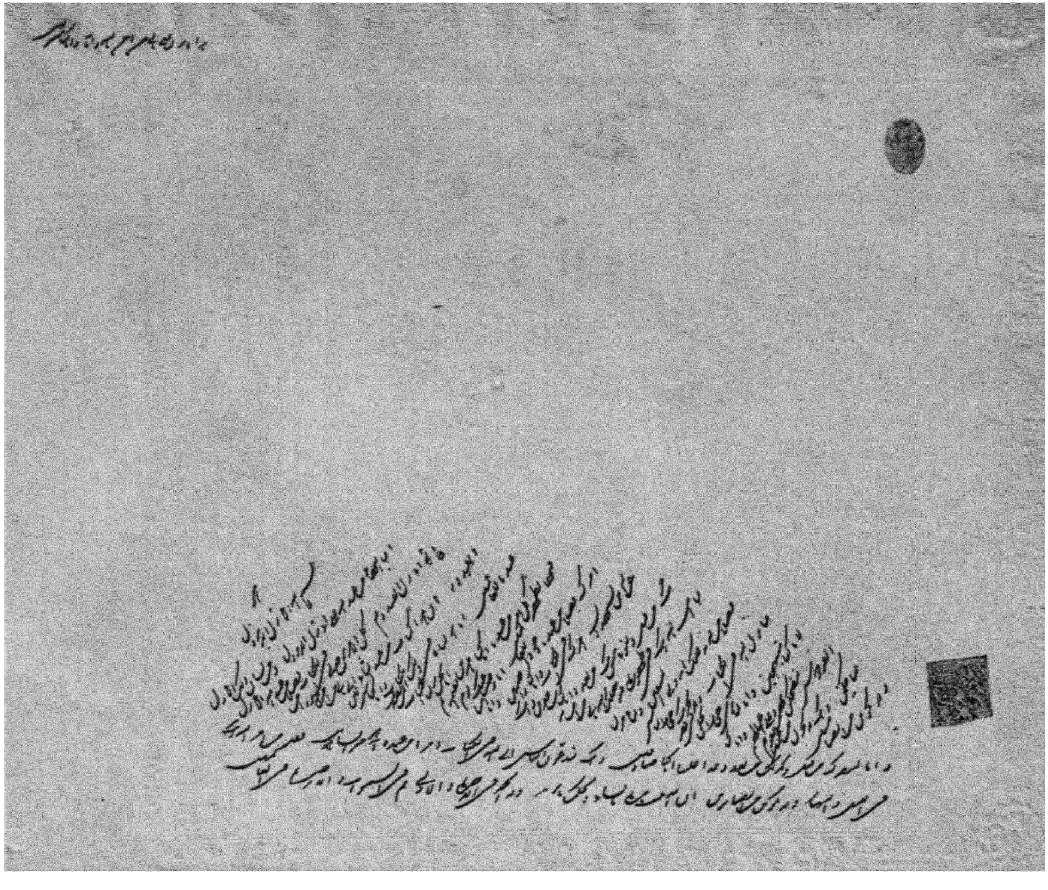
PAGE
Entrance Door and Ruins of the Qahviy-i-Awlíyá, in Shíráz, the School the Báb attended 73
Grave of the Báb's Wife in Sháh-Chirágh, Shíráz 74
Tree Marking Resting Place of the Báb's Infant Son in Bábí-Dukhtarán, Shíráz . . . 74
Facsimile of Ṭáhirih's Handwriting 78
Site of the Kazirán Gate, Shíráz 86
The Market-Street of Vakíl, Shíráz 86
The Madrisih of Ním-Ávard, Isfáhán 95
Views of Ṭihrán 102
'Aqáy-i-Kalím, Brother of Bahá'u'lláh 103
Views of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Ṭihrán 105
Approach to the Ruins of Bahá'u'lláh's Original Home in Tákur, Mázindarán . . . 110
Inscription placed by the Vazír, Mírzá Buzurg, above Door of Home in Tákur . . . 112
Views of the House Occupied by Bahá'u'lláh in Tákur, Mázindarán 115
Views of the Mosque of Gawhar-Shád in Mashhad, showing Pulpit where Mullá Ḥusayn preached 124
View of the "Babíyyih" in Mashhad 127
Drawing of Mecca 129
Relics of the Báb, showing Dress worn under the Jubbih (outer coat) 133
Relics of the Báb, showing Cap around which the Turban was wound 134
Cloth Worn By the Báb when Circumambulating the Ka'bih 135
Drawing of Medina 139
Views of the Masjid-i-Naw 144
Views of the Masjid-i-Vakíl, Shíráz, showing Section of the Interior, Pulpit from which the Báb Addressed the Congregation, and Entrance Door . . . 152
Views of the House of Quddús' Father in Bárfurúsh 182
Siyyid Javád-i-Karbilá'í 189
Interior of Ḥájí Mírzá 'Alí's House in Shíráz, (the Báb's Maternal Uncle) 192
Ḥájí Mírzá 'Alí's House, (the Báb's Maternal Uncle) 193
View of Iṣfáhán 199
Views of the House of the Imám-i-Jum'ih in Isfáhán, showing Entrance and Courtyard 200
Views of the Masjid-i-Jum'ih in Isfáhán, showing Pulpit before which the Báb Prayed 203
Views of the House of the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih in Iṣfáhán. 206
View of the 'Imárat-i-Khurshíd in Isfáhán, showing Ruins of the Section the Báb Occupied 210
Manúchihr Khán, The Mu'tamidu'd-i-Dawlih 211
View of Káshán 217
Gate of 'Attár, Káshán 218
Views of the House of Ḥájí Mírzá Jání in Káshán, showing Room where the Báb stayed 220
Views of Qum, showing the Ḥaram-i-Ma'Ṣúmih 223
Village of Qumrúd 225
Ruins of the Fortress of Kinár-Gird 225
Views of the Village of Kulayn 226
Muḥammad Sháh 229
Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí 233
Panorama of Tabríz 237
The Ark (Citadel) of Tabríz where the Báb was Confined, showing Interior and Exterior (X) of Room He Occupied 238
Castle of Máh-Kú 242
View of Milan in Ádhrbáyján 257
Houses in which Ṭáhirih lived in Qazvín 274
Ṭáhirih's Library in her Father's House in Qazvín 275
Village of Sháh-Rúd 291
Hamlet of Badasht 292
The Persian Howdah 296
Castle of Chihríq 301
The House Occupied by the Báb in Urúmíyyih, The Bálá-Khánih (X) showing Room in which He stayed 310

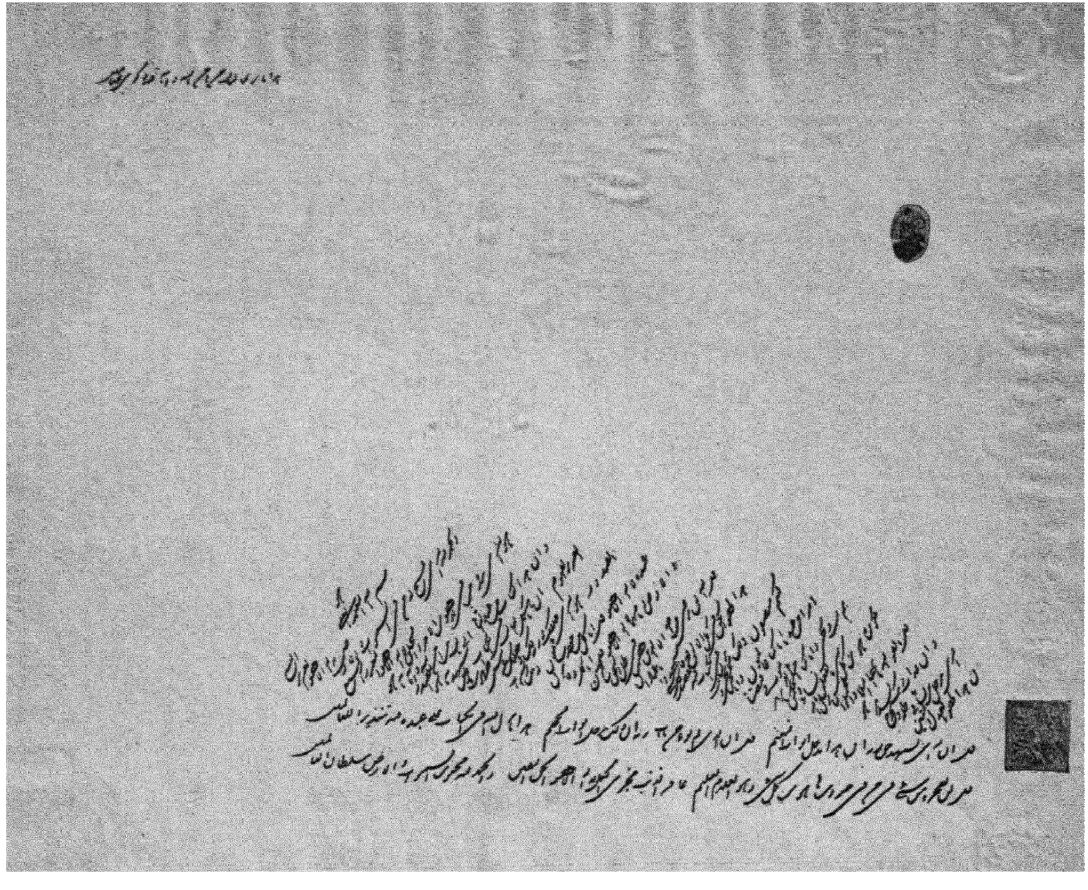
PAGE
Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh as a Child, showing Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, the Qá'im-Maqám on his right and Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí on his left, on extreme left (X) stands Manúchihr Khán, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih 314
Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh 315
Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh 316
Eminent Persian Mujtahids 317
The Namáz-Khánih of Shaykhu'l-Islám of Tabríz, showing corner (X) where the Báb was Bastinadoed 318
Village of Níshábúr 325
Views of the Village of Míyamay, showing Exterior and Interior of the Masjid where Mullá Ḥusayn and his companions prayed 326
House of the Sa'idu'l-Ulamá' in Bárfurúsh, Mázindarán 334
Views of the Caravanserai of Sabzih-Maydán in Mázindarán 335
The Shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí 343
Views of the Site of the Fort of Ṭabarsí, showing the Tomb of the Shaykh, and the Site of the Fort that enclosed the Shrine 344
Entrance of the Shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí in Mázindarán 345
Plans and Sketches of the Fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí 348
House of Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, the Mujtahid, in Sárí, Mázindarán 350
Village of Afrá 360
Village of Shír-Gáh 362
Village of Ríz-Áb 364
Village of Fírúz-Kúh 364
Village of Vás-Kas 364
View of Ámul 370
House of the Governor of Ámul 370
Views of the Masjid of Ámul, (X) showing the place where opening was made in Wall 373
Tree from which Mullá Ḥusayn was Shot 380
Village of Dízvá 401
Views of the Madrisih of Mírzá Zakí, in Bárfurúsh, the Resting Place of Quddús . . 412
Muḥammad Ridá, (One of the Companions of Quddús, who survived the Struggle of Shaykh Ṭabarsí) 427
Mírzá Abú-Ṭálib (Companion of Quddús who survived the Struggle of Shaykh Ṭabarsí) 428
Views of the Masjid-i-Sháh of Ṭihrán 438
The Madrisih of Mírzá Sálih in Ṭihrán 440
The Madrisiy-i-Sadr in Ṭihrán, (X) showing Room Bahá'u'lláh Occupied 442
The Madrisih of Dáru'sh-Shafáy-i-Masjid-i-Sháh in Ṭihrán 443
The Sabzih-Maydán of Ṭihrán 457
Gate of Naw, Ṭihrán 457
Panorama of Yazd 462
Vahíd's House in Yazd 466
Views of the Fort of Nárín, Yazd 470
Panorama of Nayríz 478
Vahíd's House in Nayríz 479
The Fort of Khájih 480
Vahíd's Room in the Fort 480
The Masjid-i-Jámi' at Nayríz 492
Site of the Martyrdoms at Nayríz 497
Graves of the Martyrs at Nayríz 497
Vahíd's Resting-Place at Nayríz 498
Mírzá Taqí Khán, the Amír-Nizám 500
The Báb's Prayer Beads and Signet Ring 503
Qur'án belonging to the Báb 503
Ruins of the House Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mámáqání, the Mujtahid of Tabríz . . . 509
The Barrack-Square in Tabríz, where the Báb suffered Martyrdom (X) showing place where He was Suspended and shot) 511
Site of the Moat that surrounded Tabríz, where the Báb's Body was thrown . . . 517

PAGE
View of the Imám-Zádih Ḥasan at Ṭihrán, where the Báb's Body was kept 520
View of Zanján 527
Views of the Masjid built for Ḥujjat by his companions 528
The Caravanserai of Mírzá Ma'Súm-i-Tabíb at Zanján, (X) showing Room the Báb Occupied 535
Graves of Ashraf (1) and his Mother (2) 562
Entrance to Ḥujjat's ruined House at Zanján 571
Square in Zanján where Ḥujjat's Body was left exposed for three days 578
Ḥájí Imám (X) showing One of the survivors of the struggle of Zanján 579
Village of Afchih near Ṭihrán (showing Bahá'u'lláh's House through trees) 597
Murgh-Mahallih, Bahá'u'lláh's Summer Residence in Shimírán 598
View of Níyávarán near Ṭihrán 602
The Russian Legation in the Village of Zarkandih 604
Southern part of Ṭihrán where criminals were hanged and where many Bahá'ís were martyred, (X) indicates site of Síyáh-Chál 607
Bahá'í Family martyred in Persia 610
Believers gathered around the Body of a Martyr 611
The House of the Kalantar in Ṭihrán where Ṭáhirih was confined 623
Costumes worn by Persian Ladies in the middle of the 19th Century (showing Indoor and Outdoor dress) 624
Site of the Garden of Ílkhání where Ṭáhirih was Martyred 626
General View of Tákur in Mázindarán 638
Ruins of Bahá'u'lláh's House, originally belonging to the Vazír, His Father in Tákur, Mázindarán 640
View of Ábádih 644
The Ḥadíqatu'r-Rahmán, where the Heads of the Martyrs of Nayríz Lie Buried . . 645
Views of Baghdád 649
Bahá'u'lláh's House in Baghdád 662
View of the Illuminated Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel 666
Map of Persia 677

FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S AUTOGRAPH
TABLETS ADDRESSED TO THE
LETTERS OF THE LIVING
AND TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET TO THE SECOND LETTER OF THE LIVING



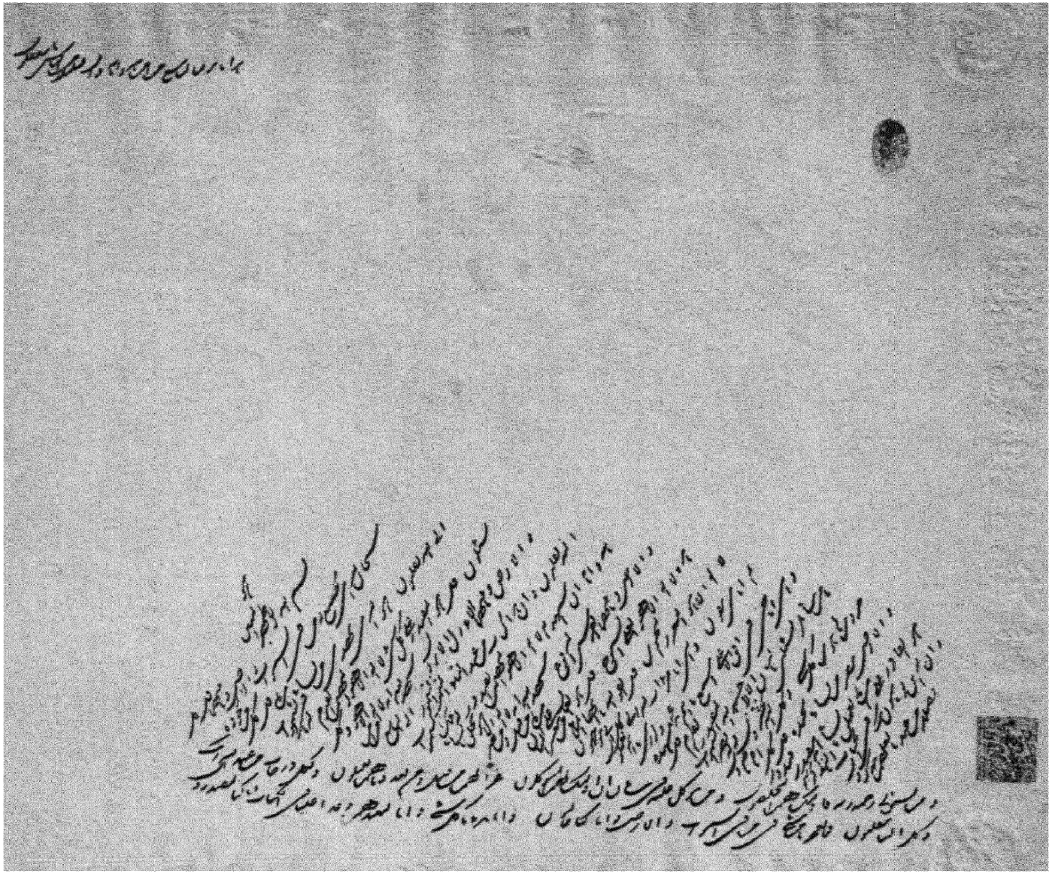


FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET TO THE SIXTH LETTER OF THE LIVING

FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET TO THE SEVENTH LETTER OF THE LIVING

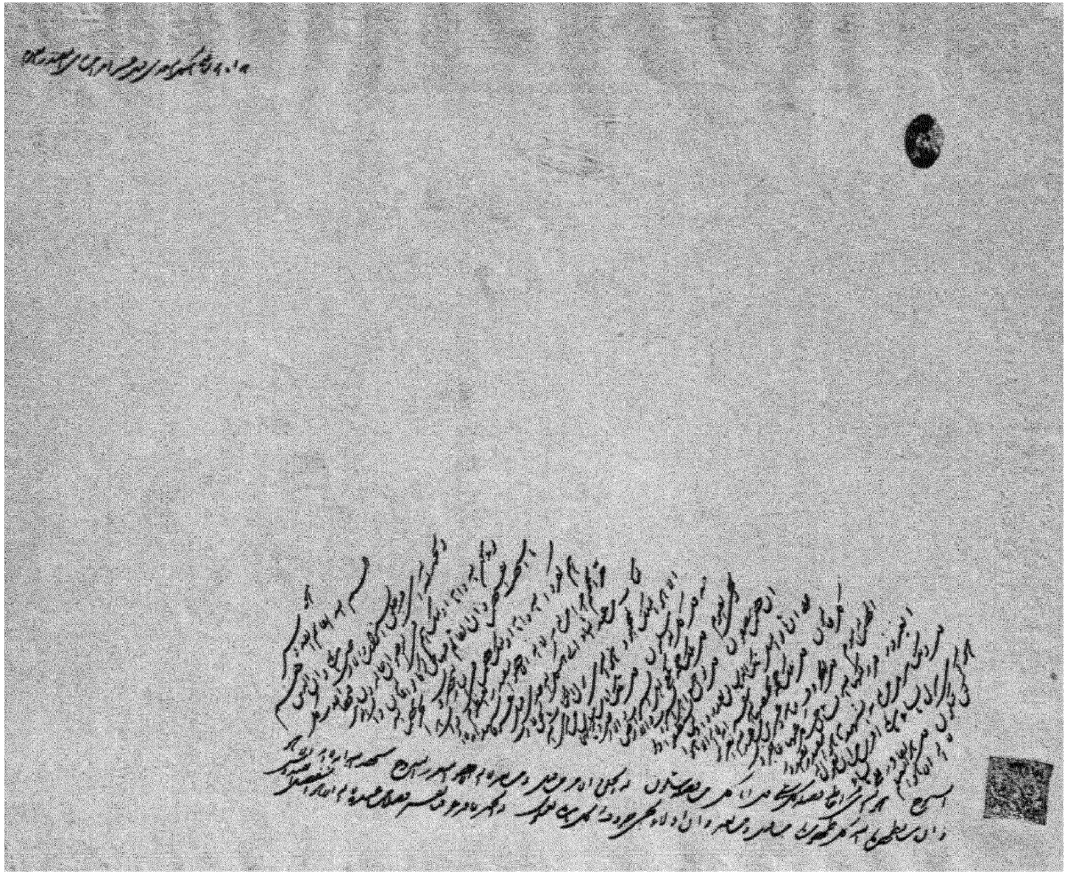
FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET TO THE EIGHTH LETTER OF THE LIVING

FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET TO THE NINTH LETTER OF THE LIVING

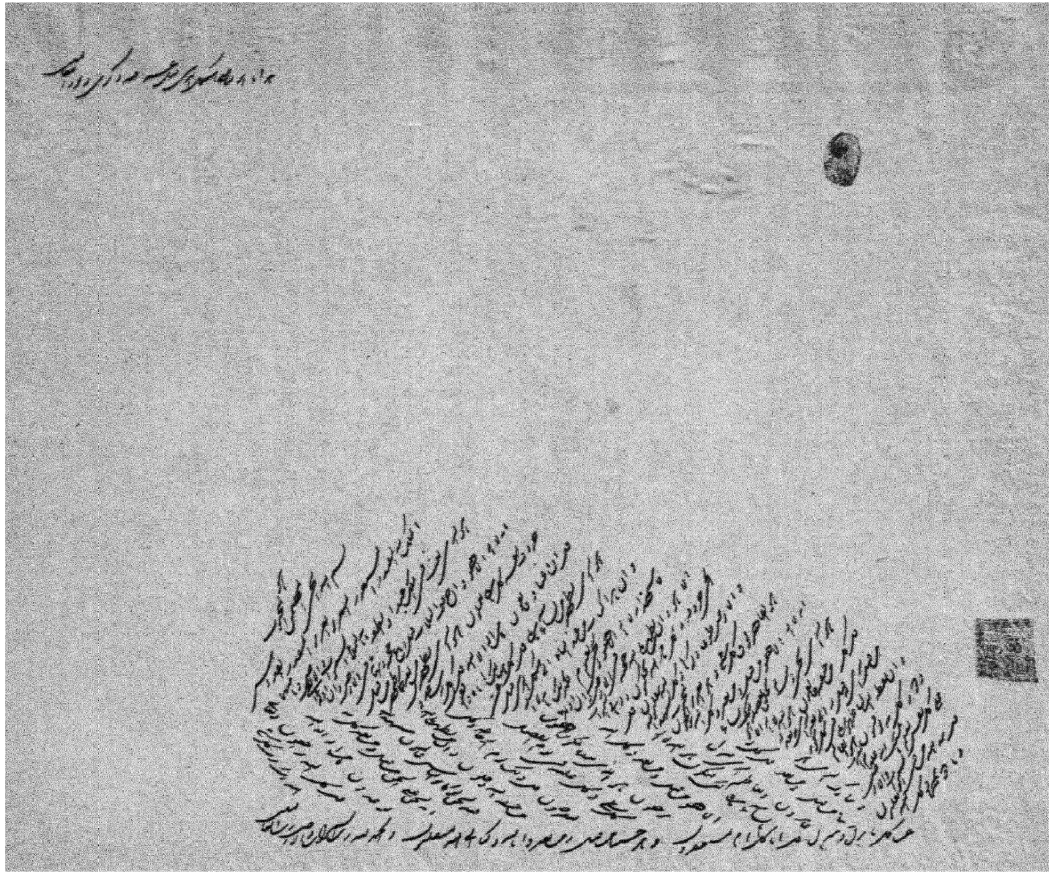


FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET TO THE TENTH LETTER OF THE LIVING

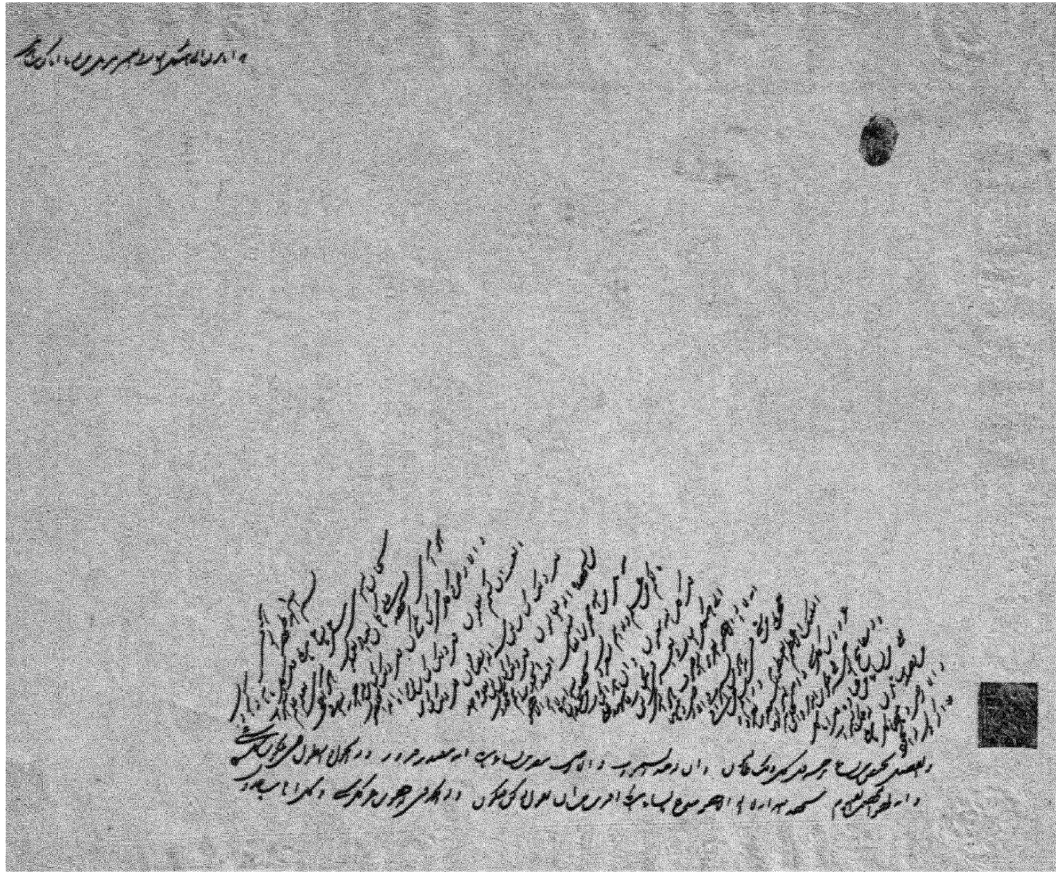
FACSIMILE OF THE BÂB'S TABLET TO THE ELEVENTH LETTER OF THE LIVING



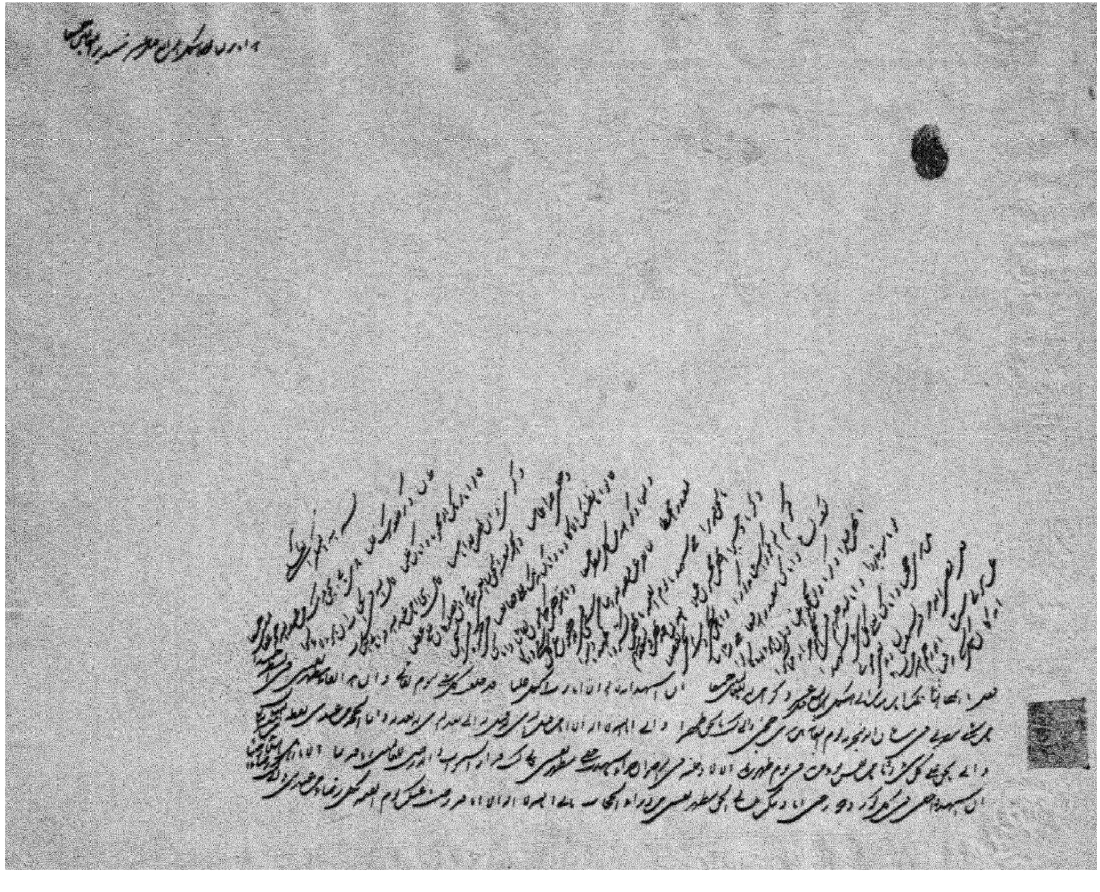
FACSIMILE OF THE BĀB'S TABLET TO THE TWELFTH LETTER OF THE LIVING



FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET TO THE THIRTEENTH LETTER OF THE LIVING

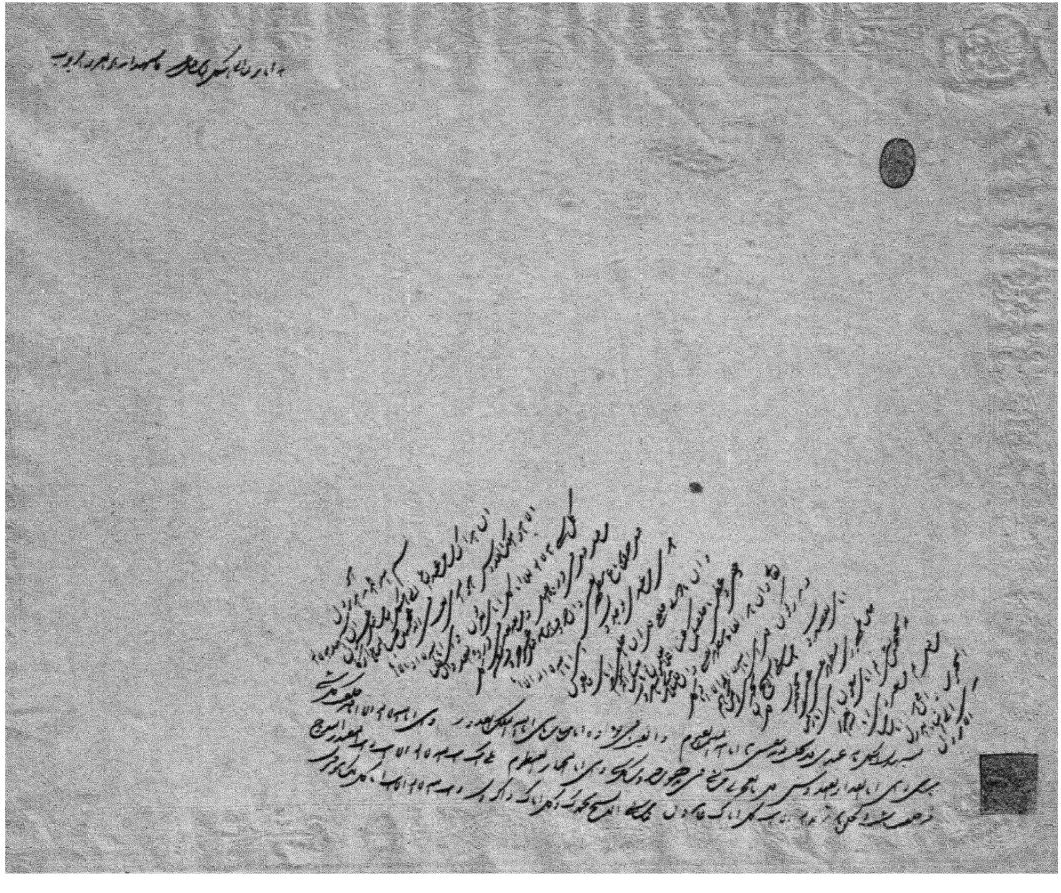


FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET TO THE FOURTEENTH LETTER OF THE LIVING



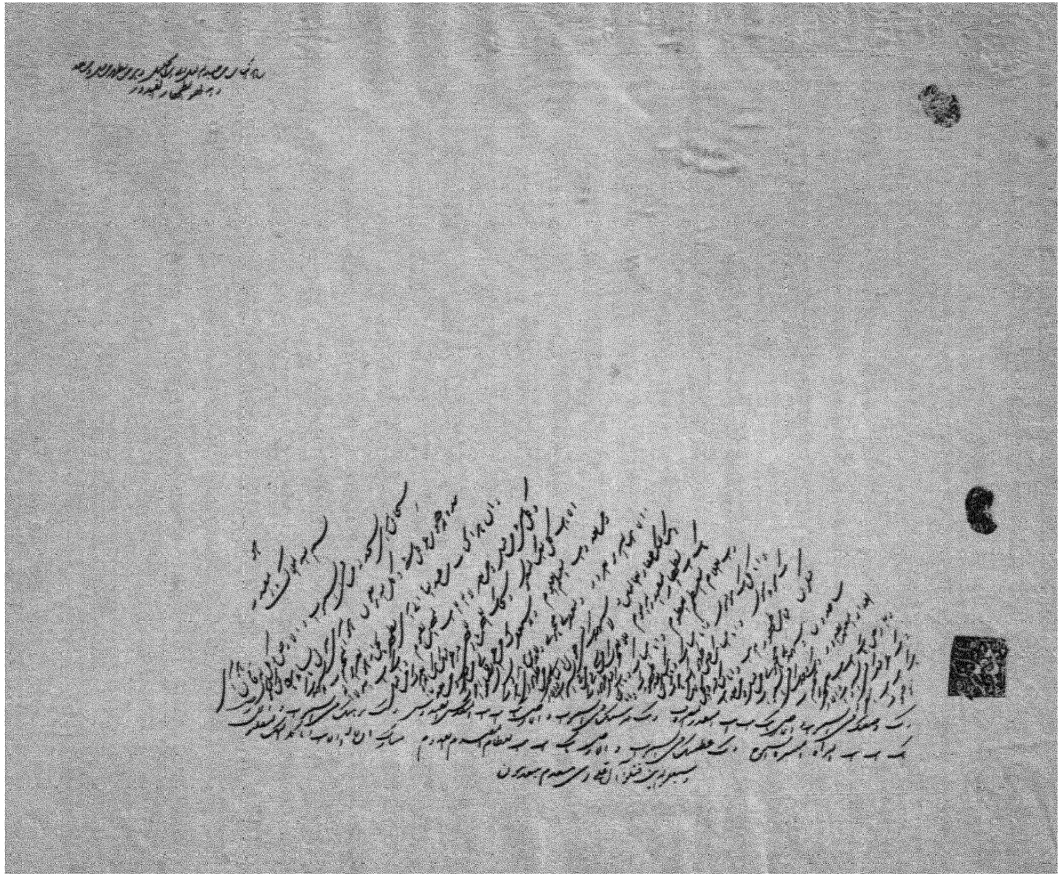
FACSIMILE OF THE BÂB'S TABLET TO THE SIXTEENTH LETTER OF THE LIVING

FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET TO THE EIGHTEENTH LETTER OF THE LIVING



FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET TO THE NINETEENTH LETTER OF THE LIVING

FACSIMILE OF THE BÁB'S TABLET ADDRESSED TO "HIM WHO WILL BE MADE MANIFEST" (BAHÁ'U'LLÁH)



INTRODUCTION



HE Bahá'í Movement is now well known throughout the world, and the time has come when Nabíl's unique narrative of its beginnings in darkest Persia will interest many readers. The record which he sets down with such devoted care is in many respects extraordinary. It has its thrilling passages, and the splendour of the central theme gives to the chronicle not only great historical value but high moral power. Its lights are strong; and this effect is more intense because they seem like a sunburst at midnight. The tale is one of struggle and martyrdom; its poignant scenes, its tragic incidents are many. Corruption, fanaticism, and cruelty gather against the cause of reformation to destroy it, and the present volume closes at the point where a riot of hate seems to have accomplished its purpose and to have driven into exile or put to death every man, woman, and child in Persia who dared to profess a leaning towards the teaching of the Báb.

Nabíl, himself a participant in some of the scenes which he recites, took up his lonely pen to recite the truth about men and women so mercilessly persecuted and a movement so grievously traduced.

He writes with ease, and when his emotions are strongly stirred his style becomes vigorous and trenchant. He does not present with any system the claims and teaching of Bahá'u'lláh and His Forerunner. His purpose is the simple one of rehearsing the beginnings of the Bahá'í Revelation and of preserving the remembrance of the deeds of its early champions. He relates a series of incidents, punctiliously quoting his authority for almost every item of information. His work in consequence, if less artistic and philosophic, gains in value as a literal account of what he knew or could from credible witnesses discover about the early history of the Cause.

The main features of the narrative (the saintly heroic

figure of the Báb, a leader so mild and so serene, yet eager, resolute, and dominant; the devotion of his followers facing oppression with unbroken courage and often with ecstasy; the rage of a jealous priesthood inflaming for its own purpose the passions of a bloodthirsty populace)—these speak a language which all may understand. But it is not easy to follow the narrative in its details, or to appreciate how stupendous was the task undertaken by Bahá'u'lláh and His Forerunner, without some knowledge of the condition of church and state in Persia and of the customs and mental outlook of the people and their masters. Nabíl took this knowledge for granted. He had himself travelled little if at all beyond the boundary of the empires of the Sháh and the Sulṭán, and it did not occur to him to institute comparisons between his own and foreign civilisations. He was not addressing the Western reader. Though he was conscious that the material he had collected was of more than national or Islamic importance and that it would before long spread both eastward and westward until it encircled the globe, yet he was an Oriental writing in an Oriental language for those who used it, and the unique work which he so faithfully accomplished was in itself a great and laborious task.

There exists in English, however, a literature about Persia in the nineteenth century which will give the Western reader ample information on the subject. From Persian writings which have already been translated, or from books of European travellers like Lord Curzon, Sir J. Malcolm, and others not a few, he will find a lifelike and vivid if unlovely picture of the Augean conditions which the Báb had to confront when He inaugurated the Movement in the middle of the nineteenth century.

All observers agree in representing Persia as a feeble and backward nation divided against itself by corrupt practices and ferocious bigotries. Inefficiency and wretchedness, the fruit of moral decay, filled the land. From the highest to the lowest there appeared neither the capacity to carry out methods of reform nor even the will seriously to institute them. National conceit preached a grandiose self-content. A pall of immobility lay over all things, and a general paralysis of mind made any development impossible.

To a student of history the degeneracy of a nation once so powerful and so illustrious seems pitiful in the extreme. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who in spite of the cruelties heaped on Bahá'u'lláh, on the Báb, and on Himself, yet loved His country, called their degradation "the tragedy of a people"; and in that work, "The Mysterious Forces of Civilisation," in which He sought to stir the hearts of His compatriots to undertake radical reforms, He uttered a poignant lament over the present fate of a people who once had extended their conquests east and west and had led the civilisation of mankind. "In former times," he writes, "Persia was verily the heart of the world and shone among the nations like a lighted taper. Her glory and prosperity broke from the horizon of humanity like the true dawn disseminating the light of knowledge and illumining the nations of the East and West. The fame of her victorious kings reached the ears of the dwellers at the poles of the earth. The majesty of her king of kings humbled the monarchs of Greece and Rome. Her governing wisdom filled the sages with awe, and the rulers of the continents fashioned their laws upon her polity. The Persians being distinguished among the nations of the earth as a people of conquerors, and justly admired for their civilisation and learning, their country became the glorious centre of all the sciences and arts, the mine of culture and a fount of virtues. . . . How is it that this excellent country now, by reason of our sloth, vanity, and indifference, from the lack of knowledge and organisation, from the poverty of the zeal and ambition of her people, has suffered the rays of her prosperity to be darkened and well-nigh extinguished?"

Other writers describe fully those unhappy conditions to which 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers.

At the time when the Báb declared His Mission, the government of the country was, in Lord Curzon's phrase, "a Church-State." Venal, cruel, and immoral as it was, it was formally religious. Muslim orthodoxy was its basis and permeated to the core both it and the social lives of the people. But otherwise there were no laws, statutes, or charters to guide the direction of public affairs. There was no House of Lords nor Privy Council, no synod, no Parliament. The Sháh was despot, and his arbitrary rule was reflected

all down the official scale through every minister and governor to the lowliest clerk or remotest headman. No civil tribunal existed to check or modify the power of the monarch or the authority which he might choose to delegate to his subordinates. If there was a law, it was his word. He could do as he pleased. It was his to appoint or to dismiss all ministers, officials, officers, and judges. He had power of life and death without appeal over all members of his household and of his court, whether civil or military. The right to take life was vested in him alone; and so were all the functions of government, legislative, executive, and judicial. His royal prerogative was limited by no written restraint whatever.

Descendants of the Sháhs were thrust into the most lucrative posts throughout the country, and as the generations went by they filled innumerable minor posts too, far and wide, till the land was burdened with this race of royal drones who owed their position to nothing better than their blood and who gave rise to the Persian saying that "camels, fleas, and princes exist everywhere."

Even when a Sháh wished to make a just and wise decision in any case that might be brought before him for judgment, he found it difficult to do so, because he could not rely on the information given him. Critical facts would be withheld, or the facts given would be distorted by the influence of interested witnesses or venal ministers. The system of corruption had been carried so far in Persia that it had become a recognised institution which Lord Curzon describes in the following terms:

"I come now to that which is the cardinal and differentiating feature of Iranian administration. Government, nay, life itself, in that country may be said to consist for the most part of an interchange of presents. Under its social aspects this practice may be supposed to illustrate the generous sentiments of an amiable people; though even here it has a grimly unemotional side, as, for instance, when, congratulating yourself upon being the recipient of a gift, you find that not only must you make a return of equivalent cost to the donor, but must also liberally remunerate the bearer of the gift (to whom your return is very likely the sole recognised means of subsistence) in a ratio proportionate

to its pecuniary value. Under its political aspects, the practice of gift-making, though consecrated in the adamantine traditions of the East, is synonymous with the system elsewhere described by less agreeable names. This is the system on which the government of Persia has been conducted for centuries, and the maintenance of which opposes a solid barrier to any real reform. From the Sháh downwards, there is scarcely an official who is not open to gifts, scarcely a post which is not conferred in return for gifts, scarcely an income which has not been amassed by the receipt of gifts. Every individual, with hardly an exception, in the official hierarchy above mentioned, has only purchased his post by a money present either to the Sháh, or to a minister, or to the superior governor by whom he has been appointed. If there are several candidates for a post, in all probability the one who makes the best offer will win.

". . . The 'madákhil' is a cherished national institution in Persia, the exaction of which, in a myriad different forms, whose ingenuity is only equalled by their multiplicity, is the crowning interest and delight of a Persian's existence. This remarkable word, for which Mr. Watson says there is no precise English equivalent, may be variously translated as commission, perquisite, douceur, consideration, pickings and stealings, profit, according to the immediate context in which it is employed. Roughly speaking, it signifies that balance of personal advantage, usually expressed in money form, which can be squeezed out of any and every transaction. A negotiation, in which two parties are involved as donor and recipient, as superior and subordinate, or even as equal contracting agents, cannot take place in Persia without the party who can be represented as the author of the favour or service claiming and receiving a definite cash return for what he has done or given. It may of course be said that human nature is much the same all the world over; that a similar system exists under a different name in our own or other countries, and that the philosophic critic will welcome in the Persian a man and a brother. To some extent this is true. But in no country that I have ever seen or heard of in the world, is the system so open, so shameless, or so universal as in Persia. So far from being limited to the sphere of

domestic economy or to commercial transactions, it permeates every walk and inspires most of the actions of life. By its operation, generosity or gratuitous service may be said to have been erased in Persia from the category of social virtues, and cupidity has been elevated into the guiding principle of human conduct. . . . Hereby is instituted an arithmetical progression of plunder from the sovereign to the subject, each unit in the descending scale remunerating himself from the unit next in rank below his, and the hapless peasant being the ultimate victim. It is not surprising, under these circumstances, that office is the common avenue to wealth, and that cases are frequent of men who, having started from nothing, are found residing in magnificent houses, surrounded by crowds of retainers and living in princely style. 'Make what you can while you can' is the rule that most men set before themselves in entering public life. Nor does popular spirit resent the act; the estimation of any one who, enjoying the opportunity, has failed to line his own pockets, being the reverse of complimentary to his sense. No one turns a thought to the sufferers from whom, in the last resort, the material for these successive 'madákhils' has been derived, and from the sweat of whose uncomplaining brow has been wrung the wealth that is dissipated in luxurious country houses, European curiosities and enormous retinues."

To read the foregoing is to perceive something of the difficulty of the Báb's mission; to read the following is to understand the dangers he faced, and to be prepared for a story of violence and heinous cruelty.

"Before I quit the subject of the Persian law and its administration, let me add a few words upon the subject of penalties and prisons. Nothing is more shocking to the European reader, in pursuing his way through the crime-stained and bloody pages of Persian history during the last and, in a happily less degree, during the present century, than the record of savage punishments and abominable tortures, testifying alternately to the callousness of the brute and the ingenuity of the fiend. The Persian character has ever been fertile in device and indifferent to suffering; and in the field of judicial executions it has found ample scope for the exercise of both attainments. Up till quite a recent

period, well within the borders of the present reign, condemned criminals have been crucified, blown from guns, buried alive, impaled, shod like horses, torn asunder by being bound to the heads of two trees bent together and then allowed to spring back to their natural position, converted into human torches, flayed while living.

". . . Under a twofold governing system, such as that of which I have now completed the description—namely, an administration in which every actor is, in different aspects, both the briber and the bribed; and a judicial procedure, without either a law or a law court—it will readily be understood that confidence in the Government is not likely to exist, that there is no personal sense of duty or pride of honour, no mutual trust or co-operation (except in the service of ill-doing), no disgrace in exposure, no credit in virtue, above all no national spirit or patriotism."

From the beginning the Báb must have divined the reception which would be accorded by His countrymen to His teachings, and the fate which awaited Him at the hands of the mullás. But He did not allow personal misgivings to affect the frank enunciation of His claims nor the open presentation of His Cause. The innovations which He proclaimed, though purely religious, were drastic; the announcement of His own identity startling and tremendous. He made Himself known as the Qá'im, the High Prophet or Messiah so long promised, so eagerly expected by the Muḥammadan world. He added to this the declaration that he was also the Gate (that is, the Báb) through whom a greater Manifestation than Himself was to enter the human realm.

Putting Himself thus in line with the traditions of Islám, and appearing as the fulfilment of prophecy, He came into conflict with those who had fixed and ineradicable ideas (different from His) as to what those prophecies and traditions meant. The two great Persian sects of Islám, the shí'ah and the sunnís, both attached vital importance to the ancient deposit of their faith but did not agree as to its contents or its import. The shí'ahs, out of whose doctrines the Bábí Movement rose, held that after the ascension of the High Prophet Muḥammad He was succeeded by a line of twelve Imáms. Each of these, they held, was specially en-

dowed by God with spiritual gifts and powers, and was entitled to the whole-hearted obedience of the faithful. Each owed his appointment not to the popular choice but to his nomination by his predecessor in office. The twelfth and last of these inspired guides was Muḥammad, called by the shí'ahs "Imám-Mihdí, Ḥujjatu'lláh [the Proof of God], Bagíyyatu'lláh [the Remnant of God], and Qá'im-i-Ál-i-Muhammad [He who shall arise of the family of Muhammad]." He assumed the functions of the Imám in the year 260 of the Hegira, but at once disappeared from view and communicated with his followers only through a certain chosen intermediary known as a Gate. Four of these Gates followed one another in order, each appointed by his predecessor with the approval of the Imám. But when the fourth, Abu'l-Ḥasan-'Alí, was asked by the faithful, before he died, to name his successor, he declined to do so. He said that God had another plan. On his death all communication between the Imám and his church therefore ceased. And though, surrounded by a band of followers, he still lives and waits in some mysterious retreat, he will not resume relations with his people until he comes forth in power to establish a millennium throughout the world.

The sunnís, on the other hand, take a less exalted view of the office of those who have succeeded the High Prophet. They regard the vicegerency less as a spiritual than as a practical matter. The Khalíf is, in their eyes, the Defender of the Faith, and he owes his appointment to the choice and approval of the People.

Important as these differences are, both sects agree, however, in expecting a twofold Manifestation. The shí'ahs look for the Qá'im, who is to come in the fulness of time, and also for the return of the Imám Ḥusayn. The sunnís await the appearance of the Mihdí and also "the return of Jesus Christ." When, at the beginning of his Mission, the Báb, continuing the tradition of the shí'ahs, proclaimed His function under the double title of, first, the Qá'im and, second, the Gate, or Báb, some of the Muḥammadans misunderstood the latter reference. They imagined His meaning to be that He was a fifth Gate in succession to Abu'l-Ḥasan-'Alí. His true meaning, however, as He himself clearly announced, was very

different. He was the Qá'im; but the Qá'im, though a High Prophet, stood in relation to a succeeding and greater Manifestation as did John the Baptist to the Christ. He was the Forerunner of One yet more mighty than Himself. He was to decrease; that Mighty One was to increase. And as John the Baptist had been the Herald or Gate of the Christ, so was the Báb the Herald or Gate of Bahá'u'lláh.

There are many authentic traditions showing that the Qá'im on His appearance would bring new laws with Him and would thus abrogate Islám. But this was not the understanding of the established hierarchy. They confidently expected that the promised Advent would not substitute a new and richer revelation for the old, but would endorse and fortify the system of which they were the functionaries. It would enhance incalculably their personal prestige, would extend their authority far and wide among the nations, and would win for them the reluctant but abject homage of mankind. When the Báb revealed His Bayán, proclaimed a new code of religious law, and by precept and example instituted a profound moral and spiritual reform, the priests immediately scented mortal danger. They saw their monopoly undermined, their ambitions threatened, their own lives and conduct put to shame. They rose against Him in sanctimonious indignation. They declared before the Sháh and all the people that this upstart was an enemy of sound learning, a subverter of Islám, a traitor to Muḥammad, and a peril not only to the holy church but to the social order and to the State itself.

The cause of the rejection and persecution of the Báb was in its essence the same as that of the rejection and persecution of the Christ. If Jesus had not brought a New Book, if He had not only reiterated the spiritual principles taught by Moses but had continued Moses' rules and regulations too, He might as a merely moral reformer have escaped the vengeance of the Scribes and Pharisees. But to claim that any part of the Mosaic law, even such material ordinances as those that dealt with divorce and the keeping of the Sabbath, could be altered—and altered by an unordained preacher from the village of Nazareth—this was to threaten the interests of the Scribes and Pharisees themselves, and

since they were the representatives of Moses and of God, it was blasphemy against the Most High. As soon as the position of Jesus was understood, His persecution began. As He refused to desist, He was put to death.

For reasons exactly parallel, the Báb was from the beginning opposed by the vested interests of the dominant Church as an uprooter of the Faith. Yet, even in that dark and fanatical country, the mullás (like the Scribes in Palestine eighteen centuries before) did not find it very easy to put forward a plausible pretext for destroying Him whom they thought their enemy.

The only known record of the Báb's having been seen by a European belongs to the period of His persecution when an English physician resident in Tabríz, Dr. Cormick, was called in by the Persian authorities to pronounce on the Báb's mental condition. The doctor's letter, addressed to a fellow practitioner in an American mission in Persia, is given in Professor E. G. Browne's "Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion." "You ask me," writes the doctor, "for some particulars of my interview with the founder of the sect known as Bábís. Nothing of any importance transpired in this interview, as the Báb was aware of my having been sent with two other Persian doctors to see whether he was of sane mind or merely a madman, to decide the question whether he was to be put to death or not. With this knowledge he was loth to answer any questions put to him. To all enquiries he merely regarded us with a mild look, chanting in a low melodious voice some hymns, I suppose. Two other siyyids, his intimate friends, were also present, who subsequently were put to death with him, besides a couple of government officials. He only deigned to answer me, on my saying that I was not a Musulman and was willing to know something about his religion, as I might perhaps be inclined to adopt it. He regarded me very intently on my saying this, and replied that he had no doubt of all Europeans coming over to his religion. Our report to the Sháh at that time was of a nature to spare his life. He was put to death some time after by the order of the Amír-Niẓám, Mírzá Taqí Khán. On our report he merely got the bastinado, in which operation a farrásh, whether intentionally or not, struck him

across the face with the stick destined for his feet, which produced a great wound and swelling of the face. On being asked whether a Persian surgeon should be brought to treat him, he expressed a desire that I should be sent for, and I accordingly treated him for a few days, but in the interviews consequent on this I could never get him to have a confidential chat with me, as some government people were always present, he being a prisoner. He was a very mild and delicate-looking man, rather small in stature and very fair for a Persian, with a melodious soft voice, which struck me much. Being a Siyyid, he was dressed in the habit of that sect, as were also his two companions. In fact his whole look and deportment went far to dispose one in his favour. Of his doctrine I heard nothing from his own lips, although the idea was that there existed in his religion a certain approach to Christianity. He was seen by some Armenian carpenters, who were sent to make some repairs in his prison, reading the Bible, and he took no pains to conceal it, but on the contrary told them of it. Most assuredly the Musulman fanaticism does not exist in his religion, as applied to Christians, nor is there that restraint of females that now exists."

Such was the impression made by the Báb upon a cultivated Englishman. And as far as the influence of His character and teaching have since spread through the West, no other record is extant of His having been observed or seen by European eyes.

His qualities were so rare in their nobility and beauty, His personality so gentle and yet so forceful, and His natural charm was combined with so much tact and judgment, that after His Declaration He quickly became in Persia a widely popular figure. He would win over almost all with whom He was brought into personal contact, often converting His gaolers to His Faith and turning the ill-disposed into admiring friends.

To silence such a man without incurring some degree of public odium was not very easy even in the Persia of the middle of last century. But with the Báb's followers it was another matter.

The mullás encountered here no cause for delay and found little need for scheming. The bigotry of the Muḥam-

madans from the Sháh downwards could be readily roused against any religious development. The Bábís could be accused of disloyalty to the Sháh, and dark political motives could be attributed to their activities. Moreover, the Báb's followers were already numerous; many of them were well-to-do, some were rich, and there were few but had some possessions which covetous neighbours might be instigated to desire. Appealing to the fears of the authorities and to the base national passions of fanaticism and cupidity, the mullás inaugurated a campaign of outrage and spoliation which they maintained with relentless ferocity till they considered that their purpose had been completely achieved.

Many of the incidents of this unhappy story are given by Nabíl in his history, and among these the happenings at Mázindarán, Nayríz, and Zanján stand out by reason of the character of the episodes of the heroism of the Bábís when thus brought to bay. On these three occasions a number of Bábís, driven to desperation, withdrew in concert from their houses to a chosen retreat and, erecting defensive works about them, defied in arms further pursuit. To any impartial witness it was evident that the mullás' allegations of a political motive were untrue. The Bábís showed themselves always ready—on an assurance that they would be no longer molested for their religious beliefs—to return peacefully to their civil occupations. Nabíl emphasises their care to refrain from aggression. They would fight for their lives with determined skill and strength; but they would not attack. Even in the midst of a fierce conflict they would not drive home an advantage nor strike an unnecessary blow.

'Abdu'l-Bahá is quoted in the "Traveller's Narrative," pp. 34–35, as making the following statement on the moral aspect of their action:

"The minister (Mírzá Taqí Khán), with the utmost arbitrariness, without receiving any instructions or asking permission, sent forth commands in all directions to punish and chastise the Bábís. Governors and magistrates sought a pretext for amassing wealth, and officials a means of acquiring profits; celebrated doctors from the summits of their pulpits incited men to make a general onslaught; the powers of the religious and the civil law linked hands and strove to eradi-

cate and destroy this people. Now this people had not yet acquired such knowledge as was right and needful of the fundamental principles and hidden doctrines of the Báb's teachings, and did not recognise their duties. Their conceptions and ideas were after the former fashion, and their conduct and behaviour in correspondence with ancient usage. The way of approach to the Báb was, moreover, closed, and the flame of trouble visibly blazing on every side. At the decree of the most celebrated doctors, the government, and indeed the common people, had, with irresistible power, inaugurated rapine and plunder on all sides, and were engaged in punishing and torturing, killing and despoiling, in order that they might quench this fire and wither these poor souls. In towns where there were but a limited number, all of them with bound hands became food for the sword, while in cities where they were numerous, they arose in self-defence in accordance with their former beliefs, since it was impossible for them to make enquiry as to their duty, and all doors were closed."

Bahá'u'lláh, on proclaiming some years later His Mission, left no room for uncertainty as to the law of His Dispensation in such a predicament when He affirmed: "It is better to be killed than to kill."

Whatever resistance the Bábís offered, here or elsewhere, proved ineffective. They were overwhelmed by numbers. The Báb Himself was taken from His cell and executed. Of His chief disciples who avowed their belief in Him, not one soul was left alive save Bahá'u'lláh, who with His family and a handful of devoted followers was driven destitute into exile and prison in a foreign land.

But the fire, though smothered, was not quenched. It burned in the hearts of the exiles who carried it from country to country as they travelled. Even in the homeland of Persia it had penetrated too deeply to be extinguished by physical violence, and still smouldered in the people's hearts, needing only a breath from the spirit to be fanned into an all-consuming conflagration.

The Second and Greater Manifestation of God was proclaimed in accordance with the prophecy of the Báb at the date which He had foretold. Nine years after the beginning

of the Bábí Dispensation—that is, in 1853—Bahá'u'lláh, in certain of His odes, alluded to His identity and His Mission, and ten years later, while resident in Baghdád, declared Himself as the Promised One to His companions.

Now the great Movement for which the Báb had prepared the way began to show the full range and magnificence of its power. Though Bahá'u'lláh Himself lived and died an exile and a prisoner and was known to few Europeans, His epistles proclaiming the new Advent were borne to the great rulers of both hemispheres, from the Sháh of Persia to the Pope and to the President of the United States. After His passing, His son 'Abdu'l-Bahá carried the tidings in person into Egypt and far through the Western world. 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited England, France, Switzerland, Germany, and America, announcing everywhere that once again the heavens had opened and that a new Dispensation had come to bless the sons of men. He died in November, 1921; and to-day the fire that once seemed to have been put out for ever, burns again in every part of Persia, has established itself on the American continent, and has laid hold of every country in the world. Around the sacred writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the authoritative exposition of 'Abdu'l-Bahá there is growing a large volume of literature in comment or in witness. The humanitarian and spiritual principles enunciated decades ago in the darkest East by Bahá'u'lláh and moulded by Him into a coherent scheme are one after the other being taken by a world unconscious of their source as the marks of progressive civilisation. And the sense that mankind has broken with the past and that the old guidance will not carry it through the emergencies of the present has filled with uncertainty and dismay all thoughtful men save those who have learned to find in the story of Bahá'u'lláh the meaning of all the prodigies and portents of our time.

Nearly three generations have passed since the inception of the Movement. Any of its early adherents who escaped the sword and the stake have long since passed away in the course of nature. The door of contemporary information as to its two great leaders and their heroic disciples is closed for ever. The Chronicle of Nabíl as a careful collection of facts made in the interests of truth and completed in the

lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh has now a unique value. The author was thirteen years old when the Báb declared Himself, having been born in the village of Zarand in Persia on the eighteenth day of Ṣafar, 1247 A.H. He was throughout his life closely associated with the leaders of the Cause. Though he was but a boy at the time, he was preparing to leave for Shaykh Ṭabarsí and join the party of Mullá Ḥusayn when the news of the treacherous massacre of the Bábís frustrated his design. He states in his narrative that he met, in Ṭihrán, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, a brother of the Báb's mother, who had just returned at the time from visiting the Báb in the fortress of Chihríg; and for many years he was a close companion of the Báb's secretary, Mírzá Aḥmad.

He entered the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in Kirmánsháh and Ṭihrán before the date of the exile to 'Iráq, and afterwards was in attendance upon Him in Baghdád and Adrianople as well as in the prison-city of 'Akká. He was sent more than once on missions to Persia to promote the Cause and to encourage the scattered and persecuted believers, and he was living in 'Akká when Bahá'u'lláh passed away in 1892 A.D. The manner of his death was pathetic and lamentable, for he became so dreadfully affected by the death of the Great Beloved that, overmastered by grief, he drowned himself in the sea, and his dead body was found washed ashore near the city of 'Akká.

His chronicle was begun in 1888, when he had the personal assistance of Mírzá Músá, the brother of Bahá'u'lláh. It was finished in about a year and a half, and parts of the manuscript were reviewed and approved, some by Bahá'u'lláh, and others by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The complete work carries the history of the Movement up to the death of Bahá'u'lláh in 1892.

The first half of this narrative, closing with the expulsion of Bahá'u'lláh from Persia, is contained in the present volume. Its importance is evident. It will be read less for the few stirring passages of action which it contains, or even for its many pictures of heroism and unwavering faith, than for the abiding significance of those events of which it gives so unique a record.

PERSIA'S STATE OF DECADENCE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A. The Qájár Sovereigns

"In theory the king may do what he pleases; his word is law. The saying that 'The law of the Medes and Persians altereth not' was merely an ancient periphrasis for the absolutism of the sovereign. He appoints and he may dismiss all ministers, officers, officials, and judges. Over his own family and household, and over the civil or military functionaries in his employ, he has power of life and death without reference to any tribunal. The property of any such individual, if disgraced or executed, reverts to him. The right to take life in any case is vested in him alone, but can be delegated to governors or deputies. All property, not previously granted by the crown or purchased—all property, in fact, to which a legal title cannot be established—belongs to him, and can be disposed of at his pleasure. All rights or privileges, such as the making of public works, the working of mines, the institution of telegraphs, roads, railroads, tramways, etc., the exploitation, in fact, of any of the resources of the country, are vested in him, and must be purchased from him before they can be assumed by others. In his person are fused the threefold functions of government, legislative, executive, and judicial. No obligation is imposed upon him beyond the outward observance of the forms of the national religion. He is the pivot upon which turns the entire machinery of public life.

"Such is, in theory, and was till lately in practice, the character of the Persian monarchy. Nor has a single one of these high pretensions been overtly conceded. The language in which the Sháh addresses his subjects and is addressed by them, recalls the proud tone in which an Artaxerxes or Darius spoke to his tributary millions, and which may still be read in the graven record of rock-wall and tomb. He remains the Sháhinsháh, or King of Kings; the Ẓillu'lláh, or Shadow of God; the Qibliy-i-'Álam, or Centre of the Universe; 'Exalted like the planet Saturn; Well of Science; Footpath of Heaven; Sublime Sovereign, whose standard is the Sun, whose splendour is that of the Firmament; Monarch of armies numerous

as the stars.' Still would the Persian subject endorse the precept of Sa'dí, that 'The vice approved by the king becomes a virtue; to seek opposite counsel is to imbrue one's hands in his own blood.' The march of time has imposed upon him neither religious council nor secular council, neither 'ulamá nor senate. Elective and representative institutions have not yet intruded their irreverent features. No written check exists upon the royal prerogative.

". . . Such is the divinity that doth hedge a throne in Persia, that not merely does the Sháh never attend at state dinners or eat with his subjects at table, with the exception of a single banquet to his principal male relatives at Naw-rúz, but the attitude and language employed towards him even by his confidential ministers are those of servile obeisance and adulation. 'May I be your sacrifice, Asylum of the Universe,' is the common mode of address adopted even by subjects of the highest rank. In his own surrounding there is no one to tell him the truth or to give him dispassionate counsel. The foreign Ministers are probably almost the only source from which he learns facts as they are, or receives unvarnished, even if interested, advice. With the best intentions in the world for the undertaking of great plans and for the amelioration of his country, he has little or no control over the execution of an enterprise which has once passed out of his hands and has become the sport of corrupt and self-seeking officials. Half the money voted with his consent never reaches its destination, but sticks to every intervening pocket with which a professional ingenuity can bring it into transient contact; half the schemes authorised by him are never brought any nearer to realisation, the minister or functionary in charge trusting to the oblivious caprices of the sovereign to overlook his dereliction of duty.

". . . Only a century ago the abominable system prevailed of blinding possible aspirants to the throne, of savage mutilations and life-long captivities, of wanton slaughter and systematic bloodshed. Disgrace was not less sudden than promotion, and death was a frequent concomitant of disgrace.

". . . Fath-'Alí Sháh . . . and his successors after him, have proved so extraordinarily prolific of male offspring that the continuity of the dynasty has been assured; and there is

probably not a reigning family in the world that in the space of one hundred years has swollen to such ample dimensions as the royal race of Persia. . . . Neither in the number of his wives nor in the extent of his progeny, can the Sháh, although undeniably a family man, be compared with his great-grandfather, Fath-'Alí Sháh. To the high opinion universally held of the domestic capacities of that monarch must, I imagine, be attributed the divergent estimates that are to be found, in works about Persia, of the number of his concubines and children. Colonel Drouville, in 1813, credits him with 700 wives, 64 sons, and 125 daughters. Colonel Stuart, who was in Persia in the year after Fath-'Alí's death, gives him 1,000 wives and 105 children. . . . Madame Dieulafoy also names the 5,000 descendants, but as existing at an epoch fifty years later (which has an air of greater probability). . . . The estimate which appears in the Násikhu't-Taváríkh, a great modern Persian historical work, fixes the number of Fath-'Alí's wives as over 1,000, and of his offspring as 260, 110 of whom survived their father. Hence the familiar Persian proverb 'Camels, fleas, and princes exist everywhere.' . . . No royal family has ever afforded a more exemplary illustration of the Scriptural assurance, 'Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands'; for there was scarcely a governorship or a post of emolument in Persia that was not filled by one of this beehive of princelings; and to this day the myriad brood of Sháh-zádihs, or descendants of a king, is a perfect curse to the country, although many of these luckless scions of royalty, who consume a large portion of the revenue in annual allowances and pensions, now occupy very inferior positions as telegraph clerks, secretaries, etc. Fraser drew a vivid picture of the misery entailed upon the country fifty years ago (1842) by this 'race of royal drones,' who filled the governing posts not merely of every province, but of every bulúk or district, city, and town; each of whom kept up a court, and a huge harem, and who preyed upon the country like a swarm of locusts. . . . Fraser, passing through Ádhirbáyján in 1834, and observing the calamitous results of the system under which Fath-'Alí Sháh distributed his colossal male progeny in every Government post throughout the kingdom, remarked:

'The most obvious consequence of this state of affairs is a thorough and universal detestation of the Qájár race, which is a prevalent feeling in every heart and the theme of every tongue.'

". . . Just as, in the course of his [Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh's] European travels, he picked up a vast number of what appeared, to the Eastern mind, to be wonderful curiosities, but which have since been stacked in the various apartments of the palace, or put away and forgotten; so in the larger sphere of public policy and administration he is continually taking up and pushing some new scheme or invention which, when the caprice has been gratified, is neglected or allowed to expire. One week it is gas; another it is electric lights. Now it is a staff college; anon, a military hospital. To-day it is a Russian uniform; yesterday it was a German man-of-war for the Persian Gulf. A new army warrant is issued this year; a new code of law is promised for the next. Nothing comes of any of these brilliant schemes, and the lumber-rooms of the palace are not more full of broken mechanism and discarded bric-à-brac than are the pigeon-holes of the government bureaux of abortive reforms and dead fiascoes.

". . . In an upper chamber of the same pavilion, Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, the Qá'im-Maqám, or Grand Vazír, of Muḥammad Sháh (the father of the present monarch), was strangled in 1835, by order of his royal master, who therein followed an example set him by his predecessor, and set one himself that was duly followed by his son. It must be rare in history to find three successive sovereigns who have put to death, from jealous motives only, the three ministers who have either raised them to the throne or were at the time of their fall filling the highest office in the State. Such is the triple distinction of Fatḥ-'Alí, Muḥammad, and Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháhs."

B. The Government

"In a country so backward in constitutional progress, so destitute of forms and statutes and charters, and so firmly stereotyped in the immemorial traditions of the East, the personal element, as might be expected, is largely in the ascendant; and the government of Persia is little else than the arbitrary exercise of authority by a series of units in a

descending scale from the sovereign to the headman of a petty village. The only check that operates upon the lower official grades is the fear of their superiors, which means can usually be found to assuage; upon the higher ranks the fear of the sovereign, who is not always closed against similar methods of pacification; and upon the sovereign himself the fear, not of native, but of foreign opinion, as represented by the hostile criticism of the European Press. . . . The Sháh, indeed, may be regarded at this moment as perhaps the best existing specimen of a moderate despot; for within the limits indicated he is practically irresponsible and omnipotent. He has absolute command over the life and property of every one of his subjects. His sons have no independent power, and can be reduced to impotence or beggary in the twinkling of an eye. The ministers are elevated and degraded at the royal pleasure. The sovereign is the sole executive, and all officials are his deputies. No civil tribunals are in existence to check or modify his prerogative.

". . . Of the general character and accomplishments of the ministers of the Persian Court, Sir J. Malcolm, in his History, wrote as follows in the early years of the century: 'The Ministers and chief officers of the Court are almost always men of polished manners, well skilled in the business of their respective departments, of pleasant conversation, subdued temper, and very acute observation; but these agreeable and useful qualities are, in general, all that they possess. Nor is virtue or liberal knowledge to be expected in men whose lives are wasted in attending to forms; whose means of subsistence are derived from the most corrupt sources; whose occupation is in intrigues which have always the same objects: to preserve themselves or ruin others; who cannot, without danger, speak any language but that of flattery and deceit; and who are, in short, condemned by their condition to be venal, artful, and false. There have, no doubt, been many ministers of Persia whom it would be injustice to class under this general description; but even the most distinguished for their virtues and talents have been forced in some degree to accommodate their principles to their station; and, unless where the confidence of their sovereign has placed them beyond the fear of rivals, necessity has compelled them to

practise a subserviency and dissimulation at variance with the truth and integrity which can alone constitute a claim to the respect all are disposed to grant to good and great men.' These observations are marked by the insight and justice characteristic of their distinguished author, and it is to be feared that to a large extent they hold as good of the present as of the old generation."

C. The People

". . . I now come to that which is the cardinal and differentiating feature of Iranian administration. Government, nay, life itself, in that country may be said to consist for the most part of an interchange of presents. Under its social aspects this practice may be supposed to illustrate the generous sentiments of an amiable people; though even here it has a grimly unemotional side, as, for instance, when, congratulating yourself upon being the recipient of a gift, you find that not only must you make a return of equivalent cost to the donor, but must also liberally remunerate the bearer of the gift (to whom your return is very likely the sole recognised means of subsistence) in a ratio proportionate to its pecuniary value. Under its political aspects, the practice of gift-making, though consecrated in the adamantine traditions of the East, is synonymous with the system elsewhere described by less agreeable names. This is the system on which the government of Persia has been conducted for centuries, and the maintenance of which opposes a solid barrier to any real reform. From the Sháh downwards, there is scarcely an official who is not open to gifts, scarcely a post which is not conferred in return for gifts, scarcely an income which has not been amassed by the receipt of gifts. Every individual, with hardly an exception, in the official hierarchy above mentioned, has only purchased his post by a money present either to the Sháh, or to a minister, or to the superior governor by whom he has been appointed. If there are several candidates for a post, in all probability the one who makes the best offer will win.

". . . The 'madákhil' is a cherished national institution in Persia, the exaction of which, in a myriad different forms, whose ingenuity is only equalled by their multiplicity, is the

crowning interest and delight of a Persian's existence. This remarkable word, for which Mr. Watson says there is no precise English equivalent, may be variously translated as commission, perquisite, douceur, consideration, pickings and stealings, profit, according to the immediate context in which it is employed. Roughly speaking, it signifies that balance of personal advantage, usually expressed in money form, which can be squeezed out of any and every transaction. A negotiation, in which two parties are involved as donor and recipient, as superior and subordinate, or even as equal contracting agents, cannot take place in Persia without the party who can be represented as the author of the favour or service claiming and receiving a definite cash return for what he has done or given. It may of course be said that human nature is much the same all the world over; that a similar system exists under a different name in our own or other countries, and that the philosophic critic will welcome in the Persian a man and a brother. To some extent this is true. But in no country that I have ever seen or heard of in the world, is the system so open, so shameless, or so universal as in Persia. So far from being limited to the sphere of domestic economy or to commercial transactions, it permeates every walk and inspires most of the actions of life. By its operation, generosity or gratuitous service may be said to have been erased in Persia from the category of social virtues, and cupidity has been elevated into the guiding principle of human conduct. . . . Hereby is instituted an arithmetical progression of plunder from the sovereign to the subject, each unit in the descending scale remunerating himself from the unit next in rank below him, and the hapless peasant being the ultimate victim. It is not surprising, under these circumstances, that office is the common avenue to wealth, and that cases are frequent of men who, having started from nothing, are found residing in magnificent houses, surrounded by crowds of retainers and living in princely style. 'Make what you can while you can' is the rule that most men set before themselves in entering public life. Nor does popular spirit resent the act; the estimation of any one who, enjoying the opportunity, has failed to line his own pockets, being the reverse of complimentary to his sense. No one turns a thought to

the sufferers from whom, in the last resort, the material for these successive 'madákhils' has been derived, and from the sweat of whose uncomplaining brow has been wrung the wealth that is dissipated in luxurious country houses, European curiosities, and enormous retinues.

". . . Among the features of public life in Persia that most quickly strike the stranger's eye, and that indirectly arise from the same conditions, is the enormous number of attendants and retainers that swarm round a minister, or official of any description. In the case of a functionary of rank or position, these vary in number from 50 to 500. Benjamin says that the Prime Minister in his time kept 3,000. Now, the theory of social and ceremonial etiquette that prevails in Persia, and indeed throughout the East, is to some extent responsible for this phenomenon, personal importance being, to a large extent, estimated by the public show which it can make, and by the staff of servants whom on occasions it can parade. But it is the institution of 'Madákhil' and of illicit pickings and stealings that is the root of the evil. If the governor or minister were bound to pay salaries to the whole of this servile crew their ranks would speedily dwindle. The bulk of them are unpaid; they attach themselves to their master because of the opportunities for extortion with which that connection presents them, and they thrive and batten on plunder. It may readily be conceived how great a drain is this swarm of blood-suckers upon the resources of the country. They are true types of unproductive labourers, absorbing but never creating wealth; and their existence is little short of a national calamity. . . . It is a cardinal point of Persian etiquette when you go out visiting to take as many of your own establishment with you as possible, whether riding or walking on foot; the number of such retinue being accepted as an indication of the rank of the master."

D. The Ecclesiastical Order

"Marvellously adapted alike to the climate, character, and occupations of those countries upon which it has laid its adamantine grip, Islám holds its votary in complete thrall from the cradle to the grave. To him, it is not only religion, it is government, philosophy, and science as well. The Mu-

ḥammadan conception is not so much that of a state church as, if the phrase may be permitted, of a church state. The undergirders with which society itself is warped round are not of civil, but of ecclesiastical, fabrication; and, wrapped in this superb, if paralysing, creed, the Musulman lives in contented surrender of all volition, deems it his highest duty to worship God and to compel, or, where impossible, to despise those who do not worship Him in the spirit, and then dies in sure and certain hope of Paradise.

". . . These Siyyids, or descendants of the Prophet, are an intolerable nuisance to the country, deducing from their alleged descent and from the prerogative of the green turban, the right to an independence and insolence of bearing from which their countrymen, no less than foreigners, are made to suffer.

". . . As a community, the Persian Jews are sunk in great poverty and ignorance. . . . Throughout the Musulman countries of the East these unhappy people have been subjected to the persecution which custom has taught themselves, as well as the world, to regard as their normal lot. Usually compelled to live apart in a Ghetto, or separate quarter of the towns, they have from time immemorial suffered from disabilities of occupation, dress, and habits, which have marked them out as social pariahs from their fellow-creatures. . . . In Isfáhán, where there are said to be 3,700, and where they occupy a relatively better status than elsewhere in Persia, they are not permitted to wear the 'kuláh' or Persian head-dress, to have shops in the bazaar, to build the walls of their houses as high as a Muslim neighbour's, or to ride in the streets. . . . As soon, however, as any outburst of bigotry takes place in Persia or elsewhere, the Jews are apt to be the first victims. Every man's hand is then against them; and woe betide the luckless Hebrew who is the first to encounter a Persian street mob.

". . . Perhaps the most extraordinary feature of Mashhad life, before I leave the subject of the shrine and the pilgrims, is the provision that is made for the material solace of the latter during their stay in the city. In recognition of the long journeys which they have made, of the hardships which they have sustained, and of the distances by which they are

severed from family and home, they are permitted, with the connivance of the ecclesiastical law and its officers, to contract temporary marriages during their sojourn in the city. There is a large permanent population of wives suitable for the purpose. A mullá is found, under whose sanction a contract is drawn up and formally sealed by both parties, a fee is paid, and the union is legally accomplished. After the lapse of a fortnight or a month, or whatever be the specified period, the contract terminates; the temporary husband returns to his own *lares et penates* in some distant clime, and the lady, after an enforced celibacy of fourteen days' duration, resumes her career of persevering matrimony. In other words, a gigantic system of prostitution, under the sanction of the Church, prevails in Mashhad. There is probably not a more immoral city in Asia; and I should be sorry to say how many of the unmurmuring pilgrims who traverse seas and lands to kiss the grating of the Imám's tomb are not also encouraged and consoled upon their march by the prospect of an agreeable holiday and what might be described in the English vernacular as 'a good spree.' "

Conclusion

"Before I quit the subject of the Persian law and its administration, let me add a few words upon the subject of penalties and prisons. Nothing is more shocking to the European reader, in pursuing his way through the crime-stained and bloody pages of Persian history during the last and, in a happily less degree, during the present century, than the record of savage punishments and abominable tortures, testifying alternately to the callousness of the brute and the ingenuity of the fiend. The Persian character has ever been fertile in device and indifferent to suffering; and in the field of judicial executions it has found ample scope for the exercise of both attainments. Up till quite a recent period, well within the borders of the present reign, condemned criminals have been crucified, blown from guns, buried alive, impaled, shod like horses, torn asunder by being bound to the heads of two trees bent together and then allowed to spring back to their natural position, converted into human torches, flayed while living.

". . . Under a twofold governing system, such as that of which I have now completed the description—namely, an administration in which every actor is, in different aspects, both the briber and the bribed; and a judicial procedure, without either a law or a law court—it will readily be understood that confidence in the Government is not likely to exist, that there is no personal sense of duty or pride of honour, no mutual trust or co-operation (except in the service of ill-doing), no disgrace in exposure, no credit in virtue, above all no national spirit or patriotism. Those philosophers are right who argue that moral must precede material, and internal exterior, reform in Persia. It is useless to graft new shoots on to a stem whose own sap is exhausted or poisoned. We may give Persia roads and railroads; we may work her mines and exploit her resources; we may drill her army and clothe her artisans; but we shall not have brought her within the pale of civilised nations until we have got at the core of the people, and given a new and a radical twist to the national character and institutions. I have drawn this picture of Persian administration, which I believe to be true, in order that English readers may understand the system with which reformers, whether foreigners or natives, have to contend, and the iron wall of resistance, built up by all the most selfish instincts in human nature, that is opposed to progressive ideas. The Sháh himself, however genuine his desire for innovation, is to some extent enlisted on the side of this pernicious system, seeing that he owes to it his private fortune; while those who most loudly condemn it in private are not behind their fellows in outwardly bowing their heads in the temple of Rimmon. In every rank below the sovereign, the initiative is utterly wanting to start a rebellion against the tyranny of immemorial custom; and if a strong man like the present king can only tentatively undertake it, where is he who shall preach the crusade?"

(Extracts from Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question.")

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S TRIBUTE TO THE BÁB AND HIS CHIEF DISCIPLES

Extracts from the Kitáb-I-Íqán

"Though young and tender of age, and though the Cause He revealed was contrary to the desire of all the peoples of the earth, both high and low, rich and poor, exalted and abased, king and subject, yet He arose and steadfastly proclaimed it. All have known and heard this. He feared no one; He was reckless of consequences. Could such a thing be made manifest except through the power of a Divine Revelation, and the potency of God's invincible Will? By the righteousness of God! Were anyone to entertain so great a Revelation in his heart, the thought of such a declaration would alone confound him! Were the hearts of all men to be crowded into his heart, he would still hesitate to venture upon so awful an enterprise. He could achieve it only by the permission of God, only if the channel of his heart were to be linked with the Source of Divine grace, and his soul be assured of the unfailing sustenance of the Almighty. To what, We wonder, do they ascribe so great a daring? Do they accuse Him of madness as they accused the Prophets of old? Or do they maintain that His motive was none other than leadership and the acquisition of earthly riches?

"Gracious God! In His Book, which He hath entitled 'Qayyúmu'l-Asmá' '—the first, the greatest, and mightiest of all books—He prophesied His own martyrdom. In it is this passage: 'O Thou Remnant of God! I have sacrificed myself wholly for Thee; I have accepted curses for Thy sake; and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love. Sufficient Witness unto me is God, the Exalted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days!'

". . . Could the Revealer of such utterance be regarded as walking in any other way than the way of God, and as having yearned for aught else except His good pleasure? In this very verse there lieth concealed a breath of detachment for which, if it were breathed upon the world, all beings would renounce their life, and sacrifice their soul.

". . . And now consider how this Sadrih of the Ridván of God hath, in the prime of youth, risen to proclaim the

Cause of God. Behold, what steadfastness He, the Beauty of God, hath revealed! The whole world rose to hinder Him, yet it utterly failed! The more severe the persecution they inflicted on that Sadrih of Blessedness, the more His fervour increased, and the brighter burned the flame of His love. All this is evident, and none disputeth its truth. Finally, He surrendered His soul, and winged His flight unto the realms above.

". . . No sooner had that eternal Beauty revealed Himself in Shíráz, in the year sixty, and rent asunder the veil of concealment, than the signs of the ascendancy, the might, the sovereignty, and power emanating from that Essence of Essences and Sea of Seas, were manifest in every land. So much so, that from every city there appeared the signs, the evidences, the tokens, and testimonies of that Divine Luminary. How many were those pure and kindly hearts which faithfully reflected the light of that eternal Sun! And how manifold the emanations of knowledge from that Ocean of Divine Wisdom which encompassed all beings! In every city, all the divines and nobles rose to hinder and repress them, and girded up the loins of malice, of envy, and tyranny for their suppression. How great the number of those holy souls, those essences of justice, who, accused of tyranny, were put to death! And how many embodiments of purity, who showed forth naught but true knowledge and stainless deeds, suffered an agonising death! Notwithstanding all this, each of these holy beings, up to his last moment, breathed the name of God and soared in the realm of submission and resignation. Such was the potency and transmuting influence which He exercised over them, that they ceased to cherish any desire but His Will, and wedded their souls to His remembrance.

"Reflect: Who in the world is able to manifest such transcendent power, such pervading influence? All these stainless hearts and sanctified souls have, with absolute resignation, responded to the summons of His decree. Instead of making complaint, they rendered thanks unto God, and, amidst the darkness of their anguish, they revealed naught but radiant acquiescence in His Will. It is well known how relentless was the hate, and how bitter the malice and enmity, enter-

tained by all the peoples of the earth towards these Companions. The persecution and pain which they inflicted on these holy and spiritual beings were regarded by them as means unto salvation, prosperity, and everlasting success. Hath the world, since the days of Adam, witnessed such tumult, such violent commotion? Notwithstanding all the torture they suffered, and the manifold afflictions they endured, they became the object of universal opprobrium and execration. Methinks, patience was revealed only by virtue of their fortitude, and faithfulness itself was begotten by their deeds.

"Do thou ponder these momentous happenings in thine heart, so that thou mayest apprehend the greatness of this Revelation, and perceive its stupendous glory."

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF SHĪ'AH ISLĀM

"The cardinal point wherein the Shí'ahs (as well as the other sects included under the more general term of Imámites) differ from the Sunnís is the doctrine of the Imámate. According to the belief of the latter, the vicegerency of the Prophet (Khiláfat) is a matter to be determined by the choice and election of his followers, and the visible head of the Musulmán world is qualified for the lofty position which he holds less by any special divine grace than by a combination of orthodoxy and administrative capacity. According to the Imámite view, on the other hand, the vicegerency is a matter altogether spiritual; an office conferred by God alone, first by His Prophet, and afterwards by those who so succeeded him, and having nothing to do with the popular choice or approval. In a word, the Khalífih of the Sunnís is merely the outward and visible Defender of the Faith: the Imám of the Shí'ahs 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 absolute and final, whose wisdom is superhuman, and whose words are authoritative. The general term Imámate is applicable to all who hold this latter view without reference to the way in which they trace the succession, and therefore includes such sects as the Báqirís and Ismá'ílís as well as the Shí'ahs or

'Church of the Twelve' (Madhhab-i-Ithná-'Asharíyyih), as they are more specifically termed, with whom alone we are here concerned. According to these, twelve persons successively held the office of Imám. These twelve are as follows:

1. 'Alí-ibn-i-Abí-Ṭálib, the cousin and first disciple of the Prophet, assassinated by Ibn-i-Muljam at Kúfih, A.H. 40 (A.D. 661).
2. Ḥasan, son of 'Alí and Fáṭimih, born A.H. 2, poisoned by order of Mu'ávíyih I, A.H. 50 (A.D. 670).
3. Ḥusayn, son of 'Alí and Fáṭimih, born A.H. 4, killed at Karbilá on Muḥarram 10, A.H. 61 (Oct. 10, A.D. 680).
4. 'Alí, son of Ḥusayn and Shahribánú (daughter of Yazdigird, the last Sásáníyán king), generally called Imám Zaynu'l-'Ábidín, poisoned by Valíd.
5. Muḥammad-Báqir, son of the above-mentioned Zaynu'l-'Ábidín and his cousin Umm-i-'Abdu'lláh, the daughter of Imám Ḥasan, poisoned by Ibráhím ibn-i-Valíd.
6. Ja'far-i-Ṣádiq, son of Imám Muḥammad-Báqir, poisoned by order of Mansúr, the 'Abbáside Khalífih.
7. Músá-Káẓim, son of Imám Ja'far-i-Ṣádiq, born A.H. 129, poisoned by order of Hárúnu'r-Rashíd, A.H. 183.
8. 'Alí-ibn-i-Músa'r-Riḍá, generally called Imám Riḍá, born A.H. 153, poisoned near Ṭús, in Khurásán, by order of the Khalífih Ma'mún, A.H. 203, and buried at Mashhad, which derives its name and its sanctity from him.
9. Muḥammad-Taqí, son of Imám Riḍá, born A.H. 195, poisoned by the Khalífih Mu'taṣim at Baghdád, A.H. 220.
10. 'Alí-Naqí, son of Imám Muḥammad-Taqí, born A.H. 213, poisoned at Surra-man-Ra'á, A.H. 254.
11. Haṣan-i-'Askarí, son of Imám 'Alí-Naqí, born A.H. 232, poisoned A.H. 260.
12. Muḥammad, son of Imám Ḥasan-i-'Askarí and Nargis-Khátún, called by the Shí'ahs 'Imám-Mihdí,' 'Ḥujjatu'lláh' (the Proof of God), 'Baqíyya-tu'lláh' (the Remnant of God), and 'Qá'im-i-Ál-i-Muḥammad' (He who shall arise of the family of Muḥammad). He bore not only the same name but the same

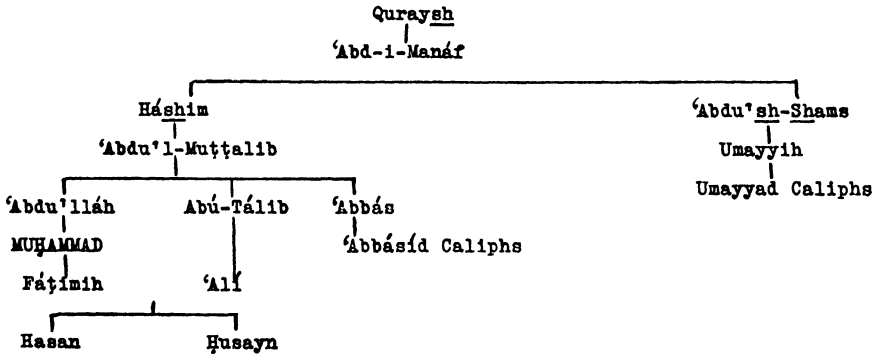
kunyih—Abu'l-Qásim—as the Prophet, and according to the Shí'ahs it is not lawful for any other to bear this name and this kunyih together. He was born at Surra-man-Ra'á, A.H. 255, and succeeded his father in the Imámate, A.H. 260.

"The Shí'ahs hold that he did not die, but disappeared in an underground passage in Surra-man-Ra'á, A.H. 329; that he still lives, surrounded by a chosen band of his followers, in one of those mysterious cities, Jábulqá and Jábulsá; and that when the fulness of time is come, when the earth is filled with injustice, and the faithful are plunged in despair, he will come forth, heralded by Jesus Christ, overthrow the infidels, establish universal peace and justice, and inaugurate a millennium of blessedness. During the whole period of his Imámate, i.e. from A.H. 260 till the present day, the Imám Mihdí has been invisible and inaccessible to the mass of his followers, and this is what is signified by the term 'Occultation' (Ghaybat). After assuming the functions of Imám and presiding at the burial of his father and predecessor, the Imám Ḥasan-i-'Askarí, he disappeared from the sight of all save a chosen few, who, one after the other, continued to act as channels of communication between him and his followers. These persons were known as 'Gates' (Abváb). The first of them was Abú-'Umar-'Uthmán ibn-i-Sa'íd 'Umarí; the second Abú-Ja'far Muḥammad-ibn-i-'Uthmán, son of the above; the third Ḥusayn-ibn-i-Rúḥ Naw-bakhtí; the fourth Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alí-ibn-i-Muḥammad Símarí. Of these 'Gates' the first was appointed by the Imám Ḥasan-i-'Askarí, the others by the then acting 'Gate' with the sanction and approval of the Imám Mihdí. This period—extending over 69 years—during which the Imám was still accessible by means of the 'Gates,' is known as the 'Lesser' or 'Minor Occultation' (Ghaybat-i-Ṣughrá). This was succeeded by the 'Greater' or 'Major Occultation' (Ghaybat-i-Kubrá). When Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alí, the last of the 'Gates,' drew near to his latter end, he was urged by the faithful (who contemplated with despair the prospect of complete severance from the Imám) to nominate a successor. This, however, he refused to do, saying, 'God hath a purpose which He will accomplish.' So on his death all

communication between the Imám and his Church ceased, and the 'Major Occultation' began and shall continue until the Return of the Imám take place in the fulness of time."

(Excerpt from "A Traveller's Narrative," Note O, pp. 296–99.)

GENEALOGY OF THE PROPHET MUḤAMMAD



Umayyad Caliphs, 661–749 A.D.
'Abbásíd Caliphs, 749–1258 A.D.
Fátimite Caliphs, 1258–1517 A.D.
Ottoman Caliphs, 1517–19 A.D.
Birth of Muḥammad, August 20th, 570 A.D
Declaration of His Mission, 613–14 A.D.
His flight to Medina, 622 A.D.
Abú-Bakri's-Ṣiddíq-ibn-i-Abí-Quḥáfih, 632–34 A.H.
'Umar-ibn-i'l-Khaṭṭáb, 634–44 A.H.
'Uthmán-ibn-i-'Affán, 644–56 A.H.
'Alí-ibn-i-Abí-Ṭálib, 656–61 A.H.

THEORY AND ADMINISTRATION OF LAW IN PERSIA IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

". . . The law in Persia, and, indeed, among Musulman peoples in general, consists of two branches: the religious, and the common law; that which is based upon the Muḥammadan Scriptures, and that which is based on precedent; that which is administered by ecclesiastical, and that which

is administered by civil tribunals. In Persia, the former is known as the Shar', the latter as the 'Urf. From the two is evolved a jurisprudence which, although in no sense scientific, is yet reasonably practical in application and is roughly accommodated to the needs and circumstances of those for whom it is dispensed. The basis of authority in the case of the Shar', or Ecclesiastical Law, consists of the utterances of the Prophet in the Qur'án; of the opinions of the Twelve Holy Imáms, whose voice in the judgment of the Shí'ah Muḥammadans is of scarcely inferior weight; and of the commentaries of a school of pre-eminent ecclesiastical jurists. The latter have played much the same part in adding to the volume of the national jurisprudence that the famous *juris consulti* did with the Common Law of Rome, or the Talmudic commentators with the Hebrew system. The body of law so framed has been roughly codified and divided into four heads, dealing respectively with religious rites and duties, with contracts and obligations, with personal affairs, and with sumptuary rules and judicial procedure. This law is administered by an ecclesiastical court, consisting of mullás, i.e. lay priests and mujtahids, i.e. learned doctors of the law, assisted sometimes by qáḍís or judges, and under the presidency of an official, known as the Shaykhu'l-Islám, one of whom is, as a rule, appointed to every large city by the sovereign. In olden days, the chief of this ecclesiastical hierarchy was the Ṣadru's-Ṣudúr, or Pontifex Maximus, a dignitary who was chosen by the king and placed over the entire priesthood and judicial bench of the kingdom. But this office was abolished in his anti-clerical campaign by Nádir Sháh, and has never been renewed. In smaller centres of population and villages, the place of this court is taken by the local mullá or mullás, who, for a consideration, are always ready with a text from the Qur'án. In the case of the higher courts, the decision is invariably written out, along with the citation from the Scriptures, or the commentators, upon which it is based. Cases of extreme importance are referred to the more eminent mujtahids, of whom there is never a large number, who gain their position solely by eminent learning or abilities, ratified by the popular approval, and whose decisions are seldom impugned. . . . In works

upon the theory of the law in Persia, it is commonly written that criminal cases are decided by the ecclesiastical, and civil cases by the secular, courts. In practice, however, there is no such clear distinction; the functions and the prerogative of the co-ordinate benches vary at different epochs, and appear to be a matter of accident or choice rather than of necessity; and at the present time, though criminal cases of difficulty may be submitted to the ecclesiastical court, yet it is with civil matters that they are chiefly concerned. Questions of heresy or sacrilege are naturally referred to them; they also take cognisance of adultery and divorce; and intoxication as an offence, not against the common law (indeed, if it were a matter of precedent, insobriety could present the highest credentials in Persia), but against the Qur'án, falls within the scope of their judgment. . . .

"From the Shar', I pass to the 'Urf, or Common Law. Nominally this is based on oral tradition, on precedent, and on custom. As such, it varies in different parts of the country. But, there being no written or recognised code, it is found to vary still more in practice according to the character or caprice of the individual who administers it. . . . The administrators of the 'Urf are the civil magistrates throughout the kingdom, there being no secular court or bench of judges after the Western model. In a village the case will be brought before the kad-khudá, or headman; in a town before the dárúghih, or police magistrate. To their judgment are submitted all the petty offences that occupy a city police-court or a bench of country magistrates in England. The penalty in the case of larceny, or assault, or such like offences, is, as a rule, restitution, either in kind or in money value; while, if lack of means renders this impossible, the criminal is soundly thrashed. All ordinary criminal cases are brought before the ḥakím, or governor of a town; the more important before the provincial governor or governor-general. The ultimate court of appeal in each case is the king, of whose sovereign authority these subordinate exercises of jurisdiction are merely a delegation, although it is rare that a suppliant at any distance from the capital can make his complaint heard so far. . . . Justice, as dispensed in this fashion by the officers of government in Persia, obeys no law and follows

no system. Publicity is the sole guarantee for fairness; but great is the scope, especially in the lower grades, for píshkash and the bribe. The dárúghis have the reputation of being both harsh and venal, and there are some who go so far as to say that there is not a sentence of an official in Persia, even of the higher ranks, that cannot be swayed by a pecuniary consideration."

(Excerpts from Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 1, pp. 452–55.)

KEY TO GENEALOGY OF THE BÁB

1. Descendant of the Imám Ḥusayn, resident of Shíráz.
2. Wife of the Báb.
3. Surnamed "Afnán-i-Kabír."
4. Wife of Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín.
5. Known as "Saqqá-Kháni."
6. Wife of Ḥáj Mírzá Siyyid Ḥasan, son of Mírzá 'Ali.
7. Died at birth.
8. Surnamed "Khál-i-Aṣghar," to whom the Kitáb-i-íqán was addressed.
9. Surnamed "Khál-i-A'ẓam," one of the Seven Martyrs of Ṭihrán.
10. Surnamed "Vakílu'd-Dawlih," chief builder of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ishqábád.
11. Surnamed "Vazír," native of Núr in Mázindarán; named 'Abbás.
12. Named 'Abbás.
13. Named 'Alí-Muḥammad.
14. Named Ḥusayn-'Alí.
15. Wife of Vakílu'd-Dawlih, Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí.
16. Only son of Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí.
17. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's son-in-law.
18. Descendant of the Imám Ḥusayn, merchant and native of Shíráz.
19. Abdu'l-Bahá's son-in-law.
20. Only child of Mírzá Abu'l-Fatḥ.

THE QÁJÁR DYNASTY

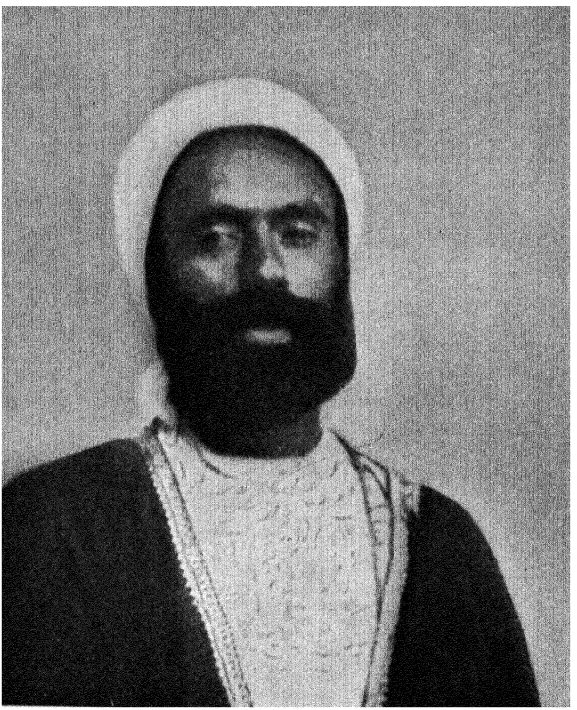
Fatḥ-'Alí Sháh, 1798–1834 A.D.
Muḥammad Sháh, 1835–48 A.D.
Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, 1848–96 A.D.
Muẓaffari'd-Dín Sháh, 1896–1907 A.D.
Muḥammad-'Alí Sháh, 1907–9 A.D.
Ahmad Sháh, 1909–25 A.D.

Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim-i-Qá'im-Maqám.
Hájí Mírzá Áqásí.
Mírzá Taqí Khán Amír-Niẓám.
Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Núrí.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Lady Blomfield for her valuable suggestions; to an English correspondent for his help in the preparation of the Introduction; to Mrs. E. Hoagg for the typing of the manuscript; to Miss Effie Baker for the photographs used in illustrating this book.

—THE TRANSLATOR.



MUḤAMMAD-I-ZARANDÍ, SURNAMED NABÍL-I-A'ZAM

PREFACE

IT IS my intention, by the aid and assistance of God, to devote the introductory pages of this narrative to such accounts as I have been able to obtain regarding those twin great lights, Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í and Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí, after which it is my hope to recount, in their chronological order, the chief events that have happened since the year '60,[1] the year that witnessed the declaration of the Faith by the Báb, until the present time, the year 1305 A.H.[2]

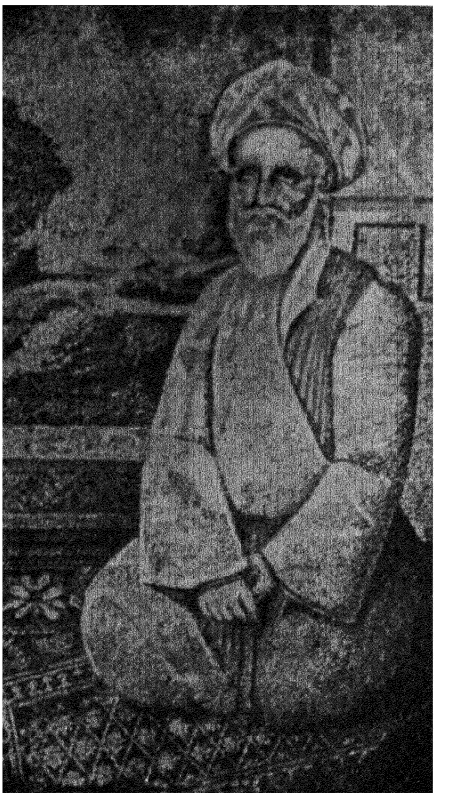
In certain instances I shall go into some detail, in others I shall content myself with a brief summary of events. I shall place on record a description of the episodes I myself have witnessed, as well as those that have been reported to me by trustworthy and recognised informants, specifying in every case their names and standing. Those to whom I am primarily indebted are the following: Mírzá Aḥmad-i-Qazvíní, the Báb's amanuensis; Siyyid Ismá'íl-i-Dhabíḥ; Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí; Shaykh Abú-Turáb-i-Qazvíní; and, last but not least, Mírzá Músá, Áqáy-i-Kalím, brother of Bahá'u'lláh.

I render thanks to God for having assisted me in the writing of these preliminary pages, and for having blessed and honoured them with the approval of Bahá'u'lláh, who has graciously deigned to consider them and who signified, through His amanuensis Mírzá Áqá Ján, who read them to Him, His pleasure and acceptance. I pray that the Almighty may sustain and guide me lest I err and falter in the task I have set myself to accomplish.

MUḤAMMAD-I-ZARANDÍ.[3]

'Akká, Palestine,
1305 A.H.

[1] 1260 A.H. (1844 A.D.).
[2] 1887–8 A.D.
[3] His full title is Nabíl-i-A'ẓam.



SHAYKH AḤMAD-I-AḤSĀ'Ī

THE DAWN-BREAKERS

CHAPTER I

THE MISSION OF SHAYKH AHMAD-I-AHSÁ'Í

AT A time when the shining reality of the Faith of Muhammad had been obscured by the ignorance, the fanaticism, and perversity of the contending sects into which it had fallen, there appeared above the horizon of the East[1] that luminous Star of Divine guidance, Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í.[2] He observed how those who professed the Faith of Islám had shattered its unity, sapped its force, perverted its purpose, and degraded its holy name. His soul was filled with anguish at the sight of the corruption and strife which characterised the shí'ah sect of Islám. Inspired by the light that shone within him,[3] he arose with unerring vision, with fixed purpose, and sublime detachment to utter his protest against the betrayal of the Faith by that ignoble people. Aglow with zeal and conscious of the sublimity of his calling, he vehemently appealed not only to shí'ah Islám but to all the followers of Muḥammad through-

[1] His genealogy, according to his son Shaykh 'Abdu'lláh, is the following: "Shaykh Aḥmad-ibn-i Zaynu'd-Dín-ibn-i-Ibráhím-ibn-i-Ṣakhr-ibn-i-Ibráhím-ibn-i-Ẓáhir-ibn-i-Ramaḍán-ibn-i-Rashíd-ibn-i-Dahím-ibn-i-Shimrúkh-ibn-i-Súlih." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 1.)

[2] Born Rajab, 1166 A.H., 24th of April–24th of May, 1753, in town of Aḥsá, in district of Aḥsá, northeast of Arabian peninsula. (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 1.) Born a shí'ah, though his ancestors were sunnís. (*Ibid.*, p. 2.) According to E. G. Browne ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note E, p. 235), Shaykh Aḥmad was born in the year 1157 A.H. and died in 1242.

[3] Siyyid Káẓim, in his book entitled "Dalílu'l-Mutaḥayyirín," writes as follows: "Notre maître vit une nuit l'Imám Ḥasan, sur lui soit le salut! Cette Altesse lui mit dans la bouche sa langue bénie. De la salive adorable de cette Altesse, il retira les sciences et l'aide de Dieu. Au goût, elle était sucrée, plus douce que le miel, plus parfumée que le musc: elle etait plutôt chaude. Quand il revint à lui et se réveilla de son sommeil, il devint dans son intime, rayonnant des lumières de la contemplation de Dieu, il déborda de l'inondation de ses bienfaits et fut entièrement séparé de tout ce qui est autre que Dieu. Sa croyance et sa confiance en Dieu augmentèrent en même temps que sa résignation à la Volonté du Très-Haut. Par suite d'un excessif amour, d'un impétueux désir qui naquit en son cœur, il oublia de manger, de se vêtir, si ce n'est juste ce qu'il fallait pour ne pas mourir." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 6.)

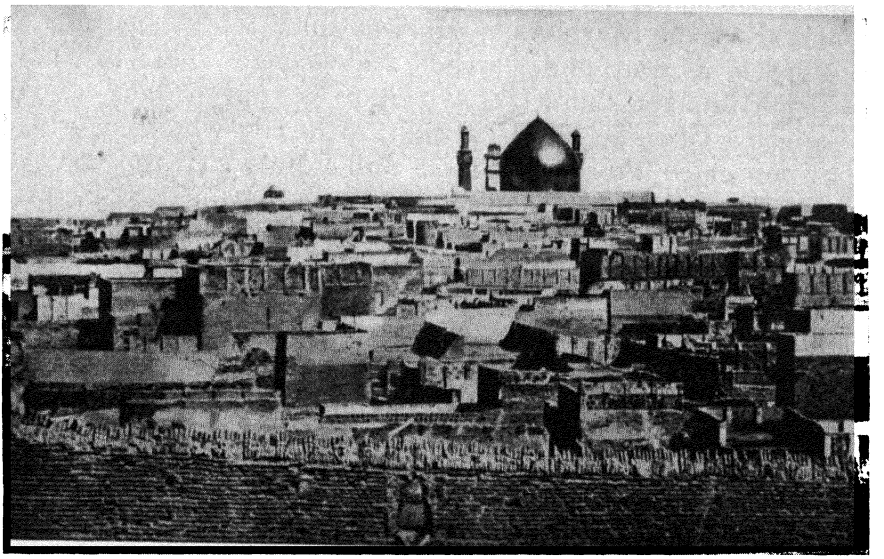
out the East, to awaken from the slumber of negligence and to prepare the way for Him who must needs be made manifest in the fulness of time, whose light alone could dissipate the mists of prejudice and ignorance which had enveloped that Faith. Forsaking his home and kindred, on one of the islands of Bahrayn, to the south of the Persian Gulf, he set out, as bidden by an almighty Providence, to unravel the mysteries of those verses of Islamic Scriptures which foreshadowed the advent of a new Manifestation. He was well aware of the dangers and perils that beset his path; he fully realised the crushing responsibility of his task. There burned in his soul the conviction that no reform, however drastic, within the Faith of Islám, could achieve the regeneration of this perverse people. He knew, and was destined by the Will of God to demonstrate, that nothing short of a new and independent Revelation, as attested and foreshadowed by the sacred Scriptures of Islám, could revive the fortunes and restore the purity of that decadent Faith.[1]

Bereft of all earthly possessions, and detached from all save God, he, in the early days of the thirteenth century of the Hegirah, when forty years of age, arose to dedicate the remaining days of his life to the task he felt impelled to shoulder. He first proceeded to Najaf and Karbilá,[2] where in a few years he acquired familiarity with the prevailing thoughts and standards current among the learned men of Islám. There he came to be recognised as one of the authorised expounders of the Islamic Holy Writ, was declared a mujtahid, and soon obtained an ascendancy over the rest of his colleagues, who either visited or were residing in those holy cities. These came to regard him as one initiated into the mysteries of Divine Revelation, and qualified to unravel the abstruse utterances of Muḥammad and of the imáms of the Faith. As his influence increased, and the scope of his

[1] "He [Shaykh Aḥmad] knew full well that he was chosen of God to prepare men's hearts for the reception of the more complete truth shortly to be revealed, and that through him the way of access to the hidden twelfth Imám Mihdí was reopened. But he did not set this forth in clear and unmistakable terms, lest 'the unregenerate' should turn again and rend him." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 15.)

[2] "Karbilá is about 55 miles S. W. of Baghdád on the banks of the Euphrates. . . . The tomb of Ḥusayn in the centre of the city, and of his brother 'Abbás in the S. E. quarter, are the chief buildings." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 486.) Najaf is revered by the shí'ahs, as it enshrines the tomb of Imám 'Alí.

authority widened, he found himself besieged on every side by an ever-increasing number of devoted enquirers who asked to be enlightened regarding the intricacies of the Faith, all of which he ably and fully expounded. By his knowledge and fearlessness he struck terror to the hearts of the Ṣúfís and Neo-Platonists and other kindred schools of thought,[1]



GENERAL VIEW OF NAJAF

who envied his learning and feared his ruthlessness. Thereby he acquired added favour in the eyes of those learned divines, who looked upon these sects as the disseminators of obscure and heretical doctrines. Yet, great as was his fame and universal as was the esteem in which he was regarded, he despised all the honours which his admirers lavished upon him. He marvelled at their servile devotion to dignity and rank, and refused resolutely to associate himself with the objects of their pursuits and desires.

[1] "The chief peculiarities of Shaykh Aḥmad's views seem to have been as follows. He declared that all knowledge and all sciences were contained in the Qur'án, and that therefore to understand the inner meanings of the latter in their entirety, a knowledge of the former must be acquired. To develop this doctrine, he used to apply cabbalistic methods of interpretation to the sacred text, and exerted himself to acquire familiarity with the various sciences known to the Muslim world. He entertained the most exaggerated veneration for the Imáms, especially the Imám Ja'far-i-Ṣádiq, the sixth of them in succession, whose words he would often quote. . . . About the future life, and the resurrection of the body also,

Having achieved his purpose in those cities, and inhaling the fragrance which wafted upon him from Persia, he felt in his heart an irrepressible yearning to hasten to that country. He concealed from his friends, however, the real motive that impelled him to direct his steps towards that land. By way of the Persian Gulf, he hastened unto the land of his heart's desire, ostensibly for the purpose of visiting the shrine of the Imám Riḍá in Mashhad.[1] He was filled with eagerness to unburden his soul, and searched zealously for those to whom he could deliver the secret which to no one he had as yet divulged. Upon his arrival at Shíráz, the city which enshrined that concealed Treasure of God, and from which the voice of the Herald of a new Manifestation was destined to be proclaimed, he repaired to the Masjid-i-Jum'ih, a mosque which in its style and shape bore a striking resemblance to the holy shrine of Mecca. Many a time did he, whilst gazing upon that edifice, observe: "Verily, this house of God betokens such signs as only those who are endowed with understanding can perceive. Methinks he who conceived and built it was inspired of God."[2] How often and how passionately he extolled that city! Such was the praise he lavished upon it that his hearers, who were only too familiar with its mediocrity, were astonished at the tone of his language. "Wonder not," he said to those who were surprised, "for ere long the secret of my words will be made manifest to you. Among

he held views which were generally considered to be heterodox, as previously mentioned. He declared that the body of man was composed of different portions, derived from each of the four elements and the nine heavens, and that the body wherewith he was raised in the resurrection contained only the latter components, the former returning at death to their original sources. This subtle body, which alone escaped destruction, he called Jism-i-Húriqlíyá, the latter being supposed to be a Greek word. He asserted that it existed potentially in our present bodies, 'like glass in stone.' Similarly he asserted that, in the case of the Night-ascent of the Prophet to Heaven, it was this, and not his material body, which performed the journey. On account of these views, he was pronounced unorthodox by the majority of the 'ulamás, and accused of holding the doctrines of Mullá Ṣadrá, the greatest Persian philosopher of modern times." (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, article 12, pp. 890–91.)

[1] In the ninth century the remains of the Imám Riḍá, son of the Imám Músá and eighth of the twelve Imáms, were interred in Mashhad.

[2] "Dans la terre de Fá (Fárs) se trouve une mosquée, au milieu de laquelle s'élève une construction semblable à la Ka'bih (Masjid-i-Jum'ih). Cela n'a été construit que pour que ce soit un signe pour cette terre avant la manifestation de l'ordre de Dieu dans l'élévation de la maison dans cette terre. [Allusion to the new Mecca, i.e. the house of the Báb in Shíráz.] Heureux celui qui adore Dieu dans cette terre-là: en vérité, nous aussi nous y avons adoré Dieu et là nous avons prié pour celui qui a élevé cette construction." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 2, p. 151.)

you there shall be a number who will live to behold the glory of a Day which the prophets of old have yearned to witness." So great was his authority in the eyes of the 'ulamás who met and conversed with him, that they professed themselves incapable of comprehending the meaning of his mysterious allusions and ascribed their failure to their own deficient understanding.

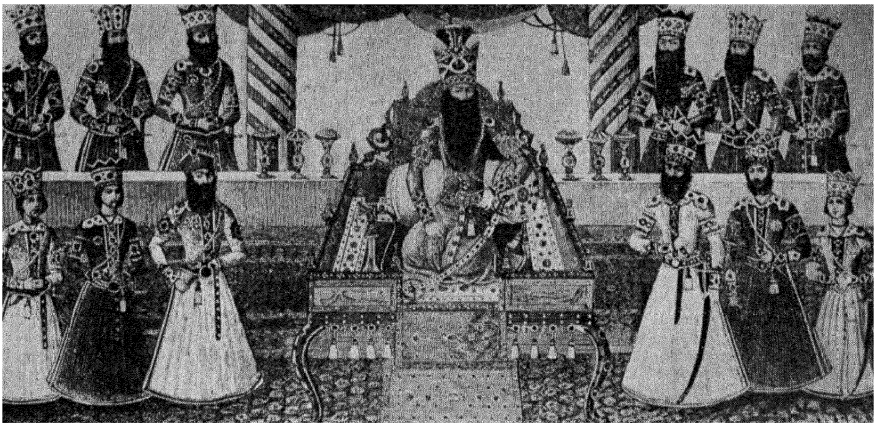
Having sown the seeds of Divine knowledge in the hearts of those whom he found receptive to his call, Shaykh Aḥmad set out for Yazd, where he tarried awhile, engaged continually in the dissemination of such truths as he felt urged to reveal. Most of his books and epistles were written in that city.[1] Such was the fame he acquired,[2] that the ruler of Persia, Fath-'Alí Sháh, was moved to address to him from Tihrán a written message,[3] calling upon him to explain certain specific questions related to the abstruse teachings of the Muslim Faith, the meaning of which the leading 'ulamás of his realm had been unable to unfold. To this he readily answered in the form of an epistle to which he gave the name of "Risáliy-i-Sulṭáníyyih." The Sháh was so pleased with the tone and subject matter of that epistle that he forthwith sent him a second message, this time extending to him an invitation to visit his court. Replying to this second imperial message,

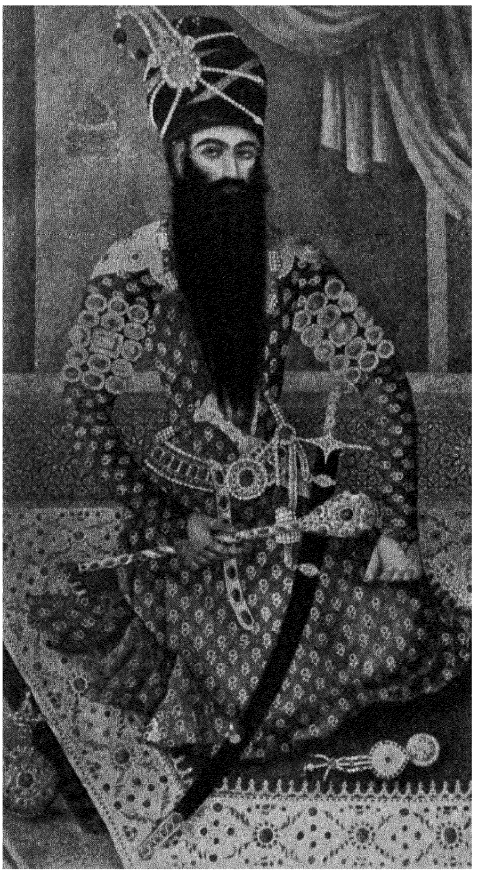
[1] A. L. M. Nicolas, in Chapter 5 of his book, "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," gives a list of no less than ninety-six volumes as representing the entire literary output of this prolific writer. Among them, the more important are the following:

1. Commentary on the Zíyáratu'l Jámi'atu'l-Kabírih of Shaykh Hádí.
2. Commentary on the verse "Qu'l Huválláh-u-Aḥad."
3. Risáliy-i-Kháqáníyyih, in answer to Fatḥ-'Ali Sháh's question regarding the superiority of the Qá'im over His ancestors.
4. On dreams.
5. Answer to Shaykh Músáy-i-Baḥraynı́ regarding the position and claims of the Sáḥibu'z-Zamán.
6. Answer to the Ṣúfís.
7. Answer to Mullá Mihdíy-i-Astirábádí on the knowledge of the soul.
8. On the joys and pains of the future life.
9. Answer to Mullá 'Alí-Akbar on the best road to the attainment of God.
10. On the Resurrection.

[2] "La nouvelle de son arrivée fit grand bruit et certains 'Ulamás, parmi les plus célèbres, le reçurent avec distinction. Ils l'entourèrent avec beaucoup de considération, et les habitants de la ville les imitèrent. Tous les 'Ulamás le vinrent voir. On reconnut qu'il était le plus savant parmi les plus savants." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," p. 18.)

[3] A. L. M. Nicolas, in his book, "Essai sur le Shaykhisme" (pp. 19–20), refers to a second letter addressed by the Sháh to Shaykh Aḥmad: "Le Sháh, prévenu, lui écrivit de nouveau en lui disant qu'évidemment il était de son devoir à lui, Roi, de se déranger et de venir à Yazd voir l'illustre et saint personnage dont les pieds étaient une bénédiction pour la province sur laquelle il consentait à les poser, mais que, pour des raisons politiques de haute importance,





FATḤ-'ALÍ SHĀH AND SONS

he wrote the following: "As I had intended ever since my departure from Najaf and Karbilá to visit and pay my homage to the shrine of the Imám Riḍá in Mashhad, I venture to hope that your Imperial Majesty will graciously allow me to fulfil the vow which I have made. Later on, God willing, it is my hope and purpose to avail myself of the honour which your Imperial Majesty has deigned to confer upon me."

Among those who, in the city of Yazd, were awakened by the message of that bearer of the light of God, was Ḥájí 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, a man of great piety, upright and God-fearing. He visited Shaykh Aḥmad each day in the company of a certain Mullá 'Abdu'l-Kháliq-i-Yazdí, who was noted for his authority and learning. On certain occasions, however, in order to talk confidentially with 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, Shaykh Aḥmad, to the great surprise of the learned 'Abdu'l-Kháliq, would ask him to retire from his presence and leave him alone with his chosen and favoured disciple. This marked preference shown to so modest and illiterate a man as 'Abdu'l-Vahháb was a cause of great surprise to his companion, who was only too conscious of his own superiority and attainments. Later, however, when Shaykh Aḥmad had departed from Yazd, 'Abdu'l-Vahháb retired from the society of men and came to be regarded as a Ṣúfí. By the orthodox leaders of that community, however, such as the Ni'matu'lláhí and Dhahabí, he was denounced as an intruder and was suspected of a desire to rob them of their leadership. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, for whom the Ṣúfí doctrine had no special attraction, scorned their false imputations and shunned their society. He associated with none except Ḥájí Ḥasan-i-Náyiní, whom he had chosen as his intimate friend and to whom he confided the secret with which he had been entrusted by his master. When 'Abdu'l-Vahháb died, this friend, following his example, continued to pursue the path which he had directed him to tread, and announced to every receptive soul the tidings of God's fast-approaching Revelation.

il ne pouvait, en ce moment, quitter la Capitale. Que d'ailleurs il était, en cas de déplacement de sa part, obligé d'amener avec lui au moins un corps de dix-mille hommes: or, la ville de Yazd est trop petite, ses champs trop pauvres pour recevoir un tel surcroît de population: l'arrivée de troupes si nombreuses occasionerait certainement la disette: 'Vous ne voudriez pas d'un pareil malheur, j'en suis certain, et je crois que, quoique je sois bien peu de chose auprès de vous, vous consentirez, cependant, à venir me voir.' "

Mírzá Maḥmúd-i-Qamṣarí, whom I met in Káshán, and who at that time was an old man over ninety years of age and was greatly beloved and revered by all those who knew him, related to me the following story: "I recall when in my youth, at the time when I was living in Káshán, I heard of a certain man in Náyin who had arisen to announce the tidings of a new Revelation, and under whose spell fell all who heard him, whether scholars, officials of the government, or the uneducated among the people. His influence was such that those who came in contact with him renounced the world and despised its riches. Curious to ascertain the truth, I proceeded, unsuspected by my friends, to Náyin, where I was able to verify the statements that were current about him. His radiant countenance bespoke the light that had been kindled in his soul. I heard him, one day, after he had offered his morning prayer, speak words such as these: 'Ere long will the earth be turned into a paradise. Ere long will Persia be made the shrine round which will circle the peoples of the earth.' One morning, at the hour of dawn, I found him fallen upon his face, repeating in wrapt devotion the words 'Alláh-u-Akbar.'[1] To my great surprise he turned to me and said: 'That which I have been announcing to you is now revealed. At this very hour the light of the promised One has broken and is shedding illumination upon the world. O Maḥmúd, verily I say, you shall live to behold that Day of days.' The words which that holy man addressed to me kept ringing in my ears until the day when, in the year sixty, I was privileged to hear the Call that arose from Shíráz. I was, alas, unable, because of my infirmities, to hasten to that city. Later, when the Báb, the herald of the new Revelation, arrived in Káshán and for three nights lived as a guest in the house of Ḥájí Mírzá Jání, I was unaware of His visit and so missed the honour of attaining His presence. Sometime afterwards, whilst conversing with the followers of the Faith, I was informed that the birthday of the Báb fell on the first day of the month of Muharram of the year 1235 A.H.[2] I realised that the day to which Ḥájí Hasan-i-Náyiní had referred did not correspond with this date, that there was actually a difference of two years between them. This thought

[1] "God is Most Great."

[2] October 20, 1819 A.D.

sorely perplexed me. Long after, however, I met a certain Ḥájí Mírzá Kamálu'd-Dín-i-Naráqí, who announced to me the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád, and who shared with me a number of verses from the 'Qaṣídiy-i-Varqá'íyyih' as well as certain passages of the Persian and Arabic 'Hidden Words.' I was moved to the depths of my soul as I heard him recite those sacred words. The following I still vividly remember: 'O Son of Being! Thy heart is my home; sanctify it for my descent. Thy spirit is my place of revelation; cleanse it for my manifestation. O Son of Earth! Wouldst thou have me, seek none other than me; and wouldst thou gaze upon my beauty, close thine eyes to the world and all that is therein; for my will and the will of another than I, even as fire and water, cannot dwell together in one heart.' I asked him the date of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh. 'The dawn of the second day of Muḥarram,' he replied, 'of the year 1233 A.H.'[1] I immediately remembered the words of Ḥájí Ḥasan and recalled the day on which they were spoken. Instinctively I fell prostrate on the ground and exclaimed: 'Glorified art Thou, O my God, for having enabled me to attain unto this promised Day. If now I be called to Thee, I die content and assured.' " That very year, the year 1274 A.H.,[2] that venerable and radiant soul yielded his spirit to God.

This account which I heard from the lips of Mírzá Maḥmúd-i-Qamṣarí himself, and which is still current amongst the people, is assuredly a compelling evidence of the perspicacity of the late Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Ahsá'í and bears eloquent testimony to the influence he exercised upon his immediate disciples. The promise he gave them was eventually fulfilled, and the mystery with which he fired their souls was unfolded in all its glory.

During those days when Shaykh Aḥmad was preparing to depart from Yazd, Siyyid Kázim-i-Rashtí,[3] that other luminary of Divine guidance, set out from his native province of Gílán with the object of visiting Shaykh Aḥmad, ere the

[1] November 12, 1817 A.D. [2] 1857–8 A.D.

[3] "His [Siyyid Káẓim's] family were merchants of repute. His father was named Áqá Siyyid Qásim. When twelve years old, he was living at Ardibíl near the tomb of Shaykh Ṣafí'u'd-Dín Isḥáq, the descendant of the seventh Imám Músá Kázim and the ancestor of the Ṣafaví kings. One night in a dream it was signified to him by one of the illustrious progeni-

latter undertook his pilgrimage to Khurásán. In the course of his first interview with him, Shaykh Aḥmad spoke these words: "I welcome you, O my friend! How long and how eagerly have I waited for you to come and deliver me from the arrogance of this perverse people! I am oppressed by the shamelessness of their acts and the depravity of their character. 'Verily, We proposed to the heavens, and to the earth, and to the mountains, to receive the trust of God, but they refused the burden, and they feared to receive it. Man undertook to bear it; and he, verily, hath proved unjust, ignorant.' "

This Siyyid Káẓim had already, from his early boyhood, shown signs of remarkable intellectual power and spiritual insight. He was unique among those of his own rank and age. At the age of eleven, he had committed to memory the whole of the Qur'án. At the age of fourteen, he had learned by heart a prodigious number of prayers and recognised traditions of Muḥammad. At the age of eighteen, he had composed a commentary on a verse of the Qur'án, known as the Áyatu'l-Kursí, which had excited the wonder and the admiration of the most learned of his day. His piety, the gentleness of his character, and his humility were such that all who knew him, whether young or old, were profoundly impressed.

In the year 1231 A.H.,[1] when only twenty-two years old, he, forsaking home, kindred, and friends, departed from Gílán, intent upon attaining the presence of him who had so nobly arisen to announce the approaching dawn of a Divine Revelation. He had been in the company of Shaykh Aḥmad for only a few weeks, when the latter, turning to him one day, addressed him in these words: "Remain in your house and cease attending my lectures. Such of my disciples as may feel perplexed will turn henceforth to you, and will seek to obtain from you directly whatsoever assistance they may require. You will, through the knowledge which the Lord your God has bestowed upon you, resolve their problems and tran-

tors of the buried saint that he should put himself under the spiritual guidance of Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í, who was at this time residing at Yazd. He accordingly proceeded thither and enrolled himself amongst the disciples of Shaykh Aḥmad, in whose doctrine he attained such eminence that on the Shaykh's death he was unanimously recognised as the leader of the Shaykhí school." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note E, p. 238.)

[1] 1815–16 A.D.

quillise their hearts. By the power of your utterance you will help to revive the sorely neglected Faith of Muḥammad, your illustrious ancestor." These words addressed to Siyyid Káẓim excited the resentment and kindled the envy of the prominent disciples of Shaykh Aḥmad, among whom figured Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mámáqání and Mullá 'Abdu'l-Kháliq-i-Yazdí. So compelling was the dignity of Siyyid Káẓim, however, and so remarkable were the evidences of his knowledge and wisdom, that these disciples were awed and felt compelled to submit.

Shaykh Aḥmad, having thus committed his disciples to the care of Siyyid Káẓim, left for Khurásán. There he tarried awhile, in the close vicinity of the holy shrine of the Imám



PAINTING OF MÍRZÁ BUZURG
(FATHER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH)

Ridá in Mashhad. Within its precincts he pursued with undiminished zest the course of his labours. By resolving the intricacies that agitated the minds of the seekers, he continued to prepare the way for the advent of the coming Manifestation. In that city he became increasingly conscious that the Day which was to witness the birth of the promised One could not be far distant. The promised hour, he felt, was fast approaching. From the direction of Núr, in the province of Mázindarán, he was able to perceive the first glimmerings that heralded the dawn of the promised Dispensation. To him the Revelation foreshadowed in these following traditional utterances was at hand: "Ere long shall ye behold the countenance of your Lord resplendent as the moon in its full glory. And yet, ye shall fail to unite in acknowledging His truth and embracing His Faith." And "One of the most mighty signs that shall signalise the advent of the promised Hour is this: 'A woman shall give birth to One who shall be her Lord.' "

Shaykh Aḥmad therefore set his face towards Núr and, accompanied by Siyyid Káẓim and a number of his distinguished disciples, proceeded to Ṭihrán. The Sháh of Persia, being informed of the approach of Shaykh Aḥmad to his capital, commanded the dignitaries and officials of Ṭihrán to go out to meet him. He directed them to extend a cordial expression of welcome on his behalf. The distinguished visitor and his companions were royally entertained by the Sháh, who visited him in person and declared him to be "the glory of his nation and an ornament to his people."[1] In those days, there was born a Child in an ancient and noble family of Núr,[2] whose father was Mírzá 'Abbás, better known as Mírzá Buzurg, a favoured minister of the Crown. That Child was Bahá'u'lláh.[3] At the hour of dawn, on the second day

[1] "Le Sháh sentait croître de jour en jour sa bienveillance et son respect envers le Shaykh. Il croyait d'obligation de lui obéir, et eût considéré comme un blasphème de se mettre en opposition avec lui. D'ailleurs, à cette époque, des tremblements de terre successifs eurent lieu à Rayy, et beaucoup de maisons furent détruites. Le Sháh eût un songe dans lequel il lui fut déclaré que si Shaykh Aḥmad n'avait pas été là, la ville entière eût été renversée et tous les habitants tués. Il s'éveilla terrifié et sa foi dans le Shaykh augmenta d'autant." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 21.)

[2] Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl asserts in his writings that the genealogy of Bahá'u'lláh can be traced back to the ancient Prophets of Persia as well as to its kings who ruled over the land prior to the Arab invasion.

[3] His name was Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí.

of Muḥarram, in the year 1233 A.H.,[1] the world, unaware of its significance, witnessed the birth of Him who was destined to confer upon it such incalculable blessings. Shaykh Aḥmad, who recognised in its full measure the meaning of this auspicious event, yearned to spend the remaining days of his life within the precincts of the court of this Divine, this new-born King. But this was not to be. His thirst unallayed, and his yearning unsatisfied, he felt compelled to submit to God's irrevocable decree, and, turning his face away from the city of his Beloved, proceeded to Kirmánsháh.

The governor of Kirmánsháh, Prince Muḥammad-'Alí Mírzá, the Sháh's eldest son and the ablest member of his house, had already begged permission of his Imperial Majesty to enable him to entertain and serve in person Shaykh Aḥmad.[2] So favoured was the Prince in the eyes of the Sháh, that his request was immediately granted. Wholly resigned to his destiny, Shaykh Aḥmad bade farewell to Ṭihrán. Ere his departure from that city, he breathed a prayer that this hidden Treasure of God, now born amongst his countrymen, might be preserved and cherished by them, that they might recognise the full measure of His blessedness and glory, and might be enabled to proclaim His excellence to all nations and peoples.

Upon his arrival in Kirmánsháh, Shaykh Aḥmad decided to select a number of the most receptive from among his shí'ah disciples, and, by devoting his special attention to their enlightenment, to enable them to become the active supporters of the Cause of the promised Revelation. In the series of books and epistles which he undertook to write, among which figures his well-known work Sharḥu'z-Zíyárih, he extolled in clear and vivid language the virtues of the imáms of the Faith, and laid special stress upon the allusions which they had made to the coming of the promised One. By his repeated references to Ḥusayn, he meant, however, none other than the Ḥusayn who was yet to be revealed; and by his allusions to the ever-recurrent name 'Alí, he intended not the

[1] November 12, 1817 A.D.

[2] "Kirmánsháh l'attendait avec beaucoup d'impatience. Le Prince Gouverneur Muḥammad-'Alí Mírzá avait envoyé la ville entière à sa rencontre, et l'on avait planté des tentes pour le recevoir, à Cháh-Qílán. Le Prince vint au-devant de lui jusqu'à Táj-Ábád, qui est à quatre farsakhs de la ville." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 30.)

'Alí who had been slain, but the 'Alí recently born. To those who questioned him regarding the signs that must needs herald the advent of the Qá'im, he emphatically asserted the inevitableness of the promised Dispensation. In the very year the Báb was born, Shaykh Aḥmad suffered the loss of his son, whose name was Shaykh 'Alí. To his disciples who mourned his loss he spoke these words of comfort: "Grieve not, O my friends, for I have offered up my son, my own 'Alí, as a sacrifice for the 'Alí whose advent we all await. To this end have I reared and prepared him."

The Báb, whose name was 'Alí-Muḥammad, was born in Shíráz, on the first of Muḥarram, in the year 1235 A.H. He was the descendant of a house renowned for its nobility, which traced its origin to Muḥammad Himself. His father, Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍá, as well as His mother, were descendants of the Prophet, and belonged to families of recognised standing. The date of His birth confirmed the truth of the saying attributed to the Imám 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful: "I am two years younger than my Lord." The mystery of this utterance, however, remained unrevealed except to those who sought and recognised the truth of the new Revelation. It was He, the Báb, who, in His first, His most weighty and exalted Book, revealed this passage concerning Bahá'u'lláh: "O Thou Remnant of God! I have sacrificed Myself wholly for Thee; I have consented to be cursed for Thy sake; and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love. Sufficient witness unto Me is God, the Exalted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days!"

While Shaykh Aḥmad was sojourning in Kirmánsháh, he received so many evidences of ardent devotion from Prince Muḥammad-'Alí Mírzá that on one occasion he was moved to refer to the Prince in such terms: "Muḥammad-'Alí I regard as my own son, though he be a descendant of Fatḥ-'Alí." A considerable number of seekers and disciples thronged his house and eagerly attended his lectures. To none, however, did he feel inclined to show the consideration and affectionate regard which characterised his attitude towards Siyyid Káẓim. He seemed to have singled him out from among the multitude that crowded to see him, and to be preparing him to carry on with undiminished vigour his work after his death. One

of his disciples, one day, questioned Shaykh Aḥmad concerning the Word which the promised One is expected to utter in the fulness of time, a Word so appallingly tremendous that the three hundred and thirteen chiefs and nobles of the earth would each and all flee in consternation as if overwhelmed by its stupendous weight. To him Shaykh Aḥmad replied: "How can you presume to sustain the weight of the Word which the chieftains of the earth are incapable of bearing? Seek not to gratify an impossible desire. Cease asking me this question, and beseech forgiveness from God." That presumptuous questioner again pressed him to disclose the nature of that Word. At last Shaykh Aḥmad replied: "Were you to attain that Day, were you to be told to repudiate the guardianship of 'Alí and to denounce its validity, what would you say?" "God forbid!" he exclaimed. "Such things can never be. That such words should proceed out of the mouth of the promised One is to me inconceivable." How grievous the mistake he made, and how pitiful his plight! His faith was weighed in the balance, and was found wanting, inasmuch as he failed to recognise that He who must needs be made manifest is endowed with that sovereign power which no man dare question. His is the right "to command whatsoever He willeth, and to decree that which He pleaseth." Whoever hesitates, whoever, though it be for the twinkling of an eye or less, questions His authority, is deprived of His grace and is accounted of the fallen. And yet few, if any, among those who listened to Shaykh Aḥmad in that city, and heard him unfold the mysteries of the allusions in the sacred Scriptures, were able to appreciate the significance of his utterances or to apprehend their purpose. Siyyid Káẓim, his able and distinguished lieutenant, alone, could claim to have understood his meaning.

After the death of Prince Muḥammad-'Alí Mírzá,[1] Shaykh Aḥmad, freed from the urgent solicitations of the Prince to extend his sojourn in Kirmánsháh, transferred his residence to Karbilá. Though to outward seeming he was circling round the shrine of the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhadá',[2] the Imám Ḥusayn, his heart, whilst he performed those rites, was set upon that true Ḥusayn, the only object of his devotions. A host of

[1] 1237 A.H.

[2] "The Prince of Martyrs."

the most distinguished 'ulamás and mujtahids thronged to see him. Many began to envy his reputation, and a number sought to undermine his authority. However much they strove, they failed to shake his position of undoubted pre-eminence amongst the learned men of that city. Eventually that shining light was summoned to shed its radiance upon the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Thither he journeyed, there he pursued with unstinted devotion his labours, and there he was laid to rest beneath the shadow of the Prophet's sepulchre, for the understanding of whose Cause he had so faithfully laboured.

Ere he departed from Karbilá, he confided to Siyyid Káẓim, his chosen successor, the secret of his mission,[1] and instructed him to strive to kindle in every receptive heart the fire that had burned so brightly within him. However much Siyyid Káẓim insisted on accompanying him as far as Najaf, Shaykh Ahmad refused to comply with his request. "You have no time to lose," were the last words which he addressed to him. "Every fleeting hour should be fully and wisely utilised. You should gird up the loin of endeavour and strive day and night to rend asunder, by the grace of God and by the hand of wisdom and loving-kindness, those veils of heedlessness that have blinded the eyes of men. For verily I say, the Hour is drawing nigh, the Hour I have besought God to spare me from witnessing, for the earthquake of the Last Hour will be tremendous. You should pray to God to be spared the overpowering trials of that Day, for neither of us is capable of withstanding its sweeping force. Others, of greater endurance and power, have been destined to bear this stupendous weight, men whose hearts are sanctified from all earthly things, and whose strength is reinforced by the potency of His power."

Having spoken these words, Shaykh Aḥmad bade him farewell, urged him to face valiantly the trials that must needs afflict him, and committed him to the care of God.

[1] A. L. M. Nicolas, in his preface to "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, quotes the following as having been spoken by Shaykh Aḥmad regarding Siyyid Káẓim "Il n'y a que Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí qui comprenne mon but, et personne autre que lui ne le comprend. . . . Cherchez la science, après moi auprès de Siyyid Kázim-i-Rashtí, qui l'a acquise directement de moi, qui la tient des Imáms, qui l'ont apprise du Prophète à qui Dieu l'avait donnée. . . . Il est le seul à me comprendre!"

In Karbilá, Siyyid Kázim devoted himself to the work initiated by his master, expounded his teachings, defended his Cause, and answered whatever questions perplexed the minds of his disciples. The vigour with which he prosecuted his task inflamed the animosity of the ignorant and envious. "For forty years," they clamoured, "we have suffered the pretentious teachings of Shaykh Ahmad to be spread with no opposition whatever on our part. We no longer can tolerate similar pretensions on the part of his successor, who rejects the belief in the resurrection of the body, who repudiates the literal interpretation of the 'Mi'ráj,'[1] who regards the signs of the coming Day as allegorical, and who preaches a doctrine heretical in character and subversive of the best tenets of orthodox Islám." The louder their clamour and protestations, the firmer grew the determination of Siyyid Kázim to prosecute his mission and fulfil his trust. He addressed an epistle to Shaykh Aḥmad, wherein he set forth at length the calumnies that had been uttered against him, and acquainted him with the character and extent of their opposition. In it he ventured to enquire as to how long he was destined to submit to the unrelenting fanaticism of a stubborn and ignorant people, and prayed to be enlightened regarding the time when the promised One was to be made manifest. To this Shaykh Aḥmad replied: "Be assured of the grace of your God. Be not grieved at their doings. The mystery of this Cause must needs be made manifest, and the secret of this Message must needs be divulged.[2] I can say no more, I can appoint

[1] "The Ascent" of Muḥammad to Heaven.

[2] The Báb, Himself, refers to this passage and confirms it in the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih": 'C'est une chose connue que les paroles du révéré Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í. Or il y a là des indications sans nombre au sujet de la Manifestation. Par exemple, il a écrit de sa propre main à Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí: 'De même que pour la construction d'une maison il faut un terrain, de même pour cette Manifestation doit se présenter le moment. Mais ici on ne peut donner une réponse fixant ce moment. Bientôt on le connaîtra d'une façon certaine.' Ce que tu as entendu toi-même si souvent de Siyyid Káẓim, cela n'est-il pas une explication? Ne répétait-il pas à chaque instant: 'Vous ne voulez donc pas que je m'en aille et que Dieu apparaisse?'" ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 58.) "Il y a aussi l'anecdote relative à Shaykh Aḥmad-Aḥsá'í en route pour la Mékke. Il a été prouvé que cette anecdote est authentique et dès lors il y a quelque chose de certain. Des disciples du défunt ont rapporté les propos qu'ils avaient entendus et parmi eux se trouvaient des personnages tels que Mullá 'Abdu'l-Khâliq et Murtaḍá-Qulí. Mullá 'Abdu'l-Khâliq rapporte que le Shaykh leur dit un jour: 'Priez afin de ne pas vous trouver au début de la Manifestation et du Retour, car il y aura beaucoup de guerres civiles.' Il a ajouté: 'Si quelqu'un d'entre vous vit encore en ce temps-là, il verra des choses étranges entre les années 60 et 67. Et

no time. His Cause will be made known after Ḥín.[1] 'Ask me not of things which, if revealed unto you, might only pain you.' "

How great, how very great, is His Cause, that even to so exalted a personage as Siyyid Kázim words such as these should have been addressed! This answer of Shaykh Aḥmad imparted solace and strength to the heart of Siyyid Káẓim, who, with redoubled determination, continued to withstand the onslaught of an envious and insidious enemy.

Shaykh Aḥmad died soon after,[2] in the year 1242 A.H., at the age of eighty-one, and was laid to rest in the cemetery of Baqí',[3] in the close vicinity of the resting place of Muhammad in the holy city of Medina.

quelle chose étrange peut-être plus étrange que l'Être même de la Manifestation. Tu y seras et tu y verras encore un fait extraordinaire: c'est que Dieu, pour rendre victorieuse cette Manifestation, suscitera un Être qui parlera de lui-même, sans avoir jamais rien appris des autres.'" (*Ibid.*, pp. 59–60.)

[1] According to the Abjad notation, the numerical value of the word "Ḥín" is 68. It was in the year 1268 A.H. that Bahá'u'lláh, while confined in the Síyáh-Chál of Ṭihrán, received the first intimations of His Divine Mission. Of this He hinted in the odes which He revealed in that year.

[2] He died in a place called Ḥaddih, in the neighbourhood of Medina. (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, p. 60.)

[3] "Son corps fût porté à Médine où il fut enterré dans le cimetière Baqí'derrière le mur de la coupole du Prophète du côté Sud, sous la gouttière du Miḥráb. On dit que là aussi se trouve le tombeau de Fáṭimih en face du Baytu'l-Ḥazan." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, pp. 60–61.) "La mort de Shaykh Aḥmad mit, durant quelques jours, un terme à la Lutte, et les passions semblèrent s'apaiser. D'ailleurs, ce fut à cette époque que l'Islám reçut un coup terrible et que sa puissance fut brisée. L'Empereur Russe vainquit les nations musulmanes et la plupart des provinces habitées par des gens de cette religion, tombèrent aux mains de l'armée Moscovite." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, p. 5.) "D'un autre côté, on pensait que, Shaykh Aḥmad mort, sa docriine disparaissait avec lui sans retour, et la paix dura pendant près de deux années. Mais les musulmans revinrent vite à leurs premiers sentiments dès qu'ils virent que la lumière de la doctrine du défunt resplendissait encore sur le monde, grâce à Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí, le meilleur, le plus fidèle élève de Shaykh Aḥmad, et son successeur." (*Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.)

CHAPTER II

THE MISSION OF SIYYID KÁẒIM-I-RASHTÍ

THE news of the passing of his beloved master brought unspeakable sorrow to the heart of Siyyid Káẓim. Inspired by the verse of the Qur'án, "Fain would they put out God's light with their mouths; but God only desireth to perfect His light, albeit the infidels abhor it," he arose with unswerving purpose to consummate the task with which Shaykh Aḥmad had entrusted him. He found himself, after the removal of so distinguished a protector, a victim of the slanderous tongue and unrelenting enmity of the people around him. They attacked his person, scorned his teachings, and reviled his name. At the instigation of a powerful and notorious shí'ah leader, Siyyid Ibráhím-i-Qazvíní, the enemies of Siyyid Káẓim leagued together, and determined to destroy him. Thereupon Siyyid Káẓim conceived the plan of securing the support and good will of one of the most formidable and outstanding ecclesiastical dignitaries of Persia, the renowned Ḥájí Siyyid Muḥammad Báqir-i-Rashtí, who lived in Isfáhán and whose authority extended far beyond the confines of that city. This friendship and sympathy, Siyyid Kázim thought, would enable him to pursue untrammelled the course of his activities, and would considerably enhance the influence which he exercised over his disciples. "Would that one amongst you," he was often heard to say to his followers, "could arise, and, with complete detachment, journey to Iṣfáhán, and deliver this message from me to that learned Siyyid: 'Why is it that in the beginning you showed such marked consideration and affection for the late Shaykh Aḥmad, and have now suddenly detached yourself from the body of his chosen disciples? Why is it that you have abandoned us to the mercy of our opponents?' Would that such a messenger, putting his trust in God, might arise to unravel whatever mysteries perplex the mind of that learned Siyyid, and dispel such doubts as might have alienated

his sympathy. Would that he were able to obtain from him a solemn declaration testifying to the unquestioned authority of Shaykh Aḥmad, and to the truth and soundness of his teachings. Would that he also, after having secured such a testimony, might visit Mashhad and there obtain a similar pronouncement from Mírzá 'Askarí, the foremost ecclesiastical leader in that holy city, and then, having completed his mission, might return in triumph to this place." Again and again did Siyyid Káẓim find opportunity to reiterate his appeal. None, however, ventured to respond to his call except a certain Mírzá Muḥít-i-Kirmání, who expressed readiness to undertake this mission. To him Siyyid Káẓim replied: "Beware of touching the lion's tail. Belittle not the delicacy and difficulty of such a mission." He then, turning his face towards his youthful disciple, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushrú'í, the Bábu'l-Báb,[1] addressed him in these words: "Arise and perform this mission, for I declare you equal to this task. The Almighty will graciously assist you, and will crown your endeavours with success."

Mullá Ḥusayn joyously sprang to his feet, kissed the hem of his teacher's garment, vowed his loyalty to him, and started forthwith on his journey. With complete severance and noble resolve, he set out to achieve his end. Arriving in Iṣfáhán, he sought immediately the presence of the learned Siyyid. Clad in mean attire, and laden with the dust of travel, he appeared, amidst the vast and richly apparelled company of the disciples of that distinguished leader, an insignificant and negligible figure. Unobserved and undaunted, he advanced to a place which faced the seat occupied by that renowned teacher. Summoning to his aid all the courage and confidence with which the instructions of Siyyid Káẓim had inspired him, he addressed Ḥájí Siyyid Muḥammad-Báqir in these words: "Hearken, O Siyyid, to my words, for response to my plea will ensure the safety of the Faith of the Prophet of God, and refusal to consider my message will cause it grievous injury." These bold and courageous words, uttered with directness and force, produced a surprising impression upon the Siyyid. He suddenly interrupted his discourse, and, ignoring his audience, listened with close atten-

[1] He was the first to believe in the Báb, who gave him this title.

tion to the message which this strange visitor had brought. His disciples, amazed at this extraordinary behaviour, rebuked this sudden intruder and denounced his presumptuous pretensions. With extreme politeness, in firm and dignified language, Mullá Ḥusayn hinted at their discourtesy and shallowness, and expressed surprise at their arrogance and vainglory. The Siyyid was highly pleased with the demeanour and argument which the visitor so strikingly displayed. He deplored and apologised for the unseemly conduct of his own disciples. In order to compensate for their ingratitude, he extended every conceivable kindness to that youth, assured him of his support, and besought him to deliver his message. Thereupon, Mullá Ḥusayn acquainted him with the nature and object of the mission with which he had been entrusted. To this the learned Siyyid replied: "As we in the beginning believed that both Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kázim were actuated by no desire except to advance the cause of knowledge and safeguard the sacred interests of the Faith, we felt prompted to extend to them our heartiest support and to extol their teachings. In later years, however, we have noticed so many conflicting statements and obscure and mysterious allusions in their writings, that we felt it advisable to keep silent for a time, and to refrain from either censure or applause." To this Mullá Ḥusayn replied: "I cannot but deplore such silence on your part, for I firmly believe that it involves the loss of a splendid opportunity to advance the cause of Truth. It is for you to set forth specifically such passages in their writings as appear to you mysterious or inconsistent with the precepts of the Faith, and I will, with the aid of God, undertake to expound their true meaning." The poise, the dignity and confidence, which characterised the behaviour of this unexpected messenger, greatly impressed Ḥájí Siyyid Muḥammad-Báqir. He begged him not to press the matter at this moment, but to wait until a later day, when, in private converse, he might acquaint him with his own doubts and misgivings. Mullá Ḥusayn, however, feeling that delay might prove harmful to the cause he had at heart, insisted upon an immediate conference with him about the weighty problems which he felt impelled and able to resolve. The Siyyid was moved to tears by the youthful enthusiasm,

the sincerity and serene confidence to which the countenance of Mullá Ḥusayn so admirably testified. He sent immediately for some of the works written by Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim, and began to question Mullá Ḥusayn regarding those passages which had excited his disapproval and surprise. To each reference the messenger replied with characteristic vigour, with masterly knowledge and befitting modesty.

He continued in this manner, in the presence of the assembled disciples, to expound the teachings of Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim, to vindicate their truth, and to defend their cause, until the time when the Mu'adhdhin, calling the faithful to prayer, suddenly interrupted the flow of his argument. The next day, he similarly, in the presence of a large and representative assembly, and whilst facing the Siyyid, resumed his eloquent defence of the high mission entrusted by an almighty Providence to Shaykh Aḥmad and his successor. A deep silence fell upon his hearers. They were seized with wonder at the cogency of his argument and the tone and manner of his speech. The Siyyid publicly promised that on the following day he would himself issue a written declaration wherein he would testify to the eminence of the position held by both Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim, and would pronounce whosoever deviated from their path as one who had turned aside from the Faith of the Prophet Himself. He would likewise bear witness to their penetrative insight, and their correct and profound understanding of the mysteries which the Faith of Muḥammad enshrined. The Siyyid redeemed his pledge, and with his own hand penned the promised declaration. He wrote at length, and in the course of his testimony paid a tribute to the character and learning of Mullá Ḥusayn. He spoke in glowing terms of Siyyid Káẓim, apologised for his former attitude, and expressed the hope that in the days to come he might be enabled to make amends for his past and regrettable conduct towards him. He read, himself, to his disciples the text of this written testimony, and delivered it unsealed to Mullá Husayn, authorising him to share its contents with whomsoever he pleased, that all might know the extent of his devotion to Siyyid Káẓim.

No sooner had Mullá Ḥusayn retired than the Siyyid charged one of his trusted attendants to follow in the foot-

steps of the visitor and find out the place where he was residing. The attendant followed him to a modest building, which served as a madrisih,[1] and saw him enter a room which, except for a worn-out mat which covered its floor, was devoid of furniture. He watched him arrive, offer his prayer of thanksgiving to God, and lie down upon that mat with nothing to cover him except his 'abá.[2] Having reported to his master all that he had observed, the attendant was again instructed to deliver to Mullá Ḥusayn the sum of a hundred túmáns,[3] and to express the sincere apologies of his master for his inability to extend to so remarkable a messenger a hospitality that befitted his station. To this offer Mullá Ḥusayn sent the following reply: "Tell your master that his real gift to me is the spirit of fairness with which he received me, and the open-mindedness which prompted him, despite his exalted rank, to respond to the message which I, a lowly stranger, brought him. Return this money to your master, for I, as a messenger, ask for neither recompense nor reward. 'We nourish your souls for the sake of God; we seek from you neither recompense nor thanks.'[4] My prayer for your master is that earthly leadership may never hinder him from acknowledging and testifying to the Truth."[5] Ḥájí Siyyid Muḥammad-Báqir died before the year sixty A.H., the year that witnessed the birth of the Faith proclaimed by the Báb.

[1] "The Madrisih or Persian colleges are entirely in the hands of the clergy and there are several in every large town. They generally consist of a court, surrounded by buildings containing chambers for students and masters, with a gate on one side; and frequently a garden and a well in the centre of the court. . . . Many of the madrisihs have been founded and endowed by kings or pious persons." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 365.)

[2] A loose outer garment, resembling a cloak, commonly made of camel's hair.

[3] Worth approximately one hundred dollars, a substantial sum in those days.

[4] Qur'án, 76: 9.

[5] The Báb, in the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih," refers to Mullá Ḥusayn in these terms: "Tu sais, toi, quel est le premier confesseur de cette Foi: tu sais que la majeure partie des docteurs Shaykhí, Siyyidíyyih, et d'autres sectes admiraient sa science et son talent. Quand il entra à Isfáhán, les gamins de la ville crièrent sur son passage: 'Ah! ah! un étudiant dépenaillé vient d'arriver!' Eh bien, cet homme, par ses preuves et ses arguments, convainquit un Siyyid d'une science éprouvée: Muḥammad-Báqir! En vérité! c'est là une des preuves de cette Manifestation car, après la mort du Siyyid, ce personnage alla voir la plupart des docteurs de l'Islám et ne rencontra la vérité qu'auprès du Maître de la Vérité; ce fut alors qu'il parvint au destin qui lui avait été fixé. En vérité! les créatures du début et de la fin de cette Manifestation l'envient et l'envieront jusqu'au jour du Jugement. Et qui donc peut accuser ce maître de l'intelligence de faiblesse mentale et de légèreté?" ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 54.)

He remained to his last moment a staunch supporter and fervent admirer of Siyyid Kázim.

Having fulfilled the first part of his mission, Mullá Ḥusayn despatched this written testimony of Ḥájí Siyyid Muḥammad-Báqir to his master in Karbilá, and directed his steps towards Mashhad, determined to deliver, to the best of his ability, the message which he was charged to give to Mírzá 'Askarí. Immediately the letter, enclosing the Siyyid's written declaration, was delivered to Siyyid Káẓim, the latter was so rejoiced that he forthwith sent to Mullá Ḥusayn his reply, expressing his grateful appreciation of the exemplary manner in which he had discharged his trust. He was so delighted with the answer he had received that, interrupting the course of his lecture, he read out, to his disciples, both the letter of Mullá Ḥusayn and the written testimony enclosed in that letter. He afterwards shared with them the epistle which he himself had written to Mullá Ḥusayn in recognition of the remarkable service he had rendered him. In it Siyyid Káẓim paid such a glowing tribute to his high attainments, to his ability and character that a few among those who heard it suspected that Mullá Ḥusayn was that promised One to whom their master unceasingly referred, the One whom he so often declared to be living in their very midst and yet to have remained unrecognised by them all. That communication enjoined upon Mullá Ḥusayn the fear of God, urged him to regard it as the most potent instrument with which to withstand the onslaught of the enemy, and the distinguishing feature of every true follower of the Faith. It was couched in such terms of tender affection, that no one who read it could doubt that the writer was bidding farewell to his beloved disciple, and that he entertained no hope of ever meeting him again in this world.

In those days Siyyid Káẓim became increasingly aware of the approach of the Hour at which the promised One was to be revealed.[1] He realised how dense were those veils that

[1] The Báb in this connection reveals the following in the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih": "Ce qu'il disait encore lors de son dernier voyage, que tu as entendu toi-même, ne le raconte-t-on pas? Et l'histoire de Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Akhbárí que rapporte 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn-i-Shushtarí? Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Akhbárí demanda un jour, étant à Káẓimayn, au vénéré Siyyid quand se manifesterait l'Imám. Le Siyyid parcourut des yeux l'assemblée et lui dit: 'Toi, tu le verras.' Mullá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Haraví racontait lui aussi cette histoire à Iṣfáhán." ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," translated by A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 58.)

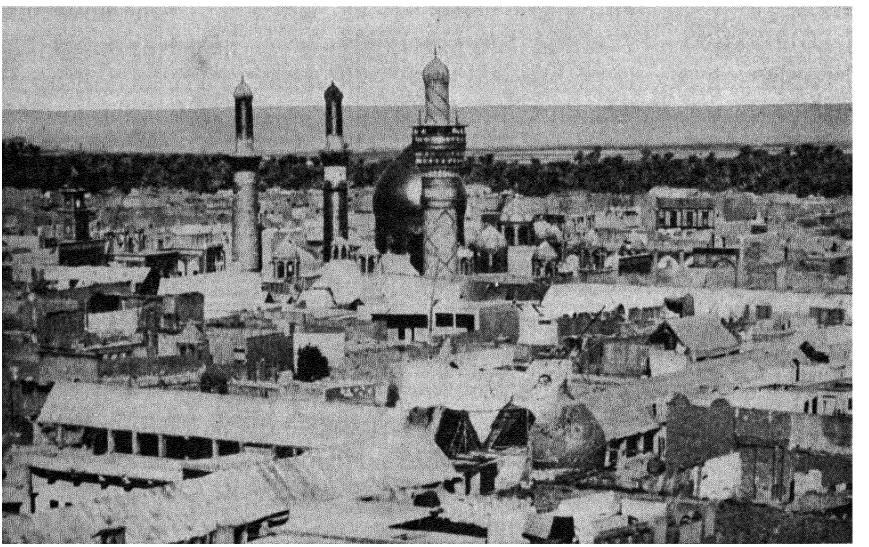
hindered the seekers from apprehending the glory of the concealed Manifestation. He accordingly exerted his utmost endeavour to remove gradually, with caution and wisdom, whatever barriers might stand in the way of the full recognition of that hidden Treasure of God. He repeatedly urged his disciples to bear in mind the fact that He whose advent they were expecting would appear neither from Jábulqá nor from Jábulsá.[1] He even hinted at His presence in their very midst. "You behold Him with your own eyes," he often observed, "and yet recognise Him not!" To his disciples who questioned him regarding the signs of the Manifestation, he would say: "He is of noble lineage. He is a descendant of the Prophet of God, of the family of Háshim. He is young in age, and is possessed of innate knowledge. His learning is derived, not from the teachings of Shaykh Aḥmad, but from God. My knowledge is but a drop compared with the immensity of His knowledge; my attainments a speck of dust in the face of the wonders of His grace and power. Nay, immeasurable is the difference. He is of medium height, abstains from smoking, and is of extreme devoutness and piety."[2] Certain of the Siyyid's disciples, despite the testimonies of their master, believed him to be the promised One, for in him they recognised the signs to which he was alluding. Among them was a certain Mullá Mihdíy-i-Khu'í, who went so far as to make public this belief. Whereupon the Siyyid was sore displeased, and would have cast him out from the company of his chosen followers had he not begged forgiveness and expressed his repentance for his action.

Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí, himself, informed me that he too entertained such doubts, that he prayed to God that if his supposition was well founded he should be confirmed in his belief, and if not that he should be delivered from such idle fancy. "I was so perturbed," he once related to me, "that for days I could neither eat nor sleep. My days were spent in the service of Siyyid Káẓim, to whom I was greatly attached. One day, at the hour of dawn, I was suddenly

[1] See note, at the beginning of the book, on "Distinguishing Features of Shí'ah Islám."

[2] "There seems to be conclusive evidence that Siyyid Káẓim adverted often near the close of life to the divine Manifestation which he believed to be at hand. He was fond of saying, 'I see him as the rising sun.'" (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 19.)

awakened by Mullá Naw-rúz, one of his intimate attendants, who, in great excitement, bade me arise and follow him. We went to the house of Siyyid Káẓim, where we found him fully dressed, wearing his 'abá, and ready to leave his home. He asked me to accompany him. 'A highly esteemed and distinguished Person,' he said, 'has arrived. I feel it incumbent upon us both to visit Him.' The morning light had just broken when I found myself walking with him through the streets of Karbilá. We soon reached a house, at the door



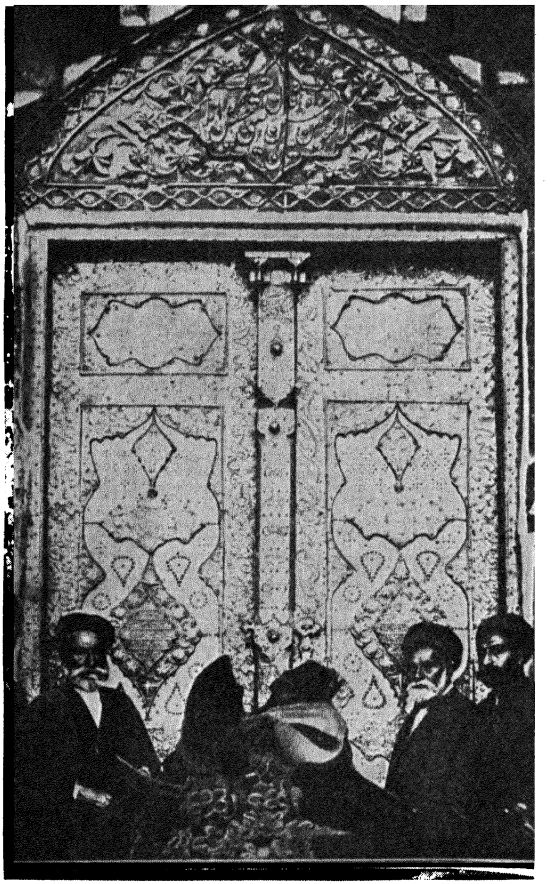
VIEW OF KARBILÁ

of which stood a Youth, as if expectant to receive us. He wore a green turban, and His countenance revealed an expression of humility and kindliness which I can never describe. He quietly approached us, extended His arms towards Siyyid Káẓim, and lovingly embraced him. His affability and loving-kindness singularly contrasted with the sense of profound reverence that characterised the attitude of Siyyid Káẓim towards him. Speechless and with bowed head, he received the many expressions of affection and esteem with which that Youth greeted him. We were soon led by Him to the upper floor of that house, and entered a chamber bedecked with flowers and redolent of the loveliest perfume. He bade us

be seated. We knew not, however, what seats we actually occupied, so overpowering was the sense of delight which seized us. We observed a silver cup which had been placed in the centre of the room, which our youthful Host, soon after we were seated, filled to overflowing, and handed to Siyyid Káẓim, saying: 'A drink of a pure beverage shall their Lord give them.'[1] Siyyid Káẓim held the cup with both hands and quaffed it. A feeling of reverent joy filled his being, a feeling which he could not suppress. I too was presented with a cupful of that beverage, though no words were addressed to me. All that was spoken at that memorable gathering was the above-mentioned verse of the Qur'án. Soon after, the Host arose from His seat and, accompanying us to the threshold of the house, bade us farewell. I was mute with wonder, and knew not how to express the cordiality of His welcome, the dignity of His bearing, the charm of that face, and the delicious fragrance of that beverage. How great was my amazement when I saw my teacher quaff without the least hesitation that holy draught from a silver cup, the use of which, according to the precepts of Islám, is forbidden to the faithful. I could not explain the motive which could have induced the Siyyid to manifest such profound reverence in the presence of that Youth—a reverence which even the sight of the shrine of the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhadá' had failed to excite. Three days later, I saw that same Youth arrive and take His seat in the midst of the company of the assembled disciples of Siyyid Káẓim. He sat close to the threshold, and with the same modesty and dignity of bearing listened to the discourse of the Siyyid. As soon as his eyes fell upon that Youth, the Siyyid discontinued his address and held his peace. Whereupon one of his disciples begged him to resume the argument which he had left unfinished. 'What more shall I say?' replied Siyyid Káẓim, as he turned his face toward the Báb. 'Lo, the Truth is more manifest than the ray of light that has fallen upon that lap!' I immediately observed that the ray to which the Siyyid referred had fallen upon the lap of that same Youth whom we had recently visited. 'Why is it,' that questioner enquired, 'that you neither reveal His name nor identify His

[1] Qur'án, 76: 21.

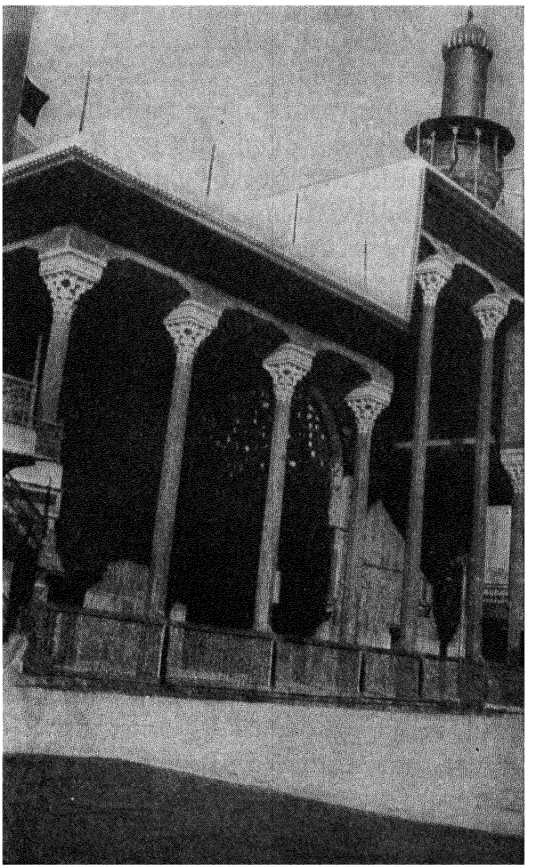
person?' To this the Siyyid replied by pointing with his finger to his own throat, implying that were he to divulge His name, they both would be put to death instantly. This added still further to my perplexity. I had already heard my teacher observe that so great is the perversity of this genera-



SHRINE OF THE IMĀM ḤUSAYN IN KARBILĀ

tion, that were he to point with his finger to the promised One and say: 'He indeed is the Beloved, the Desire of your hearts and mine,' they would still fail to recognise and acknowledge Him. I saw the Siyyid actually point out with his finger the ray of light that had fallen on that lap, and yet none among those who were present seemed to apprehend

its meaning. I, for my part, was convinced that the Siyyid himself could never be the promised One, but that a mystery inscrutable to us all, lay concealed in that strange and attractive Youth. Several times I ventured to approach Siyyid Kázim and seek from him an elucidation of this mystery.



SHRINE OF THE IMÁM ḤUSAYN IN KARBILÁ

Every time I approached him, I was overcome by a sense of awe which his personality so powerfully inspired. Many a time I heard him remark: 'O Shaykh Ḥasan, rejoice that your name is Hasan [praiseworthy]; Ḥasan your beginning, and Ḥasan your end. You have been privileged to attain to the day of Shaykh Ahmad, you have been closely asso-

ciated with me, and in the days to come yours shall be the inestimable joy of beholding "what eye hath seen not, ear heard not, nor any heart conceived."'

"I often felt the urge to seek alone the presence of that Háshimite Youth and to endeavour to fathom His mystery. I watched Him several times as He stood in an attitude of prayer at the doorway of the shrine of the Imám Ḥusayn. So wrapt was He in His devotions that He seemed utterly oblivious of those around Him. Tears rained from His eyes, and from His lips fell words of glorification and praise of such power and beauty as even the noblest passages of our sacred Scriptures could not hope to surpass. The words 'O God, my God, my Beloved, my heart's Desire' were uttered with a frequency and ardour that those of the visiting pilgrims who were near enough to hear Him instinctively interrupted the course of their devotions, and marvelled at the evidences of piety and veneration which that youthful countenance evinced. Like Him they were moved to tears, and from Him they learned the lesson of true adoration. Having completed His prayers, that Youth, without crossing the threshold of the shrine and without attempting to address any words to those around Him, would quietly return to His home. I felt the impulse to address Him, but every time I ventured an approach, a force that I could neither explain nor resist, detained me. My enquiries about Him elicited the information that He was a resident of Shíráz, that He was a merchant by profession, and did not belong to any of the ecclesiastical orders. I was, moreover, informed that He, and also His uncles and relatives, were among the lovers and admirers of Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim. Soon after, I learned that He had departed for Najaf on His way to Shíráz. That Youth had set my heart aflame. The memory of that vision haunted me. My soul was wedded to His till the day when the call of a Youth from Shíráz, proclaiming Himself to be the Báb, reached my ears. The thought instantly flashed through my mind that such a person could be none other than that selfsame Youth whom I had seen in Karbilá, the Youth of my heart's desire.

"When later on I journeyed from Karbilá to Shíráz, I found that He had set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca and

Medina. I met Him on His return and endeavoured, despite the many obstacles in my way, to remain in close association with Him. When subsequently He was incarcerated in the fortress of Máh-Kú, in the province of Ádhirbáyján, I was engaged in transcribing the verses which He dictated to His amanuensis. Every night, for a period of nine months, during which He was a prisoner in that fort, He revealed, after He had offered His evening prayer, a commentary on a juz'[1] of the Qur'án. At the end of each month a commentary on the whole of that sacred Book was thus completed. During His incarceration in Máh-Kú, nine commentaries on the whole of the Qur'án had been revealed by Him. The texts of these commentaries were entrusted, in Tabríz, to the keeping of a certain Siyyid Ibráhím-i-Khalíl, who was instructed to conceal them until the time for their publication might arrive. Their fate is unknown until now.

"In connection with one of these commentaries, the **Báb** one day asked me: 'Which do you prefer, this commentary which I have revealed, or the Aḥsanu'l-Qiṣaṣ, My previous commentary on the Súrih of Joseph? Which of the two is superior, in your estimation?' 'To me,' I replied, 'the Aḥsanu'l-Qiṣaṣ seems to be endowed with greater power and charm.' He smiled at my observation and said: 'You are as yet unfamiliar with the tone and tenor of this later commentary. The truths enshrined in this will more speedily and effectively enable the seeker to attain the object of his quest.'

"I continued to be closely associated with Him until that great encounter of Shaykh Ṭabarsí. When informed of that event, the Báb directed all His companions to hasten to that spot, and extend every assistance in their power to Quddús, His heroic and distinguished disciple. Addressing me one day, He said: 'But for My incarceration in the Ɉabal-i-Shadíd, the fortress of Chihríq, it would have been incumbent upon Me to lend My personal assistance to My beloved Quddús. Participation in that struggle is not enjoined upon you. You should proceed to Karbilá and should abide in that holy city, inasmuch as you are destined to behold, with your own eyes, the beauteous countenance of the promised Ḥusayn. As you gaze upon that radiant face. do also re-

[1] A juz' is one-thirtieth of the Qur'án.

member Me. Convey to Him the expression of My loving devotion.' He again emphatically added these words: 'Verily I say, I have entrusted you with a great mission. Beware lest your heart grow faint, lest you forget the glory with which I have invested you.'

"Soon after, I journeyed to Karbilá and lived, as bidden, in that holy city. Fearing that my prolonged stay in that centre of pilgrimage might excite suspicion, I decided to marry. I started to earn my livelihood as a scribe. What afflictions befell me at the hands of the Shaykhís, those who professed to be the followers of Shaykh Aḥmad and yet failed to recognise the Báb! Mindful of the counsels of that beloved Youth, I patiently submitted to the indignities inflicted upon me. For two years I lived in that city. Meanwhile that holy Youth was released from His earthly prison and, through His martyrdom, was delivered from the atrocious cruelties that had beset the closing years of His life.

"Sixteen lunar months, less twenty and two days, had elapsed since the day of the martyrdom of the Báb, when, on the day of 'Arafih,[1] in the year 1267 A.H.,[2] while I was passing by the gate of the inner courtyard of the shrine of the Imám Ḥusayn, my eyes, for the first time, fell upon Bahá'u'lláh. What shall I recount regarding the countenance which I beheld! The beauty of that face, those exquisite features which no pen or brush dare describe, His penetrating glance, His kindly face, the majesty of His bearing, the sweetness of His smile, the luxuriance of His jet-black flowing locks, left an indelible impression upon my soul. I was then an old man, bowed with age. How lovingly He advanced towards me! He took me by the hand and, in a tone which at once betrayed power and beauty, addressed me in these words: 'This very day I have purposed to make you known as a Bábí throughout Karbilá.' Still holding my hand in His, He continued to converse with me. He walked with me all along the market-street, and in the end He said: 'Praise be to God that you have remained in Karbilá, and have beheld with your own eyes the countenance of the promised Ḥusayn.' I recalled instantly the promise which had been given me by

[1] The ninth day of the month of Dhi'l-Hijjih. [2] October 5, 1851 A.D.

the Báb. His words, which I had regarded as referring to a remote future, I had not shared with anyone. These words of Bahá'u'lláh moved me to the depths of my being. I felt impelled to proclaim to a heedless people, at that very moment and with all my soul and power, the advent of the promised Ḥusayn. He bade me, however, repress my feelings and conceal my emotions. 'Not yet,' He breathed into my ears; 'the appointed Hour is approaching. It has not yet struck. Rest assured and be patient.' From that moment all my sorrows vanished. My soul was flooded with joy. In those days I was so poor that most of the time I hungered for food. I felt so rich, however, that all the treasures of the earth melted away into nothingness when compared with that which I already possessed. 'Such is the grace of God; to whom He will, He giveth it: He, verily, is of immense bounty.' "

I now return, after this digression, to my theme. I had been referring to the eagerness with which Siyyid Káẓim had determined to rend asunder those veils which intervened between the people of his day and the recognition of the promised Manifestation. In the introductory pages of his works, entitled Sharḥ-i-Qaṣídih and Sharḥ-i-Khuṭbih,[1] he, in veiled language, alludes to the blessed name of Bahá'u'lláh. In a booklet, the last he wrote, he explicitly mentions the name of the Báb by his reference to the term "Dhikru'lláh-i-A'ẓam." In it he writes: "Addressing this noble 'Dhikr,'[2] this mighty voice of God, I say: 'I am apprehensive of the people, lest they harm you. I am apprehensive of my own self, lest I too may hurt you. I fear you, I tremble at your authority, I dread the age in which you live. Were I to treasure you

[1] Chapter 2 of A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, is entirely devoted to a detailed enumeration of the hundred and thirty-five works composed by Siyyid Káẓım, among which the following are of outstanding interest:

1. Sharḥ-i-Khuṭbiy-i-Tutunjíyyih.
2. Sharh-i-Qaṣídih.
3. Tafsírih Áyatu'l-Kursi.
4. Dar Asrár-i-Shihádat-i-Imám Ḥusayn.
5. Cosmography.
6. Dalílu'l-Mutaḥayyirín.

His works are said to exceed 300 volumes. ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note E, p. 238.)

[2] "Dhikr" means "mention," "remembrance."

as the apple of my eye until the Day of Resurrection, I would not sufficiently have proved my devotion to you.' "[1]

How grievously Siyyid Káẓim suffered at the hands of the people of wickedness! What harm that villainous generation inflicted upon him! For years he suffered silently, and endured with heroic patience all the indignities, the calumnies, the denunciations that were heaped upon him. He was destined, however, to witness, during the last years of his life, how the avenging hand of God "destroyed with utter destruction" those that opposed, vilified, and plotted against him. In those days the followers of Ṣiyyid Ibráhím, that notorious enemy of Siyyid Káẓim, banded themselves together for the purpose of stirring up sedition and mischief and endangering the life of their formidable adversary. By every means at their disposal, they sought to poison the minds of his admirers and friends, to undermine his authority, and to discredit his name. No voice was raised in protest against the agitation that was being sedulously prepared by that ungodly and treacherous people, each of whom professed to be the exponent of true learning and the repository of the mysteries of the

[1] A. L. M. Nicolas quotes, in Chapter 3 of his "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, p. 43, the following extract from the Sharh-i-Qasídih of Siyyid Kázim: "Je l'ai dit, dans chaque période de cent années, il y'a des élus qui répandent et sèment les préceptes qui expliquent ce qui est illicite et ce qui est licite, qui disent les choses qui étaient cachées durant les cent années précédentes. Autrement dit, chaque cent ans, un personnage savant et parfait se rencontre, qui fait verdoyer et fleurir l'arbre de la loi religieuse, qui régénère son tronc tant qu'enfin le livre de la Création arrive à sa fin, dans une période de douze cents années. À ce moment, se manifesteront un certain nombre d'hommes parfaits qui manifesteront certaines choses très intimes et qui étaient cachées. . . . Donc, quand sont terminés les douze cents ans, quand le premier cycle est fini qui dépendait de l'apparence du Soleil du Prophète, de la Lune du Viláyat, alors sont finies les influences de ce cycle, et un second cycle commence, pour l'explication des préceptes intimes et des secrets cachés." He himself then adds these words: "Autrement dit, et pour rendre encore plus clair ce langage surprenant qui vraiment n'a pas besoin d'explication, Siyyid Káẓim nous dit que le premier cycle qui dure douze cent ans est uniquement pour l'éducation des corps et des esprits qui dépendent de ces corps. Il est comme l'enfant dans le ventre de sa mère. Le deuxième cycle est pour l'éducation des esprits sains, des âmes unes, qui n'ont aucune relation avec le monde des corps. C'est comme si Dieu voulait élever les esprits par le devoir en ce monde. Donc, quand le premier cycle est terminé, dont le spectacle est le nom de Muḥammad, arrive le cycle des éducations des intimités. Dans ce cycle, les apparences obéissent aux intimités, ainsi que dans le cycle précédent les intimités obéissaient aux apparences. Donc, dans ce second cycle, le nom céleste du Prophète, qui est Aḥmad, est le lieu du spectacle, le Maître: 'Mais ce nom doit forcément être trouvé de la meilleure des terres, du plus pur des airs.' " Nicolas further adds in a footnote the following words: "Le nom de Aḥmad cité plus haut, tendrait à faire croire qu'il s'agit ici de Shaykh Aḥmad. Mais, cependant, on ne peut guère, en parlant de Lahça, dire qu'elle est la meilleure des terres. On sait, au contraire, que tous les poètes de la Perse se réunissent pour chanter Shíráz et son climat idéal. Il n'y a d'ailleurs qu'a voir ce que Shaykh Aḥmad disait lui-même de son pays."

Faith of God. No one sought to warn or awaken them. They gathered such force and kindled such strife that they succeeded in evicting from Karbilá, in a disgraceful manner, the representative official of the Ottoman government, and appropriated for their own sordid aims whatever revenues accrued to him. Their menacing attitude aroused the central government at Constantinople, which despatched a military official to the scene of agitation, with full instructions to quench the fires of mischief. With the force at his command, that official besieged the city, and despatched a communication to Siyyid Kaẓim in which he entreated him to pacify the minds of the excited populace. He appealed to him to counsel moderation to its inhabitants, to induce them to relax their stubbornness, and to surrender voluntarily to his rule. Were they to heed his counsels, he promised that he would undertake to ensure their safety and protection, would proclaim a general amnesty, and would strive to promote their welfare. If they refused, however, to submit, he warned them that their lives would be in danger, that a great calamity would surely befall them.

Upon the receipt of this formal communication, Siyyid Káẓim summoned to his presence the chief instigators of the movement, and, with the utmost wisdom and affection, exhorted them to cease their agitation and surrender their arms. He spoke with such persuasive eloquence, such sincerity and detachment, that their hearts were softened and their resistance was subdued. They solemnly undertook to throw open, the next morning, the gates of the citadel and to present themselves, in the company of Siyyid Káẓim, to the officer in command of the besieging forces. It was agreed that the Siyyid would intervene in their behalf, and secure for them whatever would ensure their tranquillity and welfare. No sooner had they left the presence of the Siyyid than the 'ulamás, the chief instigators of the rebellion, unanimously arose to frustrate this plan. Fully aware that such intervention on the part of the Siyyid, who had already excited their envy, would serve to enhance his prestige and consolidate his authority, they determined to persuade a number among the foolish and excitable elements of the population to sally forth at night and attack the forces of the enemy. They assured

them of victory on the strength of a dream in which one of their members had seen 'Abbás,[1] who had charged him to incite his followers to wage holy war against the besiegers and had given him the promise of ultimate success.

Deluded by this vain promise, they rejected the advice tendered by that wise and judicious counsellor, and arose to execute the designs of their foolish leaders. Siyyid Káẓim, who was well aware of the evil influence that actuated that revolt, addressed a detailed and faithful report on the situation to the Turkish commander, who again wrote to Siyyid Káẓim and reiterated his appeal for a peaceful settlement of the issue. He, moreover, declared that at a given time he would force the gates of the citadel, and would regard the home of the Siyyid as the only place of refuge for a defeated enemy. This declaration the Siyyid caused to be spread throughout the city. It served only to excite the derision and contempt of the population. When informed of the reception accorded that declaration, the Siyyid remarked: "Verily, that with which they are threatened is for the morning. Is not the morning near?"[2]

At daybreak, the appointed hour, the forces of the enemy bombarded the ramparts of the citadel, demolished its walls, entered the city, and pillaged and massacred a considerable number of its population. Many fled in consternation to the courtyard of the shrine of the Imám Ḥusayn. Others sought refuge in the sanctuary of 'Abbás. Those who loved and honoured Siyyid Káẓim betook themselves to his home. So great was the crowd that hastened to the shelter of his residence, that it was found necessary to appropriate a number of the adjoining houses in order to accommodate the multitude of refugees who pressed at his doors. So vast and excited was the concourse that thronged his house, that when once the tumult had subsided, it was ascertained that no less than twenty-two persons had been trampled to death.

What consternation seized the residents and visitors of the holy city! With what severity did the victors treat their terrified enemy! With what audacity they ignored those sacred rights and prerogatives with which the piety of countless Muslim pilgrims had invested the holy sites of Karbilá!

[1] Brother of the Imám Husayn.

[2] Qur'án, 11: 81.

They refused to recognise alike the shrine of the Imám Ḥusayn and the sacred mausoleum of 'Abbás as inviolable sanctuaries for the thousands who fled before the avenging wrath of an alien people. The hallowed precincts of both these shrines ran with the blood of the victims. One place, and only one, could assert its right of sanctuary to the innocent and faithful among the population. That place was the residence of Siyyid Kázim. His house, with its dependencies, was regarded as being endowed with such sanctity as even the most hallowed shrine of shí'ah Islám had failed to retain. That strange manifestation of the avenging wrath of God was an object lesson to those who were inclined to belittle the station of that holy man. That memorable event[1] happened on the eighth of Dhi'l-Ḥijjih in the year 1258 A.H.[2]

It is admittedly evident that in every age and dispensation those whose mission it is either to proclaim the Truth or to prepare the way for its acceptance, have invariably been opposed by a number of powerful adversaries, who challenged their authority and attempted to pervert their teachings. These have, either by fraud or pretence, calumny or oppression, succeeded for a time in beguiling the uninformed and in

[1] A. L. M. Nicolas, in his "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, pp. 29–30, describes the event as follows: "Ce fut en l'an 1258 (1842) qu'eût lieu cet événement, le jour de la fête du Qadr. Les armées de Baghdád, sous la conduite de Najíb Páshá, s'emparèrent de Karbilá dont elles massacrèrent les habitants, et pillèrent les riches mosquées. Près de neuf mille personnes furent tuées, et la plupart étaient des Persans. Muḥammad Sháh était malade assez sérieusement quand eurent lieu ces événements, aussi les hauts fonctionnaires les lui cachèrent-ils.

"Quand le Sháh, par la suite, les apprit, il entra dans une grande colère et jura de tirer une vengeance éclatante. Mais les représentants Russe et Anglais intervinrent pour calmer les choses. Enfin de compte, Mírzá Ja'far Khán Mushíru'd-Dawlih, revenant de son ambassade à Constantinople, fût envoyé à Erzeroum pour s'y rencontrer avec les délégués Anglais, Russes et Ottomans.

"Arrivé à Tabríz, le plénipotentiaire persan tomba malade. Hájí Mírzá Áqásí nomma alors à sa place Mírzá Taqí Khán-i-Faráhání, Vazír Niẓám: celui-ci se rendit à Erzeroum avec 200 officiers.

"Le délégué Turc était Anvar Effendi, qui se montra courtoiset conciliant, mais l'un des hommes de l'Amír Niẓám fit un acte qui portait atteinte à la religion Sunnite; la population se précipita sur le camp de l'Ambassadeur; deux ou trois persans furent tués, tout fut pillé et Amír Niẓámn' eut la vie sauve que grâce à l'intervention de Badrí Páshá.

"Le Gouvernement Turc présenta des excuses et paya 15,000 túmáns de dommages et intérêts.

"Dans son Hidáyatu'ṭ-Ṭálibín, Karím Khán veut que durant le pillage de Karbilá les troupes victorieuses aient respecté les maisons des Shaykhís. Tout ceux, dit-il, qui y cherchèrent un refuge, furent sauvés, et l'on y accumula des objets précieux. Personne des compagnons de Siyyid Káẓim ne fût tué, alors que ceux qui s'étaient réfugiés aux saints tombeaux furent massacrés sans pitié. Le páshá, dit-on, entra à cheval dans l'enceinte sacrée."

[2] January 10, 1843 A.D.

misleading the feeble. Desirous of maintaining their hold over the thoughts and consciences of men, they have, so long as the Faith of God remained concealed, been able to enjoy the fruits of a fleeting and precarious ascendancy. No sooner was the Faith proclaimed, however, than they found, to their utter dismay, the effects of their dark plottings pale before the dawning light of the new Day of God. Before the fierce rays of that rising Orb all their machinations and evil deeds faded into nothingness and were soon a thing forgotten.

Around Siyyid Káẓim were likewise gathered a number of vain and ignoble people who feigned devotion and attachment to his person; who professed to be devout and pious, and who claimed to be the sole repositories of the mysteries enshrined in the utterances of Shaykh Aḥmad and his successor. They occupied the seats of honour in the company of the assembled disciples of Siyyid Káẓim. To them he addressed his discourse, and towards them he showed marked consideration and courtesy. And yet he often, in covert and subtle phrases, alluded to their blindness, their vainglory and utter inaptitude for the apprehension of the mysteries of Divine utterance. Among his allusions were the following: "None can comprehend my language except him who is begotten of me." Oftentimes he quoted this saying: "I am spellbound by the vision. I am mute with wonder, and behold the world bereft of the power of hearing. I am powerless to divulge the mystery, and find the people incapable of bearing its weight." On another occasion he remarked: "Many are those who claim to have attained union with the Beloved, and yet that Beloved refuses to acknowledge their claim. By the tears which he sheds for his loved One can the true lover be distinguished from the false." Many a time he observed: "He who is destined to be made manifest after me is of pure lineage, of illustrious descent, of the seed of Fáṭimih. He is of medium height, and is free from bodily deficiency."[1]

[1] A. L. M. Nicolas, in his "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, pp. 60–61, gives the following extract from the writings of Siyyid Kázim: "Tu as compris, je pense, que la Loi religieuse et les préceptes de la morale sont la nourriture de l'Esprit. Il est donc obligatoire que ces lois religieuses soient diverses: il faut que parfois les ordres précédents soient annulés, il faut qu'ils se composent de choses douteuses et de choses certaines, de généralités et de particularités, d'absolu et de fini, d'apparent et d'intime, afin que l'enfant arrive au temps de l'adolescence et soit parfait dans sa puissance et dans sa capacité.

"C'est à ce moment-là que doit apparaître le Qâ'im, et, après sa manifestation, doit s'accomplir le temps de sa vie, et il doit être tué; c'est quand il sera tué que le monde arrivera à l'âge de 18 ans."

I have heard Shaykh Abú-Turáb[1] recount the following: "I, together with a number of the disciples of Siyyid Káẓim, regarded the allusions to these deficiencies, from which the Siyyid declared the promised One to be free, as specifically directed toward three individuals amongst our fellow-disciples. We even designated them by such appellations as indicated their bodily defects. One of them was Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán,[2] son of Ibráhím Khán-i-Qájár-i-Kirmání, who was both one-eyed and sparsely bearded. Another was Mírzá Ḥasan-i-Gawhar, an exceptionally corpulent man. The third was Mírzá Muḥít-i-Shá'ir-i-Kirmání, who was extraordinarily lean and tall. We felt convinced that these were none other than those to whom the Siyyid constantly alluded as those vain and faithless people who would eventually reveal their real selves, and betray their ingratitude and folly. As to Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán, who for years sat at the feet of Siyyid Káẓim and acquired from him all his so-called learning, in the end he obtained leave from his master to settle in Kirmán, and there engage in the promotion of the interests of Islám and the dissemination of those traditions that clustered round the sacred memory of the Imáms of the Faith.

"I was present in the library of Siyyid Káẓim when, one day, an attendant of Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán arrived, holding a book in his hand, which he presented to the Siyyid on behalf of his master, requesting him to peruse it and to signify in his own handwriting his approval of its contents. The Siyyid read portions of that book, and returned it to the attendant with this message: 'Tell your master that he, better than anyone else, can estimate the value of his own book.' The attendant had retired when the Siyyid, with sorrowful voice, remarked: 'Accursed be he! For years he has been associated with me, and now that he intends to depart, his one aim, after so many years of study and companionship,

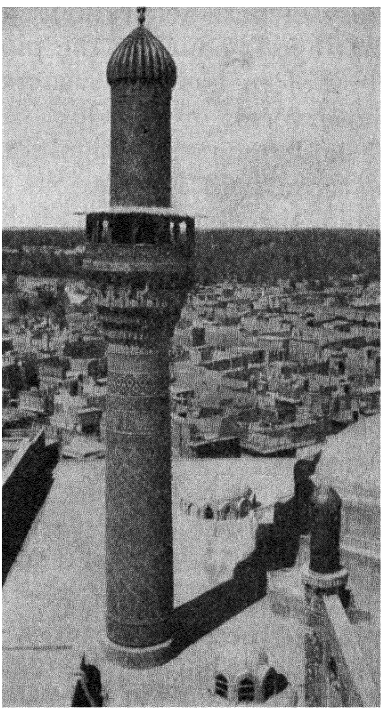
[1] According to Samandar (p. 32), Shaykh Abú-Turáb was a native of Ishtihárd, and ranked among the leading disciples of Siyyid Káẓim. He married the sister of Mullá Ḥusayn. He died while in prison in Ṭihrán.

[2] "The Báb wrote to Ḥájí Muḥammad-Karím Khán . . . and invited him to acknowledge his authority. This the latter not only entirely refused to do, but further wrote a treatise against the Báb and his doctrines." (P. 910.) "At least two such treatises were written by Ḥájí Muḥammad-Karím Khán. One of them was composed at a later date than this, probably after the Báb's death, at the special request of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh. Of these two, one has been printed, and is called 'the crushing of falsehood' (Izháqu'l-Báṭil)." (Footnote 1, p. 910.) (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, article 12.)

is to diffuse, through his book, such heretical and atheistic doctrines as he now wishes me to endorse. He has covenanted with a number of self-seeking hypocrites with the view of establishing himself in Kirmán, and in order to assume, after my departure from this world, the reins of undisputed leadership. How grievously he erred in his judgment! For the breeze of divine Revelation, wafted from the Day-Spring of guidance, will assuredly quench his light and destroy his influence. The tree of his endeavour will eventually yield naught but the fruit of bitter disillusion and gnawing remorse. Verily I say, you shall behold this with your own eyes. My prayer for you is that you may be protected from the mischievous influence which he, the antichrist of the promised Revelation, will in future exercise.' He bade me conceal this prediction until the Day of Resurrection, the Day when the Hand of Omnipotence will have disclosed the secrets which are now hidden within the breasts of men. 'On that Day,' he exhorted me, 'arise with unswerving purpose and determination for the triumph of the Faith of God. Publish far and wide all that you have heard and witnessed.' " This same Shaykh Abú-Turáb, who in the early days of the Dispensation proclaimed by the Báb thought it wiser and better not to identify himself with His Cause, cherished in his heart the fondest love for the revealed Manifestation, and in his faith remained firm and immovable as the rock. Eventually that smouldering fire blazed forth in his soul and was responsible for such behaviour on his part as to cause him to suffer imprisonment in Ṭihrán, in the same dungeon within which Bahá'u'lláh was confined. He remained steadfast to the very end, and crowned a life of loving sacrifice with the glory of martyrdom.

And as the days of Siyyid Káẓim drew to a close, he, whenever he met his disciples, whether in private converse or public discourse, exhorted them, saying: "O my beloved companions! Beware, beware, lest after me the world's fleeting vanities beguile you. Beware lest you wax haughty and forgetful of God. It is incumbent upon you to renounce all comfort, all earthly possessions and kindred, in your quest of Him who is the Desire of your hearts and of mine. Scatter far and wide, detach yourselves from all earthly things, and

humbly and prayerfully beseech your Lord to sustain and guide you. Never relax in your determination to seek and find Him who is concealed behind the veils of glory. Persevere till the time when He, who is your true Guide and Master, will graciously aid you and enable you to recognise Him. Be firm till the day when He will choose you as the companions and the heroic supporters of the promised Qá'im. Well is it with every one of you who will quaff the cup of martyrdom in His path. Those of you whom God, in His wisdom, will preserve and keep to witness the setting of the Star of Divine guidance, that Harbinger of the Sun of Divine Revelation, must needs be patient, must remain assured and steadfast. Such ones amongst you must neither falter nor feel dismayed. For soon after the first trumpet-blast which is to smite the earth with extermination and death, there shall be sounded again yet another call, at which all things will be quickened and revived. Then will the meaning of these sacred verses be revealed: 'And there was a blast on the trumpet, and all who are in the heavens and all who are in the earth expired, save those whom God permitted to live. Then was there sounded another blast, and, lo! arising, they gazed around them. And the earth shone with the light of her Lord, and the Book was set, and the Prophets were brought up, and the witnesses; and judgment was given between them with equity; and none was wronged.'[1] Verily I say, after the Qá'im the Qayyúm[2] will be made manifest. For



VIEW OF KÁẒIMAYN

[1] Qur'án, 39: 68.

[2] References to the Báb and to Bahá'u'lláh, respectively.

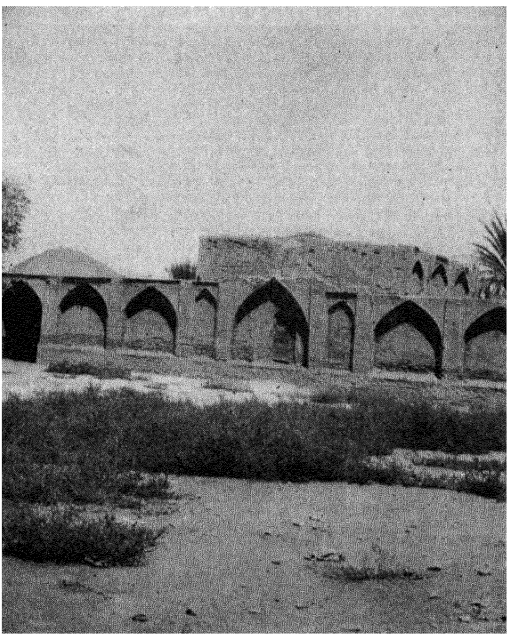
when the star of the Former has set, the sun of the beauty of Ḥusayn will rise and illuminate the whole world. Then will be unfolded in all its glory the 'mystery' and the 'secret' spoken of by Shaykh Aḥmad, who has said: 'The mystery of this Cause must needs be made manifest, and the secret of this Message must needs be divulged.' To have attained unto that Day of days is to have attained unto the crowning glory of past generations, and one goodly deed performed in that age is equal to the pious worship of countless centuries. How often has that venerable soul, Shaykh Aḥmad, recited those verses of the Qur'án already referred to! What stress he laid upon their significance as foreshadowing the advent of those twin Revelations which are to follow each other in rapid succession, and each of which is destined to suffuse the world with all its glory! How many times did he exclaim: 'Well is it with him who will recognise their significance and behold their splendour!' How often, addressing me, did he remark: 'Neither of us shall live to gaze upon their effulgent glory. But many of the faithful among your disciples shall witness the Day which we, alas, can never hope to behold!' O my beloved companions! How great, how very great, is the Cause! How exalted the station to which I summon you! How great the mission for which I have trained and prepared you! Gird up the loins of endeavour, and fix your gaze upon His promise. I pray to God graciously to assist you to weather the storms of tests and trials which must needs beset you, to enable you to emerge, unscathed and triumphant, from their midst, and to lead you to your high destiny."

Every year, in the month of Dhi'l-Qa'dih, the Siyyid would proceed from Karbilá to Káẓimayn[1] in order to visit the shrines of the imáms. He would return to Karbilá in time to visit, on the day of 'Arafih, the shrine of the Imám Ḥusayn. In that year, the last year of his life, he, faithful to his custom, departed from Karbilá in the first days of the month of Dhi'l-Qa'dih, in the year 1259 A.H.,[2] accompanied by a number of his companions and friends. On the fourth day of that month he arrived at the Masjid-i-Baráthá, situ-

[1] The tombs of "the two Káẓims," the seventh Imám Músá Káẓim and the ninth Imám Muḥammad-Taqí, about three miles north of Baghdád. Around them has grown up a considerable town, inhabited chiefly by Persians, known as "Kaẓimayn."

[2] November 23–December 23, 1843 A.D.

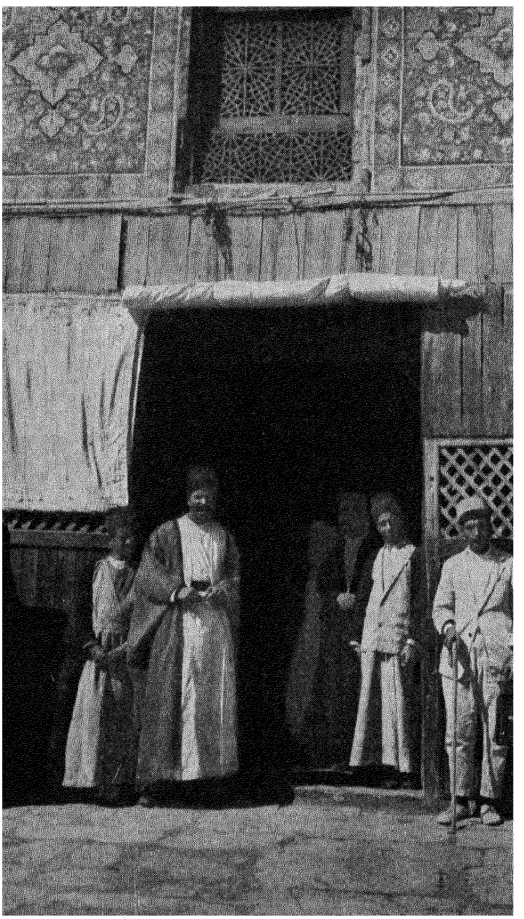
ated on the highway between Baghdád and Káẓimayn, in time to offer up his noonday prayer. He bade the Muadhdhin summon the faithful to gather and pray. Standing beneath the shade of a palm which faced the masjid, he joined the congregation, and had just concluded his devotions when an Arab suddenly appeared, approached the Siyyid, and embraced him. "Three days ago," he said, "I was shepherding my flock in this adjoining pasture, when sleep suddenly fell



SECTION OF THE MASJID-I-BARÂTHÁ

upon me. In my dream I saw Muhammad, the Apostle of God, who addressed me in these words: 'Give ear, O shepherd, to My words, and treasure them within your heart. For these words of Mine are the trust of God which I commit to your keeping. If you be faithful to them, great will be your reward. If you neglect them, grievous retribution will befall you. Hear Me; this is the trust with which I charge you: Stay within the precincts of the Masjid-i-Baráthá. On the third day after this dream, a scion of My house, Siyyid Káẓim by name, will, accompanied by his friends and companions,

alight, at the hour of noon, beneath the shadow of the palm in the vicinity of the masjid. There he will offer his prayer. As soon as your eyes fall upon him, seek his presence and convey to him My loving greetings. Tell him, from Me: "Rejoice, for the hour of your departure is at hand. When you shall have performed your visits in Káẓimayn and shall have returned to Karbilá, there, three days after your return, on the day of 'Arafih,[1] you will wing your flight to Me. Soon after shall He who is the Truth be made manifest. Then



SITE OF SIYYID KÁẒIM'S RESTING PLACE
(TOMBSTONE NOW REMOVED)

[1] December 31, 1843 A.D.

shall the world be illuminated by the light of His face." ' " A smile wreathed the countenance of Siyyid Káẓim upon the completion of the description of the dream related by that shepherd. He said: "Of the truth of the dream which you have dreamt there is no doubt." His companions were sorely grieved. Turning to them, he said: "Is not your love for me for the sake of that true One whose advent we all await? Would you not wish me to die, that the promised One may be revealed?" This episode, in its entirety, has been related to me by no less than ten persons, all of whom were present on that occasion, and who testified to its accuracy. And yet many of those who witnessed with their own eyes such marvellous signs have rejected the Truth and repudiated His Message!

This strange event was noised abroad. It brought sadness to the heart of the true lovers of Siyyid Káẓim. To these he, with infinite tenderness and joy, addressed words of cheer and comfort. He calmed their troubled hearts, fortified their faith, and inflamed their zeal. With dignity and calm he completed his pilgrimage and returned to Karbilá. The very day of his arrival he fell ill, and was confined to bed. His enemies spread the rumour that he had been poisoned by the Governor of Baghdád. This was sheer calumny and downright falsehood, inasmuch as the Governor himself had placed his unqualified confidence in Siyyid Káẓim, and had always regarded him as a highly talented leader endowed with keen perception and possessed of irreproachable character.[1] On the day of 'Arafih, in the year 1259 A.H., at the ripe age of sixty, Siyyid Káẓim, in accordance with the vision of that lowly shepherd, bade farewell to this world, leaving behind him a band of earnest and devoted disciples who, purged of all worldly desire, set out in quest of their promised Beloved. His sacred remains were interred within the precincts of the shrine of the Imám Ḥusayn.[2] His passing raised

[1] "Karím Khán qui, au sujet de la prise de Karbilá, insiste sur le respect que les assaillants montrèrent aux Shaykhís et à Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí, ne se gêne pas du tout pour déclarer qu'il est fort probable 'que Siyyid Káẓim fut empoisonné à Baghdád par cet infâme Najíb Páshá, qui, dit-il, lui fit prendre un breuvage après l'absorption duquel il fut pris d'une soif intense et mourut.' C'est ainsi que les Persans écrivent l'histoire!" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, pp. 30–31.)

[2] "Il fut enterré derrière la fenêtre du corridor du tombeau du Seigneur des Confesseurs. Ce tombeau fut creusé très profondément en inclinant, dans le bas, vers l'intérieur de l'enceinte interdite." (*Ibid.*, p. 31.)

a tumult in Karbilá similar to the agitation that seized its people the preceding year,[1] on the eve of the day of 'Arafih, when the victorious enemy forced the gates of the citadel and massacred a considerable number of its besieged inhabitants. A year before, on that day, his house had been the one haven of peace and security for the bereaved and homeless, whereas now it had become a house of sorrow where those whom he had befriended and succoured bewailed his passing and mourned his loss.[2]

[1] "Durant la vie de Siyyid Káẓim, la doctrine des Shaykhís se répandit dans toute la Perse, si bien que dans la seule province d'Iráq il y'avait plus de cent mille murids." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 463.)

[2] "Ici finit l'histoire de l'établissement du Shaykhisme, ou tout au moins de son Unité. Il va, en effet, après la mort de Siyyid Kázim-i-Rashtí, se diviser en deux branches. L'une, sous le nom de Bábisme, lui donnera l'épanouissement que semblait promettre la force du mouvement créé par Shaykh Aḥmad et auquel paraissent s'être attendu les deux maîtres, si on en croit leurs prédictions; l'autre, sous la conduite de Karím Khán-i-Qajár-i-Kirmání, continuera ses luttes contre l'élément Shíite mais cherchera toujours à se mettre à l'abri en affectant les dehors d'un parfait Ithná-'Asharisme. Si pour Karím Khán le Báb et ses sectateurs sont d'infâmes impies, pour les Bábís, Karím Khán est l'Anté-Christ ou Dajjál prédit par Muḥammad." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," II, p. 31.)

CHAPTER III

THE DECLARATION OF THE BĀB'S MISSION

THE death of Siyyid Káẓim was the signal for renewed activity on the part of his enemies. Athirst for leadership, and emboldened by his removal and the consequent dismay of his followers, they reasserted their claims and prepared to realise their ambitions. For a time, fear and anxiety filled the hearts of Siyyid Kázim's faithful disciples, but with the return of Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushrú'í from the highly successful mission with which he had been entrusted by his teacher, their gloom was dispelled.[1]

It was on the first day of Muḥarram, in the year 1260 A.H.,[2] that Mullá Ḥusayn came back to Karbilá. He cheered and strengthened the disconsolate disciples of his beloved chief, reminded them of his unfailing promise, and pleaded for unrelaxing vigilance and unremitting effort in their search for the concealed Beloved. Living in the close neighbourhood of the house the Siyyid had occupied, he, for three days, was engaged continually in receiving visits from a considerable number of mourners who hastened to convey to him, as the leading representative of the Siyyid's disciples, the expression of their distress and sorrow. He afterwards summoned a group of his most distinguished and trusted fellow-disciples and enquired about the expressed wishes and the last exhortations of their departed leader. They told him that, repeatedly and emphatically, Siyyid Káẓim had bidden them quit their homes, scatter far and wide, purge their hearts from every idle desire, and dedicate themselves to the quest of Him to whose advent he had so often alluded. "He told us," they said, "that the Object of our quest was now

[1] "Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushrú'í était un homme auquel ses adversaires reconnaissaient eux-mêmes un grand savoir et une extrême énergie de caractère. Il s'était livré à l'étude dès son enfance, et avait fait dans la théologie et la jurisprudence des progrès qui lui avaient acquis de la considération." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 128.)

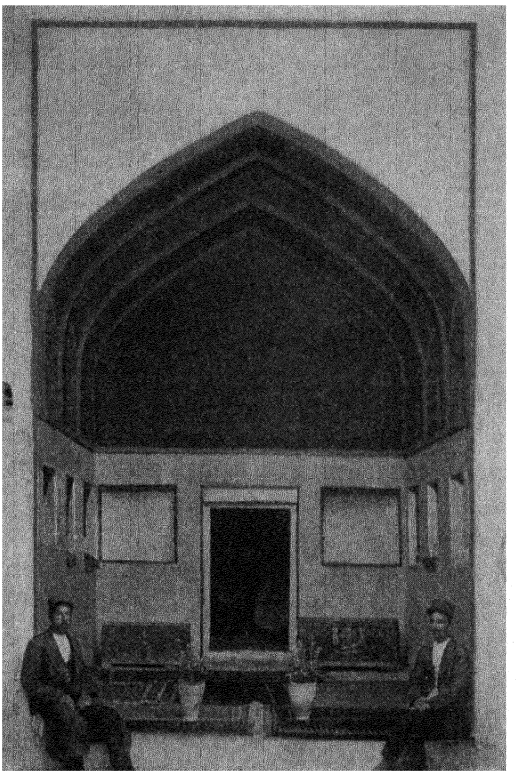
[2] January 22, 1844 A.D.

revealed. The veils that intervened between you and Him are such as only you can remove by your devoted search. Nothing short of prayerful endeavour, of purity of motive, of singleness of mind, will enable you to tear them asunder. Has not God revealed in His Book: 'Whoso maketh efforts for Us, in Our ways will We guide them'?"[1] "Why, then," Mullá Ḥusayn observed, "have you chosen to tarry in Karbilá? Why is it that you have not dispersed, and arisen to carry out his earnest plea?" "We acknowledge our failure," was their reply; "to your greatness we all bear witness. Such is our confidence in you, that if you claim to be the promised One, we shall all readily and unquestionably submit. We herein pledge our loyalty and obedience to whatever you bid us perform." "God forbid!" exclaimed Mullá Ḥusayn. "Far be it from His glory that I, who am but dust, should be compared to Him who is the Lord of Lords! Had you been conversant with the tone and language of Siyyid Káẓim, you never would have uttered such words. Your first obligation, as well as mine, is to arise and carry out, both in the spirit and in the letter, the dying message of our beloved chief." He arose instantly from his seat, and went directly to Mírzá Ḥasan-i-Gawhar, Mírzá Muḥíṭ, and other well-known figures among the disciples of Siyyid Káẓim. To each and all he fearlessly delivered the parting message of his chief, emphasised the pressing character of their duty, and urged them to arise and fulfil it. To his plea they returned evasive and unworthy answers. "Our enemies," one of them remarked, "are many and powerful. We must remain in this city and guard the vacant seat of our departed chief." Another observed: "It is incumbent upon me to stay and care for the children whom the Siyyid has left behind." Mullá Ḥusayn immediately recognised the futility of his efforts. Realising the degree of their folly, their blindness and ingratitude, he spoke to them no more. He retired, leaving them to their idle pursuits.

As the year sixty, the year that witnessed the birth of the promised Revelation, had just dawned upon the world, it would not seem inappropriate, at this juncture, to digress from our theme, and to mention certain traditions of Mu-

[1] Qur'án, 29: 69.

hammad and of the imáms of the Faith which bear specific reference to that year. Imám Ja'far, son of Muḥammad, when questioned concerning the year in which the Qá'im was to be made manifest, replied as follows: "Verily, in the year sixty His Cause shall be revealed, and His name shall be noised abroad." In the works of the learned and far-famed



HOME OF MULLÁ HUSAYN IN BUSHRÚYIH

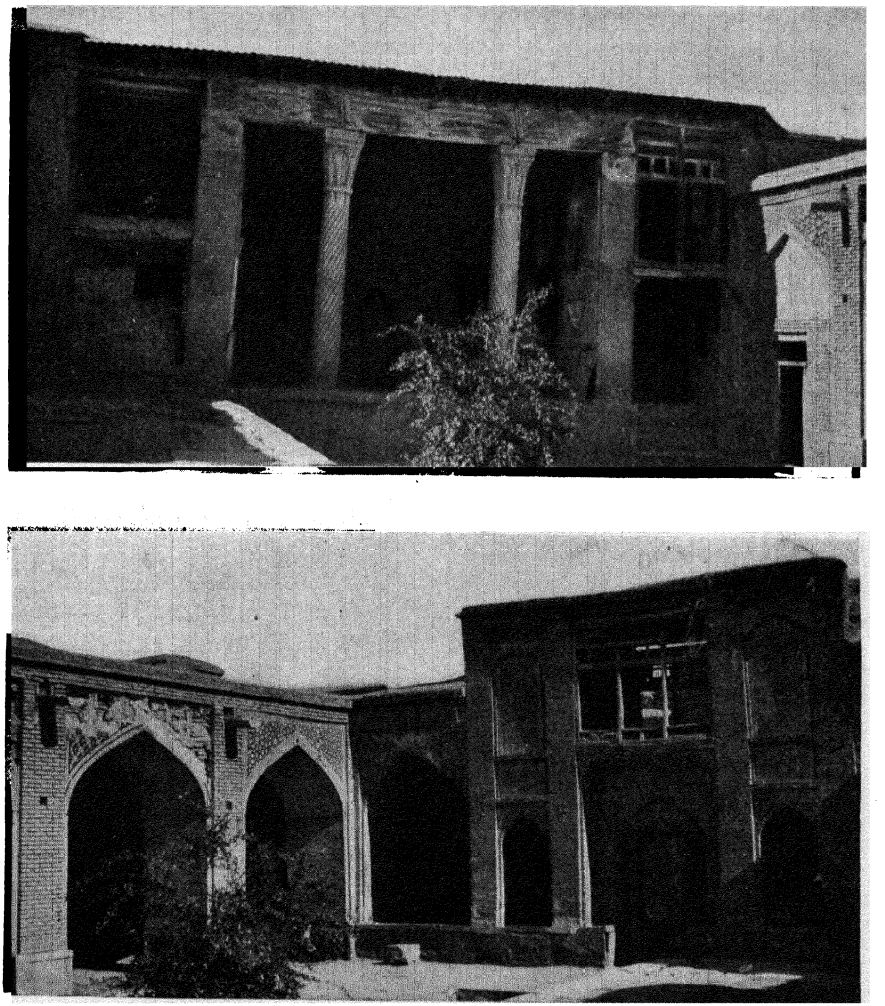
Muḥyi'd-Dín-i-'Arabí, many references are to be found regarding both the year of the advent and the name of the promised Manifestation. Among them are the following: "The ministers and upholders of His Faith shall be of the people of Persia." "In His name, the name of the Guardian ['Alí] precedeth that of the Prophet [Muḥammad]." "The year of His Revelation is identical with half of that number which is divisible by nine [2520]." Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Akhbárí, in his poems relating to the year of the Manifesta-

tion, makes the following prediction: "In the year Ghars [the numerical value of the letters of which is 1260] the earth shall be illumined by His light, and in Gharasih [1265] the world shall be suffused with its glory. If thou livest until the year Gharasí [1270], thou shalt witness how the nations, the rulers, the peoples, and the Faith of God shall all have been renewed." In a tradition ascribed to the Imám 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, it is likewise recorded: "In Ghars the Tree of Divine guidance shall be planted."

Mullá Ḥusayn, having acquitted himself of the obligation he felt to urge and awaken his fellow-disciples, set out from Karbilá for Najaf. With him were Muḥammad-Ḥasan, his brother, and Muḥammad-Báqir, his nephew, both of whom had accompanied him ever since his visit to his native town of Bushrúyih, in the province of Khurásán. Arriving at the Masjid-i-Kúfih, Mullá Ḥusayn decided to spend forty days in that place, where he led a life of retirement and prayer. By his fasts and vigils he prepared himself for the holy adventure upon which he was soon to embark. In the exercise of these acts of worship, his brother alone was associated with him, while his nephew, who attended to their daily needs, observed the fasts, and in his hours of leisure joined them in their devotions.

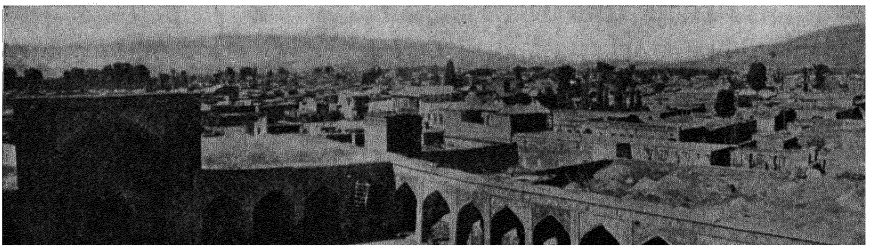
This cloistered calm with which they were surrounded was, after a few days, unexpectedly interrupted by the arrival of Mullá 'Alíy-i-Basṭámí, one of the foremost disciples of Siyyid Káẓim. He, together with twelve other companions, arrived at the Masjid-i-Kúfih, where he found his fellow-disciple Mullá Ḥusayn immersed in contemplation and prayer. Mullá 'Alí was endowed with such vast learning, and was so deeply conversant with the teachings of Shaykh Aḥmad, that many regarded him as even superior to Mullá Ḥusayn. On several occasions he attempted to enquire from Mullá Ḥusayn as to his destination after the termination of the period of his retirement. Every time he approached him, he found him so wrapt in his devotions that he felt it impossible to venture a question. He soon decided to retire, like him, for forty days from the society of men. All his companions followed his example with the exception of three who acted as their personal attendants.

Immediately after the completion of his forty days' retirement, Mullá Ḥusayn, together with his two companions, departed for Najaf. He left Karbilá by night, visited on his way the shrine of Najaf, and proceeded directly to Búshihr,



VIEWS OF THE MASJID-I-ÍLKHÁNÍ

on the Persian Gulf. There he started on his holy quest after the Beloved of his heart's desire. There, for the first time, he inhaled the fragrance of Him who, for years, had led in that city the life of a merchant and humble citizen.



GENERAL VIEW OF SHÍRÁZ

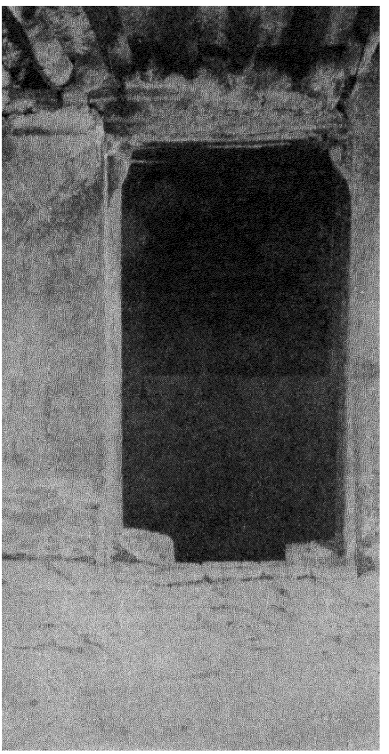
There he perceived the sweet savours of holiness with which that Beloved's countless invocations had so richly impregnated the atmosphere of that city.

He could not, however, tarry longer in Búshihr. Drawn as if by a magnet which seemed to attract him irresistibly towards the north, he proceeded to Shíráz. Arriving at the gate of that city, he instructed his brother and his nephew to proceed directly to the Masjid-i-Ílkhání, and there to remain until his arrival. He expressed the hope that, God willing, he would arrive in time to join them in their evening prayer.

On that very day, a few hours before sunset, whilst walking outside the gate of the city, his eyes fell suddenly upon a Youth of radiant countenance, who wore a green turban and who, advancing towards him, greeted him with a smile of loving welcome. He embraced Mullá Ḥusayn with tender affection as though he had been his intimate and lifelong friend. Mullá Ḥusayn thought Him at first to be a disciple of Siyyid Káẓim who, on being informed of his approach to Shíráz, had come out to welcome him.

Mírzá Aḥmad-i-Qazvíní, the martyr, who on several occasions had heard Mullá Ḥusayn recount to the early believers the story of his moving and historic interview with the Báb, related to me the following: "I have heard Mullá Ḥusayn repeatedly and graphically describe the circumstances of that remarkable interview: 'The Youth who met me outside the gate of Shíráz overwhelmed me with expressions of affection and loving-kindness. He extended to me a warm invitation to visit His home, and there refresh myself after the fatigues of my journey. I prayed to be excused, pleading that my

two companions had already arranged for my stay in that city, and were now awaiting my return. "Commit them to the care of God," was His reply; "He will surely protect and watch over them." Having spoken these words, He bade me follow Him. I was profoundly impressed by the gentle yet compelling manner in which that strange Youth spoke to me.



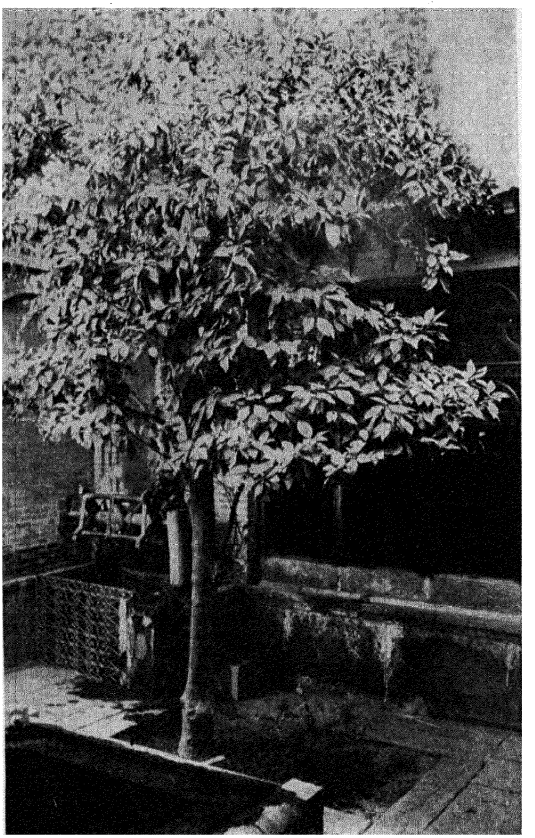
ROOM IN THE MASJID-I-ÍL<u>KH</u>ÁNÍ, <u>SH</u>ÍRÁZ, IN WHICH THE BÁB AND MULLÁ ḤUSAYN MET

As I followed Him, His gait, the charm of His voice, the dignity of His bearing, served to enhance my first impressions of this unexpected meeting.

" 'We soon found ourselves standing at the gate of a house of modest appearance. He knocked at the door, which was soon opened by an Ethiopian servant. "Enter therein in peace, secure,"[1] were His words as He crossed the threshold

[1] Qur'án, 15: 46.

and motioned me to follow Him. His invitation, uttered with power and majesty, penetrated my soul. I thought it a good augury to be addressed in such words, standing as I did on the threshold of the first house I was entering in Shíráz, a city the very atmosphere of which had produced

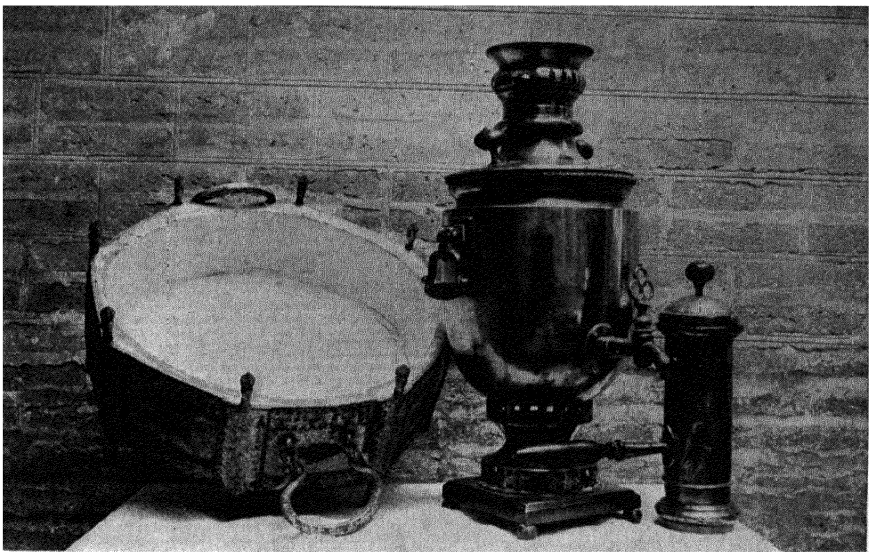


ORANGE TREE PLANTED BY THE BÁB IN THE COURTYARD OF HIS HOUSE IN SHÍRÁZ

already an indescribable impression upon me. Might not my visit to this house, I thought to myself, enable me to draw nearer to the Object of my quest? Might it not hasten the termination of a period of intense longing, of strenuous search, of increasing anxiety, which such a quest involves? As I entered the house and followed my Host to His chamber, a feeling of unutterable joy invaded my being. Immediately

we were seated, He ordered a ewer of water to be brought, and bade me wash away from my hands and feet the stains of travel. I pleaded permission to retire from His presence and perform my ablutions in an adjoining room. He refused to grant my request, and proceeded to pour the water over my hands. He then gave me to drink of a refreshing beverage, after which He asked for the samovar[1] and Himself prepared the tea which He offered me.

" 'Overwhelmed with His acts of extreme kindness, I arose

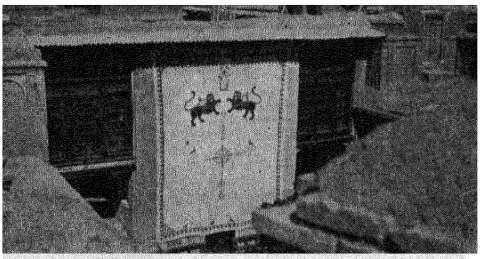


THE BÁB'S BRAZIER AND SAMOVAR

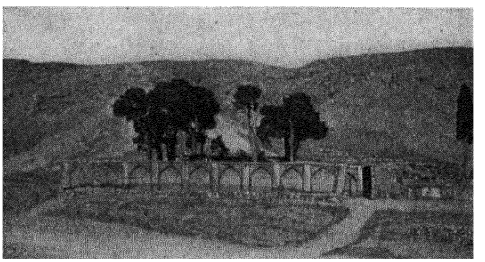
to depart. "The time for evening prayer is approaching," I ventured to observe. "I have promised my friends to join them at that hour in the Masjid-i-Ílkhání." With extreme courtesy and calm He replied: "You must surely have made the hour of your return conditional upon the will and pleasure of God. It seems that His will has decreed otherwise. You need have no fear of having broken your pledge." His dignity and self-assurance silenced me. I renewed my ablutions and prepared for prayer. He, too, stood beside me and prayed. Whilst praying, I unburdened my soul, which

[1] Tea-urn.

was much oppressed, both by the mystery of this interview and the strain and stress of my search. I breathed this prayer: "I have striven with all my soul, O my God, and until now have failed to find Thy promised Messenger. I



ROOM (LEFT HAND) WHERE THE BÁB WAS BORN. SHÍRÁZ





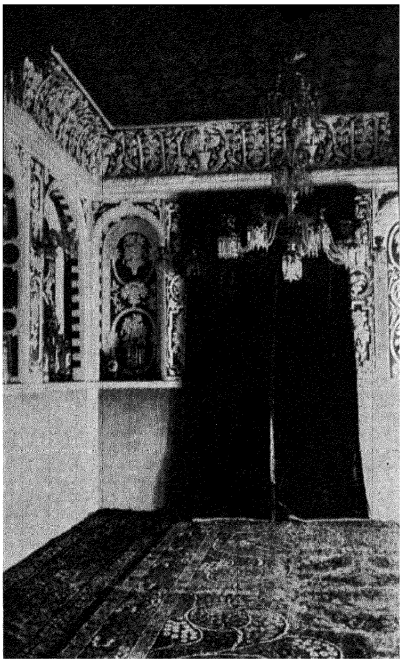
OUTSKIRTS OF SHÍRÁZ WHERE THE BÁB OFTEN WENT TO WALK

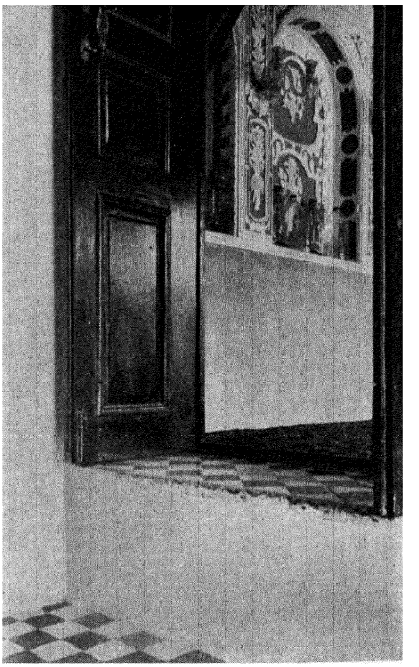
testify that Thy word faileth not, and that Thy promise is sure."

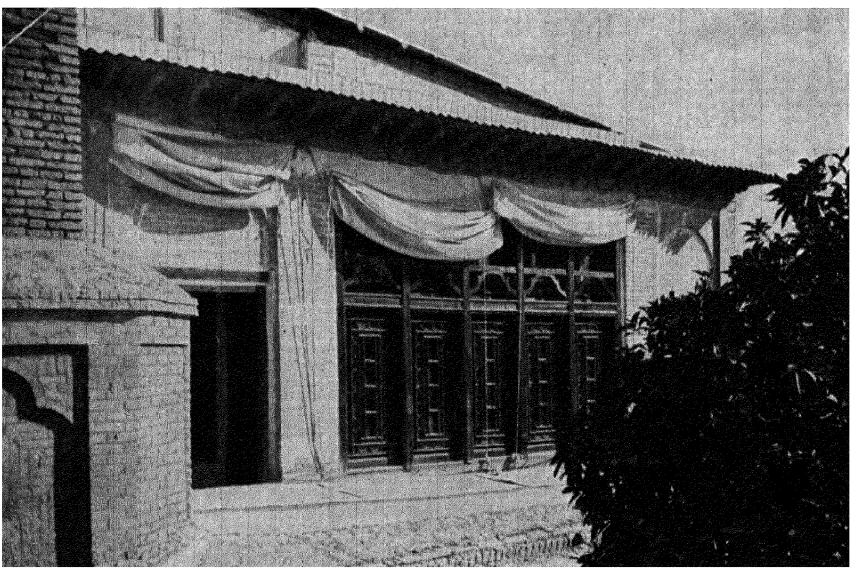
" 'That night, that memorable night, was the eve preceding the fifth day of Jamádíyu'l-Avval, in the year 1260 A.H.[1]

[1] Corresponding with the evening of May 22, 1844 A.D. The 23rd of May fell on a Thursday.

It was about an hour after sunset when my youthful Host began to converse with me. "Whom, after Siyyid Káẓim," He asked me, "do you regard as his successor and your leader?" "At the hour of his death," I replied, "our departed teacher insistently exhorted us to forsake our homes, to scatter far and wide, in quest of the promised Beloved. I have, accordingly, journeyed to Persia, have arisen to accomplish his will, and am still engaged in my quest." "Has your teacher," He further enquired, "given you any detailed indications as to the distinguishing features of the promised One?" "Yes," I replied, "He is of a pure lineage, is of illustrious descent, and of the seed of Fáṭimih. As to His age, He is more than twenty and less than thirty. He is endowed with innate knowledge. He is of medium height, abstains from smoking, and is free from bodily deficiency." He paused for a while and then with vibrant voice declared: "Behold, all these signs are manifest in Me!" He then considered each of the above-mentioned signs separately, and conclusively demonstrated that each and all were applicable to His person. I was greatly surprised, and politely observed: "He whose advent we await is a Man of unsurpassed holiness, and the Cause He is to reveal, a Cause of tremendous power. Many and diverse are the requirements which He who claims to be its visible embodiment must needs fulfil. How often has Siyyid Káẓim referred to the vastness of the knowledge of the promised One! How often did he say: 'My own knowledge is but a drop compared with that with which He has been endowed. All my attainments are but a speck of dust in the face of the immensity of His knowledge. Nay, immeasurable is the difference!' " No sooner had those words dropped from my lips than I found myself seized with fear and remorse, such as I could neither conceal nor explain. I bitterly reproved myself, and resolved at that very moment to alter my attitude and to soften my tone. I vowed to God that should my Host again refer to the subject, I would, with the utmost humility, answer and say: "If you be willing to substantiate your claim, you will most assuredly deliver me from the anxiety and suspense which so heavily oppress my soul. I shall truly be indebted to you for such deliverance." When I first started upon my quest, I determined to regard





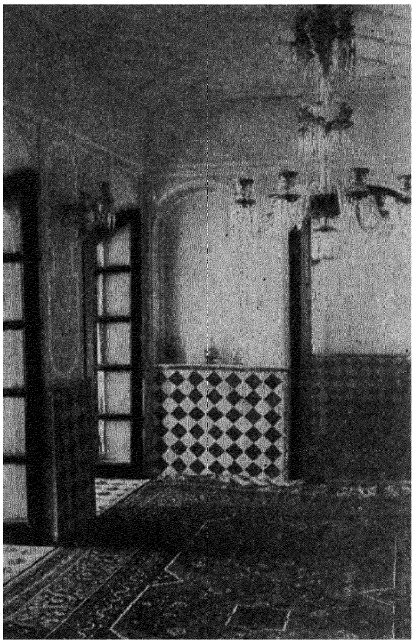


VIEWS OF THE UPPER ROOM OF THE BÁB'S HOUSE IN SHÍRÁZ WHERE HE DECLARED HIS MISSION

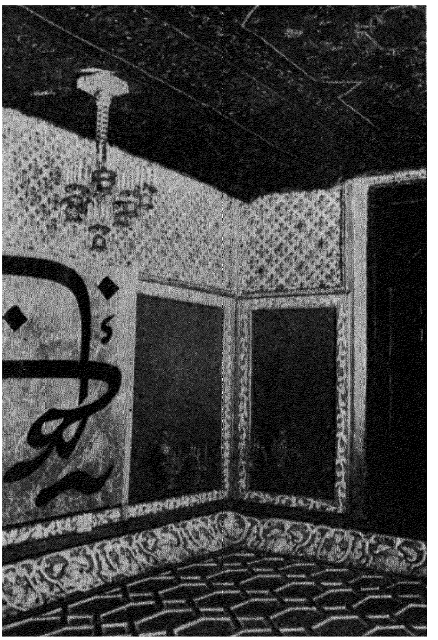
the two following standards as those whereby I could ascertain the truth of whosoever might claim to be the promised Qá'im. The first was a treatise which I had myself composed, bearing upon the abstruse and hidden teachings propounded by Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Kázim. Whoever seemed to me capable of unravelling the mysterious allusions made in that treatise, to him I would next submit my second request, and would ask him to reveal, without the least hesitation or reflection, a commentary on the Súrih of Joseph, in a style and language entirely different from the prevailing standards of the time. I had previously requested Siyyid Káẓim, in private, to write a commentary on that same Súrih, which he refused, saying: "This is, verily, beyond me. He, that great One, who comes after me will, unasked, reveal it for you. That commentary will constitute one of the weightiest testimonies of His truth, and one of the clearest evidences of the loftiness of His position."[1]

" 'I was revolving these things in my mind, when my distinguished Host again remarked: "Observe attentively. Might not the Person intended by Siyyid Káẓim be none other than I?" I thereupon felt impelled to present to Him a copy of the treatise which I had with me. "Will you," I asked Him, "read this book of mine and look at its pages with indulgent eyes? I pray you to overlook my weaknesses and failings." He graciously complied with my wish. He opened the book, glanced at certain passages, closed it, and began to address me. Within a few minutes He had, with characteristic vigour and charm, unravelled all its mysteries and resolved all its problems. Having to my entire satisfaction accomplished, within so short a time, the task I had expected Him to perform, He further expounded to me certain truths which could be found neither in the reported sayings of the imáms of the Faith nor in the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim. These truths, which I had never heard before, seemed to be endowed with refreshing vividness and power. "Had you not been My guest," He afterwards

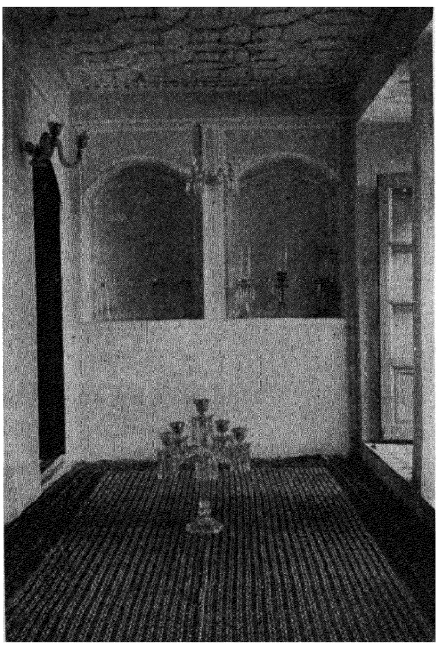
[1] "Mullá Ḥusayn is reported to have said the following: "One day, when I was alone with the late Siyyid [Káẓim] in his library, I enquired the reason why the Súriy-i-Yúsuf was entitled in the Qur'án 'the Best of Stories,' to which he replied that it was not then the proper occasion for explaining the reason. This incident remained concealed in my mind, neither had I mentioned it to anyone." ("The Táríkh-i-Jadíd," p. 39.)



HIS BEDCHAMBER



HIS MOTHER'S ROOM



HIS SITTING ROOM

VIEWS OF THE BÁB'S HOUSE IN SHÍRÁZ

observed, "your position would indeed have been a grievous one. The all-encompassing grace of God has saved you. It is for God to test His servants, and not for His servants to judge Him in accordance with their deficient standards. Were I to fail to resolve your perplexities, could the Reality that shines within Me be regarded as powerless, or My knowledge be accused as faulty? Nay, by the righteousness of God! it behoves, in this day, the peoples and nations of both the East and the West to hasten to this threshold, and here seek to obtain the reviving grace of the Merciful. Whoso hesitates will indeed be in grievous loss. Do not the peoples of the earth testify that the fundamental purpose of their creation is the knowledge and adoration of God? It behoves them to arise, as earnestly and spontaneously as you have arisen, and to seek with determination and constancy their promised Beloved." He then proceeded to say: "Now is the time to reveal the commentary on the Súrih of Joseph." He took up His pen and with incredible rapidity revealed the entire Súrih of Mulk, the first chapter of His commentary on the Súrih of Joseph. The overpowering effect of the manner in which He wrote was heightened by the gentle intonation of His voice which accompanied His writing. Not for one moment did He interrupt the flow of the verses which streamed from His pen. Not once did He pause till the Súrih of Mulk was finished. I sat enraptured by the magic of His voice and the sweeping force of His revelation. At last I reluctantly arose from my seat and begged leave to depart. He smilingly bade me be seated, and said: "If you leave in such a state, whoever sees you will assuredly say: 'This poor youth has lost his mind.'" At that moment the clock registered two hours and eleven minutes after sunset.[1] That night, the eve of the fifth day of Jamádíyu'l-Avval, in the year 1260 A.H., corresponded with the eve preceding the sixty-fifth day after Naw-rúz, which was also the eve of the sixth day of Khurdád, of the year Nahang. "This night," He declared, "this very hour will, in the days to come, be celebrated as one of the greatest and most significant of all festivals. Render thanks

[1] The date of the Manifestation is fixed by the following passage in the Persian Bayán (Váḥid 2, Báb 7): "The beginning thereof was when two hours and eleven minutes [had passed] from the evening preceding the fifth of Jamádíyu'l-Úlá, 1260 [A.H.], which is the year 1270 of the mission [of Muḥammad]." (From manuscript copy of the Bayán written by the hand of Siyyid Ḥusayn, amanuensis and companion of the Báb.)

to God for having graciously assisted you to attain your heart's desire, and for having quaffed from the sealed wine of His utterance. 'Well is it with them that attain thereunto.' "[1]

"'At the third hour after sunset, my Host ordered the dinner to be served. That same Ethiopian servant appeared again and spread before us the choicest food. That holy repast refreshed alike my body and soul. In the presence of my Host, at that hour, I felt as though I were feeding upon the fruits of Paradise. I could not but marvel at the manners and the devoted attentions of that Ethiopian servant whose very life seemed to have been transformed by the regenerating influence of his Master. I then, for the first time, recognised the significance of this well-known traditional utterance ascribed to Muḥammad: "I have prepared for the godly and righteous among My servants what eye hath seen not, ear heard not, nor human heart conceived." Had my youthful Host no other claim to greatness, this were sufficient—that He received me with that quality of hospitality and loving-kindness which I was convinced no other human being could possibly reveal.

"'I sat spellbound by His utterance, oblivious of time and of those who awaited me. Suddenly the call of the muadhdhin, summoning the faithful to their morning prayer, awakened me from the state of ecstasy into which I seemed to have fallen. All the delights, all the ineffable glories, which the Almighty has recounted in His Book as the priceless possessions of the people of Paradise—these I seemed to be experiencing that night. Methinks I was in a place of which it could be truly said: "Therein no toil shall reach us, and therein no weariness shall touch us"; "No vain discourse shall they hear therein, nor any falsehood, but only the cry, 'Peace! Peace!' "; "Their cry therein shall be, 'Glory be to Thee, O God!' and their salutation therein, 'Peace!' And the close of their cry, 'Praise be to God, Lord of all creatures!' "[2]

" 'Sleep had departed from me that night. I was enthralled by the music of that voice which rose and fell as He

[1] A. L. M. Nicolas quotes the following from the Kitábu'l-Ḥaramayn: "En vérité, le premier jour que l'Esprit descendit dans le cœur de cet Esclave était le 15 du mois de Rabí'u'l-Avval." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 206.)

[2] Quotations from the Qur'án.

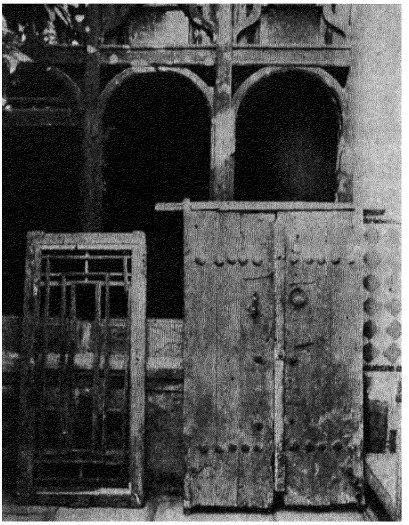
chanted; now swelling forth as He revealed verses of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá',[1] again acquiring ethereal, subtle harmonies as He uttered the prayers He was revealing.[2] At the end of each invocation, He would repeat this verse: "Far from the glory of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, be that which His creatures affirm of Him! And peace be upon His Messengers! And praise be to God, the Lord of all beings!"[3]

" 'He then addressed me in these words: "O thou who art the first to believe in Me! Verily I say, I am the Báb, the Gate of God, and thou art the Bábu'l-Báb, the gate of that Gate. Eighteen souls must, in the beginning, spontaneously and of their own accord, accept Me and recognise the truth of My Revelation. Unwarned and uninvited, each of these must seek independently to find Me. And when their number is complete, one of them must needs be chosen to accompany Me on My pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. There I shall deliver the Message of God to the Sharíf of Mecca. I then shall return to Kúfih, where again, in the Masjid of that holy city, I shall manifest His Cause. It is incumbent upon you not to divulge, either to your companions or to any other soul, that which you have seen and heard. Be engaged in the Masjid-i-Ílkhání in prayer and in teaching. I, too, will there join you in congregational prayer. Beware lest your attitude towards Me betray the secret of your faith. You should continue in this occupation and maintain this attitude until our departure for Ḥijáz. Ere we depart, we shall appoint unto each of the eighteen souls his special mission, and shall send them forth to accomplish their task. We shall instruct them to teach the Word of God and to quicken the souls of men." Having spoken these words to me, He dismissed me from His presence. Accompanying

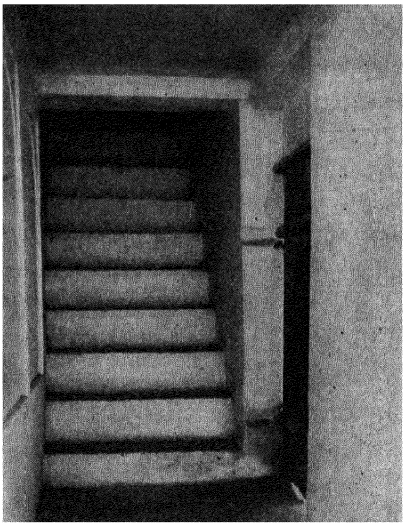
[1] The Báb's commentary on the Súrih of Joseph.

[2] "Dans le premier de ces livres, il était surtout pieux et mystique; dans le second, la polémique et la dialectique tenaient une grande place, et les auditeurs remarquaient avec étonnement qu'il découvrait, dans le chapitre du Livre de Dieu qu'il avait choisi, des sens nouveaux dont personne ne s'était avisé jusqu'alors, et qu'il en tirait surtout des doctrines et des renseignements complètement inattendus. Ce qu'on ne se lassait pas d'admirer, c'étaient l'élégance et la beauté du style arabe employé dans ces compositions. Elles eurent bientôt des admirateurs exaltés qui ne craignirent pas de les préférer aux plus beaux passages du Qur'án." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 120.)

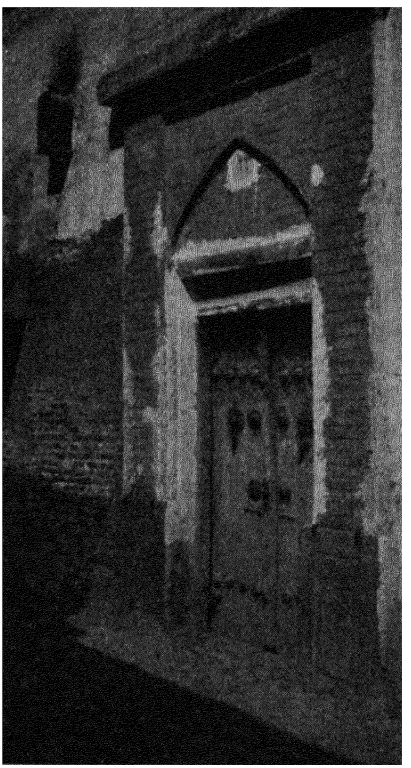
[3] Qur'án, 37: 180.



ORIGINAL WINDOW SASH AND DOOR



STEPS LEADING TO THE DECLARATION CHAMBER



ENTRANCE

VIEWS OF THE BÁB'S HOUSE IN SHÍRÁZ WHERE HE DECLARED HIS MISSION

me to the door of the house, He committed me to the care of God.

" 'This Revelation, so suddenly and impetuously thrust upon me, came as a thunderbolt which, for a time, seemed to have benumbed my faculties.[1] I was blinded by its dazzling splendour and overwhelmed by its crushing force. Excitement, joy, awe, and wonder stirred the depths of my soul. Predominant among these emotions was a sense of gladness and strength which seemed to have transfigured me. How feeble and impotent, how dejected and timid, I had felt previously! Then I could neither write nor walk, so tremulous were my hands and feet. Now, however, the knowledge of His Revelation had galvanised my being. I felt possessed of such courage and power that were the world, all its peoples and its potentates, to rise against me, I would, alone and undaunted, withstand their onslaught. The universe seemed but a handful of dust in my grasp. I seemed to be the Voice of Gabriel personified, calling unto all mankind: "Awake, for, lo! the morning Light has broken. Arise, for His Cause is made manifest. The portal of His grace is open wide; enter therein, O peoples of the world! For He who is your promised One is come!"

" 'In such a state I left His house and joined my brother and nephew. A large number of the followers of Shaykh Aḥmad, who had heard of my arrival, had gathered in the Masjid-i-Ílkhání to meet me. Faithful to the directions of my newly found Beloved, I immediately set myself to carry out His wishes. As I began to organise my classes and perform my devotions, a vast concourse of people gathered gradually about me. Ecclesiastical dignitaries and officials of the city also came to visit me. They marvelled at the spirit which my lectures revealed, unaware that the Source

[1] "It is related in the 'Biḥáru'l-Anvár,' the 'Aválim,' and the 'Yanbú" of Ṣádiq, son of Muḥammad, that he spoke these words: 'Knowledge is seven and twenty letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof. None thus far hath known any besides these two letters. But when the Qá'im shall arise, He will cause the remaining five and twenty letters to be made manifest.' Consider: he hath declared Knowledge to consist of seven and twenty letters, and regarded all the Prophets, from Adam even unto the 'Seal,' as Expounders of only two letters thereof, and as having been sent down with these two letters. He also saith that the Qá'im will reveal all the remaining five and twenty letters. Behold from this utterance how great and lofty is His station. His rank excelleth that of all the Prophets, and His Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones." ("The Kitáb-i-Íqán," p. 205.)

whence my knowledge flowed was none other than He whose advent they, for the most part, were eagerly awaiting.

" 'During those days I was, on several occasions, summoned by the Báb to visit Him. He would send at night-time that same Ethiopian servant to the masjid, bearing to me His most loving message of welcome. Every time I visited Him, I spent the entire night in His presence. Wakeful until the dawn, I sat at His feet fascinated by the charm of His utterance and oblivious of the world and its cares and pursuits. How rapidly those precious hours flew by! At daybreak I reluctantly withdrew from His presence. How eagerly in those days I looked forward to the approach of the evening hour! With what feelings of sadness and regret I beheld the dawning of day! In the course of one of these nightly visits, my Host addressed me in these words: "Tomorrow thirteen of your companions will arrive. To each of them extend the utmost loving-kindness. Leave them not to themselves, for they have dedicated their lives to the quest of their Beloved. Pray to God that He may graciously enable them to walk securely in that path which is finer than a hair and keener than a sword. Certain ones among them will be accounted, in the sight of God, as His chosen and favoured disciples. As to others, they will tread the middle way. The fate of the rest will remain undeclared until the hour when all that is hidden shall be made manifest."[1]

" 'That same morning, at sunrise, soon after my return from the home of the Báb, Mullá 'Alíy-i-Basṭámí, accompanied by the same number of companions as indicated to me, arrived at the Masjid-i-Ílkhání. I immediately set about to provide the means for their comfort. One night, a few days after their arrival, Mullá 'Alí, as the spokesman of his companions, gave vent to feelings which he could no longer repress. "You know well," he said, "how great is our confidence in you. We bear you such loyalty that if you should claim to be the promised Qá'im we would all unhesitatingly submit. Obedient to your summons, we have forsaken our

[1] "Vois de la même façon le début de la manifestation du Bayán: durant quarante jours personne autre que la lettre Sín ne crut au B. Ce ne fut que peu à peu que les formes des lettres du Bismi'lláhu'l-Amna'u'l-Aqdas revêtirent la chemise de la foi, jusqu'à ce que l'Unité Primitive fût complète. Vois ensuite combien elle s'est multipliée jusqu'à aujourd'hui." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 4, p. 119.)

homes and have gone forth in search of our promised Beloved. You were the first to set us all this noble example. We have followed in your footsteps. We have determined not to relax in our efforts until we find the Object of our quest. We have followed you to this place, ready to acknowledge whomsoever you accept, in the hope of seeking the shelter of His protection and of passing successfully through the tumult and agitation that must needs signalise the last Hour. How is it that we now see you teaching the people and conducting their prayers and devotions with the utmost tranquillity? Those evidences of agitation and expectancy seem to have vanished from your countenance. Tell us, we beseech you, the reason, that we too may be delivered from our present state of suspense and doubt." "Your companions," I gently observed, "may naturally attribute my peace and composure to the ascendancy which I seem to have acquired in this city. The truth is far from that. The world, I assure you, with all its pomp and seductions, can never lure away this Ḥusayn of Bushrúyih from his Beloved. Ever since the beginning of this holy enterprise upon which I have embarked, I have vowed to seal, with my life-blood, my own destiny. For His sake I have welcomed immersion in an ocean of tribulation. I yearn not for the things of this world. I crave only the good pleasure of my Beloved. Not until I shed my blood for His name will the fire that glows within me be quenched. Please God you may live to witness that day. Might not your companions have thought that, because of the intensity of his longing and the constancy of his endeavours, God has, in His infinite mercy, graciously deigned to unlock before the face of Mullá Ḥusayn the Gate of His grace, and, wishing, according to His inscrutable wisdom, to conceal this fact, has bidden him engage in such pursuits?" These words stirred the soul of Mullá ʿAlí. He at once perceived their meaning. With tearful eyes he entreated me to disclose the identity of Him who had turned my agitation into peace and converted my anxiety into certitude. "I adjure you," he pleaded, "to bestow upon me a portion of that holy draught which the Hand of mercy has given you to drink, for it will assuredly allay my thirst, and ease the pain of longing in my heart." "Beseech me not,"

I replied, "to grant you this favour. Let your trust be in Him, for He will surely guide your steps, and appease the tumult of your heart." ' "

Mullá 'Alí hastened to his companions and acquainted them with the nature of his conversation with Mullá Ḥusayn. Ablaze with the fire which the account of that conversation had kindled in their hearts, they immediately dispersed, and, seeking the seclusion of their cells, besought, through fasting and prayer, the early removal of the veil that intervened between them and the recognition of their Beloved. They prayed while keeping their vigils: "O God, our God! Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help. Guide us, we beseech Thee, on the straight Path, O Lord our God! Fulfil what Thou hast promised unto us by Thine Apostles, and put us not to shame on the Day of Resurrection. Verily, Thou wilt not break Thy promise."

On the third night of his retirement, whilst wrapt in prayer, Mullá 'Alíy-i-Basṭámí had a vision. There appeared before his eyes a light, and, lo! that light moved off before him. Allured by its splendour, he followed it, till at last it led him to his promised Beloved. At that very hour, in the mid-watches of the night, he arose and, exultant with joy and radiant with gladness, opened the door of his chamber and hastened to Mullá Ḥusayn. He threw himself into the arms of his revered companion. Mullá Ḥusayn most lovingly embraced him and said: "Praise be to God who hath guided us hither! We had not been guided had not God guided us!"

That very morning, at break of day, Mullá Ḥusayn, followed by Mullá 'Alí, hastened to the residence of the Báb. At the entrance of His house they met the faithful Ethiopian servant, who immediately recognised them and greeted them in these words: "Ere break of day, I was summoned to the presence of my Master, who instructed me to open the door of the house and to stand expectant at its threshold. 'Two guests,' He said, 'are to arrive early this morning. Extend to them in My name a warm welcome. Say to them from Me: "Enter therein in the name of God." ' "

The first meeting of Mullá 'Alí with the Báb, which was analogous to the meeting with Mullá Ḥusayn, differed only in this respect, that whereas at the previous meeting the

proofs and testimonies of the Báb's mission had been critically scrutinised and expounded, at this one all argument had been set aside and nothing but the spirit of intense adoration and of close and ardent fellowship prevailed. The entire chamber seemed to have been vitalised by that celestial potency which emanated from His inspired utterance. Everything in that room seemed to be vibrating with this testimony: "Verily, verily, the dawn of a new Day has broken. The promised One is enthroned in the hearts of men. In His hand He holds the mystic cup, the chalice of immortality. Blessed are they who drink therefrom!"

Each of the twelve companions of Mullá 'Alí, in his turn and by his own unaided efforts, sought and found his Beloved. Some in sleep, others in waking, a few whilst in prayer, and still others in their moments of contemplation, experienced the light of this Divine Revelation and were led to recognise the power of its glory. After the manner of Mullá 'Alí, these, and a few others, accompanied by Mullá Ḥusayn, attained the presence of the Báb and were declared "Letters of the Living." Seventeen Letters were gradually enrolled in the preserved Tablet of God, and were appointed as the chosen Apostles of the Báb, the ministers of His Faith, and the diffusers of His light.

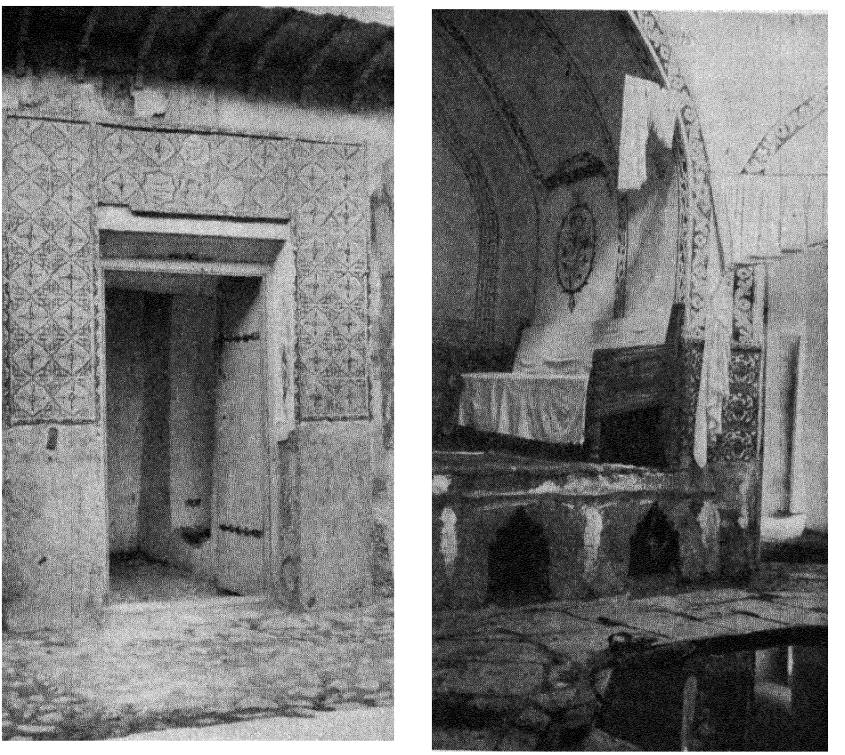
One night, in the course of His conversation with Mullá Ḥusayn, the Báb spoke these words: "Seventeen Letters have thus far enlisted under the standard of the Faith of God. There remains one more to complete the number. These Letters of the Living shall arise to proclaim My Cause and to establish My Faith. To-morrow night the remaining Letter will arrive and will complete the number of My chosen disciples." The next day, in the evening hour, as the Báb, followed by Mullá Ḥusayn, was returning to His home, there appeared a youth dishevelled and travel-stained. He approached Mullá Ḥusayn, embraced him, and asked him whether he had attained his goal. Mullá Ḥusayn tried at first to calm his agitation and advised him to rest for the moment, promising that he would subsequently enlighten him. That youth, however, refused to heed his advice. Fixing his gaze upon the Báb, he said to Mullá Ḥusayn: "Why seek you to hide Him from me? I can recognise Him by His

gait. I confidently testify that none besides Him, whether in the East or in the West, can claim to be the Truth. None other can manifest the power and majesty that radiate from His holy person." Mullá Ḥusayn marvelled at his words. He pleaded to be excused, however, and induced him to restrain his feelings until such time as he would be able to acquaint him with the truth. Leaving him, he hastened to join the Báb, and informed Him of his conversation with that youth. "Marvel not," observed the Báb, "at his strange behaviour. We have in the world of the spirit been communing with that youth. We know him already. We indeed awaited his coming. Go to him and summon him forthwith to Our presence." Mullá Ḥusayn was instantly reminded by these words of the Báb of the following traditional utterance: "On the last Day, the Men of the Unseen shall, on the wings of the spirit, traverse the immensity of the earth, shall attain the presence of the promised Qá'im, and shall seek from Him the secret that will resolve their problems and remove their perplexities."

Though distant in body, these heroic souls are engaged in daily communion with their Beloved, partake of the bounty of His utterance, and share the supreme privilege of His companionship. Otherwise how could Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim have known of the Báb? How could they have perceived the significance of the secret which lay hidden in Him? How could the Báb Himself, how could Quddús, His beloved disciple, have written in such terms, had not the mystic bond of the spirit linked their souls together? Did not the Báb, in the earliest days of His Mission, allude, in the opening passages of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá', His commentary on the Súrih of Joseph, to the glory and significance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh? Was it not His purpose, by dwelling upon the ingratitude and malice which characterised the treatment of Joseph by his brethren, to predict what Bahá'u'lláh was destined to suffer at the hands of His brother and kindred? Was not Quddús, although besieged within the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí by the battalions and fire of a relentless enemy, engaged, both in the daytime and in the night-season, in the completion of his eulogy of Bahá'u'lláh—that immortal commentary on the Sád of Ṣamad which

had already assumed the dimensions of five hundred thousand verses? Every verse of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá', every word of the aforementioned commentary of Quddús, will, if dispassionately examined, bear eloquent testimony to this truth.

The acceptance by Quddús of the truth of the Báb's Revelation completed the assigned number of His chosen



VIEWS OF THE PUBLIC BATH IN SHÍRÁZ, WHERE THE BÁB WENT AS A CHILD

disciples. Quddús, whose name was Muḥammad-'Alí, was, through his mother, a direct descendant of the Imám Ḥasan, the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad.[1] He was born in Bárfurúsh, in the province of Mázindarán. It has been reported by those who attended the lectures of Siyyid Káẓim that in the last years of the latter's life, Quddús enrolled him-

[1] The father of Quddús, according to the "Kashfu'l-Ghiṭá'," died several years before the Manifestation of the Báb. At the time of the death of his father, Quddús was still a boy studying in Mashhad in the school of Mírzá Ja'far. (P. 227, note 1.)

self as one of the Siyyid's disciples. He was the last to arrive, and invariably occupied the lowliest seat in the assembly. He was the first to depart upon the conclusion of every meeting. The silence he observed and the modesty of his behaviour distinguished him from the rest of his companions. Siyyid Káẓim was often heard to remark that certain ones among his disciples, though they occupied the lowliest of seats, and observed the strictest silence, were none the less so exalted in the sight of God that he himself felt unworthy to rank among their servants. His disciples, although they observed the humility of Quddús and acknowledged the exemplary character of his behaviour, remained unaware of the purpose of Siyyid Káẓim. When Quddús arrived in Shíráz and embraced the Faith declared by the Báb, he was only twenty-two years of age. Though young in years, he showed that indomitable courage and faith which none among the disciples of his master could exceed. He exemplified by his life and glorious martyrdom the truth of this tradition: "Whoso seeketh Me, shall find Me. Whoso findeth Me, shall be drawn towards Me. Whoso draweth nigh unto Me, shall love Me. Whoso loveth Me, him shall I also love. He who is beloved of Me, him shall I slay. He who is slain by Me, I Myself shall be his ransom."

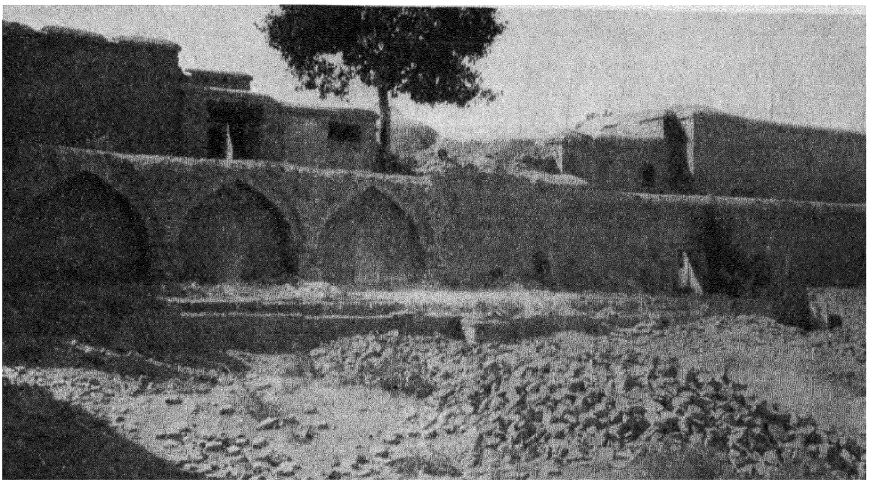
The Báb, whose name was Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad,[1] was born in the city of Shíráz, on the first day of Muḥarram, in the year 1235 A.H.[2] He belonged to a house which was renowned for its nobility and which traced its origin to Muḥammad Himself. The date of His birth confirmed the truth of the prophecy traditionally attributed to the Imám 'Alí: "I am two years younger than my Lord." Twenty-five years, four months, and four days had elapsed since the day of His birth, when he declared His Mission. In His early childhood He lost His father, Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍá,[3] a man who was known throughout the province of Fárs for his piety

[1] He is also known by the following designations:

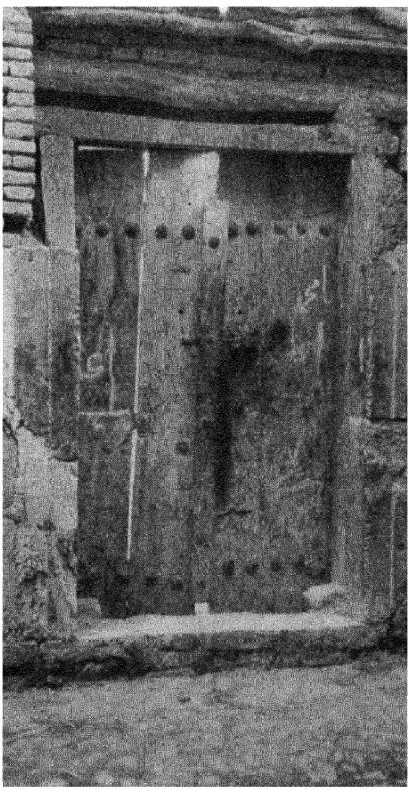
Siyyid-i-Dhikr	Ṭal'at-i-A'lá	Siyyid-i-Báb
'Abdu'dh-Dhikr	Ḥaḍrat-i-A'lá	
Bábu'lláh	Rabb-i-A'lá	
Nuqṭiy-i-Úlá	Nuqṭiy-i-Bayán	

[2] October 20, 1819 A.D.

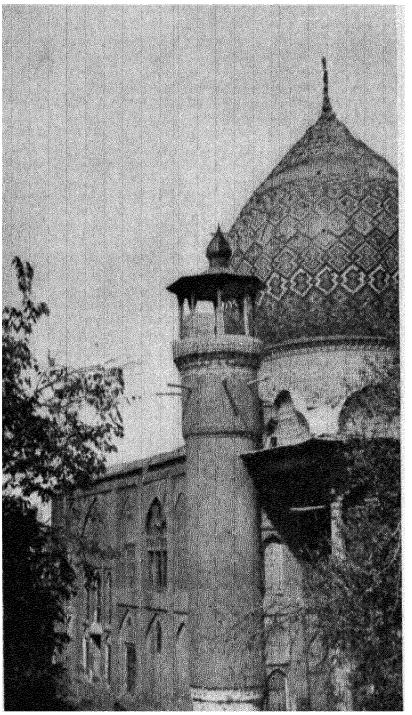
[3] According to Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl (manuscript on history of the Cause, p. 3), the Báb was still an infant, and had not yet been weaned, when His father passed away.

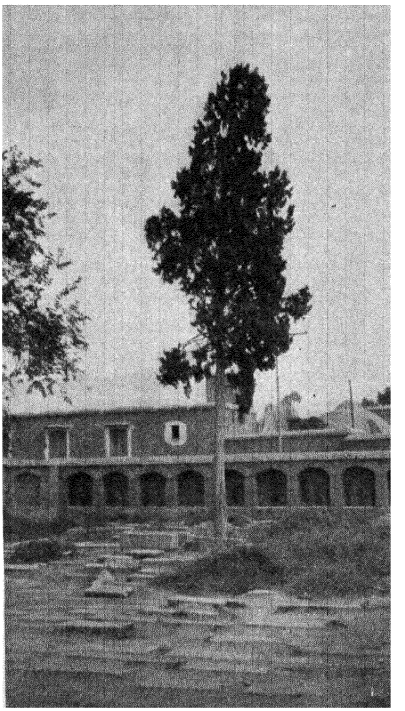


THE RUINS OF THE QAHVIYIH-AWLÍYÁ THE BÁB ATTENDED IN SHÍRÁZ

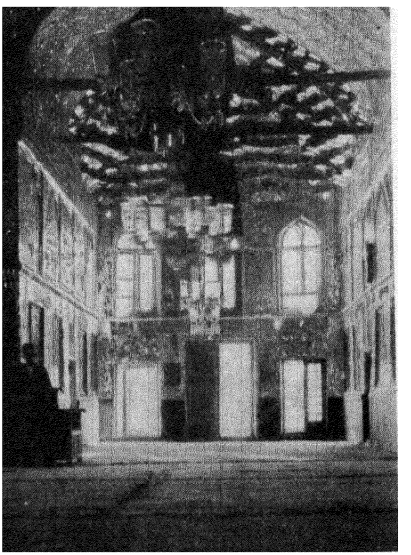


ENTRANCE DOOR OF RUINS OF
THE QAHVIYIH-AWLÍYÁ





TREE MARKING THE RESTING PLACE OF THE BĀB'S INFANT SON IN BĀBĪ-DUKHTARĀN, SHĪRĀZ



GRAVE OF THE BĀB'S WIFE IN SHĀH-CHIRĀGH, SHĪRĀZ

and virtue, and was held in high esteem and honour. Both His father and His mother were descendants of the Prophet, both were loved and respected by the people. He was reared by His maternal uncle, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, a martyr to the Faith, who placed Him, while still a child, under the care of a tutor named Shaykh 'Ábid.[1] The Báb, though not inclined to study, submitted to His uncle's will and directions.

Shaykh 'Ábid, known by his pupils as Shaykhuná, was a man of piety and learning. He had been a disciple of both Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim. "One day," he related, "I asked the Báb to recite the opening words of the Qur'án: 'Bismi'lláhi'r-Raḥmáni'r-Raḥím.'[2] He hesitated, pleading that unless He were told what these words signified, He would in no wise attempt to pronounce them. I pretended not to know their meaning. 'I know what these words signify,' observed my pupil; 'by your leave, I will explain them.' He spoke with such knowledge and fluency that I was struck with amazement. He expounded the meaning of 'Alláh,' of 'Raḥmán,' and 'Raḥím,' in terms such as I had neither read nor heard. The sweetness of His utterance still lingers in my memory. I felt impelled to take Him back to His uncle and to deliver into his hands the Trust he had committed to my care. I determined to tell him how unworthy I felt to teach so remarkable a child. I found His uncle alone in his office. 'I have brought Him back to you,' I said, 'and commit Him to your vigilant protection. He is not to be treated as a mere child, for in Him I can already discern evidences of that mysterious power which the Revelation of the Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán[3] alone can reveal. It is incumbent upon you to surround Him with your most loving care. Keep Him in your house, for He, verily, stands in no need of teachers such as I.' Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí sternly rebuked the Báb. 'Have You forgotten my instructions?' he said. 'Have I not already admonished You to follow the example of Your

[1] According to Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl (manuscript, p. 41), the Báb was six or seven years of age when He entered the school of Shaykh 'Ábid. The school was known by the name of "Qahviyih-Awlíyá." The Báb remained five years at that school, where He was taught the rudiments of Persian. On the first day of the month of Rabí'u'l-Avval, in the year 1257 A.H., He left for Najaf and Karbilá, returning seven months after to His native province of Fárs.

[2] In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

[3] "The Lord of the Age," one of the titles of the promised Qá'im.

fellow-pupils, to observe silence, and to listen attentively to every word spoken by Your teacher?' Having obtained His promise to abide faithfully by his instructions, he bade the Báb return to His school. The soul of that child could not, however, be restrained by the stern admonitions of His uncle. No discipline could repress the flow of His intuitive knowledge. Day after day He continued to manifest such remarkable evidences of superhuman wisdom as I am powerless to recount." At last His uncle was induced to take Him away from the school of Shaykh 'Ábid, and to associate Him with himself in his own profession.[1] There, too, He revealed signs of a power and greatness that few could approach and none could rival.

Some years later[2] the Báb was united in wedlock with the sister of Mírzá Siyyid Ḥasan and Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim.[3] The child which resulted from this union, He named Aḥmad.[4] He died in the year 1259 A.H.,[5] the year preceding the declaration of the Faith by the Báb. The Father did not lament his loss. He consecrated his death by words such as these:

[1] According to Ḥájí Mu'ínu's-Salṭanih's narrative (p. 37), the Báb assumed at the age of twenty the independent direction of His business affairs. "Devenu orphelin de bonne heure, il fut placé sous la tutelle de son oncle maternel, Áqá Siyyid 'Alí, et s'occupa, sous sa direction, du même commerce que son père (c'est-à-dire de mercerie)" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 189.)

[2] According to Ḥájí Mu'ínu's-Salṭanih's narrative (p. 37), the Báb's marriage took place when He was twenty-two years of age.

[3] The Báb refers to her in His commentary on the Súrih of Joseph (Súrih of Qarábat). The following is A. L. M. Nicolas' translation of the passage in question: "En vérité! Je me suis fiancé sur le trône de Dieu avec Ṣárá, c'est-à-dire avec la bien aimée. Car bien aimée vient de Bien Aimé (Le Bien Aimé est Muḥammad. Cela veut dire que Ṣárá était une Siyyid). En vérité, j'ai fixé les anges des cieux et les habitants du Paradis, témoins de ces fiançailles. Sache que la bienveillance du Dhikr Sublime est grande, oh Bien Aimée! Car c'est une bienveillance qui vient de Dieu! l'Aimé! Tu n'es pas, toi comme une femme ordinaire, si tu obéis à Dieu, au sujet du Dhikr Sublime! Connais l'immense vérité du Verbe Sublime et glorifie toi de t'asseoir avec l'ami qui est le Chéri de Dieu très haut! Certes la gloire te vient à toi de la part de Dieu, le Sage. Patiente dans l'ordre qui vient de Dieu sur le Báb et sa famille. Et, en vérité, ton fils Aḥmad a un asile dans le Paradis béni, auprès de la grande Fáṭimih." (Preface to A. L. M. Nicolas' "Le Bayân Persan," vol. 2, pp. 10–11.) "The Báb's widow survived till A.H. 1300 (1882–83)." (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, article 12, p. 993.) Both were the sons of Mírzá 'Alí, who was the paternal uncle of the mother of the Báb. Mírza Muḥsin and Mírzá Hadí, respectively the son and grandson of Mírzá Siyyid Ḥasan and Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, became sons-in-law of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

[4] The Báb refers to His son in His commentary on the Súrih of Joseph. The following is A. L. M. Nicolas' translation: "En vérité, ton fils Aḥmad a un asile dans le Paradis béni, auprès de la grande Fáṭimih." (Súrih of Qarábat.) "Gloire à Dieu, qui, en vérité, a donné à la Fraîcheur des Yeux dans sa jeunesse un enfant nommé Aḥmad. Et en vérité, cet enfant, nous l'avons élevé vers Dieu!" (Súrih of 'Abd.) (Preface to A. L. M. Nicolas' "Le Bayán Persan," vol. 2, p. 11.)

[5] 1843 A.D.

"O God, my God! Would that a thousand Ishmaels were given Me, this Abraham of Thine, that I might have offered them, each and all, as a loving sacrifice unto Thee. O my Beloved, my heart's Desire! The sacrifice of this Aḥmad whom Thy servant 'Alí-Muhammad hath offered up on the altar of Thy love can never suffice to quench the flame of longing in His heart. Not until He immolates His own heart at Thy feet, not until His whole body falls a victim to the cruelest tyranny in Thy path, not until His breast is made a target for countless darts for Thy sake, will the tumult of His soul be stilled. O my God, my only Desire! Grant that the sacrifice of My son, My only son, may be acceptable unto Thee. Grant that it be a prelude to the sacrifice of My own, My entire self, in the path of Thy good pleasure. Endue with Thy grace My life-blood which I yearn to shed in Thy path. Cause it to water and nourish the seed of Thy Faith. Endow it with Thy celestial potency, that this infant seed of God may soon germinate in the hearts of men, that it may thrive and prosper, that it may grow to become a mighty tree, beneath the shadow of which all the peoples and kindreds of the earth may gather. Answer Thou My prayer, O God, and fulfil My most cherished desire. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful."[1]

The days which the Báb devoted to commercial pursuits were mostly spent in Búshihr.[2] The oppressive heat of the summer did not deter Him from devoting, each Friday, several hours to continuous worship upon the roof of His house. Though exposed to the fierce rays of the noontide sun, He, turning His heart to His Beloved, continued to commune with Him, unmindful of the intensity of the heat

[1] "He left Shíráz for Búshihr at the age of 17, and remained there for five years engaged in commercial pursuits. During this time he won the esteem of all the merchants with whom he was brought in contact, by his integrity and piety. He was extremely attentive to his religious duties, and gave away large sums to charity. On one occasion he gave 70 túmáns [about £22] to a poor neighbour." (Appendix 2 of Táríkh-i-Jadíd: Ḥájí Mírzá Jání's History, pp. 343–4.)

[2] "Il était déjà méditatif et plutôt silencieux cependant que sa jolie figure, l'éclat de son regard en même temps que son maintien modeste et recueilli attiraient dès cette époque l'attention de ses concitoyens. Très jeune, les questions religieuses l'attiraient invinciblement, car c'est a l'âge de 19 ans qu'il écrivit son premier ouvrage 'le risáliy-i-Fiqhíyyih' dans lequel il montre une vraie piété et une effusion islamique qui semblaient lui présager un brillant avenir dans les liens de l'orthodoxie Shí'ite. Il est probable que cet ouvrage fut écrit à Búshihr car c'est lorsqu'il avait 18 ou 19 ans qu'il y fut envoyé, par son oncle, pour les besoins de son commerce." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad dit le Bâb," pp. 189–90.)

and oblivious of the world around Him. From early dawn till sunrise, and from midday till late in the afternoon, He dedicated His time to meditation and pious worship. Turning His gaze towards the north, in the direction of Ṭihrán, He, at every break of day, greeted, with a heart overflowing with love and joy, the rising sun, which to Him was a sign and



FACSIMILE OF ṬÁHIRIH'S HANDWRITING

symbol of that Day-Star of Truth that was soon to dawn upon the world. As a lover who beholds the face of his beloved, He gazed upon the rising orb with steadfastness and longing. He seemed to be addressing, in mystic language, that shining luminary, and to be entrusting it with His message of yearning and love to His concealed Beloved. With such transports of delight He greeted its beaming rays, that the heedless and

ignorant around Him thought Him to be enamoured with the sun itself.[1]

I have heard Ḥájí Siyyid Javád-i-Karbilá'í[2] recount the following: "Whilst journeying to India, I passed through Búshihr. As I was already acquainted with Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, I was enabled to meet the Báb on several occasions. Every time I met Him, I found Him in such a state of humility and lowliness as words fail me to describe. His downcast eyes, His extreme courtesy, and the serene expression of His face made an indelible impression upon my soul.[3] I often heard those who were closely associated with Him testify to the purity of His character, to the charm of His manners, to His self-effacement, to His high integrity, and to His extreme devotion to God.[4] A certain man confided to His care a trust, requesting Him to dispose of it at a fixed price. When the Báb sent him the value of that article, the man found that the sum which he had been offered considerably exceeded the limit which he had fixed. He immediately wrote to the Báb, requesting Him to explain the reason. The Báb replied: 'What I have sent you is entirely your due. There is not a single farthing in excess of

[1] "En société il s'entretenait plus volontiers avec les savants ou écoutait les récits des voyageurs qui affluaient dans cette ville commerçante; aussi se plaisait-on à le ranger au nombre des sectateurs du Ṭaríqat, fort respectés dans le peuple." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 335.)

[2] "The Kashfu'l-Ghiṭá' " gives the following particulars regarding this remarkable person: "Ḥájí Siyyid Javád himself informed me that he was a resident of Karbilá, that his cousins were well known among the recognised 'ulamás and doctors of the law in that city, and belonged to the Ithná-'Asharí sect of Shí'ah Islám. In his youth he met Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í, but was never regarded as his disciple. He was, however, an avowed follower and supporter of Siyyid Káẓim, and ranked among his foremost adherents. He met the Báb in Shíráz, long before the date of the latter's Manifestation. He saw Him on several occasions, when the Báb was only eight or nine years old, in the house of His maternal uncle. He subsequently met Him in Búshihr and stayed for about six months in the same khán in which the Báb and His maternal uncle were residing. Mullá 'Alíy-i-Bastámí, one of the Letters of the Living, acquainted him with the Message of the Báb, while in Karbilá, from which city he proceeded to Shíráz in order to inform himself more fully of the nature of His Revelation." (Pp. 55–7.)

[3] "[The] Báb possessed a mild and benignant countenance, his manners were composed and dignified, his eloquence was impressive, and he wrote rapidly and well." (Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," p. 178.)

[4] "Renfermé en lui-même, toujours occupé de pratiques pieuses, d'une simplicité de mœurs extrême, d'une douceur attrayante, et relevant ces dons par son extrême jeunesse et le charme merveilleux de sa figure, il attira autour de lui un certain nombre de personnes édifiées. Alors on commença à s'entretenir de sa science et de l'éloquence pénétrante de ses discours. Il ne pouvait ouvrir la bouche, assurent les hommes qui l'ont connu, qu'il ne

what is your right. There was a time when the trust you had delivered to Me had attained this value. Failing to sell it at that price, I now feel it My duty to offer you the whole of that sum.' However much the Báb's client entreated Him to receive back the sum in excess, the Báb persisted in refusing.

"With what assiduous care He attended those gatherings at which the virtues of the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhadá', the Imám Ḥusayn, were being extolled! With what attention He listened to the chanting of the eulogies! What tenderness and devotion He showed at those scenes of lamentation and prayer! Tears rained from His eyes as His trembling lips murmured words of prayer and praise. How compelling was His dignity, how tender the sentiments which His countenance inspired!"

As to those whose supreme privilege it was to be enrolled by the Báb in the Book of His Revelation as His chosen Letters of the Living, their names are as follows:

Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushrú'í,
Muḥammad-Ḥasan, his brother,
Muḥammad-Báqir, his nephew,
Mullá 'Alíy-i-Basṭámí,
Mullá Khudá-Bakhsh-i-Qúchání, later named Mullá 'Alí,
Mullá Ḥasan-i-Bajistání,
Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Yazdí,
Mírzá Muḥammad Rawḍih-Khán-i-Yazdí,
Sa'íd-i-Hindí,
Mullá Maḥmúd-i-Khu'í,
Mullá Jalíl-i-Urúmí,
Mullá Aḥmad-i-Ibdál-i-Marághi'í,
Mullá Báqir-i-Tabrízí,
Mullá Yúsif-i-Ardibílí,
Mírzá Hádí, son of Mullá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb-i-Qazvíní,

remuât le fond du cœur. S'exprimant, du reste, avec une vénération profonde sur le compte du Prophète, des Imâms et de leurs saints companions, il charmait les orthodoxes sévères, en même temps que, dans des entretiens plus intimes, les esprits ardents et inquiets se réjouissaient de ne pas trouver en lui cette raideur dans la profession des opinions consacrées qui leur eût pesé. Au contraire, sa conversation leur ouvrait tous ces horizons infinis, variés, bigarrés, mystérieux, ombragés et semés çà et là d'une lumière aveuglante, qui transportent d'aise les imaginations de ce pays-là." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 118.)

Mírzá Muhammad-'Alíy-i-Qazvíní,[1]
Ṭáhirih,[2]
Quddús.

These all, with the single exception of Ṭáhirih, attained the presence of the Báb, and were personally invested by Him with the distinction of this rank. It was she who, having learned of the intended departure of her sister's husband, Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, from Qazvín, entrusted him with a sealed letter, requesting that he deliver it to that promised One whom she said he was sure to meet in the course of his journey. "Say to Him, from me," she added, " 'The effulgence of Thy face flashed forth, and the rays of Thy visage arose on high. Then speak the word, "Am I not your

[1] According to Samandar, who was one of the early believers of Qazvín (manuscript, p. 15), Ṭáhirih's sister, Marḍíyyih, was the wife of Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, who was one of the Letters of the Living, and who suffered martyrdom at Shaykh Ṭabarsí. Marḍiyyih appears to have recognised and embraced the Message of the Báb (p. 5). Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí was the son of Ḥájí Mullá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, to whom the Báb addressed a Tablet while in the neighbourhood of Qazvín.

[2] According to the "Memorials of the Faithful" (pp. 291–8), Ṭáhirih had two sons and one daughter, none of whom recognised the truth of the Cause. Such was the degree of her knowledge and attainments, that her father, Ḥájí Mullá Ṣáliḥ, often expressed his regret in the following terms: "Would that she had been a boy, for he would have shed illumination upon my household, and would have succeeded me!" She became acquainted with the writings of Shaykh Ahmad while staying in the home of her cousin, Mullá Javád, from whose library she borrowed these books, and took them over to her home. Her father raised violent objections to her action and, in his heated discussions with her, denounced and criticised the teachings of Shaykh Aḥmad. Ṭáhirih refused to heed the counsels of her father, and engaged in secret correspondence with Siyyid Káẓim, who conferred upon her the name of "Qurratu'l-'Ayn." The title of "Ṭáhirih" was first associated with her name while she was staying in Badasht, and was subsequently approved by the Báb. From Qazvín she left for Karbilá, hoping to meet Siyyid Káẓim, but arrived too late, the Siyyid having passed away ten days before her arrival. She joined the companions of the departed leader, and spent her time in prayer and meditation, eagerly expecting the appearance of Him whose advent Siyyid Káẓim had foretold. Whilst in that city, she dreamed a dream. A youth, a Siyyid, wearing a black cloak and a green turban, appeared to her in the heavens, who with upraised hands was reciting certain verses, one of which she noted down in her book. She awoke from her dream greatly impressed by her strange experience. When, later on, a copy of the "Aḥsanu'l-Qisaṣ," the Báb's commentary on the Súrih of Joseph, reached her, she, to her intense delight, discovered that same verse which she had heard in her dream in that book. That discovery assured her of the truth of the Message which the author of that work had proclaimed. She herself undertook the translation of the "Aḥsanu'l-Qiṣaṣ" into Persian, and exerted the utmost effort for its spread and interpretation. For three months her house in Karbilá was besieged by the guards whom the Governor had appointed to watch and prevent her from associating with the people. From Karbilá she proceeded to Baghdád, and lived for a time in the house of Shaykh Muḥammad-i-Shibl, from which place she transferred her residence to another quarter, and was eventually taken to the home of the Muftí, where she stayed for about three months.

Lord?" and "Thou art, Thou art!" we will all reply.' "[1]

Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí eventually met and recognised the Báb and conveyed to Him both the letter and the message of Ṭáhirih. The Báb forthwith declared her one of the Letters of the Living. Her father, Ḥájí Mullá Ṣáliḥ-i-Qazvíní, and his brother, Mullá Taqí, were both mujtahids of great renown,[2] were skilled in the traditions of Muslim law, and were universally respected by the people of Ṭihrán, Qazvín, and other leading cities of Persia. She was married to Mullá Muḥammad, son of Mullá Taqí, her uncle, whom

[1] According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghitá' " (p. 93), Ṭáhirih was informed of the Message of the Báb by Mullá 'Alíy-i-Basṭamí, who visited Karbilá in the year 1260 A.H., after his return from Shíráz.

[2] "L'une des plus grandes familles de Qazvín, je veux dire des plus grandes tant par les hautes positions que ses divers membres occupaient dans la hiérarchie écclesiastique que par la réputation de science qui les environnait, était, sans contredit, la famille de Ḥájí Mullá Ṣáliḥ-i-Baraqání. Il avait un frère Mullá Muhammad-Taqíy-i-Baraqání qui reçut, après sa mort, le titre de 'Shahíd-i-Thálith', c'est-à-dire troisième martyre. Nous reprendrons d'un peu haut leur histoire pour faire bien comprendre tant leur rôle dans les dissensions religieuses de la Perse que la catastrophe que devait fatalement amener le caractère altier et l'orgueil du frère de Mullá Ṣálih. Quand le grand Mujtahid Áqá Siyyid Muhammad arriva à Qazvín, quelqu'un lui demanda si Ḥájí Mullá Ṣáliḥ-i-Baraqání était un Mujtahid. 'Certes,' répondit le Siyyid, et cela, d'autant plus que Ṣáliḥ était de ses anciens élèves, qui, vers le tard avait suivi les leçons de Áqá Siyyid 'Alí. 'Fort bien,' lui répondit son interlocuteur, mais son frère Muhammad-Taqí, est-il, lui aussi, digne de ce titre sacré? Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad répondit en louant les qualités et la science de Taqí, mais évita de donner une réponse précise à l'interrogation directe qu'on lui avait faite. Ceci n'empêcha pas l'interrogateur de répandre dans la ville le bruit que Siyyid Muhammad lui-même reconnaissait la maîtrise de Taqí, qu'il avait déclaré Mujtahid en sa présence. Or, Siyyid Muḥammad était allé habiter chez un de ses collègues, Ḥájí Mullá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb: celui-ci eut vite connaissance du bruit ainsi répandu, et faisant venir chez lui l'interlocuteur du Siyyid, le tança vertement, en présence de témoins. Naturellement le bruit de cette intervention, amplifiée de bouche en bouche, parvint jusqu'aux oreilles de Taqí qui, furieux en lui-même se bornait à dire chaque fois que le nom de Mullá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb frappait ses oreilles: 'Je ne le respecte que parce qu'il est le fils de mon maître bien-aimé.' Siyyid Muhammad, ayant été mis au courant de tous ces incidents et de toutes ces rumeurs, comprenant qu'il avait contristé l'âme de Taqí, vint un jour lui demander à déjeuner, le traita avec beaucoup de distinction, lui écrivit son brevet de Mujtahid et, ce jour-là même, l'accompagna à la Mosquée, et, la prière terminée, s'assit sur les degrés de la chaire d'où il fit l'éloge de Taqí et le confirma, en pleine assemblée, dans sa nouvelle dignité. Or, un peu plus tard, vint à passer par Qazvín Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í. Ce personnage, dit l'auteur très pieux du Qisaṣu'l-'Ulamá', fut déclaré impie car il voulut rapprocher la philosophie de la loi religieuse, 'et tout le monde sait que, dans la plupart des cas, vouloir mêler l'intelligence et la loi religieuse est une chose impossible.' Quoiqu'il en soit, Shaykh Ahmad s'éleva fort au-dessus de ses contemporains, et beaucoup d'hommes partageaient son opinion. Il avait des sectateurs dans toutes les villes de la Perse, et le Sháh Fatḥ-'Alí le traitait avec beaucoup de considération quoiqu' Ákhúnd Mullá 'Alí eût, paraît-il, dit de lui: 'C'est un ignorant au cœur pur.' À son passage à Qazvín, il alla habiter la maison de Mullá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, désormais l'ennemi de la famille Baraqání. Il allait prier à la Mosquée paroissiale et les 'Ulamás de Qazvín y venaient prier sous sa direction. Il rendit naturellement à ces saints personnages toutes les visites et toutes les amabilités qu'il en avait reçues: il était fort bien avec eux, et ce ne fut bientôt plus un mystère pour personne que son hôte était de ses disciples. Un jour, il se rendit chez Ḥájí Mullá Taqíy-i-Baraqání, qui le reçut avec tous les dehors du plus profond respect, mais

the shí'ahs styled Shahíd-i-Thálith.[1] Although her family belonged to the Bálá-Sarí, Ṭáhirih alone showed, from the very beginning, a marked sympathy and devotion to Siyyid Káẓim. As an evidence of her personal admiration for him, she wrote an apology in defence and justification of the teachings of Shaykh Aḥmad and presented it to him. To this she soon received a reply, couched in the most affectionate terms, in the opening passages of which the Siyyid thus addressed her: "O thou who art the solace of mine eyes (Yá Qurrat-i-'Ayní!), and the joy of my heart!" Ever since that time she has been known as Qurratu'l-'Ayn. After the historic

profita de sa présence pour lui poser quelques questions insidieuses. 'En ce qui concerne la résurrection des morts au jour du jugement, lui demanda-t-il, votre opinion est-elle celle de Mullá Ṣadrá?' 'Non,' dit Shaykh Ahmad. Alors Taqí, interpellant son plus jeune frère Ḥájí Mullá 'Alí: 'Va, lui dit-il, dans ma bibliothèque et apporte-moi le Shavâhid-i-Rubúbíyyih de Mullá Ṣadrá.' Puis comme Ḥájí Mullá tardait á revenir, il dit à son interlocuteur: 'Je ne discute pas avec vous, à ce sujet, mais je suis cependant curieux de connaître votre opinion sur la matière.' Le Shaykh répondit: 'Rien n'est plus facile. D'après moi la résurrection n'aura pas lieu avec notre corps matériel, mais avec son essence: et j'appelle essence, par exemple, le verre qui est en puissance dans la pierre.' 'Pardon, rétorqua méchamment Taqí, mais cette essence est autre que le corps materiel, et vous savez qu'il est de dogme, dans notre sainte religion, de croire à la résurrection de ce corps materiel lui-même.' Le Shaykh fut naturellement interloqué, et ce fut en vain qu'un de ses élèves, natif de Turkistán, voulut détourner la conversation en entamant une discussion qui menaçait d'être longue, le coup était porté, et Shaykh Ahmad se retira, convaincu qu'il s'était compromis Il ne tarda pas à s'apercevoir que sa conversation avait été soigneusement rapportée par Taqí, car le jour même il se rendit à la mosquée pour prier et il fut suivi du seul 'Abdu'l-Vahháb. Les choses menaçaient donc de se gâter, et 'Abdu'l-Vahháb crut avoir trouvé le moyen d'aplanir toutes les difficultés en suppliant son maître d'écrire et de publier un traité dans lequel il affirmerait la résurrection du corps matériel. Il avait compté sans la haine de Taqí. En effet, Shaykh Ahmad écrivit ce traité qui se trouve encore dans son volume intitulé Ajvibatu'l-Masá'il, mais personne ne le voulut lire et le bruit de son impiété grandissait tous les jours. Ce fut au point que le Gouverneur de la ville le Prince 'Alí-Naqí Mírzá Ruknu'd-Dawlih considérant l'importance des personnages engagés dans la lutte et craignant d'être accusé d'avoir laissé germer la discorde, résolut de tenter un accord. Il invita, une nuit, à un grand dîner tous les 'Ulamás illustres de la ville. Shaykh Ahmad avait la première place, et près de lui, séparé par un seul personnage, était assis Taqí. On apporta les plateaux préparés pour trois personnes, de telle sorte que les deux ennemis se trouvassent obligés de manger ensemble. Mais Taqí, irréductible, se tourna vers le plateau de ses voisins de droite, et, au grand scandale du Prince, mit sa main gauche devant la partie gauche de sa figure de façon à ce que son regard ne rencontrât pas, même involontairement, la personne de Shaykh Ahmad. Après le repas, qui fut plutôt morne, le Prince, persistant dans son idée de réconcilier les deux adversaires, fit un grand éloge de Shaykh Aḥmad, disant qu'il était le plus grand des docteurs arabes et persans, que Taqí devait lui témoigner le plus grand respect et qu'il n'était pas convenable qu'il prêtât l'oreille aux propos des gens qui voulaient amener la guerre entre deux intelligences d'élite. Il fut violemment interrompu par Taqí qui déclara d'un ton de souverain mépris: 'Il ne peut y avoir aucune paix entre l'impiété et la foi: le Shaykh a, en ce qui concerne la résurrection, une doctrine contraire à la loi islamique. Or, celui qui partage cette doctrine est un impie. Que peut-il y avoir de commun entre un révolté et moi?' Le prince eut beau insister, prier, Taqí n'en voulut pas démordre et la séance fut levée." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 263–7.)

[1] Third Martyr.

gathering of Badasht, a number of those who attended were so amazed at the fearlessness and outspoken language of that heroine, that they felt it their duty to acquaint the Báb with the character of her startling and unprecedented behaviour. They strove to tarnish the purity of her name. To their accusations the Báb replied: "What am I to say regarding her whom the Tongue of Power and Glory has named Ṭáhirih [the Pure One]?" These words proved sufficient to silence those who had endeavoured to undermine her position. From that time onwards she was designated by the believers as Ṭáhirih.[1]

A word should now be said in explanation of the term Bálá-Sarí. Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim, as well as their followers, when visiting the shrine of the Imám Ḥusayn in Karbilá, invariably occupied, as a mark of reverence, the lower end of the sepulchre. They never advanced beyond it, whereas other worshippers, the Bálá-Sarí, recited their prayers in the upper section of that shrine. The Shaykhís, believing, as they did, that "every true believer lives both in this world and in the next," felt it unseemly and improper to step beyond the limits of the lower sections of the shrine

[1] "Mullá Ṣáliḥ avait, parmi ses enfants, une fille, Zarrín-Táj—la couronne d'or—qui attira sur elle l'attention dès sa plus tendre enfance. Au lieu de se livrer comme ses congénères aux jeux et aux amusements, elle passait des heures entières à écouter les conversations dogmatiques de ses parents. Sa vive intelligence s'assimila rapidement le fatras de la science islamique, sans s'y noyer, et bientôt elle fut à même de discuter sur les points les plus obscurs et les plus confus: les traditions (ḥadís) n'eurent plus de secrets pour elle. Sa réputation s'était bien vite répandue dans la ville et ses concitoyens la considéraient, à juste titre, comme un prodige. Prodige de science, mais aussi prodige de beauté; car l'enfant grandissante était devenue une jeune fille dont le visage étincelait d'une si radieuse beauté qu'on lui avait donné le surnom de Qurratu'l-'Ayn—que M. de Gobineau traduit 'la consolation des yeux.' Son frère, 'Abdu'l-Vahháb-i-Qazvíní, qui hérita de la science et de la réputation de son père, racontait lui-même, quoique resté, en apparence du moins, musulman: 'Nous tous, ses frères, ses cousins, nous n'osions parler en sa présence, tant sa science nous intimidait, et si nous nous hasardions à exprimer une hypothèse sur un point de doctrine contesté, elle nous démontrait d'une façon si nette, si précise et si péremptoire que nous faisions fausse route, que nous nous retirions tout confus.' Elle assistait aux cours de son père et de son oncle dans la même salle que deux ou trois cents étudiants, mais cachée derrière un rideau et plus d'une fois, elle réfuta les explications que ces deux vieillards proposaient sur telle ou telle question. Sa réputation devint immense dans la Perse savante et les plus hautains 'ulamás consentirent à adopter quelques unes de ses hypothèses ou de ses opinions. Le fait est d'autant plus remarquable que la religion musulmane shí'ite a placé la femme presque au rang de l'animal: elle n'a pas d'âme et n'existe guère que pour la reproduction. Elle épousa, toute jeune encore, le fils de son oncle, Muḥammad-i-Qazvíní, qui était Imám Jum'ih de la ville et, par la suite, se rendit à Karbilá où elle assista aux leçons de Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí. Elle partagea avec passion les idées de son maître, idées qu'elle connaissait déjà d'ailleurs, Qazvín étant devenu un foyer des doctrines Shaykhís. Elle était, comme nous le verrons par la suite, d'un tempérament ardent, d'une intelligence nette

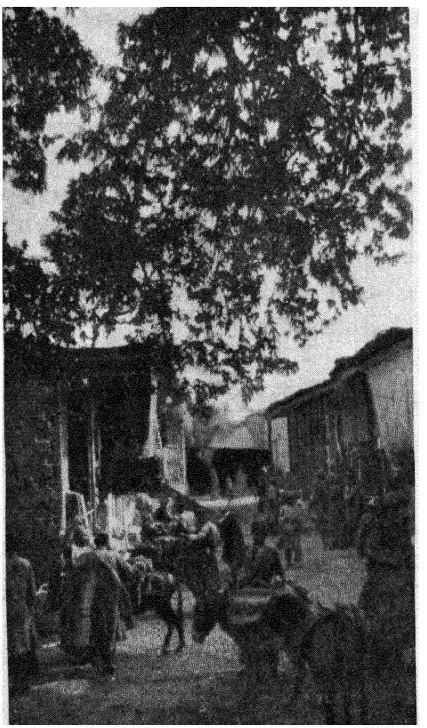
of the Imám Ḥusayn, who in their eyes was the very incarnation of the most perfect believer.[1]

Mullá Ḥusayn, who anticipated being the chosen companion of the Báb during His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, was, as soon as the latter decided to depart from Shíráz, summoned to the presence of his Master, who gave him the following instructions: "The days of our companionship are approaching their end. My Covenant with you is now accomplished. Gird up the loins of endeavour, and arise to diffuse My Cause. Be not dismayed at the sight of the degeneracy and perversity of this generation, for the Lord of the Covenant shall assuredly assist you. Verily, He shall surround you with His loving protection, and shall lead you from victory to victory. Even as the cloud that rains its bounty upon the earth, traverse the land from end to end, and shower upon its people the blessings which the Almighty, in His mercy, has deigned to confer upon you. Forbear with the 'ulamás, and resign yourself to the will of God. Raise the cry: 'Awake, awake, for, lo! the Gate of God is open, and the morning Light is shedding its radiance upon all mankind! The promised One is made manifest; prepare the way for Him, O people of the earth! Deprive not yourselves of its redeeming grace, nor close your eyes to its effulgent glory.' Those whom you find receptive to your call, share with them the epistles and tablets We have revealed for you, that, perchance, these wondrous words may cause them to turn away from the slough of heedlessness, and soar into the realm

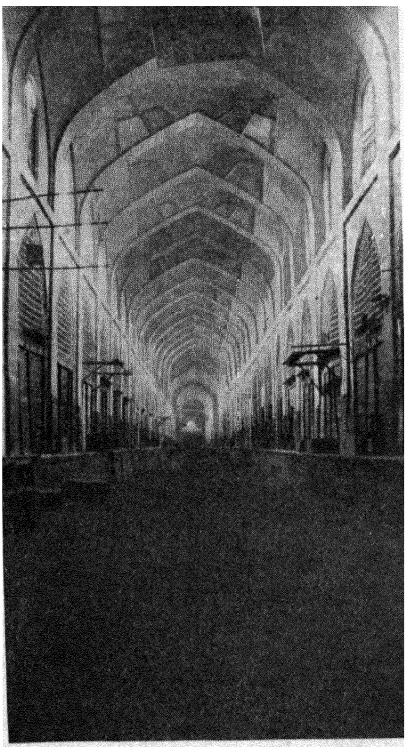
et lucide, d'un sang-froid' merveilleux et d'un courage indomptable. Toutes ces qualités réunies devaient l'amener à s'occuper du Báb dont elle entendit parler dès son retour a Qazvín. Ce qu'elle en apprit l'intéressa si vivement qu'elle entra en correspondance avec le Réformateur et que, bientôt convaincue par lui, elle fit connaître sa conversion *urbi et orbi*. Le scandale fut immense et le clergé consterné. En vain son mari, son père, ses frères la conjuraient-ils de renoncer à cette dangereuse folie, elle resta inflexible et proclama hautement sa foi." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 273–4.)

[1] "Ce nom leur vient, dit Ḥájí Karím Khán dans son Hidáyatu'ṭ-Ṭálibín, de ce que le feu Shaykh Aḥmad étant à Karbilá, durant ses pèlerinages aux saints tombeaux, et, par respect pour les Imáms, disait ses prières en se tenant derrière l'Imám, c'est-à-dire à ses pieds. En effet, pour lui il n'y avait pas de différence quant au respect à témoigner entre un Imám mort et un Imám vivant. Les Persans, au contraire, pénétrant dans le tombeau, vont se mettre au-dessus de la tête de l'Imám, et lui tournent donc le dos quand ils prient puisque les saints morts sont enterrés la tête vers la Qiblih. C'est là une honte et un mensonge! Les apôtres de Jésus prétendant être venus en aide à Dieu, on les appela 'Naṣárá,' nom qui fût donné à tous ceux qui marchèrent sur leurs traces. C'est ainsi que le nom de Bálá-Sarí s'étendit à tous ceux qui suivent la doctrine de ceux qui prient en se tenant sur la tête de l'Imám." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme," I, preface, pp. 5–6.)

of the Divine presence. In this pilgrimage upon which We are soon to embark, We have chosen Quddús as Our companion. We have left you behind to face the onslaught of a fierce and relentless enemy. Rest assured, however, that a bounty unspeakably glorious shall be conferred upon you. Follow the course of your journey towards the north, and



SITE OF THE KAZIRAN GATE, SHÍRÁZ



THE MARKET-STREET OF VAKIL, SHÍRÁZ

visit on your way Iṣfáhán, Káshán, Qum, and Ṭihrán. Beseech almighty Providence that He may graciously enable you to attain, in that capital, the seat of true sovereignty, and to enter the mansion of the Beloved. A secret lies hidden in that city. When made manifest, it shall turn the earth into paradise. My hope is that you may partake of its grace and recognise its splendour. From Ṭihrán proceed to Khurásán, and there proclaim anew the Call. From thence return to Najaf and Karbilá, and there await the summons

of your Lord. Be assured that the high mission for which you have been created will, in its entirety, be accomplished by you. Until you have consummated your work, if all the darts of an unbelieving world be directed against you, they will be powerless to hurt a single hair of your head. All things are imprisoned within His mighty grasp. He, verily, is the Almighty, the All-Subduing."

The Báb then summoned to His presence Mullá 'Alíy-i-Basṭámí, and addressed to him words of cheer and loving-kindness. He instructed him to proceed directly to Najaf and Karbilá, alluded to the severe trials and afflictions that would befall him, and enjoined him to be steadfast till the end. "Your faith," He told him, "must be immovable as the rock, must weather every storm and survive every calamity. Suffer not the denunciations of the foolish and the calumnies of the clergy to afflict you, or to turn you from your purpose. For you are called to partake of the celestial banquet prepared for you in the immortal Realm. You are the first to leave the House of God, and to suffer for His sake. If you be slain in His path, remember that great will be your reward, and goodly the gift which will be bestowed upon you."

No sooner were these words uttered than Mullá 'Alí arose from his seat and set out to prosecute his mission. At about a farsang's distance from Shíráz he was overtaken by a youth who, flushed with excitement, impatiently asked to speak to him. His name was 'Abdu'l-Vahháb. "I beseech you," he tearfully entreated Mullá 'Alí, "to allow me to accompany you on your journey. Perplexities oppress my heart; I pray you to guide my steps in the way of Truth. Last night, in my dream, I heard the crier announce in the market-street of Shíráz the appearance of the Imám 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful. He called to the multitude: 'Arise and seek him. Behold, he plucks out of the burning fire charters of liberty and is distributing them to the people. Hasten to him, for whoever receives them from his hands will be secure from penal suffering, and whoever fails to obtain them from him, will be bereft of the blessings of Paradise.' Immediately I heard the voice of the crier, I arose and, abandoning my shop, ran across the market-street of Vakíl to a place where my eyes beheld you standing and distributing

those same charters to the people. To everyone who approached to receive them from your hands, you would whisper in his ear a few words which instantly caused him to flee in consternation and exclaim: 'Woe betide me, for I am deprived of the blessings of 'Alí and his kindred! Ah, miserable me, that I am accounted among the outcast and fallen!' I awoke from my dream and, immersed in an ocean of thought, regained my shop. Suddenly I saw you pass, accompanied by a man who wore a turban, and who was conversing with you. I sprang from my seat and, impelled by a power which I could not repress, ran to overtake you. To my utter amazement, I found you standing upon the very site which I had witnessed in my dream, engaged in the recital of traditions and verses. Standing aside, at a distance, I kept watching you, wholly unobserved by you and your friend. I heard the man whom you were addressing, impetuously protest: 'Easier is it for me to be devoured by the flames of hell than to acknowledge the truth of your words, the weight of which mountains are unable to sustain!' To his contemptuous rejection you returned this answer: 'Were all the universe to repudiate His truth, it could never tarnish the unsullied purity of His robe of grandeur.' Departing from him, you directed your steps towards the gate of Kázirán. I continued to follow you until I reached this place."

Mullá 'Alí tried to appease his troubled heart and to persuade him to return to his shop and resume his daily work. "Your association with me," he urged, "would involve me in difficulties. Return to Shíráz and rest assured, for you are accounted of the people of salvation. Far be it from the justice of God to withhold from so ardent and devoted a seeker the cup of His grace, or to deprive a soul so athirst from the billowing ocean of His Revelation." The words of Mullá 'Alí proved of no avail. The more he insisted upon the return of 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, the louder grew his lamentation and weeping. Mullá 'Alí finally felt compelled to comply with his wish, resigning himself to the will of God.

Ḥájí 'Abdu'l-Majíd, the father of 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, has often been heard to recount, with eyes filled with tears, this story: "How deeply," he said, "I regret the deed I committed. Pray that God may grant me the remission of my sin. I

was one among the favoured in the court of the sons of the Farmán-Farmá, the governor of the province of Fárs. Such was my position that none dared to oppose or harm me. No one questioned my authority or ventured to interfere with my freedom. Immediately I heard that my son 'Abdu'l-Vahháb had forsaken his shop and left the city, I ran out in the direction of the Kázirán gate to overtake him. Armed with a club with which I intended to beat him, I enquired as to the road he had taken. I was told that a man wearing a turban had just crossed the street and that my son was seen following him. They seemed to have agreed to leave the city together. This excited my anger and indignation. How could I tolerate, I thought to myself, such unseemly behaviour on the part of my son, I, who already hold so privileged a position in the court of the sons of the Farmán-Farmá? Nothing but the severest chastisement, I felt, could wipe away the effect of my son's disgraceful conduct.

"I continued my search until I reached them. Seized with a savage fury, I inflicted upon Mullá 'Alí unspeakable injuries. To the strokes that fell heavily upon him, he, with extraordinary serenity, returned this answer: 'Stay your hand, O 'Abdu'l-Majíd, for the eye of God is observing you. I take Him as my witness, that I am in no wise responsible for the conduct of your son. I mind not the tortures you inflict upon me, for I stand prepared for the most grievous afflictions in the path I have chosen to follow. Your injuries, compared to what is destined to befall me in future, are as a drop compared to the ocean. Verily, I say, you shall survive me, and will come to recognise my innocence. Great will then be your remorse, and deep your sorrow.' Scorning his remarks, and heedless of his appeal, I continued to beat him until I was exhausted. Silently and heroically he endured this most undeserved chastisement at my hands. Finally, I ordered my son to follow me, and left Mullá 'Alí to himself.

"On our way back to Shíráz, my son related to me the dream he had dreamt. A feeling of profound regret gradually seized me. The blamelessness of Mullá 'Alí was vindicated in my eyes, and the memory of my cruelty to him continued long to oppress my soul. Its bitterness lingered in my heart until the time when I felt obliged to transfer my residence

from Shíráz to Baghdád. From Baghdád I moved to Kázimayn, where 'Abdu'l-Vahháb established his business. A strange mystery brooded over his youthful face. He seemed to be concealing from me a secret which appeared to have transformed his life. And when, in the year 1267 A.H.,[1] Bahá'u'lláh journeyed to 'Iráq and visited Kázimayn, 'Abdu'l-Vahháb fell immediately under the spell of His charm and pledged his undying devotion to Him. A few years later, when my son had suffered martyrdom in Ṭihrán and Bahá'u'lláh had been exiled to Baghdád, He, with infinite loving-kindness and mercy, awakened me from the sleep of heedlessness, and Himself taught me the message of the New Day, washing away with the waters of Divine forgiveness the stains of that cruel act."

This episode marks the first affliction which befell a disciple of the Báb after the declaration of His mission. Mullá 'Alí realised from this experience how steep and thorny was the path leading to his eventual attainment of the promise given him by his Master. Wholly resigned to His will, and prepared to shed his life-blood for His Cause, he resumed his journey until he arrived at Najaf. In the presence of Shaykh Muḥammad-Ḥasan, one of the most celebrated ecclesiastics of shí'ah Islám, and in the face of a distinguished company of his disciples, Mullá 'Alí announced fearlessly the manifestation of the Báb, the Gate whose advent they were eagerly awaiting. "His proof," he declared, "is His Word; His testimony, none other than the testimony with which Islám seeks to vindicate its truth. From the pen of this unschooled Háshimite Youth of Persia there have streamed, within the space of forty-eight hours, as great a number of verses, of prayers, of homilies, and scientific treatises, as would equal in volume the whole of the Qur'án, which it took Muḥammad, the Prophet of God, twenty-three years to reveal!" That proud and fanatic leader, instead of welcoming, in an age of darkness and prejudice, these life-giving evidences of a newborn Revelation, forthwith pronounced Mullá 'Alí a heretic and expelled him from the assembly. His disciples and followers, even the Shaykhís, who already testified to Mullá 'Alí's piety, sincerity, and learning, endorsed, unhesitatingly,

[1] 1850–51 A.D.

the judgment against him. The disciples of Shaykh Muhammad-Ḥasan, joining hands with their adversaries, heaped upon him untold indignities. They eventually delivered him, his hands bound in chains, to an official of the Ottoman government, arraigning him as a wrecker of Islám, a calumniator of the Prophet, an instigator of mischief, a disgrace to the Faith, and worthy of the penalty of death. He was taken to Baghdád under the escort of government officials, and was cast into prison by the governor of that city.

Ḥájí Háshim, surnamed 'Aṭṭár, a prominent merchant, who was well versed in the Scriptures of Islám, recounted the following: "I was present at Government House on one occasion when Mullá 'Alí was summoned to the presence of the assembled notables and government officials of that city. He was publicly accused of being an infidel, an abrogator of the laws of Islám, and a repudiator of its rituals and accepted standards. When his alleged offences and misdeeds had been enumerated, the Muftí, the chief exponent of the law of Islám in that city, turned to him and said: 'O enemy of God!' As I was occupying a seat beside the Muftí, I whispered in his ear: 'You are as yet unacquainted with this unfortunate stranger. Why address him in such terms? Do you not realise that such words as you have addressed to him will excite the anger of the populace against him? It behoves you to disregard the unsupported charges these busybodies have brought against him, to question him yourself, and to judge him according to the accepted standards of justice inculcated by the Faith of Islám.' The Muftí was sore displeased, arose from his seat, and left the gathering. Mullá 'Alí was again thrown into prison. A few days later, I enquired about him, hoping to achieve his deliverance. I was informed that, on the night of that same day, he had been deported to Constantinople. I made further enquiries and endeavoured to find out what eventually befell him. I could not, however, ascertain the truth. A few believed that on his way to Constantinople he had fallen ill and died. Others maintained that he had suffered martyrdom."[1] Whatever

[1] According to Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (p. 106), Mullá 'Alí suffered six months' imprisonment in Baghdád by order of Najíb Páshá, the governor of the city. He was thence ordered to leave for Constantinople, according to instructions received from the Ottoman government.

his end, Mullá 'Alí had by his life and death earned the immortal distinction of having been the first sufferer in the path of this new Faith of God, the first to have laid down his life as an offering on the Altar of Sacrifice.

Having sent forth Mullá 'Alí on his mission, the Báb summoned to His presence the remaining Letters of the Living, and to each severally He gave a special command and appointed a special task. He addressed to them these parting words: "O My beloved friends! You are the bearers of the name of God in this Day. You have been chosen as the repositories of His mystery. It behoves each one of you to manifest the attributes of God, and to exemplify by your deeds and words the signs of His righteousness, His power and glory. The very members of your body must bear witness to the loftiness of your purpose, the integrity of your life, the reality of your faith, and the exalted character of your devotion. For verily I say, this is the Day spoken of by God in His Book:[1] 'On that day will We set a seal upon their mouths; yet shall their hands speak unto Us, and their feet shall bear witness to that which they shall have done.' Ponder the words of Jesus addressed to His disciples, as He sent them forth to propagate the Cause of God. In words such as these, He bade them arise and fulfil their mission: 'Ye are even as the fire which in the darkness of the night has been kindled upon the mountain-top. Let your light shine before the eyes of men. Such must be the purity of your character and the degree of your renunciation, that the people of the earth may through you recognise and be drawn closer to the heavenly Father who is the Source of purity and grace. For none has seen the Father who is in heaven. You who are His spiritual children must by your deeds exemplify His virtues, and witness to His glory. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? Such must be the degree of your detachment, that into whatever city you enter to proclaim and teach the Cause of God, you should in no wise expect either meat or reward from its people. Nay, when you depart out of that city, you should shake the dust from off your feet. As you have entered it pure and

He passed through Mosul, where he was able to awaken interest in the new Revelation. His friends were, however, unable to discover whether he eventually reached his destination.

[1] The Qur'án.

undefiled, so must you depart from that city. For verily I say, the heavenly Father is ever with you and keeps watch over you. If you be faithful to Him, He will assuredly deliver into your hands all the treasures of the earth, and will exalt you above all the rulers and kings of the world.' O My Letters! Verily I say, immensely exalted is this Day above the days of the Apostles of old. Nay, immeasurable is the difference! You are the witnesses of the Dawn of the promised Day of God. You are the partakers of the mystic chalice of His Revelation. Gird up the loins of endeavour, and be mindful of the words of God as revealed in His Book:[1] 'Lo, the Lord thy God is come, and with Him is the company of His angels arrayed before Him!' Purge your hearts of worldly desires, and let angelic virtues be your adorning. Strive that by your deeds you may bear witness to the truth of these words of God, and beware lest, by 'turning back,' He may 'change you for another people,' who 'shall not be your like,' and who shall take from you the Kingdom of God. The days when idle worship was deemed sufficient are ended. The time is come when naught but the purest motive, supported by deeds of stainless purity, can ascend to the throne of the Most High and be acceptable unto Him. 'The good word riseth up unto Him, and the righteous deed will cause it to be exalted before Him.' You are the lowly, of whom God has thus spoken in His Book:[2] 'And We desire to show favour to those who were brought low in the land, and to make them spiritual leaders among men, and to make them Our heirs.' You have been called to this station; you will attain to it, only if you arise to trample beneath your feet every earthly desire, and endeavour to become those 'honoured servants of His who speak not till He hath spoken, and who do His bidding.' You are the first Letters that have been generated from the Primal Point,[3] the first Springs that have welled out from the Source of this Revelation. Beseech the Lord your God to grant that no earthly entanglements, no worldly affections, no ephemeral pursuits, may tarnish the purity, or embitter the sweetness, of that grace which flows through you. I am preparing you for the advent of a mighty Day. Exert your utmost endeavour that, in the world to come, I, who am now instructing you, may, before the mercy-seat of

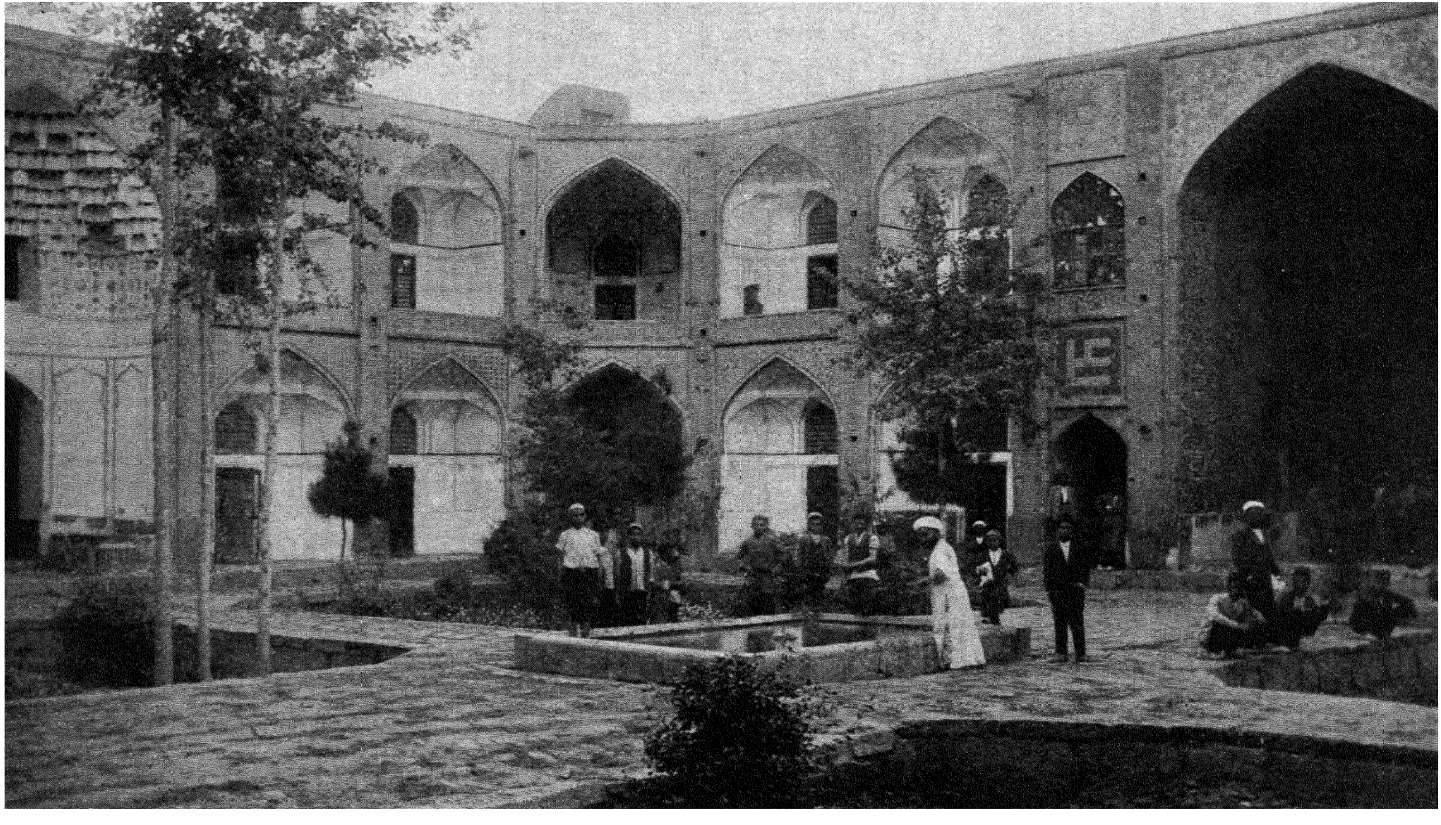
[1] The Qur'án. [2] The Qur'án. [3] One of the Báb's titles.

God, rejoice in your deeds and glory in your achievements. The secret of the Day that is to come is now concealed. It can neither be divulged nor estimated. The newly born babe of that Day excels the wisest and most venerable men of this time, and the lowliest and most unlearned of that period shall surpass in understanding the most erudite and accomplished divines of this age. Scatter throughout the length and breadth of this land, and, with steadfast feet and sanctified hearts, prepare the way for His coming. Heed not your weaknesses and frailty; fix your gaze upon the invincible power of the Lord, your God, the Almighty. Has He not, in past days, caused Abraham, in spite of His seeming helplessness, to triumph over the forces of Nimrod? Has He not enabled Moses, whose staff was His only companion, to vanquish Pharaoh and his hosts? Has He not established the ascendancy of Jesus, poor and lowly as He was in the eyes of men, over the combined forces of the Jewish people? Has He not subjected the barbarous and militant tribes of Arabia to the holy and transforming discipline of Muḥammad, His Prophet? Arise in His name, put your trust wholly in Him, and be assured of ultimate victory."[1]

With such words the Báb quickened the faith of His disciples and launched them upon their mission. To each He assigned his own native province as the field of his labours. He directed them each and all to refrain from specific references to His own name and person.[2] He instructed them to raise the call that the Gate to the Promised One has been opened, that His proof is irrefutable, and that His testimony is complete. He bade them declare that whoever believes in Him has believed in all the prophets of God, and that whoever denies Him has denied all His saints and His chosen

[1] The Báb refers to the Letters of the Living in the Persian Bayán (Váhid 1, Báb 2) in the following terms: "Tous ceux-là forment le nom du Vivant, car ce sont les noms les plus proches de Dieu: ceux qui sont autres qu'eux sont guidés par leur action indicatrice, car Dieu a commencé par eux la création du Bayán, et c'est vers eux qu'il fera revenir cette création du Bayán. Ce sont des lumières qui éternellement dans le passé se sont prosternées et qui se prosterneront éternellement dans l'avenir devant l'arch [throne] céleste." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 1, pp. 24–5.)

[2] A. L. M. Nicolas, in his introduction to volume 1 of "Le Bayán Persan" (pp. 3–5), writes as follows: "Tout le monde s'accorde à reconnaître qu'il lui était de toute impossibilité de proclamer hautement sa doctrine et de la répandre parmi les hommes. Il devait agir comme le médecin des enfants, qui enrobe une drogue amère sous une couche de sucre pour amadouer ses jeunes malades. Et le peuple au milieu duquel il a surgi était et est encore hélas! plus fanatique que ne l'étaient les Juifs à l'époque de Jésus, et la majesté de la paix



THE MADRISIH OF NÍM-ÁVARD, IṢFÁHÁN

ones. With these instructions He dismissed them from His presence and committed them to the care of God. Of these Letters of the Living, whom He thus addressed, there remained with Him in Shíráz Mullá Ḥusayn, the first of these Letters, and Quddús, the last. The rest, fourteen in number, set out, at the hour of dawn, from Shíráz, each resolved to carry out, in its entirety, the task with which he had been entrusted.

To Mullá Ḥusayn, as the hour of his departure approached, the Báb addressed these words: "Grieve not that you have not been chosen to accompany Me on My pilgrimage to Ḥijáz. I shall, instead, direct your steps to that city which enshrines a Mystery of such transcendent holiness as neither Ḥijáz nor Shíráz can hope to rival. My hope is that you may, by the aid of God, be enabled to remove the veils from the eyes of the wayward and to cleanse the minds of the malevolent. Visit, on your way, Isfáhán, Káshán, Ṭihrán, and Khurásán. Proceed thence to 'Iráq, and there await the summons of your Lord, who will keep watch over you and will direct you to whatsoever is His will and desire. As to Myself, I shall, accompanied by Quddús and My Ethiopian servant, proceed on My pilgrimage to Ḥijáz. I shall join the company of the pilgrims of Fárs, who will shortly be sailing for that land. I shall visit Mecca and Medina, and there fulfil the mission with which God has entrusted Me. God willing, I shall return hither by the way of Kúfih, in which place I hope to meet you. If it be decreed otherwise, I shall ask you to join Me in Shíráz. The hosts of the invisible Kingdom, be assured, will sustain and reinforce your efforts. The essence of power is now dwelling in you, and the company of His chosen angels revolves around you. His almighty arms will surround you, and His unfailing Spirit will ever continue to guide your steps. He that loves you, loves God; and whoever opposes you, has opposed God. Whoso befriends you, him will God befriend; and whoso rejects you, him will God reject."

Romaine n'était plus là pour arrêter les excès furieux de la folie religieuse d'un peuple surexcité. Donc, si le Christ, malgré la douceur toute relative d'ailleurs, du milieu dans lequel il prêcha, crut devoir employer la parabole, Siyyid 'Alí Muḥammad, *a fortiori*, dût déguiser sa pensée sous de nombreux détours et ne verser que goutte à goutte le philtre de ses vérités divines. Il élève son enfant, l'Humanité; il le guide, en cherchant à ne pas l'effrayer; il conduit ses premiers pas sur une route qui le mènera lentement mais sûrement, et dès qu'il pourra avancer seul, au but qui lui est fixé de toute éternité."

CHAPTER IV

MULLÁ HUSAYN'S JOURNEY TO ṬIHRÁN



ITH these noble words ringing in his ears, Mullá Ḥusayn embarked upon his perilous enterprise. Wherever he went, to whatever class of people he addressed himself, he delivered fearlessly and without reserve the Message with which his beloved Master had entrusted him. Arriving in Iṣfáhán, he established himself in the madrisih of Ním-Ávard. Around him gathered those who on his previous visit to that city had known him as the favoured messenger of Siyyid Káẓim to the eminent mujtahid, Ḥájí Siyyid Muḥammad-Báqir.[1] He, being now dead, had been succeeded by his son, who had just returned from Najaf and was now established upon the seat of his father. Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ibráhím-i-Kalbásí had also fallen seriously ill, and was on the verge of death. The disciples of the late Ḥájí Siyyid Muḥammad-Báqir, now freed from the restraining influence of their departed teacher, and alarmed at the strange doctrines which Mullá Ḥusayn was propounding, vehemently denounced him to Ḥájí Siyyid Asadu'lláh, the son of the late Ḥájí Siyyid Muḥammad-Báqir. "Mullá Ḥusayn," they complained, "was able, in the course of his last visit, to win the support of your illustrious father to the cause of Shaykh Aḥmad. No one among the Siyyid's helpless disciples dared to oppose him. He now comes as the upholder of a still more formidable opponent and is pleading His Cause with still greater vehemence and vigour. He is persistently claiming that He whose Cause he now champions is the Revealer of a Book which is divinely inspired, and which bears a striking resemblance to the tone

[1] "On se pressait en foule pour entendre le prédicateur. Il occupait, tour à tour, toutes les chaires d'Iṣfáhán, où il faisait en liberté ce qui avait été interdit à Shíráz. Il ne craignait pas de dire publiquement et d'annoncer que Mírzá 'Alí Muḥammad était le douzième Imám, l'Imám Mihdí; il montrait et lisait les livres de son maître; il en faisait remarquer l'éloquence et la profondeur, faisait ressortir l'extrême jeunesse du Voyant, en racontait des miracles." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 130.)

and language of the Qur'án. In the face of the people of this city, he has flung these challenging words: 'Produce one like it, if you are men of truth.' The day is fast approaching when the whole of Iṣfáhán will have embraced his Cause!" Ḥájí Siyyid Asadu'lláh returned evasive answers to their complaints. "What am I to say?" he was at last forced to reply. "Do you not yourselves admit that Mullá Ḥusayn has, by his eloquence and the cogency of his argument, silenced a man no less great than my illustrious father? How can I, then, who am so inferior to him in merit and knowledge, presume to challenge what he has already approved? Let each man dispassionately examine these claims. If he be satisfied, well and good; if not, let him observe silence, and not incur the risk of discrediting the fair name of our Faith."

Finding that their efforts had failed to influence Ḥájí Siyyid Asadu'lláh, his disciples referred the matter to Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ibráhím-i-Kalbásí. "Woe betide us," they loudly protested, "for the enemy has risen to disrupt the holy Faith of Islám!" In lurid and exaggerated language, they stressed the challenging character of the ideas propounded by Mullá Ḥusayn. "Hold your peace," replied Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ibráhím. "Mullá Ḥusayn is not the person to be duped by anyone, nor can he fall a victim to dangerous heresies. If your contention be true, if Mullá Ḥusayn has indeed espoused a new Faith, it is unquestionably your first obligation to enquire dispassionately into the character of his teachings, and to refrain from denouncing him without previous and careful scrutiny. If my health and strength be restored, it is my intention, God willing, to investigate the matter myself, and to ascertain the truth."

This severe rebuke, pronounced by Ḥájí Kalbásí, greatly disconcerted the disciples of Ḥájí Siyyid Asadu'lláh. In their dismay they appealed to Manúchihr Khán, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, the governor of the city. That wise and judicious ruler refused to interfere in these matters, which he said fell exclusively within the jurisdiction of the 'ulamás. He warned them to abstain from mischief and to cease disturbing the peace and tranquillity of the messenger. His trenchant words shattered the hopes of the mischief-makers. Mullá Ḥusayn was thereby relieved from the machinations

of his enemies, and, for a time, pursued untrammelled the course of his labours.

The first to embrace the Cause of the Báb in that city was a man, a sifter of wheat, who, as soon as the Call reached his ears, unreservedly accepted the Message. With marvellous devotion he served Mullá Ḥusayn, and through his close association with him became a zealous advocate of the new Revelation. A few years later, when the soul-stirring details of the siege of the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí were being recounted to him, he felt an irresistible impulse to throw in his lot with those heroic companions of the Báb who had risen for the defence of their Faith. Carrying his sieve in his hand, he immediately arose and set out to reach the scene of that memorable encounter. "Why leave so hurriedly?" his friends asked him, as they saw him running in a state of intense excitement through the bazaars of Iṣfáhán. "I have risen," he replied, "to join the glorious company of the defenders of the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí! With this sieve which I carry with me, I intend to sift the people in every city through which I pass. Whomsoever I find ready to espouse the Cause I have embraced, I will ask to join me and hasten forthwith to the field of martyrdom." Such was the devotion of this youth, that the Báb, in the Persian Bayán, refers to him in such terms: "Iṣfáhán, that outstanding city, is distinguished by the religious fervour of its shí'ah inhabitants, by the learning of its divines, and by the keen expectation, shared by high and low alike, of the imminent coming of the Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán. In every quarter of that city, religious institutions have been established. And yet, when the Messenger of God had been made manifest, they who claimed to be the repositories of learning and the expounders of the mysteries of the Faith of God rejected His Message. Of all the inhabitants of that seat of learning, only one person, a sifter of wheat, was found to recognise the Truth, and was invested with the robe of Divine virtue!"[1]

[1] "Vois la terre de Ṣád (Iṣfáhán) qui est, dans ce monde apparent, la plus grande des terres. À chaque coin de ses écoles se trouvent des esclaves nombreux revêtus du nom de savants et de lutteurs. Au moment où a lieu l'élection des créatures, un tamiseur de blé se revêt de cette chemise de primauté (sur les autres). C'est ici qu'éclate le secret de la parole des Imáms au sujet de la manifestation: 'Les plus basses des créatures deviendront les plus hautes, et les plus hautes deviendront les plus viles.'" ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 4, p. 113.)

Among the siyyids of Iṣfáhán, a few, such as Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Nahrí, whose daughter was subsequently joined in wedlock with the Most Great Branch,[1] Mírzá Hádí, the brother of Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, and Mírzá Muḥammad-Riḍáy-i-Pá-Qal'iyí, recognised the truth of the Cause. Mullá Ṣádiq-i-Khurásání, formerly known as Muqaddas, and surnamed by Bahá'u'lláh, Ismu'lláhu'l-Aṣdaq, who, according to the instructions of Siyyid Káẓim, had during the last five years been residing in Iṣfáhán and had been preparing the way for the advent of the new Revelation, was also among the first believers who identified themselves with the Message proclaimed by the Báb.[2] As soon as he learned of the arrival of Mullá Ḥusayn in Iṣfáhán, he hastened to meet him. He gives the following account of his first interview, which took place at night in the home of Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Nahrí: "I asked Mullá Ḥusayn to divulge the name of Him who claimed to be the promised Manifestation. He replied: 'To enquire about that name and to divulge it are alike forbidden.' 'Would it, then, be possible,' I asked, 'for me, even as the Letters of the Living, to seek independently the grace of the All-Merciful and, through prayer, to discover His identity?' 'The door of His grace,' he replied, 'is never closed before the face of him who seeks to find Him.' I immediately retired from his presence, and requested his host to allow me the privacy of a room in his house where, alone and undisturbed, I could commune with God. In the midst of my contemplation, I suddenly remembered the face of a Youth whom I had often observed while in Karbilá, standing in an attitude of prayer, with His face bathed in tears at the entrance of the shrine of the Imám Ḥusayn. That same countenance now reappeared before my eyes. In my vision I seemed to behold that same face, those same features, expressive of such joy as I could never describe. He smiled as He gazed at me. I went towards Him, ready to throw myself at His feet. I was bending towards the ground, when, lo! that radiant figure vanished from before me. Overpowered with joy and gladness, I ran out to meet Mullá

[1] Reference to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's marriage with Munírih Khánum.

[2] Gobineau (p. 129) mentions Mullá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Harátí, a well-known jurisconsult, as one of the earliest converts to the Faith.

Ḥusayn, who with transport received me and assured me that I had, at last, attained the object of my desire. He bade me, however, repress my feelings. 'Declare not your vision to anyone,' he urged me; 'the time for it has not yet arrived. You have reaped the fruit of your patient waiting in Iṣfáhán. You should now proceed to Kirmán, and there acquaint Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán with this Message. From that place you should travel to Shíráz and endeavour to rouse the people of that city from their heedlessness. I hope to join you in Shíráz and share with you the blessings of a joyous reunion with our Beloved.' "[1]

From Iṣfáhán, Mullá Ḥusayn proceeded to Káshán. The first to be enrolled in that city among the company of the faithful was a certain Ḥájí Mírzá Jání, surnamed Par-Pá, who was a merchant of note.[2] Among the friends of Mullá Ḥusayn was a well-known divine, Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Báqí, a resident of Káshán and a member of the shaykhí community. Although intimately associated with Mullá Ḥusayn during his stay in Najaf and Karbilá, the Siyyid felt unable to sacrifice rank and leadership for the Message which his friend had brought him.

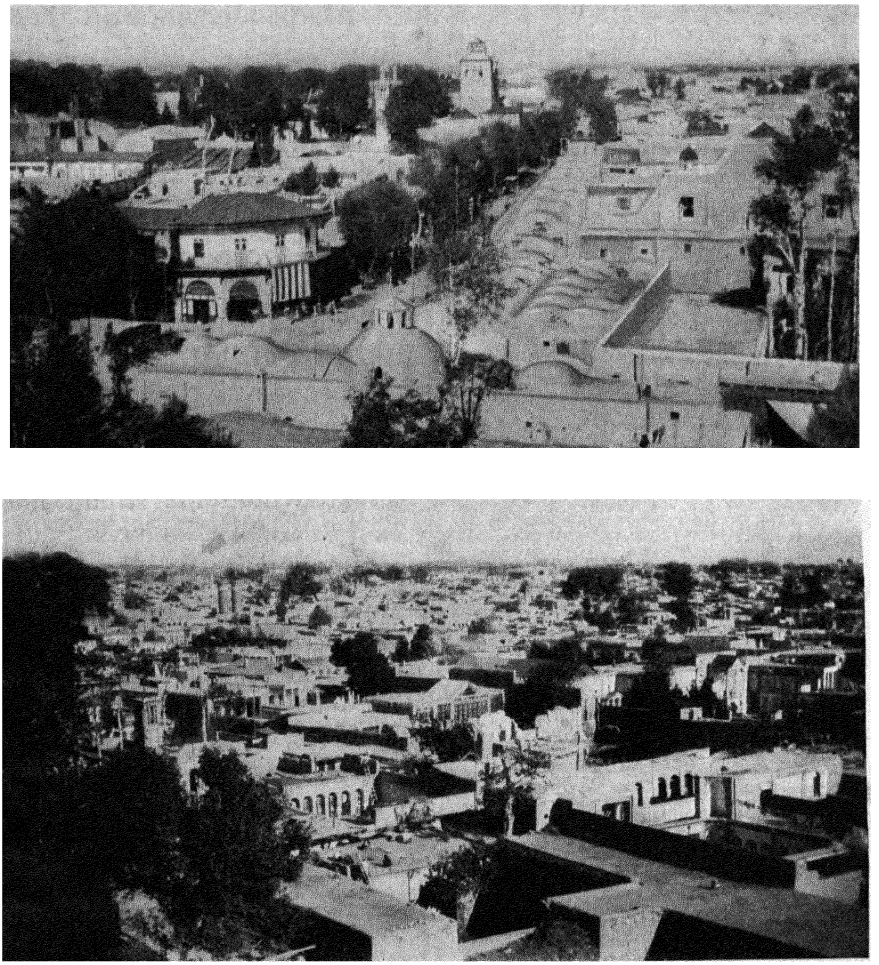
Arriving in Qum, Mullá Ḥusayn found its people utterly unprepared to heed his call. The seeds he sowed among them did not germinate until the time when Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to Baghdád. In those days Ḥájí Mírzá Músá, a native of Qum, embraced the Faith, journeyed to Baghdád, and there met Bahá'u'lláh. He eventually quaffed the cup of martyrdom in His path.

From Qum, Mullá Ḥusayn proceeded directly to Ṭihrán. He lived, during his stay in the capital, in one of the rooms

[1] "Le séjour de Bushrú'í à Iṣfáhán fut un triomphe pour le Báb. Les conversions qu'il opéra furent nombreuses et brillantes, mais lui attirèrent,—juste retour des choses d'ici-bas,—la haine féroce du clergé officiel,—devant laquelle il dut s'incliner et quitter la ville. En effet, la conversion de Mullá Muḥammad Taqíy-i-Harátí, jurisconsulte de premier ordre, mit le comble à leur fureur, d'autant que ce dernier plein de zèle montait chaque jour au mambar d'où il parlait aux hommes sans détours de la grandeur du Báb auquel il attribuait le rang de Ná'ib-i-khâṣṣ du 12e Imám." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 255.)

[2] According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghitá'" (pp. 42–5), Ḥájí Mírzá Jání was known by the people of Káshán as Ḥájí Mírzá Jányi-i-Buzurg in order to distinguish him from his namesake, who was also a merchant of Káshán, known by the name of Ḥájí Mírzá Jányi-i-Turk, or Kúchiq. The former had three brothers; the eldest was named Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ismá'íl-i-Dhabíh, the second Ḥájí Mírzá Aḥmad, the third Ḥájí 'Alí-Akbar.

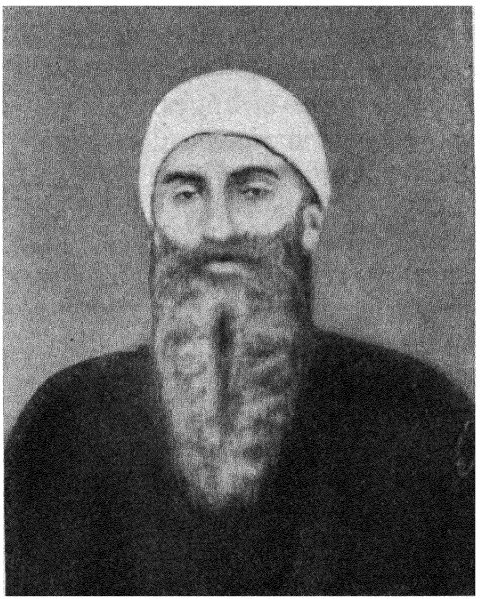
which belonged to the madrisih of Mírzá Ṣáliḥ, better known as the madrisih of Páy-i-Minár. Ḥájí Mírzá Muhammad-i-Khurásání, the leader of the shaykhí community of Tihrán, who acted as an instructor in that institution, was



VIEWS OF ṬIHRĀN

approached by Mullá Ḥusayn but failed to respond to his invitation to accept the Message. "We had cherished the hope," he said to Mullá Ḥusayn, "that after the death of Siyyid Káẓim you would strive to promote the best interests of the shaykhí community and would deliver it from the

obscurity into which it has sunk. You seem, however, to have betrayed its cause. You have shattered our fondest expectations. If you persist in disseminating these subversive doctrines, you will eventually extinguish the remnants of the shaykhís in this city." Mullá Ḥusayn assured him that he had no intention of prolonging his stay in Ṭihrán, that his aim was in no wise to abase or suppress the teachings inculcated by Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim.[1]



ÁQÁY-I-KALÍM, BROTHER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

During his stay in Ṭihrán, Mullá Ḥusayn each day would leave his room early in the morning and would return to it only an hour after sunset. Upon his return he would quietly and alone re-enter his room, close the door behind him, and

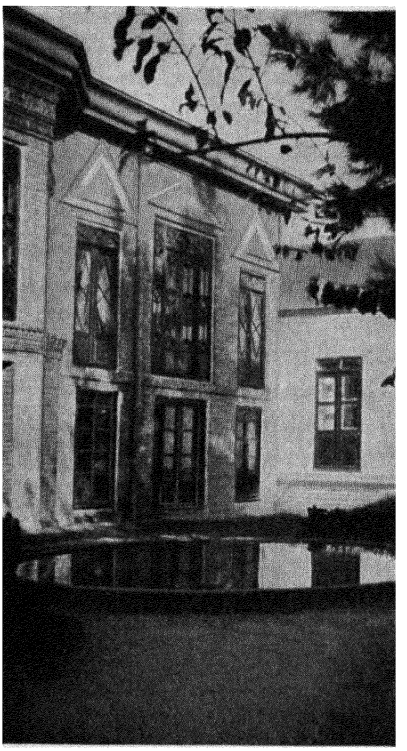
[1] "Il passa quelques jours dans cette capitale, mais il ne s'y produisit pas en public, et se contenta d'avoir avec les personnes qui vinrent le visiter des entretiens qui pouvaient passer pour confidentiels. Il ne laissa pas que de recevoir ainsi beaucoup de monde et d'amener à ses opinions un assez grand nombre de curieux. Chacun voulait le voir ou l'avoir vu, et le roi Muḥammad Sháh et son ministre, Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, en vrais Persans qu'ils étaient, ne manquèrent pas de le faire venir. Il leur exposa ses doctrines et leur remit les livres du maître." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 131.)

remain in the privacy of his cell until the next day.[1] Mírzá Músá, Áqáy-i-Kalím, the brother of Bahá'u'lláh, recounted to me the following: "I have heard Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mu'allim, a native of Núr, in the province of Mázindarán, who was a fervent admirer of both Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Kázim, relate this story: 'I was in those days recognised as one of the favoured disciples of Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad, and lived in the same school in which he taught. My room adjoined his room, and we were closely associated together. On the day that he was engaged in discussion with Mullá Ḥusayn, I overheard their conversation from beginning to end, and was deeply affected by the ardour, the fluency, and learning of that youthful stranger. I was surprised at the evasive answers, the arrogance, and contemptuous behaviour of Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad. That day I felt strongly attracted by the charm of that youth, and deeply resented the unseemly conduct of my teacher towards him. I concealed my feelings, however, and pretended to ignore his discussions with Mullá Ḥusayn. I was seized with a passionate desire to meet the latter, and ventured, at the hour of midnight, to visit him. He did not expect me, but I knocked at his door, and found him awake seated beside his lamp. He received me affectionately, and spoke to me with extreme courtesy and tenderness. I unburdened my heart to him, and as I was addressing him, tears, which I could not repress, flowed from my eyes. "I can now see," he said, "the reason why I have chosen to dwell in this place. Your teacher has contemptuously rejected this Message and despised its Author. My hope is that his pupil may, unlike his master, recognise its truth. What is your name, and which city is your home?" "My name," I replied, "is Mullá Muḥammad, and my surname Mu'allim. My home is Núr, in the province of Mázindarán." "Tell me," further enquired Mullá Ḥusayn, "is there to-day among the family of the late Mírzá Buzurg-i-Núrí, who was so renowned for his character, his charm, and artistic and intellectual attainments, anyone who has proved himself capable of maintaining the high traditions of that

[1] According to Samandar (manuscript, p. 2), Mullá Ḥusayn, on his way from Shíraz to Ṭihrán in the year 1260 A.H., was the bearer of a Tablet revealed by the Báb for Muḥammad Sháh.

illustrious house?" "Yea," I replied, "among his sons now living, one has distinguished Himself by the very traits which characterised His father. By His virtuous life, His high at-







VIEWS OF THE HOUSE OF BAHA'U'LLÁH IN ṬIHRÁN

tainments, His loving-kindness and liberality, He has proved Himself a noble descendant of a noble father." "What is His occupation?" he asked me. "He cheers the disconsolate

and feeds the hungry," I replied. "What of His rank and position?" "He has none," I said, "apart from befriending the poor and the stranger." "What is His name?" "Ḥusayn-'Alí." "In which of the scripts of His father does He excel?" "His favourite script is shikastih-nasta'líq." "How does He spend His time?" "He roams the woods and delights in the beauties of the countryside."[1] "What is His age?" "Eight and twenty." The eagerness with which Mullá Ḥusayn questioned me, and the sense of delight with which he welcomed every particular I gave him, greatly surprised me. Turning to me, with his face beaming with satisfaction and joy, he once more enquired: "I presume you often meet Him?" "I frequently visit His home," I replied. "Will you," he said, "deliver into His hands a trust from me?" "Most assuredly," was my reply. He then gave me a scroll wrapped in a piece of cloth, and requested me to hand it to Him the next day at the hour of dawn. "Should He deign to answer me," he added, "will you be kind enough to acquaint me with His reply?" I received the scroll from him and, at break of day, arose to carry out his desire.

" 'As I approached the house of Bahá'u'lláh, I recognised His brother Mírzá Músá, who was standing at the gate, and to whom I communicated the object of my visit. He went into the house and soon reappeared bearing a message of welcome. I was ushered into His presence, and presented the scroll to Mírzá Músá, who laid it before Bahá'u'lláh. He bade us both be seated. Unfolding the scroll, He glanced at its contents and began to read aloud to us certain of its passages. I sat enraptured as I listened to the sound of His

[1] "On one occasion," writes Dr. J. E. Esslemont, " 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the eldest son of Bahá'u'lláh, related to the writer the following particulars about His father's early days: 'From childhood He was extremely kind and generous. He was a great lover of outdoor life, most of His time being spent in the garden or the fields. He had an extraordinary power of attraction, which was felt by all. People always crowded around Him. Ministers and people of the Court would surround Him, and the children also were devoted to Him. When He was only thirteen or fourteen years old He became renowned for His learning. . . . When Bahá'u'lláh was twenty-two years old, His father died, and the Government wished Him to succeed to His father's position in the Ministry, as was customary in Persia, but Bahá'u'lláh did not accept the offer. Then the Prime Minister said: "Leave him to himself. Such a position is unworthy of him. He has some higher aim in view. I cannot understand him, but I am convinced that he is destined for some lofty career. His thoughts are not like ours. Let him alone." ' " ("Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era," pp. 29–30.)

voice and the sweetness of its melody. He had read a page of the scroll when, turning to His brother, He said: "Músá, what have you to say? Verily I say, whoso believes in the Qur'án and recognises its Divine origin, and yet hesitates, though it be for a moment, to admit that these soul-stirring words are endowed with the same regenerating power, has most assuredly erred in his judgment and has strayed far from the path of justice." He spoke no more. Dismissing me from His presence, He charged me to take to Mullá Ḥusayn, as a gift from Him, a loaf of Russian sugar and a package of tea,[1] and to convey to him the expression of His appreciation and love.

" 'I arose and, filled with joy, hastened back to Mullá Ḥusayn, and delivered to him the gift and message of Bahá'u'lláh. With what joy and exultation he received them from me! Words fail me to describe the intensity of his emotion. He started to his feet, received with bowed head the gift from my hand, and fervently kissed it. He then took me in his arms, kissed my eyes, and said: "My dearly beloved friend! I pray that even as you have rejoiced my heart, God may grant you eternal felicity and fill your heart with imperishable gladness." I was amazed at the behaviour of Mullá Ḥusayn. What could be, I thought to myself, the nature of the bond that unites these two souls? What could have kindled so fervid a fellowship in their hearts? Why should Mullá Ḥusayn, in whose sight the pomp and circumstance of royalty were the merest trifle, have evinced such gladness at the sight of so inconsiderable a gift from the hands of Bahá'u'lláh? I was puzzled by this thought and could not unravel its mystery.

" 'A few days later, Mullá Ḥusayn left for Khurásán. As he bade me farewell, he said: "Breathe not to anyone what you have heard and witnessed. Let this be a secret hidden within your breast. Divulge not His name, for they who envy His position will arise to harm Him. In your moments of meditation, pray that the Almighty may protect Him, that, through Him, He may exalt the downtrodden, enrich the poor,

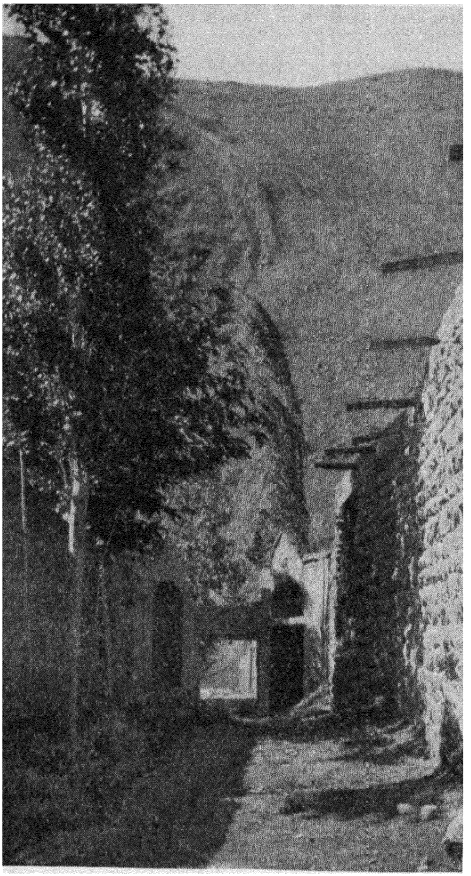
[1] Tea and that variety of sugar being extremely rare in Persia at that time, both were used as gifts among the higher classes of the population.

and redeem the fallen. The secret of things is concealed from our eyes. Ours is the duty to raise the call of the New Day and to proclaim this Divine Message unto all people. Many a soul will, in this city, shed his blood in this path. That blood will water the Tree of God, will cause it to flourish, and to overshadow all mankind." ' "

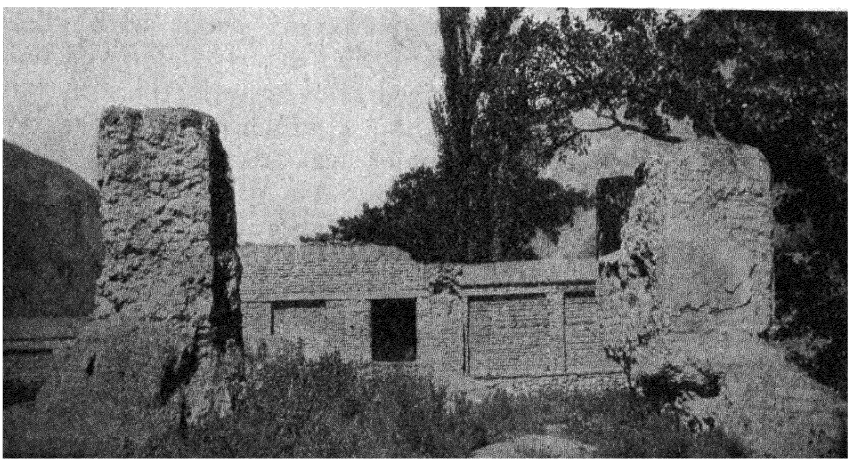
CHAPTER V

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S JOURNEY TO MÁZINDARÁN

THE first journey Bahá'u'lláh undertook for the purpose of promoting the Revelation announced by the Báb was to His ancestral home in Núr, in the province of Mázindarán. He set out for the village of Tákur, the personal estate of His father, where He owned a vast mansion, royally furnished and superbly situated. It was my privilege to hear Bahá'u'lláh Himself, one day, recount the following: "The late Vazír, My father, enjoyed a most enviable position among his countrymen. His vast wealth, his noble ancestry, his artistic attainments, his unrivalled prestige and exalted rank made him the object of the admiration of all who knew him. For a period of over twenty years, no one among the wide circle of his family and kindred, which extended over Núr and Ṭihrán, suffered distress, injury, or illness. They enjoyed, during a long and uninterrupted period, rich and manifold blessings. Quite suddenly, however, this prosperity and glory gave way to a series of calamities which severely shook the foundations of his material prosperity. The first loss he suffered was occasioned by a great flood which, rising in the mountains of Mázindarán, swept with great violence over the village of Tákur, and utterly destroyed half the mansion of the Vazír, situated above the fortress of that village. The best part of that house, which had been known for the solidity of its foundations, was utterly wiped away by the fury of the roaring torrent. Its precious articles of furniture were destroyed, and its elaborate ornamentation irretrievably ruined. This was shortly followed by the loss of various State positions which the Vazír occupied, and by the repeated assaults directed against him by his envious adversaries. Despite this sudden change of fortune, the Vazír maintained his dignity and calm, and continued, within the restricted limits of his means, his acts of benevolence and charity. He continued to exercise towards his faithless as-



APPROACH TO,



AND RUINS OF, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S ORIGINAL HOME IN TÁKUR, MÁZINDARÁN

sociates that same courtesy and kindness that had characterised his dealings with his fellow-men. With splendid fortitude he grappled, until the last hour of his life, with the adversities that weighed so heavily upon him."

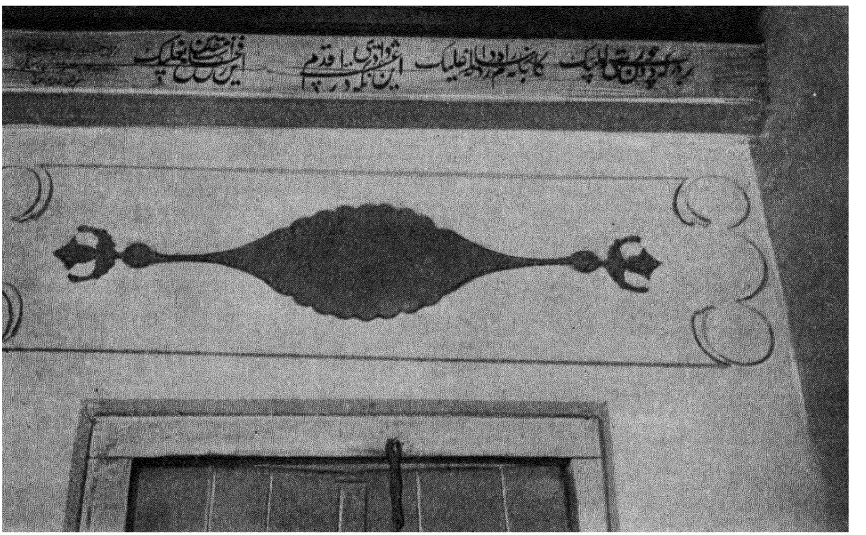
Bahá'u'lláh had already, prior to the declaration of the Báb, visited the district of Núr, at a time when the celebrated mujtahid Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Núrí was at the height of his authority and influence. Such was the eminence of his position, that they who sat at his feet regarded themselves each as the authorised exponent of the Faith and Law of Islám. The mujtahid was addressing a company of over two hundred of such disciples, and was expatiating upon a dark passage of the reported utterances of the imáms, when Bahá'u'lláh, followed by a number of His companions, passed by that place, and paused for a while to listen to his discourse. The mujtahid asked his disciples to elucidate an abstruse theory relating to the metaphysical aspects of the Islamic teachings. As they all confessed their inability to explain it, Bahá'u'lláh was moved to give, in brief but convincing language, a lucid exposition of that theory. The mujtahid was greatly annoyed at the incompetence of his disciples. "For years I have been instructing you," he angrily exclaimed, "and have patiently striven to instil into your minds the profoundest truths and the noblest principles of the Faith. And yet you allow, after all these years of persistent study, this youth, a wearer of the kuláh,[1] who has had no share in scholarly training, and who is entirely unfamiliar with your academic learning, to demonstrate his superiority over you!"

Later on, when Bahá'u'lláh had departed, the mujtahid related to his disciples two of his recent dreams, the circumstances of which he believed were of the utmost significance. "In my first dream," he said, "I was standing in the midst of a vast concourse of people, all of whom seemed to be pointing to a certain house in which they said the Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán dwelt. Frantic with joy, I hastened in my dream to attain His presence. When I reached the house, I was, to my great surprise, refused admittance. 'The promised

[1] The kuláh, a lambskin hat, differentiated the clergy from the laity, and was worn invariably by State officials.

Qá'im,' I was informed, 'is engaged in private conversation with another Person. Access to them is strictly forbidden.' From the guards who were standing beside the door, I gathered that that Person was none other than Bahá'u'lláh.

"In my second dream," the mujtahid continued, "I found myself in a place where I beheld around me a number of coffers, each of which, it was stated, belonged to Bahá'u'lláh. As I opened them, I found them to be filled with books. Every word and letter recorded in these books was set with the most



INSCRIPTION PLACED BY THE VAZÍR, MÍRZÁ BUZURG, ABOVE ENTRANCE DOOR OF HIS HOUSE IN TÁKUR

exquisite jewels. Their radiance dazzled me. I was so overpowered by their brilliance that I awoke suddenly from my dream."

When, in the year '60, Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Núr, He discovered that the celebrated mujtahid who on His previous visit had wielded such immense power had passed away. The vast number of his devotees had shrunk into a mere handful of dejected disciples who, under the leadership of his successor, Mullá Muḥammad, were striving to uphold the traditions of their departed leader. The enthusiasm which greeted Bahá'u'lláh's arrival sharply contrasted with the

gloom that had settled upon the remnants of that once flourishing community. A large number of the officials and notables in that neighbourhood called upon Him and, with every mark of affection and respect, accorded Him a befitting welcome. They were eager, in view of the social position He occupied, to learn from Him all the news regarding the life of the Sháh, the activities of his ministers, and the affairs of his government. To their enquiries Bahá'u'lláh replied with extreme indifference, and seemed to reveal very little interest or concern. With persuasive eloquence He pleaded the cause of the new Revelation, and directed their attention to the immeasurable benefits which it was destined to confer upon their country.[1] Those who heard Him marvelled at the keen interest which a man of His position and age evinced for truths which primarily concerned the divines and theologians of Islám. They felt powerless to challenge the soundness of His arguments or to belittle the Cause which He so ably expounded. They admired the loftiness of His enthusiasm and the profundity of His thoughts, and were deeply impressed by His detachment and self-effacement.

None dared to contend with His views except His uncle 'Azíz, who ventured to oppose Him, challenging His statements and aspersing their truth. When those who heard him sought to silence this opponent and to injure him, Bahá'u'lláh intervened in his behalf, and advised them to leave him in the hands of God. Alarmed, he sought the aid of the mujtahid of Núr, Mullá Muḥammad, and appealed to him to lend him immediate assistance. "O vicegerent of the Prophet of God!" he said. "Behold what has befallen the Faith. A youth, a layman, attired in the garb of nobility, has come to Núr, has invaded the strongholds of orthodoxy, and disrupted the holy Faith of Islám. Arise, and resist his onslaught. Whoever attains his presence falls immediately under his spell, and is enthralled by the power of his utterance. I know not whether he is a sorcerer, or whether he mixes with his tea some mysterious substance that makes every man who drinks the tea fall a victim to its charm." The

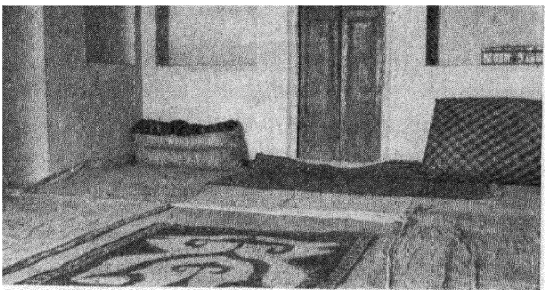
[1] "His [Bahá'u'lláh's] speech was like a 'rushing torrent' and his clearness in exposition brought the most learned divines to his feet." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 120.)

mujtahid, notwithstanding his own lack of comprehension, was able to realise the folly of such remarks. Jestingly he observed: "Have you not partaken of his tea, or heard him address his companions?" "I have," he replied, "but, thanks to your loving protection, I have remained immune from the effect of his mysterious power." The mujtahid, finding himself unequal to the task of arousing the populace against Bahá'u'lláh, and of combating directly the ideas which so powerful an opponent was fearlessly spreading, contented himself with a written statement in which he declared: "O 'Azíz, be not afraid, no one will dare molest you." In writing this, the mujtahid had, through a grammatical error, so perverted the purport of his statement, that those who read it among the notables of the village of Tákur were scandalised by its meaning, and vilified both the bearer and the author of that statement.

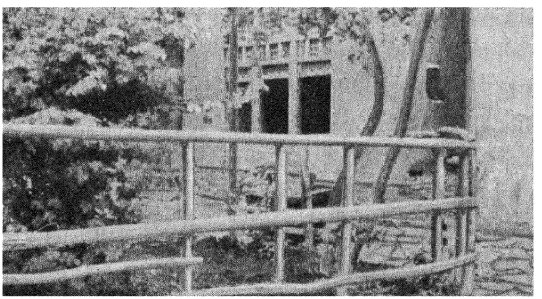
Those who attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and heard Him expound the Message proclaimed by the Báb were so much impressed by the earnestness of His appeal that they forthwith arose to disseminate that same Message among the people of Núr and to extol the virtues of its distinguished Promoter. The disciples of Mullá Muḥammad meanwhile endeavoured to persuade their teacher to proceed to Tákur, to visit Bahá'u'lláh in person, to ascertain from Him the nature of this new Revelation, and to enlighten his followers regarding its character and purpose. To their earnest entreaty the mujtahid returned an evasive answer. His disciples, however, refused to admit the validity of the objections he raised. They urged that the first obligation imposed upon a man of his position, whose function was to preserve the integrity of shí'ah Islám, was to enquire into the nature of every movement that tended to affect the interests of their Faith. Mullá Muḥammad eventually decided to delegate two of his eminent lieutenants, Mullá 'Abbás and Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, both sons-in-law and trusted disciples of the late mujtahid, Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, to visit Bahá'u'lláh and to determine the true character of the Message He had brought. He pledged himself to endorse unreservedly whatever conclusions they might arrive at, and to recognise their decision in such matters as final.



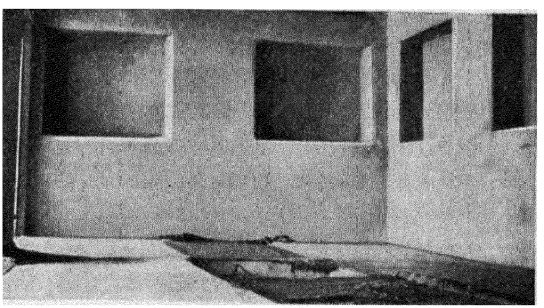
EXTERIOR OF THE ROOM OCCUPIED BY
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN TÁKUR, MÁZINDARÁN



INTERIOR OF BAHA'U'LLAH'S ROOM KEPT
IN ITS ORIGINAL CONDITION



EXTERIOR OF THE ROOM OCCUPIED BY
'ABDU'L-BAHÁ IN TÁKUR, MÁZINDARÁN



INTERIOR OF THE ROOM OCCUPIED BY
'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

On being informed, upon their arrival in Tákur, that Bahá'u'lláh had departed for His winter resort, the representatives of Mullá Muḥammad decided to leave for that place. When they arrived, they found Bahá'u'lláh engaged in revealing a commentary on the opening Súrih of the Qur'án, entitled "The Seven Verses of Repetition." As they sat and listened to His discourse, the loftiness of the theme, the persuasive eloquence which characterised its presentation, as well as the extraordinary manner of its delivery, profoundly impressed them. Mullá 'Abbás, unable to contain himself, arose from his seat and, urged by an impulse he could not resist, walked back and stood still beside the door in an attitude of reverent submissiveness. The charm of the discourse to which he was listening had fascinated him. "You behold my condition," he told his companion as he stood trembling with emotion and with eyes full of tears. "I am powerless to question Bahá'u'lláh. The questions I had planned to ask Him have vanished suddenly from my memory. You are free either to proceed with your enquiry or to return alone to our teacher and inform him of the state in which I find myself. Tell him from me that 'Abbás can never again return to him. He can no longer forsake this threshold." Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim was likewise moved to follow the example of his companion. "I have ceased to recognise my teacher," was his reply. "This very moment, I have vowed to God to dedicate the remaining days of my life to the service of Bahá'u'lláh, my true and only Master."

The news of the sudden conversion of the chosen envoys of the mujtahid of Núr spread with bewildering rapidity throughout the district. It roused the people from their lethargy. Ecclesiastical dignitaries, State officials, traders, and peasants all flocked to the residence of Bahá'u'lláh. A considerable number among them willingly espoused His Cause. In their admiration for Him, a number of the most distinguished among them remarked: "We see how the people of Núr have risen and rallied round you. We witness on every side evidences of their exultation. If Mullá Muḥammad were also to join them, the triumph of this Faith would be completely assured." "I am come to Núr," Bahá'u'lláh replied. "solely for the purpose of proclaiming the

Cause of God. I cherish no other intention. If I were told that at a distance of a hundred leagues a seeker yearned for the Truth and was unable to meet Me, I would, gladly and unhesitatingly, hasten to his abode, and would Myself satisfy his hunger. Mullá Muhammad, I am told, lives in Sa'ádat-Ábád, a village not far distant from this place. It is My purpose to visit him and deliver to him the Message of God."

Desirous of giving effect to His words, Bahá'u'lláh, accompanied by a number of His companions, proceeded immediately to that village. Mullá Muḥammad most ceremoniously received Him. "I have not come to this place," Bahá'u'lláh observed, "to pay you an official or formal visit. My purpose is to enlighten you regarding a new and wondrous Message, divinely inspired and fulfilling the promise given to Islám. Whosoever has inclined his ear to this Message has felt its irresistible power, and has been transformed by the potency of its grace. Tell Me whatsoever perplexes your mind, or hinders you from recognising the Truth." Mullá Muḥammad disparagingly remarked: "I undertake no action unless I first consult the Qur'án. I have invariably, on such occasions, followed the practice of invoking the aid of God and His blessings; of opening at random His sacred Book, and of consulting the first verse of the particular page upon which my eyes chance to fall. From the nature of that verse I can judge the wisdom and the advisability of my contemplated course of action." Finding that Bahá'u'lláh was not inclined to refuse him his request, the mujtahid called for a copy of the Qur'án, opened and closed it again, refusing to reveal the nature of the verse to those who were present. All he said was this: "I have consulted the Book of God, and deem it inadvisable to proceed further with this matter." A few agreed with him; the rest, for the most part, did not fail to recognise the fear which those words implied. Bahá'u'lláh, disinclined to cause him further embarrassment, arose and, asking to be excused, bade him a cordial farewell.

One day, in the course of one of His riding excursions into the country, Bahá'u'lláh, accompanied by His companions, saw, seated by the roadside, a lonely youth. His hair was dishevelled, and he wore the dress of a dervish. By the side of a brook he had kindled a fire, and was cooking his food

and eating it. Approaching him, Bahá'u'lláh most lovingly enquired: "Tell Me, dervish, what is it that you are doing?" "I am engaged in eating God," he bluntly replied. "I am cooking God and am burning Him." The unaffected simplicity of his manners and the candour of his reply pleased Bahá'u'lláh extremely. He smiled at his remark and began to converse with him with unrestrained tenderness and freedom. Within a short space of time, Bahá'u'lláh had changed him completely. Enlightened as to the true nature of God, and with a mind purged from the idle fancy of his own people, he immediately recognised the Light which that loving Stranger had so unexpectedly brought him. That dervish, whose name was Muṣṭafá, became so enamoured with the teachings which had been instilled into his mind that, leaving his cooking utensils behind, he straightway arose and followed Bahá'u'lláh. On foot, behind His horse, and inflamed with the fire of His love, he chanted merrily verses of a love-song which he had composed on the spur of the moment and had dedicated to his Beloved. "Thou art the Day-Star of guidance," ran its glad refrain. "Thou art the Light of Truth. Unveil Thyself to men, O Revealer of the Truth." Although, in later years, that poem obtained wide circulation among his people, and it became known that a certain dervish, surnamed Majdhúb, and whose name was Muṣṭafá Big-i-Sanandají, had, without premeditation, composed it in praise of his Beloved, none seemed to be aware to whom it actually referred, nor did anyone suspect, at a time when Bahá'u'lláh was still veiled from the eyes of men, that this dervish alone had recognised His station and discovered His glory.

Bahá'u'lláh's visit to Núr had produced the most far-reaching results, and had lent a remarkable impetus to the spread of the new-born Revelation. By His magnetic eloquence, by the purity of His life, by the dignity of His bearing, by the unanswerable logic of His argument, and by the many evidences of His loving-kindness, Bahá'u'lláh had won the hearts of the people of Núr, had stirred their souls, and had enrolled them under the standard of the Faith. Such was the effect of His words and deeds, as He went about preaching the Cause and revealing its glory to His countrymen in Núr, that the very stones and trees of that district seemed to have

been quickened by the waves of spiritual power which emanated from His person. All things seemed to be endowed with a new and more abundant life, all things seemed to be proclaiming aloud: "Behold, the Beauty of God has been made manifest! Arise, for He has come in all His glory." The people of Núr, when Bahá'u'lláh had departed from out their midst, continued to propagate the Cause and to consolidate its foundations. A number of them endured the severest afflictions for His sake; others quaffed with gladness the cup of martyrdom in His path. Mázindarán in general, and Núr in particular, were thus distinguished from the other provinces and districts of Persia, as being the first to have eagerly embraced the Divine Message. The district of Núr, literally meaning "light," which lay embedded within the mountains of Mázindarán, was the first to catch the rays of the Sun that had arisen in Shíráz, the first to proclaim to the rest of Persia, which still lay enveloped in the shadow of the vale of heedlessness, that the Day-Star of heavenly guidance had at length arisen to warm and illuminate the whole land.

When Bahá'u'lláh was still a child, the Vazír, His father, dreamed a dream. Bahá'u'lláh appeared to him swimming in a vast, limitless ocean. His body shone upon the waters with a radiance that illumined the sea. Around His head, which could distinctly be seen above the waters, there radiated, in all directions, His long, jet-black locks, floating in great profusion above the waves. As he dreamed, a multitude of fishes gathered round Him, each holding fast to the extremity of one hair. Fascinated by the effulgence of His face, they followed Him in whatever direction He swam. Great as was their number, and however firmly they clung to His locks, not one single hair seemed to have been detached from His head, nor did the least injury affect His person. Free and unrestrained, He moved above the waters and they all followed Him.

The Vazír, greatly impressed by this dream, summoned a soothsayer, who had achieved fame in that region, and asked him to interpret it for him. This man, as if inspired by a premonition of the future glory of Bahá'u'lláh, declared: "The limitless ocean that you have seen in your dream, O

Vazír, is none other than the world of being. Single-handed and alone, your son will achieve supreme ascendancy over it. Wherever He may please, He will proceed unhindered. No one will resist His march, no one will hinder His progress. The multitude of fishes signifies the turmoil which He will arouse amidst the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Around Him will they gather, and to Him will they cling. Assured of the unfailing protection of the Almighty, this tumult will never harm His person, nor will His loneliness upon the sea of life endanger His safety."

That soothsayer was subsequently taken to see Bahá'u'lláh. He looked intently upon His face, and examined carefully His features. He was charmed by His appearance, and extolled every trait of His countenance. Every expression in that face revealed to his eyes a sign of His concealed glory. So great was his admiration, and so profuse his praise of Bahá'u'lláh, that the Vazír, from that day, became even more passionately devoted to his son. The words spoken by that soothsayer served to fortify his hopes and confidence in Him. Like Jacob, he desired only to ensure the welfare of his beloved Joseph, and to surround Him with his loving protection.

Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, the Grand Vazír of Muḥammad Sháh, though completely alienated from Bahá'u'lláh's father, showed his son every mark of consideration and favour. So great was the esteem which the Ḥájí professed for Him, that Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Núrí, the I'timádu'd-Dawlih, who afterwards succeeded Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, felt envious. He resented the superiority which Bahá'u'lláh, as a mere youth, was accorded over him. The seeds of jealousy were, from that time, implanted in his breast. Though still a youth, and while his father is yet alive, he thought, he is given precedence in the presence of the Grand Vazír. What will, I wonder, happen to me when this young man shall have succeeded his father?

After the death of the Vazír, Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí continued to show the utmost consideration to Bahá'u'lláh. He would visit Him in His home, and would address Him as though He were his own son. The sincerity of his devotion, however, was very soon put to the test. One day, as he was passing through the village of Qúch-Ḥiṣár, which belonged to Bahá'-

u'lláh, he was so impressed by the charm and beauty of that place and the abundance of its water that he conceived the idea of becoming its owner. Bahá'u'lláh, whom he had summoned to effect the immediate purchase of that village, observed: "Had this property been exclusively mine own, I would willingly have complied with your desire. This transitory life, with all its sordid possessions, is worthy of no attachment in my eyes, how much less this small and insignificant estate. As a number of other people, both rich and poor, some of full age and some still minors, share with me the ownership of this property, I would request you to refer this matter to them, and to seek their consent." Unsatisfied with this reply, Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí sought, through fraudulent means, to achieve his purpose. So soon as Bahá'u'lláh was informed of his evil designs, He, with the consent of all concerned, immediately transferred the title of the property to the name of the sister of Muhammad Sháh, who had already repeatedly expressed her desire to become its owner. The Ḥájí, furious at this transaction, ordered that the estate should be forcibly seized, claiming that he already had purchased it from its original possessor. The representatives of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí were severely rebuked by the agents of the sister of the Sháh, and were requested to inform their master of the determination of that lady to assert her rights. The Ḥájí referred the case to Muhammad Sháh, and complained of the unjust treatment to which he had been subjected. That very night, the Sháh's sister had acquainted him with the nature of the transaction. "Many a time," she said to her brother, "your Imperial Majesty has graciously signified your desire that I should dispose of the jewels with which I am wont to adorn myself in your presence, and with the proceeds purchase some property. I have at last succeeded in fulfilling your desire. Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, however, is now fully determined to seize it forcibly from me." The Sháh reassured his sister, and commanded the Ḥájí to forgo his claim. The latter, in his despair, summoned Bahá'u'lláh to his presence and, by every artifice, strove to discredit His name. To the charges he brought against Him, Bahá'u'lláh vigorously replied, and succeeded in establishing His innocence. In his impotent rage, the Grand Vazír exclaimed:

"What is the purpose of all this feasting and banqueting in which you seem to delight? I, who am the Prime Minister of the Sháhanshán of Persia, never receive the number and variety of guests that crowd around your table every night. Why all this extravagance and vanity? You surely must be meditating a plot against me." "Gracious God!" Bahá'u'lláh replied. "Is the man who, out of the abundance of his heart, shares his bread with his fellow-men, to be accused of harbouring criminal intentions?" Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí was utterly confounded. He dared no reply. Though supported by the combined ecclesiastical and civil powers of Persia, he eventually found himself, in every contest he ventured against Bahá'u'lláh, completely defeated.

On a number of other occasions, Bahá'u'lláh's ascendancy over His opponents was likewise vindicated and recognised. These personal triumphs achieved by Him served to enhance His position, and spread abroad His fame. All classes of men marvelled at His miraculous success in emerging unscathed from the most perilous encounters. Nothing short of Divine protection, they thought, could have ensured His safety on such occasions. Not once did Bahá'u'lláh, beset though He was by the gravest perils, submit to the arrogance, the greed, and the treachery of those around Him. In His constant association, during those days, with the highest dignitaries of the realm, whether ecclesiastical or State officials, He was never content simply to accede to the views they expressed or the claims they advanced. He would, at their gatherings, fearlessly champion the cause of truth, would assert the rights of the downtrodden, defending the weak and protecting the innocent.

CHAPTER VI

MULLÁ ḤUSAYN'S JOURNEY TO KHURÁSÁN

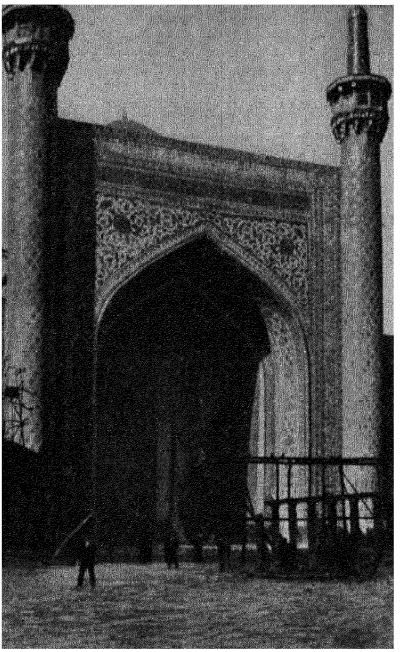
AS THE Báb bade farewell to the Letters of the Living, He instructed them, each and all, to record separately the name of every believer who embraced the Faith and identified himself with its teachings. The list of these believers He bade them enclose in sealed letters, and address them to His maternal uncle, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, in Shíráz, who would in turn deliver them to Him. "I shall classify these lists," He told them, "into eighteen sets of nineteen names each. Each set will constitute one váḥid.[1] All these names, in these eighteen sets, will, together with the first váḥid, consisting of My own name and those of the eighteen Letters of the Living, constitute the number of Kull-i-Shay'.[2] Of all these believers I shall make mention in the Tablet of God, so that upon each one of them the Beloved of our hearts may, in the Day when He shall have ascended the throne of glory, confer His inestimable blessings, and declare them the dwellers of His Paradise."

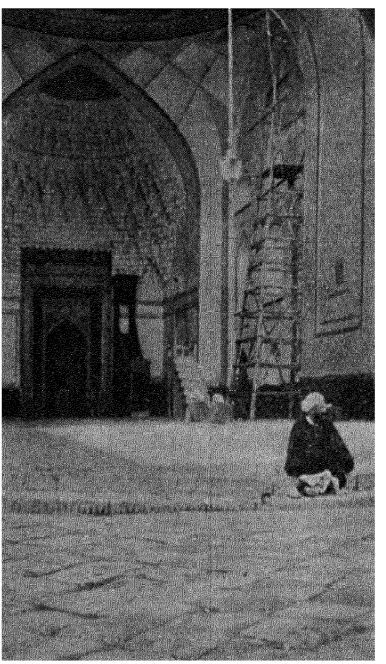
To Mullá Ḥusayn, more particularly, the Báb gave definite injunctions to send Him a written report on the nature and progress of his activities in Iṣfáhán, in Ṭihrán, and in Khurásán. He urged him to inform Him of those who accepted and submitted to the Faith, as well as of those who rejected and repudiated its truth. "Not until I receive your letter from Khurásán," He said, "shall I be ready to set out from this city on My pilgrimage to Ḥijáz."

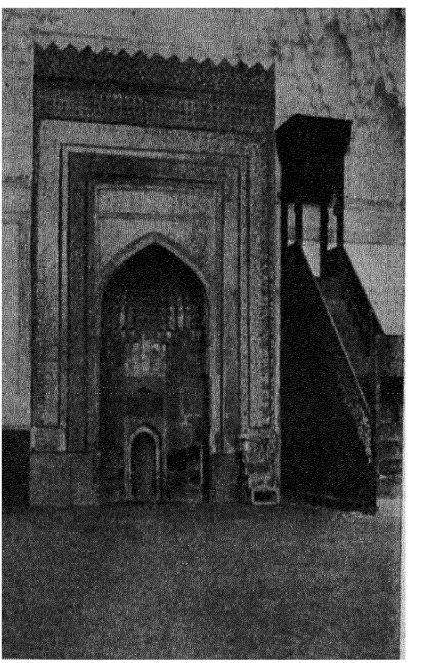
Mullá Ḥusayn, refreshed and fortified by the experience of his intercourse with Bahá'u'lláh, set out on his journey to Khurásán. During his visit to that province, he exhibited in an astonishing manner the effects of that regenerating power with which the parting words of the Báb had invested

[1] The numerical value of the word "váḥid," which means "unity," is 19.

[2] The numerical value of "Kull-i-Shay'," which means "all things," is 361, or 19 × 19.







VIEWS OF THE MOSQUE OF GAWHAR-SHÂD IN MASHHAD SHOWING PULPIT WHERE MULLÁ ḤUSAYN PREACHED

him.[1] The first to embrace the Faith in Khurásán was Mírzá Aḥmad-i-Azghandí, the most learned, the wisest, and the most eminent among the 'ulamás of that province. In whatever gathering he appeared, no matter how great the number or representative the character of the divines who were present, he alone was invariably the chief speaker. The high traits of his character, as well as his extreme devoutness, had ennobled the reputation which he had already acquired through his erudition, his ability and wisdom. The next to embrace the Faith among the shaykhís of Khurásán was Mullá Aḥmad-i-Mu'allim, who, while in Karbilá, had been the instructor of the children of Siyyid Káẓim. Next to him came Mullá Shaykh 'Alí, whom the Báb surnamed 'Aẓím, and then Mullá Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Fúrúghí, whose learning was unsurpassed except by that of Mírzá Aḥmad. No one apart from these outstanding figures among the ecclesiastical leaders of Khurásán exercised sufficient authority or possessed the necessary knowledge to challenge the arguments of Mullá Ḥusayn.

Mírzá Muḥammad Báqir-i-Qá'iní, who, for the remaining years of his life, had established his residence in Mashhad, was the next to embrace the Message. The love of the Báb inflamed his soul with such a consuming passion, that no one could resist its force or could belittle its influence. His fearlessness, his unsparing energy, his unswerving loyalty, and the integrity of his life, all combined to make him the terror of his enemies and a source of inspiration to his friends.

[1] "Le pèlerin mettait à profit, suivant son usage, un séjour, qu'il prolongeait au besoin, dans tous les villages, les bourgs et les villes de sa route, pour tenir des conférences, argumenter contre les mullás, faire connaître les livres du Báb et prêcher ses doctrines. Partout on l'appelait, on l'attendait avec impatience; il était recherché avec curiosité, écouté avidement, cru sans beaucoup de peine. Ce fut surtout à Níshápúr qu'il fit deux conversions importantes, dans les personnes de Mullá 'Abdu'l-Kháliq de Yazd, et de Mullá 'Alí le Jeune. Le premier de ces docteurs avait été élève du Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í. C'était un personnage célèbre par sa science et par son éloquence et par son crédit sur le peuple. L'autre, Shaykhí comme le premier, de mœurs sévères et de grande considération, occupait le poste considérable de principal mujtahid de la ville. Tous deux devinrent Bábís emportés et firent retentir les chaires des mosquées des prédications les plus violentes contre l'Islám. Pendant quelques semaines on eût pu croire que la religion ancienne était décidément vaincue. Le clergé, démoralisé par la défection de son chef, effrayé des discours publics qui le ménageaient si peu, ou n'osait se montrer ou avait pris la fuite. Quand Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushrú'í arriva à Mashhad, il trouva, d'une part, la population émue et divisée à son sujet; de l'autre, le clergé averti, très inquiet, mais poussé à bout et décidé à faire une vigoureuse résistance aux attaques dont il allait être l'objet." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 139–40.)

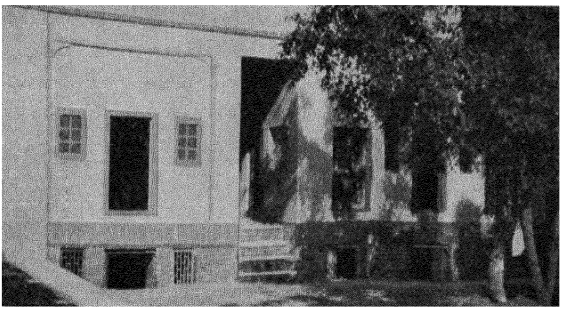
He placed his home at the disposal of Mullá Ḥusayn, arranged for separate interviews between him and the 'ulamás of Mashhad, and continued to endeavour, to the utmost of his power, to remove every obstacle that might impede the progress of the Faith. He was untiring in his efforts, undeviating in his purpose, and inexhaustible in his energy. He continued to labour indefatigably for his beloved Cause until the last hour of his life, when he fell a martyr at the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí. In his last days he was bidden by Quddús, after the tragic death of Mullá Ḥusayn, to assume the leadership of the heroic defenders of that fort. He acquitted himself gloriously of his task. His home, situated in Bálá-Khíyábán, in the city of Mashhad, is up to the present time known by the name of Bábíyyih. Whoever enters it can never escape the accusation of being a Bábí. May his soul rest in peace!

Mullá Ḥusayn, as soon as he had won to the Cause such able and devoted supporters, decided to address a written report concerning his activities to the Báb. In his communication he referred at length to his sojourn in Iṣfáhán and Káshán, described the account of his experience with Bahá'u'lláh, referred to the departure of the latter for Mázindarán, related the events of Núr, and informed Him of the success which had attended his own efforts in Khurásán. In it he enclosed a list of the names of those who had responded to his call, and of whose steadfastness and sincerity he was assured. He sent his letter by way of Yazd, through the trustworthy partners of the Báb's maternal uncle who were at that time residing in Ṭabas. That letter reached the Báb on the night preceding the twenty-seventh day of Ramaḍán,[1] a night held in great reverence by all the sects of Islám and regarded by many as rivalling in sacredness the Laylatu'l-Qadr itself, the night which, in the words of the Qur'án, "excelleth a thousand months."[2] The only companion of the Báb, when that letter reached Him that night, was Quddús, with whom He shared a number of its passages.

I have heard Mírzá Aḥmad relate the following: "The Báb's maternal uncle himself described to me the circum-

[1] Corresponding with the night preceding the 10th of October, 1844 A.D.

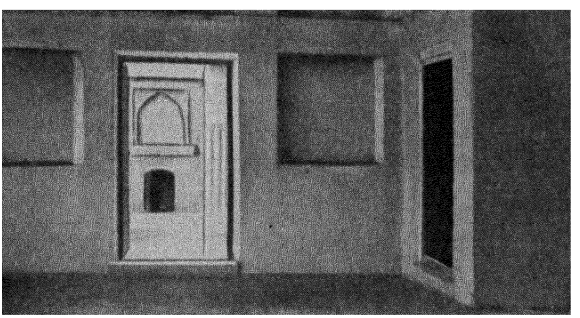
[2] The Laylatu'l-Qadr, meaning literally "Night of Power," is one of the last ten nights of Ramaḍán, and, as is commonly believed, the seventh of those nights reckoning backward.



VIEW OF THE "BABÍYYIH" IN MASHHAD

stances attending the receipt of Mullá Ḥusayn's letter by the Báb: 'That night I saw such evidences of joy and gladness on the faces of the Báb and of Quddús as I am unable to describe. I often heard the Báb, in those days, exultingly repeat the words, "How marvellous, how exceedingly marvellous, is that which has occurred between the months of Jamádí and Rajab!" As He was reading the communication addressed to Him by Mullá Ḥusayn, He turned to Quddús and, showing him certain passages of that letter, explained the reason for His joyous expressions of surprise. I, for my part, remained completely unaware of the nature of that explanation.' "

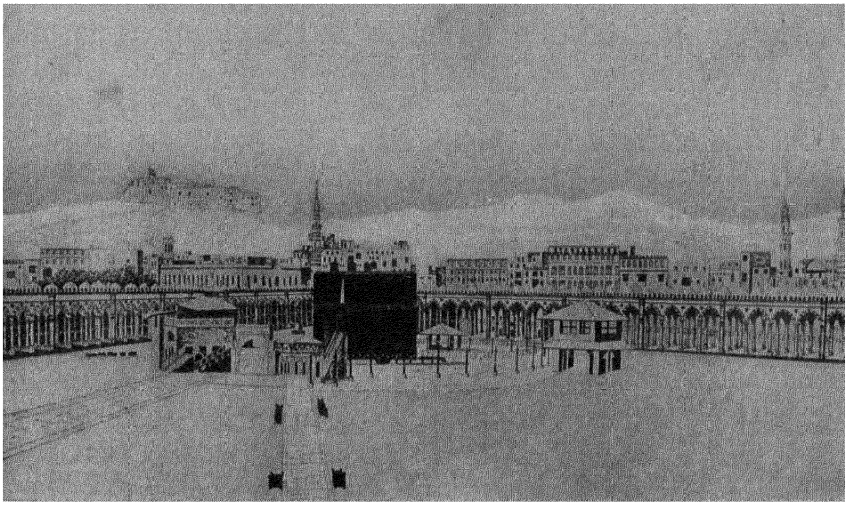
Mírzá Aḥmad, upon whom the account of this incident had produced a profound impression, was determined to fathom its mystery. "Not until I met Mullá Ḥusayn in Shíráz," he told me, "was I able to satisfy my curiosity. When I repeated to him the account described to me by the Báb's uncle, he smiled and said how well he remembered that



VIEW OF THE "BABÍYYIH" IN MASHHAD

between the months of Jamádí and Rajab he chanced to be in Tihrán. He gave no further explanation, and contented himself with this brief remark. This was sufficient, however, to convince me that in the city of Ṭihrán there lay hidden a Mystery which, when revealed to the world, would bring unspeakable joy to the hearts of both the Báb and Quddús."

The references in Mullá Ḥusayn's letter to Bahá'u'lláh's immediate response to the Divine Message, to the vigorous campaign which He had boldly initiated in Núr, and to the marvellous success which had attended His efforts, cheered and gladdened the Báb, and reinforced His confidence in the ultimate victory of His Cause. He felt assured that if now He were to fall suddenly a victim to the tyranny of His foes and depart from this world, the Cause which He had revealed would live; would, under the direction of Bahá'u'lláh, continue to develop and flourish, and would yield eventually its choicest fruit. The master-hand of Bahá'u'lláh would steer its course, and the pervading influence of His love would establish it in the hearts of men. Such a conviction fortified His spirit and filled Him with hope. From that moment His fears of the imminence of peril or danger entirely forsook Him. Phœnix-like He welcomed with joy the fire of adversity, and gloried in the glow and heat of its flame.



DRAWING OF MECCA

CHAPTER VII

THE BĀB'S PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA AND MEDINA

THE letter of Mullá Ḥusayn decided the Báb to undertake His contemplated pilgrimage to Ḥijáz. Entrusting His wife to His mother, and committing them both to the care and protection of His maternal uncle, He joined the company of the pilgrims of Fárs who were preparing to leave Shíráz for Mecca and Medina.[1] Quddús was His only companion, and the Ethiopian servant His personal attendant. He first proceeded to Búshihr, the seat of His uncle's business, where in former days He, in close association with him, had lived the life of a humble merchant. Having there completed the preliminary arrangements for His long and arduous voyage, He embarked on a sailing vessel, which, after two months of slow, stormy, and unsteady sailing, landed Him upon the shores of that sacred land.[2] High seas and the complete absence of comfort could

[1] According to Ḥájí Mu'ínú's-Salṭanih's narrative (p. 72), the Báb set out on His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina in the month of Shavvál, 1260 A.H. (Oct., 1844 A.D.).

[2] "Il garda de son voyage la plus mauvaise impression. 'Sache que les routes de la mer sont pénibles: nous ne les aimont pas pour nos fidèles: voyage sur les routes terrestres,' écrit-il dans le Kitáb-i-Baynu'l-Ḥaramayn, en s'adressant à son oncle, comme nous allons le voir tout à l'heure. Il reviendra longuement sur ce sujet dans le Bayán. Qu'on ne croie pas ici à un enfantillage: le sentiment qui guide le Báb dans cette horreur de la mer est plus noble

neither interfere with the regularity of His devotions nor perturb the peacefulness of His meditations and prayers. Oblivious of the storm that raged about Him, and undeterred by the sickness which had seized His fellow-pilgrims, He continued to occupy His time in dictating to Quddús such prayers and epistles as He felt inspired to reveal.

I have heard Ḥájí Abu'l-Ḥasan-i-Shírází, who was travelling in the same vessel as the Báb, describe the circumstances of that memorable voyage: "During the entire period of approximately two months," he asserted, "from the day we embarked at Búshihr to the day when we landed at Jaddih, the port of Ḥijáz, whenever by day or night I chanced to meet either the Báb or Quddús, I invariably found them together, both absorbed in their work. The Báb seemed to be dictating, and Quddús was busily engaged in taking down whatever fell from His lips. Even at a time when panic seemed to have seized the passengers of that storm-tossed vessel, they would be seen pursuing their labours with unperturbed confidence and calm. Neither the violence of the elements nor the tumult of the people around them could either ruffle the serenity of their countenance or turn them from their purpose."

The Báb Himself, in the Persian Bayán,[1] refers to the

et plus élevé. Frappé de l'égoisme des pèlerins, égoisme exaspéré par la gêne et les dangers d'un voyage sur mer, frappé également de l'état de saleté dans lequel sont obligés de vivre les voyageurs sur le pont, il veut éviter aux hommes l'occasion de donner cours à leurs mauvais instincts et de se rudoyer mutuellement. On sait que l'Apôtre recommande expressément la politesse, la courtoisie la plus raffinée dans les rapports sociaux: 'Ne contristez qui que ce soit pour quoi que ce soit.' Et il fut, durant ce voyage, à même de constater la méchanceté de l'homme et sa brutalité quand il se trouve en face des circonstances difficiles: 'Car la chose la plus triste que je vis dans mon pèlerinage à la Meqqe était les constantes disputes des pèlerins entre eux, disputes qui leur enlevaient les bénéfices moraux de leur pèlerinage' (Bayán, 4: 16). Il arriva donc à Mascate oú il se reposa quelques jours durant lesquels il chercha à convertir les gens du pays—sans y réussir. Il s'adressa à l'un d'entre eux, un religieux probablement et de rang élevé, dont la conversion eût pu entraîner celle de ses concitoyens; je le suppose du moins, car il ne nous donne à ce sujet aucun détail; il est évident qu'il ne dut pas chercher à convertir le premier venu qui n'aurait eu aucune influence sur les autres habitants de la ville. Qu'il ait tenté une conversion et qu'il n'y ait pas réussi, la chose est indiscutable, puisqu'il l'affirme lui-même: 'La mention de Dieu, en vérité, descendit sur la terre de Mascate, et fit parvenir l'ordre de Dieu à l'un des habitants du pays: il se pouvait qu'il comprit nos versets et devint l'un de ceux qui sont guidés. Dis: il obéit cet homme à ses passions après avoir lu nos versets: et en vérité, cet homme est, selon l'ordre du Livre, au nombre des Transgresseurs. Dis: nous n'avons pas vu à Mascate de gens du Livre qui l'aient aidé, car ils sont des ignorants perdus. Et il en fut de même pour tous ceux qui se trouvaient sur le bateau, si ce n'est l'un d'entre eux qui crut à nos versets et devint de ceux qui craignent Dieu.'" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 207–8.)

[1] "C'est ainsi que moi-même, j'ai vu dans le voyage de la Meqqe, un personnage qui dépensait des sommes considérables, mais hésitait devant la dépense d'un verre d'eau pour

hardships of that voyage. "For days," He wrote, "we suffered from the scarcity of water. I had to content myself with the juice of the sweet lemon." Because of this experience, He supplicated the Almighty to grant that the means of ocean travel might soon be speedily improved, that its hardships might be reduced, and its perils be entirely eliminated. Within a short space of time, since that prayer was offered, the evidences of a remarkable improvement in all forms of maritime transport have greatly multiplied, and the Persian Gulf, which in those days hardly possessed a single steam-driven vessel, now boasts a fleet of ocean liners that can, within the range of a few days and in the utmost comfort, carry the people of Fárs on their annual pilgrimage to Ḥijáz.

The peoples of the West, among whom the first evidences of this great Industrial Revolution have appeared, are, alas, as yet wholly unaware of the Source whence this mighty stream, this great motive power, proceeds—a force that has revolutionised every aspect of their material life. Their own history testifies to the fact that in the year which witnessed the dawn of this glorious Revelation, there suddenly appeared evidences of an industrial and economic revolution that the people themselves declare to have been unprecedented in the history of mankind. In their concern for the details of the working and adjustments of this newly conceived machinery, they have gradually lost sight of the Source and object of this tremendous power which the Almighty has committed to their charge. They seem to have sorely misused this power and misunderstood its function. Designed to confer upon the people of the West the blessings of peace and of happiness, it has been utilised by them to promote the interests of destruction and war.

son compagnon de route qui habitait avec lui. Cela se passait sur le bateau, et l'eau y était rare, de telle sorte que moi-même, dans le voyage de Búshihr à Mascat, qui dura douze jours pendant lesquels on ne put faire d'eau, je dus me contenter de citrons doux." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 2, p. 154.) "On ne peut s'imaginer sur mer rien autre chose que la gêne: on n'y peut avoir tous les objets nécessaires comme pour un voyage sur terre. . . . Les gens de mer sont bien forcés (d'y vivre) mais, par leurs actions, ils se rapprochent davantage de Dieu, et Dieu récompense les bonnes actions faites tant sur terre que sur mer, mais il double les récompenses de celles accomplies par un de ses esclaves sur mer à cause que leur travail est plus pénible." (*Ibid.*, pp. 155–6.) "J'y ai vu (dans la route de la Meqqe) des actes plus vils qu'aucun acte aux yeux de Dieu, et qui étaient cause que la bonne action qu'ils faisaient (en allant en pèlerinage) était vaine. C'étaient des disputes entre pèlerins! En tout état de cause des disputes de ce genre sont interdites. . . . Vraiment la maison de Dieu n'a pas besoin de pareilles gens pour venir tourner autour d'elle!" (*Ibid.*, p. 155.)

Upon His arrival in Jaddih, the Báb donned the pilgrim's garb, mounted a camel, and set out on His journey to Mecca. Quddús, however, notwithstanding the repeatedly expressed desire of his Master, preferred to accompany Him on foot all the way from Jaddih to that holy city. Holding in his hand the bridle of the camel upon which the Báb was riding, he walked along joyously and prayerfully, ministering to his Master's needs, wholly indifferent to the fatigues of his arduous march. Every night, from eventide until the break of day, Quddús, sacrificing comfort and sleep, would continue with unrelaxing vigilance to watch beside his Beloved, ready to provide for His wants and to ensure the means of His protection and safety.

One day, when the Báb had dismounted close to a well in order to offer His morning prayer, a roving Bedouin suddenly appeared on the horizon, drew near to Him, and, snatching the saddlebag that had been lying on the ground beside Him, and which contained His writings and papers, vanished into the unknown desert. His Ethiopian servant set out to pursue him, but was prevented by his Master, who, as He was praying, motioned to him with His hand to give up his pursuit. "Had I allowed you," the Báb later on affectionately assured him, "you would surely have overtaken and punished him. But this was not to be. The papers and writings which that bag contained are destined to reach, through the instrumentality of this Arab, such places as we could never have succeeded in attaining. Grieve not, therefore, at his action, for this was decreed by God, the Ordainer, the Almighty." Many a time afterwards did the Báb on similar occasions seek to comfort His friends by such reflections. By words such as these He turned the bitterness of regret and of resentment into radiant acquiescence in the Divine purpose and into joyous submission to God's will.

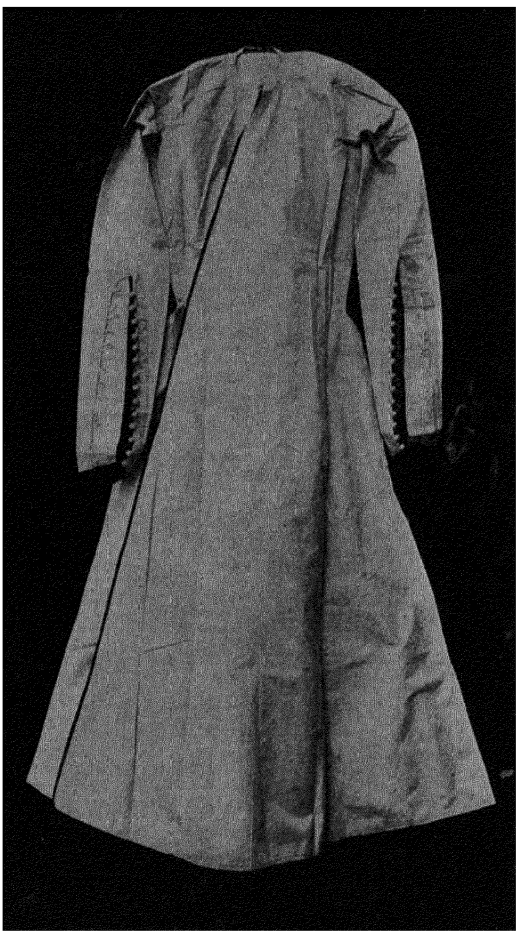
On the day of 'Arafát,[1] the Báb, seeking the quiet seclusion of His cell, devoted His whole time to meditation and worship. On the following day, the day of Nahr, after He had offered the feast-day prayer, He proceeded to Muná, where, according to ancient custom, He purchased nineteen lambs of the choicest breed, of which He sacrificed nine in

[1] The day preceding the festival.

His own name, seven in the name of Quddús, and three in the name of His Ethiopian servant. He refused to partake of the meat of this consecrated sacrifice, preferring instead to distribute it freely among the poor and needy of that neighbourhood.

Although the month of Dhi'l-Ḥijjih,[1] the month of pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, coincided in that year with the first month of the winter season, yet so intense was the heat in that region that the pilgrims who made the circuit of

[1] December, 1844 A.D.



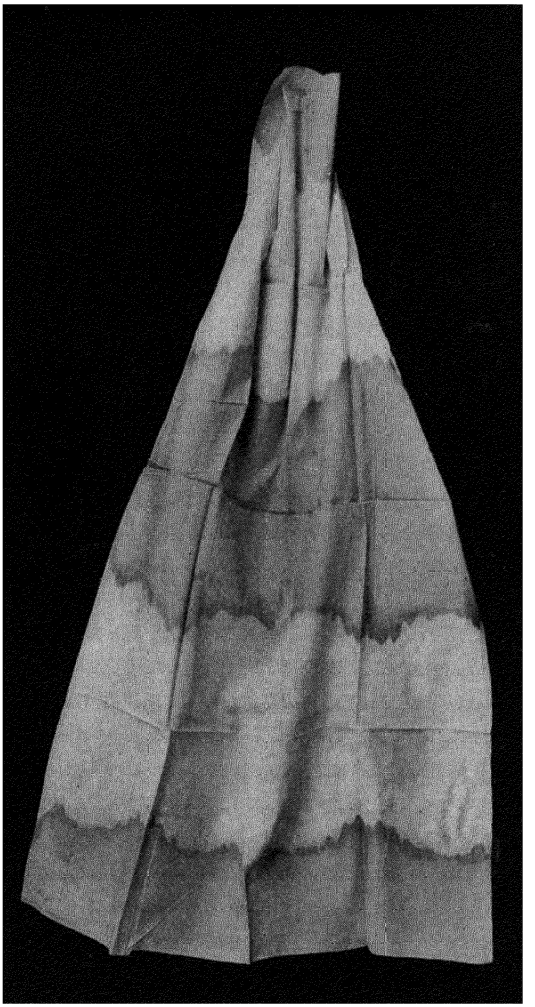
DRESS WORN UNDER THE JUBBIH, WORN BY THE BĀB. (OUTER COAT)



CAP AROUND WHICH THE TURBAN WAS WOUND. WORN BY THE BĀB

the sacred shrine were unable to perform that rite in their usual garments. Draped in a light, loose-fitting tunic, they joined in the celebration of the festival. The Báb, however, refused, as a mark of deference, to discard either His turban or cloak. Dressed in His usual attire, He, with the utmost dignity and calm, and with extreme simplicity and reverence, encompassed the Ka'bih and performed all the prescribed rites of worship.

On the last day of His pilgrimage to Mecca, the Báb met Mírzá Muḥíṭ-i-Kirmání. He stood facing the Black Stone, when the Báb approached him and, taking his hand in His, addressed him in these words: "O Muḥíṭ! You regard yourself as one of the most outstanding figures of the shaykhí community and a distinguished exponent of its teachings. In your heart you even claim to be one of the direct successors and rightful inheritors of those twin great Lights, those Stars that have heralded the morn of Divine guidance. Behold, we are both now standing within this most sacred shrine. Within its hallowed precincts, He whose Spirit dwells in this place can cause Truth immediately to be known and distinguished from falsehood, and righteousness from error. Verily I declare, none besides Me in this day, whether in the East or in the West, can claim to be the Gate that leads men to the knowledge of God. My proof is none other than that proof whereby the truth of the Prophet Muḥammad was established. Ask Me whatsoever you please; now, at this very moment, I pledge Myself to reveal such verses as can demonstrate the truth of My mission. You must choose either to submit yourself unreservedly to My Cause or to repudiate it entirely. You have no other alternative. If you choose to reject My message, I will not let go your hand until you pledge your word to declare publicly your repudia-



CLOTH WORN BY THE BÁB WHEN
CIRCUMAMBULATING THE KA'BIH

tion of the Truth which I have proclaimed. Thus shall He who speaks the Truth be made known, and he that speaks falsely shall be condemned to eternal misery and shame. Then shall the way of Truth be revealed and made manifest to all men."

This peremptory challenge, thrust so unexpectedly by the Báb upon Mírzá Muḥíṭ-i-Kirmání, profoundly distressed him. He was overpowered by its directness, its compelling

majesty and force. In the presence of that Youth, he, notwithstanding his age, his authority and learning, felt as a helpless bird prisoned in the grasp of a mighty eagle. Confused and full of fear, he replied: "My Lord, my Master! Ever since the day on which my eyes beheld You in Karbilá, I seemed at last to have found and recognised Him who had been the object of my quest. I renounce whosoever has failed to recognise You, and despise him in whose heart may yet linger the faintest misgivings as to Your purity and holiness. I pray You to overlook my weakness, and entreat You to answer me in my perplexity. Please God I may, at this very place, within the precincts of this hallowed shrine, swear my fealty to You, and arise for the triumph of Your Cause. If I be insincere in what I declare, if in my heart I should disbelieve what my lips proclaim, I would deem myself utterly unworthy of the grace of the Prophet of God, and regard my action as an act of manifest disloyalty to 'Alí, His chosen successor."

The Báb, who listened attentively to his words, and who was well aware of his helplessness and poverty of soul, answered and said: "Verily I say, the Truth is even now known and distinguished from falsehood. O shrine of the Prophet of God, and you, O Quddús, who have believed in Me! I take you both, in this hour, as My witnesses. You have seen and heard that which has come to pass between Me and him. I call upon you to testify thereunto, and God, verily, is, beyond and above you, My sure and ultimate Witness. He is the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. O Muḥíṭ! Set forth whatsoever perplexes your mind, and I will, by the aid of God, unloose My tongue and undertake to resolve your problems, so that you may testify to the excellence of My utterance and realise that no one besides Me is able to manifest My wisdom."

Mírzá Muḥíṭ responded to the invitation of the Báb and submitted to Him his questions. Pleading the necessity of his immediate departure for Medina, he expressed the hope of receiving, ere his departure from that city, the text of the promised reply. "I will grant your request," the Báb assured him. "On My way to Medina I shall, with the assistance of God, reveal My answer to your questions. If I meet you

not in that city, My reply will surely reach you immediately after your arrival at Karbilá. Whatever justice and fairness may dictate, the same shall I expect you to fulfil. 'If ye do well, to your own behoof will ye do well: and if ye do evil, against yourselves will ye do it.' 'God is verily independent of all His creatures.' "[1]

Mírzá Muḥíṭ, ere his departure, again expressed his firm resolve to redeem his solemn pledge. "I shall never depart from Medina," he assured the Báb, "whatever may betide, until I have fulfilled my covenant with You." As the mote which is driven before the gale, he, unable to withstand the sweeping majesty of the Revelation proclaimed by the Báb, fled in terror from before His face. He tarried awhile in Medina and, faithless to his pledge and disregardful of the admonitions of his conscience, left for Karbilá.

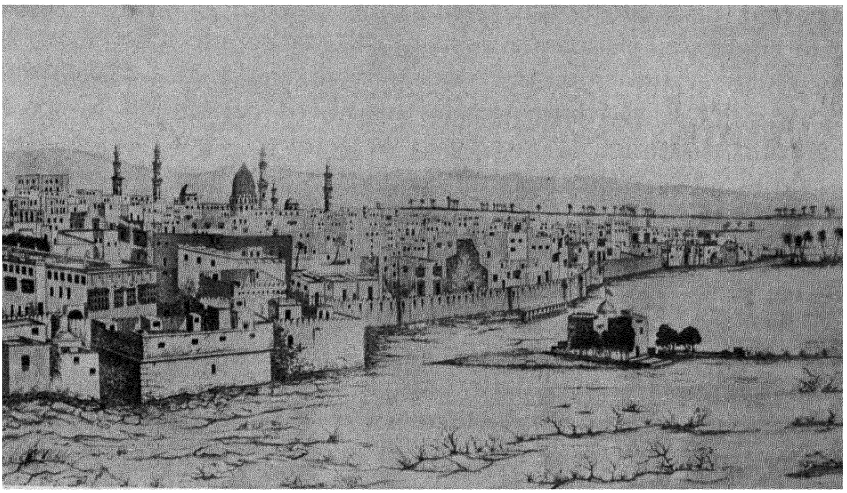
The Báb, faithful to His promise, revealed, on His way from Mecca to Medina, His written reply to the questions that had perplexed the mind of Mírzá Muhít, and gave it the name of Ṣaḥífiy-i-Baynu'l-Ḥaramayn.[2] Mírzá Muḥíṭ, who received it in the early days of his arrival in Karbilá, remained unmoved by its tone and refused to recognise the precepts which it inculcated. His attitude towards the Faith was one of concealed and persistent opposition. At times he professed to be a follower and supporter of that notorious adversary of the Báb, Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán, and occasionally claimed for himself the station of an independent leader. Nearing the end of his days, whilst residing in 'Iráq, he, feigning submission to Bahá'u'lláh, expressed, through one of the Persian princes who dwelt in Baghdád, a desire to meet Him. He requested that his proposed interview be regarded as strictly confidential. "Tell him," was Bahá'u'lláh's reply, "that in the days of My retirement in the mountains of Sulaymáníyyih, I, in a certain ode which I composed, set forth the essential requirements from every wayfarer who treads the path of search in his quest of Truth. Share with him this verse from that ode: 'If thine aim be to cherish thy life, approach not our court; but if sacrifice be thy heart's desire, come and let others come with thee. For such is the way of Faith, if in

[1] Verses of the Qur'án.
[2] "The Epistle between the Two Shrines."

thy heart thou seekest reunion with Bahá; shouldst thou refuse to tread this path, why trouble us? Begone!' If he be willing, he will openly and unreservedly hasten to meet Me; if not, I refuse to see him." Bahá'u'lláh's unequivocal answer disconcerted Mírzá Muḥít. Unable to resist and unwilling to comply, he departed for his home in Karbilá the very day he received that message. As soon as he arrived, he sickened, and, three days later, he died.

No sooner had the Báb performed the last of the observances in connection with His pilgrimage to Mecca than he addressed an epistle to the Sherif of that holy city, wherein He set forth, in clear and unmistakable terms, the distinguishing features of His mission, and called upon him to arise and embrace His Cause. This epistle, together with selections from His other writings, He delivered to Quddús, and instructed him to present them to the Sherif. The latter, however, too absorbed in his own material pursuits to incline his ear to the words which had been addressed to him by the Báb, failed to respond to the call of the Divine Message. Ḥájí Níyáz-i-Baghdádí has been heard to relate the following: "In the year 1267 A.H.,[1] I undertook a pilgrimage to that holy city, where I was privileged to meet the Sherif. In the course of his conversation with me, he said: 'I recollect that in the year '60, during the season of pilgrimage, a youth came to visit me. He presented to me a sealed book which I readily accepted but was too much occupied at that time to read. A few days later I met again that same youth, who asked me whether I had any reply to make to his offer. Pressure of work had again detained me from considering the contents of that book. I was therefore unable to give him a satisfactory reply. When the season of pilgrimage was over, one day, as I was sorting out my letters, my eyes fell accidentally upon that book. I opened it and found, in its introductory pages, a moving and exquisitely written homily which was followed by verses the tone and language of which bore a striking resemblance to the Qur'án. All that I gathered from the perusal of the book was that among the people of Persia a man of the seed of Fátimih and descendant of the family of Háshim, had raised a new call, and was announcing

[1] 1850–51 A.D.



DRAWING OF MEDINA

to all people the appearance of the promised Qá'im. I remained, however, ignorant of the name of the author of that book, nor was I informed of the circumstances attending that call.' 'A great commotion,' I remarked, 'has indeed seized that land during the last few years. A Youth, a descendant of the Prophet and a merchant by profession, has claimed that His utterance was the Voice of Divine inspiration. He has publicly asserted that, within the space of a few days, there could stream from His tongue verses of such number and excellence as would surpass in volume and beauty the Qur'án itself—a work which it took Muḥammad no less than twenty-three years to reveal. A multitude of people, both high and low, civil and ecclesiastical, among the inhabitants of Persia, have rallied round His standard and have willingly sacrificed themselves in His path. That Youth has, during the past year, in the last days of the month of Sha'bán,[1] suffered martyrdom in Tabríz, in the province of Ádhirbáyján. They who persecuted Him sought by this means to extinguish the light which He kindled in that land. Since His martyrdom, however, His influence has pervaded all classes of people.' The Sherif, who was listening attentively, expressed his indignation at the behaviour of those

[1] July, 1850 A.D.

who had persecuted the Báb. 'The malediction of God be upon these evil people,' he exclaimed, 'a people who, in days past, treated in the same manner our holy and illustrious ancestors!' With these words the Sherif concluded his conversation with me."

From Mecca the Báb proceeded to Medina. It was the first day of the month of Muḥarram, in the year 1261 A.H.,[1] when He found Himself on the way to that holy city. As He approached it, He called to mind the stirring events that had immortalised the name of Him who had lived and died within its walls. Those scenes which bore eloquent testimony to the creative power of that immortal Genius seemed to be re-enacted, with undiminished splendour, before His eyes. He prayed as He drew nigh unto that holy sepulchre which enshrined the mortal remains of the Prophet of God. He also remembered, as He trod that holy ground, that shining Herald of His own Dispensation. He knew that in the cemetery of Baqí', in a place not far distant from the shrine of Muḥammad, there had been laid to rest Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í, the harbinger of His own Revelation, who, after a life of onerous service, had decided to spend the evening of his days within the precincts of that hallowed shrine. There came to Him also the vision of those holy men, those pioneers and martyrs of the Faith, who had fallen gloriously on the field of battle, and who, with their life-blood, had sealed the triumph of the Cause of God. Their sacred dust seemed as if reanimated by the gentle tread of His feet. Their shades seemed to have been stirred by the reviving breath of His presence. They looked to Him as if they had arisen at His approach, were hastening towards Him, and were voicing their welcome. They seemed to be addressing to Him this fervent plea: "Repair not unto Thy native land, we beseech Thee, O Thou Beloved of our hearts! Abide Thou in our midst, for here, far from the tumult of Thine enemies who are lying in wait for Thee, Thou shalt be safe and secure. We are fearful for Thee. We dread the plottings and machinations of Thy foes. We tremble at the thought that their deeds might bring eternal damnation to their souls." "Fear not," the Báb's indomitable Spirit replied: "I am come into this

[1] Friday, January 10, 1845 A.D.

world to bear witness to the glory of sacrifice. You are aware of the intensity of My longing; you realise the degree of My renunciation. Nay, beseech the Lord your God to hasten the hour of My martyrdom and to accept My sacrifice. Rejoice, for both I and Quddús will be slain on the altar of our devotion to the King of Glory. The blood which we are destined to shed in His path will water and revive the garden of our immortal felicity. The drops of this consecrated blood will be the seed out of which will arise the mighty Tree of God, the Tree that will gather beneath its all-embracing shadow the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Grieve not, therefore, if I depart from this land, for I am hastening to fulfil My destiny."

CHAPTER VIII

THE BĀB'S STAY IN SHĪRĀZ AFTER THE PILGRIMAGE

THE visit of the Báb to Medina marked the concluding stage of His pilgrimage to Ḥijáz. From thence He returned to Jaddih, and by way of the sea regained His native land. He landed at Búshihr nine lunar months after He had embarked on His pilgrimage from that port. In the same khán[1] which He had previously occupied, He received His friends and relatives, who had come to greet and welcome Him. While still in Búshihr, He summoned Quddús to His presence and with the utmost kindness bade him depart for Shíráz. "The days of your companionship with Me," He told him, "are drawing to a close. The hour of separation has struck, a separation which no reunion will follow except in the Kingdom of God, in the presence of the King of Glory. In this world of dust, no more than nine fleeting months of association with Me have been allotted to you. On the shores of the Great Beyond, however, in the realm of immortality, joy of eternal reunion awaits us. The hand of destiny will ere long plunge you into an ocean of tribulation for His sake. I, too, will follow you; I, too, will be immersed beneath its depths. Rejoice with exceeding gladness, for you have been chosen as the standard-bearer of the host of affliction, and are standing in the vanguard of the noble army that will suffer martyrdom in His name. In the streets of Shíráz, indignities will be heaped upon you, and the severest injuries will afflict your body. You will survive the ignominious behaviour of your foes, and will attain the presence of Him who is the one object of our adoration and love. In His presence you will forget all the harm and disgrace that shall have befallen you. The hosts of the Unseen will hasten forth to assist you, and will

[1] Similar to a caravanserai.

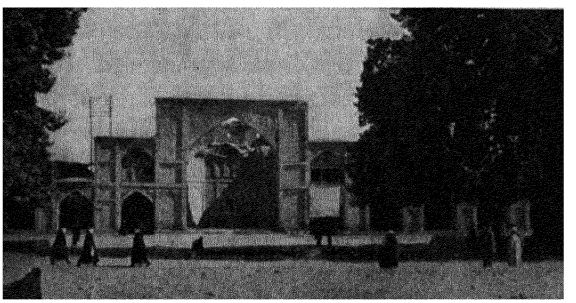
proclaim to all the world your heroism and glory. Yours will be the ineffable joy of quaffing the cup of martyrdom for His sake. I, too, shall tread the path of sacrifice, and will join you in the realm of eternity." The Báb then delivered into his hands a letter He had written to Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, His maternal uncle, in which He had informed him of His safe return to Búshihr. He also entrusted him with a copy of the Khaṣá'il-i-Sab'ih,[1] a treatise in which He had set forth the essential requirements from those who had attained to the knowledge of the new Revelation and had recognised its claim. As He bade Quddús His last farewell, He asked him to convey His greetings to each of His loved ones in Shíráz.

Quddús, with feelings of unshakable determination to carry out the expressed wishes of his Master, set out from Búshihr. Arriving at Shíráz, he was affectionately welcomed by Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, who received him in his own home and eagerly enquired after the health and doings of his beloved Kinsman. Finding him receptive to the call of the new Message, Quddús acquainted him with the nature of the Revelation with which that Youth had already fired his soul. The Báb's maternal uncle, as a result of the endeavours exerted by Quddús, was the first, after the Letters of the Living, to embrace the Cause in Shíráz. As the full significance of the new-born Faith had remained as yet undivulged, he was unaware of the full extent of its implications and glory. His conversation with Quddús, however, removed the veil from his eyes. So steadfast became his faith, and so profound grew his love for the Báb, that he consecrated his whole life to His service. With unrelaxing vigilance he arose to defend His Cause and to shield His person. In his sustained endeavours, he scorned fatigue and was disdainful of death. Though recognised as an outstanding figure among the business men of that city, he never allowed material considerations to interfere with his spiritual responsibility of safeguarding the person, and advancing the Cause, of his beloved Kinsman. He persevered in his task until the hour when, joining the company of the Seven Martyrs of Ṭihrán, he, in circumstances of exceptional heroism, laid down his life for Him.

[1] Literally meaning "The Seven Qualifications."

The next person whom Quddús met in Shíráz was Ismu'-lláhu'l-Asdaq, Mullá Ṣádiq-i-Khurásání, to whom he entrusted the copy of the Khaṣá'il-i-Sab'ih, and stressed the necessity of putting into effect immediately all its provisions. Among its precepts was the emphatic injunction of the Báb to every loyal believer to add the following words to the traditional formula of the adhán:[1] "I bear witness that He whose name is 'Alí-Qabl-i-Muḥammad[2] is the servant of the Baqíyyatu'-





VIEWS OF THE MASJID-I-NAW

lláh."[3] Mullá Ṣádiq, who in those days had been extolling from the pulpit-top to large audiences the virtues of the imáms of the Faith, was so enraptured by the theme and language of that treatise that he unhesitatingly resolved to carry out all the observances it ordained. Driven by the impelling force inherent in that Tablet, he, one day as he was leading his congregation in prayer in the Masjid-i-Naw, suddenly proclaimed, as he was sounding the adhán, the additional words prescribed by the Báb. The multitude that

[1] Refer to Glossary. [2] Reference to the name of the Báb.
[3] Reference to Bahá'u'lláh. Refer to Glossary.

heard him was astounded by his cry. Dismay and consternation seized the entire congregation. The distinguished divines, who occupied the front seats and who were greatly revered for their pious orthodoxy, raised a clamour, loudly protesting: "Woe betide us, the guardians and protectors of the Faith of God! Behold, this man has hoisted the standard of heresy. Down with this infamous traitor! He has spoken blasphemy. Arrest him, for he is a disgrace to our Faith." "Who," they angrily exclaimed, "dared authorise such grave departure from the established precepts of Islám? Who has presumed to arrogate to himself this supreme prerogative?"

The populace re-echoed the protestations of these divines, and arose to reinforce their clamour. The whole city had been aroused, and public order was, as a result, seriously threatened. The governor of the province of Fárs, Ḥusayn Khán-i-Íravání, surnamed Ájúdán-Báshí, and generally designated in those days as Ṣáḥib-Ikhtíyár,[1] found it necessary to intervene and to enquire into the cause of this sudden commotion. He was informed that a disciple of a young man named Siyyid-i-Báb, who had just returned from His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and was now living in Búshihr, had arrived in Shíráz and was propagating the teachings of his Master. "This disciple," Ḥusayn Khán was further informed, "claims that his teacher is the author of a new revelation and is the revealer of a book which he asserts is divinely inspired. Mullá Ṣádiq-i-Khurásání has embraced that faith, and is fearlessly summoning the multitude to the acceptance of that message. He declares its recognition to be the first obligation of every loyal and pious follower of shí'ah Islám."

Ḥusayn Khán ordered the arrest of both Quddús and Mullá Sádiq. The police authorities, to whom they were delivered, were instructed to bring them handcuffed into the presence of the governor. The police also delivered into the hands of Husayn Khán the copy of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá', which they had seized from Mullá Ṣádiq while he was reading aloud its passages to an excited congregation. Quddús, owing to his youthful appearance and unconventional dress, was at first ignored by Ḥusayn Khán, who preferred to direct

[1] According to the "Táríkh-i-Jadíd" (p. 204), he was also styled "Nizámu'd-Dawlih."

his remarks to his more dignified and elderly companion. "Tell me," angrily asked the governor, as he turned to Mullá Ṣádiq, "if you are aware of the opening passage of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá' wherein the Siyyid-i-Báb addresses the rulers and kings of the earth in these terms: 'Divest yourselves of the robe of sovereignty, for He who is the King in truth, hath been made manifest! The Kingdom is God's, the Most Exalted. Thus hath the Pen of the Most High decreed!' If this be true, it must necessarily apply to my sovereign, Muḥammad Sháh, of the Qájár dynasty,[1] whom I represent as the chief magistrate of this province. Must Muḥammad Sháh, according to this behest, lay down his crown and abandon his sovereignty? Must I, too, abdicate my power and relinquish my position?" Mullá Ṣádiq unhesitatingly replied: "When once the truth of the Revelation announced by the Author of these words shall have been definitely established, the truth of whatsoever has fallen from His lips will likewise be vindicated. If these words be the Word of God, the abdication of Muḥammad Sháh and his like can matter but little. It can in no wise turn aside the Divine purpose, nor alter the sovereignty of the almighty and eternal King."[2]

That cruel and impious ruler was sorely displeased with such an answer. He reviled and cursed him, ordered his attendants to strip him of his garments and to scourge him with a thousand lashes. He then commanded that the beards of both Quddús and Mullá Ṣádiq should be burned, their noses be pierced, that through this incision a cord should be passed, and with this halter they should be led through the streets of the city.[3] "It will be an object lesson to the people of Shíráz," Ḥusayn Khán declared, "who will know what the penalty of heresy will be." Mullá Ṣádiq, calm and self-possessed and with eyes upraised to heaven, was heard reciting this prayer: "O Lord, our God! We have indeed heard the voice of One that called. He called us to the

[1] "One of the tribes of Túrán, a Turkish family, called the Qájár, which first appeared in Persia in the invading army of Changíz Khán." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 339.)

[2] According to A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb" (footnote 175, p. 225), this meeting took place on August 6, 1845 A.D.

[3] According to the "Traveller's Narrative" (p. 5), a certain Mullá 'Alí-Akbar-i-Ardistání was, together with them, subjected to the same persecution.

Faith—'Believe ye on the Lord your God!'—and we have believed. O God, our God! Forgive us, then, our sins, and hide away from us our evil deeds, and cause us to die with the righteous."[1] With magnificent fortitude both resigned themselves to their fate. Those who had been instructed to inflict this savage punishment performed their task with alacrity and vigour. None intervened in behalf of these sufferers, none was inclined to plead their cause. Soon after this, they were both expelled from Shíráz. Before their expulsion, they were warned that if they ever attempted to return to this city, they would both be crucified. By their sufferings they earned the immortal distinction of having been the first to be persecuted on Persian soil for the sake of their Faith. Mullá 'Alíy-i-Basṭámí, though the first to fall a victim to the relentless hate of the enemy, underwent his persecution in 'Iráq, which lay beyond the confines of Persia. Nor did his sufferings, intense as they were, compare with the hideousness and the barbaric cruelty which characterised the torture inflicted upon Quddús and Mullá Ṣádiq.

An eye-witness of this revolting episode, an unbeliever residing in Shíráz, related to me the following: "I was present when Mullá Ṣádiq was being scourged. I watched his persecutors each in turn apply the lash to his bleeding shoulders, and continue the strokes until he became exhausted. No one believed that Mullá Ṣádiq, so advanced in age and so frail in body, could possibly survive fifty such savage strokes. We marvelled at his fortitude when we found that, although the number of the strokes of the scourge he had received had already exceeded nine hundred, his face still retained its original serenity and calm. A smile was upon his face, as he held his hand before his mouth. He seemed utterly indifferent to the blows that were being showered upon him. When he was being expelled from the city, I succeeded in approaching him, and asked him why he held his hand before his mouth. I expressed surprise at the smile upon his countenance. He emphatically replied: 'The first seven strokes were severely painful; to the rest I seemed to have grown indifferent. I was wondering whether the strokes that followed were being actually applied to my own body. A feeling

[1] Qur'án, 3: 193.

of joyous exultation had invaded my soul. I was trying to repress my feelings and to restrain my laughter. I can now realise how the almighty Deliverer is able, in the twinkling of an eye, to turn pain into ease, and sorrow into gladness. Immensely exalted is His power above and beyond the idle fancy of His mortal creatures.' " Mullá Ṣádiq, whom I met years after, confirmed every detail of this moving episode.

Ḥusayn Khán's anger was not appeased by this atrocious and most undeserved chastisement. His wanton and capricious cruelty found further vent in the assault which he now directed against the person of the Báb.[1] He despatched to Búshihr a mounted escort of his own trusted guard, with emphatic instructions to arrest the Báb and to bring Him in chains to Shíráz. The leader of that escort, a member of the Nuṣayrí community, better known as the sect of 'Alíyu'-lláhí, related the following: "Having completed the third stage of our journey to Búshihr, we encountered, in the midst of the wilderness, a youth who wore a green sash and a small turban after the manner of the siyyids who are in the trading profession. He was on horseback, and was followed by an Ethiopian servant who was in charge of his belongings. As we approached him, he saluted us and enquired as to our destination. I thought it best to conceal from him the truth, and replied that in this vicinity we had been commanded by the governor of Fárs to conduct a certain enquiry. He smilingly observed: 'The governor has sent you to arrest Me. Here am I; do with Me as you please. By

[1] "Cette ville était devenue le theâtre de discussions passionées qui troublèrent profondément la paix générale. Les curieux, les pèlerins, les amateurs de scandale s'y donnaient rendez-vous, commentant les nouvelles, approuvant ou blâmant, exaltant le jeune Siyyid ou le couvrant au contraire de malédictions ou d'injures: tout le monde s'excitait, s'énervait, s'affolait. Les Mullás voyaient avec une âpre inquiétude s'augmenter le nombre des sectateurs de la nouvelle doctrine: leur clientèle, par suite leurs resources diminuaient d'autant. Il fallait aviser, une plus longue tolérance pouvait vider les mosquées de leurs fidèles convaincus que puisque l'Islám ne se défendait pas c'est qu'il avouait être vaincu. D'autre part Ḥusayn Khán, Niẓámu'd-Dawlih, gouverneur de Shiráz, craignit qu'à laisser aller les choses le scandale devint tel, qu'il fût par le suite impossible à réprimer: c'était risquer la disgrâce, d'ailleurs le Báb ne se contentait pas de prêcher: il appelait à lui les hommes de bonne volonté. 'Et celui qui connait la parole de Dieu et ne lui vient pas en aide au moment de la violence est exactement comme celui qui s'est détourné du témoignage de sa Sainteté Ḥusayn fils d'Alí à Karbilá. Ce sont ceux-là les impies.' (Kitáb-i-Baynu'l-Ḥaramayn.) Les intérêts civils ainsi d'accord avec les intérêts du ciel, Niẓámu'd-Dawlih et Shaykh Abú-Turáb, l'Imám-Jum'ih, furent d'avis qu'il fallait infliger au novateur un affront qui le discréditât aux yeux de la population. Peut-être ainsi arriverait-on à calmer les choses." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 229–30.)

coming out to meet you, I have curtailed the length of your march, and have made it easier for you to find Me.' I was startled by his remarks and marvelled at his candour and straightforwardness. I could not explain, however, his readiness to subject himself, of his own accord, to the severe discipline of government officials, and to risk thereby his own life and safety. I tried to ignore him, and was preparing to leave, when he approached me and said: 'I swear by the righteousness of Him who created man, distinguished him from among the rest of His creatures, and caused his heart to be made the seat of His sovereignty and knowledge, that all My life I have uttered no word but the truth, and had no other desire except the welfare and advancement of My fellow-men. I have disdained My own ease and have avoided being the cause of pain or sorrow to anyone. I know that you are seeking Me. I prefer to deliver Myself into your hands, rather than subject you and your companions to unnecessary annoyance for My sake.' These words moved me profoundly. I instinctively dismounted from my horse, and, kissing his stirrups, addressed him in these words: 'O light of the eyes of the Prophet of God! I adjure you, by Him who has created you and endowed you with such loftiness and power, to grant my request and to answer my prayer. I beseech you to escape from this place and to flee from before the face of Ḥusayn Khán, the ruthless and despicable governor of this province. I dread his machinations against you; I rebel at the idea of being made the instrument of his malignant designs against so innocent and noble a descendant of the Prophet of God. My companions are all honourable men. Their word is their bond. They will pledge themselves not to betray your flight. I pray you, betake yourself to the city of Mashhad in Khurásán, and avoid falling a victim to the brutality of this remorseless wolf.' To my earnest entreaty he gave this answer: 'May the Lord your God requite you for your magnanimity and noble intention. No one knows the mystery of My Cause; no one can fathom its secrets. Never will I turn My face away from the decree of God. He alone is My sure Stronghold, My Stay and My Refuge. Until My last hour is at hand, none dare assail Me, none can frustrate the plan of the Almighty. And when

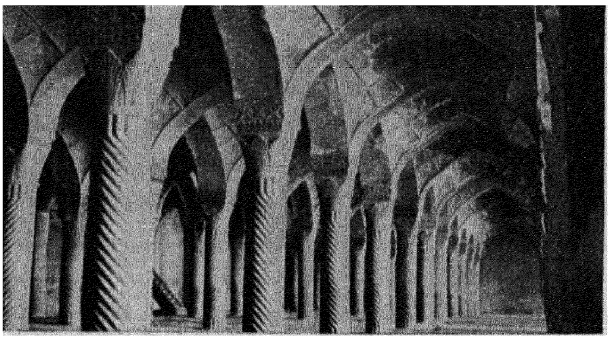
My hour is come, how great will be My joy to quaff the cup of martyrdom in His name! Here am I; deliver Me into the hands of your master. Be not afraid, for no one will blame you.' I bowed my consent and carried out his desire."

The Báb straightway resumed His journey to Shíráz. Free and unfettered, He went before His escort, which followed Him in an attitude of respectful devotion. By the magic of His words, He had disarmed the hostility of His guards and transmuted their proud arrogance into humility and love. Reaching the city, they proceeded directly to the seat of the government. Whosoever observed the cavalcade marching through the streets could not help but marvel at this most unusual spectacle. Immediately Ḥusayn Khán was informed of the arrival of the Báb, he summoned Him to his presence. He received Him with the utmost insolence and bade Him occupy a seat facing him in the centre of the room. He publicly rebuked Him, and in abusive language denounced His conduct. "Do you realise," he angrily protested, "what a great mischief you have kindled? Are you aware what a disgrace you have become to the holy Faith of Islám and to the august person of our sovereign? Are you not the man who claims to be the author of a new revelation which annuls the sacred precepts of the Qur'án?" The Báb calmly replied: " 'If any bad man come unto you with news, clear up the matter at once, lest through ignorance ye harm others, and be speedily constrained to repent of what ye have done.' "[1] These words inflamed the wrath of Ḥusayn Khán. "What!" he exclaimed. "Dare you ascribe to us evil, ignorance, and folly?" Turning to his attendant, he bade him strike the Báb in the face. So violent was the blow, that the Báb's turban fell to the ground. Shaykh Abú-Turáb, the Imám-Jum'ih of Shíráz, who was present at that meeting and who strongly disapproved of the conduct of Ḥusayn Khán, ordered that the Báb's turban be replaced upon His head, and invited Him to be seated by his side. Turning to the governor, the Imám-Jum'ih explained to him the circumstances connected with the revelation of the verse of the Qur'án which the Báb had quoted, and sought by this means to calm his fury. "This verse which this youth has

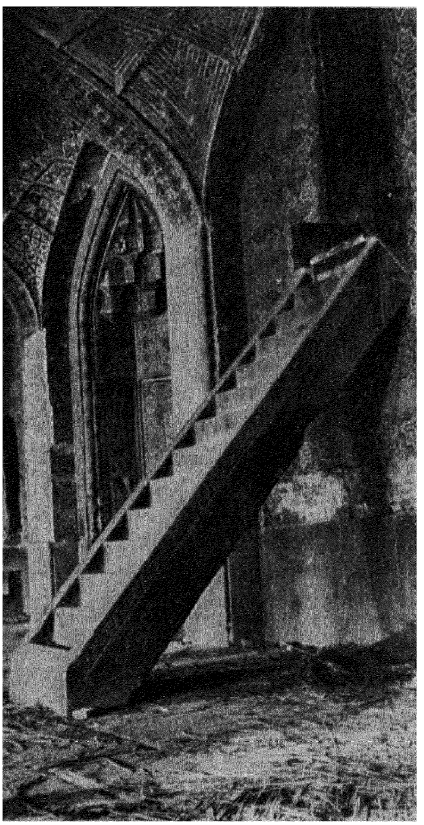
[1] Qur'án, 49: 6.

quoted," he told him, "has made a profound impression upon me. The wise course, I feel, is to enquire into this matter with great care, and to judge him according to the precepts of the holy Book." Ḥusayn Khán readily consented; whereupon Shaykh Abú-Turáb questioned the Báb regarding the nature and character of His Revelation. The Báb denied the claim of being either the representative of the promised Qá'im or the intermediary between Him and the faithful. "We are completely satisfied," replied the Imám-Jum'ih; "we shall request you to present yourself on Friday in the Masjid-i-Vakíl, and to proclaim publicly your denial." As Shaykh Abú-Turáb arose to depart in the hope of terminating the proceedings, Ḥusayn Khán intervened and said: "We shall require a person of recognised standing to give bail and surety for him, and to pledge his word in writing that if ever in future this youth should attempt by word or deed to prejudice the interests either of the Faith of Islám or of the government of this land, he would straightway deliver him into our hands, and regard himself under all circumstances responsible for his behaviour." Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, the Báb's maternal uncle, who was present at that meeting, consented to act as the sponsor of his Nephew. In his own handwriting he wrote the pledge, affixed to it his seal, confirmed it by the signature of a number of witnesses, and delivered it to the governor; whereupon Ḥusayn Khán ordered that the Báb be entrusted to the care of His uncle, with the condition that at whatever time the governor should deem it advisable, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí would at once deliver the Báb into his hands.

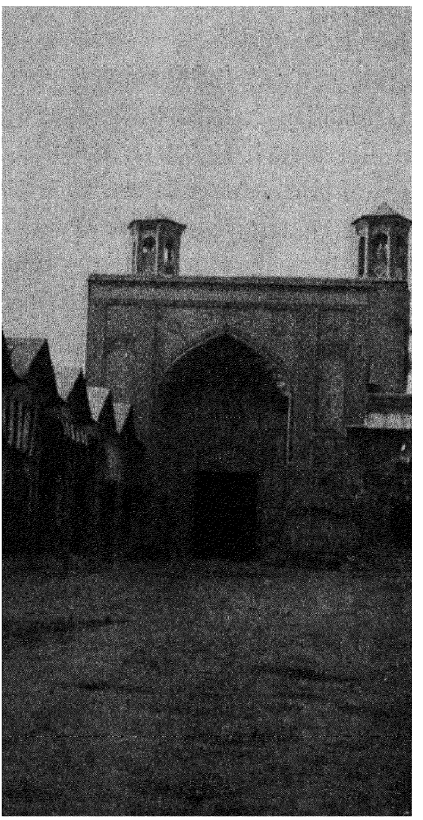
Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, his heart filled with gratitude to God, conducted the Báb to His home and committed Him to the loving care of His revered mother. He rejoiced at this family reunion and was greatly relieved by the deliverance of his dear and precious Kinsman from the grasp of that malignant tyrant. In the quiet of His own home, the Báb led for a time a life of undisturbed retirement. No one except His wife, His mother, and His uncles had any intercourse with Him. Meanwhile the mischief-makers were busily pressing Shaykh Abú-Turáb to summon the Báb to the Masjid-i-Vakíl and to call upon Him to fulfil His pledge.



SECTION OF THE INTERIOR



PULPIT FROM WHICH THE BÁB ADDRESSED THE CONGREGATION



ENTRANCE DOOR

VIEWS OF THE MASJID-I-VAKÍL, SHÍRÁZ

Shaykh Abú-Turáb was known to be a man of kindly disposition, and of a temperament and nature which bore a striking resemblance to the character of the late Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, the Imám-Jum'ih of Ṭihrán. He was extremely reluctant to treat with contumely persons of recognised standing, particularly if these were residents of Shíráz. Instinctively he felt this to be his duty, observed it conscientiously, and was as a result universally esteemed by the people of that city. He therefore sought, through evasive answers and repeated postponements, to appease the indignation of the multitude. He found, however, that the stirrers-up of mischief and sedition were bending every effort further to inflame the feelings of general resentment which had seized the masses. He at length felt compelled to address a confidential message to Ḥají Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, requesting him to bring the Báb with him on Friday to the Masjid-i-Vakíl, that He might fulfil the pledge He had given. "My hope," he added, "is that by the aid of God the statements of your nephew may ease the tenseness of the situation and may lead to your tranquillity as well as to our own."

The Báb, accompanied by Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, arrived at the Masjid at a time when the Imám-Jum'ih had just ascended the pulpit and was preparing to deliver his sermon. As soon as his eyes fell upon the Báb, he publicly welcomed Him, requested Him to ascend the pulpit, and called upon Him to address the congregation. The Báb, responding to his invitation, advanced towards him and, standing on the first step of the staircase, prepared to address the people. "Come up higher," interjected the Imám-Jum'ih. Complying with his wish, the Báb ascended two more steps. As He was standing, His head hid the breast of Shaykh Abú-Turáb, who was occupying the pulpit-top. He began by prefacing His public declaration with an introductory discourse. No sooner had He uttered the opening words of "Praise be to God, who hath in truth created the heavens and the earth," than a certain siyyid known as Siyyid-i-Shish-Parí, whose function was to carry the mace before the Imám-Jum'ih, insolently shouted: "Enough of this idle chatter! Declare, now and immediately, the thing you intend to say." The Imám-Jum'ih greatly resented the rudeness of the siyyid's

remark. "Hold your peace," he rebuked him, "and be ashamed of your impertinence." He then, turning to the Báb, asked Him to be brief, as this, he said, would allay the excitement of the people. The Báb, as He faced the congregation, declared: "The condemnation of God be upon him who regards me either as a representative of the Imám or the gate thereof. The condemnation of God be also upon whosoever imputes to me the charge of having denied the unity of God, of having repudiated the prophethood of Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets, of having rejected the truth of any of the messengers of old, or of having refused to recognise the guardianship of 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, or of any of the imáms who have succeeded him." He then ascended to the top of the staircase, embraced the Imám-Jum'ih, and, descending to the floor of the Masjid, joined the congregation for the observance of the Friday prayer. The Imám-Jum'ih intervened and requested Him to retire. "Your family," he said, "is anxiously awaiting your return. All are apprehensive lest any harm befall you. Repair to your house and there offer your prayer; of greater merit shall this deed be in the sight of God." Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí also was, at the request of the Imám-Jum'ih, asked to accompany his nephew to his home. This precautionary measure which Shaykh Abú-Turáb thought it wise to observe was actuated by the fear lest, after the dispersion of the congregation, a few of the evil-minded among the crowd might still attempt to injure the person of the Báb or endanger His life. But for the sagacity, the sympathy, and the careful attention which the Imám-Jum'ih so strikingly displayed on a number of such occasions, the infuriated mob would doubtless have been led to gratify its savage desire, and would have committed the most abominable of excesses. He seemed to have been the instrument of the invisible Hand appointed to protect both the person and the Mission of that Youth.[1]

[1] "À la suite de cette séance publique provoquée par la sottise des mullás, et qui lu, attira de nombreux partisans, le trouble fut profond dans toutes les provinces de la Perse, le débat prit un tel caractère de gravité que Muḥammad Sháh envoya à Shíráz un homme en qui il avait toute confiance pour lui faire un rapport de ce qu'il aurait vu et compris. Cet envoyé était Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 232–3.)

The Báb regained His home and for some time was able to lead, in the privacy of His house, and in close association with His family and kinsmen, a life of comparative tranquillity. In those days He celebrated the advent of the first Naw-Rúz since He had declared His Mission. That festival fell, in that year, on the tenth day of the month of Rabí'u'l-Avval, 1261 A.H.[1]

A few among those who were present on that memorable occasion in the Masjid-i-Vakíl, and had listened to the statements of the Báb, were greatly impressed by the masterly manner in which that Youth had, by His unaided efforts, succeeded in silencing His formidable opponents. Soon after this event, they were each led to apprehend the reality of His Mission and to recognise its glory. Among them was Shaykh 'Alí Mírzá, the nephew of this same Imám-Jum'ih, a young man who had just attained the age of maturity. The seed implanted in his heart grew and developed, until in the year 1267 A.H.[2] he was privileged to meet Bahá'u'lláh in 'Iráq. That visit filled him with enthusiasm and joy. Returning greatly refreshed to his native land, he resumed with redoubled energy his labours for the Cause. From that year until the present time, he has persevered in his task, and has achieved distinction by the uprightness of his character and whole-hearted devotion to his government and country. Recently a letter addressed by him to Bahá'u'lláh has reached the Holy Land, in which he expresses his keen satisfaction at the progress of the Cause in Persia. "I am mute with wonder," he writes, "when I behold the evidences of God's unconquerable power manifested among the people of my country. In a land which has for years so savagely persecuted the Faith, a man who for forty years has been known throughout Persia as a Bábí, has been made the sole arbitrator in a case of dispute which involves, on the one hand, the Ẓillu's-Sulṭán, the tyrannical son of the Sháh and a sworn enemy of the Cause, and, on the other, Mírzá Fatḥ-'Alí Khán, the Ṣáḥib-i-Díván. It has been publicly announced that whatsoever be the verdict of this Bábí, the same should be unreservedly accepted by both parties and should be unhesitatingly enforced."

[1] March, 1845 A.D. [2] 1850–51 A.D.

A certain Muhammad-Karím who was among the congregation that Friday was likewise attracted by the Báb's remarkable behaviour on that occasion. What he saw and heard on that day brought about his immediate conversion. Persecution drove him out of Persia to 'Iráq, where, in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, he continually deepened his understanding and faith. Later on he was bidden by Him to return to Shíráz and to endeavour to the best of his ability to propagate the Cause. There he remained and laboured to the end of his life.

Still another was Mírzá Áqáy-i-Rikáb-Sáz. He became so enamoured of the Báb on that day that no persecution, however severe and prolonged, was able either to shake his convictions or to obscure the radiance of his love. He, too, attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in 'Iráq. In answer to the questions which he asked regarding the interpretation of the Disconnected Letters of the Qur'án and the meaning of the Verse of Núr, he was favoured with an expressly written Tablet revealed by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh. In His path he eventually suffered martyrdom.

Among them also was Mírzá Raḥím-i-Khabbáz, who distinguished himself by his fearlessness and fiery ardour. He relaxed not in his efforts until the hour of his death.

Ḥájí Abu'l-Ḥasan-i-Bazzáz, who, as a fellow-traveller of the Báb during His pilgrimage to Ḥijáz, had but dimly recognised the overpowering majesty of His Mission, was, on that memorable Friday, profoundly shaken and completely transformed. He bore the Báb such love that tears of an overpowering devotion continually flowed from his eyes. All who knew him admired the uprightness of his conduct and praised his benevolence and candour. He, as well as his two sons, has proved by his deeds the tenacity of his faith, and has won the esteem of his fellow-believers.

And yet another of those who felt the fascination of the Báb on that day was the late Ḥájí Muḥammad-Bisáṭ, a man well-versed in the metaphysical teachings of Islám and a great admirer of both Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim. He was of a kindly disposition and was gifted with a keen sense of humour. He had won the friendship of the Imám-

Jum'ih, was intimately associated with him, and was a faithful attendant at the Friday congregational prayer.

The Naw-Rúz of that year, which heralded the advent of a new springtime, was also symbolic of that spiritual rebirth, the first stirrings of which could already be discerned throughout the length and breadth of the land. A number of the most eminent and learned among the people of that country emerged from the wintry desolation of heedlessness, and were quickened by the reviving breath of the new-born Revelation. The seeds which the Hand of Omnipotence had implanted in their hearts germinated into blossoms of the purest and loveliest fragrance.[1] As the breeze of His loving-kindness and tender mercy wafted over these blossoms, the penetrating power of their perfume spread far and wide over the face of all that land. It diffused itself even beyond the confines of Persia. It reached Karbilá and reanimated the souls of those who were waiting in expectation for the return

[1] "Quoi qu'il en soit, l'impression produite fut immense à Shíráz, et tout le monde lettré et religieux se pressa autour d'"Alí-Muḥammad. Aussitôt qu'il paraissait dans la mosquée, on l'entourait. Aussitôt qu'il s'asseyait dans la chaire, on faisait silence pour l'écouter. Ses discours publics n'attaquaient jamais le fond de l'Islám et respectaient la plus grande partie des formes: le Kitmán, en somme, y dominait. C'étaient, néanmoins, des discours hardis. Le clergé n'y était pas ménagé; ses vices y étaient cruellement flagellés. Les destinées tristes et douloureuses de l'humanité en étaient généralement le thème, et, çà et là, certaines allusions dont l'obscurité irritait les passions curieuses des uns, tandis qu'elle flattait l'orgueil des autres, déjà initiés en tout ou en partie, donnaient à ces prédications un sel et un mordant tels que la foule y grossissait chaque jour, et que, dans toute la Perse, on commença à parler d'"Alí-Muḥammad. Les Mullás de Shíráz n'avaient pas attendu tout ce bruit pour se réunir contre leur jeune détracteur. Dès ses premières apparitions en public, ils lui avaient envoyé les plus habiles d'entre eux, afin d'argumenter contre lui et de le confondre, et ces luttes publiques, qui se tenaient soit dans les mosquées, soit dans les collèges, en présence du gouverneur, des chefs militaires, du clergé, du peuple, de tout le monde enfin, au lieu de profiter aux prêtres, ne contribuèrent pas peu à répandre et à exalter à leurs dépens la renommée de l'enthousiaste. Il est certain qu'il battit ses contradicteurs; il les condamna, ce qui n'était pas très difficile, le Qur'án à la main. Ce fut un jeu pour lui de montrer à la face de ces multitudes, qui les connaissaient bien, à quel point leur conduite, à quel point leurs préceptes, à quel point leurs dogmes mêmes étaient en contradiction flagrante avec le Livre, qu'ils ne pouvaient récuser. D'une hardiesse et d'une exaltation extraordinaires, il flétrissait, sans ménagement aucun, sans souci aucun des conventions ordinaires, les vices de ses antagonistes, et, après leur avoir prouvé qu'ils étaient infidèles quant à la doctrine, il les déshonorait dans leur vie et les jetait à croix ou pile à l'indignation ou au mépris des auditeurs. Les scènes de Shíráz, ces débuts de sa prédication furent si profondément émouvants, que les musulmans restés orthodoxes, qui y ont assisté, en ont conservé un souvenir ineffaçable et n'en parlent qu'avec une sorte de terreur. Ils avouent unanimement que l'éloquence d'"Alí-Muḥammad était d'une nature incomparable et telle que, sans en avoir été témoin, on ne saurait l'imaginer. Bientôt le jeune théologien ne parut plus en public qu'entouré d'une troupe nombreuse de partisans. Sa maison en était toujours pleine. Non seulement il enseignait dans les mosquées et dans les collèges, mais c'était chez lui, surtout, et le soir, que, retiré dans une chambre

of the Báb to their city. Soon after Naw-Rúz, an epistle reached them by way of Basrih, in which the Báb, who had intended to return from Ḥijáz to Persia by way of Karbilá, informed them of the change in His plan and of His consequent inability to fulfil His promise. He directed them to proceed to Iṣfáhán and remain there until the receipt of further instructions. "Should it be deemed advisable," He added, "We shall request you to proceed to Shíráz; if not, tarry in Iṣfáhán until such time as God may make known to you His will and guidance."

The receipt of this unexpected intelligence created a considerable stir among those who had been eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Báb at Karbilá. It agitated their minds and tested their loyalty. "What of His promise to us?" whispered a few of the discontented among them. "Does He regard the breaking of His pledge as the interposition of the will of God?" The others, unlike those waverers, became more steadfast in their faith and clung with added determination to the Cause. Faithful to their Master, they joyously responded to His invitation, ignoring entirely the criticisms and protestations of those who had faltered in their faith.

avec l'élite de ses admirateurs, il soulevait pour eux les voiles d'une doctrine qui n'était pas encore parfaitement arrêtée pour lui-même. Il semblerait que, dans ces premiers temps, se fût plutôt la partie polémique qui l'occupât que la dogmatique, et rien n'est plus naturel. Dans ces conférences secrètes, les hardiesses, bien autrement multipliées qu'en public, grandissaient chaque jour, et elles tendaient si évidemment à un renversement complet de l'Islâm, qu'elles servaient bien d'introduction à une nouvelle profession de foi. La petite Église était ardente, hardie, emportée, prête à tout, fanatisée dans le vrai sens et le sens élevé du mot, c'est-à-dire que chacun de ses membres ne se comptait pour rien et brûlait de sacrifier sang et argent à la cause de la vérité." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 120, 122.) "The Báb now began to gather round him a group of devoted adherents. He seems to have been noted for extreme simplicity of manner, and engaging gentleness, and a wonderful charm of appearance. Men were impressed by his knowledge and his penetrating eloquence of speech. And his writings, though to Gobineau they appeared dull, were greatly admired by the Persians for the beauty and elegance of their style and produced an immense sensation in Shíráz. As soon as he entered the mosque it was surrounded. As soon as he ascended the pulpit there was silence." (Sir Francis Younghusband's "The Gleam," p. 194.) "La morale prêchée par un jeune homme à l'âge où les passions bouillonent agit extraordinairement sur un auditoire composé de gens religieux jusqu'au fanatisme, surtout lorsque les paroles du prédicateur sont en parfaite harmonie avec ses actions. Personne ne doutait de la continence ni de la rigidité du Karbilá'í Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad: il parlait peu, était constamment rêveur et le plus souvent fuyait les hommes, ce qui excitait encore la curiosité; on le recherchait de toute part." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 341.) "Par la moralité de sa vie, le jeune Siyyid servait d'exemple à ceux qui l'entouraient. Aussi l'écoutait-on volontiers, lorsque, dans des discours ambigus et entrecoupés, il parlait contre les abus qui règnent dans toutes les classes de la société. On répétait ses paroles en les amplifiant; on parlait de lui comme du vrai maître, et l'on se livrait à lui sans reserve." (*Ibid.*)

They set out for Iṣfáhán, determined to abide by whatsoever might be the will and desire of their Beloved. They were joined by a few of their companions, who, though gravely shaken in their belief, concealed their feelings. Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Nahrí, whose daughter was subsequently joined in wedlock with the Most Great Branch, and Mírzá Hádí, the brother of Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, both residents of Iṣfáhán, were among those companions whose vision of the glory and sublimity of the Faith the expressed misgivings of the evil whisperers had failed to obscure. Among them, too, was a certain Muḥammad-i-Ḥaná-Sáb, also a resident of Iṣfáhán, who is now serving in the home of Bahá'u'lláh. A number of these staunch companions of the Báb participated in the great struggle of Shaykh Ṭabarsí and miraculously escaped the tragic fate of their fallen brethren.

On their way to Iṣfáhán they met, in the city of Kangávar, Mullá Ḥusayn with his brother and nephew, who were his companions on his previous visit to Shíráz, and who were proceeding to Karbilá. They were greatly delighted by this unexpected encounter, and requested Mullá Ḥusayn to prolong his stay in Kangávár, with which request he readily complied. Mullá Ḥusayn, who, while in that city, led the companions of the Báb in the Friday congregational prayer, was held in such esteem and reverence by his fellow-disciples that a number of those present, who later on, in Shíráz, revealed their disloyalty to the Faith, were moved with envy. Among them were Mullá Javád-i-Baraghání and Mullá 'Abdu'l-'Alíy-i-Harátí, both of whom feigned submission to the Revelation of the Báb in the hope of satisfying their ambition for leadership. They both strove secretly to undermine the enviable position achieved by Mullá Ḥusayn. Through their hints and insinuations, they persistently endeavoured to challenge his authority and disgrace his name.

I have heard Mírzá Aḥmad-i-Kátib, better known in those days as Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím, who had been the travelling companion of Mullá Javád from Qazvín, relate the following: "Mullá Javád often alluded in his conversation with me to Mullá Ḥusayn. His repeated and disparaging remarks, couched in artful language, impelled me to cease my association with him. Every time I determined to sever my

intercourse with Mullá Javád, I was prevented by Mullá Ḥusayn, who, discovering my intention, counselled me to exercise forbearance towards him. Mullá Ḥusayn's association with the loyal companions of the Báb greatly added to their zeal and enthusiasm. They were edified by his example and were lost in admiration for the brilliant qualities of mind and heart which distinguished so eminent a fellow-disciple."

Mullá Ḥusayn decided to join the company of his friends and to proceed with them to Iṣfáhán. Travelling alone, at about a farsang's[1] distance in advance of his companions, he, as soon as he paused at nightfall to offer his prayer, would be overtaken by them and would, in their company, complete his devotions. He would be the first to resume the journey, and would again be joined by that devoted band at the hour of dawn, when he once more would break his march to offer his prayer. Only when pressed by his friends would he consent to observe the congregational form of worship. On such occasions he would sometimes follow the lead of one of his companions. Such was the devotion which he had kindled in those hearts that a number of his fellow-travellers would dismount from their steeds and, offering them to those who were journeying on foot, would themselves follow him, utterly indifferent to the strain and fatigues of the march.

As they approached the outskirts of Iṣfáhán, Mullá Ḥusayn, fearing that the sudden entry of so large a group of people might excite the curiosity and suspicion of its inhabitants, advised those who were travelling with him to disperse and to enter the gates in small and inconspicuous numbers. A few days after their arrival, there reached them the news that Shíráz was in a state of violent agitation, that all manner of intercourse with the Báb had been forbidden, and that their projected visit to that city would be fraught with the gravest danger. Mullá Ḥusayn, quite undaunted by this sudden intelligence, decided to proceed to Shíráz. He acquainted only a few of his trusted companions with his intention. Discarding his robes and turban, and wearing the jubbih[2] and kuláh of the people of Khurásán, he, disguising himself as a horseman of Hizárih and Qúchán and accompanied by his brother and nephew, set out at an unexpected hour for the

[1] Refer to Glossary. [2] Refer to Glossary.

city of his Beloved. As he approached its gate, he instructed his brother to proceed in the dead of night to the house of the Báb's maternal uncle and to request him to inform the Báb of his arrival. Mullá Ḥusayn received, the next day, the welcome news that Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí was expecting him an hour after sunset outside the gate of the city. Mullá Ḥusayn met him at the appointed hour and was conducted to his home. Several times at night did the Báb honour that house with His presence, and continue in close association with Mullá Husayn until the break of day. Soon after this, He gave permission to His companions who had gathered in Iṣfáhán, to leave gradually for Shíráz, and there to wait until it should be feasible for Him to meet them. He cautioned them to exercise the utmost vigilance, instructed them to enter, a few at a time, the gate of the city, and bade them disperse, immediately upon their arrival, into such quarters as were reserved for travellers, and accept whatever employment they could find.

The first group to reach the city and meet the Báb, a few days after the arrival of Mullá Ḥusayn, consisted of Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Nahrí, Mírzá Hádí, his brother; Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Qazvíní, Mullá Javád-i-Baraghání, Mullá 'Abdu'l-'Alíy-i-Harátí, and Mírzá Ibráhím-i-Shírází. In the course of their association with Him, the last three of the group gradually betrayed their blindness of heart and demonstrated the baseness of their character. The manifold evidences of the Báb's increasing favour towards Mullá Ḥusayn aroused their anger and excited the smouldering fire of their jealousy. In their impotent rage, they resorted to the abject weapons of fraud and of calumny. Unable at first to manifest openly their hostility to Mullá Ḥusayn, they sought by every crafty device to beguile the minds and damp the affections of his devoted admirers. Their unseemly behaviour alienated the sympathy of the believers and precipitated their separation from the company of the faithful. Expelled by their very acts from the bosom of the Faith, they leagued themselves with its avowed enemies and proclaimed their utter rejection of its claims and principles. So great was the mischief which they stirred up among the people of that city that they were eventually expelled by the civil authorities,

who alike despised and feared their plottings. The Báb has in a Tablet, in which He expatiates upon their machinations and misdeeds, compared them to the calf of the Sámirí, the calf that had neither voice nor soul, which was both the abject handiwork and the object of the adoration of a wayward people. "May Thy condemnation, O God!" He wrote, with reference to Mullá Javád and Mullá 'Abdu'l-'Alí, "rest upon the Jibt and Ṭághút,[1] the twin idols of this perverse people." All three subsequently proceeded to Kirmán and joined forces with Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad Karím Khán, whose designs they furthered and the vehemence of whose denunciations they strove to reinforce.

One night after their expulsion from Shíráz, the Báb, who was visiting the home of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, where He had summoned to meet Him Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Nahrí, Mírzá Hádí, and Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Qazvíní, turned suddenly to the last-named and said: " 'Abdu'l-Karím, are you seeking the Manifestation?" These words, uttered with calm and extreme gentleness, had a startling effect upon him. He paled at this sudden interrogation and burst into tears. He threw himself at the feet of the Báb in a state of profound agitation. The Báb took him lovingly in His arms, kissed his forehead, and invited him to be seated by His side. In a tone of tender affection, He succeeded in appeasing the tumult of his heart.

As soon as they had regained their home, Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí and his brother enquired of Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím the reason for the violent perturbation which had suddenly seized him. "Hear me," he answered; "I will relate to you the tale of a strange experience, a tale which I have shared with no one until now. When I attained the age of maturity, I felt, while I lived in Qazvín, a profound yearning to unravel the mystery of God and to apprehend the nature of His saints and prophets. Nothing short of the acquisition of learning, I realised, could enable me to achieve my goal. I succeeded in obtaining the consent of my father and uncles to the abandonment of my business, and plunged immediately into study and research. I occupied a room in one of the madrisihs of Qazvín, and concentrated my efforts on the

[1] Qur'án, 4: 50.

acquisition of every available branch of human learning. I often discussed the knowledge which I acquired with my fellow-disciples, and sought by this means to enrich my experience. At night, I would retire to my home, and, in the seclusion of my library, would devote many an hour to undisturbed study. I was so immersed in my labours that I grew indifferent to both sleep and hunger. Within two years I had resolved to master the intricacies of Muslim jurisprudence and theology. I was a faithful attendant at the lectures given by Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Íravání, who, in those days, ranked as the most outstanding divine of Qazvín. I greatly admired his vast erudition, his piety and virtue. Every night during the period that I was his disciple, I devoted my time to the writing of a treatise which I submitted to him and which he revised with care and interest. He seemed to be greatly pleased with my progress, and often extolled my high attainments. One day, in the presence of his assembled disciples, he declared: 'The learned and sagacious Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím has qualified himself to expound authoritatively the sacred Scriptures of Islám. He no longer needs to attend either my classes or those of my equals. I shall, please God, celebrate his elevation to the rank of a mujtahid on the morning of the coming Friday, and will deliver his certificate to him after the congregational prayer.'

"No sooner had Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím spoken these words and departed than his disciples came forward and heartily congratulated me on my accomplishments. I returned, greatly elated, to my home. Upon my arrival I discovered that both my father and my elder uncle, Ḥájí Husayn-'Alí, both of whom were greatly esteemed throughout Qazvín, were preparing a feast in my honour, with which they intended to celebrate the completion of my studies. I requested them to postpone the invitation they had extended to the notables of Qazvín until further notice from me. They gladly consented, believing that in my eagerness for such a festival I would not unduly postpone it. That night I repaired to my library and, in the privacy of my cell, pondered the following thoughts in my heart: Had you not fondly imagined, I said to myself, that only the sanctified in spirit could ever hope to attain the station of an authoritative expounder of the

sacred Scriptures of Islám? Was it not your belief that whoso attained this station would be immune from error? Are you not already accounted among those who enjoy that rank? Has not Qazvín's most distinguished divine recognised and declared you to be such? Be fair. Do you in your own heart regard yourself as having attained that state of purity and sublime detachment which you, in days past, considered the requisites for one who aspires to reach that exalted position? Think you yourself to be free from every taint of selfish desire? As I sat musing, a feeling of my own unworthiness gradually overpowered me. I recognised myself as still a victim of cares and perplexities, of temptations and doubts. I was oppressed by such thoughts as to how I should conduct my classes, how to lead my congregation in prayer, how to enforce the laws and precepts of the Faith. I felt continually anxious as to how I should discharge my duties, how to ensure the superiority of my achievements over those who had preceded me. I was overcome with such a sense of humiliation that I felt impelled to seek forgiveness from God. Your aim in acquiring all this learning, I thought to myself, has been to unravel the mystery of God and to attain the state of certitude. Be fair. Are you sure of your own interpretation of the Qur'án? Are you certain that the laws which you promulgate reflect the will of God? The consciousness of error suddenly dawned upon me. I realised for the first time how the rust of learning had corroded my soul and had obscured my vision. I lamented my past, and deplored the futility of my endeavours. I knew that the people of my own rank were subject to the same afflictions. As soon as they had acquired this so-called learning, they would claim to be the exponents of the law of Islám and would arrogate to themselves the exclusive privilege of pronouncing upon its doctrine.

"I remained absorbed in my thoughts until dawn. That night I neither ate nor slept. At times I would commune with God: 'Thou seest me, O my Lord, and Thou beholdest my plight. Thou knowest that I cherish no other desire except Thy holy will and pleasure. I am lost in bewilderment at the thought of the multitude of sects into which Thy holy Faith hath fallen. I am deeply perplexed when I behold the

schisms that have torn the religions of the past. Wilt Thou guide me in my perplexities, and relieve me of my doubts? Whither am I to turn for consolation and guidance?' I wept so bitterly that night that I seemed to have lost consciousness. There suddenly came to me the vision of a great gathering of people, the expression of whose shining faces greatly impressed me. A noble figure, attired in the garb of a siyyid, occupied a seat on the pulpit facing the congregation. He was expounding the meaning of this sacred verse of the Qur'án: 'Whoso maketh efforts for Us, in Our ways will We guide them.' I was fascinated by his face. I arose, advanced towards him, and was on the point of throwing myself at his feet when that vision suddenly vanished. My heart was flooded with light. My joy was indescribable.

"I immediately decided to consult Ḥájí Alláh-Vardí, father of Muḥammad-Javád-i-Farhádí, a man known throughout Qazvín for his deep spiritual insight. When I related to him my vision, he smiled and with extraordinary precision described to me the distinguishing features of the siyyid who had appeared to me. 'That noble figure,' he added, 'was none other than Ḥájí Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí, who is now in Karbilá and who may be seen expounding every day to his disciples the sacred teachings of Islám. Those who listen to his discourse are refreshed and edified by his utterance. I can never describe the impression which his words exert upon his hearers.' I joyously arose and, expressing to him my feelings of profound appreciation, retired to my home and started forthwith on my journey to Karbilá. My old fellow-disciples came and entreated me either to call in person on the learned Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím, who had expressed a desire to meet me, or to allow him to come to my house. 'I feel the impulse,' I replied, 'to visit the shrine of the Imám Ḥusayn at Karbilá. I have vowed to start immediately on that pilgrimage. I cannot postpone my departure. I will, if possible, visit him for a few moments when I start to leave the city. If I cannot, I would beg him to excuse me and to pray in my behalf that I may be guided on the straight path.'

"I confidentially acquainted my relatives with the nature of my vision and its interpretation. I informed them of my projected visit to Karbilá. My words to them that very day

instilled the love of Siyyid Káẓim in their hearts. They felt greatly drawn to Ḥájí Alláh-Vardí, freely associated with him, and became his fervent admirers.

"My brother, 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd [who later quaffed the cup of martyrdom in Ṭihrán], accompanied me on my journey to Karbilá. There I met Siyyid Káẓim and was amazed to hear him discourse to his assembled disciples under exactly the same circumstances as he had appeared to me in my vision. I was astounded when I discovered, upon my arrival, that he was expounding the meaning of the same verse which he, when he appeared to me, was explaining to his disciples. As I sat and listened to him, I was greatly impressed by the force of his argument and the profundity of his thoughts. He graciously received me and showed me the utmost kindness. My brother and I both felt an inner joy we had never before experienced. At the hour of dawn we would hasten to his home, and would accompany him on his visit to the shrine of the Imám Ḥusayn.

"I spent the entire winter in close companionship with him. During the whole of that period, I faithfully attended his classes. Every time I listened to his speech, I heard him describe a particular aspect of the manifestation of the promised Qá'im. This theme constituted the sole subject of his discourses. Whichever verse or tradition he happened to be expounding, he would invariably conclude his commentary on it with a particular reference to the advent of the promised Revelation. 'The promised One,' he would openly and repeatedly declare, 'lives in the midst of this people. The appointed time for His appearance is fast approaching. Prepare the way for Him, and purify yourselves so that you may recognise His beauty. Not until I depart from this world will the day-star of His countenance be revealed. It behoves you after my departure to arise and seek Him. You should not rest for one moment until you find Him.'

"After the celebration of Naw-Rúz, Siyyid Káẓim bade me depart from Karbilá. 'Rest assured, O 'Abdu'l-Karím,' he told me as he bade me farewell, 'you are of those who, in the Day of His Revelation, will arise for the triumph of His Cause. You will, I hope, remember me on that blessed Day.' I besought him to allow me to remain in Karbilá, pleading

that my return to Qazvín would arouse the enmity of the mullás of that city. 'Let your trust be wholly in God,' was his reply. 'Ignore entirely their machinations. Engage in trade, and rest assured that their protestations will never succeed in harming you.' I followed his advice, and together with my brother set out for Qazvín.

"Immediately upon my arrival, I undertook to carry out the counsel of Siyyid Kázim. With the instructions he had given me, I was able to silence every malicious opposer. I devoted my days to the transaction of my business; at night I would regain my home and, in the quiet of my chamber, would consecrate my time to meditation and prayer. With tearful eyes I would commune with God and would beseech Him, saying: 'Thou hast, by the mouth of Thine inspired servant, promised that I shall attain unto Thy Day, and shall behold Thy Revelation. Thou hast, through him, assured me that I shall be among those who will arise for the triumph of Thy Cause. How long wilt Thou withhold from me Thy promise? When will the hand of Thy loving-kindness unlock to me the door of Thy grace, and confer upon me Thy everlasting bounty?' Every night I would renew this prayer and would continue in my supplications until the break of day.

"One night, on the eve of the day of 'Arafih, in the year 1255 A.H.,[1] I was so wrapt in prayer that I seemed to have fallen into a trance. There appeared before me a bird, white as the snow, which hovered above my head and alighted upon the twig of a tree beside me. In accents of indescribable sweetness, that bird voiced these words: 'Are you seeking the Manifestation, O 'Abdu'l-Karím? Lo, the year '60.' Immediately after, the bird flew away and vanished. The mystery of those words greatly agitated me. The memory of the beauty of that vision lingered long in my mind. I seemed to have tasted all the delights of Paradise. My joy was irrepressible.

"The mystic message of that bird had penetrated my soul and was continually on my lips. I revolved it constantly in my mind. I shared it with no one, fearing lest its sweetness forsake me. A few years later, the Call from Shíráz reached my ears. The day I heard it, I hastened to that city. On

[1] The night preceding February 13, 1840 A.D.

my way I met, in Ṭihrán, Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mu'allim, who acquainted me with the nature of this Call, and informed me that those who had acknowledged it had gathered in Karbilá and were awaiting the return of their Leader from Ḥijáz. I immediately departed for that city. From Hamadán, Mullá Javád-i-Baraghání, to my great distress, accompanied me to Karbilá, where I was privileged to meet you as well as the rest of the believers. I continued to treasure within my heart the strange message conveyed to me by that bird. When I subsequently attained the presence of the Báb and heard from His lips those same words, spoken in the same tone and language as I had heard them, I realised their significance. I was so overwhelmed by their power and glory that I instinctively fell at His feet and magnified His name."

In the early days of the year 1265 A.H.,[1] I set out, at the age of eighteen, from my native village of Zarand for Qum, where I chanced to meet Siyyid Ismá'íl-i-Zavári'í, surnamed Dhabíḥ, who later on, while in Baghdád, offered up his life as a sacrifice in the path of Bahá'u'lláh. Through him I was led to recognise the new Revelation. He was then preparing to leave for Mázindarán and had determined to join the heroic defenders of the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí. He had intended to take me with him, together with Mírzá Fatḥu'lláh-i-Ḥakkák, a lad of my age, who was a resident of Qum. As circumstances interfered with his plan, he promised before his departure that he would communicate with us from Ṭihrán and would ask us to join him. In the course of his conversation with Mírzá Fatḥú-lláh and me, he related to us the account of Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím's marvellous experience. I was seized with an ardent desire to meet him. When I subsequently arrived at Ṭihrán and met Siyyid Ismá'íl in the Madrisiy-i-Dáru'sh-Shafáy-i-Masjid-i-Sháh, I was introduced by him to this same Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím, who was then living in that same madrisih. In those days we were informed that the struggle of Shaykh Ṭabarsí had come to an end, and that those companions of the Báb who had gathered in Ṭihrán and were contemplating joining their brethren had each returned to his own province unable to achieve his goal. Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím remained in the

[1] 1848 A.D.

capital, where he devoted his time to transcribing the Persian Bayán. My close association with him at that time served to deepen my love and admiration for him. I still feel, after the lapse of eight and thirty years since our first interview in Ṭihrán, the warmth of his friendship and the fervour of his faith. My feelings of affectionate regard for him prompted me to dwell at length upon the circumstances of his early life, culminating in what may be regarded as the turning point of his whole career. May it in turn serve to awaken the reader to the glory of this momentous Revelation.

CHAPTER IX

THE BĀB'S STAY IN SHĪRĀZ AFTER THE PILGRIMAGE

(Continued)

SOON after the arrival of Mullá Ḥusayn at Shíráz, the voice of the people rose again in protest against him. The fear and indignation of the multitude were excited by the knowledge of his continued and intimate intercourse with the Báb. "He again has come to our city," they clamoured; "he again has raised the standard of revolt, and is, together with his chief, contemplating a still fiercer onslaught upon our time-honoured institutions." So grave and menacing became the situation that the Báb instructed Mullá Ḥusayn to regain, by way of Yazd, his native province of Khurásán. He likewise dismissed the rest of His companions who had gathered in Shíráz, and bade them return to Iṣfáhán. He retained Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím, to whom He assigned the duty of transcribing His writings.

These precautionary measures which the Báb deemed wise to undertake, relieved Him from the immediate danger of violence from the infuriated people of Shíráz, and served to lend a fresh impetus to the propagation of His Faith beyond the limits of that city. His disciples, who had spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, fearlessly proclaimed to the multitude of their countrymen the regenerating power of the new-born Revelation. The fame of the Báb had been noised abroad and had reached the ears of those who held the highest seats of authority, both in the capital and throughout the provinces.[1] A wave of passionate enquiry swayed the minds and hearts of both the leaders and the

[1] "Le Bábisme avait de nombreux adeptes dans toutes les classes de la société, et beaucoup d'entre eux avaient une grande importance; des grand seigneurs, des membres du clergé, des militaires et des marchands avaient embrassé cette doctrine." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 8, p. 251.)

masses of the people. Amazement and wonder had seized those who had heard from the lips of the immediate messengers of the Báb the tales of those signs and testimonies which had heralded the birth of His Manifestation. The dignitaries of State and Church either attended in person or delegated their ablest representatives to enquire into the truth and character of this remarkable Movement.

Muḥammad Sháh[1] himself was moved to ascertain the veracity of these reports and to enquire into their nature. He delegated Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí,[2] the most learned, the most eloquent, and the most influential of his subjects, to interview the Báb and to report to him the results of his investigations. The Sháh had implicit confidence in his impartiality, in his competence and profound spiritual insight. He occupied a position of such pre-eminence among the leading figures in Persia that at whatever meeting he happened to be present, no matter how great the number of the ecclesiastical leaders who attended it, he was invariably its chief speaker. None would dare to assert his views in his presence. They all reverently observed silence before him; all testified to his sagacity, his unsurpassed knowledge and mature wisdom.

[1] Refer to "Pedigree of the Qájár Dynasty" at the beginning of the book.

[2] Concerning him, 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written the following: "This remarkable man, this precious soul, had committed to memory no less than thirty thousand traditions, and was highly esteemed and admired by all classes of people. He had achieved universal renown in Persia, and his authority and erudition were widely and fully recognised." (From manuscript relating to martyrdoms in Persia.)

"Ce personnage était, comme son nom l'indique, né à Dáráb, près de Shíráz. Son père Siyyid Ja'far, surnommé Kashfí, était l'un des plus grands et des plus célèbres 'ulamás de l'époque. Sa haute valeur morale, son caractère, ses mœurs pures lui avaient attiré l'estime et la considération universelles: sa science lui avait valu le glorieux surnom de kashfí qui veut dire celui qui découvre, et dans ce cas, celui qui découvre et explique les secrets divins. Élevé par lui, son fils ne tarda pas à l'égaler sur tous les points: il partagea désormais la faveur dont jouissait son père et se rendit à Ṭihrán, précédé de son renom et de sa popularité. Il y devint le commensal du prince Ṭahmásp Mírzá, Mu'ayyadu'd-Dawlih, petit-fils de Fath-'Alí Sháh par son père Muhammad-'Alí Mírzá. Le gouvernement lui-même rendit hommage à sa science et à son mérite et il fut consulté plus d'une fois dans les circonstances difficiles. Ce fut à lui que pensèrent Muḥammad Sháhet Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí quand ils voulurent trouver un émissaire honnête et dont la fidélité ne fût pas douteuse." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muhammad dit le Báb," p. 233)

"Pendant que ces événements se déroulaient au Nord de la Perse, les provinces du centre et du sud étaient profondément remuées par les prédications enflammées des missionaires de la nouvelle doctrine. Le peuple, léger, crédule, ignorant, superstitieux à l'excès, était frappé de stupeur par les miracles continuels qu'à chaque instant il entendait raconter; les mullás anxieux, sentant leur troupeau frémissant prêt à leur échapper, redoublaient de calomnies et d'imputations infamantes; les mensonges les plus grossiers, les imaginations les

In those days Siyyid Yaḥyá was residing in Ṭihrán in the house of Mírzá Luṭf-'Alí, the Master of Ceremonies to the Sháh, as the honoured guest of his Imperial Majesty. The Sháh confidentially signified through Mírzá Luṭf-'Alí his desire and pleasure that Siyyid Yaḥyá should proceed to Shíráz and investigate the matter in person. "Tell him from us," commanded the sovereign, "that inasmuch as we repose the utmost confidence in his integrity, and admire his moral and intellectual standards, and regard him as the most suitable among the divines of our realm, we expect him to proceed to Shíráz, to enquire thoroughly into the episode of the Siyyid-i-Báb, and to inform us of the results of his investigations. We shall then know what measures it behoves us to take."

Siyyid Yaḥyá had been himself desirous of obtaining first-hand knowledge of the claims of the Báb, but had been unable, owing to adverse circumstances, to undertake the journey to Fárs. The message of Muḥammad Sháh decided him to carry out his long-cherished intention. Assuring his sovereign of his readiness to comply with his wish, he immediately set out for Shíráz.

On his way, he conceived the various questions which he thought he would submit to the Báb. Upon the replies which the latter gave to these questions would, in his view, depend the truth and validity of His mission. Upon his arrival at Shíráz, he met Mullá Shaykh 'Alí, surnamed 'Aẓím, with whom he had been intimately associated while in Khurásán. He asked him whether he was satisfied with his interview with the Báb. "You should meet Him," 'Aẓím replied, "and seek independently to acquaint yourself with His Mission. As a friend, I would advise you to exercise the utmost con-

plus sanglantes étaient par eux répandus dans la populace hésitante, partagée entre l'horreur et l'admiration. . . . Siyyid Ja'far était étranger aux doctrines Shaykhís comme à celles de Mullá Ṣadrá. Cependant, son zèle emporté, son imagination ardente l'avaient, vers la fin de sa vie, fait sortir un peu des sentiers étroits de l'orthodoxie Shi'ite. Il commentait les ḥadís d'une autre façon que ses collègues, et prétendait même, dit-on, avoir pénétré les soixante et dix significations intimes du Qur'án. . . . Son fils—qui, par la suite, devait dépasser ces étrangetés—était à cette époque un homme de 35 ans environ qui, ses études terminées, était venu se fixer à Ṭihrán où il s'était lié avec tout ce que la cour comptait de grands personnages et d'hommes distingués. Ce fut sur lui que se portat le choix de S. M. Il fut donc chargé de se rendre à Shíráz, de se mettre en rapport avec le Báb et de renseigner—aussi exactement qu'il le pourrait—l'autorité centrale des conséquences politiques que l'on pouvait tirer d'une réforme qui semblait devoir bouleverser la face du pays." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 387–8.)

sideration in your conversations with Him, lest you, too, in the end should be obliged to deplore any act of discourtesy towards Him."

Siyyid Yaḥyá met the Báb at the home of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, and exercised in his attitude towards Him the courtesy which 'Aẓím had counselled him to observe. For about two hours he directed the attention of the Báb to the most abstruse and bewildering themes in the metaphysical teachings of Islám, to the obscurest passages of the Qur'án, and to the mysterious traditions and prophecies of the imáms of the Faith. The Báb at first listened to his learned references to the law and prophecies of Islám, noted all his questions, and began to give to each a brief but persuasive reply. The conciseness and lucidity of His answers excited the wonder and admiration of Siyyid Yaḥyá. He was overpowered by a sense of humiliation at his own presumptuousness and pride. His sense of superiority completely vanished. As he arose to depart, he addressed the Báb in these words: "Please God, I shall, in the course of my next audience with You, submit the rest of my questions and with them shall conclude my enquiry." As soon as he retired, he joined 'Aẓím, to whom he related the account of his interview. "I have in His presence," he told him, "expatiated unduly upon my own learning. He was able in a few words to answer my questions and to resolve my perplexities. I felt so abased before Him that I hurriedly begged leave to retire." 'Aẓím reminded him of his counsel, and begged him not to forget this time the advice he had given him.

In the course of his second interview, Siyyid Yaḥyá, to his amazement, discovered that all the questions which he had intended to submit to the Báb had vanished from his memory. He contented himself with matters that seemed irrelevant to the object of his enquiry. He soon found, to his still greater surprise, that the Báb was answering, with the same lucidity and conciseness that had characterised His previous replies, those same questions which he had momentarily forgotten. "I seemed to have fallen fast asleep," he later observed. "His words, His answers to questions which I had forgotten to ask, reawakened me. A voice still kept whispering in my ear: 'Might not this, after all, have

been an accidental coincidence?' I was too agitated to collect my thoughts. I again begged leave to retire. 'Azím, whom I subsequently met, received me with cold indifference, and sternly remarked: 'Would that schools had been utterly abolished, and that neither of us had entered one! Through our little-mindedness and conceit, we are withholding from ourselves the redeeming grace of God, and are causing pain to Him who is the Fountain thereof. Will you not this time beseech God to grant that you may be enabled to attain His presence with becoming humility and detachment, that perchance He may graciously relieve you from the oppression of uncertainty and doubt?'

"I resolved that in my third interview with the Báb I would in my inmost heart request Him to reveal for me a commentary on the Súrih of Kawthar.[1] I determined not to breathe that request in His presence. Should he, unasked by me, reveal this commentary in a manner that would immediately distinguish it in my eyes from the prevailing standards current among the commentators on the Qur'án, I then would be convinced of the Divine character of His Mission, and would readily embrace His Cause. If not, I would refuse to acknowledge Him. As soon as I was ushered into His presence, a sense of fear, for which I could not account, suddenly seized me. My limbs quivered as I beheld His face. I, who on repeated occasions had been introduced into the presence of the Sháh and had never discovered the slightest trace of timidity in myself, was now so awed and shaken that I could not remain standing on my feet. The Báb, beholding my plight, arose from His seat, advanced towards me, and, taking hold of my hand, seated me beside Him. 'Seek from Me,' He said, 'whatever is your heart's desire. I will readily reveal it to you.' I was speechless with wonder. Like a babe that can neither understand nor speak, I felt powerless to respond. He smiled as He gazed at me and said: 'Were I to reveal for you the commentary on the Súrih of Kawthar, would you acknowledge that My words are born of the Spirit of God? Would you recognise that My utterance can in no wise be associated with sorcery or magic?' Tears flowed from my eyes as I heard Him speak these words.

[1] Qur'án, 108.

All I was able to utter was this verse of the Qur'án: 'O our Lord, with ourselves have we dealt unjustly: if Thou forgive us not and have not pity on us, we shall surely be of those who perish.'

"It was still early in the afternoon when the Báb requested Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí to bring His pen-case and some paper. He then started to reveal His commentary on the Súrih of Kawthar. How am I to describe this scene of inexpressible majesty? Verses streamed from His pen with a rapidity that was truly astounding. The incredible swiftness of His writing,[1] the soft and gentle murmur of His voice, and the stupendous force of His style, amazed and bewildered me. He continued in this manner until the approach of sunset. He did not pause until the entire commentary of the Súrih was completed. He then laid down His pen and asked for tea. Soon after, He began to read it aloud in my presence. My heart leaped madly as I heard Him pour out, in accents of unutterable sweetness, those treasures enshrined in that sublime commentary.[2] I was so entranced by its beauty that three times over I was on the verge of fainting. He sought to revive my failing strength with a few drops of rose-water which He caused to be sprinkled on my face. This

[1] According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghiṭá'" (p. 81), no less than two thousand verses were revealed on that occasion by the Báb. The bewildering rapidity of this revelation was no less remarkable in the eyes of Siyyid Yahyá than the matchless beauty and profound meaning of the verses contained in that commentary. "Dans l'espace de cinq heures, deux mille bayts (verses) se manifestent de lui, ou bien avec la rapidité juste suffisante pour que le scribe puisse les écrire. On peut, par là, juger, si on l'avait laissé faire, combien, depuis le début de sa manifestation jusqu'à aujourd'hui, combien de ces œuvres se fussent répandues parmi les hommes." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. I, p. 43.) "Dieu lui a donné une (telle) puissance et une (telle) faculté d'élocution, que si un scribe rapide écrivait avec la plus extrême rapidité, en deux nuits et deux jours, sans interruption, il manifesterait de cette mine de la parole, l'équivalent d'un Qur'án." (*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 132.) "And if anyone should reflect on the appearance of this Tree (the Báb), he will without doubt admit the loftiness of God's religion. For in one from whose life twenty-four years had passed, who was devoid of those sciences wherein all are learned, who now recites verses after such fashion without thought or hesitation, who in the course of five hours writes a thousand verses of supplications without pause of the pen, who produces commentaries and learned treatises of so high a degree of wisdom and understanding of the Divine Unity that doctors and philosophers confess their inability to comprehend those passages, there is no doubt that all this is from God." (Bayán, Váḥid 2, Báb 1.) ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note C, p. 219.)

[2] "Certes le fait d'écrire *currente calamo* un commentaire nouveau sur une sourate dont le sens est si obscur, devait frapper d'étonnement Siyyid Yahyá, mais ce qui le surprit plus étrangement encore, ce fut de retrouver, dans ce commentaire, l'explication que lui-même avait trouvée dans ses méditations sur ces trois versets. Ainsi il se rencontrait avec le Réformateur dans une interprétation qu'il croyait avoir été le seul à imaginer et qu'il n'avait communiquée à personne." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 234.)

restored my vigour and enabled me to follow His reading to the end.

"When He had completed His recital, the Báb arose to depart. He entrusted me, as He left, to the care of His maternal uncle. 'He is to be your guest,' He told him, 'until the time when he, in collaboration with Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím, shall have finished transcribing this newly revealed commentary, and shall have verified the correctness of the transcribed copy.' Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím and I devoted three days and three nights to this work. We would in turn read aloud to each other a portion of the commentary until the whole of it had been transcribed. We verified all the traditions in the text and found them to be entirely accurate. Such was the state of certitude to which I had attained that if all the powers of the earth were to be leagued against me they would be powerless to shake my confidence in the greatness of His Cause.[1]

"As I had, since my arrival at Shíráz, been living in the home of Ḥusayn Khán, the governor of Fárs, I felt that my prolonged absence from his house might excite his suspicion and inflame his anger. I therefore determined to take leave of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí and Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím and to regain the residence of the governor. On my arrival I found that Ḥusayn Khán, who in the meantime had been searching for me, was eager to know whether I had fallen a victim to the Báb's magic influence. 'No one but God,' I replied, 'who alone can change the hearts of men, is able to captivate the heart of Siyyid Yaḥyá. Whoso can ensnare his heart is of God, and His word unquestionably the voice of Truth.' My answer silenced the governor. In his conversation with others, I subsequently learned, he had expressed the view that I too had fallen a hopeless victim to the charm of that Youth. He had even written to Muḥammad Sháh and complained that during my stay in Shíráz I had refused all manner of intercourse with the 'ulamás of the city. 'Though nominally my guest,' he wrote to his sovereign, 'he frequently

[1] "It was a strange circumstance," writes Lady Sheil, "that among those who adopted [the] Báb's doctrine there should have been a large number of mullás, and even mujtahids, who hold a high rank as expounders of the law in the Muḥammadan church. Many of these men sealed their faith with their blood." ("Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," pp. 178–9.)

absents himself for a number of consecutive days and nights from my house. That he has become a Bábí, that he has been heart and soul enslaved by the will of the Siyyid-i-Báb, I have ceased to entertain any doubt.'

"Muhammad Sháh himself, at one of the state functions in his capital, was reported to have addressed these words to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí: 'We have been lately informed[1] that Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí has become a Bábí. If this be true, it behoves us to cease belittling the cause of that siyyid.' Ḥusayn Khán, on his part, received the following imperial command: 'It is strictly forbidden to any one of our subjects to utter such words as would tend to detract from the exalted rank of Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí. He is of noble lineage, a man of great learning, of perfect and consummate virtue. He will under no circumstances incline his ear to any cause unless he believes it to be conducive to the advancement of the best interests of our realm and to the well-being of the Faith of Islám.'

"Upon the receipt of this imperial injunction, Ḥusayn Khán, unable to resist me openly, strove privily to undermine my authority. His face betrayed an implacable enmity and hate. He failed, however, in view of the marked favours bestowed upon me by the Sháh, either to harm my person or to discredit my name.

"I was subsequently commanded by the Báb to journey to Burújird, and there acquaint my father[2] with the new Message. He urged me to exercise towards him the utmost forbearance and consideration. From my confidential conversations with him I gathered that he was unwilling to repudiate the truth of the Message I had brought him. He preferred, however, to be left alone and to be allowed to pursue his own way."

Another dignitary of the realm who dispassionately investigated and ultimately embraced the Message of the Báb

[1] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 8), Siyyid Yaḥyá "wrote without fear or care a detailed account of his observations to Mírzá Lutf-'Alí, the chamberlain, in order that the latter might submit it to the notice of the late king, while he himself journeyed to all parts of Persia, and in every town and station summoned the people from the pulpit-tops in such wise that other learned doctors decided that he must be mad, accounting it a sure case of bewitchment."

[2] His name was Siyyid Ja'far, known as Kashfí, "the Discloser," because of his skill in the interpretation of the Qur'án and the visions which he claimed to have.

was Mullá Muḥammad-'Alí,[1] a native of Zanján, whom the Báb surnamed Ḥujjat-i-Zanjání. He was a man of independent mind, noted for extreme originality and freedom from all forms of traditional restraint. He denounced the whole hierarchy of the ecclesiastical leaders of his country, from the Abváb-i-Arba'ih[2] down to the humblest mullá among his contemporaries. He despised their character, deplored their degeneracy, and expatiated upon their vices. He even, prior to his conversion, betrayed an attitude of careless contempt for Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Ahsá'í and Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí.[3] He was so filled with horror at the misdeeds that had stained the history of shí'ah Islám that whoever belonged to that sect, no matter how high his personal attainments, was regarded by him as unworthy of his consideration. Not infrequently did cases of fierce controversy arise between him and the divines of Zanján which, but for the personal intervention of the Sháh, would have led to grave disorder and bloodshed. He was eventually summoned to the capital and, in the presence of his opponents, representatives of the ecclesiastical heads of Ṭihrán and other cities, was called upon to vindicate his claim. Single-handed and alone he would establish his superiority over his adversaries and would silence their clamour. Although in their hearts they dissented from his views and condemned his conduct, they were compelled to acknowledge outwardly his authority and to confirm his opinion.

As soon as the Call from Shíráz reached his ears, Ḥujjat deputed one of his disciples, Mullá Iskandar, in whom he reposed the fullest confidence, to enquire into the whole matter and to report to him the result of his investigations. Utterly indifferent to the praise and censure of his countrymen, whose integrity he suspected and whose judgment he disdained, he sent his delegate to Shíráz with explicit instructions to conduct a minute and independent enquiry. Mullá Iskandar attained the presence of the Báb and felt immediately the regenerating power of His influence. He tarried

[1] He was styled Ḥujjatu'l-Islám.

[2] Literally meaning "The Four Gates," each of whom claimed to be an intermediary between the absent Imám and his followers.

[3] He was an Akhbárí. For an account of the Akhbáris, see Gobineau's "Les Religions et Les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 23 *et seq.*

forty days in Shíráz, during which time he imbibed the principles of the Faith and acquired, according to his capacity, a knowledge of the measure of its glory.

With the approval of the Báb, he returned to Zanján. He arrived at a time when all the leading 'ulamás of the city had assembled in the presence of Ḥujjat. As soon as he appeared, Ḥujjat enquired whether he believed in, or rejected, the new Revelation. Mullá Iskandar submitted the writings of the Báb which he had brought with him, and asserted that whatever should be the verdict of his master, the same would he deem it his obligation to follow. "What!" angrily exclaimed Ḥujjat. "But for the presence of this distinguished company, I would have chastised you severely. How dare you consider matters of belief to be dependent upon the approbation or rejection of others?" Receiving from the hand of his messenger the copy of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá', he, as soon as he had perused a page of that book, fell prostrate upon the ground and exclaimed: "I bear witness that these words which I have read proceed from the same Source as that of the Qur'án. Whoso has recognised the truth of that sacred Book must needs testify to the Divine origin of these words, and must needs submit to the precepts inculcated by their Author. I take you, members of this assembly, as my witnesses: I pledge such allegiance to the Author of this Revelation that should He ever pronounce the night to be the day, and declare the sun to be a shadow, I would unreservedly submit to His judgment, and would regard His verdict as the voice of Truth. Whoso denies Him, him will I regard as the repudiator of God Himself." With these words he terminated the proceedings of that gathering.[1]

We have, in the preceding pages, referred to the expulsion of Quddús and of Mullá Ṣádiq from Shíráz, and have attempted to describe, however inadequately, the chastisement inflicted upon them by the tyrannical and rapacious Ḥusayn

[1] "'I met him [Mullá Muhammad-'Alí],' says Mírzá Jání, 'in Ṭihrán, in the house of Maḥmúd Khán, the kalantar, where he was confined because of his devotion to His Holiness. He said: "I was a mullá, so proud and masterful that I would abase myself to no one, not even the late Ḥájí Siyyid Báqir of Rasht, who was regarded as the 'Proof of Islám' and the most learned of doctors. My doctrines being after the Akhbárí school, I differed in certain questions with the mass of the clergy. People complained of me, and Muḥammad Sháh summoned me to Ṭihrán. I came, and he perused my books and informed himself of their purport. I asked him to summon the siyyid [i.e. Siyyid Báqir of Rasht] also, that we might

Khán. A word should now be said regarding the nature of their activities after their expulsion from that city. For a few days they continued to journey together, after which they separated, Quddús departing for Kirmán in order to interview Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán, and Mullá Ṣádiq directing his steps towards Yazd with the intention of pursuing among the 'ulamás of that province the work which he had been so cruelly forced to abandon in Fárs. Quddús was received, upon his arrival, at the home of Ḥájí Siyyid Javád-i-Kirmání, whom he had known in Karbilá and whose scholarship, skill, and competence were universally recognised by the people of Kirmán. At all the gatherings held in his home, he invariably assigned to his youthful guest the seat of honour and treated him with extreme deference and courtesy. So marked a preference for so young and seemingly mediocre a person kindled the envy of the disciples of Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán, who, describing in vivid and exaggerated language the honours which were being lavished upon Quddús, sought to excite the dormant hostility of their chief. "Behold," they whispered in his ears, "he who is the best-beloved, the trusted and most intimate companion of the Siyyid-i-Báb, is now the honoured guest of one who is admittedly the most powerful inhabitant of Kirmán. If he be allowed to live in close companionship with Ḥájí Siyyid Javád, he will no doubt instil his poison into his soul, and will fashion him as the instrument whereby he will succeed in disrupting your authority and in extinguishing your fame." Alarmed by these evil whisperings, the cowardly Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán appealed to the governor and induced him to call in person upon Ḥájí Siyyid Javád and demand that he terminate that dangerous association. The representations of the governor inflamed the wrath of the intemperate Ḥájí Siyyid Javád. "How often," he violently protested, "have I advised you

dispute. At first he intended to do so, but afterwards, having considered the mischief which might result, suspended the proposed discussion. To be brief, notwithstanding all this self-sufficiency, as soon as news of the Manifestation of His Holiness reached me, and I had perused a small page of the verses of that Point of the Furqán, I became as one beside himself, and involuntarily, yet with full option, confessed the truth of His claim, and became His devoted slave; for I beheld in Him the most noble of the Prophet's miracles, and, had I rejected it, I should have rejected the truth of the religion of Islám."'" (Ḥájí Mírzá Jání's History: Appendix 2 of "Tárikh-i-Jadíd," pp. 349–50.)

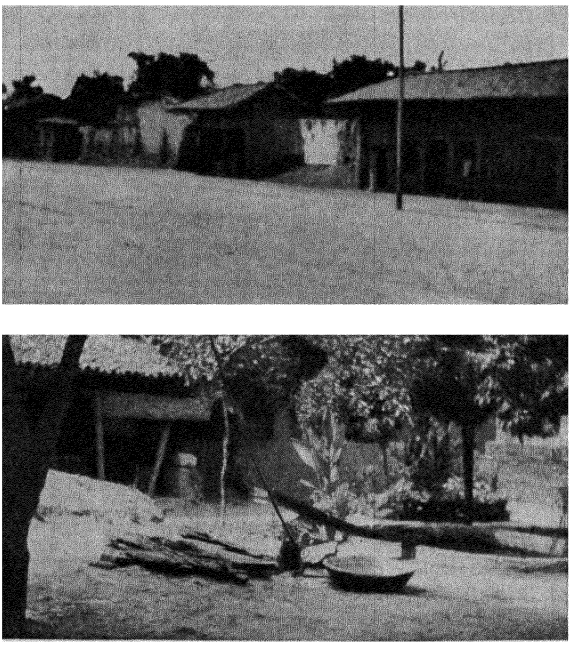
to ignore the whisperings of this evil plotter! My forbearance has emboldened him. Let him beware lest he overstep his bounds. Does he desire to usurp my position? Is he not the man who receives into his home thousands of abject and ignoble people and overwhelms them with servile flattery? Has he not, again and again, striven to exalt the ungodly and to silence the innocent? Has he not, year after year, by reinforcing the hand of the evil-doer, sought to ally himself with him and gratify his carnal desires? Does he not until this day persist in uttering his blasphemies against all that is pure and holy in Islám? My silence seems to have added to his temerity and insolence. He gives himself the liberty of committing the foulest deeds, and refuses to allow me to receive and honour in my own home a man of such integrity, such learning and nobleness. Should he refuse to desist from his practice, let him be warned that the worst elements of the city will, at my instigation, expel him from Kirmán." Disconcerted by such vehement denunciations, the governor apologised for his action. Ere he retired, he assured Ḥájí Siyyid Javád that he need entertain no fear, that he himself would endeavour to awaken Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán to the folly of his behaviour, and would induce him to repent.

The siyyid's message stung Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán. Convulsed by a feeling of intense resentment which he could neither suppress nor gratify, he relinquished all hopes of acquiring the undisputed leadership of the people of Kirmán. That open challenge sounded the death-knell of his cherished ambitions.

In the privacy of his home, Ḥájí Siyyid Javád heard Quddús recount all the details of his activities from the day of his departure from Karbilá until his arrival at Kirmán. The circumstances of his conversion and his subsequent pilgrimage with the Báb stirred the imagination and kindled the flame of faith in the heart of his host, who preferred, however, to conceal his belief, in the hope of being able to guard more effectively the interests of the newly established community. "Your noble resolve," Quddús lovingly assured him, "will in itself be regarded as a notable service rendered to the

Cause of God. The Almighty will reinforce your efforts and will establish for all time your ascendancy over your opponents."

The incident was related to me by a certain Mírzá 'Abdu'lláh-i-Ghawghá, who, while in Kirmán, had heard it from the lips of Ḥájí Siyyid Javád himself. The sincerity of the expressed intentions of the siyyid has been fully vindicated by the splendid manner in which, as a result of his endeavours,



VIEWS OF THE HOUSE OF QUDDÚS' FATHER IN BÁRFURÚSH

he succeeded in resisting the encroachments of the insidious Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán, who, had he remained unchallenged, would have caused incalculable harm to the Faith.

From Kirmán, Quddús decided to leave for Yazd, and from thence to proceed to Ardikán, Náyin, Ardistán, Iṣfáhán, Káshán, Qum, and Tihrán. In each of these cities, notwithstanding the obstacles that beset his path, he succeeded in instilling into the understanding of his hearers the principles which he had so bravely risen to advocate. I have

heard Áqáy-i-Kalím, the brother of Bahá'u'lláh, describe in the following terms his meeting with Quddús in Ṭihrán: "The charm of his person, his extreme affability, combined with a dignity of bearing, appealed to even the most careless observer. Whoever was intimately associated with him was seized with an insatiable admiration for the charm of that youth. We watched him one day perform his ablutions, and were struck by the gracefulness which distinguished him from the rest of the worshippers in the performance of so ordinary a rite. He seemed, in our eyes, to be the very incarnation of purity and grace."

In Ṭihrán, Quddús was admitted into the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, after which he proceeded to Mázindarán, where, in his native town of Bárfurúsh, in the home of his father, he lived for about two years, during which time he was surrounded by the loving devotion of his family and kindred. His father had married, on the death of his first wife, a lady who treated Quddús with a kindness and care that no mother could have hoped to surpass. She longed to witness his wedding, and was often heard to express her fears lest she should have to carry with her to the grave the "supreme joy of her heart." "The day of my wedding," Quddús observed, "is not yet come. That day will be unspeakably glorious. Not within the confines of this house, but out in the open air, under the vault of heaven, in the midst of the Sabzih-Maydán, before the gaze of the multitude, there shall I celebrate my nuptials and witness the consummation of my hopes." Three years later, when that lady learned of the circumstances attending the martyrdom of Quddús in the Sabzih-Maydán, she recalled his prophetic words and understood their meaning.[1] Quddús remained in Bárfurúsh until the time when he was joined by Mullá Ḥusayn after the latter's return from his visit to the Báb in the castle of Máh-Kú. From Bárfurúsh they set out for Khurásán, a journey rendered memorable by deeds so heroic that none of their countrymen could hope to rival them.

As to Mullá Sádiq, as soon as he arrived at Yazd, he enquired of a trusted friend, a native of Khurásán, about the

[1] A similar statement is reported in the "Kashfu'l-Ghiṭá'" (p. 227). Such a statement, the author declares, was made to him by several residents of the province of Mázindarán.

latest developments connected with the progress of the Cause in that province. He was particularly anxious to be enlightened concerning the activities of Mírzá Aḥmad-i-Azghandí, and expressed his surprise at the seeming inactivity of one who, at a time when the mystery of the Faith was still undivulged, had displayed such conspicuous zeal in preparing the people for the acceptance of the expected Manifestation.

"Mírzá Aḥmad," he was told, "secluded himself for a considerable period of time in his own home, and there concentrated his energies upon the preparation of a learned and voluminous compilation of Islamic traditions and prophecies relating to the time and the character of the promised Dispensation. He collected more than twelve thousand traditions of the most explicit character, the authenticity of which was universally recognised; and resolved to take whatever steps were required for the copying and the dissemination of that book. By encouraging his fellow-disciples to quote publicly from its contents, in all congregations and gatherings, he hoped he would be able to remove such hindrances as might impede the progress of the Cause he had at heart.

"When he arrived at Yazd, he was warmly welcomed by his maternal uncle, Siyyid Husayn-i-Azghandí, the foremost mujtahid of that city, who, a few days before the arrival of his nephew, had sent him a written request to hasten to Yazd and deliver him from the machinations of Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán, whom he regarded as a dangerous though unavowed enemy of Islám. The mujtahid called upon Mírzá Aḥmad to combat by every means in his power Ḥájí Mírzá Khán's pernicious influence; and wished him to establish permanently his residence in that city, that he might, through incessant exhortations and appeals, succeed in enlightening the minds of the people as to the true aims and intentions cherished by that malignant enemy.

"Mírzá Aḥmad, concealing from his uncle his original intention to leave for Shíráz, decided to prolong his stay in Yazd. He showed him the book which he had compiled, and shared its contents with the 'ulamás who thronged from every quarter of the city to meet him. All were greatly impressed

by the industry, the erudition, and the zeal which the compiler of that celebrated work had demonstrated.

"Among those who came to visit Mírzá Aḥmad was a certain Mírzá Taqí, a man who was wicked, ambitious, and haughty, who had recently returned from Najaf, where he had completed his studies and had been elevated to the rank of mujtahid. In the course of his conversation with Mírzá Aḥmad, he expressed a desire to peruse that book, and to be allowed to retain it for a few days, that he might acquire a fuller understanding of its contents. Siyyid Husayn and his nephew both acceded to his wish. Mírzá Taqí, who was to have returned the book, failed to redeem his promise. Mírzá Ahmad, who had already suspected the insincerity of Mírzá Taqí's intentions, urged his uncle to remind the borrower of the pledge he had given. 'Tell your master,' was the insolent reply to the messenger sent to claim the book, 'that after having satisfied myself as to the mischievous character of that compilation, I decided to destroy it. Last night I threw it into the pond, thereby obliterating its pages.'

"Moved by deep and determined indignation at such deceitfulness and impertinence, Siyyid Ḥusayn resolved to wreak his vengeance upon him. Mírzá Aḥmad succeeded, however, by his wise counsels, in pacifying the anger of his infuriated uncle and in dissuading him from carrying out the measures which he proposed to take. 'This punishment,' he urged, 'which you contemplate will excite the agitation of the people, and will stir up mischief and sedition. It will gravely interfere with the efforts which you wish me to exert in order to extinguish the influence of Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán. He will undoubtedly seize the occasion to denounce you as a Bábí, and will hold me responsible for having been the cause of your conversion. By this means he will both undermine your authority and earn the esteem and gratitude of the people. Leave him in the hands of God.' "

Mullá Ṣádiq was greatly pleased to learn from the account of this incident that Mírzá Aḥmad was actually residing in Yazd, and that no obstacles stood in the way of his meeting with him. He went immediately to the masjid in which Siyyid Ḥusayn was leading the congregational prayer and in which

Mírzá Ahmad delivered the sermon. Taking his seat in the first row among the worshippers, he joined them in prayer, after which he went straight to Siyyid Ḥusayn and publicly embraced him. Uninvited, he immediately afterwards ascended the pulpit and prepared to address the faithful. Siyyid Ḥusayn, though at first startled, preferred to raise no objection, being curious to discover the motive, and ascertain the degree of the learning, of this sudden intruder. He motioned to his nephew to refrain from opposing him.

Mullá Ṣádiq prefaced his discourse with one of the best-known and most exquisitely written homilies of the Báb, after which he addressed the congregation in these terms: "Render thanks to God, O people of learning, for, behold, the Gate of Divine Knowledge, which you deem to have been closed, is now wide open. The River of everlasting life has streamed forth from the city of Shíráz, and is conferring untold blessings upon the people of this land. Whoever has partaken of one drop from this Ocean of heavenly grace, no matter how humble and unlettered, has discovered in himself the power to unravel the profoundest mysteries, and has felt capable of expounding the most abstruse themes of ancient wisdom. And whoever, though he be the most learned expounder of the Faith of Islám, has chosen to rely upon his own competence and power and has disdained the Message of God, has condemned himself to irretrievable degradation and loss."

A wave of indignation and dismay swept over the entire congregation as these words of Mullá Ṣádiq pealed out this momentous announcement. The masjid rang with cries of "Blasphemy!" which an infuriated congregation shouted in horror against the speaker. "Descend from the pulpit," rose the voice of Siyyid Ḥusayn amid the clamour and tumult of the people, as he motioned to Mullá Ṣádiq to hold his peace and to retire. No sooner had he regained the floor of the masjid than the whole company of the assembled worshippers rushed upon him and overwhelmed him with blows. Siyyid Husayn immediately intervened, vigorously dispersed the crowd, and, seizing the hand of Mullá Ṣádiq, forcibly drew him to his side. "Withhold your hands," he appealed to the multitude; "leave him in my custody. I will take him

to my home, and will closely investigate the matter. A sudden fit of madness may have caused him to utter these words. I will myself examine him. If I find that his utterances are premeditated and that he himself firmly believes in the things which he has declared, I will, with my own hands, inflict upon him the punishment imposed by the law of Islám."

By this solemn assurance, Mullá Ṣádiq was delivered from the savage attacks of his assailants. Divested of his 'abá[1] and turban, deprived of his sandals and staff, bruised and shaken by the injuries he had received, he was entrusted to the care of Siyyid Ḥusayn's attendants, who, as they forced their passage among the crowd, succeeded eventually in conducting him to the home of their master.

Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí, likewise, was subjected in those days to a persecution fiercer and more determined than the savage onslaught which the people of Yazd had directed against Mullá Ṣádiq. But for the intervention of Mírzá Ahmad and the assistance of his uncle, he would have fallen a victim to the wrath of a ferocious enemy.

When Mullá Ṣadiq and Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí arrived at Kirmán, they again had to submit to similar indignities and to suffer similar afflictions at the hands of Ḥájí Mírzá Karím Khán and his associates.[2] Ḥájí Siyyid Javád's persistent exertions freed them eventually from the grasp of their persecutors, and enabled them to proceed to Khurásán.

Though hunted and harassed by their foes, the Báb's immediate disciples, together with their companions in different parts of Persia, were undeterred by such criminal acts

[1] Refer to Glossary.

[2] "Il y eut là une lutte ardente entre Muqaddas et Karím Khán, qui comme on le sait avait pris le rang de chef de la secte Shaykhí après la mort de Káẓim. La discussion eut lieu en présence d'un nombreux auditoire et Karím somma son adversaire de prouver la vérité de la mission du Báb. 'Si tu le fais, lui dit-il, je me convertis, et mes élèves avec moi; mais, si tu n'y réussis pas, je ferai crier dans les bazars: voilà celui qui foule aux pieds la sainte loi de l'Islám.' 'Je sais qui tu es, Karím, lui répliqua Muqaddas. Ne te souviens-tu pas de ton maître Siyyid Kázim et de ce qu'il t'a dit: "Chien ne veux-tu pas que je meure et qu'après moi paraisse la vérité absolue!" Et voilà qu'aujourd'hui, poussé par ta passion des richesses et de la gloire, tu te mens à toi-même.' Commencée sur ce ton, la discussion devait être brève. En effet, les élèves de Karím tirèrent le couteau et se lancèrent sur celui qui insultait leur chef. Fort heureusement le gouverneur de la ville s'interposa, fit arrêter Muqaddas et le fit conduire dans son palais. Il le garda pendant un certain temps, et, quand les passions se furent un peu calmées, il le renvoya de nuit, le faisant accompagner durant quelques étapes par 10 cavaliers." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 228–9.)

from the accomplishment of their task. Unswerving in their purpose and immovable in their convictions, they continued to battle with the dark forces that assailed them every step of their path. By their unstinted devotion and unexampled fortitude, they were able to demonstrate to many of their countrymen the ennobling influence of the Faith they had arisen to champion.

While Vaḥíd[1] was still in Shíráz, Ḥájí Siyyid Javád-i-Karbilá'í[2] arrived and was introduced by Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí into the presence of the Báb. In a Tablet which He addressed to Vaḥíd and Ḥájí Siyyid Javád, the Báb extolled the firmness of their faith and stressed the unalterable character of their devotion. The latter had met and known the Báb before the declaration of His Mission, and had been a fervent admirer of those extraordinary traits of character which had distinguished Him ever since His childhood. At a later time, he met Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád and became the recipient of His special favour. When, a few years afterwards, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to Adrianople, he, already much advanced in years, returned to Persia, tarried awhile in the province of 'Iráq, and thence proceeded to Khurásán. His kindly disposition, extreme forbearance, and unaffected simplicity earned him the appellation of the Siyyid-i-Núr.[3]

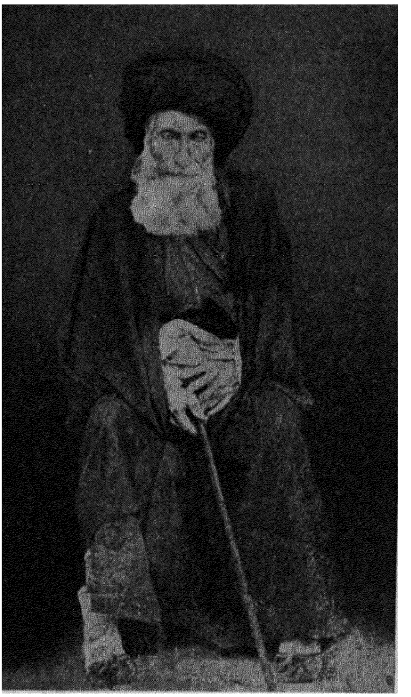
Ḥájí Siyyid Javád, one day, while crossing a street in Ṭihrán, suddenly saw the Sháh as he was passing on horseback. Undisturbed by the presence of his sovereign, he calmly approached and greeted him. His venerable figure and dignity of bearing pleased the Sháh immensely. He acknowledged his salute and invited him to come and see him. Such was the reception accorded him that the courtiers of the Sháh were moved with envy. "Does not your Imperial Majesty realise," they protested, "that this Ḥájí

[1] Title given by the Báb to Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí.

[2] The remarkable circumstances attending the conversion of Ḥájí Siyyid Javád-i-Karbilá'í are fully related in the "Kashfu'l-Ghiṭá'" (pp. 70–77), and reference is made to a significant Tablet revealed to him by Bahá'u'lláh (p. 63), in which the importance of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is fully stressed, and the necessity of exercising the utmost caution and moderation in the application and execution of its precepts emphasised. The text of this Tablet is found on pp. 64–70 of the same book. The following passage of the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih" refers to the conversion of Ḥájí Siyyid Javád: "Áqá Siyyid Javád-i-Karbilá'í a dit qu'avant la manifestation, un indien lui avait écrit le nom de celui qui serait manifesté." ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," traduction par A. L. M. Nicolás, p. 59.)

[3] Literally meaning "radiant siyyid."

Siyyid Javád is none other than the man who, even prior to the declaration of the Siyyid-i-Báb, had proclaimed himself a Bábí, and had pledged his undying loyalty to his person?" The Sháh, perceiving the malice which actuated their accusation, was sorely displeased, and rebuked them for their temerity and low-mindedness. "How strange!" he is reported to have exclaimed; "whoever is distinguished by the uprightness of his conduct and the courtesy of his manners, my people forthwith denounce him as a Bábí and regard him as an object worthy of my condemnation!"



SIYYID JAVÁD-I-KARBILÁ'Í

Ḥájí Siyyid Javád spent the last days of his life in Kirmán and remained until his last hour a staunch supporter of the Faith. He never wavered in his convictions nor relaxed in his unsparing endeavours for the diffusion of the Cause.

Shaykh Sulṭán-i-Karbilá'í, whose ancestors ranked among the leading 'ulamás of Karbilá, and who himself had been a firm supporter and intimate companion of Siyyid Káẓim, was also among those who, in those days, had met the Báb in Shíráz. It was he who, at a later time, proceeded to Sulaymáníyyih in search of Bahá'u'lláh, and whose daughter was subsequently given in marriage to Áqáy-i-Kalím. When he arrived at Shíráz, he was accompanied by Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí, to whom we have referred in the early pages of this narrative. To him the Báb assigned the task of transcribing, in collaboration with Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím, the Tablets which He had lately revealed. Shaykh Sultán, who had been too ill, at the time of his arrival, to meet the Báb, received one night, while still on his sick-bed, a message from his

Beloved, informing him that at about two hours after sunset He would Himself visit him. That night the Ethiopian servant, who was acting as lantern-bearer to his Master, was instructed to walk in advance at a distance which would keep away the attention of the people from Him, and to extinguish the lantern as soon as he reached his destination.

I have heard Shaykh Sultán himself describe that nocturnal visit: "The Báb, who had bidden me extinguish the lamp in my room ere He arrived, came straight to my bedside. In the midst of the darkness which enveloped us, I was holding fast to the hem of His garment and was imploring Him: 'Fulfil my desire, O Beloved of my heart, and allow me to sacrifice myself for Thee; for no one else except Thee is able to confer upon me this favour.' 'O Shaykh!' the Báb replied, 'I too yearn to immolate Myself upon the altar of sacrifice. It behoves us both to cling to the garment of the Best-Beloved and to seek from Him the joy and glory of martyrdom in His path. Rest assured I will, in your behalf, supplicate the Almighty to enable you to attain His presence. Remember Me on that Day, a Day such as the world has never seen before.' As the hour of parting approached, he placed in my hand a gift which He asked me to expend for myself. I tried to refuse; but He begged me to accept it. Finally I acceded to His wish; whereupon He arose and departed.

"The allusion of the Báb that night to His 'Best-Beloved' excited my wonder and curiosity. In the years that followed, I oftentimes believed that the one to whom the Báb had referred was none other than Ṭáhirih. I even imagined Siyyid-i-'Uluvv to be that person. I was sorely perplexed, and knew not how to unravel this mystery. When I reached Karbilá and attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, I became firmly convinced that He alone could claim such affection from the Báb, that He, and only He, could be worthy of such adoration."

The second Naw-Rúz after the declaration of the Báb's Mission, which fell on the twenty-first day of the month of Rabí'u'l-Avval, in the year 1262 A.H.,[1] found the Báb still in Shíráz enjoying, under circumstances of comparative tranquillity and ease, the blessings of undisturbed association

[1] 1846 A.D.

with His family and kindred. Quietly and unceremoniously, He celebrated the festival of Naw-Rúz in His own home, and, in accordance with His invariable custom, bountifully conferred upon both His mother and His wife the marks of His affection and favour. By the wisdom of His counsels and the tenderness of His love, He cheered their hearts and dispelled their apprehensions. He bequeathed to them all His possessions and transferred to their names the title to His property. In a document which He Himself wrote and signed, He directed that His house and its furniture, as well as the rest of His estate, should be regarded as the exclusive property of His mother and His wife; and that upon the death of the former, her share of the property should revert to His wife.

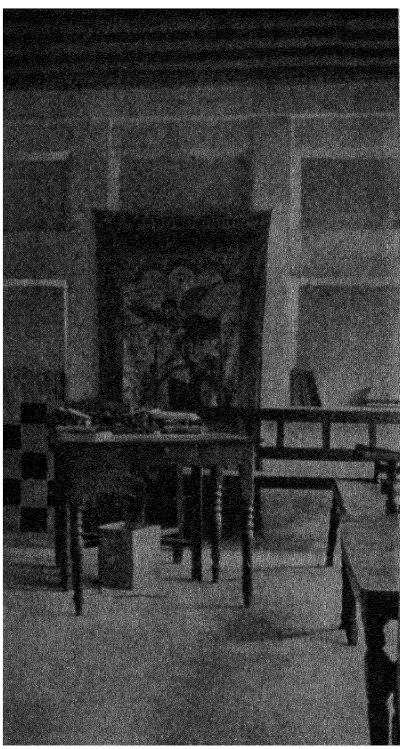
The mother of the Báb failed at first to realise the significance of the Mission proclaimed by her Son. She remained for a time unaware of the magnitude of the forces latent in His Revelation. As she approached the end of her life, however, she was able to perceive the inestimable quality of that Treasure which she had conceived and given to the world. It was Bahá'u'lláh who eventually enabled her to discover the value of that hidden Treasure which had lain for so many years concealed from her eyes. She was living in 'Iraq, where she hoped to spend the remaining days of her life, when Bahá'u'lláh instructed two of His devoted followers, Ḥájí Siyyid Javád-i-Karbilá'í and the wife of Ḥájí 'Abdu'l-Majíd-i-Shírází, both of whom were already intimately acquainted with her, to instruct her in the principles of the Faith. She acknowledged the truth of the Cause and remained, until the closing years of the thirteenth century A.H.,[1] when she departed this life, fully aware of the bountiful gifts which the Almighty had chosen to confer upon her.

The wife of the Báb, unlike His mother, perceived at the earliest dawn of His Revelation the glory and uniqueness of His Mission and felt from the very beginning the intensity of its force. No one except Ṭáhirih, among the women of her generation, surpassed her in the spontaneous character of her devotion nor excelled the fervor of her faith. To her the Báb confided the secret of His future sufferings, and un-

[1] The thirteenth century A.H. ended in October, 1882 A.D.

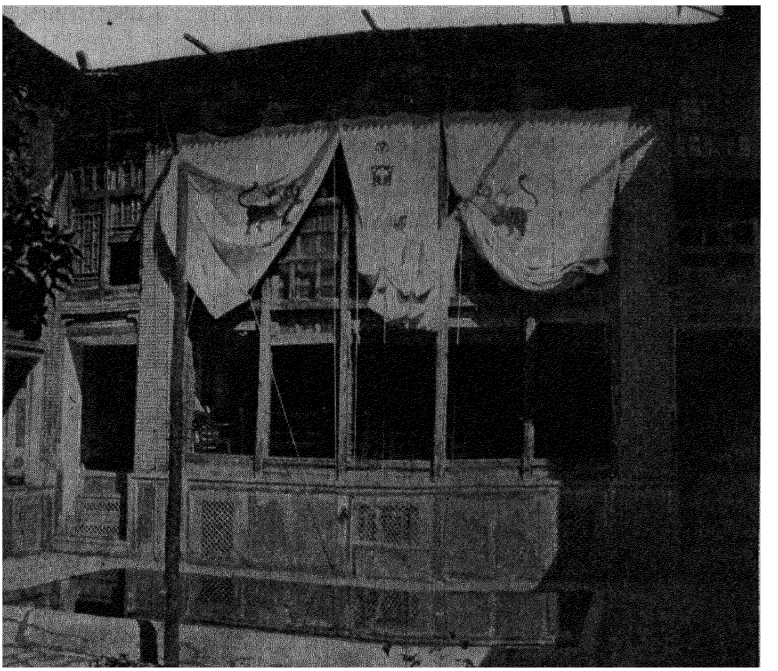
folded to her eyes the significance of the events that were to transpire in His Day. He bade her not to divulge this secret to His mother and counselled her to be patient and resigned to the will of God. He entrusted her with a special prayer, revealed and written by Himself, the reading of which, He assured her, would remove her difficulties and lighten the burden of her woes. "In the hour of your perplexity," He directed her, "recite this prayer ere you go to sleep. I Myself will appear to you and will banish your anxiety." Faithful to His advice, every time she turned to Him in prayer, the light of His unfailing guidance illumined her path and resolved her problems.[1]

After the Báb had settled the affairs of His household and provided for the future maintenance of both His mother and His wife, He transferred His residence from His own home to that of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí. There He awaited the approaching hour of His sufferings. He knew that the afflictions which were in store for Him could no longer be delayed, that He was soon to be caught in a whirlwind of adversity which would carry Him swiftly to the field of martyrdom, the crowning object of His life. He bade those of His disciples who had settled in Shíráz, among whom were Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím and Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí, to proceed to Iṣfáhán and there await His further instructions. Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-



INTERIOR OF ḤÁJÍ MÍRZÁ 'ALÍ'S HOUSE IN SHÍRÁZ

[1] "The Báb's widow survived till A.H. 1300, only six years ago. She was the sister of my friend's maternal grandfather. The above particulars are derived from an old lady of the same family, so that there is every reason to regard them as reliable." (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, p. 993.)



ḤÁJÍ MÍRZÁ SIYYID 'ALÍ'S HOUSE IN SHÍRÁZ (THE BÁB'S MATERNAL UNCLE)

Yazdí, one of the Letters of the Living, who had recently arrived at Shíráz, was likewise instructed to proceed to Iṣfáhán and to join the company of his fellow-disciples in that city.

Meanwhile Ḥusayn Khán, the governor of Fárs, was bending every effort to involve the Báb in fresh embarrassments and to degrade Him still further in the eyes of the public. The smouldering fire of his hostility was fanned to flame by the knowledge that the Báb was allowed to pursue unmolested the course of His activities, that He was still able to associate with certain of His companions, and that He continued to enjoy the benefits of unrestrained fellowship with His family and kindred.[1] By the aid of his secret agents, he succeeded in obtaining accurate information re-

[1] "Cependant les troubles, les discussions passionées, le scandale continuaient à Shiráz, tant et si bien, qu'importuné de tout ce tapage, anxieux des suites qu'il pouvait avoir, Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí donna l'ordre à Ḥusayn Khán Niẓámu'd-Dawlih, d'en finir avec le Réformateur et de le faire tuer secrètement." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 235.)

garding the character and influence of the Movement which the Báb had initiated. He had secretly watched His movements, ascertained the degree of enthusiasm which He had aroused, and scrutinised the motives, the conduct, and the number of those who had embraced His Cause.

One night there came to Ḥusayn Khán the chief of his emissaries with the report that the number of those who were crowding to see the Báb had assumed such proportions as to necessitate immediate action on the part of those whose function it was to guard the security of the city. "The eager crowd that gathers every night to visit the Báb," he remarked, "surpasses in number the multitude of people that throngs every day before the gates of the seat of your government. Among them are to be seen men celebrated alike for their exalted rank and extensive learning.[1] Such are the tact and lavish generosity which his maternal uncle displays in his attitude towards the officials of your government that no one among your subordinates is inclined to acquaint you with the reality of the situation. If you would permit me, I will, with the aid of a number of your attendants, surprise the Báb at the hour of midnight and will deliver, handcuffed, into your hands certain of his associates who will enlighten you concerning his activities, and who will confirm the truth of my statements." Ḥusayn Khán refused to comply with his wish. "I can tell better than

[1] "Extrêmement irrités, mécontents et inquiets, les Mullás du Fárs, ne pouvant d'ailleurs prévoir où s'arrêterait le mouvement qui se prononçait si fortement contre eux, n'étaient pas les seuls à se sentir dans l'embarras. Les autorités de la ville et de la province comprenaient trop bien que le peuple qui leur avait été confié et qui n'est jamais beaucoup dans leurs mains, cette fois n'y étaient plus du tout. Les hommes de Shíráz, légers, railleurs, turbulents, belliqueux, toujours prêts à la révolte, insolents en perfection, rien moins qu'attachés à la dynastie Qájár, n'ont jamais été faciles à mener, et leurs administrateurs ont souvent des journées pénibles. Quelle serait la situation de ces administrateurs, si le chef réel de la ville et du pays, l'arbitre des idées de tout le monde, l'idole de chacun, allait être un jeune homme que rien ne soumettait, n'attachait ou ne gagnait à rien, qui se faisait un piédestal de son indépendance et qui n'en tirait qu'un trop grand parti en attaquant chaque jour impunément et publiquement tout ce qui jusqu'alors s'était considéré comme puissant et respecté dans la ville? À la vérité, les gens du roi, la politique, l'administration proprement dite n'avaient encore été l'objet d'aucune des virulentes apostrophes du novateur; mais à le voir si rigide dans ses mœurs, si inexorable pour la fraude de l'esprit et l'esprit de rapine des membres du clergé, il était fort douteux qu'il pût approuver au fond la même rapacité, la même fraude si florissantes chez les fonctionnaires publics, et on pouvait bien croire que le jour où ses regards tomberaient sur eux, il ne manquerait pas d'apercevoir et de vitupérer ce qu'on n'avait guère le moyen de cacher." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 122–3.)

you," was his answer, "what the interests of the State require. Watch me from a distance; I shall know how to deal with him."

That very moment, the governor summoned 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Khán, the chief constable of the city. "Proceed immediately," he commanded him, "to the house of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí. Quietly and unobserved, scale the wall and ascend to the roof, and from there suddenly enter his home. Arrest the Siyyid-i-Báb immediately, and conduct him to this place together with any of the visitors who may be present with him at that time. Confiscate whatever books and documents you are able to find in that house. As to Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, it is my intention to impose upon him, the following day, the penalty for having failed to redeem his promise. I swear by the imperial diadem of Muḥammad Sháh that this very night I shall have the Siyyid-i-Báb executed together with his wretched companions. Their ignominious death will quench the flame they have kindled, and will awaken every would-be follower of that creed to the danger that awaits every disturber of the peace of this realm. By this act I shall have extirpated a heresy the continuance of which constitutes the gravest menace to the interests of the State."

'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Khán retired to execute his task. He, together with his assistants, broke into the house of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí[1] and found the Báb in the company of His maternal uncle and a certain Siyyid Káẓim-i-Zanjání, who was later martyred in Mázindarán, and whose brother, Siyyid Murtadá, was one of the Seven Martyrs of Ṭihrán. He immediately arrested them, collected whatever documents he could find, ordered Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí to remain in his house, and conducted the rest to the seat of government. The Báb, undaunted and self-possessed, was heard to repeat this verse of the Qur'án: "That with which they are threatened is for the morning. Is not the morning near?"

No sooner had the chief constable reached the marketplace than he discovered, to his amazement, that the people of the city were fleeing from every side in consternation, as if overtaken by an appalling calamity. He was struck

[1] September 23, 1845 A.D. See "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," p. 204.

with horror when he witnessed the long train of coffins being hurriedly transported through the streets, each followed by a procession of men and women loudly uttering shrieks of agony and pain. This sudden tumult, the lamentations, the affrighted countenances, the imprecations of the multitude distressed and bewildered him. He enquired as to the reason. "This very night," he was told, "a plague[1] of exceptional virulence has broken out. We are smitten by its devastating power. Already since the hour of midnight it has extinguished the lives of over a hundred people. Alarm and despair reign in every house. The people are abandoning their homes, and in their plight are invoking the aid of the Almighty."[2]

'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Khán, terrified by this dreadful intelligence, ran to the home of Ḥusayn Khán. An old man who guarded his house and was acting as door-keeper informed him that the house of his master was deserted, that the ravages of the pestilence had devastated his home and afflicted the members of his household. "Two of his Ethiopian maids," he was told, "and a man-servant have already fallen victims to this scourge, and members of his own family are now dangerously ill. In his despair, my master has abandoned his home and, leaving the dead unburied, has fled with the rest of his family to the Bágh-i-Takht."[3]

'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Khán decided to conduct the Báb to his own home and keep Him in his custody pending instructions from the governor. As he was approaching his house, he was struck by the sound of weeping and wailing of the members of his household. His son had been attacked by the plague and was hovering on the brink of death. In his despair, he threw himself at the feet of the Báb and tearfully implored Him to save the life of his son. He begged Him to forgive his past transgressions and misdeeds. "I adjure you," he entreated the Báb as he clung to the hem of His garment, "by Him who has elevated you to this ex-

[1] Outbreak of cholera.

[2] The Báb refers to this incident in the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih" in the following terms: "Reporte-toi aux premiers jours de la manifestation: combien d'hommes y sont morts du choléra! c'était là l'un des prodiges de la manifestation et personne ne l'a compris. Pendant quatre années le fléau sévit parmi les Musulmans shi'ites sans que personne en saisit la signification." ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," traduction par A. L. M. Nicolas, pp. 61–2.)

[3] A garden in the outskirts of Shíráz.

alted position, to intercede in my behalf and to offer a prayer for the recovery of my son. Suffer not that he, in the prime of youth, be taken away from me. Punish him not for the guilt which his father has committed. I repent of what I have done, and at this moment resign my post. I solemnly pledge my word that never again will I accept such a position even though I perish of hunger."

The Báb, who was in the act of performing His ablutions and was preparing to offer the prayer of dawn, directed him to take some of the water with which He was washing His face to his son and request him to drink it. This He said would save his life.

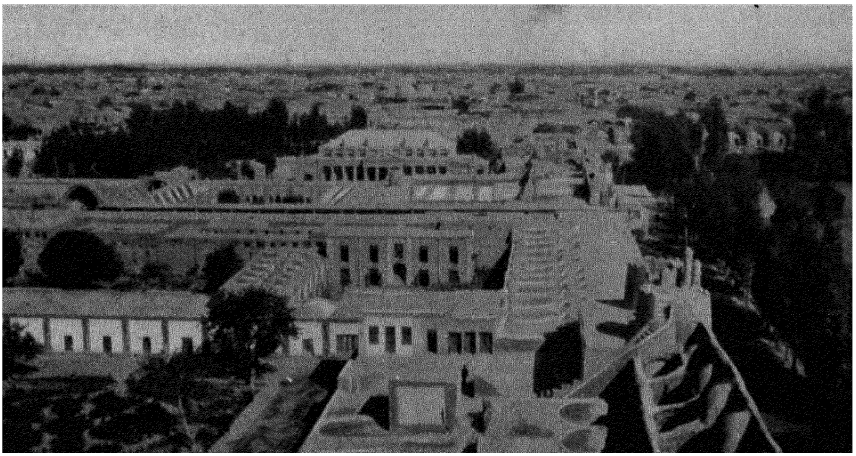
No sooner had 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Khán witnessed the signs of the recovery of his son than he wrote a letter to the governor in which he acquainted him with the whole situation and begged him to cease his attacks on the Báb. "Have pity on yourself," he wrote him, "as well as on those whom Providence has committed to your care. Should the fury of this plague continue its fatal course, no one in this city, I fear, will by the end of this day have survived the horror of its attack." Ḥusayn Khán replied that the Báb should be immediately released and given freedom to go wherever He might please.[1]

As soon as an account of these happenings reached Ṭihrán and was brought to the attention of the Sháh, an imperial edict dismissing Ḥusayn Khán from office was issued and sent to Shíráz. From the day of his dismissal, that shameless tyrant fell a victim to countless misfortunes, and was in the end unable to earn even his daily bread. No one seemed willing or able to save him from his evil plight. When, at a later time, Bahá'u'lláh had been banished to Baghdád, Ḥusayn Khán sent Him a letter in which he expressed repentance and promised to atone for his past misdeeds on condition that he should regain his former position. Bahá'u'lláh refused to answer him. Sunk in misery and shame, he languished until his death.

The Báb, who was staying at the home of 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Khán, sent Siyyid Káẓim to request Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí to

[1] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 11), "Ḥusayn Khán released the Báb on condition of his quitting the city."

come and see Him. He informed His uncle of His intended departure from Shíráz, entrusted both His mother and His wife to his care, and charged him to convey to each the expression of His affection and the assurance of God's unfailing assistance. "Wherever they may be," He told His uncle, as He bade him farewell, "God's all-encompassing love and protection will surround them. I will again meet you amid the mountains of Ádhirbáyján, from whence I will send you forth to obtain the crown of martyrdom. I Myself will follow you, together with one of My loyal disciples, and will join you in the realm of eternity."



VIEWS OF IṢFÁHÁN

CHAPTER X

THE BÁB'S SOJOURN IN IṢFÁHÁN

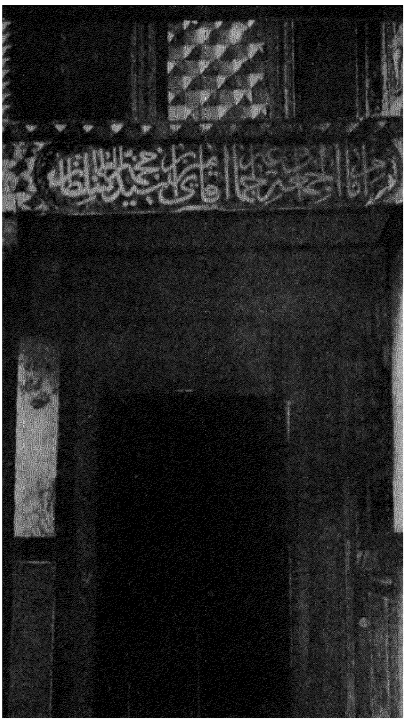
THE summer of the year 1262 A.H.[1] was drawing to a close when the Báb bade His last farewell to His native city of Shíráz, and proceeded to Iṣfáhán. Siyyid Káẓim-i-Zanjání accompanied Him on that journey. As He approached the outskirts of the city, He wrote a letter to the governor of the province, Manúchihr Khán, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih,[2] in which He requested him to signify his wish as to the place where He could dwell. The letter, which He entrusted to Siyyid Káẓim, was expressive of such courtesy and revealed such exquisite penmanship that the Mu'tamid was moved to instruct the Sulṭánu'l-'Ulamá, the Imám-Jum'ih of Iṣfáhán,[3] the foremost ecclesiastical authority of that province, to receive the Báb in his own home and to accord Him a kindly and generous

[1] 1846 A.D.

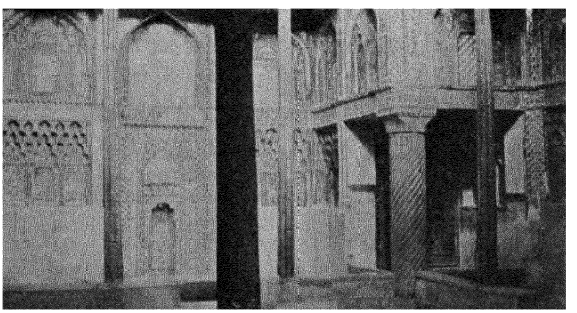
[2] "He [Manúchihr Khán] was a man of energy and courage and in 1841 completely crushed the Bakhtíyárí tribes, which had risen in rebellion. His vigorous though severe administration secured to the people of Iṣfáhán some little justice." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 487.)

[3] According to Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl (manuscript, p. 66), the name of the Imám-Jum'ih of Iṣfáhán was Mír Siyyid Muḥammad, and his title "Sulṭánu'l-'Ulamá'." "The office of Ṣadru's-Ṣudúr, or chief priest of Ṣafaví times, was abolished by Nádir Sháh, and the Imám-Jum'ih of Iṣfáhán is now the principal ecclesiastical dignitary of Persia." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 365.)

reception. In addition to his message, the governor sent the Imám-Jum'ih the letter he had received from the Báb. The Sultánu'l-'Ulamá accordingly bade his own brother, whose savage cruelty in later years earned him the appellation of



ENTRANCE



COURTYARD

VIEWS OF THE HOUSE OF THE IMÁM-I-JUM'IH IN IṢFÁHÁN

Raqshá'[1] from Bahá'u'lláh, to proceed with a number of his favourite companions to meet and escort the expected Visitor to the gate of the city. As the Báb approached, the Imám-Jum'ih went out to welcome Him in person, and conducted Him ceremoniously to his house.

Such were the honours accorded to the Báb in those days that when, on a certain Friday, He was returning from the public bath to the house, a multitude of people were seen eagerly clamouring for the water which He had used for His ablutions. His fervent admirers firmly believed in its unfailing virtue and power to heal their sicknesses and ailments. The Imám-Jum'ih himself had, from the very first night, become so enamoured with Him who was the object of such devotion, that, assuming the functions of an attendant, he undertook to minister to the needs and wants of his beloved Guest. Seizing the ewer from the hand of the chief steward and utterly ignoring the customary dignity of his rank, he proceeded to pour out the water over the hands of the Báb.

One night, after supper, the Imám-Jum'ih, whose curiosity had been excited by the extraordinary traits of character which his youthful Guest had revealed, ventured to request Him to reveal a commentary on the Súrih of Va'l-'Aṣr.[2] His request was readily granted. Calling for pen and paper, the Báb, with astonishing rapidity and without the least premeditation, began to reveal, in the presence of His host, a most illuminating interpretation of the aforementioned Súrih. It was nearing midnight when the Báb found Himself engaged in the exposition of the manifold implications involved in the first letter of that Súrih. That letter, the letter váv, upon which Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsá'í had already laid such emphasis in his writings, symbolised for the Báb the advent of a new cycle of Divine Revelation, and has since been alluded to by Bahá'u'lláh in the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" in such passages as "the mystery of the Great Reversal" and "the Sign of the Sovereign." The Báb soon after began to chant, in the presence of His host and his companions, the homily with which He had prefaced His commentary on the Súrih. Those words of power confounded His hearers with wonder.

[1] Meaning female serpent. [2] Qur'án, 103.

They seemed as if bewitched by the magic of His voice. Instinctively they started to their feet and, together with the Imám-Jum'ih, reverently kissed the hem of His garment. Mullá Muhammad-Taqíy-i-Harátí, an eminent mujtahid, broke out into a sudden expression of exultation and praise. "Peerless and unique," he exclaimed, "as are the words which have streamed from this pen, to be able to reveal, within so short a time and in so legible a writing, so great a number of verses as to equal a fourth, nay a third, of the Qur'án, is in itself an achievement such as no mortal, without the intervention of God, could hope to perform. Neither the cleaving of the moon nor the quickening of the pebbles of the sea can compare with so mighty an act."

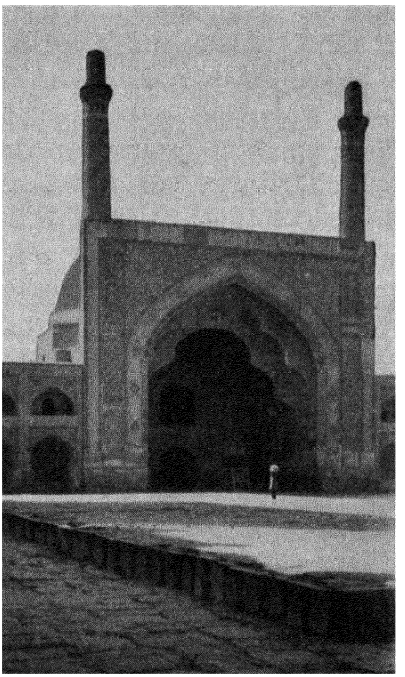
As the Báb's fame was being gradually diffused over the entire city of Iṣfáhán, an unceasing stream of visitors flowed from every quarter to the house of the Imám-Jum'ih: a few to satisfy their curiosity, others to obtain a deeper understanding of the fundamental verities of His Faith, and still others to seek the remedy for their ills and sufferings. The Mu'tamid himself came one day to visit the Báb and, while seated in the midst of an assemblage of the most brilliant and accomplished divines of Iṣfáhán, requested Him to expound the nature and demonstrate the validity of the Nubuvvat-i-Khāṣṣih.[1] He had previously, in that same gathering, called upon those who were present to adduce such proofs and evidences in support of this fundamental article of their Faith as would constitute an unanswerable testimony for those who were inclined to repudiate its truth. No one, however, seemed capable of responding to his invitation. "Which do you prefer," asked the Báb, "a verbal or a written answer to your question?" "A written reply," he answered, "not only would please those who are present at this meeting, but would edify and instruct both the present and future generations."

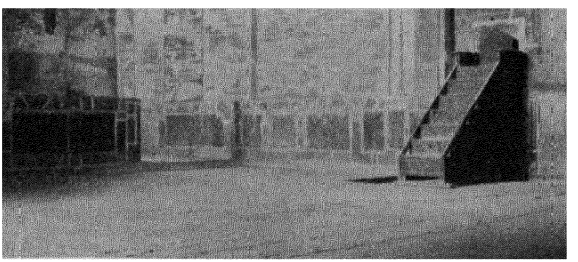
The Báb instantly took up His pen and began to write. In less than two hours, He had filled about fifty pages with a most refreshing and circumstantial enquiry into the origin, the character, and the pervasive influence of Islám. The originality of His dissertation, the vigour and vividness of

[1] Muḥammad's "Specific Mission."

its style, the accuracy of its minutest details, invested His treatment of that noble theme with an excellence which no one among those who were present on that occasion could have failed to perceive. With masterly insight, He linked the central idea in the concluding passages of this exposition with the advent of the promised Qá'im and the expected "Return" of the Imám Ḥusayn.[1] He argued with such force

[1] Reference to His own Mission and to Bahá'u'lláh's subsequent Revelation.





VIEWS OF THE MASJID-I-JUM'IH IN IṢFÁHÁN, SHOWING PULPIT BEFORE WHICH THE BÁB PRAYED

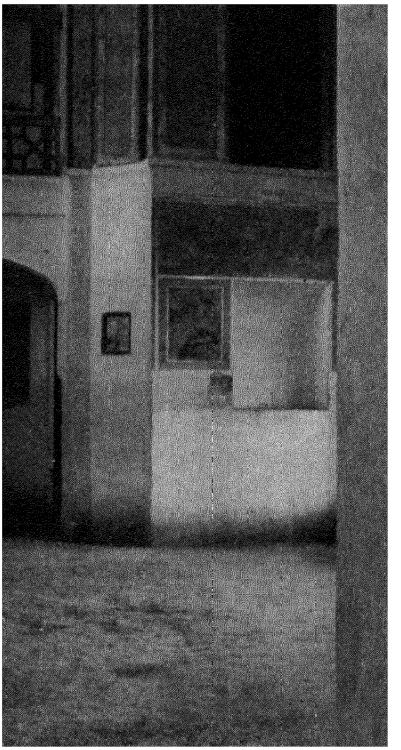
and courage that those who heard Him recite its verses were astounded by the magnitude of His revelation. No one dared to insinuate the slightest objection—much less, openly to challenge His statements. The Mu'tamid could not help giving vent to his enthusiasm and joy. "Hear me!" he exclaimed. "Members of this revered assembly, I take you as my witnesses. Never until this day have I in my heart been firmly convinced of the truth of Islám. I can henceforth, thanks to this exposition penned by this Youth, declare myself a firm believer in the Faith proclaimed by the Apostle of God. I solemnly testify to my belief in the reality of the superhuman power with which this Youth is endowed, a power which no amount of learning can ever impart." With these words he brought the meeting to an end.

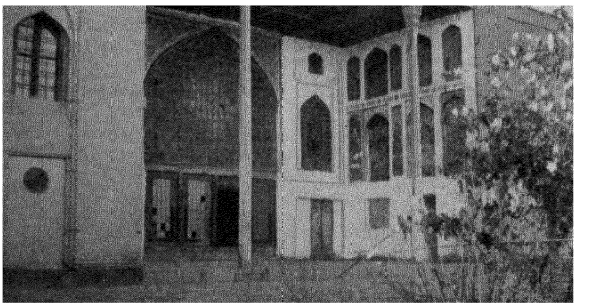
The growing popularity of the Báb aroused the resentment of the ecclesiastical authorities of Iṣfáhán, who viewed with concern and envy the ascendancy which an unlearned Youth was slowly acquiring over the thoughts and consciences of their followers. They firmly believed that unless they rose to stem the tide of popular enthusiasm, the very foundations of their existence would be undermined. A few of the more sagacious among them thought it wise to abstain from acts of direct hostility to either the person or the teachings of the Báb, as such action, they felt, would serve only to enhance His prestige and consolidate His position. The mischief-makers, however, were busily engaged in disseminating the wildest reports concerning the character and claims of the Báb. These reports soon reached Ṭihrán and were brought to the attention of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, the Grand Vazír of Muḥammad Sháh. This haughty and overbearing minister viewed with apprehension the possibility that his sovereign might one day feel inclined to befriend the Báb, an inclination which he felt sure would precipitate his own downfall. The Ḥájí was, moreover, apprehensive lest the Mu'tamid, who enjoyed the confidence of the Sháh, should succeed in arranging an interview between the sovereign and the Báb. He was well aware that should such an interview take place, the impressionable and tender-hearted Muhammad Sháh would be completely won over by the attractiveness and novelty of that creed. Spurred on by

such reflections, he addressed a strongly worded communication to the Imám-Jum'ih, in which he upbraided him for his grave neglect of the obligation imposed upon him to safeguard the interests of Islám. "We have expected you," Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí wrote him, "to resist with all your power every cause which conflicts with the best interests of the government and people of this land. You seem instead to have befriended, nay to have glorified, the author of this obscure and contemptible movement." He likewise wrote a number of encouraging letters to the 'ulamás of Iṣfáhán, whom he had previously ignored but upon whom he now lavished his special favours. The Imám-Jum'ih, while refusing to alter his respectful attitude towards his Guest, was induced by the tone of the message he had received from the Grand Vazír, to instruct his associates to devise such means as would tend to lessen the ever-increasing number of visitors who thronged each day to the presence of the Báb. Muḥammad-Mihdí, surnamed the Safíhu'l-'Ulamá', son of the late Ḥájí Kalbásí, in his desire to gratify the wish and to earn the esteem of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, began to calumniate the Báb from the pulpit in the most unseemly language.

As soon as the Mu'tamid was informed of these developments, he sent a message to the Imám-Jum'ih in which he reminded him of the visit he as governor had paid to the Báb, and extended to him as well as to his Guest an invitation to his home. The Mu'tamid invited Ḥájí Siyyid Asadu'lláh, son of the late Ḥájí Siyyid Muḥammad Báqir-i-Rashtí, Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ja'far-i-Ábádiyí, Muḥammad-Mihdí, Mírzá Ḥasan-i-Núrí, and a few others to be present at that meeting. Ḥájí Siyyid Asadu'lláh refused the invitation and endeavoured to dissuade those who had been invited, from participating in that gathering. "I have sought to excuse myself," he informed them, "and I would most certainly urge you to do the same. I regard it as most unwise of you to meet the Siyyid-i-Báb face to face. He will, no doubt, reassert his claim and will, in support of his argument, adduce whatever proof you may desire him to give, and, without the least hesitation, will reveal as a testimony to the truth he bears, verses of such a number as would equal half the Qur'án. In the end he will challenge you in these words: 'Produce like-

wise, if ye are men of truth.' We can in no wise successfully resist him. If we disdain to answer him, our impotence will have been exposed. If we, on the other hand, submit to his claim, we shall not only be forfeiting our own reputation, our own prerogatives and rights, but will have committed





VIEWS OF THE HOUSE OF THE MU'TAMIDU'D-DAWLIH IN IṢFÁHÁN

ourselves to acknowledge any further claims that he may feel inclined to make in the future."

Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ja'far heeded this counsel and refused to accept the invitation of the governor. Muḥammad Mihdí, Mírzá Ḥasan-i-Núrí, and a few others who disdained such advice, presented themselves at the appointed hour at the home of the Mu'tamid. At the invitation of the host, Mírzá Ḥasan, a noted Platonist, requested the Báb to elucidate certain abstruse philosophical doctrines connected with the 'Arshíyyih of Mullá Ṣadrá,[1] the meaning of which only a few had been able to unravel.[2] In simple and unconventional language, the Báb replied to each of his questions. Mírzá Ḥasan, though unable to apprehend the meaning of the answers which he had received, realised how inferior was the learning of the so-called exponents of the Platonic and the Aristotelian schools of thought of his day to the knowledge displayed by that Youth. Muḥammad Mihdí ventured in his turn to question the Báb regarding certain aspects of the Islámic law. Dissatisfied with the explanation he received, he began to contend idly with the Báb. He was soon silenced by the Mu'tamid, who, cutting short his conversation, turned to an attendant and, bidding him light the lantern, gave the order that Muḥammad Mihdí be immediately conducted to his home. The Mu'tamid subsequently

[1] See Note K, "A Traveller's Narrative," and Gobineau, pp. 65–73.

[2] "C'est alors que Muhammad s'étant tu, Mírzá Muhammad-Ḥasan, qui suivait la doctrine philosophique de Mullá Ṣadrá, interrogea le Báb pour l'inciter à expliquer trois miracles qu'il suffira d'énoncer pour édifier le lecteur. Le premier est le Ṭiyyu'l-Ard, ou si l'on préfère le transport immédiat d'un personnage quelconque d'un endroit du monde à un autre endroit fort éloigné: les shi'ites sont convaincus que le troisième Imám, Javád, avait adopté cette façon facile et économique de voyager: par exemple il se transporta en un clin d'œil de Médine en Arabie, à Ṭús dans le Khurásán. Le second miracle est la présence multiple et simultanée d'un même personnage à beaucoup d'endroits différents. 'Alí, entr'autres, était à la même minute, l'hôte de soixante personnes différentes. Enfin le troisième est un problème de cosmographie que je soumets à nos astronomes qui en apprécieront certainement la saveur. Il est dit dans les hadis que durant le règne d'un tyran, le ciel tourne rapidement, tandis que pendant celui d'un Imám il tourne lentement. D'abord, comment le ciel peut-il avoir deux mouvements; et ensuite que faisait-il durant le règne des 'Umayyads et des Abbassids. Ce serait la solution de ces insanités qu'on aurait proposée au Báb. Je ne m'y arrêterai pas plus longtemps mais je crois devoir faire remarquer ici la mentalité des savants musulmans de la Perse. Et si l'on veut bien réfléchir que depuis environ un millier d'années la science de l'Irán ne repose que sur de pareilles billevesées, que les hommes s'épuisent en recherches continues sur de pareilles matières, on comprendra facilement le vide et l'arrogance de toutes ces cervelles. Quoi qu'il en soit la réunion aurait été interrompue par l'annonce du dîner auquel chacun prit part pour rentrer ensuite chez soi." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 239–40.)

confided his apprehensions to the Imám-Jum'ih. "I fear the machinations of the enemies of the Siyyid-i-Báb," he told him. "The Sháh has summoned Him to Ṭihrán. I am commanded to arrange for His departure. I deem it more advisable for Him to stay in my home until such time as He can leave this city." The Imám-Jum'ih acceded to his request and returned alone to his house.

The Báb had tarried forty days at the residence of the Imám-Jum'ih. While He was still there, a certain Mullá Muhammad-Taqíy-i-Harátí, who was privileged to meet the Báb every day, undertook, with His consent, to translate one of His works, entitled Risáliy-i-Furú'-i-'Adlíyyih, from the original Arabic into Persian. The service he thereby rendered to the Persian believers was marred, however, by his subsequent behaviour. Fear suddenly seized him, and he was induced eventually to sever his connection with his fellow-believers.

Ere the Báb had transferred His residence to the house of the Mu'tamid, Mírzá Ibráhím, father of the Sulṭánu'sh-Shuhadá' and elder brother of Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Nahrí, to whom we have already referred, invited the Báb to his home one night. Mírzá Ibráhím was a friend of the Imám-Jum'ih, was intimately associated with him, and controlled the management of all his affairs. The banquet which was spread for the Báb that night was one of unsurpassed magnificence. It was commonly observed that neither the officials nor the notables of the city had offered a feast of such magnitude and splendour. The Sulṭánu'sh-Shuhadá' and his brother, the Maḥbúbu'sh-Shuhadá', who were lads of nine and eleven, respectively, served at that banquet and received special attention from the Báb. That night, during dinner, Mírzá Ibráhím turned to his Guest and said: "My brother, Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, has no child. I beg You to intercede in his behalf and to grant his heart's desire." The Báb took a portion of the food with which He had been served, placed it with His own hands on a platter, and handed it to His host, asking him to take it to Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí and his wife. "Let them both partake of this," He said; "their wish will be fulfilled." By virtue of that portion which the Báb had chosen to bestow upon her, the wife of Mírzá

Muhammad-'Alí conceived and in due time gave birth to a girl, who eventually was joined in wedlock with the Most Great Branch,[1] a union that came to be regarded as the consummation of the hopes entertained by her parents.

The high honours accorded to the Báb served further to inflame the hostility of the 'ulamás of Isfáhán. With feelings of dismay, they beheld on every side evidences of His all-pervasive influence invading the stronghold of orthodoxy and subverting their foundations. They summoned a gathering, at which they issued a written document, signed and sealed by all the ecclesiastical leaders of the city, condemning the Báb to death.[2] They all concurred in this condemnation with the exception of Ḥájí Siyyid Asadu'lláh and Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ja'far-i-Ábádiyí, both of whom refused to associate themselves with the contents of so glaringly abusive a document. The Imám-Jum'ih, though declining to endorse the death-warrant of the Báb, was induced, by reason of his extreme cowardice and ambition, to add to that document, in his own handwriting, the following testimony: "I testify that in the course of my association with this youth I have been unable to discover any act that would in any way betray his repudiation of the doctrines of Islám. On the contrary, I have known him as a pious and loyal observer of its precepts. The extravagance of his claims, however, and his disdainful contempt for the things of the world, incline me to believe that he is devoid of reason and judgment."

No sooner had the Mu'tamid been informed of the condemnation pronounced by the 'ulamás of Isfáhán than he determined, by a plan which he himself conceived, to nullify the effects of that cruel verdict. He issued immediate instructions that towards the hour of sunset the Báb, escorted by five hundred horsemen of the governor's own mounted body-guard, should leave the gate of the city and proceed in the direction of Ṭihrán. Imperative orders had been given that at the completion of each farsang[3] one hundred of this mounted escort should return directly to Isfáhán.

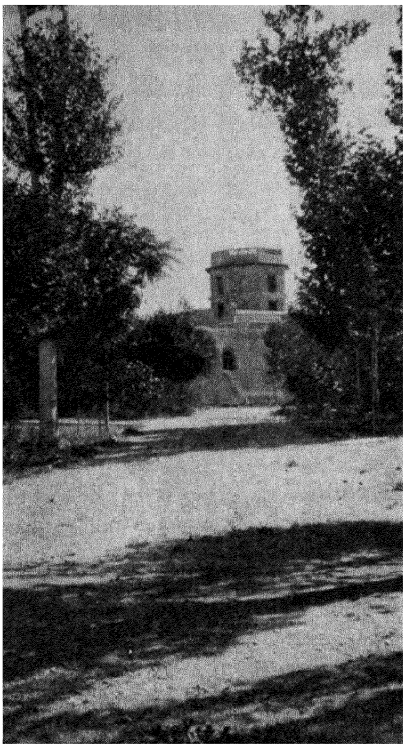
[1] Reference to Munírih Khánum's marriage with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

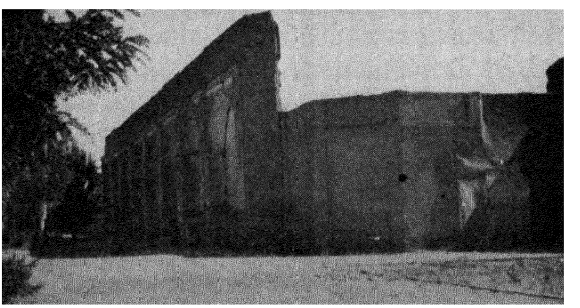
[2] According to Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl, about seventy eminent 'ulamás and notables had set their seal to a document which condemned the Báb as a heretic, and which declared Him to be deserving of the penalty of death.

[3] Refer to Glossary.

To the chief of the last remaining contingent, a man in whom he placed implicit confidence, the Mu'tamid confidentially intimated his desire that at every maydán[1] twenty of the

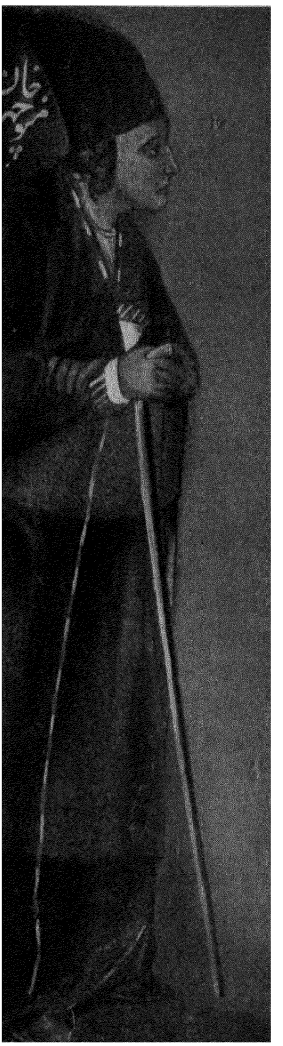
[1] Refer to Glossary.





VIEW OF THE RUINS OF THE SECTION THE BÁB OCCUPIED

remaining hundred should likewise be ordered by him to return to the city. Of the twenty remaining horsemen, the Mu'tamid directed that ten should be despatched to Ardistán for the purpose of collecting the taxes levied by the government, and that the rest, all of whom should be of his tried and most reliable men, should, by an unfrequented route, bring the Báb back in disguise to Iṣfáhán.[1] They were, moreover, instructed so to regulate their march that before dawn of the ensuing day the Báb should have arrived at Iṣfáhán and should have been delivered into his custody. This plan was immediately taken in hand and duly executed. At an unsuspected hour, the Báb re-entered the city, was directly conducted to the private residence of the Mu'tamid, known by the name of 'Imárat-i-Khurshíd,[2] and was introduced, through a side entrance reserved for the Mu'tamid himself, into his private apartments. The governor waited in person on the Báb, served His meals, and provided whatever was required for His comfort and safety.[3]



MANÚCHIHR KHÁN
THE MU'TAMIDU'D-DAWLIH

[1] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 13), the Mu'tamid gave secret orders that when the Báb reached Múrchih-Khár (the second stage out from Iṣfáhán on the north road, distant about 35 miles therefrom), He should return to Iṣfáhán.

[2] "Ainsi cette pièce (dans laquelle je me trouve), qui n'a ni portes ni limites précises, est aujourd'hui la plus haute des pièces du Paradis, car l'arbre de vérité y habite. On dirait que tous les atomes de cette chambre chantent tous par la voix qui dit: 'En vérité! je suis Dieu! il n'y a pas d'autre dieu que moi, le Seigneur de toutes choses.' Et ils le chantent par-dessus de toutes les pièces de la terre, même par-dessus celles qui sont ornées de glaces ou d'ornements d'or. Si cependant l'arbre de vérité réside dans une de ces pièces ornées, alors les atomes de ces miroirs chantent (cette phrase), ainsi que le faisaient et le font les atomes des miroirs du Palais Ṣadrí, car à l'époque des jours de Ṣád (Iṣfáhán) il y demeurait." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 1, p. 128.)

[3] According to "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 13, the Báb remained four months in that house.

Meanwhile the wildest conjectures obtained currency in the city regarding the journey of the Báb to Ṭihrán, the sufferings which He was made to endure on His way to the capital, the verdict which had been pronounced against Him, and the penalty which He had suffered. These rumours greatly distressed the believers who were residing in Iṣfáhán. The Mu'tamid, who was well aware of their grief and anxiety, interceded with the Báb in their behalf and begged to be allowed to introduce them into His presence. The Báb addressed a few words in His own handwriting to Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Qazvíní, who had taken up his quarters in the madrisih of Ním-Ávard, and instructed the Mu'tamid to send it to him by a trusted messenger. An hour later, Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím was ushered into the presence of the Báb. Of his arrival no one except the Mu'tamid was informed. He received from his Master some of His writings, and was instructed to transcribe them in collaboration with Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdí and Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí. To these he soon returned, bearing the welcome news of the Báb's well-being and safety. Of all the believers residing in Iṣfáhán, these three alone were allowed to see Him.

One day, while seated with the Báb in his private garden within the courtyard of his house, the Mu'tamid, taking his Guest into his confidence, addressed Him in these words: "The almighty Giver has endowed me with great riches.[1] I know not how best to use them. Now that I have, by the aid of God, been led to recognise this Revelation, it is my ardent desire to consecrate all my possessions to the furtherance of its interests and the spread of its fame. It is my intention to proceed, by Your leave, to Ṭihrán, and to do my best to win to this Cause Muḥammad Sháh, whose confidence in me is firm and unshaken. I am certain that he will eagerly embrace it, and will arise to promote it far and wide. I will also endeavour to induce the Sháh to dismiss the profligate Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, the folly of whose administration has well-nigh brought this land to the verge of ruin. Next, I will strive to obtain for You the hand of one of the

[1] "Le 4 mars, 1847, M. de Bonnière écrit au Ministre des affaires étrangères de France: 'Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, gouverneur d'Iṣfáhán, vient de mourir, laissant une fortune que l'on évalue à 40 millions de francs.'" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 242, note 192.)

sisters of the Sháh, and will myself undertake the preparation of Your nuptials. Finally, I hope to be enabled to incline the hearts of the rulers and kings of the earth to this most wondrous Cause and to extirpate every lingering trace of that corrupt ecclesiastical hierarchy that has stained the fair name of Islám." "May God requite you for your noble intentions," the Báb replied. "So lofty a purpose is to Me even more precious than the act itself. Your days and Mine are numbered, however; they are too short to enable Me to witness, and allow you to achieve, the realisation of your hopes. Not by the means which you fondly imagine will an almighty Providence accomplish the triumph of His Faith. Through the poor and lowly of this land, by the blood which these shall have shed in His path, will the omnipotent Sovereign ensure the preservation and consolidate the foundation of His Cause. That same God will, in the world to come, place upon your head the crown of immortal glory, and will shower upon you His inestimable blessings. Of the span of your earthly life there remain only three months and nine days, after which you shall, with faith and certitude, hasten to your eternal abode." The Mu'tamid greatly rejoiced at these words. Resigned to the will of God, he prepared himself for the departure which the words of the Báb had so clearly foreshadowed. He wrote his testament, settled his private affairs, and bequeathed whatever he possessed to the Báb. Immediately after his death, however, his nephew, the rapacious Gurgín Khán, discovered and destroyed his will, seized his property, and contemptuously ignored his wishes.

As the days of his earthly life were drawing to a close, the Mu'tamid increasingly sought the presence of the Báb, and, in his hours of intimate fellowship with Him, obtained a deeper realisation of the spirit which animated His Faith. "As the hour of my departure approaches," he one day told the Báb, "I feel an undefinable joy pervading my soul. But I am apprehensive for You, I tremble at the thought of being compelled to leave You to the mercy of so ruthless a successor as Gurgín Khán. He will, no doubt, discover Your presence in this home, and will, I fear, grievously ill-treat You." "Fear not," remonstrated the Báb; "I have

committed Myself into the hands of God. My trust is in Him. Such is the power which He has bestowed upon Me that if it be My wish, I can convert these very stones into gems of inestimable value, and can instil into the heart of the most wicked criminal the loftiest conceptions of uprightness and duty. Of My own will have I chosen to be afflicted by My enemies, 'that God might accomplish the thing destined to be done.' "[1] As those precious hours flew by, a sense of overpowering devotion, of increased consciousness of nearness to God, filled the heart of the Mu'tamid. In his eyes the world's pomp and pageantry melted away into insignificance when brought face to face with the eternal realities enshrined in the Revelation of the Báb. His vision of its glories, its infinite potentialities, its incalculable blessings grew in vividness as he increasingly realised the vanity of earthly ambition and the limitations of human endeavour. He continued to ponder these thoughts in his heart, until the time when a slight attack of fever, which lasted but one night, suddenly terminated his life. Serene and confident, he winged his flight to the Great Beyond.[2]

As the life of the Mu'tamid was approaching its end, the Báb summoned to His presence Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Yazdí and Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím, acquainted them with the nature of His prediction to His host, and bade them tell the believers who had gathered in the city, to scatter throughout Káshán, Qum, and Ṭihrán, and await whatever Providence, in His wisdom, might choose to decree.

A few days after the death of the Mu'tamid, a certain person who was aware of the design which he had conceived and carried out for the protection of the Báb, informed his successor, Gurgín Khán,[3] of the actual residence of the Báb in the 'Imárat-i-Khurshíd, and described to him the honours which his predecessor had lavished upon his Guest in the privacy of his own home. On the receipt of this unexpected intelligence, Gurgín Khán despatched his messenger to Ṭihrán and instructed him to deliver in person the following

[1] Qur'án, 8: 42.

[2] He died, according to E. G. Browne ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note L, p. 277), in the month of Rabí'u'l-Avval of the year 1263 A.H. (Feb.-March, 1847 A.D.).

[3] According to "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 13, he was the nephew of the Mu'tamid.

message to Muḥammad Sháh: "Four months ago it was generally believed in Iṣfáhán that, in pursuance of your Majesty's imperial summons, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, my predecessor, had sent the Siyyid-i-Báb to the seat of your Majesty's government. It has now been disclosed that this same siyyid is actually occupying the 'Imárat-i-Khurshíd, the private residence of the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih. It has been ascertained that my predecessor himself extended the hospitality of his home to the Siyyid-i-Báb and sedulously guarded that secret from both the people and the officials of this city. Whatever it pleases your Majesty to decree, I unhesitatingly pledge myself to perform."

The Sháh, who was firmly convinced of the loyalty of the Mu'tamid, realised, when he received this message, that the late governor's sincere intention had been to await a favourable occasion when he could arrange a meeting between him and the Báb, and that his sudden death had interfered with the execution of that plan. He issued an imperial mandate summoning the Báb to the capital. In his written message to Gurgín Khán, the Sháh commanded him to send the Báb in disguise, in the company of a mounted escort[1] headed by Muḥammad Big-i-Chápárchí,[2] of the sect of the 'Alíyu'lláhí, to Ṭihrán; to exercise the utmost consideration towards Him in the course of His journey, and strictly to maintain the secrecy of His departure.[3]

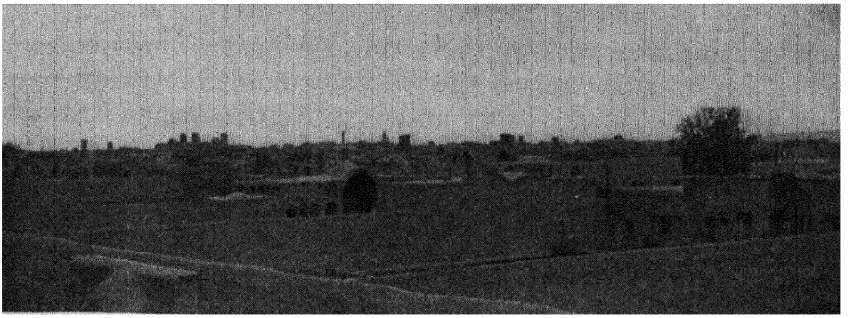
Gurgín Khán went immediately to the Báb and delivered into His hands the written mandate of the sovereign. He then summoned Muḥammad Big, conveyed to him the behests of Muḥammad Sháh, and ordered him to undertake immediate preparations for the journey. "Beware," he warned him, "lest anyone discover his identity or suspect the nature of your mission. No one but you, not even the members of his escort, should be allowed to recognise him. Should anyone question you concerning him, say that he is

[1] According to "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 14, the members of the escort were Nuṣayrí horsemen. See note 1, p. 14.

[2] "Chápárchí" means "courier."

[3] "Celui-ci, fantasque et capricieux, oubliant qu'il avait peu de temps auparavant ordonné le meurtre du Réformateur, sentit naître en lui le désir de voir enfin l'homme qui faisait tant parler de lui: il donna donc l'ordre à Gurgín Khán de le lui envoyer à Ṭihrán." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 242.)

a merchant whom we have been instructed to conduct to the capital and of whose identity we are completely ignorant." Soon after midnight, the Báb, in accordance with those instructions, set out from the city and proceeded in the direction of Ṭihrán.



VIEW OF KĀSHĀN

CHAPTER XI

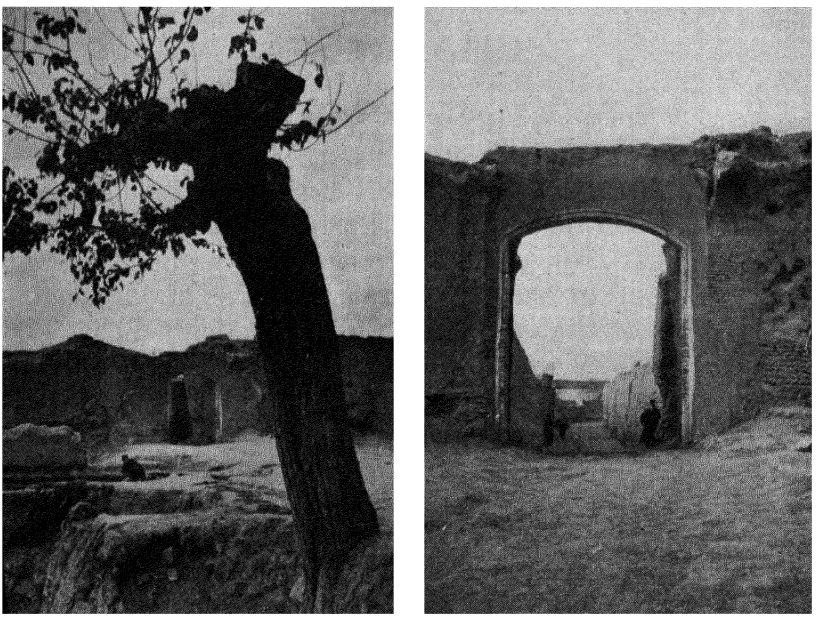
THE BĀB'S STAY IN KĀSHĀN

ON THE eve of the Báb's arrival at Káshán, Ḥájí Mírzá Jání, surnamed Parpá, a noted resident of that city, dreamed that he was standing at a late hour in the afternoon at the gate of 'Aṭṭár, one of the gates of the city, when his eyes suddenly beheld the Báb on horseback wearing, instead of His customary turban, the kuláh[1] usually worn by the merchants of Persia. Before Him, as well as behind Him, marched a number of horsemen into whose custody He seemed to have been delivered. As they approached the gate, the Báb saluted him and said: "Ḥájí Mírzá Jání, We are to be your Guest for three nights. Prepare yourself to receive Us."

When he awoke, the vividness of his dream convinced him of the reality of his vision. This unexpected apparition constituted in his eyes a providential warning which he felt it his duty to heed and observe. He accordingly set out to prepare his house for the reception of the Visitor, and to provide whatever seemed necessary for His comfort. As soon as he had completed the preliminary arrangements for the banquet which he had decided to offer the Báb that night, Ḥájí Mírzá Jání proceeded to the gate of 'Aṭṭár, and there waited for the signs of the Báb's expected arrival. At the appointed hour, as he was scanning the horizon, he descried in the distance what seemed to him a company of horsemen

[1] See Glossary.

approaching the gate of the city. As he hastened to meet them, his eyes recognised the Báb surrounded by His escort, dressed in the same clothes and wearing the same expression as he had seen the night before in his dream. Ḥájí Mírzá Jání joyously approached Him and bent to kiss His stirrups. The Báb prevented him, saying: "We are to be your Guest for three nights. To-morrow is the day of Naw-Rúz; we shall celebrate it together in your home." Muḥammad Big, who had been riding close to the Báb, thought Him to be



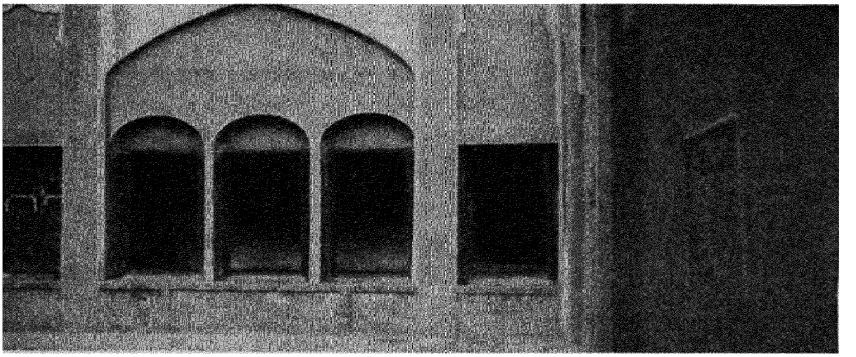
GATE OF 'AṬṬÁR, KÁSHÁN

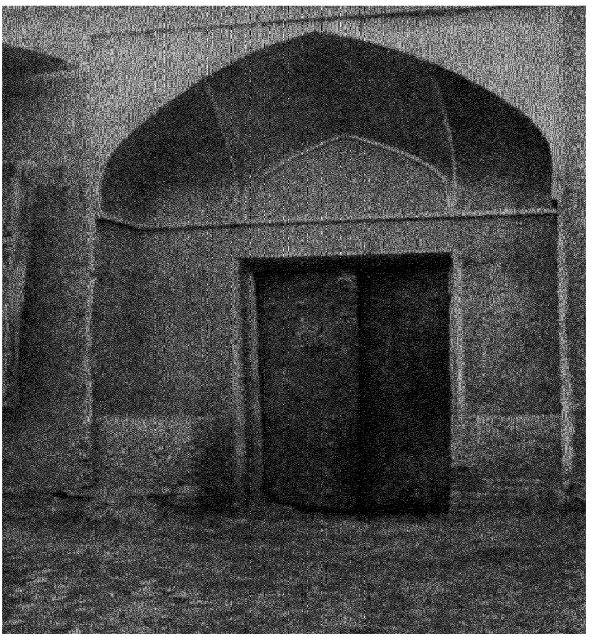
an intimate acquaintance of Ḥájí Mírzá Jání. Turning to him, he said: "I am ready to abide by whatever is the desire of the Siyyid-i-Báb. I would ask you, however, to obtain the approval of my colleague who shares with me the charge of conducting the Siyyid-i-Báb to Ṭihrán." Ḥájí Mírzá Jání submitted his request and was met with a flat refusal. "I decline your suggestion," he was told. "I have been most emphatically instructed not to allow this youth to enter any city until his arrival at the capital. I have been particularly commanded to spend the night outside the gate of the city,

to break my march at the hour of sunset, and to resume it the next day at the hour of dawn. I cannot depart from the orders that have been given to me." This gave rise to a heated altercation which was eventually settled in favour of Muḥammad Big, who succeeded in inducing his opponent to deliver the Báb into the custody of Ḥájí Mírzá Jání with the express understanding that on the third morning he should safely deliver back his Guest into their hands. Ḥájí Mírzá Jání, who had intended to invite to his home the entire escort of the Báb, was advised by Him to abandon this intention. "No one but you," He urged, "should accompany Me to your home." Ḥájí Mírzá Jání requested to be allowed to defray the expense of the horsemen's three days' stay in Káshán. "It is unnecessary," observed the Báb; "but for My will, nothing whatever could have induced them to deliver Me into your hands. All things lie prisoned within the grasp of His might. Nothing is impossible to Him. He removes every difficulty and surmounts every obstacle." The horsemen were lodged in a caravanserai in the immediate neighbourhood of the gate of the city. Muḥammad Big, following the instructions of the Báb, accompanied Him until they drew near the house of Ḥájí Mírzá Jání. Having ascertained the actual situation of the house, he returned and joined his compànions.

The night the Báb arrived at Káshán coincided with the eve preceding the third Naw-Rúz, after the declaration of His Mission, which fell on the second day of the month of Rabí'u'th-Thání, in the year 1263 A.H.[1] On that same night, Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Yazdí, who had previously, in accordance with the directions of the Báb, come to Káshán, was invited to the house of Ḥájí Mírzá Jání and introduced into the presence of his Master. The Báb was dictating to him a Tablet in honour of His host, when a friend of the latter, a certain Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Báqí, who was noted in Káshán for his learning, arrived. The Báb invited him to enter, permitted him to hear the verses which He was revealing, but refused to disclose His identity. In the concluding passages of the Tablet which He was addressing to Ḥájí Mírzá Jání, He prayed in his behalf, supplicated the Almighty to illumine

[1] 1847 A.D.







VIEWS OF THE HOUSE OF ḤĀJĪ MĪRZĀ JĀNĪ IN KĀSHĀN, SHOWING THE ROOM WHERE THE BĀB STAYED

his heart with the light of Divine knowledge, and to unloose his tongue for the service and proclamation of His Cause. Unschooled and unlettered though he was, Ḥájí Mírzá Jání was able, by virtue of this prayer, to impress with his speech even the most accomplished divine of Káshán. He became endowed with such power that he was able to silence every idle pretender who dared to challenge the precepts of his Faith. Even the haughty and imperious Mullá Ja'far-i-Naráqí was unable, despite his consummate eloquence, to resist the force of his argument, and was compelled to acknowledge outwardly the merits of the Cause of his adversary, though at heart he refused to believe in its truth.

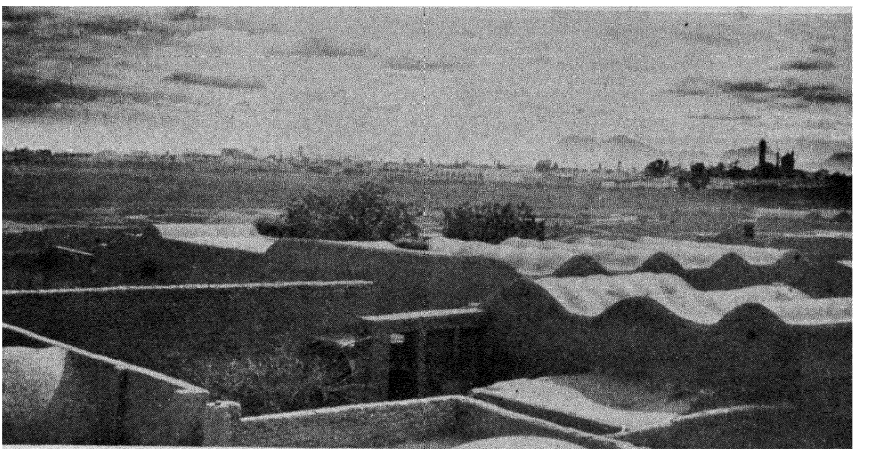
Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Báqí sat and listened to the Báb. He heard His voice, watched His movements, looked upon the expression of His face, and noted the words which streamed unceasingly from His lips, and yet failed to be moved by their majesty and power. Wrapt in the veils of his own idle fancy and learning, he was powerless to appreciate the meaning of the utterances of the Báb. He did not even trouble to enquire the name or the character of the Guest into whose presence he had been introduced. Unmoved by the things he had heard and seen, he retired from that presence, unaware of the unique opportunity which, through his apathy, he had irretrievably lost. A few days later, when informed of the name of the Youth whom he had treated with such careless indifference, he was filled with chagrin and remorse. It was too late, however, for him to seek His presence and atone for his conduct, for the Báb had already departed from Káshán. In his grief, he renounced the society of his fellowmen, and led, to the end of his days, a life of unrelieved seclusion.

Among those who were privileged to meet the Báb in the home of Ḥájí Mírzá Jání was a man named Mihdí, who was destined at a later time, in the year 1268 A.H.,[1] to suffer martyrdom in Ṭihrán. He and a few others were, during those three days, affectionately entertained by Ḥájí Mírzá Jání, whose lavish hospitality earned him the praise and commendation of his Master. To even the members of the Báb's escort he extended the same loving-kindness, and, by

[1] 1851–2 A.D.

his liberality and charm of manner, won their lasting gratitude. On the morning of the second day after Naw-Rúz, he, mindful of his pledge, delivered the Prisoner into their hands, and, with a heart overflowing with grief, bade Him a last and touching farewell.





VIEWS OF QUM SHOWING THE HARAM-I-MA'ṢUMIH

CHAPTER XII

THE BĀB'S JOURNEY FROM KĀSHĀN TO TABRĪZ

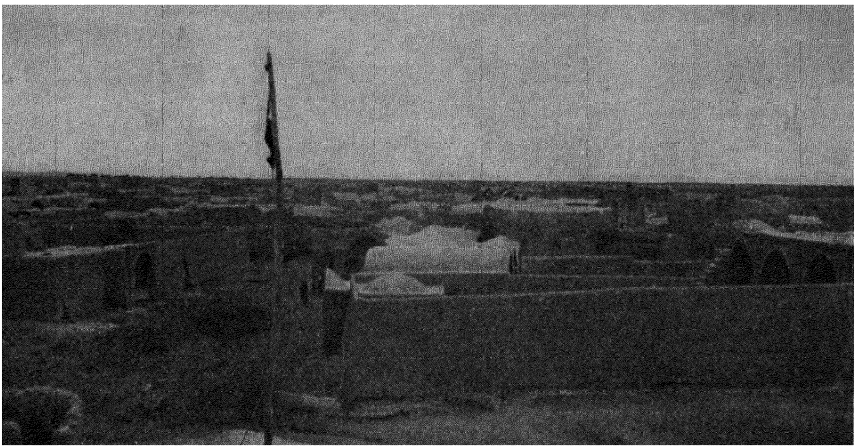
ATTENDED by His escort, the Báb proceeded in the direction of Qum.[1] His alluring charm, combined with a compelling dignity and unfailing benevolence, had, by this time, completely disarmed and transformed His guards. They seemed to have abdicated all their rights and duties and to have resigned themselves to His will and pleasure. In their eagerness to

[1] The site of the second most sacred shrine in Persia, and the burial-place of many of her kings, among them Fath-'Alí and Muḥammad Sháh.

serve and please Him, they, one day, remarked: "We are strictly forbidden by the government to allow You to enter the city of Qum, and have been ordered to proceed by an unfrequented route directly to Ṭihrán. We have been particularly directed to keep away from the Ḥaram-i-Ma'súmih,[1] that inviolable sanctuary under whose shelter the most notorious criminals are immune from arrest. We are ready, however, to ignore utterly for Your sake whatever instructions we have received. If it be Your wish, we shall unhesitatingly conduct You through the streets of Qum and enable You to visit its holy shrine." " 'The heart of the true believer is the throne of God,' " observed the Báb. "He who is the ark of salvation and the Almighty's impregnable stronghold is now journeying with you through this wilderness. I prefer the way of the country rather than to enter this unholy city. The immaculate one whose remains are interred within this shrine, her brother, and her illustrious ancestors no doubt bewail the plight of this wicked people. With their lips they pay homage to her; by their acts they heap dishonour upon her name. Outwardly they serve and reverence her shrine; inwardly they disgrace her dignity."

Such lofty sentiments had instilled such confidence in the hearts of those who accompanied the Báb that had He at any time chosen to turn away suddenly and leave them, no one among His guards would have felt in the least perturbed or would have attempted to pursue Him. Proceeding by a route that skirted the northern end of the city of Qum, they halted at the village of Qumrúd, which was owned by a relative of Muhammad Big, and the inhabitants of which all belonged to the sect of the 'Alíyu'lláhí. At the invitation of the headman of the village, the Báb tarried one night in that place and was touched by the warmth and spontaneity of the reception which those simple folk had accorded Him. Ere He resumed His journey, He invoked the blessings of

[1] "At Qum are deposited the remains of his [Imám Riḍá's] sister, Fáṭimiy-i-Ma'súmih, i.e. the Immaculate, who, according to one account, lived and died here, having fled from Baghdád to escape the persecution of the Khalífs; according to another, sickened and died at Qum, on her way to see her brother at Ṭús. He, for his part, is believed by the pious Shí'ahs to return the compliment by paying her a visit every Friday from his shrine at Mashhad." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 2, p. 8.)

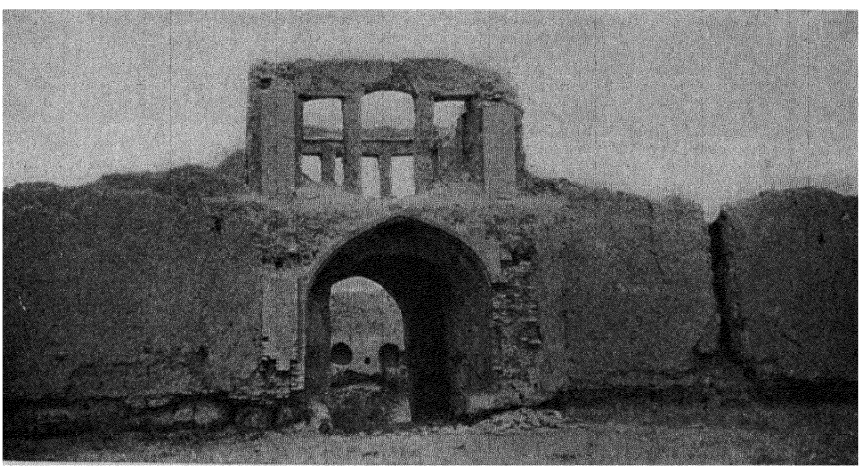


VILLAGE OF QUMRÚD

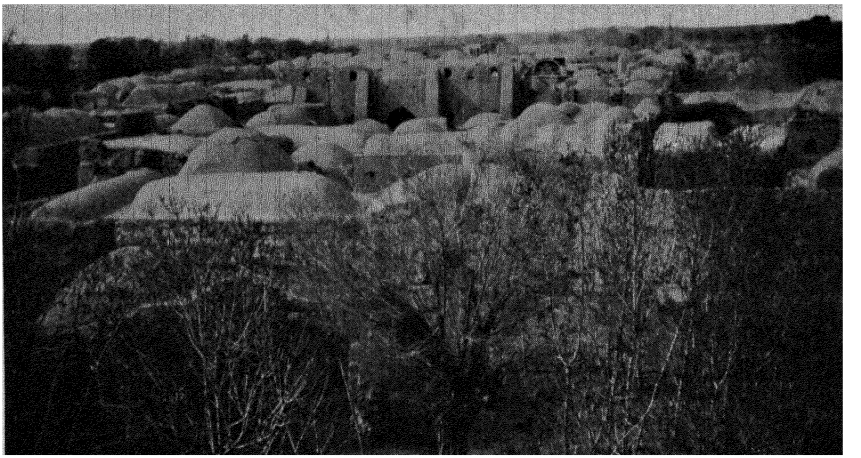
the Almighty in their behalf and cheered their hearts with assurances of His appreciation and love.

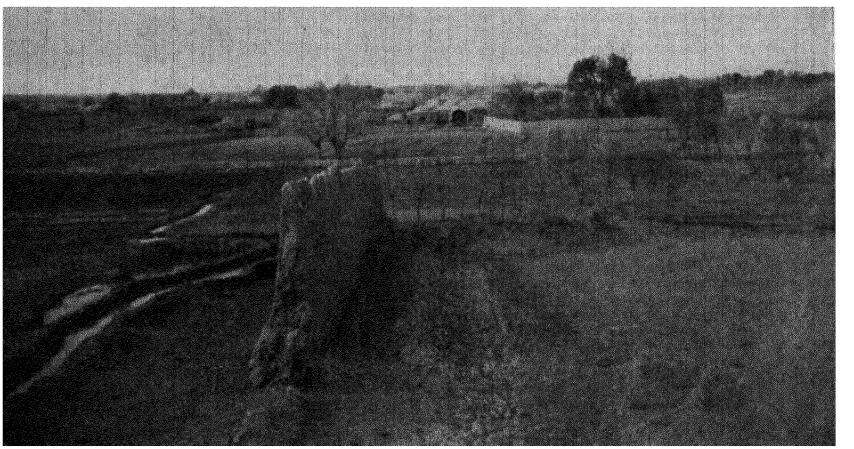
After a march of two days from that village, they arrived, on the afternoon of the eighth day after Naw-Rúz, at the fortress of Kinár-Gird,[1] which lies six farsangs to the south of Ṭihrán. They were planning to reach the capital on the

[1] A station on the old Ṭṣfáhán road, distant about 28 miles from Ṭihrán. ("A Traveller's Narrative," p. 14, note 2.)



RUINS OF THE FORTRESS OF KINÁR-GIRD





VIEWS OF THE VILLAGE OF KULAYN

ensuing day, and had decided to spend the night in the neighbourhood of that fortress, when a messenger unexpectedly arrived from Ṭihrán, bearing a written order from Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí to Muḥammad Big. That message instructed him to proceed immediately with the Báb to the village of Kulayn,[1] where Shaykh-i-Kulayní, Muhammad-ibn-i-Ya'qúb, the author of the Usúl-i-Káfí, who was born in that place, had been laid to rest with his father, and whose shrines are greatly

[1] See "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 14, note 3.

honoured by the people of that neighbourhood.[1] Muhammad Big was commanded, in view of the unsuitability of the houses in that village, to pitch a special tent for the Báb and keep the escort in its neighbourhood pending the receipt of further instructions. On the morning of the ninth day after Naw-Rúz, the eleventh day of the month of Rabí'u'th-Thání, in the year 1263 A.H.,[2] in the immediate vicinity of that village, which belonged to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, a tent which had served for his own use whenever he visited that place was erected for the Báb, on the slopes of a hill pleasantly situated amid wide stretches of orchards and smiling meadows. The peacefulness of that spot, the luxuriance of its vegetation, and the unceasing murmur of its streams greatly pleased the Báb. He was joined two days after by Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Yazdí, Siyyid Ḥasan, his brother; Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím, and Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí, all of whom were invited to lodge in the immediate surroundings of His tent. On the fourteenth day of the month of Rabí'u'th-Thání,[3] the twelfth day after Naw-Rúz, Mullá Mihdíy-i-Khu'í and Mullá Muḥammad-Mihdíy-i-Kandí arrived from Ṭihrán. The latter, who had been closely associated with Bahá'u'lláh in Ṭihrán, had been commissioned by Him to present to the Báb a sealed letter together with certain gifts which, as soon as they were delivered into His hands, provoked in His soul sentiments of unusual delight. His face glowed with joy as He overwhelmed the bearer with marks of His gratitude and favour.

That message, received at an hour of uncertainty and suspense, imparted solace and strength to the Báb. It dispelled the gloom that had settled upon His heart, and imbued His soul with the certainty of victory. The sadness which had long lingered upon His face, and which the perils of His captivity had served to aggravate, visibly diminished. He no longer shed those tears of anguish which had streamed so profusely from His eyes ever since the days of His arrest and departure from Shíráz. The cry "Beloved, My Well-

[1] "Le bruit s'en étant répandu, il fut impossible d'éxecuter l'ordre du premier ministre Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí. D'Iṣfáhán à Ṭihrán on ne parlait que de l'iniquité du clergé et du gouvernement par rapport à Báb; partout on murmurait, on criait à l'injustice." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 355.)

[2] March 29, 1847 A.D. [3] April 1, 1847 A.D.

Beloved," which in His bitter grief and loneliness He was wont to utter, gave way to expressions of thanksgiving and praise, of hope and triumph. The exultation which glowed upon His face never forsook Him until the day when the news of the great disaster which befell the heroes of Shaykh Ṭabarsí again beclouded the radiance of His countenance and dimmed the joy of His heart.

I have heard Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím recount the following incident: "My companions and I were fast asleep in the vicinity of the tent of the Báb when the trampling of horsemen suddenly awakened us. We were soon informed that the tent of the Báb was vacant and that those who had gone out in search of Him had failed to find Him. We heard Muḥammad Big remonstrate with the guards. 'Why feel disturbed?' he pleaded. 'Are not His magnanimity and nobleness of soul sufficiently established in your eyes to convince you that He will never, for the sake of His own safety, consent to involve others in embarrassment? He, no doubt, must have retired, in the silence of this moonlit night, to a place where He can seek undisturbed communion with God. He will unquestionably return to His tent. He will never desert us.' In his eagerness to reassure his colleagues, Muḥammad Big set out on foot along the road leading to Ṭihrán. I, too, with my companions, followed him. Shortly after, the rest of the guards were seen, each on horseback, marching behind us. We had covered about a maydán[1] when, by the dim light of the early dawn, we discerned in the distance the lonely figure of the Báb. He was coming towards us from the direction of Ṭihrán. 'Did you believe Me to have escaped?' were His words to Muḥammad Big as He approached him. 'Far be it from me,' was the instant reply as he flung himself at the feet of the Báb, 'to entertain such thoughts.' Muḥammad Big was too much awed by the serene majesty which that radiant face revealed that morning to venture any further remark. A look of confidence had settled upon His countenance, His words were invested with such transcendent power, that a feeling of profound reverence wrapped our very souls. No one dared to question Him as to the cause of so remarkable a change in His speech

[1] See Glossary.



MUḤAMMAD SHÁH

and demeanour. Nor did He Himself choose to allay our curiosity and wonder."

For a fortnight[1] the Báb tarried in that spot. The tranquillity which He enjoyed amidst those lovely surroundings was rudely disturbed by the receipt of a letter which Muhammad Sháh[2] himself addressed to the Báb and which was

[1] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 14), the Báb remained in the village of Kulayn for a period of twenty days.

[2] "Muḥammad Sháh," writes Gobineau, "était un prince d'un caractère tout particulier, non point rare en Asie, mais tel que les Européens n'ont guère su l'y voir, et encore moins l'y comprendre. Bien qu'il ait régné dans un temps où les habitudes de la politique locale étaient encore assez dures, il était doux et endurant, et sa tolérance s'étendait jusqu'à assister d'un œil fort placide aux désordres de son harem qui, pourtant, auraient eu quelque droit de le fâcher; car, même sous Fatḥ-'Alí Sháh, le laisser-aller et le caprice des fantaisies ne furent

composed in these terms:[1] "Much as we desire to meet you, we find ourself unable, in view of our immediate departure from our capital, to receive you befittingly in Ṭihrán. We have signified our desire that you be conducted to Máh-Kú, and have issued the necessary instructions to 'Alí Khán, the warden of the castle, to treat you with respect and consideration. It is our hope and intention to summon you to this place upon our return to the seat of our government, at

jamais portés aussi loin. On lui prête ce mot, digne de notre 18ème siècle: 'Que ne vous cachez-vous un peu, madame? Je ne veux pas vous empêcher de vous amuser.' Mais chez lui ce n'était point affectation d'indifférence, c'était lassitude et ennui. Sa santé avait toujours été déplorable; goutteux au dernier degré, il souffrait des douleurs continuelles et avait à peine de relâche. Son caractère, naturellement faible, était devenu très mélancolique, et, comme il avait un grand besoin d'affection et qu'il ne trouvait guère de sentiments de ce genre dans sa famille, chez ses femmes, chez ses enfants, il avait concentré toutes ses affections sur le vieux Mullá, son précepteur. Il en avait fait son unique ami, son confident, puis son premier et tout puissant ministre, et enfin, sans exagération ni manière de parler, son Dieu Élevé par cette idole dans des idées fort irrévérencieuses pour l'Islamisme il ne faisait non plus de cas des dogmes du prophète que du Prophète lui-même. Les Imáms lui étaient très indifférents, et s'il avait quelques égards pour 'Alí, c'était en raison de cette bizarre opération de l'esprit par laquelle les Persans identifient ce vénérable personnage avec leur nationalité. Mais, en somme, Muḥammad Sháh n'était pas musulman, non plus que chrétien, guèbre ou juif. Il tenait pour certain que la substance divine s'incarnait dans les Sages avec toute sa puissance; et comme il considérait Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí comme le Sage par excellence, il ne doutait pas qu'il ne fût Dieu, et lui demandait dévotement quelque prodige. Souvent il lui arriva de dire à ses officiers, d'un air pénétré et convaincu: 'Le Ḥájí m'a promis un miracle pour ce soir, vous verrez!' En de hors du Ḥájí, Muḥammad Sháh était donc d'une prodigieuse indifférence pour le succès ou les revers de telle ou telle doctrine religieuse; il lui plaisait, au contraire, de voir s'élever des conflits d'opinions qui témoignaient à ses yeux de l'aveuglement universel." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 131–2.)

[1] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 14), the Báb "forwarded a letter to the Royal Presence craving audience to set forth the truth of His condition, expecting this to be a means for the attainment of great advantages." Regarding this letter, Gobineau writes as follows: "'Alí-Muḥammad écrivit lui-même à la Cour, et sa lettre arriva en même temps que les accusations de ses adversaires. Sans prendre aucunement une attitude agressive vis-à-vis du roi, s'en remettant, au contraire, à son autorité et à sa justice, il remontrait que, depuis longtemps, la dépravation du clergé était, en Perse, un fait connu de tout le monde; que non seulement les bonnes mœurs s'en trouvaient corrompues et le bien-être de la nation tout à fait atteint, mais encore que la religion même, viciée par la faute de tant de coupables, était en péril et menaçait de disparaître en laissant le peuple dans les plus fâcheuses ténèbres; que, pour lui, appelé de Dieu, en vertu d'une mission spéciale, à écarter de tels malheurs, il avait déjà commencé à éclairer le peuple du Fárs que la saine doctrine avait fait les progrès les plus évidents et les plus rapides, que tous ses adversaires avaient été confondus et vivaient désormais dans l'impuissance et le mépris public; mais que ce n'était qu'un début, et que le Báb, confiant dans la magnanimité du roi, sollicitait la permission de venir dans la capitale avec ses principaux disciples, et, là, d'établir des conférences avec tous les Mullás de l'Empire, en présence du souverain, des grands et du peuple; que, certainement, il les couvrirait de honte; il leur prouverait leur infidélité; il les réduirait au silence comme il avait fait des Mullás grands et petits qui avaient prétendu s'élever contre lui; que s'il était, contre son attente, vaincu dans cette lutte, il se soumettait d'avance à tout ce que le roi ordonnerait, et était prêt à livrer sa tête et celle de chacun de ses partisans." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 124.)

which time we shall definitely pronounce our judgment. We trust that we have caused you no disappointment, and that you will at no time hesitate to inform us in case any grievances befall you. We fain would hope that you will continue to pray for our well-being and for the prosperity of our realm." (Dated Rabí'u'th-Thání, 1263 A.H.)[1]

Hájí Mírzá Áqásí[2] was no doubt responsible for having induced Muhammad Sháh to address such a communication to the Báb. He was actuated solely by a sense of fear[3] lest

[1] March 19–April 17, 1847 A.D.

[2] According to Hidáyat in the "Majma'u'l-Fuṣaḥá'," the name of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí was 'Abbás-'Alí. He was the son of Mírzá Muslim, one of the well-known divines of Íraván. His son, 'Abbás-'Alí, was a pupil, while in Karbilá, of Fakhru'd-Dín 'Abdu's-Ṣamad-i-Hamadání. From Karbilá he proceeded to Hamadán, visited Ádhirbáyján, and from there undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca. Returning, in circumstances of extreme poverty, to Ádhirbáyján, he succeeded in gradually improving his position, and was made the tutor of the children of Mírzá Músá Khán, the brother of the late Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, the Qá'im-Maqám. Muḥammad Mírzá, to whom he had announced his eventual accession to the throne of Persia, was greatly devoted to him. He eventually was appointed his prime minister, and retired after the death of the monarch to Karbilá, where he died in Ramaḍán, 1265 A.H. (Notes of Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl.) According to Ḥájí Mu'ínu's-Salṭanih's narrative (p. 120), Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí was born in Máh-Kú, where his parents had been residing after their departure from Íraván, in the Caucasus. "Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, native of Íraván, attained unlimited influence over his weak-minded master, formerly his tutor, and professed Ṣúfí doctrine. A quizzical old gentleman, with a long nose, whose countenance betokened the oddity and self-sufficiency of his character." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," p. 473.) "Le Ḥájí, de son côté, était un Dieu d'une espèce particulière. Il n'est pas absolument certain qu'il ne crût pas de lui-même ce dont Muḥammad Sháh était persuadé. Dans tous les cas, il professait les mêmes principes généraux que le roi, et les lui avait de bonne foi inculqués. Mais cela ne l'empêchait pas de bouffonner. La bouffonnerie était le système, la règle, l'habitude de sa conduite et de sa vie. Il ne prenait rien au sérieux, à commencer par lui-même: 'Je ne suis pas un premier ministre, répétait-il constamment et surtout à ceux qu'il maltraitait; je suis un vieux mullá, sans naissance et sans mérite, et si je me trouve à la place où je suis, c'est que le roi l'a voulu.' Il ne parlait jamais de ses fils sans les appeler fils de drôlesse et fils de chien. C'est dans ces termes qu'il demandait de leurs nouvelles ou leur faisait transmettre des ordres par ses officiers quand ils étaient absents. Son plaisir particulier était de passer des revues de cavaliers où il réunissait, dans leurs plus somptueux équipages, tous les Kháns nomades de la Perse. Quand ces belliqueuses tribus étaient rassemblées dans la plaine, on voyait arriver le Ḥájí, vêtu comme un pauvre, avec un vieux bonnet pelé et disloqué, un sabre attaché de travers sur sa robe, et monté sur un petit âne. Alors il faisait ranger les assistants autour de lui, les traitait d'imbéciles, tournait en ridicule leur attirail, leur prouvait qu'ils n'étaient bon à rien, et les renvoyait chez eux avec des cadeaux; car son humeur sarcastique s'assaisonnait de générosité." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 132–3.)

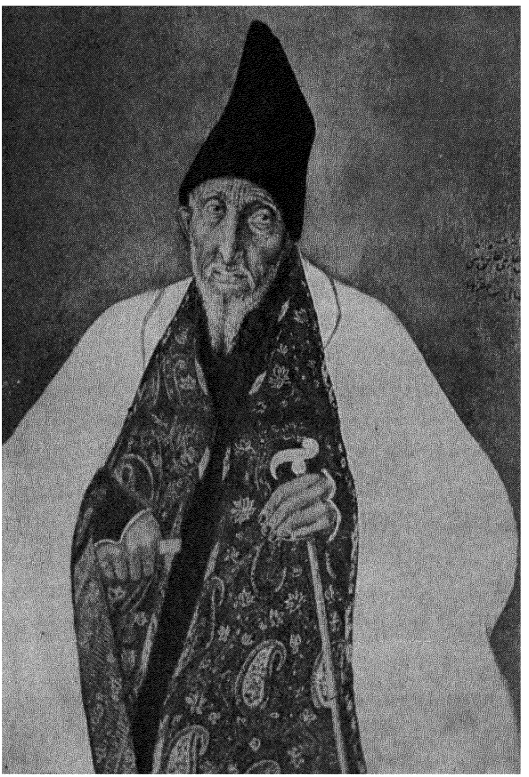
[3] "Une anecdote montre à quels sentiments obéissait le premier ministre quand il détermina en ce sens la volonté du Sháh. Le prince Farhád Mírzá, jeune encore, était l'élève de Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí. Il a raconté par la suite: 'Quand S. M. eut pris l'avis de son premier ministre et eut écrit au Báb de se rendre à Máh-Kú, nous allâmes avec Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí passer quelques jours dans le parc qu'il avait lui-même fait planter à Yaft-Ábád, aux environs de Ṭihrán. J'étais fort désireux d'interroger mon maître sur les événements qui se précipitaient, mais je n'osais le faire devant le monde. Un jour que je me promenais avec lui dans le jardin et qu'il se montrait de bonne humeur, je m'enhardis jusqu'à lui demander: "Hájí,

the contemplated interview should rob him of his position of unquestioned pre-eminence in the affairs of the State and should lead eventually to his overthrow from power. He entertained no feelings of malice or resentment toward the Báb. He finally succeeded[1] in persuading his sovereign to transfer so dreaded an opponent to a remote and sequestered corner of his realm, and was thus able to relieve his mind of a thought that continually obsessed him.[2] How stupendous was his mistake, how grievous his blunder! Little did he realise, at that moment, that by his incessant intrigues he was withholding from his king and country the incomparable benefits of a Divine Revelation which alone had the power to deliver the land from the appalling state of degradation into which it had fallen. By his act that short-sighted minister did not only withhold from Muḥammad Sháh the supreme instrument with which he could have rehabilitated a fast-declining empire, but also deprived him of that spiritual Agency which could have enabled him to establish his undisputed ascendancy over the peoples and nations of the earth. By his folly, his extravagance and perfidious counsels, he undermined the foundations of the State, lowered its prestige, sapped the loyalty of his subjects, and plunged them into

pourquoi avez-vous envoyé le Báb à Máh-Kú?" Il me répondit: "Tu es jeune encore et tu ne peux comprendre certaines choses, mais sache que s'il était venu à Ṭihrán, nous ne serions pas en ce moment, toi et moi, à nous promener libres de tous soucis sous ces frais ombrages."'" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 243–4.) According to Ḥájí Mu'ínu's-Salṭanih's narrative (p. 129), the chief motive which actuated Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí to urge Muḥammad Sháh to order the banishment of the Báb to Ádhirbáyján was the fear lest the promise which the Báb had given to the sovereign that He would cure him of his illness, were he to allow Him to be received in Ṭihrán, should be fulfilled. He felt sure that should the Báb be able to effect such a cure, the Sháh would fall under the influence of his Prisoner and would cease to confer upon his prime minister the honours and benefits which he exclusively enjoyed.

[1] According to Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl, Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí sought, by his reference to the rebellion of Muḥammad Ḥasan Khán, the Salár, in Khurásán, and the revolt of Áqá Khán-i-Ismá'ílí, in Kirmán, to induce the sovereign to abandon the project of summoning the Báb to the capital, and to send Him instead to the remote province of Ádhirbáyján.

[2] "Cependant, en cette circonstance, les calculs du grand Vazír se trouvèrent tout à fais en défaut. Dans la crainte que la présence de Báb à Ṭihrán n'occasionnât de nouveaux désordres (et il y en avait assez, grâce à ses fantaisies et à son mauvais système d'administration), il changea ses dispositions, et l'escorte qui conduisait Báb d'Isfáhán à Ṭihrán reçut à une trentaine de km. de cette dernière capitale, l'ordre de n'y pas entrer et de conduire le prisonnier à Máh-Kú, ville où, dans la pensée du premier ministre, l'imposteur n'avait rien à espérer, parceque ses habitants, en reconnaissance des bienfaits et de la protection qu'ils avaient reçus de lui, prendraient des mesures pour étouffer les troubles qui pourraient naître." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 356.)



ḤĀJÍ MÍRZÁ ĀQĀSÍ

an abyss of misery.[1] Incapable of being admonished by the example of his predecessors, he contemptuously ignored the demands and interests of the people, pursued, with unremitting zeal, his designs for personal aggrandisement, and by his profligacy and extravagance involved his country in ruinous wars with its neighbours. Sa'd-i-Ma'ádh, who was neither of royal blood nor invested with authority, attained, through the uprightness of his conduct and his unsparing

[1] "The state of Persia, however, was not satisfactory; for Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, who had been its virtual ruler for thirteen years, 'was utterly ignorant of statesmanship or of military science, yet too vain to receive instruction and too jealous to admit of a coadjutor; brutal in his language; insolent in his demeanour; indolent in his habits; he brought the exchequer to the verge of bankruptcy and the country to the brink of revolution. The pay of the army was generally from three to five years in arrears. The cavalry of the tribes was almost annihilated.' Such—to adopt the weighty words of Rawlinson—was the condition of Persia in the middle of the nineteenth century." (P. M. Sykes' "A History of Persia," vol. 2, pp. 439–40.)

devotion to the Cause of Muḥammad, so exalted a station that to the present day the chiefs and rulers of Islám have continued to reverence his memory and to praise his virtues; whereas Buzurg-Mihr, the ablest, the wisest and most experienced administrator among the vazírs of Núshíraván-i-'Ádil, in spite of his commanding position, eventually was publicly disgraced, was thrown into a pit, and became the object of the contempt and the ridicule of the people. He bewailed his plight and wept so bitterly that he finally lost his sight. Neither the example of the former nor the fate of the latter seemed to have awakened that self-confident minister to the perils of his own position. He persisted in his thoughts until he too forfeited his rank, lost his riches,[1] and sank into abasement and shame. The numerous properties which he forcibly seized from the humble and law-abiding subjects of the Sháh, the costly furnitures with which he embellished them, the vast expenditures of labour and treasure which he ordered for their improvement—all were irretrievably lost two years after he had issued his decree condemning the Báb to a cruel incarceration in the inhospitable mountains of Ádhirbáyján. All his possessions were confiscated by the State. He himself was disgraced by his sovereign, was ignominiously expelled from Ṭihrán, and fell a prey to disease and poverty. Bereft of hope and sunk in misery, he languished in Karbilá until the hour of his death.[2]

[1] "Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, the half crazy old Prime Minister, had the whole administration in his hands, and obtained complete control over the Sháh. The misgovernment of the country grew worse and worse, while the people starved, and cursed the Qájár dynasty. . . . The condition of the provinces was deplorable; and every man with any pretension to talent or patriotism was driven into exile by the old Ḥájí, who was sedulously collecting wealth for himself at Ṭihrán, at the expense of the wretched country. The governorships of provinces were sold to the highest bidders, who oppressed the people in a fearful manner." (C. R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," pp. 486–7.)

[2] Gobineau writes regarding his fall: "Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, chassé d'un pouvoir dont il avait passé son temps à se moquer, s'était retiré à Karbilá, et il y employait ses derniers jours à faire des niches aux mullás et un peu aussi à la mémoire des saints martyrs." ("Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 160.) "Cet homme rusé s'était si bien emparé de la volonté du Sháh défunt que l'on pouvait dire avec raison que le ministre était le véritable souverain; aussi ne put-il survivre à son ancienne fortune. À la mort de Muḥammad Sháh il avait disparu et avait pris le chemin de Karbilá, où, sous la protection du très saint Imám, un criminel d'État même trouve un asile inviolable. Il succomba bientôt sous le poids d'un chagrin rongeur qui bien plus que ses remords, abrégea sa vie." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, pp. 367–8.)

The Báb was accordingly ordered to proceed to Tabríz.[1] The same escort, under the command of Muhammad Big, attended Him on His journey to the northwestern province of Ádhirbáyján. He was allowed to select one companion and one attendant from among His followers to be with Him during His sojourn in that province. He selected Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Yazdí and Siyyid Ḥasan, his brother. He refused to expend on Himself the funds provided by the government for the expense of that journey. All the allowances that were given by the State He bestowed upon the poor and needy, and devoted to His own private needs the money which He, as a merchant, had earned in Búshihr and Shíráz. As orders had been given to avoid entering the towns in the course of the journey to Tabríz, a number of the believers of Qazvín, informed of the approach of their beloved Leader, set out for the village of Síyáh-Dihán[2] and were there able to meet Him.

One of them was Mullá Iskandar, who had been delegated by Ḥujjat to visit the Báb in Shíráz, and to investigate His Cause. The Báb commissioned him to deliver the following message to Sulaymán Khán-i-Afshár, who was a great admirer of the late Siyyid Káẓim: "He whose virtues the late siyyid unceasingly extolled, and to the approach of whose Revelation he continually alluded, is now revealed. I am that promised One. Arise and deliver Me from the hand of the oppressor." When the Báb entrusted this message to Mullá Iskandar, Sulaymán Khán was in Zanján and was preparing to leave for Ṭihrán. Within the space of three days, that message reached him. He failed, however, to respond to that appeal.

[1] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 16), the Báb "wrote a letter, in the course of the journey, to the Prime Minister, saying: 'You summoned me from Iṣfáhán to meet the doctors and for the attainment of a decisive settlement. What has happened now that this excellent intention has been changed for Má-kúh and Tabriz?'"

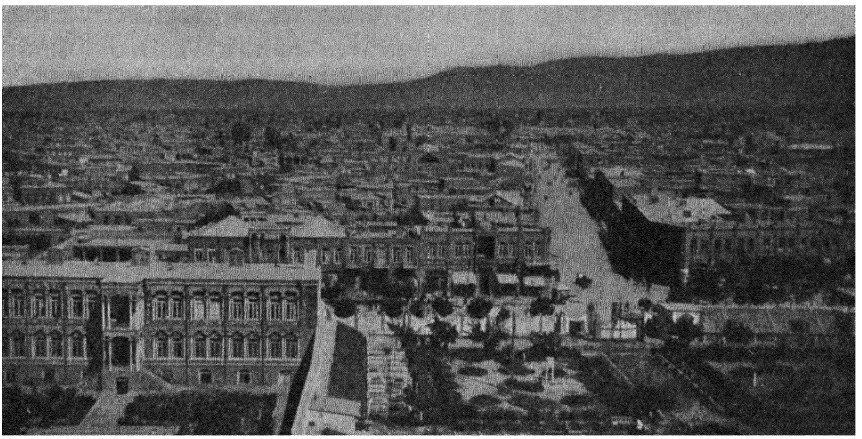
[2] According to Samandar (manuscript, pp. 4–5), the Báb tarried in the village of Síyáh-Dihán, in the neighbourhood of Qazvín, on His way to Ádhirbáyján. In the course of that journey, He is reported to have revealed several Tablets addressed to the leading 'ulamás in Qazvín, among whom were the following: Ḥájí Mullá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, Ḥájí Mullá Ṣáliḥ, Ḥájí Mullá Taqí, and Ḥájí Siyyid Taqí. These Tablets were conveyed to their recipients through Ḥájí Mullá Aḥmad-i-Ibdál. Several believers, among whom were the two sons of Ḥájí Mullá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, were able to meet the Báb during the night which He spent in that village. It is from this village that the Báb is reported to have addressed His epistle to Ḥájí Mírzá Aqásí.

Two days later, a friend of Mullá Iskandar had acquainted Ḥujjat, who, at the instigation of the 'ulamás of Zanján, had been incarcerated in the capital, with the appeal of the Báb. Ḥujjat immediately instructed the believers of his native city to undertake whatever preparations were required and to collect the necessary forces to achieve the deliverance of their Master. He urged them to proceed with caution and to attempt, at an appropriate moment, to seize and carry Him away to whatever place He might desire. These were shortly joined by a number of believers from Qazvín and Ṭihrán, who set out, according to the directions of Ḥujjat, to execute the plan. They overtook the guards at the hour of midnight and, finding them fast asleep, approached the Báb and begged Him to flee. "The mountains of Ádhirbáyján too have their claims," was His confident reply as He lovingly advised them to abandon their project and return to their homes.[1]

Approaching the gate of Tabríz, Muḥammad Big, feeling that the hour of his separation from his Prisoner was at hand, besought His presence and with tearful eyes begged Him to overlook his shortcomings and transgressions. "The journey from Iṣfáhán," he said, "has been long and arduous. I have failed to do my duty and to serve You as I ought. I crave Your forgiveness, and pray You to vouchsafe me Your blessings." "Be assured," the Báb replied, "I account you a member of My fold. They who embrace My Cause will eternally bless and glorify you, will extol your conduct and exalt your name."[2] The rest of the guards followed the

[1] In the "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," Muhammad Big is reported to have related the following account to Ḥájí Mírzá Jání: "So we mounted and rode on till we came to a brick caravanserai distant two parsangs from the city. Thence we proceeded to Mílán, where many of the inhabitants came to see His Holiness, and were filled with wonder at the majesty and dignity of that Lord of mankind. In the morning, as we were setting out from Mílán, an old woman brought a scald-headed child, whose head was so covered with scabs that it was white down to the neck, and entreated His Holiness to heal him. The guards would have forbidden her, but His Holiness prevented them, and called the child to Him. Then He drew a handkerchief over its head and repeated certain words; which he had no sooner done than the child was healed. And in that place about two hundred persons believed and underwent a true and sincere conversion." (Pp. 220–21.)

[2] Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl states in his writings that he himself, while in Ṭihrán, met the son of Muḥammad Big, whose name was 'Alí-Akbar Big, and heard him recount the remarkable experiences his father had had in the course of his journey to Tabríz in the company of the Báb. 'Alí-Akbar Big was a fervent believer in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and was known as such by the Bahá'ís of Persia.



PANORAMA OF TABRÍZ

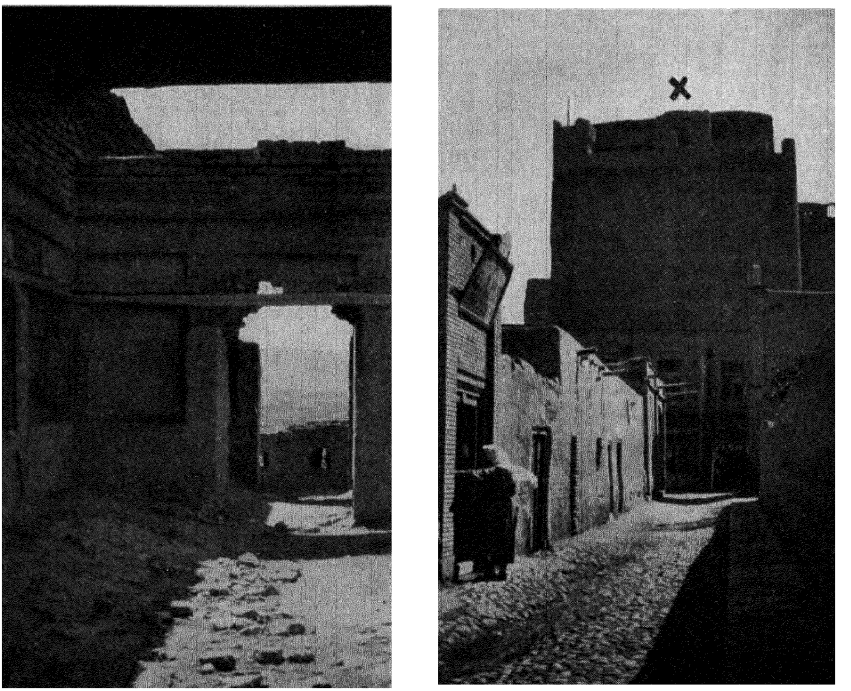
example of their chief, implored the blessings of their Prisoner, kissed His feet, and with tears in their eyes bade Him a last farewell. To each the Báb expressed His appreciation of his devoted attentions and assured him of His prayers in his behalf. Reluctantly they delivered Him into the hands of the governor of Tabríz, the heir to the throne of Muḥammad Sháh. To those with whom they were subsequently brought in contact, these devoted attendants of the Báb and eyewitnesses of His superhuman wisdom and power, recounted with awe and admiration the tale of those wonders which they had seen and heard, and by this means helped to diffuse in their own way the knowledge of the new Revelation.

The news of the approaching arrival of the Báb at Tabríz bestirred the believers in that city. They all set out to meet Him, eager to extend to so beloved a Leader their welcome. The officials of the government into whose custody the Báb was to be delivered refused to allow them to draw near and to receive His blessings. One youth, however, unable to restrain himself, rushed forth barefooted, through the gate of the city, and, in his impatience to gaze upon the face of his Beloved, ran out a distance of half a farsang[1] towards Him. As he approached the horsemen who were marching in advance of the Báb, he joyously welcomed them and, seizing

[1] See Glossary.

the hem of the garment of one among them, devoutly kissed his stirrups. "Ye are the companions of my Well-Beloved," he tearfully exclaimed. "I cherish you as the apple of my eye." His extraordinary behaviour, the intensity of his emotion, amazed them. They immediately granted him his request to attain the presence of his Master. As soon as his eyes fell upon Him, a cry of exultation broke from his lips. He fell upon his face and wept profusely. The Báb dismounted from His horse, put His arms around him, wiped away his tears, and soothed the agitation of his heart. Of all the believers of Tabríz, that youth alone succeeded in offering his homage to the Báb and in being blessed by the touch of His hand. All the others had perforce to content themselves with a distant glimpse of their Beloved, and with that view sought to satisfy their longing.

When the Báb arrived at Tabríz, He was conducted to one of the chief houses in that city, which had been reserved



THE ARK (CITADEL) OF TABRÍZ WHERE THE BÁB WAS CONFINED, SHOWING INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR (X) OF ROOM HE OCCUPIED

for His confinement.[1] A detachment of the Náṣirí regiment stood guard at the entrance of His house. With the exception of Siyyid Ḥusayn and his brother, neither the public nor His followers were allowed to meet Him. This same regiment, which had been recruited from among the inhabitants of Khamsih, and upon which special honours had been conferred, was subsequently chosen to discharge the volley that caused His death. The circumstances of His arrival had stirred the people in Tabríz profoundly. A tumultuous concourse of people had gathered to witness His entry into the city.[2] Some were impelled by curiosity, others were earnestly desirous of ascertaining the veracity of the wild reports that were current about Him, and still others were moved by their faith and devotion to attain His presence and to assure Him of their loyalty. As He walked along the streets, the acclamations of the multitude resounded on every side. The great majority of the people who beheld His face greeted Him with the shout of "Alláh-u-Akbar,"[3] others loudly glorified and cheered Him, a few invoked upon Him the blessings of the Almighty, others were seen to kiss reverently the dust of His footsteps. Such was the clamour which His arrival had raised that a crier was ordered to warn the populace of the danger that awaited those who ventured to seek His presence. "Whosoever shall make any attempt to approach the Siyyid-i-Báb," went forth the cry, "or seek to meet him, all his possessions shall forthwith be seized and he himself condemned to perpetual imprisonment."

On the day after the Báb's arrival, Ḥájí Muhammad-Taqíy-i-Míláni, a noted merchant of the city, ventured, together with Ḥájí 'Alí-'Askar, to interview the Báb. They were warned by their friends and well-wishers that by such an attempt they would not only be risking the loss of their

[1] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 16), the Báb remained forty days in Tabríz. According to Ḥájí Mu'ínu's-Saltanih's manuscript (p. 138), the Báb spent the first night, on His arrival in Tabríz, in the home of Muḥammad Big. From there He was transferred to a room in the Citadel (the Ark) which adjoined the Masjid-i-'Alí Sháh.

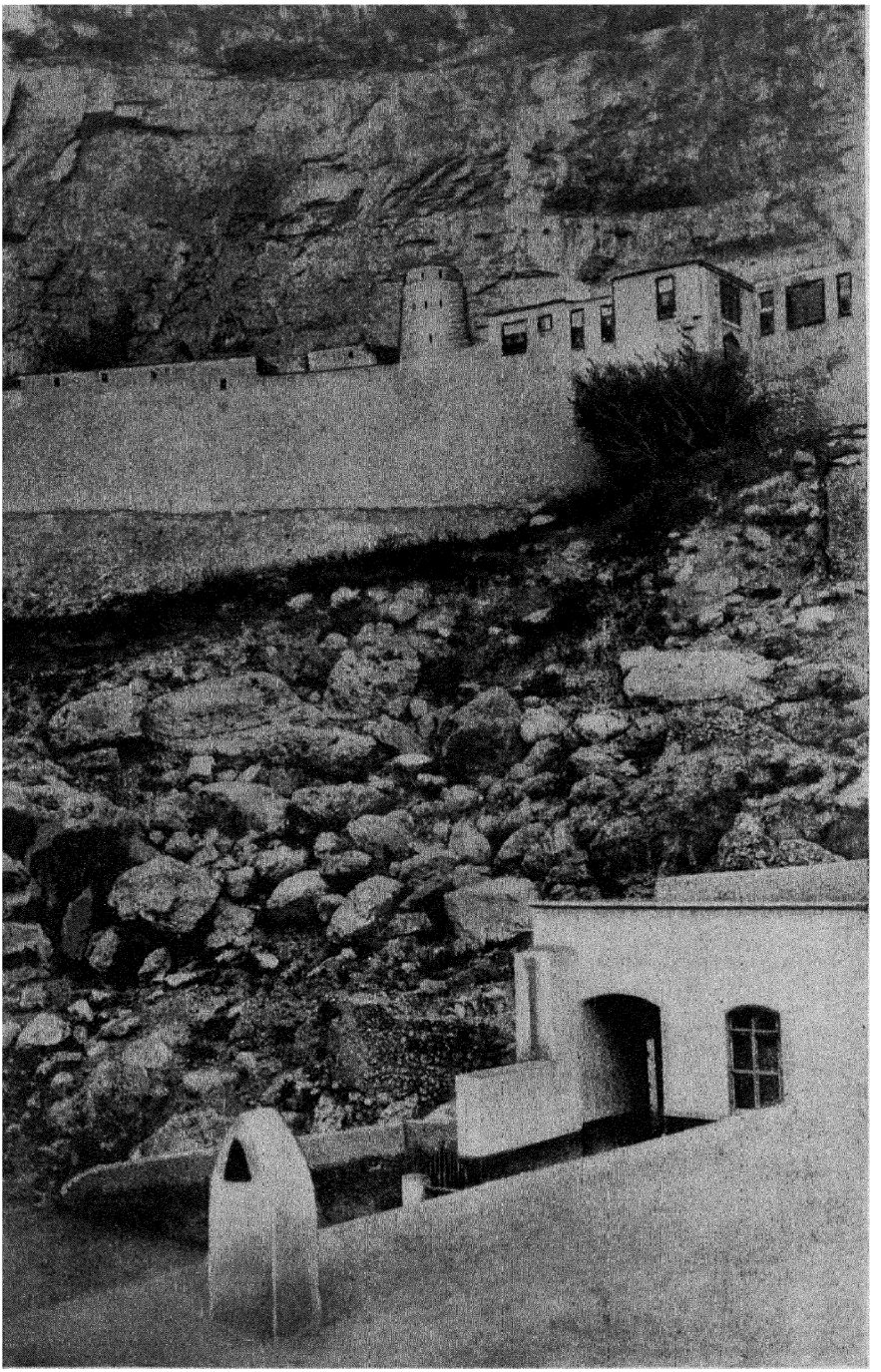
[2] "Les progrès de cet homme énergique [Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí] furent si grands et si rapides qu'aux portes de Tauris [Tabríz] même les habitants d'un village fort peuplé se livrèrent à lui et prirent le nom de Bábí. Il va sans dire que dans la ville même les Bábís étaient assez nombreux, alors que le gouvernement prenait des mesures pour convaincre publiquement Báb d'imposture, le punir et par là se justifier devant le peuple." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, pp. 357–8.)

[3] "God is the Most Great."

possessions, but would also be endangering their lives. They refused, however, to heed such counsels. As they approached the door of the house in which the Báb was confined, they were immediately arrested. Siyyid Ḥasan, who at that moment was coming out from the presence of the Báb, instantly intervened. "I am commanded by the Siyyid-i-Báb," he vehemently protested, "to convey to you this message: 'Suffer these visitors to enter, inasmuch as I Myself have invited them to meet Me.' " I have heard Hájí 'Alí-'Askar testify to the following: "This message immediately silenced the opposers. We were straightway ushered into His presence. He greeted us with these words: 'These miserable wretches who watch at the gate of My house have been destined by Me as a protection against the inrush of the multitude who throng around the house. They are powerless to prevent those whom I desire to meet from attaining My presence.' For about two hours, we tarried with Him. As He dismissed us, He entrusted me with two cornelian ringstones, instructing me to have carved on them the two verses which He had previously given to me; to have them mounted and brought to Him as soon as they were ready. He assured us that at whatever time we desired to meet Him, no one would hinder our admittance to His presence. Several times I ventured to go to Him in order to ascertain His wish regarding certain details connected with the commission with which He had entrusted me. Not once did I encounter the slightest opposition on the part of those who were guarding the entrance of His house. Not one offensive word did they utter against me, nor did they seem to expect the slightest remuneration for their indulgence.

"I recall how, in the course of my association with Mullá Ḥusayn, I was impressed by the many evidences of his perspicacity and extraordinary power. I was privileged to accompany him on his journey from Shíráz to Mashhad, and visited with him the towns of Yazd, Ṭabas, Bushrúyih, and Turbat. I deplored in those days the sadness of my failure to meet the Báb in Shíráz. 'Grieve not,' Mullá Ḥusayn confidently assured me; 'the Almighty is no doubt able to compensate you in Tabríz for the loss you have sustained in Shíráz. Not once, but seven times, can He enable you

to partake of the joy of His presence, in return for the one visit which you have missed.' I was amazed at the confidence with which he uttered those words. Not until the time of my visit to the Báb in Tabríz, when, despite adverse circumstances, I was, on several occasions, admitted into His presence, did I recall those words of Mullá Ḥusayn and marvel at his remarkable foresight. How great was my surprise when, on my seventh visit to the Báb, I heard Him speak these words: 'Praise be to God, who has enabled you to complete the number of your visits and who has extended to you His loving protection.' "



THE CASTLE OF MÁH-KÚ

CHAPTER XIII

THE BÁB'S INCARCERATION IN THE CASTLE OF MÁH-KÚ

SIYYID ḤUSAYN-I-YAZDÍ has been heard to relate the following: "During the first ten days of the Báb's incarceration in Tabríz, no one knew what would next befall Him. The wildest conjectures were current in the city. One day I ventured to ask Him whether He would continue to remain where He was or would be transferred to still another place. 'Have you forgotten,' was His immediate reply, 'the question you asked me in Iṣfáhán? For a period of no less than nine months, we shall remain confined in the Jabal-i-Básiṭ,[1] from whence we shall be transferred to the Jabal-i-Shadíd.[2] Both these places are among the mountains of Khuy and are situated on either side of the town bearing that name.' Five days after the Báb had uttered this prediction, orders were issued to transfer Him and me to the castle of Máh-Kú and to deliver us into the custody of 'Alí Khán-i-Máh-Kú'í."

The castle, a solid, four-towered stone edifice, occupies the summit of a mountain at the foot of which lies the town of Máh-Kú. The only road that leads from it passes into that town, ending at a gate which adjoins the seat of government and is invariably kept closed. This gate is distinct from that of the castle itself. Situated on the confines of both the Ottoman and Russian empires, this castle has been used, in view of its commanding position and strategic advantages, as a centre for reconnoitring purposes. The officer in charge of that station observed, in time of war, the movements of the enemy, surveyed the surrounding regions, and reported to his government such cases of emergency as came

[1] Literally "the Open Mountain," allusion to Máh-Kú. The numerical value of "Jabal-i-Básiṭ" is equivalent to that of "Máh-Kú."

[2] Literally "the Grievous Mountain," allusion to Chihríg. The numerical value of "Jabal-i-Shadíd" is equivalent to that of "Chihríg."

under his observation. The castle is bounded on the west by the river Araxes, which marks the frontier between the territory of the Sháh and the Russian empire. To the south extends the territory of the Sulṭán of Turkey; the frontier town of Báyazíd being at a distance of only four farsangs[1] from the mountain of Máh-Kú. The frontier officer, in charge of the castle, was a man named 'Alí Khán. The residents of the town are all Kurds and belong to the sunní sect of Islám.[2] The shí'ahs, who constitute the vast majority of the inhabitants of Persia, have always been their avowed and bitter enemies. These Kurds particularly abhor the siyyids of the shí'ah denomination, whom they regard as the spiritual leaders and chief agitators among their opponents. 'Alí Khán's mother being a Kurd, the son was held in great esteem and was implicitly obeyed by the people of Máh-Kú. They regarded him as a member of their own community and placed the utmost confidence in him.

Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí had deliberately contrived to relegate the Báb to so remote, so inhospitable and dangerously situated a corner of the territory of the Sháh, with the sole purpose of stemming the tide of His rising influence and of severing every tie that bound Him to the body of His disciples throughout the country. Confident that few, if any, would venture to penetrate that wild and turbulent region, occupied by so rebellious a people, he fondly imagined that this forced seclusion of his Captive from the pursuits and interests of His followers would gradually tend to stifle the Movement at its very birth and would lead to its final extinction.[3] He was soon made to realise, however, that he had gravely mistaken the nature of the Revelation of the Báb and had underrated the force of its influence. The turbulent spirits of this unruly people were soon subdued by the gentle manners of the Báb, and their hearts were softened

[1] Refer to Glossary.

[2] "Il habite une montagne dont les habitants ne peuvent même pas prononcer le mot 'Jannat' (Paradis), qui est un mot arabe: comment dès lors en pourraient-ils comprendre le sens. Vois dès lors ce qui se passe pour la vérité des existences." ("Le Bayân Persan," vol. 4, p. 14.)

[3] "Patrie du premier ministre, sur la frontière de l'Ádhirbáyján, cette ville est sortie de son obscurité sous l'administration de ce ministre, et beaucoup de gens de Máh-Kú furent élevés aux premiers postes de l'État, grâce a leur servilité pour Hájí Mírzá Áqásí." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 356, note 1.)

by the ennobling influence of His love. Their pride was humbled by His unexampled modesty, and their unreasoning arrogance mellowed by the wisdom of His words. Such was the fervour which the Báb had kindled in those hearts that their first act, every morning, was to seek a place whence they could catch a glimpse of His face, where they could commune with Him and beseech His blessings upon their daily work. In cases of dispute, they would instinctively hasten to that spot and, with their gaze fixed upon His prison, would invoke His name and adjure one another to declare the truth. 'Alí Khán several times attempted to induce them to desist from this practice but found himself powerless to restrain their enthusiasm. He discharged his functions with the utmost severity and refused to allow any of the avowed disciples of the Báb to reside, even for one night, in the town of Máh-Kú.[1]

"For the first two weeks," Siyyid Ḥusayn further related, "no one was permitted to visit the Báb. My brother and I alone were admitted to His presence. Siyyid Ḥasan would, every day, accompanied by one of the guards, descend to the town and purchase our daily necessities. Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí, who had arrived at Máh-Kú, spent the nights in a masjid outside the gate of the town. He acted as an intermediary between those of the followers of the Báb who occasionally visited Máh-Kú and Siyyid Ḥasan, my brother, who would in turn submit the petitions of the believers to their Master and would acquaint Shaykh Hasan with His reply.

[1] "C'est le Báb lui-même qui nous indique comment sa vie se passait dans la prison où il était enfermé. Ses plaintes, si fréquentes dans le Bayán, doivent, je pense, être dues à des resserrements de discipline provenant d'ordres venus de temps en temps de Ṭihrán. Tous les historiens, en effet, tant les Bábí que les Musulmans, nous disent que, malgré les ordres sévères d'empêcher toutes communications du prisonnier avec le monde extérieur, le Báb recevait une foule de disciples et d'étrangers dans sa prison. (L'auteur du Mutanabbiyyín écrit: 'Les Bábí de toutes les parties de la terre se rendaient en Ádhirbáyján, en pèlerinage auprès de leur chef.') . . . 'Oh! quel est ton aveuglement, ô ma créature! Ce que tu fais, tu le fais pensant me contenter! Et malgré ces versets qui me prouvent moi-même, ces versets qui découlent de ma puissance et dont le trésor est l'être même de ce personnage (le Báb), malgré ces versets qui ne sortent de sa bouche qu'avec ma permission, voilà que, sans aucune espèce de droit, vous l'avez mis au sommet d'une montagne dont les habitants ne sont même pas dignes qu'on les cite. Près de lui, ce qui est près de moi, il n'y a personne, si ce n'est une des Lettres de la Vie de mon livre. Entre ses deux mains, qui sont mes deux mains, il n'y a même pas un serviteur, pour allumer, la nuit, la lampe. Et voilà que les hommes qui sont sur terre n'ont été créés que pour son existence: c'est par sa bienveillance qu'ils sont dans la joie, et ils ne lui donnent même pas une lumière!' (Unité 2, porte 1.)

"One day the Báb charged my brother to inform Shaykh Hasan that He would Himself request 'Alí Khán to alter his attitude towards the believers who visited Máh-Kú and to abandon his severity. 'Tell him,' He added, 'I will tomorrow instruct the warden to conduct him to this place.' I was greatly surprised at such a message. How could the domineering and self-willed 'Alí Khán, I thought to myself, be induced to relax the severity of his discipline? Early the next day, the gate of the castle being still closed, we were surprised by a sudden knock at the door, knowing full well that orders had been given that no one was to be admitted before the hour of sunrise. We recognised the voice of 'Alí Khán, who seemed to be expostulating with the guards, one of whom presently came in and informed me that the warden of the castle insisted on being allowed admittance into the presence of the Báb. I conveyed his message and was commanded to usher him at once into His presence. As I was stepping out of the door of His antechamber, I found 'Alí Khán standing at the threshold in an attitude of complete submission, his face betraying an expression of unusual humility and wonder. His self-assertiveness and pride seemed to have entirely vanished. Humbly and with extreme courtesy, he returned my salute and begged me to allow him to enter the presence of the Báb. I conducted him to the room which my Master occupied. His limbs trembled as he followed me. An inner agitation which he could not conceal

'Le fruit (de la religion islamique) c'est de croire à la Manifestation (du Báb) et on l'emprisonne à Máh-Kú!' (Unité 2, porte 7.) 'Tout ce qui appartient à l'homme du Paradis est en Paradis. Cette chambre solitaire (dans laquelle je suis) et qui n'a même pas de porte est aujourd'hui le plus grand des jardins du Paradis, car l'arbre de la Vérité y est planté. Tous les atomes qui la composent crient: En vérité, il n'y a pas d'autres dieu que Dieu! En vérité, je suis Dieu, et il n'y a pas d'autre dieu que moi le Seigneur de l'Univers!' (Unité 2, porte 16.) 'Le fruit de cette porte est que les hommes voyant qu'il est permis de faire tout cela pour le Bayán (dépenser tant d'argent) qui n'est que la trace de Celui que Dieu doit manifester, doivent se rendre compte de ce qu'il faut faire pour Celui que Dieu doit manifester quand il apparaîtra, afin qu'il ne (lui) arrive pas ce qui (m') arrive aujourd'hui. C'est-à-dire qu'il y a de par le monde beaucoup de Qur'áns valant mille túmáns, alors que Celui qui fait descendre des versets (le Báb) est mis sur une montagne, dans une chambre construite en briques séchées au soleil. Et cependant cette chambre est l'Arche (9e ciel, séjour de la Divinité) même. Que cela serve d'exemple aux Bayánís afin qu'ils ne fassent pas envers Lui, ce que les Qur'ánís ont fait vis-à-vis de moi.' (Unité 3, porte 19.)" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 365–7.) "Tous croient à Lui, et ils l'ont emprisonné sur une montagne! Tous sont par Lui dans l'allégresse, et ils l'ont abandonné tout seul! Aucun feu n'est plus ardent pour ceux qui ont agi ainsi que leurs œuvres mêmes; de même, pour les croyants, aucun Paradis n'est plus haut que leur foi même." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 1, pp. 126–7.)

brooded over his face. The Báb arose from His seat and welcomed him. Bowing reverently, 'Alí Khán approached and flung himself at His feet. 'Deliver me,' he pleaded, 'from my perplexity. I adjure You, by the Prophet of God, Your illustrious Ancestor, to dissipate my doubts, for their weight has well-nigh crushed my heart. I was riding through the wilderness and was approaching the gate of the town, when, it being the hour of dawn, my eyes suddenly beheld You standing by the side of the river engaged in offering Your prayer. With outstretched arms and upraised eyes, You were invoking the name of God. I stood still and watched You. I was waiting for You to terminate Your devotions that I might approach and rebuke You for having ventured to leave the castle without my leave. In Your communion with God, You seemed so wrapt in worship that You were utterly forgetful of Yourself. I quietly approached You; in Your state of rapture, You remained wholly unaware of my presence. I was suddenly seized with great fear and recoiled at the thought of awakening You from Your ecstasy. I decided to leave You, to proceed to the guards and to reprove them for their negligent conduct. I soon found out, to my amazement, that both the outer and inner gates were closed. They were opened at my request, I was ushered into Your presence, and now find You, to my wonder, seated before me. I am utterly confounded. I know not whether my reason has deserted me.' The Báb answered and said: 'What you have witnessed is true and undeniable. You belittled this Revelation and have contemptuously disdained its Author. God, the All-Merciful, desiring not to afflict you with His punishment, has willed to reveal to your eyes the Truth. By His Divine interposition, He has instilled into your heart the love of His chosen One, and caused you to recognise the unconquerable power of His Faith.' "

This marvellous experience completely changed the heart of 'Alí Khán. Those words had calmed his agitation and subdued the fierceness of his animosity. By every means in his power, he determined to atone for his past behaviour. "A poor man, a shaykh," he hastily informed the Báb, "is yearning to attain Your presence. He lives in a masjid outside the gate of Máh-Kú. I pray You that I myself be

allowed to bring him to this place that he may meet You. By this act I hope that my evil deeds may be forgiven, that I may be enabled to wash away the stains of my cruel behaviour toward Your friends." His request was granted, whereupon he went straightway to Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí and conducted him into the presence of his Master.

'Alí Khán set out, within the limits imposed upon him, to provide whatever would tend to alleviate the rigour of the captivity of the Báb. At night the gate of the castle was still closed; in the daytime, however, those whom the Báb desired to see were allowed to enter His presence, were able to converse with Him and to receive His instructions.

As He lay confined within the walls of the castle, He devoted His time to the composition of the Persian Bayán, the most weighty, the most illuminating and comprehensive of all His works.[1] In it He laid down the laws and precepts of His Dispensation, plainly and emphatically announced the advent of a subsequent Revelation, and persistently urged His followers to seek and find "Him whom God would make manifest,"[2] warning them lest they allow the mysteries and allusions in the Bayán to interfere with their recognition of His Cause.[3]

[1] "So great multitudes continued to come from all quarters to visit the Báb, and the writings which emanated from His inspired pen during this period were so numerous that they amounted in all to more than a hundred thousand verses." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadid," p. 238.) "Voyez, environ cent mille lignes semblables à ces versets se sont répandues parmi les hommes, sans compter les oraisons jaculatoires et les questions de science et de philosophie." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 1, p. 43.) "Vois aussi au sujet du Point du Bayân. Ceux qui le connaissaient, savent quel était son rang avant la manifestation; mais après la manifestation, et quoique jusqu'à aujourd'hui il ait produit plus de cinq cent mille bayts [verses] sur des sujets divers, on n'en prononce pas moins contre lui des paroles que la plume se refuse à répéter." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 3, p. 113.) "The verses which have rained from this Cloud of Divine mercy [the Báb] have been so abundant that none hath yet been able to estimate their number. A score of volumes are now available. How many still remain beyond our reach! How many have been plundered and have fallen into the hands of the enemy, the fate of which none knoweth!" (The "Kitáb-i-Íqán," pp. 182–3.)

[2] Allusion to Bahá'u'lláh. "To Mullá Báqir, one of the Letters of the Living—the glory and favour of God be upon him—He [the Báb] addresses these words: 'Haply, in the eighth year, the Day of His Manifestation, thou mayest attain His presence.'" ("The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p. 129.)

[3] "C'est toujours dans le même ordre d'idées qu'une fois enfermé a Máh-Kú, il adresse une longue lettre au Sháh (Muḥammad Sháh) que nous allons analyser ici. Le document commence, comme presque tous les documents littéraires du Báb, par une louange exaltée de l'Unité Divine. Le Báb continue en louant, comme il convient, Muḥammad et les douze imáms, qui, comme on le verra dans le second volume de cet ouvrage, sont les pierres angulaires de l'édifice du Bayán. 'Et moi j'affirme, s'écrie-t-il que tout ce qui est dans ce monde de possibilités autre qu'eux n'est auprès d'eux que le néant absolu, et si on peut le mentionner, ce tout, ce n'est que comme l'ombre d'une ombre. Je demande pardon à Dieu de ces limites

I have heard Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunúzí bear witness to the following: "The voice of the Báb, as He dictated the teachings and principles of His Faith, could be clearly heard by those who were dwelling at the foot of the mountain. The melody of His chanting, the rhythmic flow of the verses which streamed from His lips caught our ears and penetrated into our very souls. Mountain and valley re-echoed the majesty of His voice. Our hearts vibrated in their depths to the appeal of His utterance."[1]

que je viens de leur assigner, car en vérité le dernier degré des louanges qu'on en peut faire est de reconnaître en face d'eux, qu'on ne peut les louer. . . . C'est pourquoi Dieu m'a créé d'une boue telle que personne n'a été créé d'une boue pareille. Et Dieu m'a donné ce que les savants dans leur science ne peuvent comprendre, ce que personne ne peut connaître à moins d'être complètement anéanti en face d'un signe d'entre mes signes. . . . Sache, qu'en vérité, je suis une colonne de la première parole: cette parole que quiconque l'a connue a connu Dieu tout entier et est entré dans le bien universel. Celui qui n'a pas voulu la connaître est resté ignorant de Dieu et est entré dans le mal universel. J'en jure par ton Dieu, le Maître des deux mondes, celui qui vit ici-bas aussi longtemps que le permet la nature, et reste toute sa vie l'esclave de Dieu dans toutes les œuvres de bien qu'embrasse la science de Dieu, s'il a dans son cœur de l'inimitié contre moi, fût-ce si peu que Dieu seul le pusse comprendre, alors toutes ses bonnes œuvres et toute sa piété sont sans utilité et Dieu ne le regarde que d'un regard de châtiment, et celui-là est de ceux qui meurent. Dieu a fixé tout le bien que lui-même reconnaît comme bien dans l'œuvre de m'obéir, et tout le mal qu'il connaît dans l'acte de me désobéir. En vérité, aujourd'hui je vois, dans le rang que je tiens, tout ce que je viens de dire et les gens de mon amour et de mon obéissance dans les plus hautes demeures des cieux, tandis que mes ennemis sont plongés dans les profondeurs du feu! Sur mon existence, je le jure, si je n'avais pas été obligé d'accepter d'être le Ḥujjat de Dieu, je ne t'eusse pas averti. . . .' Comme on le voit, le Báb continue ici très nettement et renouvelle

[1] This is the prayer which the Báb Himself quotes in the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih" as His supplication during the months of His captivity in the castle of Máh-Kú: "O mon Dieu! donne par sa personne à lui-même, à ses descendants, à sa famille, à ses amis, à ses sujets, à ses proches, à tous et à tous les habitants de la terre, un rayon qui éclaire leurs regards, facilite leur tôche, fais-les parvenir aux meilleures des œuvres en ce monde et dans l'autre. En vérité! tu peux ce que tu veux. O mon Dieu! ressuscite en lui ce par quoi il peut renouveler ta religion et fais vivre par lui ce qui est changé dans ton livre; manifeste par lui ce que tu modifies dans tes ordres afin que par lui ta religion se lève de nouveau; donne-lui dans la main un livre nouveau, pur et saint; qu'aucun doute, aucune hésitation ne soient dans ce livre et que personne ne puisse se présenter qui le détruise ou bien le modifie. O mon Dieu! éclaire par ton resplendissement tout ce qui est obscur, et, par son pouvoir affermi, disperse les lois anciennes. Par sa prééminence, ruine ceux qui n'ont pas suivi la route de Dieu. Par lui, fais périr tous les tyrans, éteins par son sabre toutes les discordes, efface par sa justice toutes les oppressions, fais obéir à ses ordres ceux qui ont le commandement; sous son empire renverse tous les empires. O mon Dieu! abaisse quiconque veut l'abaisser, tue quiconque est son ennemi; renie quiconque le renie et égare quiconque repousse sa vérité, renie ses ordres, s'efforce d'obscurcir sa lumière et d'éteindre son nom." The Báb then adds these words: "Ces bénédictions, répète-les souvent, et si tu n'as pas le temps de les répéter en entier, ne manque pas d'en dire la dernière partie. Sois éveillé le jour de l'apparition de celui que Dieu doit manifester, car cette prière est descendue du ciel pour lui quoique je sois dans l'espoir qu'aucun chagrin ne l'attend: j'ai instruit les gens de ma religion à ne se réjouir du malheur de personne. Aussi, se peut-il qu'à l'époque de l'apparition de ce soleil de la vérité, aucune souffrance ne t'atteigne." ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," traduction par A. L. M. Nicolas, pp. 64–5.)

The gradual relaxation of the stern discipline imposed upon the Báb encouraged an increasing number of His disciples from the different provinces of Persia to visit Him in the castle of Máh-Kú. An unceasing stream of eager and devout pilgrims was directed to its gates through the gentleness and leniency of 'Alí Khán.[1] After a stay of three days, they would invariably be dismissed by the Báb, with instructions to return to their respective fields of service and to resume their labours for the consolidation of His Faith. 'Alí

ses affirmations du Kitáb-i-baynu'l-Ḥaramayn. Il n'y ajoute rien, mais n'en retranche rien non plus. 'Moi donc, dit-il, je suis ce Point d'où tout ce qui existe a trouvé l'existence. Je suis cette Face de Dieu qui ne meurt pas, je suis cette Lumière qui ne s'éteint pas. Celui qui me connaît est accompagné de tout le bien, celui qui me repousse a derrière lui tout le mal. En vérité, Moïse, quand il demanda à Dieu ce qu'il demanda (il voulut voir Dieu) Dieu rayonna sur la montagne, de la lumière d'un des sectateurs d''Alí, et, comme l'explique le hadis, "cette lumière j'en jure par Dieu, était ma lumière." Ne vois-tu pas que la valeur numérale des lettres qui composent mon nom est égale à la valeur numérale de celles qui composent le mot Rabb (Seigneur)? Or Dieu n'a-t-il pas dit dans le Qur'án: Et quand ton Rabb rayonna sur la montagne.' Le Báb continue en étudiant les prophéties faites dans le Qur'án puis dans quelques hadis au sujet de la manifestation du Mihdí. Il rapporte le fameux hadís de Mufaḍḍal qui est l'un des arguments les plus forts pour la vérité de sa mission. Dans le Qur'án il est dit, Chap. 32, verset 4: Dieu conduit les affaires (du monde) du ciel à la terre puis (tout) remonte à lui dans un jour dont la durée est de mille années de notre comput. D'autre part le dernier Imám a disparu en l'an 260 de l'Hégire, c'est à ce moment que la manifestation prophétique est terminée et que 'la porte de la science est fermée.' Or Mufaḍḍal interrogea l'Imám Ṣádiq sur les signes de l'arrivée du Mihdí, et l'Imám lui répondit: 'Il se manifestera en l'année 60 et son nom sera élevé Ce qui veut dire en l'année 1260 qui est précisément l'année de la manifestation du Báb. 'J'en jure par Dieu, dit à ce sujet Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad, je n'ai pas pris de leçons et mon éducation a été celle d'un marchand. En l'année 60 j'ai eu le cœur rempli de versets solides, de sciences certaines et du témoignage de Dieu. Et j'ai proclamé ma mission en cette année même. . . . Et cette année même je vous ai envoyé un messager (Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushrú'í) porteur d'un Livre afin que le Gouvernement pu faire ce qu'il avait à faire vis-à-vis de l'Ḥujjat. Mais la volonté de Dieu étant que s'élevassent des guerres civiles qui assourdissent les oreilles, aveuglassent les yeux, et rendissent les cœurs endurcis, c'est pour cette raison qu'on n'a pas laissé mon messager parvenir jusqu'à vous. Ceux qui se considèrent commes patriotes s'y opposèrent et jusqu'à aujourd'hui—quatre ans presque ont passé—sans que personne vous ait rien dit de la vérité de la question. Et maintenant, comme mon temps est proche, comme mon œuvre est œuvre divine et non pas humaine, c'est pourquoi je vous en ai écrit brièvement. J'en jure par Dieu! si tu savais ce qui pendant ces quatres ans m'est advenu de tes fonctionnaires et de tes délégués! Si tu le savais, la peur de Dieu t'empêcherait d'achever le souffle qui s'exhale en ce moment de tes lèvres, à moins que tu ne formes le dessein d'entrer dans l'obéissance de l'ordre du Ḥujjat, et de réparer immédiatement ce qui a eu lieu. J'étais à Shíráz, et de ce gouverneur mauvais et maudit, je subis des tyrannies telles que si tu en connaissais la moindre part, de par ta justice tu exercerais sur lui la peine du talion, car sa violence a attiré la punition du ciel jusqu'au jour du jugement sur l'étendue de l'Empire. Cet homme très orgueilleux et toujours ivre ne donnait aucun ordre empreint d'intelligence. Je fus forcé de sortir de Shíráz et je me dirigeai vers Ṭihrán pour aller te voir, mais feu Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih comprit la vérité de ma mission et fit ce qu'exigeait la déférence vis-à-vis des élus

[1] "L'auteur du Mutanabiyyín écrit: 'Les Bábí de toutes les parties de la terre se rendaient en Ádhirbáyján, en pèlerinage auprès de leur chef.'" (Prince 'Alí-Qulí Mírzá, I'tiḍádu's-Salṭanih being the author.) (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 365, note 227.)

Khán himself never failed to pay his respects to the Báb each Friday, and to assure Him of his unswerving loyalty and devotion. He often presented Him with the rarest and choicest fruit available in the neighbourhood of Máh-Kú, and would continually offer Him such delicacies as he thought would prove agreeable to His taste and liking.

In this manner the Báb spent the summer and autumn within the walls of that castle. A winter followed of such

du Seigneur. Des ignorants de la ville commencèrent une émeute, et c'est pourquoi je me cachai dans le palais Ṣadr jusqu'au moment où Mu'tamid mourut. Que Dieu le recompense! Il n'y a pas de doute que la cause de son salut du feu de l'enfer soit ce qu'il a fait pour moi. Ensuite Gurgín me fit durant sept nuits voyager avec cinq individus, sans rien de ce qui est nécessaire au voyage et avec mille mensonges et mille violences. Hélas! Hélas! sur ce qui m'est arrivé! Enfin le Sulṭán ordonna de me diriger sur Máh-Kú, sans même me donner une monture que je pusse monter! Hélas! Hélas! il m'est arrivé ce qui m'est arrivé! Enfin je parvins à ce village dont tous les habitants sont ignorants et grossiers. Ah! j'en jure par Dieu, si tu savais en quel lieu je demeure, le premier qui aurait pitié de moi, ce serait toi-même! C'est un fortin, au sommet d'une montagne, et c'est à ta bien veillance que je dois une pareille demeure! Ceux qui y habitent sont deux hommes et quatre chiens! Pense à quoi je passe mon temps! Je remercie Dieu, comme il doit être remercié, et je jure par Dieu que celui qui m'a emprisonné là est content de ce qu'il a fait. Et cependant, s'il savait avec qu il a agi ainsi, jamais plus il ne serait heureux. Et maintenant, je t'avise d'un secret: cet homme a emprisonnè (en ma personne) tous les prophètes, tous les saints et celui que la science de Dieu a embrassé. Et il n'est resté de péché d'aucun genre sous lequel je n'ai gémi. . . . Quand j'eus appris l'ordre que tu avais donné (de me conduire à Máh-Kú) j'ai écrit au Ṣadr-i-A'ẓam: "tue-moi et envoie ma tête où tu voudras, car vivre sans péché et aller où sont les pécheurs ne peut me convenir." Il ne me répondit rien: et je suis convaincu qu'il ne connaissait pas la vérité de la question, car attrister sans raison les cœurs des croyants et des croyantes est pire que de détruire la maison de Dieu. Or, j'en jure par Dieu, c'est moi aujourd'hui la vraie maison de Dieu. Tout le bien s'attache à ceci que quelqu'un me fasse du bien, car c'est alors comme s'il faisait du bien à Dieu, à ses anges, à ses amis. Mais peut-être Dieu et ses amis sont trop élevés pour qu'arrive jusqu'à la poussière de leur seuil le bien ou le mal de quelqu'un, mais ce qui arrive à Dieu m'arrive à moi. J'en jure par Dieu, celui qui m'a emprisonné s'est emprisonné lui-même, et il ne m'arrive que ce que Dieu a ordonné. Alors hélas! hélas! sur celui dont la main laisse échapper le mal, bien heureux celui qui prodigue le bien.' Enfin, et pour résumer cette trop longue missive: 'L'autre question est affaire de ce bas monde. Feu Mu'tamid, une nuit, fit retirer tous les assistants et même Ḥájí Mullá Ahmad, puis il me dit: "Je sais fort bien que tout ce que j'ai acquis, je l'ai acquis par la violence, et cela appartient au Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán. Je te le donne donc en entier, car tu es le Maître de la Vérité et je te demande la permission d'en devenir possesseur." Il retira même une bague qu'il avait au doigt, et me la donna. Je pris la bague et la lui rendis et l'envoyai en possession de tout son bien. Dieu est témoin de ce que je dis là, et son témoignage suffit. Je ne veux pas un dinar de ces biens, mais c'est à vous à ordonner comme bon vous semblera. Mais comme pour toute contestation Dieu a demandé lui-même le témoignage de deux témoins, au milieu de tous les savants, faites venir Siyyid Yahyá et Akhúnd Mullá 'Abdu'l-Kháliq. Ils vous montreront et vous expliqueront mes versets et de cet entretien ne subsistera qu'une seule chose, c'est la perfection de mon témoignage. De ces deux personnages, l'un m'a connu avant la manifestation, l'autre après; tous deux me connaissent fort bien, et c'est pourquoi je les ai choisis.' Et la lettre se termine par des preuves cabalistiques et des hadis. Ainsi donc le Báb se déplaisait vivement dans sa prison et il y resta relativement longtemps puisqu'en somme le document que nous venons de citer est de 1264 et l'éxécution du martyr n'eut lieu que le 27 Sha'bán de l'an 1266 (8 Juillet, 1850)." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 367–73.)

exceptional severity that even the copper implements were affected by the intensity of the cold. The beginning of that season coincided with the month of Muḥarram of the year 1264 A.H.[1] The water which the Báb used for His ablutions was of such icy coldness that its drops glistened as they froze upon His face. He would invariably, after the termination of each prayer, summon Siyyid Ḥusayn to His presence and would request him to read aloud to Him a passage from the Muḥriqu'l-Qulúb, a work composed by the late Ḥájí Mullá Mihdí, the great-grandfather of Ḥájí Mírzá Kamálu'd-Dín-i-Naráqí, in which the author extols the virtues, laments the death, and narrates the circumstances of the martyrdom of the Imám Ḥusayn. The recital of those sufferings would provoke intense emotion in the heart of the Báb. His tears would keep flowing as He listened to the tale of the unutterable indignities heaped upon him, and of the agonising pain which he was made to suffer at the hands of a perfidious enemy. As the circumstances of that tragic life were unfolded before Him, the Báb was continually reminded of that still greater tragedy which was destined to signalise the advent of the promised Ḥusayn. To Him those past atrocities were but a symbol which foreshadowed the bitter afflictions which His own beloved Ḥusayn was soon to suffer at the hands of His countrymen. He wept as He pictured in His mind those calamities which He who was to be made manifest was predestined to suffer, calamities such as the Imám Ḥusayn, even in the midst of his agonies, was never made to endure.[2]

[1] December 9, 1847–January 8, 1848 A.D.

[2] "During His sojourn at Máh-Kú the Báb composed a great number of works, amongst the more important of which may be especially mentioned the Persian Bayán and the Seven Proofs (Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih), both of which contain ample internal evidence of having been written at this period. Indeed, if we may credit a statement made in the Táríkh-i-Jadíd on the authority of Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, the various writings of the Báb current in Tabríz alone amounted in all to not less than a million verses!" ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note L, p. 200.) Regarding the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih," Nicolas writes as follows: "Le Livre des Sept Preuves est la plus importante des œuvres de polémique sorties de la plume de Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad, dit le Báb." (Préface, p. 1.) "Son correspondant lui a évidemment demandé toutes les preuves de sa mission et la réponse qu'il reçoit est admirable de précision et de netteté. Elle se base sur deux versets du Qur'án: d'après le premier nul ne peut produir des versets, eut-il pour collaborateurs tous les hommes et tous les démons—d'après le second, nul ne comprend le sens des versets du Qur'án, si ce n'est Dieu et les hommes d'une science solide." (Préface, p. 5.) "Comme on le voit, l'argumentation du Báb est neuve et originale, et l'on peut déjà, par ce simple aperçu, se rendre compte du puissant intérêt qu'offre la lecture de son œuvre littéraire. Le cadre de ce travail ne me laisse point la liberté d'exposer, même

In one of His writings revealed in the year '60 A.H., the Báb declares the following: "The spirit of prayer which animates My soul is the direct consequence of a dream which I had in the year before the declaration of My Mission. In My vision I saw the head of the Imám Ḥusayn, the Siyyidu'-sh-Shuhadá', which was hanging upon a tree. Drops of blood dripped profusely from His lacerated throat. With feelings of unsurpassed delight, I approached that tree and, stretching forth My hands, gathered a few drops of that sacred blood, and drank them devoutly. When I awoke, I felt that the Spirit of God had permeated and taken possession of My soul. My heart was thrilled with the joy of His Divine presence, and the mysteries of His Revelation were unfolded before My eyes in all their glory."

No sooner had Muḥammad Sháh condemned the Báb to captivity amid the mountain fastnesses of Ádhirbáyján than he became afflicted with a sudden reverse of fortune, such as he had never known before and which struck at the very foundations of his State. Appalling disaster surprised his forces that were engaged in maintaining internal order throughout the provinces.[1] The standard of rebellion was

brièvement, les principaux dogmes d'une doctrine certainement hardie et dont la façade est certes brilliante et sympathique. J'espère le faire par la suite, mais, j'ai encore, pour le moment, une observation à présenter sur le Livre des Sept Preuves. En effet, vers la fin de son ouvrage, le Báb parle des miracles qui ont accompagné sa manifestation. Ceci étonnera sans doute le lecteur, car il aura vu, au cours de sa réponse, notre apôtre nier nettement les miracles matériels que l'imagination musulmane prête à Muhammad. Il affirme que pour lui-même, comme pour le Prophète Arabe, la seule preuve de sa mission est la descente des versets. Il n'en a pas d'autres, non qu'il soit incapable de produire des miracles—car Dieu fait ce qu'il veut—mais simplement parce que les prodiges matériels sont inférieurs aux miracles immatériels." (Préface, pp. 12–13.) ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," traduction par A. L. M. Nicolas.)

[1] "Cette province était depuis quelque temps déjà en proie à des troubles qui offraient une certaine gravité. À la fin de l'année 1844 ou au commencement de l'année 1845, le gouverneur de Bujnúrd s'était révolté contre l'autorité du Sháh et s'était allié aux Turkomans contre la Perse. Le Prince Ásifu'd-Dawlih, gouverneur du Khurásán, réclama des secours à la capitale. Le général Khán Bábá Khán, général en chef de l'armée persane, reçut l'ordre d'envoyer dix mille hommes contre les rebelles, mais la pénurie du trésor l'empêcha d'obéir. Le Sháh forma dès lors pour le printemps, le projet d'une expédition à la tête de laquelle il devait se mettre. Les préparatifs pour cette expédition se poursuivirent avec vigueur. Bientôt dix bataillons de mille hommes chacun furent préparés, n'attendant que l'arrivée du prince Ḥamzih Mírzá nommé général en chef de l'expédition. Tout d'un coup, le gouverneur du Khurásán, Ásifu'd-Dawlih, frère de la mère du roi, se sentant menacé dans sa sécurité par la suspicion qui s'élevait à Ṭihrán contre lui, vint à la cour se jeter aux pieds du roi, protester de son entier dévouement à sa personne et demander justice contre ses accusateurs. Or, le principal de ses adversaires était Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, le tout puissant premier ministre. La lutte fut donc longue mais se termina par la défaite du gouverneur, qui reçut l'ordre

hoisted in Khurásán, and so great was the consternation provoked by that rising that the projected campaign of the Sháh to Hirát was immediately abandoned. Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí's recklessness and prodigality had fanned into flame the smouldering fires of discontent, had exasperated the masses and encouraged them to stir up sedition and mischief. The most turbulent elements in Khurásán that inhabited the regions of Qúchán, Bujnúrd, and Shíraván leagued themselves with the Sálár, son of the Āṣifu'd-Dawlih, the elder maternal uncle of the Sháh and governor of the province, and repudiated the authority of the central government. Whatever forces were despatched from the capital met with immediate defeat at the hands of the chief instigators of the rebellion. Ja'far-Qulí Khán-i-Námdár and Amír Arslán Khán, son of the Sálár, who conducted the operations against the forces of the Sháh, displayed the utmost cruelty and, having repulsed the attacks of the enemy, mercilessly put their captives to death.

Mullá Ḥusayn was at that time residing at Mashhad,[1] and was endeavouring, despite the tumult which that revolt had occasioned, to spread the knowledge of the new Revelation. No sooner had he discovered that the Sálár, in his desire to extend the scope of the rebellion, had determined to approach him and obtain his support, than he promptly decided to leave the city in order to avoid implicating him-

d'aller accomplir, avec la mère du roi, le pèlerinage de la Mecque. Le fils de Âsifu'd-Dawlih, Sálár, conservateur de la mosquée de Mashhad, riche par lui-même, fort de son alliance avec le chef kurde Ja'far-Qulí Khán, Ílkhání de la tribu Qájár, prit dès lors une attitude assez hostile, ce qui provoqua l'envoi immédiat de trois mille hommes et de douze pièces de canon, en même temps que le gouvernement du Khurásán était donné à Ḥamzih Mírzá. La nouvelle que Ja'far-Qulí Khán, à la tête d'une nombreuse troupe de cavaliers kurdes et turkomans, avait sabré quelques détachements de l'armée royale provoqua un envoi immédiat de cinq nouveaux régiments et de 18 canons. Ce fut vers le 28 octobre de l'année 1847 que cette révolte sembla complètement réprimée par la victoire de Sháh-rúd (15 septembre) et la dispersion et la fuite de Ja'far-Qulí Khán et de Sálár." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 257–8.)

[1] "Mashhad est le plus grand lieu de pèlerinage de toute la Perse, Karbilá étant, comme on le sait, en territoire ottoman. C'est là que repose l'Imám Riḍá. Je ne m'appesantirai pas sur les centaines de miracles que le saint Tombeau a opérés jadis et continue à opérer chaque jour; qu'il suffise de savoir que chaque année des milliers de pèlerins se rendent à cette tombe et qu'ils ne s'en retournent chez eux qu'après avoir été soulagés de leurs derniers centimes par les habiles exploiteurs de cette productive industrie. Le fleuve d'or coule sans interruption entre les mains des heureux fonctionnaires. Mais ceux-ci ont naturellement besoin d'une infinité de comparses pour enserrer dans leurs filets leurs innombrables dupes. C'est certes, là, l'administration la mieux organisée de la Perse entière. Il s'ensuit que si une moitié de la ville vit de la mosquée, l'autre moitié, elle aussi, est intéressée à l'affluence

self in the plots of that proud and rebellious chief. In the dead of night, with only Qambar-'Alí as his attendant, he proceeded on foot in the direction of Ṭihrán, from which place he was determined to visit Ádhirbáyján, where he hoped to meet the Báb. His friends, when they learned of the manner of his departure, immediately provided whatever would be conducive to the comforts of his long and arduous journey and hastened to overtake him. Mullá Ḥusayn declined their help. "I have vowed," he said, "to walk the whole distance that separates me from my Beloved. I shall not relax in my resolve until I shall have reached my destination." He even tried to induce Qambar-'Alí to return to Mashad, but was finally obliged to yield to his entreaty to allow him to act as his servant throughout his pilgrimage to Ádhirbáyján.

On his way to Ṭihrán, Mullá Ḥusayn was enthusiastically greeted by the believers in the different towns through which he passed. They addressed to him the same request and received from him the same reply. I have heard the following testimony from the lips of Áqáy-i-Kalím: "When Mullá Ḥusayn arrived at Ṭihrán, I, together with a large number of believers, went to visit him. He seemed to us the very embodiment of constancy, of piety and virtue. He inspired us with his rectitude of conduct and passionate loyalty. Such were the force of his character and the ardour of his faith that we felt convinced that he, unaided and alone, would be capable of achieving the triumph of the Faith of God." He was, with secrecy, ushered into the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, and, soon after his interview, proceeded to Ádhirbáyján.

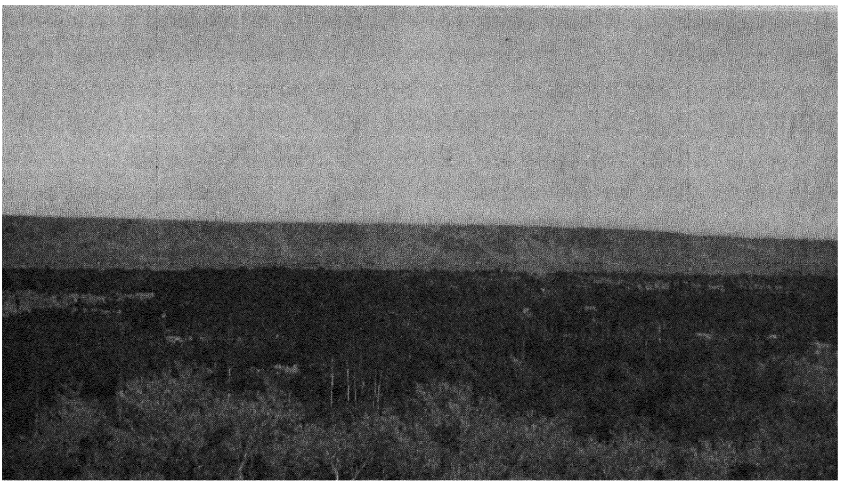
The night before his arrival at Máh-Kú, which was the eve of the fourth Naw-Rúz after the declaration of the

des visiteurs: je veux parler des négociants, des restaurateurs, des hôteliers et même des filles qui y trouvent autant de maris, à l'heure ou à la journée, qu'elles en peuvent désirer. Tous ces gens devaient naturellement s'unir contre le missionaire dont ils ignoraient la doctrine mais qui leur semblait néanmoins menacer leur industrie. Tonner contre les abus était fort bien dans toute autre ville, mais n'était guère de mise là où tout le monde, petits et grands, ne vivait que de ces abus mêmes. Que l'Imâm Mihdí parût, c'était évidemment son droit, mais c'était bien ennuyeux. Certes, c'était très beau de courir le monde avec lui et d'en opérer la conquête, mais c'était bien fatigant et bien hasardeux, puis, on y pouvait reçevoir de mauvais coups. Tandis qu'actuellement on était bien tranquille, dans une bonne ville où l'on gagnait de l'argent sans risques et sans péril." (*Ibid.*, pp. 258–9.)

Mission of the Báb, and which fell in that year, the year 1264 A.H.,[1] on the thirteenth of the month of Rabí'u'th-Thání, 'Alí Khán dreamed a dream. "In my sleep," he thus relates his story, "I was startled by the sudden intelligence that Muḥammad, the Prophet of God, was soon to arrive at Máh-Kú, that He was to proceed directly to the castle in order to visit the Báb and to offer Him His congratulations on the advent of the Naw-Rúz festival. In my dream, I ran out to meet Him, eager to extend to so holy a Visitor the expression of my humble welcome. In a state of indescribable gladness, I hastened on foot in the direction of the river, and as I reached the bridge, which lay at a distance of a maydán[2] from the town of Máh-Kú, I saw two men advancing towards me. I thought one of them to be the Prophet Himself, while the other who walked behind Him I supposed to be one of His distinguished companions. I hastened to throw myself at His feet, and was bending to kiss the hem of His robe, when I suddenly awoke. A great joy had flooded my soul. I felt as if Paradise itself, with all its delights, had been crowded into my heart. Convinced of the reality of my vision, I performed my ablutions, offered my prayer, arrayed myself in my richest attire, anointed myself with perfume, and proceeded to the spot where, the night before in my dream, I had gazed upon the countenance of the Prophet. I had instructed my attendants to saddle three of my best and swiftest steeds and to conduct them immediately to the bridge. The sun had just risen when, alone and unescorted, I walked out of the town of Máh-Kú in the direction of the river. As I approached the bridge, I discovered, with a throb of wonder, the two men whom I had seen in my dream walking one behind the other, and advancing towards me. Instinctively I fell at the feet of the one whom I believed to be the Prophet, and devoutly kissed them. I begged Him and His companion to mount the horses which I had prepared for their entry into Máh-Kú. 'Nay,' was His reply, 'I have vowed to accomplish the whole of my journey on foot. I will walk to the summit of this mountain and will there visit your Prisoner.' "

This strange experience of 'Alí Khán brought about a

[1] 1848 A.D. [2] See Glossary.



VIEW OF MÍLÁN IN ÁDHIRBÁYJÁN

deepening of reverence in his attitude towards the Báb. His faith in the potency of His Revelation became even greater, and his devotion to Him was vastly increased. In an attitude of humble surrender, he followed Mullá Ḥusayn until they reached the gate of the castle. As soon as the eyes of Mullá Ḥusayn fell upon the countenance of his Master, who was seen standing at the threshold of the gate, he halted instantly and, bowing low before Him, stood motionless by His side. The Báb stretched forth His arms and affectionately embraced him. Taking him by the hand, He conducted him to His chamber. He then summoned His friends into His presence and celebrated in their company the feast of Naw-Rúz. Dishes of sweetmeats and of the choicest fruits had been spread before Him. He distributed them among His assembled friends, and as He offered some of the quinces and apples to Mullá Ḥusayn, He said: "These luscious fruits have come to us from Mílán, the Arḍ-i-Jannat,[1] and have been specially plucked and consecrated to this feast by the Ismu'lláhu'l-Fatíq, Muhammad-Taqí."

Until that time no one of the disciples of the Báb but Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdí and his brother had been allowed to spend the night within the castle. That day 'Alí Khán went to the Báb and said: "If it be Your desire to retain

[1] Literally "Land of Paradise."

Mullá Ḥusayn with You this night, I am ready to abide by Your wish, for I have no will of my own. However long You desire him to stay with You, I pledge myself to carry out Your command." The disciples of the Báb continued to arrive in increasing numbers at Máh-Kú, and were immediately and without the least restriction admitted to His presence.

One day, as the Báb, in the company of Mullá Ḥusayn, was looking out over the landscape of the surrounding country from the roof of the castle, He gazed towards the west and, as He saw the Araxes winding its course far away below Him, turned to Mullá Ḥusayn and said: "That is the river, and this is the bank thereof, of which the poet Ḥáfiẓ has thus written: 'O zephyr, shouldst thou pass by the banks of the Araxes, implant a kiss on the earth of that valley and make fragrant thy breath. Hail, a thousand times hail, to thee, O abode of Salmá! How dear is the voice of thy camel-drivers, how sweet the jingling of thy bells!'[1] The days of your stay in this country are approaching their end. But for the shortness of your stay, we would have shown you the 'abode of Salmá,' even as we have revealed to your eyes the 'banks of the Araxes.' " By the "abode of Salmá" the Báb meant the town of Salmás, which is situated in the neighbourhood of Chihríq and which the Turks designate as Salmás. Continuing His remarks, the Báb said: "It is the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit that causes words such as these to stream from the tongue of poets, the significance of which they themselves are oftentimes unable to apprehend. The following verse is also divinely inspired: 'Shíráz will be thrown into a tumult; a Youth of sugar-tongue will appear. I fear lest the breath of His mouth should agitate and upset Baghdád.' The mystery enshrined within this verse is now concealed; it will be revealed in the year after Hín."[2] The Báb subsequently quoted this well-known tradition: "Treasures lie hidden beneath the throne

[1] According to Ḥájí Mu'inu's-Salṭanih's narrative (pp. 67–8), Mírzá Ḥabíb-i-Shírází, better known by the name of Qá'iní, one of the most eminent poets of Persia, was the first to sing the praise of the Báb and to extol the loftiness of His station. A manuscript copy of Qá'iní's poems, containing these verses, was shown to the author of the narrative. The following words, he says, were written at the head of the eulogy: 'In praise of the manifestation of the Siyyid-i-Báb.'

[2] See note 1, page 18.

of God; the key to those treasures is the tongue of poets." He then, one after the other, related to Mullá Ḥusayn those events which must needs transpire in the future, and bade him not to mention them to anyone.[1] "A few days after your departure from this place," the Báb informed him, "they will transfer Us to another mountain. Ere you arrive at your destination, the news of Our departure from Máh-Kú will have reached you."

The prediction which the Báb had uttered was promptly fulfilled. Those who had been charged to watch secretly the movements and conduct of 'Alí Khán submitted to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí a detailed report in which they expatiated upon his extreme devotion to his Prisoner and described such incidents as tended to confirm their statements. "Day and night," they wrote him, "the warden of the castle of Máh-Kú is to be seen associating with his captive in conditions of unrestrained freedom and friendliness. 'Alí Khán, who obstinately refused to wed his daughter with the heir to the throne of Persia, pleading that such an act would so infuriate the sunní relatives of his mother that they would unhesitatingly put him and his daughter to death, now with the keenest eagerness desires that same daughter to be espoused to the Báb. The latter has refused, but 'Alí Khán still persists in his entreaty. But for the prisoner's refusal, the nuptials of the maiden would have been already celebrated." 'Alí Khán had actually made such a request and had even begged Mullá Ḥusayn to intercede in his behalf with the Báb but had failed to obtain His consent.

These malevolent reports had an immediate influence upon Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí. Fear and resentment again impelled that capricious minister to issue a peremptory order for the transference of the Báb to the castle of Chihríq.

Twenty days after Naw-Rúz, the Báb bade farewell to the people of Máh-Kú, who, in the course of His nine months' captivity, had recognised to a remarkable degree the power

[1] In the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih," the Báb reveals the following: "Le hadis 'Âdhirbáyján' est encore relatif à ce point: 'Ce qui arrivera dans l'Âdhirbáyján est de toute nécessité pour nous; rien ne peut empêcher ce qui doit s'y produire. Restez donc dans vos maisons; mais si vous entendez qu'un agitateur y apparaît, alors courez vers lui.' Et ce hadis continue en disant: 'Ḥélas sur les Arabes, car la guerre civile est proche.' Si, en prononçant ces dernières paroles, le Prophète avait voulu faire allusion à sa propre mission, elles eussent été vaines et sans valeur." ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," traduction par A. L. M. Nicolas, p. 47.)

of His personality and the greatness of His character. Mullá Ḥusayn, who had already, at the bidding of the Báb, departed from Máh-Kú, was still in Tabríz when the news of his Master's predicted transference to Chihríq reached him. As the Báb bade His last farewell to Mullá Ḥusayn, He addressed him in these words: "You have walked on foot all the way from your native province to this place. On foot you likewise must return until you reach your destination; for your days of horsemanship are yet to come. You are destined to exhibit such courage, such skill and heroism as shall eclipse the mightiest deeds of the heroes of old. Your daring exploits will win the praise and admiration of the dwellers in the eternal Kingdom. You should visit, on your way, the believers of Khuy, of Urúmíyyih, of Marághih, of Mílán, of Tabríz, of Zanján, of Qazvín, and of Ṭihrán. To each you will convey the expression of My love and tender affection. You will strive to inflame their hearts anew with the fire of the love of the Beauty of God, and will endeavour to fortify their faith in His Revelation. From Ṭihrán you should proceed to Mázindarán, where God's hidden treasure will be made manifest to you. You will be called upon to perform deeds so great as will dwarf the mightiest achievements of the past. The nature of your task will, in that place, be revealed to you, and strength and guidance will be bestowed upon you that you may be fitted to render your service to His Cause."

On the morning of the ninth day after Naw-Rúz, Mullá Ḥusayn set forth, as bidden by his Master, on his journey to Mázindarán. To Qambar-'Alí the Báb addressed these parting words: "The Qambar-'Alí of a bygone age would glory in that his namesake has lived to witness a Day for which even He[1] who was the Lord of his lord sighed in vain; of which He, with keen longing, has spoken: 'Would that My eyes could behold the faces of My brethren who have been privileged to attain unto His Day!' "

[1] Reference to the Prophet Muḥammad.

CHAPTER XIV

MULLÁ ḤUSAYN'S JOURNEY TO MÁZINDARÁN

 LÍ KHÁN cordially invited Mullá Ḥusayn to tarry a few days in his home before his departure from Máh-Kú. He expressed a keen desire to provide every facility for his journey to Mázindarán. The latter, however, refused to delay his departure or to avail himself of the means of comfort which 'Alí Khán had so devotedly placed at his disposal.

He, faithful to the instructions he had received, stopped at every town and village that the Báb had directed him to visit, gathered the faithful, conveyed to them the love, the greetings, and the assurances of their beloved Master, quickened afresh their zeal, and exhorted them to remain steadfast in His way. In Ṭihrán he was again privileged to enter the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and to receive from His hands that spiritual sustenance which enabled him, with such undaunted courage, to brave the perils that so fiercely assailed the closing days of his life.

From Ṭihrán Mullá Ḥusayn proceeded to Mázindarán in eager expectation of witnessing the revelation of the hidden treasure promised to him by his Master. Quddús was at that time living in Bárfurúsh in the home which had originally belonged to his own father. He freely associated with all classes of people, and by the gentleness of his character and the wide range of his learning had won the affection and unqualified admiration of the inhabitants of that town. Upon his arrival in that city, Mullá Husayn went directly to the home of Quddús and was affectionately received by him. Quddús himself waited upon his guest, and did his utmost to provide whatever seemed necessary for his comfort. With his own hands he removed the dust, and washed the blistered skin of his feet. He offered him the seat of honour in the company of his assembled friends, and introduced, with

extreme reverence, each of the believers who had gathered to meet him.

On the night of his arrival, as soon as the believers who had been invited to dinner to meet Mullá Ḥusayn had returned to their homes, the host, turning to his guest, enquired whether he would enlighten him more particularly regarding his intimate experiences with the Báb in the castle of Máh-Kú. "Many and diverse," replied Mullá Ḥusayn, "were the things which I heard and witnessed in the course of my nine days' association with Him. He spoke to me of things relating both directly and indirectly to His Faith. He gave me, however, no definite directions as to the course I should pursue for the propagation of His Cause. All He told me was this: 'On your way to Ṭihrán, you should visit the believers in every town and village through which you pass. From Ṭihrán you should proceed to Mázindarán, for there lies a hidden treasure which shall be revealed to you, a treasure which will unveil to your eyes the character of the task you are destined to perform.' By His allusions I could, however dimly, perceive the glory of His Revelation and was able to discern the signs of the future ascendancy of His Cause. From His words I gathered that I should eventually be called upon to sacrifice my unworthy self in His path. For on previous occasions, whenever dismissing me from His presence, the Báb would invariably assure me that I should again be summoned to meet Him. This time, however, as He spoke to me His parting words, He gave me no such promise, nor did He allude to the possibility of my ever meeting Him again face to face in this world. 'The Feast of Sacrifice,' were His last words to me, 'is fast approaching. Arise and gird up the loin of endeavour, and let nothing detain you from achieving your destiny. Having attained your destination, prepare yourself to receive Us, for We too shall ere long follow you.' "

Quddús enquired whether he had brought with him any of his Master's writings, and, on being informed that he had none with him, presented his guest with the pages of a manuscript which he had in his possession, and requested him to read certain of its passages. As soon as he had read a page of that manuscript, his countenance underwent a

sudden and complete change. His features betrayed an undefinable expression of admiration and surprise. The loftiness, the profundity—above all, the penetrating influence of the words he had read, provoked intense agitation in his heart and called forth the utmost praise from his lips. Laying down the manuscript, he said: "I can well realise that the Author of these words has drawn His inspiration from that Fountainhead which stands immeasurably superior to the sources whence the learning of men is ordinarily derived. I hereby testify to my whole-hearted recognition of the sublimity of these words and to my unquestioned acceptance of the truth which they reveal." From the silence which Quddús observed, as well as from the expression which his countenance betokened, Mullá Ḥusayn concluded that no one else except his host could have penned those words. He instantly arose from his seat and, standing with bowed head at the threshold of the door, reverently declared: "The hidden treasure of which the Báb has spoken, now lies unveiled before my eyes. Its light has dispelled the gloom of perplexity and doubt. Though my Master be now hidden amid the mountain fastnesses of Ádhirbáyján, the sign of His splendour and the revelation of His might stand manifest before me. I have found in Mázindarán the reflection of His glory."

How grave, how appalling the mistake of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí! This foolish minister had vainly imagined that by condemning the Báb to a life of hopeless exile in a remote and sequestered corner of Ádhirbáyján, he would succeed in concealing from the eyes of his countrymen that Flame of God's undying Fire. Little did he perceive that by setting up the Light of God upon a hill, he was helping to diffuse its radiance and to proclaim its glory. By his own acts, by his amazing miscalculations, instead of hiding that heavenly Flame from the eyes of men, he gave it still further prominence and helped to excite its glow. How fair, on the other hand, was Mullá Ḥusayn, and how keen and sure his judgment! Of those who had known and seen him, none could for one moment question the erudition of this youth, his charm, his high integrity and amazing courage. Had he, after the death of Siyyid Kázim, declared himself the prom-

ised Qá'im, the most distinguished among his fellow-disciples would have unanimously acknowledged his claim and submitted to his authority. Had not Mullá Muhammad-i-Mámáqání, that noted and learned disciple of Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í, after he was made acquainted in Tabríz by Mullá Ḥusayn with the claims of the new Revelation, declared: "I take God as my witness! Had this claim which the Siyyid-i-Báb has made been advanced by this same Mullá Ḥusayn, I would, in view of his remarkable traits of character and breadth of knowledge, have been the first to champion his cause and to proclaim it to all people. As he, however, has chosen to subordinate himself to another person, I have ceased to have any confidence in his words and have refused to respond to his appeal." Had not Siyyid Muḥammad-Báqir-i-Rashtí, when he heard Mullá Ḥusayn so ably resolve the perplexities which had long afflicted his mind, testified in such glowing terms to his high attainments: "I, who fondly imagined myself capable of confounding and silencing Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí, realised, when I first met and conversed with him who claims to be only his humble disciple, how grievously I had erred in my judgment. Such is the strength with which this youth seems endowed that if he were to declare the day to be night, I would still believe him able to deduce such proofs as would conclusively demonstrate, in the eyes of the learned divines, the truth of his statement."

On the very night he was brought in contact with the Báb, Mullá Ḥusayn, though at first conscious of his own infinite superiority and predisposed to belittle the claims advanced by the son of an obscure merchant of Shíráz, did not fail to perceive, as soon as his Host had begun to unfold His theme, the incalculable benefits latent in His Revelation. He eagerly embraced His Cause and disdainfully abandoned whatever might hamper his own efforts for the proper understanding and the effective promotion of its interests. And when, in due course, Mullá Ḥusayn was given the opportunity of appreciating the transcendent sublimity of the writings of Quddús, he, with his usual sagacity and unerring judgment, was likewise able to estimate the true worth and merit of those special gifts with which both the person and the utter-

ance of Quddús were endowed. The vastness of his own acquired knowledge dwindled into insignificance before the all-encompassing, the God-given virtues which the spirit of this youth displayed. That very moment, he pledged his undying loyalty to him who so powerfully mirrored forth the radiance of his own beloved Master. He felt it to be his first obligation to subordinate himself entirely to Quddús, to follow in his footsteps, to abide by his will, and to ensure by every means in his power his welfare and safety. Until the hour of his martyrdom, Mullá Ḥusayn remained faithful to his pledge. In the extreme deference which he henceforth showed to Quddús, he was solely actuated by a firm and unalterable conviction of the reality of those supernatural gifts which so clearly distinguished him from the rest of his fellow-disciples. No other consideration induced him to show such deference and humility in his behaviour towards one who seemed to be but his equal. Mullá Ḥusayn's keen insight swiftly apprehended the magnitude of the power that lay latent in him, and the nobility of his character impelled him to demonstrate befittingly his recognition of that truth.

Such was the transformation wrought in the attitude of Mullá Ḥusayn towards Quddús that the believers who gathered the next morning at his house were extremely surprised to find that the guest who the night before had occupied the seat of honour, and upon whom had been lavished such kindness and hospitality, had given his seat to his host and was now standing, in his place, at the threshold in an attitude of complete humility. The first words which, in the company of the assembled believers, Quddús addressed to Mullá Ḥusayn were the following: "Now, at this very hour, you should arise and, armed with the rod of wisdom and of might, silence the host of evil plotters who strive to discredit the fair name of the Faith of God. You should face that multitude and confound their forces. You should place your reliance upon the grace of God, and should regard their machinations as a futile attempt to obscure the radiance of the Cause. You should interview the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá', that notorious and false-hearted tyrant, and should fearlessly disclose to his eyes the distinguishing features of this Revelation. From thence you should proceed to Khurásán. In the town

of Mashhad, you should build a house so designed as both to serve for our private residence and at the same time afford adequate facilities for the reception of our guests. Thither we shall shortly journey, and in that house we shall dwell. To it you shall invite every receptive soul who we hope may be guided to the River of everlasting life. We shall prepare and admonish them to band themselves together and proclaim the Cause of God."

Mullá Ḥusayn set out the next day at the hour of sunrise to interview the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá'. Alone and unaided, he sought his presence and conveyed to him, as bidden by Quddús, the Message of the new Day. With fearlessness and eloquence, he pleaded, in the midst of the assembled disciples, the Cause of his beloved Master, called upon him to demolish those idols which his own idle fancy had carved and to plant upon their shattered fragments the standard of Divine guidance. He appealed to him to disentangle his mind from the fettering creeds of the past, and to hasten, free and untrammelled, to the shores of eternal salvation. With characteristic vigour, he defeated every argument with which that specious sorcerer sought to refute the truth of the Divine Message, and exposed, by means of his unanswerable logic, the fallacies of every doctrine that he endeavoured to propound. Assailed by the fear lest the congregation of his disciples should unanimously rally round the person of Mullá Ḥusayn, the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá' had recourse to the meanest of devices, and indulged in the most abusive language in the hope of safeguarding the integrity of his position. He hurled his calumnies into the face of Mullá Ḥusayn, and, contemptuously ignoring the proofs and testimonies adduced by his opponent, confidently asserted, without the least justification on his part, the futility of the Cause he had been summoned to embrace. No sooner had Mullá Ḥusayn realised his utter incapacity to apprehend the significance of the Message he had brought him than he arose from his seat and said: "My argument has failed to rouse you from your sleep of negligence. My deeds will in the days to come prove to you the power of the Message you have chosen to despise." He spoke with such vehemence and emotion that the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá' was utterly confounded.

Such was the consternation of his soul that he was unable to reply. Mullá Ḥusayn then turned to a member of that audience who seemed to have felt the influence of his words, and charged him to relate to Quddús the circumstances of this interview. "Say to him," he added: " 'Inasmuch as you did not specifically command me to seek your presence, I have determined to set out immediately for Khurásán. I proceed to carry out in their entirety those things which you have instructed me to perform.' "

Alone and with a heart wholly detached from all else but God, Mullá Ḥusayn set out on his journey to Mashhad. His only companion, as he trod his way to Khurásán, was the thought of accomplishing faithfully the wishes of Quddús, and his one sustenance the consciousness of his unfailing promise. He went directly to the home of Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir-i-Qá'iní, and was soon able to buy, in the neighbourhood of that house in Bálá-Khíyábán, a tract of land on which he began to erect the house which he had been commanded to build, and to which he gave the name of Bábíyyih, a name that it bears to the present day. Shortly after it was completed, Quddús arrived at Mashhad and abode in that house. A steady stream of visitors, whom the energy and zeal of Mullá Ḥusayn had prepared for the acceptance of the Faith, poured into the presence of Quddús, acknowledged the claim of the Cause, and willingly enlisted under its banner. The all-observing vigilance with which Mullá Ḥusayn laboured to diffuse the knowledge of the new Revelation, and the masterly manner in which Quddús edified its ever-increasing adherents, gave rise to a wave of enthusiasm which swept over the entire city of Mashhad, and the effects of which spread rapidly beyond the confines of Khurásán. The house of Bábíyyih was soon converted into a rallying centre for a multitude of devotees who were fired with an inflexible resolve to demonstrate, by every means in their power, the great inherent energies of their Faith.

CHAPTER XV

ṬÁHIRIH'S JOURNEY FROM KARBILÁ TO KHURÁSÁN

AS THE appointed hour approached when, according to the dispensations of Providence, the veil which still concealed the fundamental verities of the Faith was to be rent asunder, there blazed forth in the heart of Khurásán a flame of such consuming intensity that the most formidable obstacles standing in the way of the ultimate recognition of the Cause melted away and vanished.[1] That fire caused such a conflagration in the hearts of men that the effects of its quickening power were felt in the most outlying provinces of Persia. It obliterated every trace of the misgivings and doubts which had still lingered in the hearts of the believers, and had hitherto hindered them from apprehending the full measure of its glory. The decree of the enemy had condemned to perpetual isolation Him who was the embodiment of the beauty of God, and sought thereby to quench for all time the flame of His love. The hand of Omnipotence, however, was busily engaged, at a time when the host of evil-doers were darkly plotting against Him, in confounding their schemes and in nullifying their efforts. In the easternmost province of Persia, the Almighty had, through the hand of Quddús, lit a fire that glowed with the hottest flame in the breasts of the people of Khurásán. And in Karbilá, beyond the western confines of that land, He had kindled the light of Ṭáhirih, a light that was destined to shed its radiance upon the whole of Persia. From the east

[1] "On n'étonnera personne," writes Clément Huart, "en faisant remarquer que la nouvelle secte se répandit dans le Khurásán plus rapidement que partout ailleurs. Le Khurásán a eu cette fortune singulière que les idées nouvelles y ont toujours trouvé le champ le plus approprié; c'est de cette province que sont parties bien des révolutions qui ont changé la face des choses dans l'Orient musulman; il suffit de rappeler que c'est dans le Khurásán que débuta l'idée de la rénovation persane après la conquête arabe, et que c'est là que se forma l'armée qui, sous les ordres d'Abú-Muslim, alla porter les Abbassides sur le trône des Khalifes en renversant l'aristocratie mecquoise qui l'occupait depuis l'avènement des Umayyads." ("La Religion de Báb," pp. 18–19.)

and from the west of that country, the voice of the Unseen summoned those twin great lights to hasten to the land of Ṭá,[1] the day-spring of glory, the home of Bahá'u'lláh. He bade them each seek the presence, and revolve round the person of that Day-Star of Truth, to seek His advice, to reinforce His efforts, and to prepare the way for His coming Revelation.

In pursuance of the Divine decree, in the days when Quddús was still residing in Mashhad, there was revealed from the pen of the Báb a Tablet addressed to all the believers of Persia, in which every loyal adherent of the Faith was enjoined to "hasten to the Land of Khá," the province of Khurásán.[2] The news of this high injunction spread with marvellous rapidity and aroused universal enthusiasm. It reached the ears of Ṭáhirih, who, at that time, was residing in Karbilá and was bending every effort to extend the scope of the Faith she had espoused.[3] She had left her native town of Qazvín and had arrived, after the death of Siyyid Káẓim, at that holy city, in eager expectation of witnessing the signs which the departed siyyid had foretold. In the foregoing pages we have seen how instinctively she had been led to discover the Revelation of the Báb and how spontaneously she had acknowledged its truth. Unwarned and uninvited, she perceived the dawning light of the promised Revelation breaking upon the city of Shíráz, and was prompted to pen her message and plead her fidelity to Him who was the Revealer of that light.

The Báb's immediate response to her declaration of faith which, without attaining His presence, she was moved to make, animated her zeal and vastly increased her courage. She arose to spread abroad His teachings, vehemently denounced the corruption and perversity of her generation, and fearlessly advocated a fundamental revolution in the habits

[1] Ṭihrán.

[2] "It is believed," writes Lieut.-Col. P. M. Sykes, "that the twelfth Imám never died, but in A.H. 260 (873) disappeared into miraculous concealment, from which he will reappear on the Day of Judgment in the mosque of Gawhar-Shád at Mashhad, to be hailed as the Mihdí or 'Guide' and to fill the earth with justice." ("A History of Persia," vol. 2, p. 45.)

[3] According to Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (p. 108), Ṭahirih arrived in Karbilá in the year 1263 A.H. She visited Kúfih and the surrounding district, and was engaged in spreading the teachings of the Báb. She shared with the people whom she met the writings of her Master, among which was His commentary on the Súrih of Kawthar.

and manners of her people.[1] Her indomitable spirit was quickened by the fire of her love for the Báb, and the glory of her vision was further enhanced by the discovery of the inestimable blessings latent in His Revelation. The innate fearlessness and the strength of her character were reinforced a hundredfold by her immovable conviction of the ultimate victory of the Cause she had embraced; and her boundless energy was revitalised by her recognition of the abiding value of the Mission she had risen to champion. All who met her in Karbilá were ensnared by her bewitching eloquence and felt the fascination of her words. None could resist her charm; few could escape the contagion of her belief. All testified to the extraordinary traits of her character, marvelled at her amazing personality, and were convinced of the sincerity of her convictions.

She was able to win to the Cause the revered widow of Siyyid Káẓim, who was born in Shíráz, and was the first among the women of Karbilá to recognise its truth. I have heard Shaykh Sulṭán describe her extreme devotion to Ṭáhirih, whom she revered as her spiritual guide and esteemed as her affectionate companion. He was also a fervent admirer of the character of the widow of the Siyyid, to whose gentleness of manner he often paid a glowing tribute. "Such was her attachment to Ṭáhirih," Shaykh Sulṭán was often heard to remark, "that she was extremely reluctant to allow that heroine who was a guest in her house to absent herself, though it were for an hour, from her presence. So great an attachment on her part did not fail to excite the curiosity and quicken the faith of her women friends, both Persian and Arab, who were constant visitors in her home. In the first year of her acceptance of the Message, she suddenly

[1] "Ce fut dans sa famille qu'elle entendit parler pour la première fois des prédications du Báb à Shíráz et de la nature des doctrines qu'il prêchait. Ce qu'elle en apprit, tout incomplet et imparfait que ce fût, lui plut extrêmement. Elle se mit en correspondance avec le Báb, et bientôt embrassa toutes ses idées. Elle ne se contenta pas d'une sympathie passive; elle confessa en public la foi de son maître; elle s'éleva non seulement contre la polygamie, mais contre l'usage du voile, et se montra à visage découvert sur les places publiques, au grand effroi et au grand scandale des siens et de tous les musulmans sincères, mais aux applaudissements des personnes déjà nombreuses qui partageaient son enthusiasme et dont ses prédications publiques augmentèrent de beaucoup le cercle. Son oncle, le docteur, son père, le juriste, son mari, épuisèrent tout pour la ramener au moins à une conduite plus placide et plus reservée. Elle les repoussa par ces arguments sans réplique de la foi impatiente du repos." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 137–8.)

fell ill, and after the lapse of three days, as had been the case with Siyyid Káẓim, she departed this life."

Among the men who in Karbilá eagerly embraced, through the efforts of Ṭáhirih, the Cause of the Báb, was a certain Shaykh Ṣáliḥ, an Arab resident of that city who was the first to shed his blood in the path of the Faith, in Ṭihrán. She was so profuse in her praise of Shaykh Ṣáliḥ that a few suspected him of being equal in rank to Quddús. Shaykh Sulṭán was also among those who fell under the spell of Ṭáhirih. On his return from Shíráz, he identified himself with the Faith, boldly and assiduously promoted its interests, and did his utmost to execute her instructions and wishes. Another admirer was Shaykh Muḥammad-i-Shibl, the father of Muḥammad-Muṣṭafá, an Arab native of Baghdád who ranked high among the 'ulamás of that city. By the aid of this chosen band of staunch and able supporters, Ṭáhirih was able to fire the imagination and to enlist the allegiance of a considerable number of the Persian and Arab inhabitants of 'Iráq, most of whom were led by her to join forces with those of their brethren in Persia who were soon to be called upon to shape by their deeds the destiny, and to seal with their life-blood the triumph, of the Cause of God.

The Báb's appeal, which was originally addressed to His followers in Persia, was soon transmitted to the adherents of His Faith in 'Iráq. Ṭáhirih gloriously responded. Her example was followed immediately by a large number of her faithful admirers, all of whom expressed their readiness to journey forthwith to Khurásán. The 'ulamás of Karbilá sought to dissuade her from undertaking that journey. Perceiving immediately the motive which prompted them to tender her such advice, and aware of their malignant design, she addressed to each of these sophists a lengthy epistle in which she set forth her motives and exposed their dissimulation.[1]

[1] According to Samandar (manuscript, p. 9), the main reason for the agitation of the people of Karbilá which induced them to accuse Ṭáhirih before the governor of Baghdád was her bold action in disregarding the anniversary of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn which was being commemorated in the early days of the month of Muḥarram in the house of the late Siyyid Káẓim in Karbilá, and in celebrating instead the anniversary of the birthday of the Báb, which fell on the first day of that month. She is reported to have asked her sister and relatives to discard their mourning garb and wear instead gay attire, in open defiance of the customs and traditions of the people on that occasion.

From Karbilá she proceeded to Baghdád.[1] A representative delegation, consisting of the ablest leaders among the shí'ah, the sunní, the Christian and Jewish communities of that city, sought her presence and endeavoured to convince her of the folly of her actions. She was able, however, to silence their protestations, and astounded them with the force of her argument. Disillusioned and confused, they retired, deeply conscious of their own impotence.[2]

The 'ulamás of Kirmánsháh respectfully received her and presented her with various tokens of their esteem and admiration.[3] In Hamadán,[4] however, the ecclesiastical leaders

[1] According to Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (pp. 108–9), the following disciples and companions were with Ṭáhirih when she arrived in Baghdád: Mullá Ibráhím-i-Maḥallatí, Shaykh Ṣáliḥ-i-Karímí, Siyyid Aḥmad-i-Yazdí (father of Siyyid Ḥusayn, the amanuensis of the Báb), Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Báyigání, Shaykh Sultán-i-Karbilá'í, the mother of Mullá Ḥusayn and her daughter, the wife of Mírzá Hádíy-i-Nahrí and his mother. According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghiṭá'" (p. 94), the mother and sister of Mullá Ḥusayn were among the ladies and disciples who accompanied Ṭáhirih on her journey from Karbilá to Baghdád. On their arrival, they took up their quarters in the house of Shaykh Muhammad-ibn-i-Shiblu'l-'Aráqí, after which they were transferred, by order of the governor of Baghdád, to the house of the Muftí, Siyyid Maḥmúd-i-Álúsí, the well-known author of the celebrated commentary entitled "Rúḥu'l-Ma'ání," pending the receipt of fresh instructions from the Sultán in Constantinople. The "Kashfu'l-Ghitá'" further adds (p. 96) that in the "Rúhu'l-Ma'ání" references are reported to have been found to the conversations which the Muftí had had with Ṭáhirih, to whom, it is reported, he addressed these words: "O Qurratu'l-'Ayn! I swear by God that I share in thy belief. I am apprehensive, however, of the swords of the family of 'Uthmán." "She proceeded directly to the house of the chief Muftí, before whom she defended her creed and her conduct with great ability. The question whether she should be allowed to continue her teaching was submitted first to the Páshá of Baghdád and then to the central government, the result being that she was ordered to leave Turkish territory." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note Q, pp. 214–15.)

[2] According to Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (p. 111), the following accompanied Ṭáhirih from Khániqín (on the Persian frontier) to Kirmánsháh: Shaykh Ṣálih-i-Karímí, Shaykh Muḥammad-i-Shibl, Shaykh Sulṭán-i-Karbilá'í, Siyyid Aḥmad-i-Yazdí, Siyyid Muhammad-i-Báyigání, Siyyid Muhsin-i-Káẓimí, Mullá Ibráhím-i-Maḥallátí, and about thirty Arab believers. They tarried three days in the village of Karand, where Ṭáhirih fearlessly proclaimed the teachings of the Báb and was highly successful in awakening the interest of all classes of people in the new Revelation. Twelve hundred persons are reported to have volunteered to follow her and do her bidding.

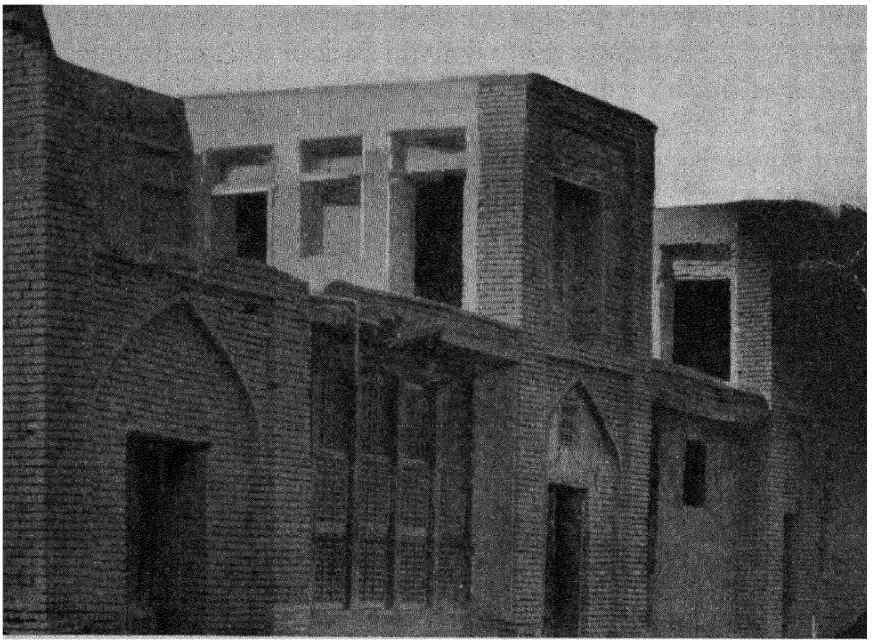
[3] According to Muḥammad Mustafá (p. 112), an enthusiastic reception was accorded her on her arrival in Kirmánsháh. Princes, 'ulamás, and government officials hastened to visit her, and were greatly impressed by her eloquence, her fearlessness, her extensive knowledge, and the force of her character. The commentary on the Súrih of Kawthar, revealed by the Báb, was publicly read and translated. The wife of the Amír, the governor of Kirmánsháh, was among the ladies who met Ṭáhirih and heard her expound the sacred teachings. The Amír himself, together with his family, acknowledged the truth of the Cause and testified to their admiration and love for Ṭáhirih. According to Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (p. 116), Ṭáhirih tarried two days in the village of Ṣaḥnih on her way to Hamadán, where she was accorded a reception no less enthusiastic than the one which had greeted her in the village of Karand. The inhabitants of the village begged to be allowed to gather together the members of their community and to join hands with the body of her followers for the spread and promotion of the Cause. She advised them, however, to remain, extolled and blessed their efforts, and proceeded to Hamadán.

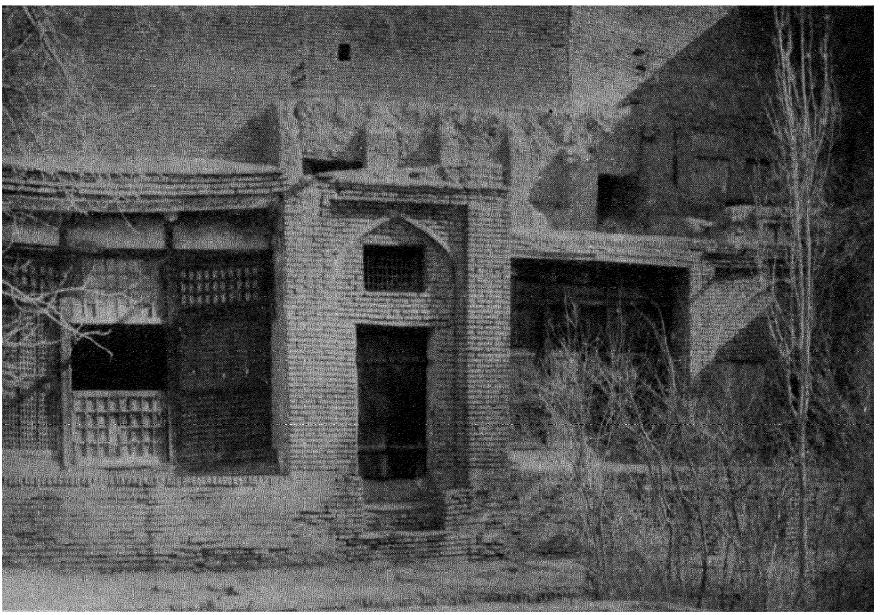
[4] According to the "Memorials of the Faithful" (p. 275), Ṭáhirih tarried two months in Hamadán.

of the city were divided in their attitude towards her. A few sought privily to provoke the people and undermine her prestige; others were moved to extol openly her virtues and applaud her courage. "It behoves us," these friends declared from their pulpits, "to follow her noble example and reverently to ask her to unravel for us the mysteries of the Qur'án and to resolve the intricacies of the holy Book. For our highest attainments are but a drop compared to the immensity of her knowledge." While in Hamadán, Ṭáhirih was met by those whom her father, Ḥájí Mullá Ṣáliḥ, had sent from Qazvín to welcome and urge her, on his behalf, to visit her native town and prolong her stay in their midst.[1] She reluctantly consented. Ere she departed, she bade those who had accompanied her from 'Iráq to proceed to their native land. Among them were Shaykh Sulṭán, Shaykh Muḥammad-i-Shibl and his youthful son, Muḥammad-Muṣṭafá, 'Ábid and his son Náṣir, who subsequently was given the name of Ḥájí 'Abbás. Those of her companions who had been living in Persia, such as Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Gulpáyigání, whose pen-name was Ṭá'ir, and whom Ṭáhirih had styled Fata'l-Malíḥ, and others were also bidden to return to their homes. Only two of her companions remained with her—Shaykh Sáliḥ and Mullá Ibráhím-i-Gulpáyigání, both of whom quaffed the cup of martyrdom, the first in Ṭihrán and the other in Qazvín. Of her own kinsmen, Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, one of the Letters of the Living and her brother-in-law, and Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Hádí, who had been betrothed to her daughter, travelled with her all the way from Karbilá to Qazvín.

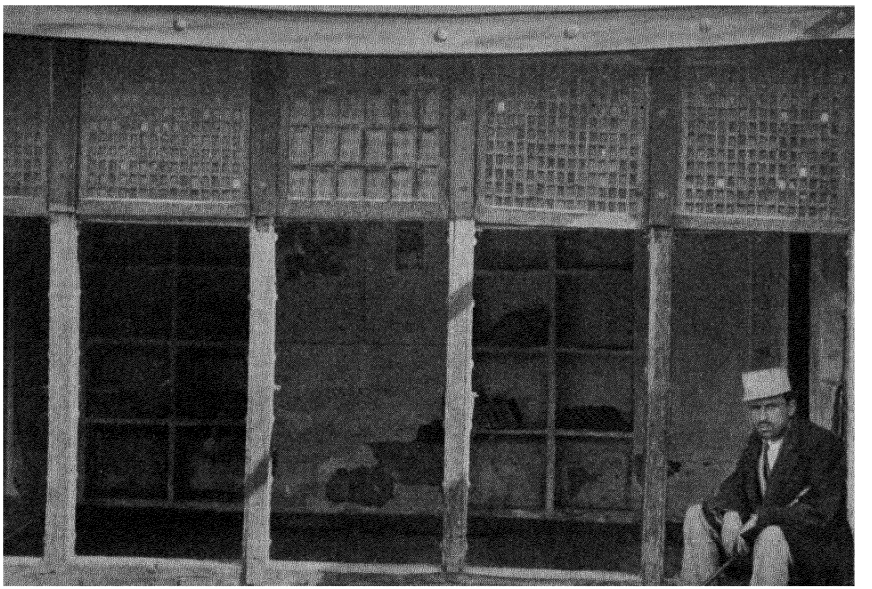
On her arrival at the house of her father, her cousin, the haughty and false-hearted Mullá Muḥammad, son of Mullá Taqí, who esteemed himself, next to his father and his uncle, the most accomplished of all the mujtahids of Persia, sent certain ladies of his own household to persuade Ṭáhirih to transfer her residence from her father's house to his own. "Say to my presumptuous and arrogant kinsman," was her bold reply to the messengers: " 'If your desire had really been to be a faithful mate and companion to me, you would have hastened to meet me in Karbilá and would on foot have

[1] According to Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (p. 117), among those who had been sent from Qazvín were the brothers of Ṭáhirih.





HOUSES IN WHICH ṬAHIRIH LIVED IN QAZVÍN



TÁHIRIH'S LIBRARY IN HER FATHER'S HOME IN QAZVÍN, SHOWING ONE OF HER RELATIVES

guided my howdah[1] all the way to Qazvín. I would, while journeying with you, have aroused you from your sleep of heedlessness and would have shown you the way of truth. But this was not to be. Three years have elapsed since our separation. Neither in this world nor in the next can I ever be associated with you. I have cast you out of my life for ever.' "

So stern and unyielding a reply roused both Mullá Muhammad and his father to a burst of fury. They immediately pronounced her a heretic, and strove day and night to undermine her position and to sully her fame. Ṭáhirih vehemently defended herself and persisted in exposing the depravity of their character.[2] Her father, a peace-loving and fair-minded

[1] See Glossary.

[2] "Comment une femme, créature si faible en Perse, et surtout dans une ville comme Qazvín, où le clergé possède une si grande influence, où les 'ulamás, par leur nombre et leur importance, attirent l'attention du gouvernement et du peuple, comment se peut-il que là, justement, dans des conditions si peu favorables, une femme ait pu organiser un parti si puissant d'hérétiques? C'est là une question qui déconcerte quelque peu même l'historien de la Perse, Sipihr; c'était en effet sans exemple dans le passé." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 474.)

man, deplored this acrimonious dispute and endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation and harmony between them, but failed in his efforts.

This state of tension continued until the time when a certain Mullá 'Abdu'lláh, a native of Shíráz and fervent admirer of both Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim, arrived in Qazvín at the beginning of the month of Ramaḍán, in the year 1263 A.H.[1] Subsequently, in the course of his trial in Ṭihrán, in the presence of the Ṣáḥib-Díván, this same Mullá 'Abdu'lláh recounted the following: "I have never been a convinced Bábí. When I arrived at Qazvín, I was on my way to Máh-Kú, intending to visit the Báb and investigate the nature of His Cause. On the day of my arrival at Qazvín, I became aware that the town was in a great state of turmoil. As I was passing through the market-place, I saw a crowd of ruffians who had stripped a man of his head-dress and shoes, had wound his turban around his neck, and by it were dragging him through the streets. An angry multitude was tormenting him with their threats, their blows and curses. 'His unpardonable guilt,' I was told in answer to my enquiry, 'is that he has dared to extol in public the virtues of Shaykh Aḥmad and Siyyid Káẓim. Accordingly, Ḥájí Mullá Taqí, the Ḥujjatu'l-Islám, has pronounced him a heretic and decreed his expulsion from the town.'

"I was amazed at the explanation given me. How could a shaykhí, I thought to myself, be regarded as a heretic and be deemed worthy of such cruel treatment? Desirous of ascertaining from Mullá Taqí himself the truth of this report, I betook myself to his school and asked whether he had actually pronounced such a condemnation against him. 'Yes,' he bluntly replied, 'the god whom the late Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Baḥraynί worshipped is a god in whom I can never believe. Him as well as his followers I regard as the very embodiments of error.' I was moved that very moment to smite his face in the presence of his assembled disciples. I restrained myself, however, and vowed that, God willing, I would pierce his lips with my spear so that he would never be again able to utter such blasphemy.

"I straightway left his presence and directed my steps

[1] August 13–September 12, 1847 A.D.

towards the market, where I bought a dagger and a spear-head of the sharpest and finest steel. I concealed them in my bosom, ready to gratify the passion that burned within me. I was waiting for my opportunity when, one night, I entered the masjid in which he was wont to lead the congregation in prayer. I waited until the hour of dawn, at which time I saw an old woman enter the masjid, carrying with her a rug, which she spread over the floor of the miḥráb.[1] Soon after, I saw Mullá Taqí enter alone, walk to the miḥráb, and offer his prayer. Cautiously and quietly, I followed him and stood behind him. He was prostrating himself on the floor, when I rushed upon him, drew out my spear-head, and plunged it into the back of his neck. He uttered a loud cry. I threw him on his back and, unsheathing my dagger, drove it hilt-deep into his mouth. With the same dagger, I struck him at several places in his breast and side, and left him bleeding in the mihráb.

"I ascended immediately the roof of the masjid and watched the frenzy and agitation of the multitude. A crowd rushed in and, placing him upon a litter, transported him to his house. Unable to identify the murderer, the people seized the occasion to gratify their basest instincts. They rushed at one another's throats, violently attacked and mutually accused one another in the presence of the governor. Finding out that a large number of innocent people had been gravely molested and thrown into prison, I was impelled by the voice of my conscience to confess my act. I accordingly besought the presence of the governor and said to him: 'If I deliver into your hands the author of this murder, will you promise me to set free all the innocent people who are suffering in his place?' No sooner had I obtained from him the necessary assurance than I confessed to him that I had committed the deed. He was not disposed at first to believe me. At my request, he summoned the old woman who had spread the rug in the miḥráb, but refused to be convinced by the evidence which she gave. I was finally conducted to the bedside of Mullá Taqí, who was on the point of death. As soon as he saw me, he recognised my features. In his agitation, he pointed with his finger to

[1] See Glossary.

me, indicating that I had attacked him. He signified his desire that I be taken away from his presence. Shortly after, he expired. I was immediately arrested, was convicted of murder, and thrown into prison. The governor, however, failed to keep his promise and refused to release the prisoners."

The candour and sincerity of Mullá 'Abdu'lláh greatly pleased the Ṣáḥib-Díván. He gave secret orders to his attendants to enable him to escape from prison. At the hour of midnight, the prisoner took refuge in the home of Riḍá Khán-i-Sardár, who had recently been married to the sister of the Sipah-Sálár, and remained concealed in that house until the great struggle of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, when he determined to throw in his lot with the heroic defenders of the fort. He, as well as Riḍá Khán, who followed him to Mázindarán, quaffed eventually the cup of martyrdom.

The circumstances of the murder fanned to fury the wrath of the lawful heirs of Mullá Taqí, who now determined to wreak their vengeance upon Ṭáhirih. They succeeded in having her placed in the strictest confinement in the house of her father, and charged those women whom they had selected to watch over her, not to allow their captive to leave her room except for the purpose of performing her daily ablutions. They accused her of really being the instigator of the crime. "No one else but you," they asserted, "is guilty of the murder of our father. You issued the order for his assassination." Those whom they had arrested and confined were conducted by them to Ṭihrán and were incarcerated in the home of one of the kad-khudás[1] of the capital. The friends and heirs of Mullá Taqí scattered themselves in all directions, denouncing their captives as the repudiators of the law of Islám and demanding that they be immediately put to death.

Bahá'u'lláh, who was at that time residing in Ṭihrán, was informed of the plight of these prisoners who had been the companions and supporters of Táhirih. As He was already acquainted with the kad-khudá in whose home they were incarcerated, He decided to visit them and intervene in their behalf. That avaricious and deceitful official, who was fully aware of the extreme generosity of Bahá'u'lláh, greatly ex-

[1] See Glossary.

aggerated, in the hope of deriving a substantial pecuniary advantage for himself, the misfortune that had befallen the unhappy captives. "They are destitute of the barest necessities of life," urged the kad-khudá. "They hunger for food, and their clothing is wretchedly scanty." Bahá'u'lláh extended immediate financial assistance for their relief, and urged the kad-khudá to relax the severity of the rule under which they were confined. The latter consented to relieve a few who were unable to support the oppressive weight of their chains, and for the rest did whatever he could to alleviate the rigour of their confinement. Prompted by greed, he informed his superiors of the situation, and emphasised the fact that both food and money were being regularly supplied by Bahá'u'lláh for those who were imprisoned in his house.

These officials were in their turn tempted to derive every possible advantage from the liberality of Bahá'u'lláh. They summoned Him to their presence, protested against His action, and accused Him of complicity in the act for which the captives had been condemned. "The kad-khudá," replied Bahá'u'lláh, "pleaded their cause before Me and enlarged upon their sufferings and needs. He himself bore witness to their innocence and appealed to Me for help. In return for the aid which, in response to his invitation, I was impelled to extend, you now charge Me with a crime of which I am innocent." Hoping to intimidate Bahá'u'lláh by threatening immediate punishment, they refused to allow Him to return to His home. The confinement to which He was subjected was the first affliction that befell Bahá'u'lláh in the path of the Cause of God; the first imprisonment He suffered for the sake of His loved ones. He remained in captivity for a few days, until Ja'far-Qulí Khán, the brother of Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Núrí, who at a later time was appointed Grand Vazír of the Sháh, and a number of other friends intervened in His behalf and, threatening the kad-khudá in severe language, were able to effect His release. Those who had been responsible for His confinement had confidently hoped to receive, in return for His deliverance, the sum of one thousand túmáns,[1] but they soon found out that they were forced to comply with the wishes of Ja'far-Qulí Khán without

[1] See Glossary.

the hope of receiving, either from him or from Bahá'u'lláh, the slightest reward. With profuse apologies and with the utmost regret, they surrendered their Captive into his hands.

The heirs of Mullá Taqí were in the meantime bending every effort to avenge the blood of their distinguished kinsman. Unsatisfied with what they had already accomplished, they directed their appeal to Muḥammad Sháh himself, and endeavoured to win his sympathy to their cause. The Sháh is reported to have returned this answer: "Your father, Mullá Taqí, surely could not have claimed to be superior to the Imám 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful. Did not the latter instruct his disciples that, should he fall a victim to the sword of Ibn-i-Mulḥam, the murderer alone should, by his death, be made to atone for his act, that no one else but he should be put to death? Why should not the murder of your father be similarly avenged? Declare to me his murderer, and I will issue my orders that he be delivered into your hands in order that you may inflict upon him the punishment which he deserves."

The uncompromising attitude of the Sháh induced them to abandon the hopes which they had cherished. They declared Shaykh Ṣálih to be the murderer of their father, obtained his arrest, and ignominiously put him to death. He was the first to shed his blood on Persian soil in the path of the Cause of God; the first of that glorious company destined to seal with their life-blood the triumph of God's holy Faith. As he was being conducted to the scene of his martyrdom, his face glowed with zeal and joy. He hastened to the foot of the gallows and met his executioner as if he were welcoming a dear and lifelong friend. Words of triumph and hope fell unceasingly from his lips. "I discarded," he cried, with exultation, as his end approached, "the hopes and the beliefs of men from the moment I recognised Thee, Thou who art my Hope and my Belief!" His remains were interred in the courtyard of the shrine of the Imám-Zádih Zayd in Ṭihrán.

The unsatiable hatred that animated those who had been responsible for the martyrdom of Shaykh Ṣáliḥ impelled them to seek additional instruments for the furtherance of their designs. Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, whom the Ṣáḥib-Díván had succeeded in convincing of the treacherous conduct of the heirs

of Mullá Taqí, refused to entertain their appeal. Undeterred by his refusal, they submitted their case to the Ṣadr-i-Ardibílí, a man notoriously presumptuous and one of the most arrogant among the ecclesiastical leaders of Persia. "Behold," they pleaded, "the indignity that has been inflicted upon those whose supreme function it is to keep guard over the integrity of the Law. How can you, who are its chief and illustrious exponent, allow so grave an affront to its dignity to remain unpunished? Are you really incapable of avenging the blood of that slaughtered minister of the Prophet of God? Do you not realise that to tolerate such a heinous crime would in itself unloose a flood of calumny against those who are the chief repositories of the teachings and principles of our Faith? Will not your silence embolden the enemies of Islám to shatter the structure which your own hands have reared? As a result, will not your own life be endangered?"

The Ṣadr-i-Ardibílí was sore afraid, and in his impotence sought to beguile his sovereign. He addressed the following request to Muḥammad Sháh: "I would humbly implore your Majesty to allow the captives to accompany the heirs of that martyred leader on their return to Qazvín, that these may, of their own accord, forgive them publicly their action, and enable them to recover their freedom. Such a gesture on their part will considerably enhance their position and will win them the esteem of their countrymen." The Sháh, wholly unaware of the mischievous designs of that crafty plotter, immediately granted his request, on the express condition that a written statement be sent to him from Qazvín assuring him that the condition of the prisoners after their freedom was entirely satisfactory, and that no harm was likely to befall them in the future.

No sooner were the captives delivered into the hands of the mischief-makers than they set about gratifying their feelings of implacable hatred towards them. On the first night after they had been handed over to their enemies, Ḥájí Asadu'lláh, the brother of Ḥájí Alláh-Vardí and paternal uncle of Muḥammad-Hádí and Muḥammad-Javád-i-Farhádí, a noted merchant of Qazvín who had acquired a reputation for piety and uprightness which stood as high as that of his illustrious brother, was mercilessly put to death. Knowing

full well that in his own native town they would be unable to inflict upon him the punishment they desired, they determined to take his life whilst in Ṭihrán in a manner that would protect them from the suspicion of murder. At the hour of midnight, they perpetrated the shameful act, and, the next morning, announced that illness had been the cause of his death. His friends and acquaintances, mostly natives of Qazvín, none of whom had been able to detect the crime that had extinguished such a noble life, accorded him a burial that befitted his station.

The rest of his companions, among whom were Mullá Ṭáhir-i-Shírází and Mullá Ibráhím-i-Maḥallátí, both of whom were greatly esteemed for their learning and character, were savagely put to death immediately after their arrival at Qazvín. The entire population, which had been sedulously instigated beforehand, clamoured for their immediate execution. A band of shameless scoundrels, armed with knives, swords, spears, and axes, fell upon them and tore them to pieces. They mutilated their bodies with such wanton barbarity that no fragment of their scattered members could be found for burial.

Gracious God! Acts of such incredible savagery have been perpetrated in a town like Qazvín, which prides itself on the fact that no less than a hundred of the highest ecclesiastical leaders of Islám dwell within its gates, and yet none could be found among all its inhabitants to raise his voice in protest against such revolting murders! No one seemed to question their right to perpetrate such iniquitous and shameless deeds. No one seemed to be aware of the utter incompatibility between such ferocious deeds committed by those who claimed to be the sole repositories of the mysteries of Islám, and the exemplary conduct of those who first manifested its light to the world. No one was moved to exclaim indignantly: "O evil and perverse generation! To what depths of infamy and shame you have sunk! Have not the abominations which you have wrought surpassed in their ruthlessness the acts of the basest of men? Will you not recognise that neither the beasts of the field nor any moving thing on earth has ever equalled the ferociousness of your acts? How long is your heedlessness to last? Is it not your

belief that the efficacy of every congregational prayer is dependent upon the integrity of him who leads that prayer? Have you not again and again declared that no such prayer is acceptable in the sight of God until and unless the imám who leads the congregation has purged his heart from every trace of malice? And yet you deem those who instigate and share in the performance of such atrocities to be the true leaders of your Faith, the very embodiments of fairness and justice. Have you not committed to their hands the reins of your Cause and regarded them as the masters of your destinies?"

The news of this outrage reached Ṭihrán and spread with bewildering rapidity throughout the city. Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí vehemently protested. "In what passage of the Qur'án," he is reported to have exclaimed, "in which tradition of Muḥammad, has the massacre of a number of people been justified in order to avenge the murder of a single person?" Muḥammad Sháh also expressed his strong disapproval of the treacherous conduct of the Ṣadr-i-Ardibílí and his confederates. He denounced his cowardice, banished him from the capital, and condemned him to a life of obscurity in Qum. His degradation from office pleased immensely the Grand Vazír, who had hitherto laboured in vain to bring about his downfall, and whom his sudden removal from Ṭihrán relieved of the apprehensions which the extension of his authority had inspired. His own denunciation of the massacre of Qazvín was prompted, not so much by his sympathy with the Cause of the defenceless victims, as by his hope of involving the Ṣadr-i-Ardibílí in such embarrassments as would inevitably disgrace him in the eyes of his sovereign.

The failure of the Sháh and of his government to inflict immediate punishment upon the malefactors encouraged them to seek further means for the gratification of their relentless hatred towards their opponents. They now directed their attention to Ṭáhirih herself, and resolved that she should suffer at their hands the same fate that had befallen her companions. While still in confinement, Ṭáhirih, as soon as she was informed of the designs of her enemies, addressed the following message to Mullá Muḥammad, who had succeeded to the position of his father and was now recognised

as the Imám-Jum'ih of Qazvín: " 'Fain would they put out God's light with their mouths: but God only desireth to perfect His light, albeit the infidels abhor it.'[1] If my Cause be the Cause of Truth, if the Lord whom I worship be none other than the one true God, He will, ere nine days have elapsed, deliver me from the yoke of your tyranny. Should He fail to achieve my deliverance, you are free to act as you desire. You will have irrevocably established the falsity of my belief." Mullá Muḥammad, recognising his inability to accept so bold a challenge, chose to ignore entirely her message, and sought by every cunning device to accomplish his purpose.

In those days, ere the hour which Ṭáhirih had fixed for her deliverance had struck, Bahá'u'lláh signified His wish that she should be delivered from her captivity and brought to Ṭihrán. He determined to establish, in the eyes of the adversary, the truth of her words, and to frustrate the schemes which her enemies had conceived for her death. Muḥammad-Hádíy-i-Farhádí was accordingly summoned by Him and was entrusted with the task of effecting her immediate transference to His own home in Ṭihrán. Muḥammad-Hádí was charged to deliver a sealed letter to his wife, Khátún-Ján, and instruct her to proceed, in the guise of a beggar, to the house where Ṭáhirih was confined; to deliver the letter into her hands; to wait awhile at the entrance of her house, until she should join her, and then to hasten with her and commit her to his care. "As soon as Ṭáhirih has joined you," Bahá'u'lláh urged the emissary, "start immediately for Ṭihrán. This very night, I shall despatch to the neighbourhood of the gate of Qazvín an attendant, with three horses, that you will take with you and station at a place that you will appoint outside the walls of Qazvín. You will conduct Ṭáhirih to that spot, will mount the horses, and will, by an unfrequented route, endeavour to reach at daybreak the outskirts of the capital. As soon as the gates are opened, you must enter the city and proceed immediately to My house. You should exercise the utmost caution lest her identity be disclosed. The Almighty will assuredly guide your steps and will surround you with His unfailing protection."

[1] Qur'án, 9: 33.

Fortified by the assurance of Bahá'u'lláh, Muḥammad-Hádí set out immediately to carry out the instructions he had received. Unhampered by any obstacle, he, ably and faithfully, acquitted himself of his task, and was able to conduct Ṭáhirih safely, at the appointed hour, to the home of his Master. Her sudden and mysterious removal from Qazvín filled her friends and foes alike with consternation. The whole night, they searched the houses and were baffled in their efforts to find her. The fulfilment of the prediction she had uttered astounded even the most sceptical among her opponents. A few were made to realise the supernatural character of the Faith she had espoused, and submitted willingly to its claims. Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, her own brother, acknowledged, that very day, the truth of the Revelation, but failed to demonstrate subsequently by his acts the sincerity of his belief.[1]

The hour which Ṭáhirih had fixed for her deliverance found her already securely established under the sheltering shadow of Bahá'u'lláh. She knew full well into whose presence she had been admitted; she was profoundly aware of the sacredness of the hospitality she had been so graciously accorded.[2] As it was with her acceptance of the Faith proclaimed by the Báb when she, unwarned and unsummoned, had hailed His Message and recognised its truth, so did she perceive through her own intuitive knowledge the future glory of Bahá'u'lláh. It was in the year '60, while in Karbilá, that she alluded in her odes to her recognition of the Truth He was to reveal. I have myself been shown in Ṭihrán, in the

[1] According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghiṭá'" (p. 110), Mullá Ḥusayn is reported by Mullá Ja'far-i-Vá'iẓ-i-Qazvíní to have met Ṭáhirih in Qazvín at the home of Áqá Hádí, who is probably none other than Muḥammad Hádíy-i-Farhádí, who was commissioned by Bahá'u'lláh to conduct Ṭáhirih to Ṭihrán. The meeting is stated to have taken place prior to the murder of Mullá Taqí.

[2] 'Abdu'l-Bahá relates, in the "Memorials of the Faithful" (p. 306), the circumstances of a visit paid by Vaḥíd to Ṭáhirih, while the latter was staying in the home of Bahá'u'lláh in Ṭihrán. "Ṭáhirih," He writes, "was listening from behind the veil to the utterances of Vaḥíd, who was discoursing with fervour and eloquence on the signs and verses that bore witness to the advent of the new Manifestation. I was then a child and was sitting on her lap, as she followed the recital of the remarkable testimonies which flowed ceaselessly from the lips of that learned man. I well remember how she suddenly interrupted 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.'"

home of Siyyid Muḥammad, whom Ṭáhirih had styled Fata'l-Malíḥ, the verses which she, in her own handwriting, had penned, every letter of which bore eloquent testimony to her faith in the exalted Missions of both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. In that ode the following verse occurs: "The effulgence of the Abhá Beauty hath pierced the veil of night; behold the souls of His lovers dancing, mote-like, in the light that has flashed from His face!" It was her steadfast conviction in the unconquerable power of Bahá'u'lláh that prompted her to utter her prediction with such confidence, and to fling her challenge so boldly in the face of her enemies. Nothing short of an immovable faith in the unfailing efficacy of that power could have induced her, in the darkest hours of her captivity, to assert with such courage and assurance the approach of her victory.

A few days after Ṭáhirih's arrival at Ṭihrán, Bahá'u'lláh decided to send her to Khurásán in the company of the believers who were preparing to depart for that province. He too had determined to leave the capital and take the same direction a few days later. He accordingly summoned Áqáy-i-Kalím and instructed him to take immediately the necessary measures to ensure the removal of Ṭáhirih, together with her woman attendant, Qánitih, to a place outside the gate of the capital, from whence they were, later on, to proceed to Khurásán. He cautioned him to exercise the utmost care and vigilance lest the guards who were stationed at the entrance of the city, and who had been ordered to refuse the passage of women through the gates without a permit, should discover her identity and prevent her departure.

I have heard Áqáy-i-Kalím recount the following: "Putting our trust in God, we rode out, Ṭáhirih, her attendant, and I, to a place in the vicinity of the capital. None of the guards who were stationed at the gate of Shimírán raised the slightest objection, nor did they enquire regarding our destination. At a distance of two farsangs[1] from the capital, we alighted in the midst of an orchard abundantly watered and situated at the foot of a mountain, in the centre of which was a house that seemed completely deserted. As I went about in search of the proprietor, I chanced to meet an old

[1] See Glossary.

man who was watering his plants. In answer to my enquiry, he explained that a dispute had arisen between the owner and his tenants, as a result of which those who occupied the place had deserted it. 'I have been asked by the owner,' he added, 'to keep guard over this property until the settlement of the dispute.' I was greatly delighted with the information he gave me, and asked him to share with us our luncheon. When, later in the day, I decided to depart for Ṭihrán, I found him willing to watch over and guard Ṭáhirih and her attendant. As I committed them to his care, I assured him that I would either myself return that evening or send a trusted attendant whom I would follow the next morning with all the necessary requirements for the journey to Khurásán.

"Upon my arrival at Ṭihrán, I despatched Mullá Báqir, one of the Letters of the Living, together with an attendant, to join Ṭáhirih. I informed Bahá'u'lláh of her safe departure from the capital. He was greatly pleased at the information I gave Him, and named that orchard 'Bágh-i-Jannat.'[1] 'That house,' He remarked, 'has been providentially prepared for your reception, that you may entertain in it the loved ones of God.'

"Ṭáhirih tarried seven days in that spot, after which she set out, accompanied by Muḥammad-Ḥasan-i-Qazvíní, surnamed Fatá, and a few others, in the direction of Khurásán. I was commanded by Bahá'u'lláh to arrange for her departure and to provide whatever might be required for her journey."

[1] "Garden of Paradise."

CHAPTER XVI

THE CONFERENCE OF BADASHT

SOON after Ṭáhirih had started on her journey, Bahá'u'lláh instructed Áqáy-i-Kalím to complete the necessary preparations for His contemplated departure for Khurásán. He committed to his care His family and asked him to provide whatever might be conducive to their well-being and safety.

When He arrived at Sháh-Rúd, He was met by Quddús, who had left Mashhad, where he had been residing, and had come to welcome Him as soon as he had heard of His approach. The whole province of Khurásán was in those days in the throes of a violent agitation. The activities which Quddús and Mullá Ḥusayn had initiated, their zeal, their courage, their outspoken language, had aroused the people from their lethargy, had kindled in the hearts of some the noblest sentiments of faith and devotion, and had provoked in the breasts of others the instincts of passionate fanaticism and malice. A multitude of seekers constantly poured from every direction into Mashhad, eagerly sought the residence of Mullá Ḥusayn, and through him were ushered into the presence of Quddús.

Their numbers soon swelled to such proportions as to excite the apprehension of the authorities. The chief constable viewed with concern and dismay the crowds of agitated people who streamed unceasingly into every quarter of the holy city. In his desire to assert his rights, intimidate Mullá Ḥusayn, and induce him to curtail the scope of his activities, he issued orders to arrest immediately the latter's special attendant, whose name was Ḥasan, and subject him to cruel and shameful treatment. They pierced his nose, passed a cord through the incision, and with this halter led and paraded him through the streets.

Mullá Ḥusayn was in the presence of Quddús when the news of the disgraceful affliction that had befallen his servant

reached him. Fearing lest this sad intelligence might grieve the heart of his beloved chief, he arose and quietly retired. His companions soon gathered round him, expressed their indignation at this outrageous assault upon so innocent a follower of their Faith, and urged him to avenge the insult. Mullá Ḥusayn tried to appease their anger. "Let not," he pleaded, "the indignity that has befallen Ḥasan afflict and disturb you, for Ḥusayn is still with you and will safely deliver him back into your hands to-morrow."

In the face of so solemn an assurance, his companions ventured no further remarks. Their hearts, however, burned with impatience to redress that bitter injury. A number of them eventually decided to band themselves together and loudly raise, through the streets of Mashhad, the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!"[1] as a protest against this sudden affront to the dignity of their Faith. That cry was the first of its kind to be raised in Khurásán in the name of the Cause of God. The city re-echoed with the sound of those voices. The reverberations of their shouts reached even the most outlying regions of the province, raised a great tumult in the hearts of the people, and were the signal for the tremendous happenings that were destined to transpire in the future.

In the midst of the confusion that ensued, those who were holding the halter with which they dragged Ḥasan through the streets, perished by the sword. The companions of Mullá Ḥusayn conducted the released captive into the presence of their leader and informed him of the fate that had befallen the oppressor. "You have refused," Mullá Ḥusayn is reported to have remarked, "to tolerate the trials to which Ḥasan has been subjected; how can you reconcile yourselves to the martyrdom of Ḥusayn?"[2]

The city of Mashhad, which had just recovered its peace and tranquillity after the rebellion that the Sálár had provoked, was plunged again into confusion and distress. Prince Ḥamzih Mírzá was stationed with his men and munitions at a distance of four farsangs[3] from the city, ready to face whatever emergency might arise when the news of these fresh disturbances suddenly reached him. He immediately

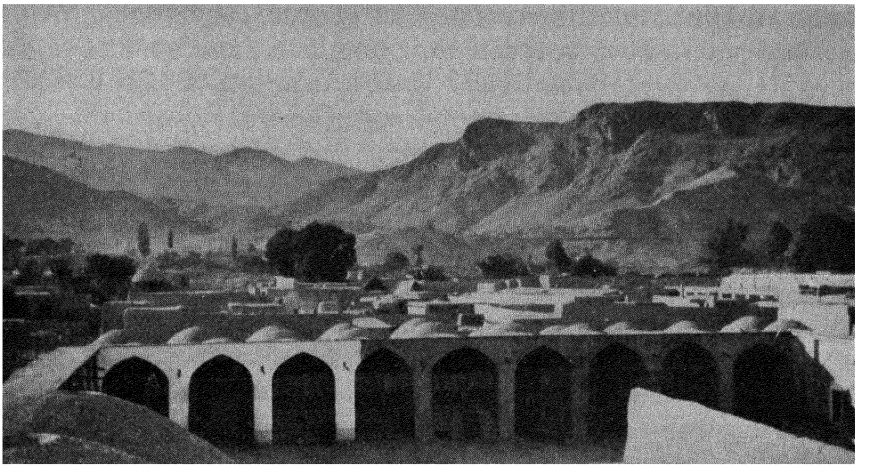
[1] "O Lord of the Age!" one of the titles of the promised Qá'im.
[2] Allusion to his own martyrdom. [3] See Glossary.

despatched a detachment to the city with instructions to obtain the assistance of the governor for the arrest of Mullá Ḥusayn, and to conduct him into his presence. 'Abdu'l-'Alí Khán-i-Marághiyí, the captain of the prince's artillery, immediately intervened. "I deem myself," he pleaded, "one among the lovers and admirers of Mullá Ḥusayn. If you contemplate inflicting any harm upon him, I pray you to take my life and then to proceed to execute your design; for I cannot, so long as I live, tolerate the least disrespect towards him."

The prince, who knew full well how much he stood in need of that officer, was greatly embarrassed at this unexpected declaration. "I too have met Mullá Ḥusayn," was his reply as he tried to remove the apprehension of 'Abdu'l-'Alí Khán. "I too cherish the utmost devotion to him. By summoning him to my camp, I am hoping to restrict the scope of the mischief which has been kindled and to safeguard his person." The prince then addressed in his own handwriting a letter to Mullá Ḥusayn in which he urged the extreme desirability of his transferring his residence for a few days to his headquarters, and assured him of his sincere desire to shield him from the attacks of his infuriated opponents. He gave orders that his own highly ornamented tent be pitched in the vicinity of his camp and be reserved for the reception of his expected guest.

On the receipt of this communication, Mullá Ḥusayn presented it to Quddús, who advised him to respond to the invitation of the prince. "No harm can befall you," Quddús assured him. "As to me, I shall this very night set out in the company of Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Qazvíní, one of the Letters of the Living, for Mázindarán. Please God, you too, later on, at the head of a large company of the faithful and preceded by the 'Black Standards,' will depart from Mashhad and join me. We shall meet at whatever place the Almighty will have decreed."

Mullá Husayn joyously responded. He threw himself at the feet of Quddús and assured him of his firm determination to discharge with fidelity the obligations which he had imposed upon him. Quddús lovingly took him in his arms and, kissing his eyes and his forehead, committed him to the



VILLAGE OF SHÁH-RÚD

Almighty's unfailing protection. Early that same afternoon, Mullá Ḥusayn mounted his steed and rode out with dignity and calm to the encampment of Prince Ḥamzih Mírzá, and was ceremoniously conducted by 'Abdu'l-'Alí Khán, who, together with a number of officers, had been appointed by the prince to go out and welcome him, to the tent that had been specially erected for his use.

That very night, Quddús summoned to his presence Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir-i-Qá'iní, who had built the Bábíyyih, together with a number of the most prominent among his companions, and enjoined upon them to bear unquestioned allegiance to Mullá Ḥusayn and to obey implicitly whatever he might wish them to do. "Tempestuous are the storms which lie ahead of us," he told them. "The days of stress and violent commotion are fast approaching. Cleave to him, for in obedience to his command lies your salvation."

With these words, Quddús bade farewell to his companions and, accompanied by Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Qazvíní, departed from Mashhad. A few days later, he encountered Mírzá Sulaymán-i-Núrí, who informed him of the circumstances attending the deliverance of Ṭáhirih from her confinement in Qazvín, of her journey in the direction of Khurásán, and of Bahá'u'lláh's subsequent departure from the capital. Mírzá Sulaymán, as well as Mírzá Muḥammad-

'Alí, remained in the company of Quddús until their arrival at Badasht. They reached that hamlet at the hour of dawn, and found there assembled a large gathering of people whom they recognised as their fellow-believers. They decided, however, to resume their journey, and proceeded directly to Sháh-Rúd. As they were approaching that village, Mírzá Sulaymán, who was following at a distance behind them, encountered Muḥammad-i-Ḥaná-Sáb, who was on his way to Badasht. In answer to his enquiry as to the object of that gathering, Mírzá Sulaymán was informed that Bahá'u'lláh and Ṭáhirih had, a few days before, left Sháh-Rúd for that hamlet; that a large number of believers had already arrived from Iṣfáhán, Qazvín, and other towns of Persia, and were waiting to accompany Bahá'u'lláh on His intended journey to Khurásán. "Tell Mullá Ahmad-i-Ibdál, who is now in Badasht," Mírzá Sulaymán remarked, "that this very morning a light has shone upon you, the radiance of which you have failed to recognise."[1]

No sooner had Bahá'u'lláh been informed by Muḥammad-i-Ḥaná-Sáb of the arrival of Quddús at Sháh-Rúd than He decided to join him. Attended by Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mu'allim-i-Núrí, He set out on horseback that same evening for that village, and had returned with Quddús to Badasht the next morning at the hour of sunrise.

It was then the beginning of summer. Upon His arrival, Bahá'u'lláh rented three gardens, one of which He assigned exclusively to the use of Quddús, another He set apart for Ṭáhirih and her attendant, and reserved the third for Himself.

[1] Allusion to Quddús.



HAMLET OF BADASHT

Those who had gathered in Badasht were eighty-one in number, all of whom, from the time of their arrival to the day of their dispersion, were the guests of Bahá'u'lláh. Every day, He revealed a Tablet which Mírzá Sulaymán-i-Núrí chanted in the presence of the assembled believers. Upon each He bestowed a new name. He Himself was henceforth designated by the name of Bahá; upon the Last Letter of the Living was conferred the appellation of Quddús, and to Qurratu'l-'Ayn was given the title of Ṭáhirih. To each of those who had convened at Badasht a special Tablet was subsequently revealed by the Báb, each of whom He addressed by the name recently conferred upon him. When, at a later time, a number of the more rigid and conservative among her fellow-disciples chose to accuse Ṭáhirih of indiscreetly rejecting the time-honoured traditions of the past, the Báb, to whom these complaints had been addressed, replied in the following terms: "What am I to say regarding her whom the Tongue of Power and Glory has named Ṭáhirih [the Pure One]?"

Each day of that memorable gathering witnessed the abrogation of a new law and the repudiation of a long-established tradition. The veils that guarded the sanctity of the ordinances of Islám were sternly rent asunder, and the idols that had so long claimed the adoration of their blind worshippers were rudely demolished. No one knew, however, the Source whence these bold and defiant innovations proceeded, no one suspected the Hand which steadily and unerringly steered their course. Even the identity of Him who had bestowed a new name upon each of those who had congregated in that hamlet remained unknown to those who had received them. Each conjectured according to his own degree of understanding. Few, if any, dimly surmised that Bahá'u'lláh was the Author of the far-reaching changes which were being so fearlessly introduced.

Shaykh Abú-Turáb, one of the best-informed as to the nature of the developments in Badasht, is reported to have related the following incident: "Illness, one day, confined Bahá'u'lláh to His bed. Quddús, as soon as he heard of His indisposition, hastened to visit Him. He seated himself, when ushered into His presence, on the right hand of

Bahá'u'lláh. The rest of the companions were gradually admitted to His presence, and grouped themselves around Him. No sooner had they assembled than Muhammad-Ḥasan-i-Qazvíní, the messenger of Ṭáhirih, upon whom the name of Fata'l-Qazvíní had been newly conferred, suddenly came in and conveyed to Quddús a pressing invitation from Ṭáhirih to visit her in her own garden. 'I have severed myself entirely from her,' he boldly and decisively replied. 'I refuse to meet her.'[1] The messenger retired immediately, and soon returned, reiterating the same message and appealing to him to heed her urgent call. 'She insists on your visit,' were his words. 'If you persist in your refusal, she herself will come to you.' Perceiving his unyielding attitude, the messenger unsheathed his sword, laid it at the feet of Quddús, and said: 'I refuse to go without you. Either choose to accompany me to the presence of Ṭáhirih or cut off my head with this sword.' 'I have already declared my intention not to visit Ṭáhirih,' Quddús angrily retorted. 'I am willing to comply with the alternative which you have chosen to put before me.'

"Muḥammad-Ḥasan, who had seated himself at the feet of Quddús, had stretched forth his neck to receive the fatal blow, when suddenly the figure of Ṭáhirih, adorned and unveiled, appeared before the eyes of the assembled companions. Consternation immediately seized the entire gathering.[2] All stood aghast before this sudden and most unex-

[1] According to the "Kashfu'l-Ghitá'," a decision had been previously arrived at between Quddús and Ṭáhirih, in accordance with which the latter was to proclaim publicly the independent character of the Revelation of the Báb, and to emphasise the abrogation of the laws and ordinances of the previous Dispensation. Quddús, on the other hand, was expected to oppose her contention and strenuously to reject her views. This arrangement was made for the purpose of mitigating the effects of such a challenging and far-reaching proclamation, and of averting the dangers and perils which such a startling innovation was sure to produce. (P. 211.) Bahá'u'lláh appears to have taken a neutral attitude in this controversy, though actually He was the prime mover and the controlling and directing influence throughout the different stages of that memorable episode.

[2] "Mais l'effet produit avait été foudroyant. Les uns se cachèrent la face avec leurs mains, d'autres se prosternèrent, d'autres s'enveloppèrent la tête de leur vêtement pour ne point voir le visage de son Altesse la Pure. Si regarder le visage d'une femme inconnue et qui passe est un grave péché, quel crime n'était-ce pas que de porter les yeux sur la sainte qu'elle était. . . . La séance fut levée au milieu d'un tumulte indescriptible. Les injures pleuvaient à l'adresse de la femme assez indécente pour se montrer ainsi à visage découvert, les uns affirmèrent qu'elle était devenue subitement folle, les autres que c'était une dévergondée, quelques-uns bien rares prirent sa défense." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 283–4.)

pected apparition. To behold her face unveiled was to them inconceivable. Even to gaze at her shadow was a thing which they deemed improper, inasmuch as they regarded her as the very incarnation of Fáṭimih,[1] the noblest emblem of chastity in their eyes.

"Quietly, silently, and with the utmost dignity, Ṭáhirih stepped forward and, advancing towards Quddús, seated herself on his right-hand side. Her unruffled serenity sharply contrasted with the affrighted countenances of those who were gazing upon her face. Fear, anger, and bewilderment stirred the depths of their souls. That sudden revelation seemed to have stunned their faculties. 'Abdu'l-Kháliq-i-Iṣfáhání was so gravely shaken that he cut his throat with his own hands. Covered with blood and shrieking with excitement, he fled away from the face of Ṭáhirih. A few, following his example, abandoned their companions and forsook their Faith. A number were seen standing speechless before her, confounded with wonder. Quddús, meanwhile, had remained seated in his place, holding the unsheathed sword in his hand, his face betraying a feeling of inexpressible anger. It seemed as if he were waiting for the moment when he could strike his fatal blow at Ṭáhirih.

"His threatening attitude failed, however, to move her. Her countenance displayed that same dignity and confidence which she had evinced at the first moment of her appearance before the assembled believers. A feeling of joy and triumph had now illumined her face. She rose from her seat and, undeterred by the tumult that she had raised in the hearts of her companions, began to address the remnant of that assembly. Without the least premeditation, and in language which bore a striking resemblance to that of the Qur'án, she delivered her appeal with matchless eloquence and profound fervour. She concluded her address with this verse of the Qur'án: 'Verily, amid gardens and rivers shall the pious dwell in the seat of truth, in the presence of the potent King.' As she uttered these words, she cast a furtive glance towards both Bahá'u'lláh and Quddús in such a manner that those who were watching her were unable to tell to which of the two she was alluding. Immediately

[1] Daughter of Muḥammad, and wife of the Imám 'Alí.

discarded. A great confusion, however, prevailed among those who had so zealously arisen to advocate these reforms. A few condemned so radical a change as being the essence of heresy, and refused to annul what they regarded as the inviolable precepts of Islám. Some regarded Ṭáhirih as the sole judge in such matters and the only person qualified to claim implicit obedience from the faithful. Others who denounced her behaviour held to Quddús, whom they regarded as the sole representative of the Báb, the only one who had the right to pronounce upon such weighty matters. Still others who recognised the authority of both Ṭáhirih and Quddús viewed the whole episode as a God-sent test designed to separate the true from the false and distinguish the faithful from the disloyal.

Ṭáhirih herself ventured on a few occasions to repudiate the authority of Quddús. "I deem him," she is reported to have declared, "a pupil whom the Báb has sent me to edify and instruct. I regard him in no other light." Quddús did not fail, on his part, to denounce Ṭáhirih as "the author of heresy," and stigmatised those who advocated her views as "the victims of error." This state of tension persisted for a few days until Bahá'u'lláh intervened and, in His masterly manner, effected a complete reconciliation between them. He healed the wounds which that sharp controversy had caused, and directed the efforts of both along the path of constructive service.[1]

The object of that memorable gathering had been attained.[2] The clarion-call of the new Order had been sounded.

[1] "It was this bold act of Qurratu'l-'Ayn which shook the foundations of a literal belief in Islamic doctrines among the Persians. It may be added that the first-fruits of Qurratu'l-'Ayn's teaching was no one less than the heroic Quddús, and that the eloquent teacher herself owed her insight probably to Bahá'u'lláh. Of course, the supposition that her greatest friend might censure her is merely a delightful piece of irony." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp. 103–4.)

[2] "It has been suggested that the true cause of the summoning of that assembly was anxiety for the Báb, and a desire to carry him off to a place of safety. But the more accepted view—that the subject before the Council was the relation of the Bábís to the Islamic laws—is also the more probable." (*Ibid.*, p. 80.) "The object of the conference was to correct a widespread misunderstanding. There were many who thought that the new leader came, in the most literal sense, to fulfil the Islamic Law. They realised, indeed, that the object of Muḥammad was to bring about an universal kingdom of righteousness and peace, but they thought this was to be effected by wading through streams of blood, and with the help of the divine judgments. The Báb, on the other hand, though not always consistent, was moving, with some of his disciples, in the direction of moral suasion; his only weapon was 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' When the Qá'im appeared all things

discarded. A great confusion, however, prevailed among those who had so zealously arisen to advocate these reforms. A few condemned so radical a change as being the essence of heresy, and refused to annul what they regarded as the inviolable precepts of Islám. Some regarded Ṭáhirih as the sole judge in such matters and the only person qualified to claim implicit obedience from the faithful. Others who denounced her behaviour held to Quddús, whom they regarded as the sole representative of the Báb, the only one who had the right to pronounce upon such weighty matters. Still others who recognised the authority of both Ṭáhirih and Quddús viewed the whole episode as a God-sent test designed to separate the true from the false and distinguish the faithful from the disloyal.

Ṭáhirih herself ventured on a few occasions to repudiate the authority of Quddús. "I deem him," she is reported to have declared, "a pupil whom the Báb has sent me to edify and instruct. I regard him in no other light." Quddús did not fail, on his part, to denounce Ṭáhirih as "the author of heresy," and stigmatised those who advocated her views as "the victims of error." This state of tension persisted for a few days until Bahá'u'lláh intervened and, in His masterly manner, effected a complete reconciliation between them. He healed the wounds which that sharp controversy had caused, and directed the efforts of both along the path of constructive service.[1]

The object of that memorable gathering had been attained.[2] The clarion-call of the new Order had been sounded.

[1] "It was this bold act of Qurratu'l-'Ayn which shook the foundations of a literal belief in Islamic doctrines among the Persians. It may be added that the first-fruits of Qurratu'l-'Ayn's teaching was no one less than the heroic Quddús, and that the eloquent teacher herself owed her insight probably to Bahá'u'lláh. Of course, the supposition that her greatest friend might censure her is merely a delightful piece of irony." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp. 103–4.)

[2] "It has been suggested that the true cause of the summoning of that assembly was anxiety for the Báb, and a desire to carry him off to a place of safety. But the more accepted view—that the subject before the Council was the relation of the Bábís to the Islamic laws—is also the more probable." (*Ibid.*, p. 80.) "The object of the conference was to correct a widespread misunderstanding. There were many who thought that the new leader came, in the most literal sense, to fulfil the Islamic Law. They realised, indeed, that the object of Muḥammad was to bring about an universal kingdom of righteousness and peace, but they thought this was to be effected by wading through streams of blood, and with the help of the divine judgments. The Báb, on the other hand, though not always consistent, was moving, with some of his disciples, in the direction of moral suasion; his only weapon was 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' When the Qá'im appeared all things

The obsolete conventions which had fettered the consciences of men were boldly challenged and fearlessly swept away. The way was clear for the proclamation of the laws and precepts that were destined to usher in the new Dispensation. The remnant of the companions who had gathered in Badasht accordingly decided to depart for Mázindarán. Quddús and Táhirih seated themselves in the same howdah,[1] which had been prepared for their journey by Bahá'u'lláh. On their way, Ṭáhirih each day composed an ode which she instructed those who accompanied her to chant as they followed her howdah. Mountain and valley re-echoed the shouts with which that enthusiastic band, as they journeyed to Mázindarán, hailed the extinction of the old, and the birth of the new Day.

Bahá'u'lláh's sojourn in Badasht lasted two and twenty days. In the course of their journey to Mázindarán, a few of the followers of the Báb sought to abuse the liberty which the repudiation of the laws and sanctions of an outgrown Faith had conferred upon them. They viewed the unprecedented action of Ṭáhirih in discarding the veil as a signal to transgress the bounds of moderation and to gratify their selfish desires. The excesses in which a few indulged provoked the wrath of the Almighty and caused their immediate dispersion. In the village of Níyálá, they were grievously tested and suffered severe injuries at the hands of their enemies. This scattering extinguished the mischief which a few of the irresponsible among the adherents of the Faith had sought to kindle, and preserved untarnished its honour and dignity.

I have heard Bahá'u'lláh Himself describe that incident:

would be renewed. But the Qá'im was on the point of appearing, and all that remained was to prepare for his Coming. No more should there be any distinction between higher and lower races, or between male and female. No more should the long, enveloping veil be the badge of woman's inferiority. The gifted woman before us had her own characteristic solution of the problem. . . . It is said in one form of tradition, that Qurratu'l-'Ayn herself attended the conference with a veil on. If so, she lost no time in discarding it, and broke out (we are told) into the fervid exclamation, 'I am the blast of the trumpet, I am the call of the bugle,' i.e. 'Like Gabriel, I would awaken sleeping souls.' It is said, too, that this short speech of the brave woman was follwed by the recitation by Bahá'u'lláh of the Súrih of the Resurrection (75). Such recitations often have an overpowering effect. The inner meaning of this was that mankind was about to pass into a new cosmic cycle, for which a new set of laws and customs would be indispensable." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp. 101–3.)

[1] Refer to Glossary.

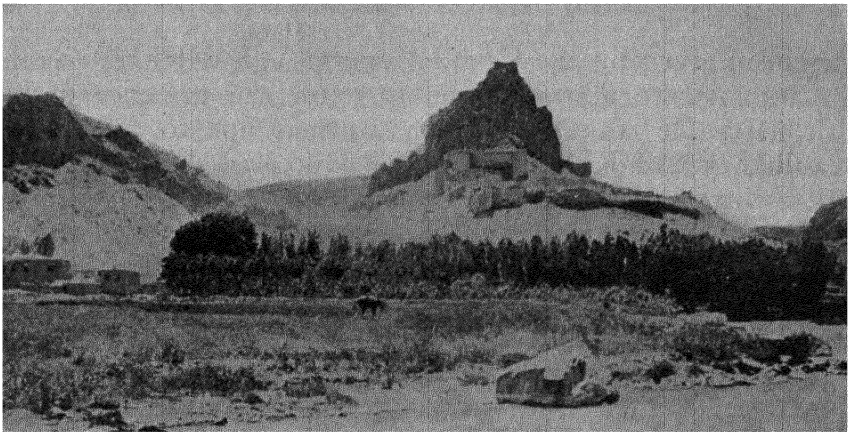
"We were all gathered in the village of Níyálá and were resting at the foot of a mountain, when, at the hour of dawn, we were suddenly awakened by the stones which the people of the neighbourhood were hurling upon us from the top of the mountain. The fierceness of their attack induced our companions to flee in terror and consternation. I clothed Quddús in my own garments and despatched him to a place of safety, where I intended to join him. When I arrived, I found that he had gone. None of our companions had remained in Níyálá except Ṭáhirih and a young man from Shíráz, Mírzá 'Abdu'lláh. The violence with which we were assailed had brought desolation into our camp. I found no one into whose custody I could deliver Ṭáhirih except that young man, who displayed on that occasion a courage and determination that were truly surprising. Sword in hand, undaunted by the savage assault of the inhabitants of the village, who had rushed to plunder our property, he sprang forward to stay the hand of the assailants. Though himself wounded in several parts of his body, he risked his life to protect our property. I bade him desist from his act. When the tumult had subsided, I approached a number of the inhabitants of the village and was able to convince them of the cruelty and shamefulness of their behaviour. I subsequently succeeded in restoring a part of our plundered property."

Bahá'u'lláh, accompanied by Ṭáhirih and her attendant, proceeded to Núr. He appointed Shaykh Abú-Turáb to watch over her and ensure her protection and safety. Meanwhile the mischief-makers were endeavouring to kindle the anger of Muḥammad Sháh against Bahá'u'lláh, and, by representing Him as the prime mover of the disturbances of Sháh-Rúd and Mázindarán, succeeded eventually in inducing the sovereign to have Him arrested. "I have hitherto," the Sháh is reported to have angrily remarked, "refused to countenance whatever has been said against him. My indulgence has been actuated by my recognition of the services rendered to my country by his father. This time, however, I am determined to put him to death."

He accordingly commanded one of his officers in Ṭihrán to instruct his son who was residing in Mázindarán to arrest

Bahá'u'lláh and to conduct Him to the capital. The son of this officer received the communication on the very day preceding the reception which he had prepared to offer to Bahá'u'lláh, to whom he was devotedly attached. He was greatly distressed and did not divulge the news to anyone. Bahá'u'lláh, however, perceived his sadness and advised him to put his trust in God. The next day, as He was being accompanied by His friend to his home, they encountered a horseman who was coming from the direction of Ṭihrán. "Muḥammad Sháh is dead!" that friend exclaimed in the Mázindaráni dialect, as he hastened to rejoin Him after a brief conversation with the messenger. He drew out the imperial summons and showed it to Him. The document had lost its efficacy. That night was spent in the company of his guest in an atmosphere of undisturbed calm and gladness.

Quddús had in the meantime fallen into the hands of his opponents, and was confined in Sárí in the home of Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, the leading mujtahid of that town. The rest of his companions, after their dispersal in Níyálá, had scattered in different directions, each carrying with him to his fellow-believers the news of the momentous happenings of Badasht.



CASTLE OF CHIHRÍQ

CHAPTER XVII

THE BÁB'S INCARCERATION IN THE CASTLE OF CHIHRÍQ

THE incident of Níyálá occurred in the middle of the month of Sha'bán, in the year 1264 A.H.[1] Towards the end of that same month, the Báb was brought to Tabríz, where He suffered at the hands of His oppressors a severe and humiliating injury. That deliberate affront to His dignity almost synchronised with the attack which the inhabitants of Níyálá directed against Bahá'u'lláh and His companions. The one was pelted with stones by an ignorant and pugnacious people; the other was afflicted with stripes by a cruel and treacherous enemy.

I shall now relate the circumstances that led to that odious indignity which the persecutors of the Báb chose to inflict upon Him. He had, in pursuance of the orders issued by Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, been transferred to the castle of Chihríq[2] and consigned to the keeping of Yaḥyá Khán-i-Kurd, whose sister was the wife of Muḥammad Sháh, the mother of the Náyibu's-Salṭanih. Strict and explicit instructions

[1] July 3–August 1, 1848 A.D.

[2] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 18), the Báb remained for three months in the castle of Chihríq before He was taken to Tabríz to be examined.

had been given by the Grand Vazír to Yahyá Khán, enjoining him not to allow anyone to enter the presence of his Prisoner. He was particularly warned not to follow the example of 'Alí Khán-i-Máh-Kú'í, who had gradually been led to disregard the orders he had received.[1]

Despite the emphatic character of that injunction, and in the face of the unyielding opposition of the all-powerful Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, Yaḥyá Khán found himself powerless to abide by those instructions. He, too, soon came to feel the fascination of his Prisoner; he, too, forgot, as soon as he came into contact with His spirit, the duty he was expected to perform. At the very outset, the love of the Báb penetrated his heart and claimed his entire being. The Kurds who lived in Chihríq, and whose fanaticism and hatred of the shí'ahs exceeded the aversion which the inhabitants of Máh-Kú entertained for that people, were likewise subjected to the transforming influence of the Báb. Such was the love He had kindled in their hearts that every morning, ere they started for their daily work, they directed their steps towards His prison and, gazing from afar at the castle which contained His beloved self, invoked His name and besought His blessings. They would prostrate themselves on the ground and seek to refresh their souls with remembrance of Him. To one another they would freely relate the wonders of His power and glory, and would recount such dreams as bore witness to the creative power of His influence. To no one would Yaḥyá Khán refuse admittance to the castle.[2] As Chihríq itself was unable to accommodate the increasing number of visitors who flocked to its gates, they were enabled to obtain the necessary lodgings in Iskí-Shahr, the old Chihríq, which was situated at an hour's distance from the

[1] "The Báb was subjected to a closer and more rigorous confinement at Chihríq than he had been at Máh-Kú. Hence he used to call the former 'the Grievous Mountain' (Jabal-i-Shadíd, the numerical value of the word 'Shadíd'—318—being the same as that of the name Chihríq), and the latter 'the Open Mountain' (Jabal-i-Básiṭ)." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note L, p. 276.)

[2] "Là, comme partout, le peuple s'empressa auprès de lui. M. Mochenin dit dans ses mémoires sur Báb: 'Au mois de Juin 1850 (ne serait-ce pas plutôt en 1849?), m'étant rendu à Chihríq pour les affaires de mon service, je vis le Bálâ-Khánih du haut duquel Báb enseignait sa doctrine. L'affluence du peuple était si grande que la cour n'étant pas assez vaste pour contenir tous les auditeurs, la plupart restaient dans la rue et écoutaient avec recueillement les vers du nouveau Qur'án. Peu de temps après, Báb fut transféré à Tauris pour y être condamné à mort.' " (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 371.)

castle. Whatever provisions were required for the Báb were purchased in the old town and transported to His prison.

One day the Báb asked that some honey be purchased for Him. The price at which it had been bought seemed to Him exorbitant. He refused it and said: "Honey of a superior quality could no doubt have been purchased at a lower price. I who am your example have been a merchant by profession. It behoves you in all your transactions to follow in My way. You must neither defraud your neighbour nor allow him to defraud you. Such was the way of your Master. The shrewdest and ablest of men were unable to deceive Him, nor did He on His part choose to act ungenerously towards the meanest and most helpless of creatures." He insisted that the attendant who had made that purchase should return and bring back to Him a honey superior in quality and cheaper in price.

During the Báb's captivity in the castle of Chihríq, events of a startling character caused grave perturbation to the government. It soon became evident that a number of the most eminent among the siyyids, the 'ulamás, and the government officials of Khuy had espoused the Cause of the Prisoner and had completely identified themselves with His Faith. Among them figured Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí and his brother Búyúk-Áqá, both siyyids of distinguished merit who had risen with fevered earnestness to proclaim their Faith to all sorts and conditions of people among their countrymen. A continuous stream of seekers and confirmed believers flowed back and forth, as the result of such activities, between Khuy and Chihríq.

It came to pass at that time that a prominent official of high literary ability, Mírzá Asadu'lláh, who was later surnamed Dayyán by the Báb and whose vehement denunciations of His Message had baffled those who had endeavoured to convert him, dreamed a dream. When he awoke, he determined not to recount it to anyone, and, fixing his choice on two verses of the Qur'án, he addressed the following request to the Báb: "I have conceived three definite things in my mind. I request you to reveal to me their nature." Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí was asked to submit this written request to the Báb. A few days later, he received a reply

penned in the Báb's handwriting, in which He set forth in their entirety the circumstances of that dream and revealed the exact texts of those verses. The accuracy of that reply brought about a sudden conversion. Though unused to walking, Mírzá Asadu'lláh hastened on foot along that steep and stony path which led from Khuy to the castle. His friends tried to induce him to proceed on horseback to Chihríq, but he refused their offer. His meeting with the Báb confirmed him in his belief and excited that fiery ardour which he continued to manifest to the end of his life.

That same year the Báb had expressed His desire that forty of His companions should each undertake to compose a treatise and seek, by the aid of verses and traditions, to establish the validity of His Mission. His wishes were instantly obeyed, and the result of their labours was duly submitted to His presence. Mírzá Asadu'lláh's treatise won the unqualified admiration of the Báb and ranked highest in His estimation. He bestowed on him the name Dayyán and revealed in his honour the Lawḥ-i-Ḥurúfát[1] in which He made the following statement: "Had the Point of the Bayán[2] no other testimony with which to establish His truth, this were sufficient—that He revealed a Tablet such as this, a Tablet such as no amount of learning could produce."

The people of the Bayán, who utterly misconceived the purpose underlying that Tablet, thought it to be a mere exposition of the science of Jafr.[3] When, at a later time, in the early years of Bahá'u'lláh's incarceration in the prison city of 'Akká, Jináb-i-Muballigh made, from Shíráz, his request that He unravel the mysteries of that Tablet, there was revealed from His pen an explanation which they who misconceived the words of the Báb might do well to ponder. Bahá'u'lláh adduced from the statements of the Báb irrefutable evidence proving that the appearance of the Man-Yuẓhiruhu'lláh[4] must needs occur no less than nineteen years after the Declaration of the Báb. The mystery of the Mustagháth[5] had long baffled the most searching minds among the people of the Bayán and had proved an unsur-

[1] Literally "Tablet of the Letters."
[2] One of the titles of the Báb.
[3] Science of divination.
[4] Reference to Bahá'u'lláh. See Glossary.
[5] See Glossary.

mountable obstacle to their recognition of the promised One. The Báb had Himself in that Tablet unravelled that mystery; no one, however, was able to understand the explanation which He had given. It was left to Bahá'u'lláh to unveil it to the eyes of all men.

The untiring zeal which Mírzá Asadu'lláh displayed induced his father, who was an intimate friend of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, to report to him the circumstances which led to the conversion of his son, and to inform him of his negligence in carrying out the duties which the State had imposed upon him. He expatiated upon the eagerness with which so able a servant of the government had risen to serve his new Master, and the success which had attended his efforts.

A further cause for apprehension on the part of the government authorities was supplied by the arrival at Chihríq of a dervish who had come from India and who, as soon as he met the Báb, acknowledged the truth of His Mission. All who met that dervish, whom the Báb had named Qahru'lláh, during his sojourn at Iskí-Shahr, felt the warmth of his enthusiasm and were deeply impressed by the tenacity of his conviction. An increasing number of people became enamoured of the charm of his personality and willingly acknowledged the compelling power of his Faith. Such was the influence which he exercised over them that a few among the believers were inclined to regard him as an exponent of Divine Revelation, although he altogether disclaimed such pretensions. He was often heard to relate the following: "In the days when I occupied the exalted position of a navváb in India, the Báb appeared to me in a vision. He gazed at me and won my heart completely. I arose, and had started to follow Him, when He looked at me intently and said: 'Divest yourself of your gorgeous attire, depart from your native land, and hasten on foot to meet Me in Ádhirbáyján. In Chihríq you will attain your heart's desire.' I followed His directions and have now reached my goal."

The news of the turmoil which that lowly dervish had been able to raise among the Kurdish leaders in Chihríq reached Tabríz and was thence communicated to Ṭihrán. No sooner had the news reached the capital than orders

were issued to transfer the Báb immediately to Tabríz in the hope of allaying the excitement which His continued residence in that locality had provoked. Before the news of this fresh order had reached Chihríq, the Báb had charged 'Aẓím to inform Qahru'lláh of His desire that he return to India and there consecrate his life to the service of His Cause. "Alone and on foot," He commanded him, "he should return whence he came. With the same ardour and detachment with which he performed his pilgrimage to this country, he must now repair to his native land and unceasingly labour to advance the interests of the Cause." He also bade him instruct Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb-i-Turshízí, who was living in Khuy, to proceed immediately to Urúmíyyih, where He said He would soon join him. 'Aẓím himself was directed to leave for Tabríz and there inform Siyyid Ibráhim-i-Khalíl of His approaching arrival at that city. "Tell him," the Báb added, "that the fire of Nimrod will shortly be kindled in Tabríz, but despite the intensity of its flame no harm will befall our friends."

No sooner had Qahru'lláh received the message from his Master than he arose to carry out His wishes. To anyone who wished to accompany him, he would say: "You can never endure the trials of this journey. Abandon the thought of coming with me. You would surely perish on your way, inasmuch as the Báb has commanded me to return alone to my native land." The compelling force of his reply silenced those who begged to be allowed to journey with him. He refused to accept either money or clothing from anyone. Alone, clad in the meanest attire, staff in hand, he walked all the way back to his country. No one knows what ultimately befell him.

Muhammad-'Alíy-i-Zunúzí, surnamed Anís, was among those who heard of the message from the Báb in Tabríz, and was fired with the desire to hasten to Chihríq and attain His presence. Those words had kindled in him an irrepressible longing to sacrifice himself in His path. Siyyid 'Alíy-i-Zunúzí, his stepfather, a notable of Tabríz, strenuously objected to his leaving the city, and was at last induced to confine him in his house and strictly watch over him. His

son languished in his confinement until the time when his Beloved had reached Tabríz and had been taken back again to His prison in Chihríq.

I have heard Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí relate the following: "At about the same time that the Báb dismissed 'Azím from His presence, I was instructed by Him to collect all the available Tablets that He had revealed during His incarceration in the castles of Máh-Kú and Chihríq, and to deliver them into the hands of Siyyid Ibráhím-i-Khalíl, who was then living in Tabríz, and urge him to conceal and preserve them with the utmost care.

"During my stay in that city, I often visited Siyyid 'Alíy-i-Zunúzí, who was related to me, and frequently heard him deplore the sad fate of his son. 'He seems to have lost his reason,' he bitterly complained. 'He has, by his behaviour, brought reproach and shame upon me. Try to calm the agitation of his heart and induce him to conceal his convictions.' Every day I visited him, I witnessed the tears that continually rained from his eyes. After the Báb had departed from Tabríz, one day as I went to see him, I was surprised to note the joy and gladness which had illumined his countenance. His handsome face was wreathed in smiles as he stepped forward to receive me. 'The eyes of my Beloved,' he said, as he embraced me, 'have beheld this face, and these eyes have gazed upon His countenance.' 'Let me,' he added, 'tell you the secret of my happiness. After the Báb had been taken back to Chihríq, one day, as I lay confined in my cell, I turned my heart to Him and besought Him in these words: "Thou beholdest, O my Best-Beloved, my captivity and helplessness, and knowest how eagerly I yearn to look upon Thy face. Dispel the gloom that oppresses my heart, with the light of Thy countenance." What tears of agonising pain I shed that hour! I was so overcome with emotion that I seemed to have lost consciousness. Suddenly I heard the voice of the Báb, and, lo! He was calling me. He bade me arise. I beheld the majesty of His countenance as He appeared before me. He smiled as He looked into my eyes. I rushed forward and flung myself at His feet. "Rejoice," He said; "the hour is approaching when, in this very city, I shall be suspended before the eyes of the multitude

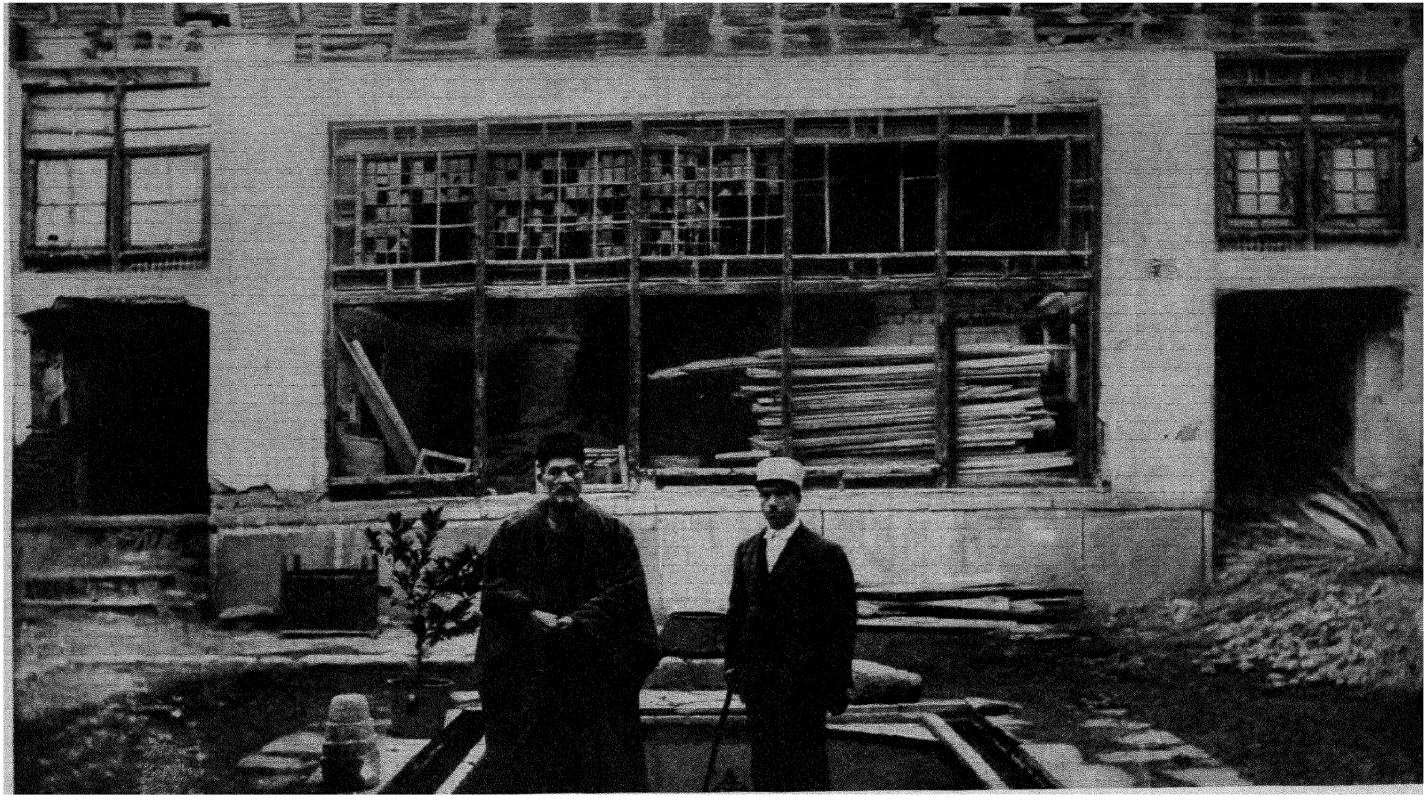
and shall fall a victim to the fire of the enemy. I shall choose no one except you to share with Me the cup of martyrdom. Rest assured that this promise which I give you shall be fulfilled." I was entranced by the beauty of that vision. When I recovered, I found myself immersed in an ocean of joy, a joy the radiance of which all the sorrows of the world could never obscure. That voice keeps ringing in my ears. That vision haunts me both in the daytime and in the night-season. The memory of that ineffable smile has dissipated the loneliness of my confinement. I am firmly convinced that the hour at which His pledge is to be fulfilled can no longer be delayed.' I exhorted him to be patient and to conceal his emotions. He promised me not to divulge that secret, and undertook to exercise the utmost forbearance towards Siyyid 'Alí. I hastened to assure the father of his determination, and succeeded in obtaining his release from his confinement. That youth continued until the day of his martyrdom to associate, in a state of complete serenity and joy, with his parents and kinsmen. Such was his behaviour towards his friends and relatives that, on the day he laid down his life for his Beloved, the people of Tabríz all wept and bewailed him."

CHAPTER XVIII

EXAMINATION OF THE BÁB AT TABRÍZ

THE Báb, in anticipation of the approaching hour of His affliction, had dispersed His disciples who had gathered in Chihríq and awaited with calm resignation the order which was to summon Him to Tabríz. Those into whose custody He was delivered thought it inadvisable to pass through the town of Khuy, which lay on their route to the capital of Ádhirbáyján. They decided to go by way of Urúmíyyih and thus avoid the demonstrations which the excited populace in Khuy were likely to make as a protest against the tyranny of the government. When the Báb arrived at Urúmíyyih, Malik Qásim Mírzá ceremoniously received Him and accorded Him the warmest hospitality. In His presence, the prince acted with extraordinary deference and refused to allow the least disrespect on the part of those who were allowed to meet Him.

On a certain Friday when the Báb was going to the public bath, the prince, who was curious to test the courage and power of his Guest, ordered his groom to offer Him one of his wildest horses to ride. Apprehensive lest the Báb might suffer any harm, the attendant secretly approached Him and tried to induce Him to refuse to mount a horse that had already overthrown the bravest and most skilful of horsemen. "Fear not," was His reply. "Do as you have been bidden, and commit Us to the care of the Almighty." The inhabitants of Urúmíyyih, who had been informed of the intention of the prince, had filled the public square, eager to witness what might befall the Báb. As soon as the horse was brought to Him, He quietly approached it and, taking hold of the bridle which the groom had offered Him, gently caressed it and placed His foot in the stirrup. The horse stood still and motionless beside Him as if conscious of the power which was dominating it. The multitude that watched this most unusual spectacle marvelled at the



THE HOUSE OCCUPIED BY THE BÁB IN ÚRUMÍYYIH. THE BÁLÁ-KHÁNIH (UPPER ROOM) MARKED X IS THE ROOM IN WHICH HE STAYED

behaviour of the animal. To their simple minds this extraordinary incident appeared little short of a miracle. They hastened in their enthusiasm to kiss the stirrups of the Báb, but were prevented by the attendants of the prince, who feared lest so great an onrush of people might harm Him. The prince himself, who had accompanied his Guest on foot as far as the vicinity of the bath, was bidden by Him, ere they reached its entrance, to return to his residence. All the way, the prince's footmen were endeavouring to restrain the people who, from every side, were pressing forward to catch a glimpse of the Báb. Upon His arrival, He dismissed all those who had accompanied Him except the prince's private attendant and Siyyid Ḥasan, who waited in the antechamber and aided Him in undressing. On His return from the bath, He again mounted the same horse and was acclaimed by the same multitude. The prince came on foot to meet Him, and escorted Him back to his residence.

No sooner had the Báb left the bath than the people of Urúmíyyih rushed to take away, to the last drop, the water which had served for His ablutions. Great excitement prevailed on that day. The Báb, as He observed these evidences of unrestrained enthusiasm, was reminded of the well-known tradition, commonly ascribed to the Imám 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, which specifically referred to Ádhirbáyján. The lake of Urúmíyyih, that same tradition asserts in its concluding passages, will boil up, will overrun its banks, and inundate the town. When He was subsequently informed how the overwhelming majority of the people had spontaneously arisen to proclaim their undivided allegiance to His Cause, He calmly observed: "Think men that when they say, 'We believe,' they shall be let alone and not be put to the proof?"[1] This comment was fully justified by the attitude which that same people assumed towards Him when the news of the dreadful treatment meted out to Him in Tabríz reached them. Hardly a handful among those who had so ostentatiously professed their faith in Him persevered, in the hour of trial, in their allegiance to His Cause. Foremost among these was Mullá Imám-Vardí, the tenacity of whose faith no one except Mullá Jalíl-i-Urúmí, a native of

[1] Qur'án, 29: 2.

Urúmíyyih and one of the Letters of the Living, could surpass. Adversity served but to intensify the ardour of his devotion and to reinforce his belief in the righteousness of the Cause he had embraced. He subsequently attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, the truth of whose Mission he readily recognised, and for the advancement of which he strove with the same fevered earnestness that had characterised his earlier strivings for the promotion of the Cause of the Báb. In recognition of his long-standing services, he, and also his family, were honoured with numerous Tablets from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh in which He extolled his achievements and invoked the blessings of the Almighty upon his efforts. With unflinching determination, he continued to labour for the furtherance of the Faith until past eighty years of age, when he departed this life.

The tales of the signs and wonders which the Báb's unnumbered admirers had witnessed were soon transmitted from mouth to mouth, and gave rise to a wave of unprecedented enthusiasm which spread with bewildering rapidity over the entire country. It swept over Ṭihrán and roused the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the realm to fresh exertions against Him. They trembled at the progress of a Movement which, if allowed to run its course, they felt certain would soon engulf the institutions upon which their authority, nay their very existence, depended. They saw on every side increasing evidences of a faith and devotion such as they themselves had been powerless to evoke, of a loyalty which struck at the very root of the fabric which their own hands had reared and which all the resources at their command had as yet failed to undermine.

Tabríz, in particular, was in the throes of the wildest excitement. The news of the impending arrival of the Báb had inflamed the imagination of its inhabitants and had kindled the fiercest animosity in the hearts of the ecclesiastical leaders of Ādhirbáyján. These alone, of all the people of Tabríz, abstained from sharing in the demonstrations with which a grateful population hailed the return of the Báb to their city. Such was the fervour of popular enthusiasm which that news had evoked that the authorities decided to house the Báb in a place outside the gates of the city. Only those

whom He desired to meet were allowed the privilege of approaching Him. All others were strictly refused admittance.

On the second night after His arrival, the Báb summoned 'Azím to His presence and, in the course of His conversation with him, asserted emphatically His claim to be none other than the promised Qá'im. He found him, however, reluctant to acknowledge this claim unreservedly. Perceiving his inner agitation, He said: "To-morrow I shall, in the presence of the Valí-'Ahd,[1] and in the midst of the assembled 'ulamás and notables of the city, proclaim My Mission. Whoso may feel inclined to require from Me any other testimony besides the verses which I have revealed, let him seek satisfaction from the Qá'im of his idle fancy."

I have heard 'Aẓím testify to the following: "That night I was in a state of great perturbation. I remained awake and restless until the hour of sunrise. As soon as I had offered my morning prayer, however, I realised that a great change had come over me. A new door seemed to have been unlocked and set open before my face. The conviction soon dawned upon me that if I were loyal to my faith in Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, I must needs also unreservedly acknowledge the claims advanced by the Báb, and must submit without fear or hesitation to whatever He might choose to decree. This conclusion allayed the agitation of my heart. I hastened to the Báb and begged His forgiveness. 'It is a further evidence of the greatness of this Cause,' He remarked, 'that even 'Aẓím[2] should have felt so exceedingly troubled and shaken by its power and the immensity of its claim.' 'Rest assured,' He added, 'the grace of the Almighty shall enable you to fortify the faint in heart and to make firm the step of the waverer. So great shall be your faith that should the enemy mutilate and tear your body to pieces, in the hope of lessening by one jot or tittle the ardour of your love, he would fail to attain his object. You will, no doubt, in the days to come, meet face to face Him who is the Lord of all the worlds, and will partake of the joy of His presence.' These words dispelled the gloom of my apprehensions. From that day onward, no trace of either fear or agitation ever again cast its shadow upon me."

[1] The heir to the throne. [2] Literally meaning "great."



NÁṢIRI'D-DÍN SHÁH AS A CHILD, SHOWING MÍRZÁ ABU'L-QÁSIM, THE QÁ'IM-MAQÁM ON HIS RIGHT AND ḤÁJÍ MÍRZÁ ÁQÁSÍ ON HIS LEFT. ON EXTREME LEFT (MARKED X) STANDS MANÚCHIHR KHÁN, THE MU'TAMIDU'D-DAWLIH

The detention of the Báb outside the gate of Tabríz failed to allay the excitement which reigned in the city. Every measure of precaution, every restriction, which the authorities had imposed, served only to aggravate a situation which had already become ominous and menacing. Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí issued his orders for the immediate convocation of the ecclesiastical dignitaries of Tabríz in the official residence of the governor of Ádhirbáyján for the express purpose of arraigning the Báb and of seeking the most effective means for the extinction of His influence. Ḥájí Mullá Maḥmúd, entitled the Niẓámu'l-'Ulamá', who was the tutor of Násiri'd-Dín Mírzá the Valí-'Ahd,[1] Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mámáqání, Mírzá 'Alí-Aṣghar the Shaykhu'l-Islám, and a number of the most distinguished shaykhís and doctors of divinity were among those who had convened for that purpose.[2] Násiri'd-Dín Mírzá himself attended that

[1] Born July 17, 1831; began to reign September, 1848; died 1896. "Ce prince quitta Tihrán pour aller rejoindre son gouvernement le 23 janvier 1848 pour, son père étant mort le 4 septembre, en revenir le 18 de la même année en qualité de Sháh." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 243, note 195.)

[2] "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 19) mentions in addition the name of Mírzá Aḥmad, the Imám-Jum'ih.

gathering. The presidency belonged to the Nizámu'l-'Ulamá', who, as soon as the proceedings had begun, in the name of the assembly commissioned an officer of the army to introduce the Báb into their presence. A multitude of people had meanwhile besieged the entrance of the hall and were impatiently awaiting the time when they could catch a glimpse of His face. They were pressing forward in such large numbers that a passage had to be forced for Him through the crowd that had collected before the gate.

Upon His arrival, the Báb observed that every seat in that hall was occupied except one which had been reserved for the Valí-'Ahd. He greeted the assembly and, without the slightest hesitation, proceeded to occupy that vacant seat. The majesty of His gait, the expression of overpowering confidence which sat upon His brow—above all, the spirit of power which shone from His whole being, appeared to have for a moment crushed the soul out of the body of those whom He had greeted. A deep, a mysterious silence, suddenly fell upon them. Not one soul in that distinguished assembly dared breathe a single word. At last the stillness which brooded over them was broken by the Niẓámu'l-'Ulamá'. "Who do you claim to be," he asked the Báb, "and what is the message which you have brought?" "I am," thrice exclaimed the Báb, "I am, I am, the promised One! I am the One whose name you have for a thousand years invoked, at whose



NAṢIRI'D-DIN SHAH

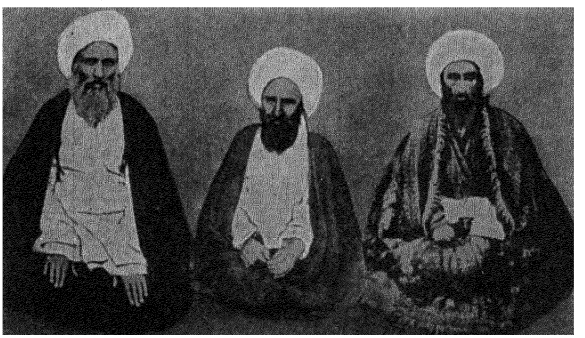


NÁṢIRI'D-DÍN SHÁH

mention you have risen, whose advent you have longed to witness, and the hour of whose Revelation you have prayed God to hasten. Verily I say, it is incumbent upon the peoples of both the East and the West to obey My word and to pledge allegiance to My person." No one ventured to reply except Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mámáqání, a leader of the shaykhí community who had been himself a disciple of Siyyid Káẓim. It was he on whose unfaithfulness and insincerity the siyyid had tearfully remarked, and the perversity of whose nature he had deplored. Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí, who had heard Siyyid Káẓim make these criticisms, recounted to me the following: "I was greatly surprised at the tone of his reference to Mullá Muḥammad, and was curious to know what his future behaviour would be so as to merit such expressions of pity and condemnation from his master. Not until I discovered his attitude that day towards the Báb did I realise the extent of his arrogance and blindness. I was standing together with other people outside the hall, and was able to follow the conversation of those who were within. Mullá Muḥammad was seated on the left hand of the Valí-'Ahd. The Báb was occupying a seat between them. Immediately after He had declared Himself to be the promised One, a feeling of awe seized those who were present. They had dropped their heads in silent confusion. The pallor of their faces betrayed the agitation of their hearts. Mullá Muḥammad, that one-eyed and white-bearded renegade, insolently reprimanded Him, saying: 'You wretched and immature lad of Shíráz! You have already convulsed and

subverted 'Iráq; do you now wish to arouse a like turmoil in Ádhirbáyján?' 'Your Honour,' replied the Báb, 'I have not come hither of My own accord. I have been summoned to this place.' 'Hold your peace,' furiously retorted Mullá Muhammad, 'you perverse and contemptible follower of Satan!' 'Your Honour,' the Báb again answered, 'I maintain what I have already declared.'

"The Niẓámu'l-'Ulamá' thought it best to challenge His Mission openly. 'The claim which you have advanced,' he told the Báb, 'is a stupendous one; it must needs be sup-

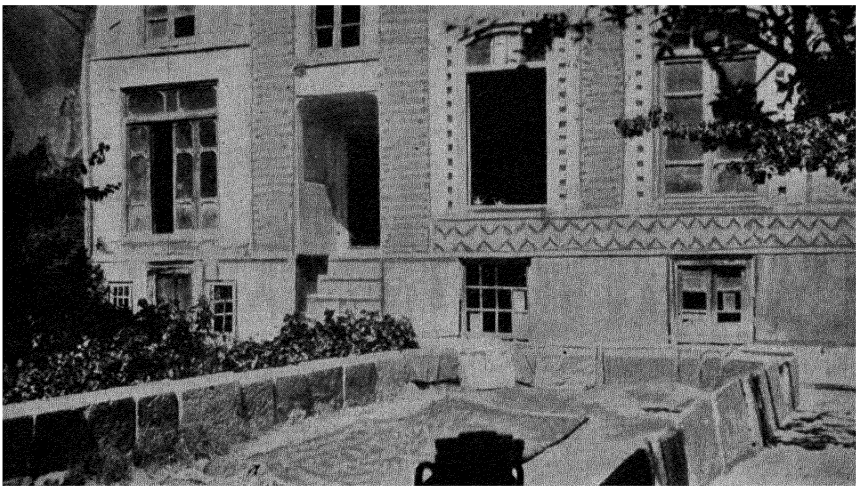


EMINENT PERSIAN MUJTAHIDS

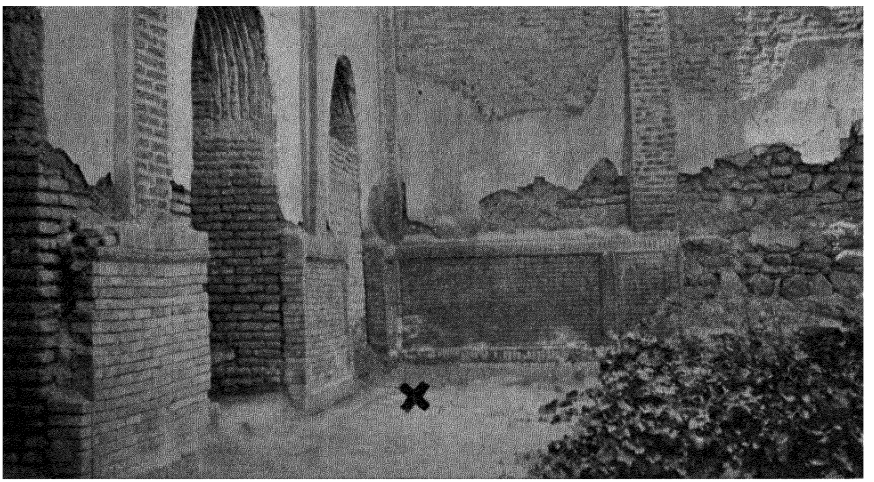
ported by the most incontrovertible evidence.' 'The mightiest, the most convincing evidence of the truth of the Mission of the Prophet of God,' the Báb replied, 'is admittedly His own Word. He Himself testifies to this truth: "Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to Thee the Book?"[1] The power to produce such evidence has been given to Me by God. Within the space of two days and two nights, I declare Myself able to reveal verses of such number as will equal the whole of the Qur'án.' 'Describe orally, if you speak the truth,' the Niẓámu'l-'Ulamá' requested, 'the proceedings of this gathering in language that will resemble the phraseology of the verses of the Qur'án so that the Valí-'Ahd and the assembled divines may bear witness to the truth of your claim.' The Báb readily acceded to his wish. No sooner had He uttered the words, 'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, praise be to Him who has

[1] Qur'án, 29: 51.

created the heaven and the earth,' than Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mámáqání interrupted and called His attention to an infraction of the rules of grammar. 'This self-appointed Qá'im of ours,' he cried in haughty scorn, 'has at the very start of his address betrayed his ignorance of the most rudimentary rules of grammar!' 'The Qur'án itself,' pleaded the Báb, 'does in no wise accord with the rules and conventions current amongst men. The Word of God can never be subject to the limita-



THE NAMÁZ-KHÁNIH OF THE SHAYKHU'L-ISLÁM OF TABRÍZ



CORNER MARKED X SHOWING WHERE THE BÁB WAS BASTINADOED

tions of His creatures. Nay, the rules and canons which men have adopted have been deduced from the text of the Word of God and are based upon it. These men have, in the very texts of that holy Book, discovered no less than three hundred instances of grammatical error, such as the one you now criticise. Inasmuch as it was the Word of God, they had no other alternative except to resign themselves to His will.'[1]

"He then repeated the same words He had uttered, to which Mullá Muḥammad raised again the same objection. Shortly after, another person ventured to put this question to the Báb: 'To which tense does the word Ishtartanna belong?' In answer to him, the Báb quoted this verse of the Qur'án: 'Far be the glory of thy Lord, the Lord of all greatness, from what they impute to Him, and peace be upon His Apostles! And praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds.' Immediately after, He arose and left the gathering."[2]

The Niẓámu'l-'Ulamá' was sorely displeased at the manner in which the meeting had been conducted. "How shameful," he was heard to exclaim later, "is the discourtesy of the people of Tabríz! What could possibly be the connection between these idle remarks and the consideration of such weighty, such momentous issues?" A few others were like-

[1] "Que si l'on élève un reproche contre la grammaire ou la syntaxe (de ces versets) ce reproche est vain, car les règles (de grammaire) doivent être tirées des versets et non lee versets construits d'après elles. Il n'y a d'ailleurs aucun doute que le Maître des versets ait nié ces règles, ait nié qu'il en eût connaissance, et cela lui-même." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 1, pp. 45–6.)

[2] "And as for the Muslim accounts, those which we have before us do not bear the stamp of truth: they seem to be forgeries. Knowing what we do of the Báb, it is probable that he had the best of the argument, and that the doctors and functionaries who attended the meeting were unwilling to put upon record their own fiasco." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 62.) "It is difficult to decide to what measure of credence the above narrative [the Muhammadan version of the examination of the Báb at Tabríz] is entitled. Very probably such questions as are there recorded—and assuredly some of them are sufficiently frivolous and even indecent—were asked; but, even though the Báb may have been unable to answer them, it is far more likely that, as stated in the 'Táríkh-i-Jadíd,' he preserved a dignified silence than that he gave utterance to the absurdities attributed to him by the Muḥammadan writers. These, indeed, spoil their own case; for, desiring to prove that the Báb was not endowed with superhuman wisdom, they represent him as displaying an ignorance which we can scarcely credit. That the whole examination was a farce throughout, that the sentence was a foregone conclusion, that no serious attempt to apprehend the nature and evidence of the Báb's claim and doctrine was made, and that from first to last a systematic course of browbeating, irony, and mockery was pursued appear to me to be facts proved no less by the Muhammadan than by the Bábí accounts of these inquisitorial proceedings." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note M, p. 290.)

wise inclined to denounce the disgraceful treatment meted out to the Báb on that occasion. Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mámáqání, however, persisted in his vehement denunciations. "I warn you," he loudly protested, "if you allow this youth to pursue unhampered the course of his activities, the day will come when the entire population of Tabríz will have flocked to his standard. Should he, when that day arrives, signify his wish that all the 'ulamás of Tabríz, that the Valí-'Ahd himself, should be expelled from the city and that he should alone assume the reins of civil and ecclesiastical authority, no one of you, who now view with apathy his cause, will feel able to oppose him effectually. The entire city, nay the whole province of Ádhirbáyján, will on that day unanimously support him."

The persistent denunciations of that evil plotter excited the apprehensions of the authorities of Tabríz. Those who held the reins of power in their grasp took counsel together as to the most effective measures to be taken to resist the progress of His Faith. Some urged that in view of the marked disrespect which the Báb had shown to the Valí-'Ahd in occupying his seat without his leave, and because of His failure to obtain the consent of the chairman of that gathering when He arose to depart, He should be summoned again to a like gathering and should receive from the hands of its members a humiliating punishment. Náṣiri'd-Dín Mírzá, however, refused to entertain this proposal. Finally it was decided that the Báb should be brought to the home of Mírzá 'Alí-Aṣghar, who was both the Shaykhu'l-Islám of Tabríz and a siyyid, and should receive at the hands of the governor's body-guard the chastisement which He deserved. The guard refused to accede to this request, preferring not to interfere in a matter which they regarded as the sole concern of the 'ulamás of the city. The Shaykhu'l-Islám himself decided to inflict the punishment. He summoned the Báb to his home, and with his hand eleven times applied the rods to His feet.[1]

[1] The following is Dr. Cormick's account of his personal impressions of Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad the Báb, extracted from letters written by him to the Rev. Benjamin Labaree, D.D. (Dr. Cormick was an English physician long resident in Tabríz, where he was highly respected. The document was communicated to Professor E. G. Browne, of Cambridge University, by Mr. W. A. Shedd, who wrote concerning it, in a letter dated March 1, 1911:

That same year this insolent tyrant was struck with paralysis, and, after enduring the most excruciating pain, died a miserable death. His treacherous, avaricious, and self-seeking character was universally recognised by the people of Tabríz. Notoriously cruel and sordid, he was feared and despised by the people who groaned under his yoke and prayed for deliverance. The abject circumstances of his death reminded both his friends and his opponents of the punishment which must necessarily await those whom neither the fear of God nor the voice of conscience can deter from behaving with such perfidious cruelty towards their fellow men. After his death the functions of the Shaykhu'l-Islám were abolished in Tabríz. Such was his infamy that the very name of the institution with which he had been associated came to be abhorred by the people.

And yet his behaviour, base and treacherous as it was, was only one instance of the villainous conduct which characterised the attitude of the ecclesiastical leaders among his countrymen towards the Báb. How far and how grievously have these erred from the path of fairness and justice! How contemptuously have they cast away the counsels of the Prophet of God and the admonitions of the imáms of the Faith! Have not these explicitly declared that "should a

"Dear Professor Browne, In going over papers of my father (the late Rev. J. H. Shedd, D.D., of the American Mission at Urúmíyyih, Persia, of the same mission as Dr. Benjamin Labaree), I found something which I think may be of value from a historical point of view. I have no books here, nor are any accessible here, to be certain whether this bit of testimony has been used or not. I think probably not, and I am sure that I can do nothing better than send them to you, with the wish that you may use them as you think best. Of the authenticity of the papers there can be no doubt.")

"You ask me for some particulars of my interview with the founder of the sect known as Bábís. Nothing of any importance transpired in this interview, as the Báb was aware of my having been sent with two other Persian doctors to see whether he was of sane mind or merely a madman, to decide the question whether to put him to death or not. With this knowledge he was loth to answer any questions put to him. To all enquiries he merely regarded us with a mild look, chanting in a low melodious voice some hymns, I suppose. Two other Siyyids, his intimate friends, were also present, who subsequently were put to death with him, besides a couple of government officials. He only once deigned to answer me, on my saying that I was not a Musulman and was willing to know something about his religion, as I might perhaps be inclined to adopt it. He regarded me very intently on my saying this, and replied that he had no doubt of all Europeans coming over to his religion. Our report to the Sháh at that time was of a nature to spare his life. He was put to death some time after by the order of the Amír-Niẓám Mírzá Taqí Khán. On our report he merely got the bastinado, in which operation a farrásh, whether intentionally or not, struck him across the face with the stick destined for his feet, which produced a great wound and swelling of the face. On being asked whether a Persian surgeon should be brought to treat him, he expressed a desire that I should be sent for, and I accordingly treated him for a few days, but in the

Youth from Baní-Háshim[1] be made manifest and summon the people to a new Book and to new laws, all should hasten to Him and embrace His Cause"? Although these same imáms have clearly stated that "most of His enemies shall be the 'ulamás," yet these blind and ignoble people have chosen to follow the example of their leaders and to regard their conduct as the pattern of righteousness and justice. They walk in their footsteps, implicitly obey their orders, and deem themselves the "people of salvation," the "chosen of God," and the "custodians of His Truth."

From Tabríz the Báb was taken back to Chihríq, where He was again entrusted to the keeping of Yahyá Khán. His persecutors had fondly imagined that by summoning Him to their presence they would, through threats and intimidation, induce Him to abandon His Mission. That gathering enabled the Báb to set forth emphatically, in the presence of the most illustrious dignitaries assembled in the capital of Ádhirbáyján, the distinguishing features of His claim, and to confute, in brief and convincing language, the arguments of His adversaries. The news of that momentous declaration, fraught with such far-reaching consequences, spread rapidly throughout Persia and stirred again more deeply the feelings of the disciples of the Báb. It reanimated their zeal, reinforced their position, and was a signal for the tremendous happenings that were soon to convulse that land.

interviews consequent on this I could never get him to have a confidential chat with me, as some government people were always present, he being a prisoner. He was very thankful for my attentions to him. He was a very mild and delicate-looking man, rather small in stature and very fair for a Persian, with a melodious soft voice, which struck me much. Being a Siyyid, he was dressed in the habit of that sect, as were also his two companions. In fact his whole look and deportment went far to dispose one in his favour. Of his doctrine I heard nothing from his own lips, although the idea was that there existed in his religion a certain approach to Christianity. He was seen by some Armenian carpenters, who were sent to make some repairs in his prison, reading the Bible, and he took no pains to conceal it, but on the contrary told them of it. Most assuredly the Musulman fanaticism does not exist in his religion, as applied to Christians, nor is there that restraint of females that now exists." In connection with this document, Professor Browne writes as follows: "The first of these two documents is very valuable as giving the personal impression produced by the Báb, during the period of his imprisonment and suffering, on a cultivated and impartial Western mind. Very few Western Christians can have had the opportunity of seeing, still less of conversing with, the Báb, and I do not know of any other who has recorded his impressions." (E. G. Browne's "Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion," pp. 260–62, 264.)

[1] Háshim was the great-grandfather of Muḥammad.

No sooner had the Báb returned to Chihríq than He wrote in bold and moving language a denunciation of the character and action of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí. In the opening passages of that epistle, which was given the name of the Khuṭbiy-i-Qahríyyih,[1] the Author addresses the Grand Vazír of Muḥammad Sháh in these terms: "O thou who hast disbelieved in God and hast turned thy face away from His signs!" That lengthy epistle was forwarded to Ḥujjat, who, in those days, was confined in Ṭihrán. He was instructed to deliver it in person to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí.

I was privileged to hear the following account from the lips of Bahá'u'lláh while in the prison-city of 'Akká: "Mullá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Zanjání, soon after he had delivered that Tablet to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, came and visited me. I was in the company of Mírzá Masíh-i-Núrí and a number of other believers when he arrived. He recounted the circumstances attending the delivery of the Tablet, and recited before us the entire text, which was about three pages in length, and which he had committed to memory." The tone of Bahá'u'lláh's reference to Ḥujjat indicated how greatly pleased He was with the purity and nobleness of his life, and how much He admired his undaunted courage, his indomitable will, his unworldliness, and his unwavering constancy.

[1] Literally "Sermon of Wrath."

CHAPTER XIX

THE MĀZINDARĀN UPHEAVAL

IN THE same month of Sha'bán that witnessed the indignities inflicted upon the Báb in Tabríz, and the afflictions which befell Bahá'u'lláh and His companions in Níyálá, Mullá Ḥusayn returned from the camp of Prince Ḥamzih Mírzá to Mashhad, from which place he was to proceed seven days later to Karbilá, accompanied by whomsoever he might desire. The prince offered him a sum to defray the expenses of his journey, an offer that he declined, sending the money back with a message requesting him to expend it for the relief of the poor and needy. 'Abdu'l-'Alí Khán likewise volunteered to provide all the requirements of Mullá Ḥusayn's intended pilgrimage, and expressed his eagerness to pay also the expenses of whomsoever he might choose to accompany him. All that he accepted from him was a sword and a horse, both of which he was destined to utilise with consummate bravery and skill in repulsing the assaults of a treacherous enemy.

My pen can never adequately describe the devotion which Mullá Ḥusayn had kindled in the hearts of the people of Mashhad, nor can it seek to fathom the extent of his influence. His house, in those days, was continually besieged by crowds of eager people who begged to be allowed to accompany him on his contemplated journey. Mothers brought their sons, and sisters their brothers, and tearfully implored him to accept them as their most cherished offerings on the Altar of Sacrifice.

Mullá Ḥusayn was still in Mashhad when a messenger arrived bearing to him the Báb's turban and conveying the news that a new name, that of Siyyid 'Alí, had been conferred upon him by his Master. "Adorn your head," was the message, "with My green turban, the emblem of My lineage, and, with the Black Standard[1] unfurled before you,

[1] Refer to p. 351.

hasten to the Jazíriy-i-Khadrá',[1] and lend your assistance to My beloved Quddús."

As soon as that message reached him, Mullá Husayn arose to execute the wishes of his Master. Leaving Mashhad for a place situated at a farsang's[2] distance from the city, he hoisted the Black Standard, placed the turban of the Báb upon his head, assembled his companions, mounted his steed, and gave the signal for their march to the Jazíriy-i-Khadrá'. His companions, who were two hundred and two in number, enthusiastically followed him. That memorable day was the nineteenth of Sha'bán, in the year 1264 A.H.[3] Wherever they tarried, at every village and hamlet through which they passed, Mullá Ḥusayn and his fellow-disciples would fearlessly proclaim the message of the New Day, would invite the people to embrace its truth, and would select from among those who responded to their call a few whom they would ask to join them on their journey.

In the town of Níshápúr, Ḥájí 'Abdu'l-Majíd, the father of Badí',[4] who was a merchant of note, enlisted under the banner of Mullá Husayn. Though his father enjoyed an unrivalled prestige as the owner of the best-known turquoise mine of Níshápúr, he, forsaking all the honours and material benefits that his native town had conferred upon him, pledged his undivided loyalty to Mullá Ḥusayn. In the village of Míyámay, thirty among its inhabitants declared their faith

[1] Literally "Verdant Isle." [2] Refer to Glossary. [3] July 21, 1848 A.D.
[4] Bearer of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh.



VILLAGE OF NÍSHÁPÚR

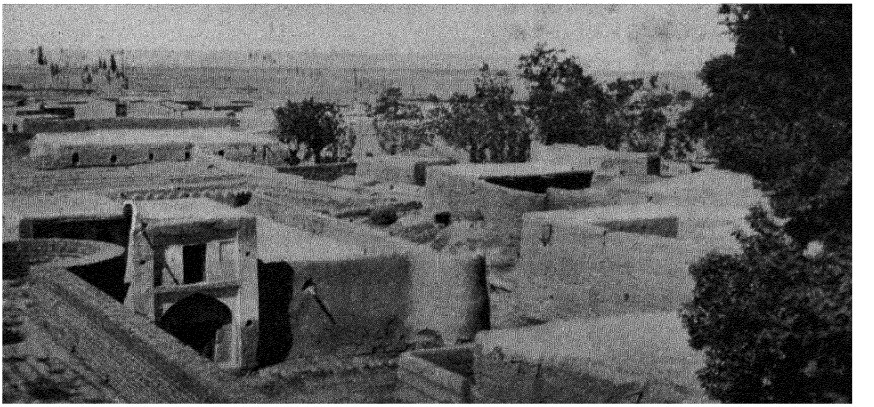
and joined that company. All of them, with the exception of Mullá 'Ísá, fell martyrs in the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí.[1]

Arriving at Chashmih-'Alí, a place situated near the town of Dámghán and on the highroad to Mázindarán, Mullá Ḥusayn decided to break his journey and to tarry there for a few days. He encamped under the shadow of a big tree, by the side of a running stream. "We stand at the parting of the ways," he told his companions. "We shall await His decree as to which direction we should take." Towards the end of the month of Shavvál,[2] a fierce gale arose and struck down a large branch of that tree; whereupon Mullá Ḥusayn observed: "The tree of the sovereignty of Muḥammad Sháh has, by the will of God, been uprooted and hurled to the ground." On the third day after he had uttered that prediction, a messenger, who was on his way to Mashhad, arrived from Ṭihrán and reported the death of his sovereign.[3] The following day, the company determined to leave for Mázindarán. As their leader arose to depart, he pointed in the direction of Mázindarán and said: "This is the way that leads to our Karbilá. Whoever is unprepared for the great trials that lie before us, let him now repair to his home and give up the journey." He several times repeated that warning, and, as he approached Savád-Kúh, explicitly declared: "I, together with seventy-two of my companions, shall suffer death for the sake of the Well-Beloved. Whoso is unable to renounce the world, let him now, at this very moment, depart, for later on he will be unable to escape." Twenty of his companions chose to return, feeling themselves powerless to withstand the trials to which their chief continually alluded.

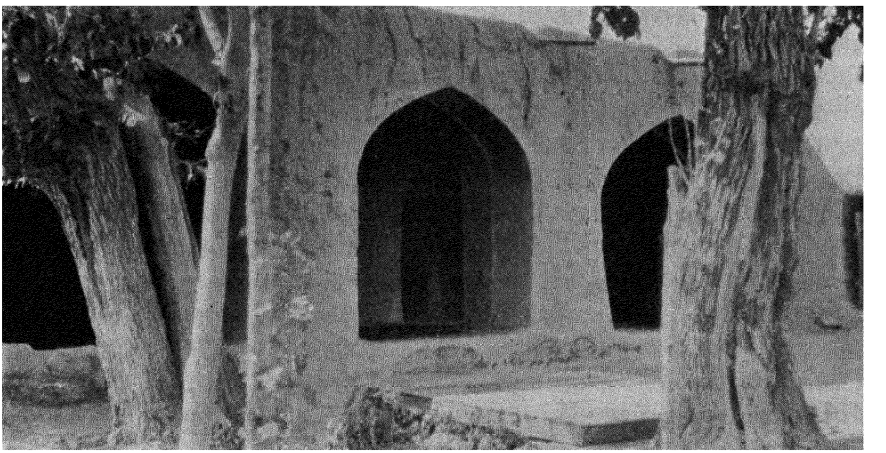
[1] "Il [Mullá Ḥusayn] arriva d'abord à Míyámay où il s'adjoignit trente bábís dont le chef, Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín, élève du défunt Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Ahsá'í, était un vieillard pieux et respecté. Son zèle était si ardent qu'il amena avec lui son gendre, jeune homme de 18 ans qui s'était, il y'avait à peine quelques jours, marié avec sa fille. 'Viens, lui dit-il, viens avec moi faire le dernier voyage. Viens, car je veux être pour toi un véritable père et te faire participer aux joies du salut.' Ils partirent donc, et c'est à pied que le vieillard voulut faire les étapes qui devaient le conduire au martyr." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 290.)

[2] August 31–September 29, 1848 A.D.

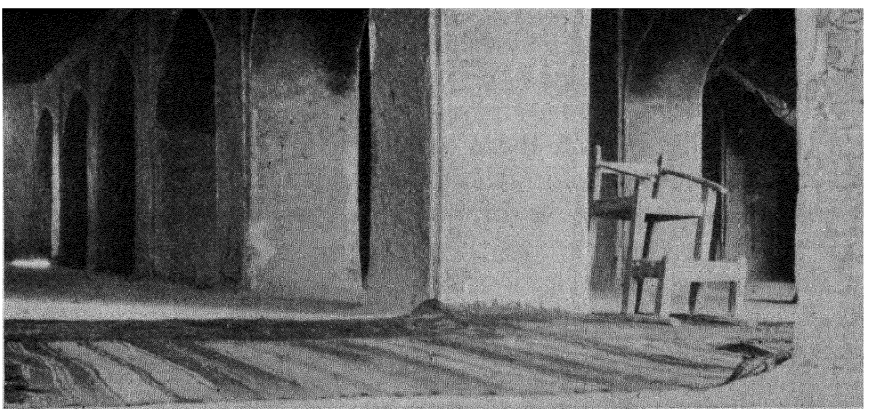
[3] Muḥammad Sháh died on the eve of the sixth of Shavvál (September 4, 1848 A.D.). "Il eut un interrègne de 2 mois environ. On organisa un gouvernement provisoir composé de 4 membres administrateurs, sous la présidence de la veuve du Sháh défunt. À la fin, et après beaucoup d'agitations, l'héritier légitime, le jeune prince, gouverneur de l'Ádhirbáyján, Náṣiri'd-Dín Mírzá, fut élevé au trône." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 367.)



VIEW OF THE VILLAGE OF MÍYÂMAY



EXTERIOR OF THE MASJID



INTERIOR OF THE MASJID, WHERE MULLÁ ḤUSAYN AND HIS COMPANIONS PRAYED

The news of their approach to the town of Bárfurúsh alarmed the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá'. The widespread and growing popularity of Mullá Ḥusayn, the circumstances attending his departure from Mashhad, the Black Standard which waved before him—above all, the number, the discipline, and the enthusiasm of his companions, combined to arouse the implacable hatred of that cruel and overbearing mujtahid. He bade the crier summon the people of Bárfurúsh to the masjid and announce that a sermon of such momentous consequence was to be delivered by him that no loyal adherent of Islám in that neighbourhood could afford to ignore it. An immense crowd of men and women thronged the masjid, saw him ascend the pulpit, fling his turban to the ground, tear open the neck of his shirt, and bewail the plight into which the Faith had fallen. "Awake," he thundered from the pulpit, "for our enemies stand at our very doors, ready to wipe out all that we cherish as pure and holy in Islám! Should we fail to resist them, none will be left to survive their onslaught. He who is the leader of that band came alone, one day, and attended my classes. He utterly ignored me and treated me with marked disdain in the presence of my assembled disciples. As I refused to accord him the honours which he expected, he angrily arose and flung me his challenge. This man had the temerity, at a time when Muḥammad Sháh was seated upon his throne and was at the height of his power, to assail me with so much bitterness. What excesses this stirrer-up of mischief, who is now advancing at the head of his savage band, will not commit now that the protecting hand of Muḥammad Sháh has been suddenly withdrawn! It is the duty of all the inhabitants of Bárfurúsh, both young and old, both men and women, to arm themselves against these contemptible wreckers of Islám, and by every means in their power to resist their onset. To-morrow, at the hour of dawn, let all of you arise and march out to exterminate their forces."

The entire congregation arose in response to his call. His passionate eloquence, the undisputed authority he exercised over them, and the dread of the loss of their own lives and property, combined to induce the inhabitants of that town to make every possible preparation for the coming

encounter. They armed themselves with every weapon which they could either find or devise, and set out at break of day from the town of Bárfurúsh, fully determined to face and slay the enemies of their Faith and to plunder their property.[1]

As soon as Mullá Ḥusayn had determined to pursue the way that led to Mázindarán, he, immediately after he had offered his morning prayer, bade his companions discard all their possessions. "Leave behind all your belongings," he urged them, "and content yourselves only with your steeds and swords, that all may witness your renunciation of all earthly things, and may realise that this little band of God's chosen companions has no desire to safeguard its own property, much less to covet the property of others." Instantly they all obeyed and, unburdening their steeds, arose and joyously followed him. The father of Badí' was the first to throw aside his satchel, which contained a considerable amount of turquoise which he had brought with him from the mine that belonged to his father. One word from Mullá Ḥusayn proved sufficient to induce him to fling by the roadside what was undoubtedly his most treasured possession, and to cling to the desire of his leader.

At a farsang's[2] distance from Bárfurúsh, Mullá Ḥusayn and his companions encountered their enemies. A multitude of people, fully equipped with arms and ammunition, had gathered, and blocked their way. A fierce expression of savagery rested upon their countenances, and the foulest

[1] "The minister [Mírzá Taqí Khán] with the utmost arbitrariness, without receiving any instructions or asking permission, sent forth commands in all directions to punish and chastise the Bábís. Governors and magistrates sought a pretext for amassing wealth, and officials a means of acquiring profits; celebrated doctors from the summits of their pulpits incited men to make a general onslaught; the powers of the religious and the civil law linked hands and strove to eradicate and destroy this people. Now this people had not yet acquired such knowledge as was right and needful of the fundamental principles and hidden doctrines of the Báb's teachings, and did not recognise their duties. Their conceptions and ideas were after the former fashion, and their conduct and behaviour in correspondence with ancient usage. The way of approach to the Báb was, moreover, closed, and the flame of trouble visibly blazing on every side. At the decree of the most celebrated of the doctors, the government, and indeed the common people, had, with irresistible power, inaugurated rapine and plunder on all sides, and were engaged in punishing and torturing, killing and despoiling, in order that they might quench this fire and wither these poor souls. In towns where these were but a limited number all of them with bound hands became food for the sword, while in cities where they were numerous they arose in self-defence in accordance with their former beliefs, since it was impossible for them to make enquiry as to their duty, and all doors were closed." ("A Traveller's Narrative," pp. 34–5.)

[2] See Glossary.

imprecations fell unceasingly from their lips. The companions, in the face of the uproar of this angry populace, made as if to unsheathe their swords. "Not yet," commanded their leader; "not until the aggressor forces us to protect ourselves must our swords leave their scabbards." He had scarcely uttered these words when the fire of the enemy was directed against them. Six of the companions were immediately hurled to the ground. "Beloved leader," exclaimed one of them, "we have risen and followed you with no desire except to sacrifice ourselves in the path of the Cause we have embraced. Allow us, we pray you, to defend ourselves, and suffer us not to fall so disgracefully a victim to the fire of the enemy." "The time is not yet come," replied Mullá Husayn; "the number is as yet incomplete." A bullet immediately after pierced the breast of one of his companions, a siyyid from Yazd[1] who had walked all the way from Mashhad to that place, and who ranked among his staunchest supporters. At the sight of that devoted companion fallen dead at his feet, Mullá Husayn raised his eyes to heaven and prayed: "Behold, O God, my God, the plight of Thy chosen companions, and witness the welcome which these people have accorded Thy loved ones. Thou knowest that we cherish no other desire than to guide them to the way of Truth and to confer upon them the knowledge of Thy Revelation. Thou hast Thyself commanded us to defend our lives against the assaults of the enemy. Faithful to Thy command, I now arise with my companions to resist the attack which they have launched against us."[2]

Unsheathing his sword and spurring on his charger into the midst of the enemy, Mullá Husayn pursued, with marvellous intrepidity, the assailant of his fallen companion. His opponent, who was afraid to face him, took refuge behind a tree and, holding aloft his musket, sought to shield himself. Mullá Husayn immediately recognised him, rushed

[1] "La balle atteignit en pleine poitrine et étendit raide mort le nommé Siyyid Ridá. C'était un homme de mœurs pures et simples, d'une conviction ardente et sincère. Par respect pour son chef, il était toujours à pied à côté de son cheval, prêt à le servir à la moindre occasion." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 294.)

[2] "No one is to be slain for unbelief, for the slaying of a soul is outside the religion of God; . . . and if anyone commands it, he is not and has not been of the Bayán, and no sin can be greater for him than this." ("The Bayán." See *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Oct., 1889, art. 12, pp. 927–8.)

forward, and with a single stroke of his sword cut across the trunk of the tree, the barrel of the musket, and the body of his adversary.[1] The astounding force of that stroke confounded the enemy and paralysed their efforts. All fled panic-stricken in the face of so extraordinary a manifestation of skill, of strength, and of courage. This feat was the first of its kind to attest to the prowess and heroism of Mullá Ḥusayn, a feat which earned him the commendation of the Báb. Quddús likewise paid his tribute to the cool fearlessness which Mullá Ḥusayn displayed on that occasion. He is reported to have quoted, when informed of the news, the following verse of the Qur'án: "So it was not ye who slew them, but God who slew them; and those shafts were God's, not thine! He would make trial of the faithful by a gracious trial from Himself: verily, God heareth, knoweth. This befell, that God might also bring to naught the craft of the infidels."

I myself, when in Ṭihrán, in the year 1265 A.H.,[2] a month after the conclusion of the memorable struggle of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, heard Mírzá Aḥmad relate the circumstances of this incident in the presence of a number of believers, among whom were Mírzá Muhammad-Ḥusayn-i-Ḥakamíy-i-Kirmání, Ḥájí Mullá Ismá'íl-i-Faráhání, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh-i-Iṣfáhání, and Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Iṣfáhání.

When, at a later time, I visited Khurásán and was staying at the home of Mullá Ṣádiq-i-Khurásání in Mashhad, where I had been invited to teach the Cause, I asked Mírzá Mu-

[1] "Mais la douleur et la colère décuplèrent les forces de ce dernier [Mullá Ḥusayn] qui, d'un seul coup de son arme, coupa en deux le fusil l'homme et l'arbre." (Mírzá Jání ajoute que le Bushrú'í se servit en cette occasion de la main gauche. Les musulmans eux-mêmes ne mettent pas en doute l'authenticité de cette anecdote.) (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muhammad dit le Báb," p. 295 and note 215.) "Then Jináb-i-Bábu'l-Báb turned himself about, saying: 'Now have they made it our duty to protect ourselves'; grasped the hilt of his sword; and, acquiescing in that which the providence of God had ordained, began to defend himself. Notwithstanding his slender and fragile frame and trembling hand, such were his valour and prowess on that day that whosoever had eyes to discern the truth could clearly see that such strength and courage could only be from God, being beyond human capacity. . . . Then I saw Mullá Ḥusayn unsheathe his sword and raise his face towards heaven, and heard him exclaim: 'O God, I have completed the proof to this host, but it availeth not.' Then he began to attack us on the right and on the left. I swear by God that on that day he wielded the sword in such wise as transcends the power of man. Only the horsemen of Mázindarán held their ground and refused to flee. And when Mullá Ḥusayn was well warmed to the fray, he overtook a fugitive soldier. The soldier sheltered himself behind a tree, and further strove to shield himself with his musket. Mullá Ḥusayn dealt him such a blow with his sword that he clave him and the tree and the musket into six pieces." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 49, 107–8.)

[2] 1848–9 A.D.

ḥammad-i-Furúghí, in the presence of a number of believers, among whom were Nabíl-i-Akbar and the father of Badí', to enlighten me regarding the true character of that amazing report. Mírzá Muhammad emphatically declared: "I myself was a witness to this act of Mullá Ḥusayn. Had I not seen it with my own eyes, I never would have believed it." In this connection, the same Mírzá Muḥammad related to us the following story: "After the engagement of Vás-Kas, when Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá was completely routed, and had fled barefooted from the face of the companions of the Báb, the Amír-Niẓám[1] severely rebuked him. 'I have charged you,' he wrote him, 'with the mission of subduing a handful of young and contemptible students. I have placed at your disposal the army of the Sháh, and yet you have allowed it to suffer such a disgraceful defeat. What would have befallen you, I wonder, had I entrusted you with the mission of defeating the combined forces of the Russian and Ottoman governments?' The prince thought it best to entrust a messenger with the fragments of the barrel of that same rifle which was cleft in twain by the sword of Mullá Ḥusayn, and to instruct him to present them, in person, to the Amír-Niẓám. 'Such is,' was his message to the Amír, 'the contemptible strength of an adversary who, with a single stroke of his sword, has shattered into six pieces the tree, the musket, and its holder.'

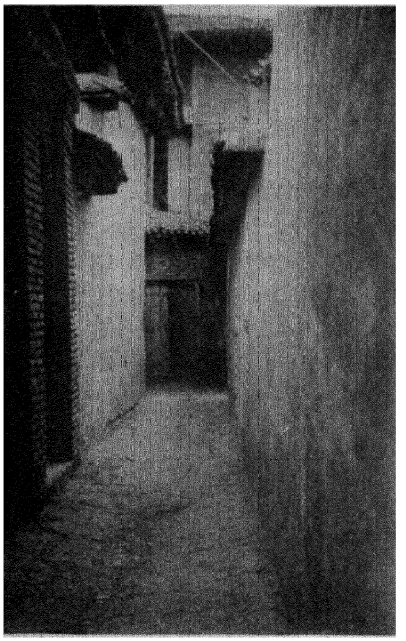
"So convincing a testimony of the strength of his opponent constituted, in the eyes of the Amír-Niẓám, a challenge

[1] Mírzá Taqí Khán, I'timádu'd-Dawlih, Grand Vazír and successor to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí. The following reference is made to him in "A Traveller's Narrative" (pp. 32–3): "Mírzá Taqí Khán Amír-Niẓám, who was Prime Minister and Chief Regent, seized in the grasp of his despotic power the reins of the affairs of the commonwealth, and urged the steed of his ambition into the arena of wilfulness and sole possession. This minister was a person devoid of experience and wanting in consideration for the consequences of actions; bloodthirsty and shameless; and swift and ready to shed blood. Severity in punishing he regarded as wise administration, and harshly entreating, distressing, intimidating, and frightening the people he considered as a fulcrum for the advancement of the monarchy. And as His Majesty the King was in the prime of youthful years the minister fell into strange fancies and sounded the drum of absolutism in (the conduct of) affairs: on his own decisive resolution, without seeking permission from the Royal Presence or taking counsel with prudent statesmen, he issued orders to persecute the Bábís, imagining that by overweening force he could eradicate and suppress matters of this nature, and that harshness would bear good fruit; whereas (in fact) to interfere with matters of conscience is simply to give them greater currency and strength; the more you strive to extinguish, the more will the flame be kindled, more specially in matters of faith and religion, which spread and acquire influence so soon as blood is shed, and strongly affect men's hearts."

which no man of his position and authority could afford to ignore. He resolved to curb the power which, by so daring an act, had sought to assert itself against his forces. Unable, in spite of the overwhelming number of his men, to defeat Mullá Ḥusayn and his companions fairly and honourably, he meanly resorted to treachery and fraud as instruments for the attainment of his purpose. He ordered the prince to affix his seal to the Qur'án and pledge the honour of his officers that they would henceforth abstain from any act of hostility towards the occupants of the fort. By this means he was able to induce them to lay down their arms, and to inflict upon his defenceless opponents a crushing and inglorious defeat."

Such a remarkable display of dexterity and strength could not fail to attract the attention of a considerable number of observers whose minds had remained, as yet, untainted by prejudice or malice. It evoked the enthusiasm of poets who, in different cities of Persia, were moved to celebrate the exploits of the author of so daring an act. Their poems helped to diffuse the knowledge, and to immortalise the memory, of that mighty deed. Among those who paid their tribute to the valour of Mullá Ḥusayn was a certain Ridá-Qulí Khán-i-Lalih-Báshí, who, in the "Táríkh-i-Náṣirí," lavished his praise on the prodigious strength and the unrivalled skill which had characterised that stroke.

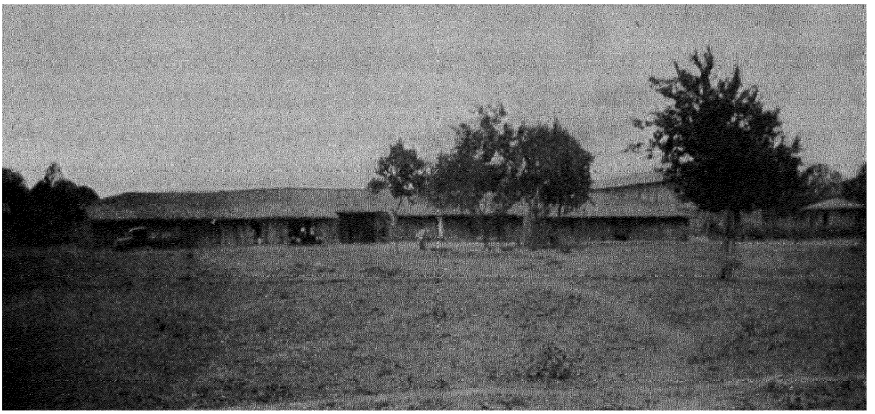
I ventured to ask Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Furúghí whether he was aware that in the "Násikhu't-Taváríkh" mention had been made of the fact that Mullá Ḥusayn had, in his early youth, been instructed in the art of swordsmanship, that he had acquired his proficiency only after a considerable period of training. "This is sheer fabrication," affirmed Mullá Muhammad. "I have known him from his childhood, and have been associated with him, as a classmate and friend, for a long time. I have never known him to be possessed of such strength and power. I even deem myself superior in vigour and bodily endurance. His hand trembled as he wrote, and he often expressed his inability to write as fully and as frequently as he wished. He was greatly handicapped in this respect, and he continued to suffer from its effects until his journey to Mázindarán. The moment he unsheathed

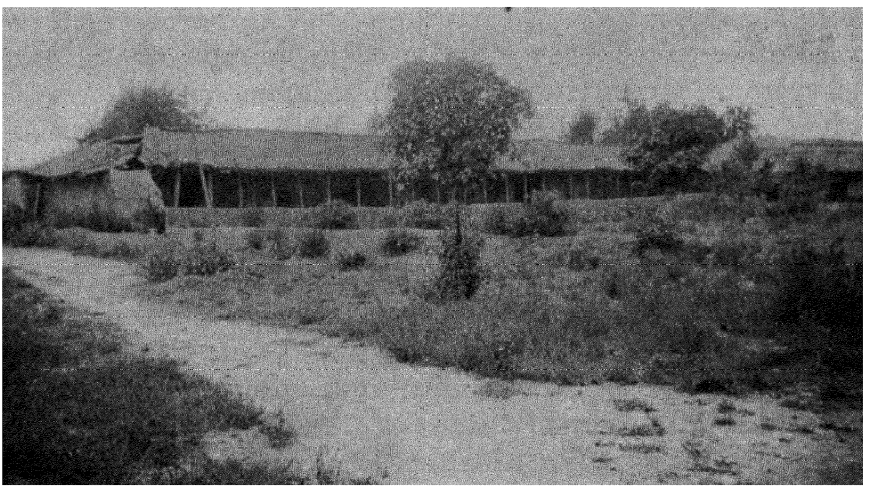


HOUSE OF THE SA'ÍDU'L-'ULAMÁ' IN BÁRFÚRŪSH, MÁZINDARÁN

his sword, however, to repulse that savage attack, a mysterious power seemed to have suddenly transformed him. In all subsequent encounters, he was seen to be the first to spring forward and spur on his charger into the camp of the aggressor. Unaided, he would face and fight the combined forces of his opponents and would himself achieve the victory. We, who followed him in the rear, had to content ourselves with those who had already been disabled and were weakened by the blows they had sustained. His name alone was sufficient to strike terror into the hearts of his adversaries. They fled at mention of him; they trembled at his approach. Even those who were his constant companions were mute with wonder before him. We were stunned by the display of his stupendous force, his indomitable will and complete intrepidity. We were all convinced that he had ceased to be the Mullá Ḥusayn whom we had known, and that in him resided a spirit which God alone could bestow."

This same Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Furúghí related to me the following: "Mullá Ḥusayn had no sooner dealt his memorable blow to his adversary than he disappeared from our sight. We knew not whither he had gone. His attendant, Qambar-'Alí, alone could follow him. He subsequently informed us that his master threw himself headlong upon his enemies, and was able with a single stroke of his sword to strike down each of those who dared assail him. Unmindful of the bullets that rained upon him, he forced his way through the ranks of the enemy and headed for Bárfurúsh. He rode straight to the residence of the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá', thrice made the circuit of his house, and cried out: 'Let that contemptible







VIEWS OF THE CARAVANSERAI OF SABZIH-MAYDÁN IN MÁZINDARÁN

coward, who has incited the inhabitants of this town to wage holy warfare against us and has ignominiously concealed himself behind the walls of his house, emerge from his inglorious retreat. Let him, by his example, demonstrate the sincerity of his appeal and the righteousness of his cause. Has he forgotten that he who preaches a holy war must needs himself march at the head of his followers, and by his own deeds kindle their devotion and sustain their enthusiasm?' "

The voice of Mullá Ḥusayn drowned the clamour of the multitude. The inhabitants of Bárfurúsh surrendered and soon raised the cry, "Peace, peace!" No sooner had the voice of surrender been raised than the acclamations of the followers of Mullá Ḥusayn, who at that moment were seen galloping towards Bárfurúsh, were heard from every side. The cry of "Yá Ṣáhibu'z-Zamán!"[1] which they shouted at the top of their voices, struck dismay into the hearts of those who heard it. The companions of Mullá Ḥusayn, who had abandoned the hope of again finding him alive, were greatly surprised when they saw him seated erect upon his horse, unhurt and unaffected by the fierceness of that onset. Each reverently approached him and kissed his stirrups.

On the afternoon of that day, the peace which the inhabitants of Bárfurúsh had implored was granted. To the crowd which had gathered about him, Mullá Ḥusayn spoke these words: "O followers of the Prophet of God, and shí'ahs of the imáms of His Faith! Why have you risen against us? Why deem the shedding of our blood an act meritorious in the sight of God? Did we ever repudiate the truth of your Faith? Is this the hospitality which the Apostle of God has enjoined His followers to accord to both the faithful and the infidel? What have we done to merit such condemnation on your part? Consider: I alone, with no other weapon than my sword, have been able to face the rain of bullets which the inhabitants of Bárfurúsh have poured upon me, and have emerged unscathed from the midst of the fire with which you have besieged me. Both my person and my horse have escaped unhurt from your overwhelming attack. Except for the slight scratch which I received on my face, you have

[1] See Glossary.

been powerless to wound me. God has protected me and willed to establish in your eyes the ascendancy of His Faith."

Immediately afterwards, Mullá Ḥusayn proceeded to the caravanserai of Sabzih-Maydán. He dismounted and, standing at the entrance of the inn, awaited the arrival of his companions. As soon as they had gathered and been accommodated in that place, he sent for bread and water. Those who had been commissioned to fetch them returned empty-handed, and informed him that they had been unable to procure either bread from the baker or water from the public square. "You have exhorted us," they told him, "to put our trust in God and to resign ourselves to His will. 'Nothing can befall us but what God hath destined for us. Our liege Lord is He; and on God let the faithful trust!' "[1]

Mullá Ḥusayn ordered that the gates of the caravanserai be closed. Assembling his companions, he begged them to remain gathered in his presence until the hour of sunset. As the evening approached, he asked whether any among them would be willing to arise and, renouncing his life for the sake of his Faith, ascend to the roof of the caravanserai and sound the adhán.[2] A youth gladly responded. No sooner had the opening words of "Alláh-u-Akbar" dropped from his lips than a bullet suddenly struck him and immediately caused his death. "Let another one among you arise,"

[1] Qur'án, 9: 52.

[2] "Le Bábu'l-Báb voulant, dit notre auteur, en même temps qu'accomplir un devoir religieux donner un exemple de la fermeté des convictions des sectaires, de leur mépris de la vie, et démontrer au monde l'impiété et l'irréligion de ceux qui se disent musulmans, donna l'ordre à l'un des siens de monter sur une terrasse et d'y chanter l'adhán." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 295–6.) "It was at Marand," writes Lady Sheil, "that I first heard the adhán, or call of the Muslims to prayer, so solemn and impressive, specially when well chanted, for it is in fact a chant. . . . He turned towards Mecca, and placing his open hands to his head, proclaimed with a loud sonorous voice, 'Alláh-u-Akbar,' which he repeated four times; then 'Ashhad-u-an-lá-iláh-a-illa'lláh'—(I bear witness there is no God but God), twice; then 'Ashhad-u-inna-Muḥammadan-Rasú'lláh' —(I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Prophet of God), twice; then 'I bear witness that 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, is the friend of God.' . . . The single toll in the knell for transporting the dead to their last earthly abode arouses, perhaps from association, ideas of profound solemnity; so too does the trumpet echoing through the camp when it ushers the dragoon to his grave; but above both, in solemn awe, is the keening as it sweeps afar over the dales and hills of Munster, announcing that a Gael has been gathered to his fathers. The adhán excites a different impression. It raises in the mind a combination of feelings, of dignity, solemnity, and devotion, compared with which the din of bells becomes insignificant. It is an imposing thing to hear in the dead of the night the first sounds of the mu'adhdhin proclaiming 'Alláh-u-Akbar—Mighty is the Lord—I bear witness there is no God but God!' St. Peter's and St. Paul's together can produce nothing equal to it." ("Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," pp. 84, 85.)

Mullá Ḥusayn urged them, "and, with the selfsame renunciation, proceed with the prayer which that youth was unable to finish." Another youth started to his feet, and had no sooner uttered the words, "I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Apostle of God," than he also was struck down by another bullet from the enemy. A third youth, at the bidding of his chief, attempted to complete the prayer which his martyred companions had been forced to leave unfinished. He, too, suffered the same fate. As he was approaching the end of his prayer, and was uttering the words, "There is no God but God," he, in his turn, fell dead.

The fall of his third companion decided Mullá Ḥusayn to throw open the gate of the caravanserai, and to arise, together with his friends, to repulse this unexpected attack from a treacherous enemy. Leaping on horseback, he gave the signal to charge upon the assailants who had massed before the gates and had filled the Sabzih-Maydán. Sword in hand, and followed by his companions, he succeeded in decimating the forces that had been arrayed against him. Those few who had escaped their swords fled before them in panic, again pleading for peace, again imploring mercy. With the approach of evening, the entire crowd had vanished. The Sabzih-Maydán, which a few hours before overflowed with a seething mass of opponents, was now deserted. The clamour of the multitude was stilled. Bestrewn with the bodies of the slain, the Maydán and its surroundings offered a sad and moving spectacle, a scene which bore witness to the victory of God over His enemies.

So startling a victory[1] induced a number of the nobles and chiefs of the people to intervene and beseech the mercy of Mullá Ḥusayn on behalf of their fellow-citizens. They came on foot to submit to him their petition. "God is our witness," they pleaded, "that we harbour no intention but

[1] "Sa'idu'l-'Ulamá' voulant en finir à tout prix, réunit autant de monde qu'il put et mit de nouveau le siège devant le caravanserai: la bataille durait depuis cinq ou six jours, quand parut 'Abbás-Qulí Khán Sardár-i-Lárijání. Entre temps, en effet, et dès le début de l'action, les 'ulamás de Bárfurúsh, exaspérés des nombreuses conversions que Quddús avait su faire en ville—300 en une semaine, constatent avec quelque mauvaise humeur les historiens musulmans—en avaient référé au Gouverneur de la province, le Prince Khánlar Mírzá; celui-ci ne fit aucune attention à leurs doléances, ayant en tête bien d'autres préoccupations. La mort de Muḥammad Sháh l'inquiétait beaucoup plus pour lui-même que les criailleries des mullás et il se préparait à aller à Ṭihrán saluer le nouveau souverain dont

that of establishing peace and reconciliation between us. Remain seated on your charger for a while, until we have explained our motive." Observing the earnestness of their appeal, Mullá Ḥusayn dismounted and invited them to join him in the caravanserai. "We, unlike the people of this town, know how to receive the stranger in our midst," he said, as he invited them to be seated beside him and ordered that they be served with tea. "The Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá'," they replied, "was alone responsible for having kindled the fire of so much mischief. The people of Bárfurúsh should in no wise be implicated in the crime which he has committed. Let the past be now forgotten. We would suggest, in the interest of both parties, that you and your companions leave to-morrow for Ámul. Bárfurúsh is in the throes of great excitement; we fear lest they may again be instigated to attack you." Mullá Ḥusayn, though hinting at the insincerity of the people, consented to their proposal; whereupon 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání[1] and Ḥájí Muṣṭafá Khán arose together and, swearing by the Qur'án which they had brought with them, solemnly declared their intention to regard them as their guests that night, and the following day to instruct Khusraw-i-Qádí-Kalá'í[2] and a hundred horsemen to ensure their safe passage through Shír-Gáh. "The malediction of God and His Prophets be upon us, both in this world and

il espérait se concilier les bonnes grâces. N'ayant pas réussi de ce côté et les événements se précipitant, les 'ulamás écrivirent une lettre fort pressante au chef militaire de la province, 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání. Ce dernier, jugeant inutile de se déranger lui-même, envoya Muhammad Bik, yávar (capitaine), à la tête de 300 hommes pour remettre les choses en ordre. C'est alors que les musulmans vinrent assiéger le caravanserai. La lutte s'organisa, mais, si dix bábís furent tués, un nombre infiniment plus grand d'assailants mordit la poussière. Les choses traînant en longueur, 'Abbás-Qulí Khán crut devoir venir lui-même pour se rendre compte de visu de la situation." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 296–7.)

[1] Gobineau describes him in the following terms: "Les nomades turks et persans passent leur vie à chasser, souvent aussi à guerroyer, et surtout à parler de chasse et de guerre. Ils sont braves, mais non tous les jours, et ils tomberaient sous le coup de la remarque de Brant tôme, qui, dans son expérience des guerres de son époque, avait beaucoup rencontré de pareils courages, qu'il nomme assez bien journaliers. Mais ce que sont ces nomades d'une manière très uniforme et constante, c'est grands parleurs, grands démanteleurs de villes, grands massacreurs de héros, grands exterminateurs de multitudes; en somme, naïfs, très à découvert dans leurs sentiments, très vifs dans l'expression de ce qui échauffe leurs têtes, extrêmements amusants. 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání, homme très bien né assurément, était un type de nomade accompli." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 171.)

[2] A notorious scoundrel who often rebelled against the government.

in the next," they added, "if we ever allow the slightest injury to be inflicted upon you and your party."

As soon as they had made their declaration, their friends who had gone to fetch food for the companions and fodder for their horses, arrived. Mullá Ḥusayn bade his fellow-believers break their fast, inasmuch as none of them that day, which was Friday, the twelfth of the month of Dhi'l-Qa'dih,[1] had taken any meat or drink since the hour of dawn. So great was the number of notables and their attendants that had crowded into the caravanserai that day that neither he nor any of his companions had partaken of the tea which they had offered to their visitors.

That night, about four hours after sunset, Mullá Ḥusayn, together with his friends, dined in the company of 'Abbás-Qulí Khán and Ḥájí Muṣṭafá Khán. In the middle of that same night, the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá' summoned Khusraw-i-Qádí-Kalá'í and confidentially intimated to him his desire that, at any time or place he himself might decide, the entire property of the party which had been entrusted to his charge should be seized, and that they themselves, without a single exception, should be put to death. "Are these not the followers of Islám?" Khusraw observed. "Have not these same people, as I have already learned, preferred to sacrifice three of their companions rather than leave unfinished the call to prayer which they had raised? How could we, who cherish such designs and perpetrate such acts, be regarded as worthy of that name?" That shameless miscreant insisted that his orders be faithfully obeyed. "Slay them," he said, as he pointed with his finger to his neck, "and be not afraid. I hold myself responsible for your act. I will, on the Day of Judgment, be answerable to God in your name. We, who wield the sceptre of authority, are surely better informed than you, and can better judge how best to extirpate this heresy."

At the hour of sunrise, 'Abbás-Qulí Khán asked that Khusraw be conducted into his presence, and bade him exercise the utmost consideration towards Mullá Ḥusayn and his companions, to ensure their safe passage through Shír-Gáh, and to refuse whatever rewards they might wish to offer him.

[1] October 10, 1848 A.D.

Khusraw feigned submission to these instructions and assured him that neither he nor his horsemen would relax in their vigilance or flinch in their devotion to them. "On our return," he added, "we shall show you his own written expression of satisfaction with the services we shall have rendered him."

When Khusraw was taken by 'Abbás-Qulí Khán and Ḥájí Muṣṭafá Khán and other representative leaders of Bárfurúsh into the presence of Mullá Ḥusayn and was introduced to him, the latter remarked: " 'If ye do well, it will redound to your own advantage; and if ye do evil, the evil will return upon you.'[1] If this man should treat us well, great shall be his reward; and if he act treacherously towards us, great shall be his punishment. To God would we commit our Cause, and to His will are we wholly resigned."

Mullá Ḥusayn spoke these words and gave the signal for departure. Once more Qambar-'Alí was heard to raise the call of his master, "Mount your steeds, O heroes of God!"—a summons which he invariably called out on such occasions. At the sound of those words, they all hurried to their steeds. A detachment of Khusraw's horsemen marched before them. They were immediately followed by Khusraw and Mullá Ḥusayn, who rode abreast in the centre of the company. In their rear followed the rest of the companions, and on their right and left marched the remainder of the hundred horsemen whom Khusraw had armed as willing instruments for the execution of his design. It had been agreed that the party should start early in the morning from Bárfurúsh and arrive on the same day at noon at Shír-Gáh. Two hours after sunrise, they started for their destination. Khusraw intentionally took the way of the forest, a route which he thought would better serve his purpose.

As soon as they had penetrated it, he gave the signal for attack. His men fiercely threw themselves upon the companions, seized their property, killed a number, among whom was the brother of Mullá Ṣádiq, and captured the rest. As soon as the cry of agony and distress reached his ears, Mullá Husayn halted, and, alighting from his horse, protested against Khusraw's treacherous behaviour. "The hour of midday is long past," he told him; "we still have not attained

[1] Qur'án, 17:7.

our destination. I refuse to proceed further with you; I can dispense with your guidance and company and that of your men." Turning to Qambar-'Alí, he asked him to spread his prayer-mat, that he might offer his devotions. He was performing his ablutions, when Khusraw, who had also dismounted, called one of his attendants and bade him inform Mullá Ḥusayn that if he wished to reach his destination safely, he should deliver to him both his sword and his horse. Refusing to give a reply, Mullá Ḥusayn proceeded to offer his prayer. Shortly after, Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Juvayníy-i-Sabzivárí, a man of literary accomplishments and fearless courage, went to an attendant who was preparing the qalyán,[1] and requested him to allow him to take it in person to Khusraw; a request that was readily granted. Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí was bending to kindle the fire of the qalyán, when, thrusting his hand suddenly into Khusraw's bosom, he drew his dagger from his robe and plunged it hilt-deep into his vitals.[2]

Mullá Ḥusayn was still in the act of prayer when the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán"[3] was raised again by his companions. They threw themselves upon their treacherous assailants and in one onslaught struck them all down except the attendant who had prepared the qalyán. Affrighted and defenceless, he fell at the feet of Mullá Ḥusayn and implored his aid. He was given the bejewelled qalyán which belonged to his master and was bidden to return to Bárfurúsh and recount to 'Abbás-Qulí Khán all that he had witnessed. "Tell him," said Mullá Ḥusayn, "how faithfully Khusraw discharged his mission. That false miscreant foolishly imagined that my mission had come to an end, that both my sword and my horse had fulfilled their function. Little did he know that their work had but just begun, that until the services which they can render are entirely accomplished, neither his power nor the power of any man beside him can wrest them from me."

As the night was approaching, the party decided to tarry in that spot until the hour of dawn. At daybreak, after Mullá Husayn had offered his prayer, he gathered his com-

[1] See Glossary.

[2] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 36), it was Mírzá Luṭf-'Alí, the secretary, who drew his dagger and stabbed Khusraw.

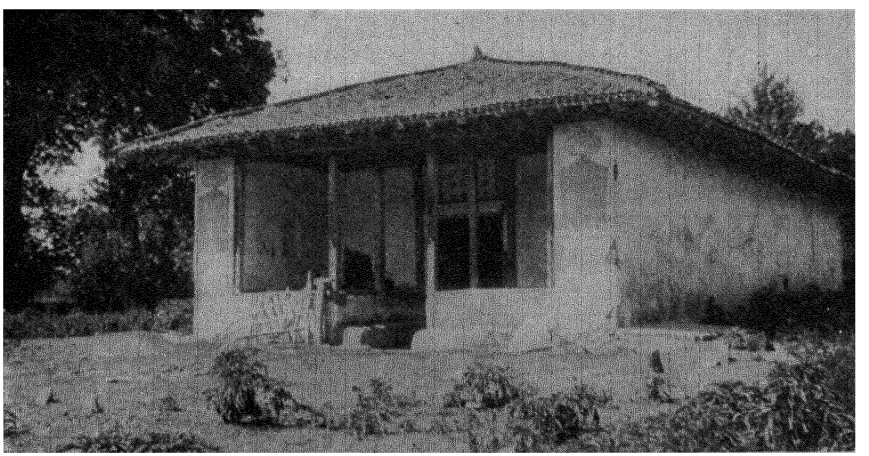
[3] See Glossary.

panions together and said: "We are approaching our Karbilá, our ultimate destination." Immediately after, he set out on foot towards that spot, and was followed by his companions. Finding that a few were attempting to carry with them the belongings of Khusraw and of his men, he ordered them to leave everything behind except their swords and horses. "It behoves you," he urged them, "to arrive at that hallowed spot in a state of complete detachment, wholly sanctified from all that pertains to this world."[1] He had walked the distance of a maydán[2] when he arrived at the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí.[3] The Shaykh had been one of the transmitters of the traditions ascribed to the imáms of the Faith, and his burial-place was visited by the people of the neighbourhood. On reaching that spot, he recited the following verse of the Qur'án: "O

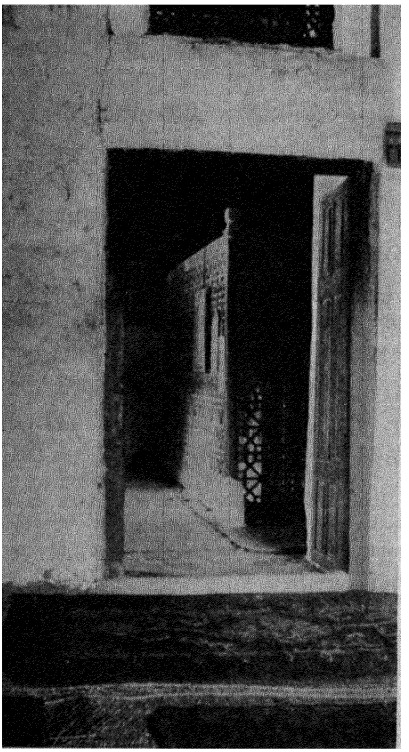
[1] "Puis se tournant vers ses compagnons: 'Pour ces quelques jours que nous avons encore à vivre, évitons que des richesses périssables nous divisent et nous séparent. Que tout ceci nous soit commun et que chacun en profite.' Les Bábís y consentirent avec joie, et c'est ce sacrifice merveilleux, cette abnégation parfaite qui les ont fait et les font encore accuser de vouloir la communauté des biens et des femmes!" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 299.)

[2] See Glossary.

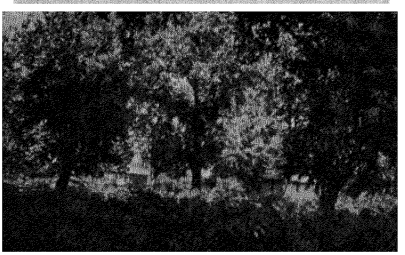
[3] Shrine of Shaykh Aḥmad-ibn-i-Abí-Ṭálib-i-Ṭabarsí, situated about fourteen miles S.E. of Bárfurúsh. Professor Browne, of Cambridge University, visited the spot on September 26, 1888, and saw the name of the buried saint inscribed on a tablet with the form of words used for his "visitation," the tablet hanging suspended from the railings surrounding the tomb. "It consists at present," he writes, "of a flat, grassy enclosure surrounded by a hedge, and containing, besides the buildings of the shrine and another building at the gateway (opposite to which, but outside the enclosure, stands the house of the mutavallí, or custodian of the shrine), nothing but two or three orange trees and a few rude graves covered with flat



THE SHRINE OF THE SHAYKH ṬABARSÍ



THE TOMB OF THE SHAYKH ṬABARSÍ



SITE OF THE FORT THAT ENCLOSED THE SHRINE

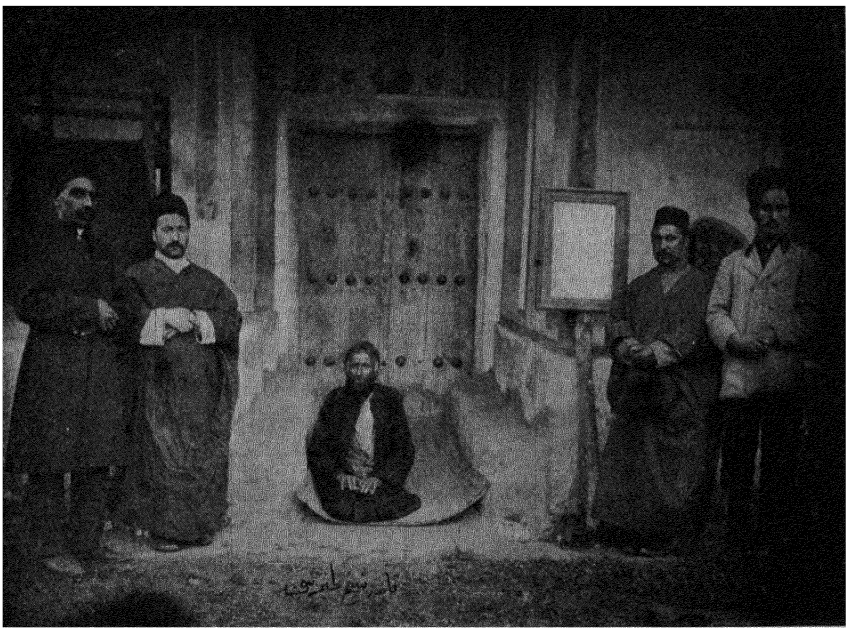
my Lord, bless Thou my arrival at this place, for Thou alone canst vouchsafe such blessings."

The night preceding their arrival, the guardian of the shrine dreamed that the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhadá', the Imám Ḥusayn, had arrived at Shaykh Tabarsí, accompanied by no less than seventy-two warriors and a large number of his companions. He dreamed that they tarried in that spot, engaged in the most heroic of battles, triumphing in every encounter over the forces of the enemy, and that the Prophet of God, Himself, arrived one night and joined that blessed company. When Mullá Ḥusayn arrived on the following day, the guardian immediately recognised him as the hero he had seen in his vision, threw himself at his feet, and kissed them devoutly. Mullá Ḥusayn invited him to be seated by his side, and heard him relate his story. "All that you

stones, the last resting-places, perhaps, of some of the Bábí defenders. The building at the gateway is two storeys high, is traversed by the passage giving access to the enclosure, and is roofed with tiles. The buildings of the shrine, which stand at the farther end of the enclosure, are rather more elaborate. Their greatest length (about 20 paces) lies east and west; their breadth is about ten paces; and, besides the covered portico at the entrance, they contain two rooms scantily lighted by wooden gratings over the doors. The tomb of the Shaykh, from whom the place takes its name, stands surrounded by wooden railings in the centre of the inner room, to which access is obtained either by a door communicating with the outer chamber, or by a door opening externally into the enclosure." (For plans and sketches, see the author's translation of the "Táríkh-i-Jadíd.") (E. G. Browne's "A Year amongst the Persians," p. 565.)

have witnessed," he assured the keeper of the shrine, "will come to pass. Those glorious scenes will again be enacted before your eyes." That servant threw in his lot eventually with the heroic defenders of the fort and fell a martyr within its walls.

On the very day of their arrival, which was the fourteenth of Dhi'l-Qa'dih,[1] Mullá Husayn gave Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir, who had built the Bábíyyih, the preliminary instruc-



ENTRANCE OF THE SHRINE OF SHAYKH ṬABARSÍ IN MÁZINDARÁN

tions regarding the design of the fort which was to be constructed for their defence. Towards the evening of the same day, they found themselves suddenly encompassed by an irregular multitude of horsemen who had emerged from the forest and were preparing to open fire upon them. "We are of the inhabitants of Qádí-Kalá," they shouted. "We come to avenge the blood of Khusraw. Not until we have put you all to the sword shall we be satisfied." Besieged by a savage crowd ready to pounce upon them, the party had to draw

[1] October 12, 1848 A.D.

their swords again in self-defence. Raising the cry of "Yá Sáhibu'z-Zamán," they leaped forward, repulsed the assailants, and put them to flight. So tremendous was the shout, that the horsemen vanished as suddenly as they had appeared. Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Juvayní had, at his own request, assumed the command of that encounter.

Fearing that their assailants might again turn on them and resort to a general massacre, they pursued them until they reached a village which they thought to be the village of Qádí-Kalá. At the sight of them, all the men fled in wild terror. The mother of Naẓar Khán, the owner of the village, was inadvertently killed in the darkness of the night, amid the confusion that ensued. The outcries of the women, who were violently protesting that they had no connection whatever with the people of Qádí-Kalá, soon reached the ears of Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, who immediately ordered his companions to withhold their hands until they ascertained the name and character of the place. They soon found out that the village belonged to Naẓar Khán and that the woman who had lost her life was his mother. Greatly distressed at the discovery of so grievous a mistake on the part of his companions, Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí sorrowfully exclaimed: "We did not intend to molest either the men or the women of this village. Our sole purpose was to curb the violence of the people of Qádí-Kalá, who were about to put us all to death." He apologised earnestly for the pitiful tragedy which his companions had unwittingly enacted.

Nazar Khán, who in the meantime had concealed himself in his house, was convinced of the sincerity of the regrets expressed by Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí. Though suffering from this grievous loss, he was moved to call upon him and to invite him to his home. He even asked Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí to introduce him to Mullá Husayn, and expressed a keen desire to be made acquainted with the precepts of a Cause that could kindle such fervour in the breasts of its adherents.

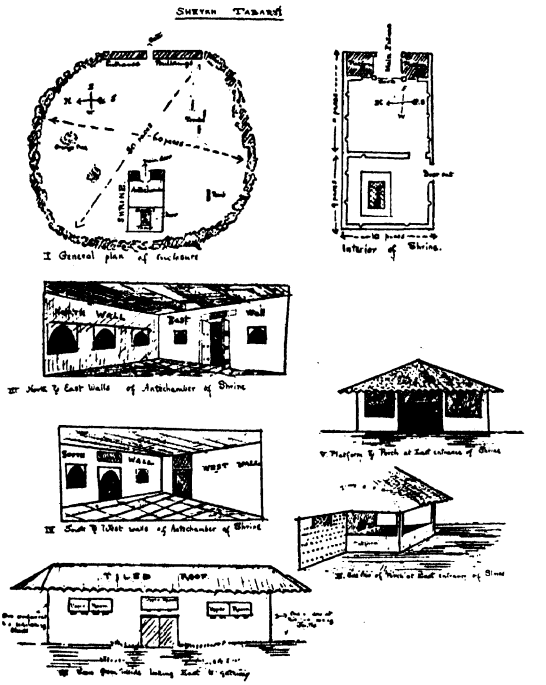
At the hour of dawn, Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, accompanied by Nazar Khán, arrived at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí, and found Mullá Ḥusayn leading the congregational prayer. Such was the rapture that glowed upon his counte-

nance that Nazar Khán felt an irresistible impulse to join the worshippers and to repeat the very prayers that were then falling from their lips. After the completion of that prayer, Mullá Ḥusayn was informed of the loss which Naẓar Khán had sustained. He expressed in the most touching language the sympathy which he and the entire company of his fellow-disciples felt for him in his great bereavement. "God knows," he assured him, "that our sole intention was to protect our lives rather than disturb the peace of the neighbourhood." Mullá Ḥusayn then proceeded to relate the circumstances that had led to the attack directed against them by the people of Bárfurúsh, and explained the treacherous conduct of Khusraw. He again assured him of the sorrow which the death of his mother had caused him. "Afflict not your heart," Naẓar Khán spontaneously replied. "Would that a hundred sons had been given me, all of whom I would have joyously placed at your feet and offered as a sacrifice to the Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!" He pledged, that very moment, his undying loyalty to Mullá Husayn, and hastened back to his village in order to return with whatever provisions might be required for the party.

Mullá Ḥusayn ordered his companions to commence the building of the fort which had been designed. To every group he assigned a section of the work, and encouraged them to hasten its completion. In the course of these operations, they were continually harassed by the people of the neighbouring villages, who, at the persistent instigations of the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá', marched out and fell upon them. Every attack of the enemy ended in failure and shame. Undeterred by the fierceness of their repeated onsets, the companions valiantly withstood their assaults until they had succeeded in subjugating temporarily the forces which had hemmed them in on every side. When the work of construction was completed, Mullá Ḥusayn undertook the necessary preparations for the siege which the fort was destined to sustain, and provided, despite the obstacles which stood in his way, whatever seemed essential for the safety of its occupants.

The work had scarcely been completed when Shaykh Abú-Turáb arrived bearing the news of Bahá'u'lláh's arrival at the village of Naẓar Khán. He informed Mullá Ḥusayn

that he had been specially commanded by Bahá'u'lláh to inform them that they all were to be His guests that night and that He Himself would join them that same afternoon. I have heard Mullá Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Furúghí recount the following: "The tidings which Shaykh Abú-Turáb brought imparted an indefinable joy to the heart of Mullá Ḥusayn. He hastened immediately to his companions and bade them bestir themselves for the reception of Bahá'u'lláh. He himself



PLANS AND SKETCHES OF THE FORT OF SHAYKH ṬABARSÍ

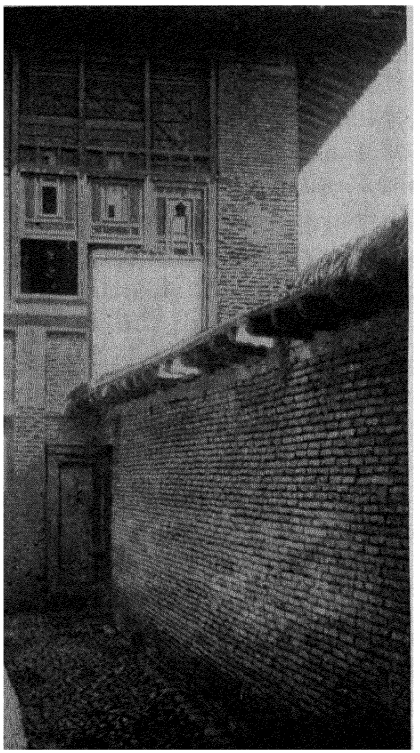
joined them in sweeping and sprinkling with water the approaches to the shrine, and attended in person to whatever was necessary for the arrival of the beloved Visitor. As soon as he saw Him approaching with Naẓar Khán, he rushed forward, tenderly embraced Him, and conducted Him to the place of honour which he had reserved for His reception. We were too blind in those days to recognise the glory of Him whom our leader had introduced with such reverence and love into our midst. What Mullá Ḥusayn had perceived, our

dull vision was as yet unable to recognise. With what solicitude he received Him in his arms! What feelings of rapturous delight filled his heart on seeing Him! He was so lost in admiration that he was utterly oblivious of us all. His soul was so wrapt in contemplation of that countenance that we who were awaiting his permission to be seated were kept standing a long time beside him. It was Bahá'u'lláh Himself who finally bade us be seated. We, too, were soon made to feel, however inadequately, the charm of His utterance, though none of us were even dimly aware of the infinite potency latent in His words.

"Bahá'u'lláh, in the course of that visit, inspected the fort and expressed His satisfaction with the work that had been accomplished. In His conversation with Mullá Ḥusayn, He explained in detail such matters as were vital to the welfare and safety of his companions. 'The one thing this fort and company require,' He said, 'is the presence of Quddús. His association with this company would render it complete and perfect.' He instructed Mullá Ḥusayn to despatch Mullá Mihdíy-i-Khu'í with six people to Sárí, and to demand of Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí that he immediately deliver Quddús into their hands. 'The fear of God and the dread of His punishment,' He assured Mullá Ḥusayn, 'will prompt him to surrender unhesitatingly his captive.'

"Ere He departed, Bahá'u'lláh enjoined them to be patient and resigned to the will of the Almighty. 'If it be His will,' He added, 'We shall once again visit you at this same spot, and shall lend you Our assistance. You have been chosen of God to be the vanguard of His host and the establishers of His Faith. His host verily will conquer. Whatever may befall, victory is yours, a victory which is complete and certain.' With these words, He committed those valiant companions to the care of God, and returned to the village with Naẓar Khán and Shaykh Abú-Turáb. From thence He departed by way of Núr to Ṭihrán."

Mullá Ḥusayn set out immediately to carry out the instructions he had received. Summoning Mullá Mihdí, he bade him proceed together with six other companions to Sárí and ask that the mujtahid liberate his prisoner. As soon as the message was conveyed to him, Mírzá Muḥammad-



HOUSE OF MÍRZÁ MUḤAMMAD-TAQÍ, THE MUJTAHID, IN SÁRÍ, MÁZINDARÁN

Taqí unconditionally acceded to their request. The potency with which that message had been endowed seemed to have completely disarmed him. "I have regarded him," he hastened to assure the messengers, "only as an honoured guest in my house. It would be unbecoming of me to pretend to have dismissed or released him. He is at liberty to do as he desires. Should he wish it, I would be willing to accompany him."

Mullá Ḥusayn had in the meantime apprised his companions of the approach of Quddús, and had enjoined them to observe towards him a reverence such as they would feel prompted to show to the Báb Himself. "As to myself," he added, "you must consider me as his lowly servant. You should bear him such loyalty that if he were to command you to take my life, you would unhesitatingly obey. If you waver or hesitate, you will have shown your disloyalty to your Faith. Not until he summons you to his presence must you in any wise venture to intrude upon him. You should forsake your desires and cling to his will and pleasure. You should refrain from kissing either his hands or his feet, for his blessed heart dislikes such evidences of reverent affection. Such should be your behaviour that I may feel proud of you before him. The glory and authority with which he has been invested must needs be duly recognised by even the most insignificant of his companions. Whoso departs from the spirit and letter of my admonitions, a grievous chastisement will surely overtake him."

The incarceration of Quddús in the home of Mírzá Mu-

ḥammad-Taqí, Sárí's most eminent mujtahid, to whom he was related, lasted five and ninety days. Though confined, Quddús was treated with marked deference, and was allowed to receive most of the companions who had been present at the gathering of Badasht. To none, however, did he grant permission to stay in Sárí. Whoever visited him was urged, in the most pressing terms, to enlist under the Black Standard hoisted by Mullá Ḥusayn. It was the same standard of which Muḥammad, the Prophet of God, had thus spoken: "Should your eyes behold the Black Standards proceeding from Khurásán, hasten ye towards them, even though ye should have to crawl over the snow, inasmuch as they proclaim the advent of the promised Mihdí,[1] the Vicegerent of God." That standard was unfurled at the command of the Báb, in the name of Quddús, and by the hands of Mullá Ḥusayn. It was carried aloft all the way from the city of Mashhad to the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí. For eleven months, from the beginning of Sha'bán, in the year 1264 A.H.,[2] to the end of Jamádíyu'th-Thání, in the year 1265 A.H.,[3] that earthly emblem of an unearthly sovereignty waved continually over the heads of that small and valiant band, summoning the multitude who gazed upon it to renounce the world and to espouse the Cause of God.

While in Sárí, Quddús frequently attempted to convince Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí of the truth of the Divine Message. He freely conversed with him on the most weighty and outstanding issues related to the Revelation of the Báb. His bold and challenging remarks were couched in such gentle, such persuasive and courteous language, and delivered with such geniality and humour, that those who heard him felt not in the least offended. They even misconstrued his allusions to the sacred Book as humorous observations intended to entertain his hearers. Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, despite the cruelty and wickedness that were latent in him and which he subsequently manifested by the stand he took in insisting upon the extermination of the remnants of the defenders of the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, was withheld by an inner power from showing the least disrespect to Quddús while the latter was confined in his home. He even was prompted to prevent

[1] See Glossary. [2] July 3–August 1, 1848 A.D. [3] April 24–May 23, 1849 A.D.

the inhabitants of Sárí from offending Quddús, and was often heard to rebuke them for the harm which they desired to inflict upon him.

The news of the impending arrival of Quddús bestirred the occupants of the fort of Ṭabarsí. As he drew near his destination, he sent forward a messenger to announce his approach. The joyful tidings gave them new courage and strength. Roused to a burst of enthusiasm which he could not repress, Mullá Ḥusayn started to his feet and, escorted by about a hundred of his companions, hastened to meet the expected visitor. He placed two candles in the hands of each, lighted them himself, and bade them proceed to meet Quddús. The darkness of the night was dispelled by the radiance which those joyous hearts shed as they marched forth to meet their beloved. In the midst of the forest of Mázindarán, their eyes instantly recognised the face which they had longed to behold. They pressed eagerly around his steed, and with every mark of devotion paid him their tribute of love and undying allegiance. Still holding the lighted candles in their hands, they followed him on foot towards their destination. Quddús, as he rode along in their midst, appeared as the day-star that shines amidst its satellites. As the company slowly wended its way towards the fort, there broke forth the hymn of glorification and praise intoned by the band of his enthusiastic admirers. "Holy, holy, the Lord our God, the Lord of the angels and the spirit!" rang their jubilant voices around him. Mullá Ḥusayn raised the glad refrain, to which the entire company responded. The forest of Mázindarán re-echoed to the sound of their acclamations.

In this manner they reached the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí. The first words that fell from the lips of Quddús after he had dismounted and leaned against the shrine were the following: "The Baqíyyatu'lláh[1] will be best for you if ye are of those who believe."[2] By this utterance was fulfilled the prophecy of Muḥammad as recorded in the following tradition: "And when the Mihdí[3] is made manifest, He shall lean His back against the Ka'bih and shall address to the three hundred and thirteen followers who will have grouped around Him, these words: 'The Baqíyyatu'lláh will be best for you if

[1] Literally "Remnant of God." [2] Qur'án, 11: 85. [3] See Glossary.

ye are of those who believe.' " By "Baqíyyatu'lláh" Quddús meant none other than Bahá'u'lláh. To this testified Mullá Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Furughí, who related to me the following: "I myself was present when Quddús alighted from his horse. I saw him lean against the shrine and heard him utter those same words. No sooner had he spoken them than he made mention of Bahá'u'lláh and, turning to Mullá Ḥusayn, enquired about Him. He was informed that unless God decreed to the contrary, He had signified His intention to return to this place before the first day of Muḥarram.[1]

"Shortly after, Quddús entrusted to Mullá Ḥusayn a number of homilies which he asked him to read aloud to his assembled companions. The first homily he read was entirely devoted to the Báb, the second concerned Bahá'u'lláh, and the third referred to Ṭáhirih. We ventured to express to Mullá Ḥusayn our doubts whether the references in the second homily were applicable to Bahá'u'lláh, who appeared clothed in the garb of nobility. The matter was reported to Quddús, who assured us that, God willing, its secret would be revealed to us in due time. Utterly unaware, in those days, of the character of the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh, we were unable to understand the meaning of those allusions, and idly conjectured as to what could be their probable significance. In my eagerness to unravel the subtleties of the traditions concerning the promised Qá'im, I several times approached Quddús and requested him to enlighten me regarding that subject. Though at first reluctant, he eventually acceded to my wish. The manner of his answer, his convincing and illuminating explanations, served to heighten the sense of awe and of veneration which his presence inspired. He dispelled whatever doubts lingered in our minds, and such were the evidences of his perspicacity that we came to believe that to him had been given the power to read our profoundest thoughts and to calm the fiercest tumult in our hearts.

"Many a night I saw Mullá Ḥusayn circle round the shrine within the precincts of which Quddús lay asleep. How often did I see him emerge in the mid-watches of the night from his chamber and quietly direct his steps to that spot and whisper the same verse with which we all had greeted

[1] November 27, 1848 A.D.

the arrival of the beloved visitor! With what feelings of emotion I can still remember him as he advanced towards me, in the stillness of those dark and lonely hours which I devoted to meditation and prayer, whispering in my ears these words: 'Banish from your mind, O Mullá Mírzá Muḥammad, these perplexing subtleties and, freed from their trammels, arise and seek with me to quaff the cup of martyrdom. Then will you be able to comprehend, as the year '80[1] dawns upon the world, the secret of the things which now lie hidden from you.' "

Quddús, on his arrival at the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, charged Mullá Ḥusayn to ascertain the number of the assembled companions. One by one he counted them and passed them in through the gate of the fort: three hundred and twelve in all. He himself was entering the fort in order to acquaint Quddús with the result, when a youth, who had hastened all the way on foot from Bárfurúsh, suddenly rushed in and, seizing the hem of his garment, pleaded to be enrolled among the companions and to be allowed to lay down his life, whenever required, in the path of the Beloved. His wish was readily granted. When Quddús was informed of the total number of the companions, he remarked: "Whatever the tongue of the Prophet of God has spoken concerning the promised One must needs be fulfilled,[2] that thereby His testimony may be complete in the eyes of those divines who esteem themselves as the sole interpreters of the law and traditions of Islám. Through them will the people recognise the truth and acknowledge the fulfilment of these traditions."[3]

[1] Reference to the year 1280 A.H. (1863–4 A.D.), in which Bahá'u'lláh declared His Mission in Baghdád.

[2] The assembling of three hundred and thirteen chosen supporters of the imám in Ṭáliqán of Khurásán is one of the signs that must needs herald the advent of the promised Qá'im. (E. G. Browne's "A History of Persian Literature in Modern Times" [A.D. 1500–1924], p. 399.)

[3] "Amongst them also was Riḍá Khán, the son of Muḥammad Khán, the Turkamán, Master of the Horse to his late Majesty Muhammad Sháh. And he was a youth graceful of form, comely of face, endowed with all manner of talents and virtues, dignified, temperate, gentle, generous, courageous, and manly. For the love and service of His Supreme Holiness he forsook both his post and his salary, and shut his eyes alike to rank and name, fame and shame, reproaches of friends and revilings of foes. At the first step he left behind him dignity, wealth, position, and all the power and consideration which he enjoyed, spent large sums of money (four or five thousand túmáns at least) in the Cause, and repeatedly showed his readiness freely to lay down his life. One of these occasions was when His Supreme Holiness arrived at the village of Khánliq near Ṭihrán, and, to try the fidelity of His followers, said:

Every morning and every afternoon during those days, Quddús would summon Mullá Ḥusayn and the most distinguished among his companions and ask them to chant the writings of the Báb. Seated in the Maydán, the open square adjoining the fort, and surrounded by his devoted friends, he would listen intently to the utterances of his Master and would occasionally be heard to comment upon them. Neither the threats of the enemy nor the fierceness of their successive onsets could induce him to abate the fervour, or to break the regularity, of his devotions. Despising all danger and oblivious of his own needs and wants, he continued, even under the most distressing circumstances, his daily communion with his Beloved, wrote his praises of Him, and roused to fresh exertions the defenders of the fort. Though exposed to the bullets that kept ceaselessly raining upon his besieged companions, he, undeterred by the ferocity of the attack, pursued his labours in a state of unruffled calm. "My soul is wedded to Thy mention!" he was wont to exclaim. "Remembrance of Thee is the stay and solace of my life! I glory in that I was the first to suffer ignominiously for Thy

'Were there but a few horsemen who would deliver Me from the bonds of the froward and their devices, it were not amiss.' On hearing these words, several tried and expert horsemen, fully equipped and armed, at once prepared to set out, and, renouncing all that they had, hastily conveyed themselves before His Holiness. Amongst these were Mírzá Qurbán-'Alí, of Astarábád, and Riḍá Khán. When they were come before His Holiness, He smiled and said, 'The mountain of Ádhirbáyján has also a claim on Me,' and bade them turn back. After his return, Riḍá Khán devoted himself to the service of the friends of God, and his house was often the meeting place of the believers, amongst whom both Jináb-i-Quddús and Jináb-i-Bábu'l-Báb were for a while his honoured guests. Indeed, he neither spared himself nor fell short in the service of any of this circle, but, notwithstanding his high position, strove with heart and soul to further the objects of God's servants. When, for instance, Jináb-i-Quddús first began to preach the doctrine in Mázindarán, and the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá', being informed of this, made strenuous efforts to do him injury, Riḍá Khán at once hastened to Mázindarán, and, whenever Jináb-i-Quddús went forth from his house, used, in spite of his high position and the respect to which he was accustomed, to walk on foot before him with his drawn sword over his shoulder; seeing which, the malignants feared to take any liberty. . . . For some while, Ridá Khán remained after this fashion in Mázindarán, until he accompanied Jináb-i-Quddús to Mashhad. On his return thence, he was present at the troubles at Badasht, where he performed the most valuable services, and was entrusted with the most important and delicate commissions. After the meeting at Badasht was dispersed, he fell ill, and, in company with Mírzá Sulaymán-Qulí of Núr (a son of the late Shátir-báshí, also conspicuous for his virtues, learning, and devotion), came to Ṭihrán. Riḍá Khán's illness lasted for some while, and on his recovery the siege of the castle of Ṭabarsí had already waxed grievous. He at once determined to go to the assistance of the garrison. Being, however, a man of mark and well known, he could not leave the capital without giving some plausible reason. He therefore pretended to repent his former course of action, and begged that he might be sent to take part in the war in Mázindarán, and thus make amends for the past. The king granted his request, and he was appointed to accompany the force

sake in Shíráz. I long to be the first to suffer in Thy path a death that shall be worthy of Thy Cause."

He would sometimes ask his 'Iráqí companions to chant various passages of the Qur'án, to which he would listen with close attention, and would often be moved to unfold their meaning. In the course of one of their chantings, they came across the following verse: "With somewhat of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and fruits, will We surely prove you: but bear good tidings to the patient." "These words," Quddús would remark, "were originally revealed with reference to Job and the afflictions that befell him. In this day, however, they are applicable to us, who are destined to suffer those same afflictions. Such will be the measure of our calamity that none but he who has been endowed with constancy and patience will be able to survive them."

The knowledge and sagacity which Quddús displayed on those occasions, the confidence with which he spoke, and the resource and enterprise which he demonstrated in the instructions he gave to his companions, reinforced his authority and enhanced his prestige. These at first supposed that the pro-

proceeding under Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá against the castle. During the march thither, he was continually saying to the prince, 'I will do this,' and 'I will do that'; so that the prince came to entertain high hopes of him, and promised him a post commensurate with his services, for till the day when battle was inevitable and peace no longer possible, he was ever foremost in the army and most active in ordering its affairs. But on the first day of battle he began to gallop his horse and practise other martial exercises, until, without having aroused suspicion, he suddenly gave it free rein and effected a junction with the Brethren of Purity. On arriving in their midst, he kissed the knee of Jináb-i-Quddús and prostrated himself before him in thankfulness. Then he once more returned to the battle-field, and began to revile and curse the prince, saying: 'Who is man enough to trample underfoot the pomp and circumstance of the world, free himself from the bonds of carnal lusts, and join himself, as I have done, to the saints of God? I, for my part, shall be satisfied with my head only when it falls stained with dust and blood in this plain.' Then, like a ravening lion, he rushed upon them with naked brand, and quitted himself so manfully that all the royalist officers were astonished, saying: 'Such valour must have been newly granted him from on high, or else a new spirit hath been breathed into his frame.' For it happened more than once that he cut down a gunner as he was in the very act of firing his gun, while so many of the chief officers of the royalist army fell by his hand that the prince and the other commanding officers desired more eagerly to revenge themselves on him than on any other of the Bábís. Therefore, on the eve of the day appointed for Jináb-i-Quddús to surrender himself at the royalist camp, Riḍá Khán, knowing that because of the fierce hatred which they bore him they would slay him with the most cruel tortures, went by night to the quarters of an officer in the camp who was an old and faithful friend and comrade. After the massacre of the other Bábís, search was made for Riḍá Khán, and he was at length discovered. The officer who had sheltered him proposed to ransom him for the sum of two thousand túmáns in cash, but his proposal was rejected, and though he offered to increase the sum, and strove earnestly to save his friend, it was of no avail, for the prince, because of the exceeding hatred he bore Riḍá Khán, ordered him to be hewn in pieces." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 96–101.)

found reverence which Mullá Ḥusayn showed towards him was dictated by the exigencies of the situation rather than prompted by a spontaneous feeling of devotion to his person. His own writings and general behaviour gradually dispelled such doubts and served to establish him still more firmly in the esteem of his companions. In the days of his confinement in the town of Sárí, Quddús, whom Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí had requested to write a commentary on the Súrih of Ikhlás, better known as the Súrih of Qul Huva'lláhu'l-Aḥad, composed, in his interpretation of the Ṣád of Ṣamad alone, a treatise which was thrice as voluminous as the Qur'án itself. That exhaustive and masterly exposition had profoundly impressed Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí and had been responsible for the marked consideration which he showed towards Quddús, although in the end he joined the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá' in compassing the death of the heroic martyrs of Shaykh Ṭabarsí. Quddús continued, while besieged in that fort, to write his commentary on that Súrih, and was able, despite the vehemence of the enemy's onslaught, to pen as many verses as he had previously written in Sárí in his interpretation of that same letter. The rapidity and copiousness of his composition, the inestimable treasures which his writings revealed, filled his companions with wonder and justified his leadership in their eyes. They read eagerly the pages of that commentary which Mullá Ḥusayn brought to them each day and to which he paid his share of tribute.

The completion of the fort, and the provision of whatever was deemed essential for its defence, animated the enthusiasm of the companions of Mullá Ḥusayn and excited the curiosity of the people of the neighbourhood.[1] A few out of sheer curiosity, others in pursuit of material interest, and still others prompted by their devotion to the Cause which that building symbolised, sought to be admitted within its walls and marvelled at the rapidity with which it had been raised. Quddús had no sooner ascertained the number of its occu-

[1] "D'après les descriptions que j'en ai entendu faire, le château construit par Mullá Ḥusayn ne laissa pas que de devenir un édifice assez fort. La muraille dont il était entouré avait environ dix mètres de hauteur. Elle était en grosses pierres. Sur cette base, on éleva des constructions en bois faites avec des troncs d'arbres énormes, au milieu desquelles on ménagea un nombre convenable de meurtrières; puis on ceignit le tout d'un fossé profond. En somme c'était une espèce de grosse tour, ayant le soubassement en pierres et les étages supérieures en bois, garnie de trois rangs superposés de meurtrières et où l'on pouvait placer

pants than he ordered that no visitor be allowed to enter it. The praises which those who had already inspected the fort had lavished upon it were transmitted from mouth to mouth until they reached the ears of the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá' and kindled within his breast the flame of unrelenting jealousy. In his detestation of those who had been responsible for its erection, he issued the strictest prohibition against anyone's approaching its precincts and urged all to boycott the companions of Mullá Ḥusayn. Despite the stringency of his orders, a few were found to disregard his wishes and to render whatever assistance was in their power to those whom he had so undeservedly persecuted. The afflictions to which these sufferers were subjected were such that at times they felt a distressing need of the bare necessities of life. In their dark hour of adversity, however, there would suddenly break upon them the light of Divine deliverance opening before their face the door of unexpected relief.

The providential manner in which the occupants of the fort were relieved of the distress which weighed upon them fanned to fury the wrath of the wilful and imperious Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá'. Impelled by an implacable hatred, he addressed a burning appeal to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, who had recently ascended the throne, and expatiated upon the danger with which his dynasty, nay the monarchy itself, was menaced. "The standard of revolt," he pleaded, "has been raised by the contemptible sect of the Bábís. This wretched band of irresponsible agitators has dared to strike at the very foundations of the authority with which your Imperial Majesty has been invested. The inhabitants of a number of villages in the immediate vicinity of their headquarters have already flown to their standard and sworn allegiance to their cause. They have built themselves a fort, and in that massive stronghold they have entrenched themselves, ready to direct a campaign against you. With unswerving obstinacy they

autant de tufang-chís que l'on voudrait ou plutôt que l'on en aurait. On perça beaucoup de portes et de poternes, afin d'avoir par où entrer et sortir facilement; l'on fit des puits et on eut de l'eau en abondance; on creusa des passages souterrains pour se créer, en cas de malheur, quelques lieux de refuges, on établit des magazins qui furent aussitôt fournis et remplis de toutes sortes de provisions de bouche achetées ou peut-être bien prises dans les villages des environs; enfin, on composa la garnison du château des Bábís les plus énergiques, les plus dévoués, les plus sûrs que l'on eût sous la main." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 156.)

have resolved to proclaim their independent sovereignty, a sovereignty that shall abase to the dust the imperial diadem of your illustrious ancestors. You stand at the threshold of your reign. What greater triumph could signalise the inauguration of your rule than to extirpate this hateful creed that has dared to conspire against you? It will serve to establish your Majesty in the confidence of your people. It will enhance your prestige, and invest your crown with imperishable glory. Should you vacillate in your policy, should you betray the least indulgence towards them, I feel it my duty to warn you that the day is fast approaching when not only the province of Mázindarán but the whole of Persia, from end to end, will have repudiated your authority and will have surrendered to their cause."

Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, as yet inexperienced in the affairs of State, referred the matter to the officers who commanded the army of Mázindarán and who were in attendance upon him.[1] He instructed them to take whatever means they deemed fit for the eradication of the disturbers of his realm. Ḥájí Muṣṭafá Khán-i-Turkamán submitted his views to his sovereign: "I myself come from Mázindarán. I have been able to estimate the forces at their disposal. The handful of untrained and frail-bodied students whom I have seen are utterly powerless to withstand the forces which your Majesty can command. The army which you contemplate despatching is in my view unnecessary. A small detachment of that army will be sufficient to wipe them out. They are utterly unworthy of the care and consideration of my sovereign. Should your Majesty be willing to signify your desire, in an imperial message addressed to my brother 'Abdu'lláh Khán-i-

[1] "Ainsi, forcené pour le bon ordre, l'Amír-Nizám avisa bien vite aux affaires du Mázindarán, et quand les grands de cette province, venus à Ṭihrán pour faire leur cour au roi, furent au moment de leur départ, on leur commenda de prendre de telles mesures que la sédition des Bábís ne se prolongeât pas davantage. Ils promirent d'agir pour le mieux.

"En effet, aussitôt de retour, ces chefs se mirent en mouvement afin de réunir leurs forces et de se concerter. Chacun écrivit à ses parents de venir le joindre. Ḥájí Muṣṭafá Khán manda son frère 'Abdu'lláh. 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání appela Muḥammad-Sulṭán et 'Alí Khán de Savád-Kúh. Tous ces gentilshommes avec leur monde s'arrêtèrent au dessein d'attaquer les Bábís dans leurs château avant que ceux-ci ne songeassent à prendre eux-mêmes l'offensive. Les officiers royaux voyant les chefs du pays en aussi bonne disposition, rassemblèrent de leur côté un grand conseil, où s'empressèrent de se rendre les seigneurs nommés tout à l'heure, puis Mírzá Áqá, Mustawfí du Mázindarán ou contrôleur des finances, le chef des 'ulamás et beaucoup d'autres personnages de grande considération." (*Ibid.*, pp. 160–61.)

Turkamán, that he should be given the necessary authority to subjugate that band, I am convinced that he will, within the space of two days, quell their rebellion and shatter their hopes."

The Sháh gave his consent, and issued his farmán[1] to that same 'Abdu'lláh Khán, bidding him to recruit without delay, from any part of his realm, the forces he might require for the execution of his purpose. He sent with his message a royal badge, which he bestowed upon him as a mark of confidence in his capacity to undertake that task. The re-



VILLAGE OF AFRA

ceipt of the imperial farmán and the token of the honour which his sovereign had conferred upon him nerved him to fresh resolve to carry out his mission befittingly. Within a short space of time, he had raised an army of about twelve thousand men, composed largely of the Usanlú, the Afghán, and the Kúdár communities.[2] He equipped them with whatever ammunition was required, and stationed them in the village of Afrá, which was the property of Naẓar Khán, and

[1] See Glossary.

[2] "De son côté, le contrôleur des finances leva une troupe parmi les Afgháns domiciliés à Sárí et y joignit quelques hommes des tribus turques placées sous son administration. 'Alí-Ábád, le village si rudement châtié par les Bábís et qui aspirait à une revanche, fournit ce qu'il put et se renforça d'une partie des hommes de Qádí, qui, en raison du voisinage, se laissèrent embaucher." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 161.)

which commanded the fort of Tabarsí. No sooner had he fixed his camp upon that eminence than he set out to intercept the bread which was being daily conveyed to the companions of Mullá Ḥusayn. Even water was soon to be denied them, as it became impossible for the besieged to leave the fort under the fire of the enemy.

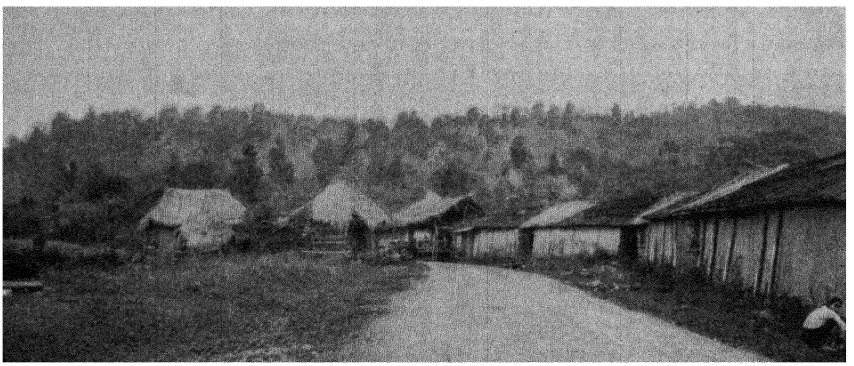
The army was ordered to set up a number of barricades in front of the fort and to open fire upon anyone who chanced to leave its gate. Quddús forbade his companions to go out in order to fetch water from the neighbourhood. "Our bread has been intercepted by our enemy," complained Rasúl-i-Bahnimírí. "What will befall us if water should likewise be denied us?" Quddús, who was at that time, the hour of sunset, viewing the army of the enemy in company with Mullá Ḥusayn from the terrace of the fort, turned to him and said: "The scarcity of water has distressed our companions. God willing, this very night a downpour of rain will overtake our opponents, followed by a heavy snowfall, which will assist us to repulse their contemplated assault."

That very night, the army of 'Abdu'lláh Khán was surprised by a torrential rain which overwhelmed that section which lay close to the fort. Much of the ammunition was irretrievably ruined. There gathered within the walls of the fort an amount of water which, for a long period, was sufficient for the consumption of the besieged. In the course of the following night, a snowfall such as the people of the neighbourhood even in the depth of winter had never experienced, added considerably to the annoyance which the rain had caused. The next night, which was the evening preceding the fifth of Muḥarram, in the year 1265 A.H.,[1] Quddús determined to leave the gate of the fort. "Praise be to God," he remarked to Rasúl-i-Bahnimírí as he paced with calm and serenity the approaches to the gate, "who has graciously answered our prayer and caused both rain and snow to fall upon our enemies; a fall that has brought desolation into their camp and refreshment into our fort."

As the hour of the attack approached for which that numerous army, despite the losses it had sustained, was strenuously preparing, Quddús determined to sally out and

[1] December 1, 1848 A.D.

scatter its forces. Two hours after sunrise, he mounted his steed and, escorted by Mullá Ḥusayn and three other of his companions, all of whom were riding beside him, marched out of the gate, followed by the entire company on foot behind them. As soon as they had emerged, there pealed out the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!"[1]—a cry that diffused consternation through the camp of the enemy. The roar which these lion-hearted followers of the Báb raised amidst the forest of Mázindarán dispersed the affrighted enemy that lay in ambush within its recesses. The glitter of their bared weapons dazzled their sight, and its menace was sufficient to stun and overpower them. They fled in disgraceful rout



VILLAGE OF SHIR-GAH

before their onrush, leaving all possessions behind them. Within the space of forty-five minutes, the shout of victory had been raised. Quddús and Mullá Ḥusayn had succeeded in bringing under their control the remnants of the defeated army. 'Abdu'lláh Khán-i-Turkamán, with two of his officers, Ḥabíbu'lláh Khán-i-Afghán and Núru'lláh Khán-i-Afghán, together with no less than four hundred and thirty of their men, had perished.

Quddús returned to the fort while Mullá Ḥusayn was still engaged in pursuing the work which had been so valiantly performed. The voice of Siyyid 'Abdu'l-'Aẓím-i-Khu'í was soon raised summoning him, on behalf of Quddús, to return immediately to the fort. "We have repulsed the assailants,"

[1] See Glossary.

Quddús remarked; "we need not carry further the punishment. Our purpose is to protect ourselves that we may be able to continue our labours for the regeneration of men. We have no intention whatever of causing unnecessary harm to anyone. What we have already achieved is sufficient testimony to God's invincible power. We, a little band of His followers, have been able, through His sustaining grace, to overcome the organised and trained army of our enemies."

Despite this defeat, not one of the followers of the Báb lost his life in the course of that encounter. No one except a man named Qulí, who rode in advance of Quddús, was badly wounded. They were all commanded to take none of the property of their adversaries excepting their swords and horses.

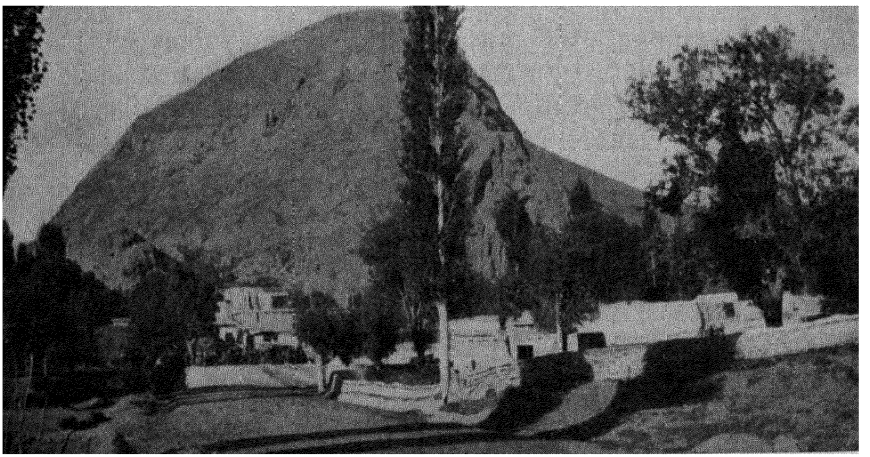
As the signs of the reassembling of the forces which had been commanded by 'Abdu'lláh Khán became apparent, Quddús bade his companions dig a moat around the fort as a safeguard against a renewed attack. Nineteen days elapsed during which they exerted themselves to the utmost for the completion of the task they had been charged to perform. They joyously laboured by day and by night in order to expedite the work with which they had been entrusted.

Soon after the work was completed, it was announced that Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá[1] was advancing towards the fort at the head of a numerous army, and had actually encamped at Shír-Gáh. A few days later, he had transferred his headquarters to Vás-Kas. On his arrival, he sent one of his men to inform Mullá Ḥusayn that he had been commanded by the Sháh to ascertain the purpose of his activities and to request that he be enlightened as to the object he had in view. "Tell your master," Mullá Ḥusayn replied, "that we utterly disclaim any intention either of subverting

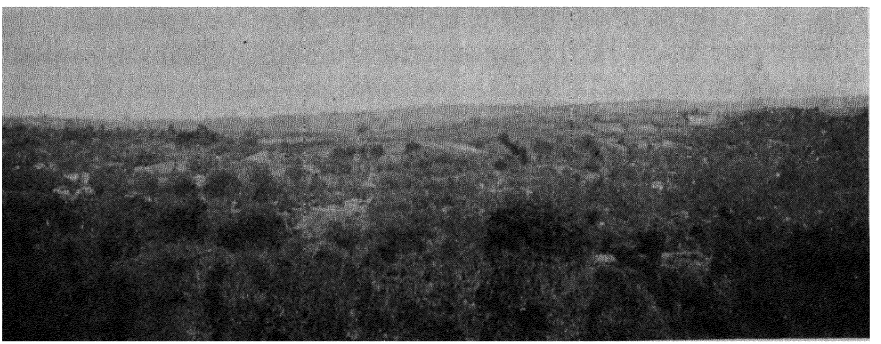
[1] "L'Amír-Niẓám entra dans un transport de violente colère en apprenant ce qui venait de se passer. Il s'indigna aux terreurs qu'on lui dépeignait. Trop loin du théâtre de l'action pour bien apprécier l'enthousiasme sauvage des rebelles, ce qu'il en comprit, ce fut qu'il était besoin d'en finir avec eux avant que leur énergie n'eût encore été exaltée par des succès trop réels. Le prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, nommé lieutenant du roi dans la province menacée, partit avec des pouvoirs extraordinaires. On donna ordre de dresser la liste des morts tombés dans le combat devant le château des Bábís et dans le sac de Ferra, et des pensions furent promises aux survivants. Ḥájí Mustafá Khán, frère d'"Abdu'lláh, reçut des marques solides de la faveur royale; enfin on fit ce qui était possible pour relever les courages et rendre aux musulmans un peu de confiance en eux-mêmes." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 163–4.)



VILLAGE OF RÍZ-ÁB



VILLAGE OF FÍRÚZ-KÚH



VILLAGE OF VAS-KAS

the foundations of the monarchy or of usurping the authority of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh. Our Cause concerns the revelation of the promised Qá'im and is primarily associated with the interests of the ecclesiastical order of this country. We can set forth incontrovertible arguments and deduce infallible proofs in support of the truth of the Message we bear." The passionate sincerity with which Mullá Ḥusayn pleaded in defence of his Cause, and the details which he cited to demonstrate the validity of his claims, touched the heart of the messenger and brought tears to his eyes. "What are we to do?" he exclaimed. "Let the prince," Mullá Husayn replied, "direct the 'ulamás of both Sárí and Bárfurúsh to betake themselves to this place, and ask us to demonstrate the validity of the Revelation proclaimed by the Báb. Let the Qur'án decide as to who speaks the truth. Let the prince himself judge our case and pronounce the verdict. Let him also decide as to how he should treat us if we fail to establish, by the aid of verses and traditions, the truth of this Cause." The messenger expressed his complete satisfaction with the answer he had received, and promised that before the lapse of three days the ecclesiastical dignitaries would be convened in the manner he had suggested.

The promise given by the messenger was destined to remain unfulfilled. Three days after, Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá prepared to launch his attack, on a scale hitherto unprecedented, upon the occupants of the fort. At the head of three regiments of infantry and several regiments of cavalry, he quartered his host upon a height that overlooked that spot, and gave the signal to open fire in that direction.

The day had not yet broken when at the signal, "Mount your steeds, O heroes of God!" Quddús ordered that the gates of the fort be again thrown open. Mullá Husayn and two hundred and two of his companions ran to their horses and followed Quddús as he rode out in the direction of Vás-Kas. Undaunted by the overwhelming forces arrayed against them, and undeterred by the snow and mud which had accumulated on the roads, they headed, without a pause, in the midst of the darkness that surrounded them, towards the stronghold which served as a base for the operations of the enemy.

The prince, who was observing the movements of Mullá Ḥusayn, saw him approaching, from his fort, and ordered his men to open fire upon him. The bullets which they discharged were powerless to check his advance. He forced his way through the gate and rushed into the private apartments of the prince, who, with a sudden sense that his life was in danger, threw himself from a back window into the moat and escaped barefooted.[1] His host, deprived of their leader and struck with panic, fled in disgraceful rout before that little band which, despite their own overwhelming numbers and the resources which the imperial treasury had placed at their disposal, they were unable to subdue.[2]

As the victors were forcing their way through the section of the fort reserved for the prince, two other princes of royal blood[3] fell in an attempt to strike down their opponents. As they penetrated his apartments, they discovered, in one

[1] "Nous avons laissé Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá courant loin de sa maison incendiée et errant seul dans la campagne, à travers les neiges et les ténèbres. À l'aube il se trouva dans un défilé inconnu, perdu en des lieux horribles, mais en réalité éloigné seulement d'un peu plus d'une demi-lieue du lieu du carnage. Le vent apportait à ses oreilles le bruit des décharges de la mousqueterie.

"Dans ce triste état et ne sachant que devenir, il fut rencontré par un Mázindaráni monté sur un cheval assez bon, qui, en passant près de lui, le reconnut. Cet homme mit pied à terre, fit monter le prince à sa place et s'offrit à lui servir de guide. Il le mena dans une maison de paysans, où il l'installa dans l'écurie; ce n'est pas un séjour méprisé en Perse. Tandis que le Prince mangeait et se reposait, le Mázindaráni remonta à cheval, et, battant le pays, alla donner à tous les soldats qu'il put rencontrer l'heureuse nouvelle que le prince était sain et sauf. Ainsi, bande par bande, il lui amena tout son monde, ou au moins un rassemblement assez respectable.

"Si Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá avait été un de ces esprits altiers que les échecs n'abattent point, il eût peut-être jugé sa situation médiocrement modifiée par le malheur de la nuit précédente; il eût considéré l'affaire comme le résultat d'une surprise, et, avec les troupes qui lui restaient, se fût efforcé de sauver au moins les apparences en maintenant son terrain, car, de fait, les Bábís s'étaient retirés et on n'en voyait plus nulle part. Mais le Sháhzádih, loin de se piquer de tant de fermeté, était un pauvre caractère, et il s'empressa, quand il vit sa personne si bien gardée, de sortir de son écurie pour se diriger vers le village de Qádí-Kalá, d'où il se rendit en toute hâte à Sárí. Cette conduite eut pour effet d'augmenter encore dans toute la province l'impression produite par la première nouvelle de la surprise de Váskas. Partout on perdit la tête: les villes ouvertes se crurent exposées à tous les périls, et malgré la rigueur de la saison, on vit des caravanes d'habitants paisibles, mais fort désolés, qui emmenaient leurs femmes et leurs enfants dans les solitudes du Damávand, pour les soustraire aux inévitables dangers qu'indiquait manifestement, pour tout ce monde, la prudente conduite du Sháhzádih. Quand les Asiatiques perdent une fois la tête, ce n'est pas à demi." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 169–70.)

[2] "En quelques instants, son armée, déjà si fort en désordre, était dissipée par les trois cents hommes de Mullá Ḥusayn. N'était-ce pas l'épée du Seigneur et de Gédéon?" (*Ibid.*, p. 167.)

[3] According to Gobineau (p. 167), they were Sulṭán Ḥusayn Mírzá, son of Fatḥ-'Alí Sháh, and Dawúd Mírzá, son of Zillu's-Sulṭán, uncle of the Sháh. A. L. M. Nicolas, in his "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb" (p. 308), adds Mustawfí Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Báqí.

of his rooms, coffers filled with gold and silver, all of which they disdained to touch. With the exception of a pot of gunpowder and the favourite sword of the prince which they carried as an evidence of their triumph to Mullá Ḥusayn, his companions ignored the costly furnishings which their owner had abandoned in his despair. When they took it to Mullá Ḥusayn, they discovered that he had, as a result of the bullet which had struck his own sword, exchanged it for that of Quddús, with which he was engaged in repulsing the assailant.

They were throwing open the gate of the prison which had been in the hands of the enemy, when they heard the voice of Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí, who had been made a captive on his way to the fort and was languishing among the prisoners. He interceded for his fellow-sufferers and succeeded in obtaining their immediate release.

On the morning of that memorable engagement, Mullá Ḥusayn assembled his companions around Quddús in the outskirts of Vás-Kas, while he remained himself on horseback in anticipation of a renewed attack by the enemy. He was watching their movements, when he suddenly observed an innumerable host rushing from both sides towards him. All sprang to their feet and, raising again the cry of "Yá Sáḥibu'z-Zamán!" pressed forward to face the challenge. Mullá Ḥusayn spurred his charger in one direction, and Quddús and his companions in another. The detachment which was charging Mullá Ḥusayn suddenly deflected its course and, fleeing from before him, joined forces with the rest of the enemy and encompassed Quddús and those who were with him. At a given moment, they discharged a thousand bullets, one of which struck Quddús in the mouth, knocking out several of his teeth and wounding both his tongue and throat. The loud noise which the simultaneous discharge of a thousand bullets produced, and which could be heard at a distance of ten farsangs,[1] filled with apprehension Mullá Husayn, who hastened to the rescue of his friends. As soon as he reached them, he alighted from his horse and, entrusting it to his attendant, Qambar-'Alí, ran towards Quddús. The sight of blood dripping profusely from the mouth of his beloved chief

[1] See Glossary.

struck him with fear and dismay. He raised his hands in horror and was on the point of beating himself upon the head when Quddús bade him desist. Obeying his leader instantly, he begged him to be allowed to receive his sword from his hand, which, as soon as it had been delivered, was unsheathed from its scabbard and used to scatter the forces that had massed around him. Followed by a hundred and ten of his fellow-disciples, he faced the forces arrayed against him. Wielding in one hand the sword of his beloved leader and in the other that of his disgraced opponent, he fought a desperate battle against them, and within thirty minutes, during which he displayed marvellous heroism, he succeeded in putting the entire army to flight.

The disgraceful retreat of the army of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá enabled Mullá Ḥusayn and his companions to repair to the fort. With pain and regret, they conducted their wounded leader to the shelter of his stronghold. On his arrival, Quddús addressed a written appeal to his friends who were bewailing his injury, and by his words of cheer soothed their sorrow. "We should submit," he exhorted them, "to whatever is the will of God. We should stand firm and steadfast in the hour of trial. The stone of the infidel broke the teeth of the Prophet of God; mine have fallen as a result of the bullet of the enemy. Though my body be afflicted, my soul is immersed in gladness. My gratitude to God knows no bounds. If you love me, suffer not that this joy be obscured by the sight of your lamentations."

This memorable engagement fell on the twenty-fifth of Muḥarram, 1265 A.H.[1] In the beginning of that same month, Bahá'u'lláh, faithful to the promise He had given to Mullá Ḥusayn, set out, attended by a number of His friends, from Núr for the fort of Ṭabarsí. Among those who accompanied Him were Ḥájí Mírzá Jáníy-i-Káshání, Mullá Báqir-i-Tabrízí, one of the Letters of the Living, and Mírzá Yaḥyá, His brother. Bahá'u'lláh had signified His wish that they should proceed directly to their destination and allow no pause in their journey. His intention was to reach that spot at night, inasmuch as strict orders had been issued, ever since 'Abdu'lláh

[1] December 21, 1848 A.D.

Khán had assumed the command, that no help should be extended, under any circumstances, to the occupants of the fort. Guards had been stationed at different places to ensure the isolation of the besieged. His companions, however, pressed Him to interrupt the journey and to seek a few hours of rest. Although He knew that this delay would involve a grave risk of being surprised by the enemy, He yielded to their earnest request. They halted at a lonely house adjoining the road. After supper, his companions all retired to sleep. He alone, despite the hardships He had endured, remained wakeful. He knew well the perils to which He and His friends were exposed, and was fully aware of the possibilities which His early arrival at the fort involved.

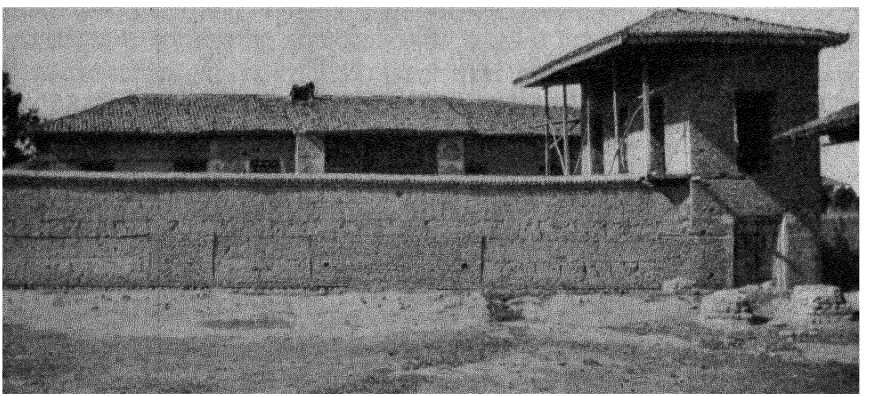
As He watched beside them, the secret emissaries of the enemy informed the guards of the neighbourhood of the arrival of the party, and ordered the immediate seizure of whatever they could find in their possession. "We have received strict orders," they told Bahá'u'lláh, whom they recognised instantly as the leader of the group, "to arrest every person we chance to meet in this vicinity, and are commanded to conduct him, without any previous investigation, to Ámul and deliver him into the hands of its governor." "The matter has been misrepresented in your eyes," Bahá'u'lláh remarked. "You have misconstrued our purpose. I would advise you to act in a manner that will cause you eventually no regret." This admonition, uttered with dignity and calm, induced the chief of the guards to treat with consideration and courtesy those whom he had arrested. He bade them mount their horses and proceed with him to Ámul. As they were approaching the banks of a river, Bahá'u'lláh signalled to His companions, who were riding at a distance from the guards, to cast into the water whatever manuscripts they had in their possession.

At daybreak, as they were approaching the town, a message was sent in advance to the acting governor, informing him of the arrival of a party that had been captured on their way to the fort of Ṭabarsí. The governor himself, together with the members of his body-guard, had been appointed to join the army of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, and had commissioned his kinsman to act in his absence. As

soon as the message reached him, he went to the masjid of Āmul and summoned the 'ulamás and leading siyyids of the town to gather and meet the party. He was greatly surprised as soon as his eyes saw and recognised Bahá'u'lláh, and deeply regretted the orders he had given. He feigned to reprimand Him for the action He had taken, in the hope



VIEW OF ÁMUL



HOUSE OF THE GOVERNOR OF ÁMUL

of appeasing the tumult and allaying the excitement of those who had gathered in the masjid. "We are innocent," Bahá'u'lláh declared, "of the guilt they impute to us. Our blamelessness will eventually be established in your eyes. I would advise you to act in a manner that will cause you eventually no regret." The acting governor asked the 'ulamás who were present to put any question they desired.

To their enquiries Bahá'u'lláh returned explicit and convincing replies. As they were interrogating Him, they discovered a manuscript in the possession of one of His companions which they recognised as the writings of the Báb and which they handed to the chief of the 'ulamás present at that gathering. As soon as he had perused a few lines of that manuscript, he laid it aside and, turning to those around him, exclaimed: "These people, who advance such extravagant claims, have, in this very sentence which I have read, betrayed their ignorance of the most rudimentary rules of orthography." "Esteemed and learned divine," Bahá'u'lláh replied, "these words which you criticise are not the words of the Báb. They have been uttered by no less a personage than the Imám 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, in his reply to Kumayl-ibn-i-Zíyád, whom he had chosen as his companion."

The circumstances which Bahá'u'lláh proceeded to relate in connnection with the reply, no less than the manner of His delivery, convinced the arrogant mujtahid of his stupidity and blunder. Unable to contradict so weighty a statement, he preferred to keep silent. A siyyid angrily interjected: "This very statement conclusively demonstrates that its author is himself a Bábí and no less than a leading expounder of the tenets of that sect." He urged in vehement language that its followers be put to death. "These obscure sectarians are the sworn enemies," he cried, "both of the State and of the Faith of Islám! We must, at all costs, extirpate that heresy." He was seconded in his denunciation by the other siyyids who were present, and who, emboldened by the imprecations uttered at that gathering, insisted that the governor comply unhesitatingly with their wishes.

The acting governor was much embarrassed, and realised that any evidence of indulgence on his part would be fraught with grave consequences for the safety of his position. In his desire to hold in check the passions which had been aroused, he ordered his attendants to prepare the rods and promptly inflict a befitting punishment upon the captives. "We will afterwards," he added, "keep them in prison pending the return of the governor, who will send them to Tihrán,

where they will receive, at the hands of the sovereign, the chastisement they deserve."

The first who was bound to receive the bastinado was Mullá Báqir. "I am only a groom of Bahá'u'lláh," he urged. "I was on my way to Mashhad when they suddenly arrested me and brought me to this place." Bahá'u'lláh intervened and succeeded in inducing his oppressors to release him. He likewise interceded for Ḥájí Mírzá Jání, who He said was "a mere tradesman" whom He regarded as His "guest," so that He was "responsible for any charges brought against him." Mírzá Yaḥyá, whom they proceeded to bind, was also set free as soon as Bahá'u'lláh had declared him to be His attendant. "None of these men," He told the acting governor, "are guilty of any crime. If you insist on inflicting your punishment, I offer Myself as a willing Victim of your chastisement." The acting governor was reluctantly compelled to give orders that Bahá'u'lláh alone be chosen to suffer the indignity which he had intended originally for His companions.[1]

The same treatment that had been meted out to the Báb five months previously in Tabríz, Bahá'u'lláh suffered in the presence of the assembled 'ulamás of Ámul. The first confinement that the Báb suffered at the hands of His enemies was in the house of 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Khán, the chief constable of Shíráz; the first confinement of Bahá'u'lláh was in the home of one of the kad-khudás of Ṭihrán. The Báb's second imprisonment was in the castle of Máh-Kú; that of Bahá'u'lláh was in the private residence of the governor of Ámul. The Báb was scourged in the namáz-khánih[2] of the Shaykhu'l-Islám of Tabríz; the same indignity was inflicted on Bahá'u'lláh in the namáz-khánih of the mujtahid of Ámul. The Báb's third confinement was in the castle of Chihríq; Bahá'u'lláh's was in the Síyáh-Chál[3] of Ṭihrán. The Báb, whose trials and sufferings had preceded, in almost every case,

[1] "O Shaykh! Things the like of which no eye hath seen have befallen this wronged one. Gladly and with the utmost resignation I have accepted to suffer, that thereby the souls of men may be enlightened and the Word of God be established. When we were imprisoned in the Land of Mím [Mázindarán], they one day delivered us into the hands of the 'ulamás. That which ensued, thou canst well imagine!" ("The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p. 57.)

[2] Literally "prayer-house."

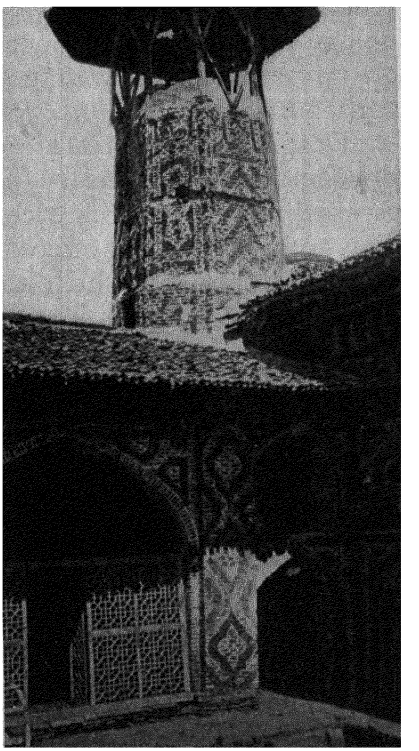
[3] Literally "black pit," the subterranean dungeon in which Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned.



MARK X SHOWS PLACE WHERE OPENING WAS MADE IN THE WALL

those of Bahá'u'lláh, had offered Himself to ransom His Beloved from the perils that beset that precious Life; whilst Bahá'u'lláh, on His part, unwilling that He who so greatly loved Him should be the sole Sufferer, shared at every turn the cup that had touched His lips. Such love no eye has ever beheld, nor has mortal heart conceived such mutual devotion. If the branches of every tree were turned into pens, and all the seas into ink, and earth and heaven rolled into one parchment, the immensity of that love would still remain unexplored, and the depths of that devotion unfathomed.

Bahá'u'lláh and His companions remained for a time imprisoned in one of the rooms that formed part of the masjid.



VIEWS OF THE MASJID OF ĀMUL

The acting governor, who was still determined to shield his Prisoner from the assaults of an inveterate enemy, secretly instructed his attendants to open, at an unsuspected hour, a passage through the wall of the room in which the captives were confined, and to transfer their Leader immediately to his home. He was himself conducting Bahá'u'lláh to his residence when a siyyid sprang forward and, directing his fiercest invectives against Him, raised the club which he held in his hand to strike Him. The acting governor immediately interposed himself and, appealing to the assailant, "adjured him by the Prophet of God" to stay his hand. "What!" burst forth the siyyid. "How dare you release a man who is the sworn enemy of the Faith of our fathers?" A crowd of ruffians had meanwhile gathered around him, and by their howls of derision and abuse added to the clamour which he had raised. Despite the growing tumult, the attendants of the acting governor were able to conduct Bahá'u'lláh in safety to the residence of their master, and displayed on that occasion a courage and presence of mind that were truly surprising.

Despite the protestations of the mob, the rest of the prisoners were taken to the seat of government, and thus escaped from the perils with which they had been threatened. The acting governor offered profuse apologies to Bahá'u'lláh for the treatment which the people of Ámul had accorded Him. "But for the interposition of Providence," he said, "no force would have achieved your deliverance from the grasp of this malevolent people. But for the efficacy of the vow which I had made to risk my own life for your sake, I, too, would have fallen a victim to their violence, and would have been trampled beneath their feet." He bitterly complained of the outrageous conduct of the siyyids of Ámul, and denounced the baseness of their character. He expressed himself as being continually tormented by the effects of their malignant designs. He set about serving Bahá'u'lláh with devotion and kindness, and was often heard, in the course of his conversation with Him, to remark: "I am far from regarding you a prisoner in my home. This house, I believe, was built for the very purpose of affording you a shelter from the designs of your foes."

I have heard Bahá'u'lláh Himself recount the following: "No prisoner has ever been accorded the treatment which I received at the hands of the acting governor of Āmul. He treated Me with the utmost consideration and esteem. I was generously entertained by him, and the fullest attention was given to everything that affected My security and comfort. I was, however, unable to leave the gate of the house. My host was afraid lest the governor, who was related to 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání, might return from the fort of Ṭabarsí and inflict injury upon Me. I tried to dispel his apprehensions. 'The same Omnipotence,' I assured him, 'who has delivered us from the hands of the mischief-makers of Āmul, and has enabled us to be received with such hospitality by you in this house, is able to change the heart of the governor and to cause him to treat us with no less consideration and love.'

"One night we were suddenly awakened by the clamour of the people who had gathered outside the gate of the house. The door was opened, and it was announced that the governor had returned to Āmul. Our companions, who were anticipating a fresh attack upon them, were completely surprised to hear the voice of the governor rebuking those who had denounced us so bitterly on the day of our arrival. 'For what reason,' we heard him loudly remonstrating, 'have these miserable wretches chosen to treat so disrespectfully a guest whose hands are tied and who has not been given the chance to defend himself? What is their justification for having demanded that he be immediately put to death? What evidence have they with which to support their contention? If they be sincere in their claims to be devotedly attached to Islám and to be the guardians of its interests, let them betake themselves to the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí and there demonstrate their capacity to defend the Faith of which they profess to be the champions.' "

What he had seen of the heroism of the defenders of the fort had quite changed the mind and heart of the governor of Āmul. He returned filled with admiration for a Cause which he had formerly despised, and the progress of which he had strenuously resisted. The scenes he witnessed had disarmed his wrath and chastened his pride. Humbly and

respectfully, he went to Bahá'u'lláh and apologised for the insolence of the inhabitants of a town that he had been chosen to govern. He served Him with extreme devotion, utterly ignoring his own position and rank. He paid a glowing tribute to Mullá Ḥusayn, and expatiated upon his resourcefulness, his intrepidity, his skill, and nobleness of soul. A few days later, he succeeded in arranging for the safe departure of Bahá'u'lláh and His companions for Ṭihrán.

Bahá'u'lláh's intention to throw in His lot with the defenders of the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí was destined to remain unfulfilled. Though Himself extremely desirous to lend every possible assistance in His power to the besieged, He was spared, through the mysterious dispensation of Providence, the tragic fate that was soon to befall the chief participators in that memorable struggle. Had He been able to reach the fort, had He been allowed to join the members of that heroic band, how could He have played His part in the great drama which He was destined to unfold? How could He have consummated the work that had been so gloriously conceived and so marvellously inaugurated? He was in the heyday of His life when the call from Shíráz reached Him. At the age of twenty-seven, He arose to consecrate His life to its service, fearlessly identified Himself with its teachings, and distinguished Himself by the exemplary part He played in its diffusion. No effort was too great for the energy with which He was endowed, and no sacrifice too woful for the devotion with which His faith had inspired Him. He flung aside every consideration of fame, of wealth, and position, for the prosecution of the task He had set His heart to achieve. Neither the taunts of His friends nor the threats of His enemies could induce Him to cease championing a Cause which they alike regarded as that of an obscure and proscribed sect.

The first incarceration to which He was subjected as a result of the helping hand He had extended to the captives of Qazvín; the ability with which He achieved the deliverance of Ṭáhirih; the exemplary manner in which He steered the course of the turbulent proceedings in Badasht; the manner in which He saved the life of Quddús in Níyálá; the wisdom which He showed in His handling of the delicate situation created by the impetuosity of Ṭáhirih, and the vigilance He

exercised for her protection; the counsels which He gave to the defenders of the fort of Ṭabarsí; the plan He conceived of joining the forces of Quddús to those of Mullá Ḥusayn and his companions; the spontaneity with which He arose to support the exertions of those brave defenders; the magnanimity which prompted Him to offer Himself as a substitute for His companions who were under the threat of severe indignities; the serenity with which He faced the severity inflicted upon Him as a result of the attempt on the life of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh; the indignities which were heaped upon Him all the way from Lavásán to the headquarters of the imperial army and from thence to the capital; the galling weight of chains which He bore as He lay in the darkness of the Síyáh-Chál of Ṭihrán—all these are but a few instances that eloquently testify to the unique position which He occupied as the prime Mover of the forces which were destined to reshape the face of His native land. It was He who had released these forces, who steered their course, harmonised their action, and brought them finally to their highest consummation in the Cause He Himself was destined at a later time to reveal.

CHAPTER XX

THE MĀZINDARĀN UPHEAVAL
(*Continued*)

THE forces under the command of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá meanwhile had recovered from the state of utter demoralisation into which they had sunk, and were now diligently preparing to renew their attack upon the occupants of the fort of Ṭabarsí. The latter found themselves again encompassed by a numerous host, at the head of which marched 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání and Sulaymán Khán-i-Afshár-i-Shahríyárí, who, together with several regiments of infantry and cavalry, had hastened to reinforce the company of the prince's soldiers.[1] Their combined forces encamped in the neighbourhood of the fort,[2] and proceeded to erect a series of seven barricades around it. With the utmost arrogance, they sought at first to display the extent of the forces at their command, and indulged with increasing zest in the daily exercise of their arms.

[1] "Ainsi perplexe et ne sachant où se tourner, le Sháh-zádih, pauvre homme, donna des ordres pour qu'on réunit de nouvelles forces et qu'on mît sur pied une autre armée. L'empressement était faible de la part de la population des villes à aller servir sous un chef dont on venait de voir le mérite et l'intrépidité à l'épreuve. Toutefois, moyennant quelque argent et beaucoup de promesses, les mullás surtout, qui ne perdaient pas leur cause de vue et qui étaient assurément les plus intéressés dans toutes ces affaires, s'agitant beaucoup on finit par rassembler bon nombre de tufang-chís. Quant aux cavaliers des tribus, du moment que leurs chefs montent à cheval, ils en font autant et n'en demandent pas davantage. 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání obéit sans hésiter à l'ordre d'envoyer un nouveau contingent. Seulement, cette fois, soit par défiance de ce que l'ineptie du prince pourrait faire courir de risques inutiles à ses parents et à ses sujets, soit par une certaine ambition de se signaler lui-même, il ne confia plus à personne la conduite de ses gens. Il se mit à leur tête, et, par un coup hardi, au lieu de rejoindre l'armée royale, il s'en alla tout droit attaquer les Bábís dans leur refuge, puis il donna avis au prince qu'il était arrivé devant le château du Shaykh Ṭabarsí et qu'il en faisait le siège. Du reste il annonçait qu'il n'avait aucun besoin de secours ni d'aide, que ses gens lui suffisaient et au delà, et que seulement s'il plaisait à son Altesse Royale de se donner de sa personne le spectacle de la façon dont lui, 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání, allait traiter les rebelles, il lui ferait honneur et plaisir." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 170–71.)

[2] "Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá n'aurait pu se donner, lui, pour un guerrier bien téméraire, on vient de le voir; mais il remplaçait l'intempérance de l'intrépidité par une qualité utile aussi à un général: il ne prenait pas au pied de la lettre les fanfaronnades de ses lieutenants. Craignant donc qu'il n'arrivât malheur à l'imprudent nomade, il lui envoya immédiatement des

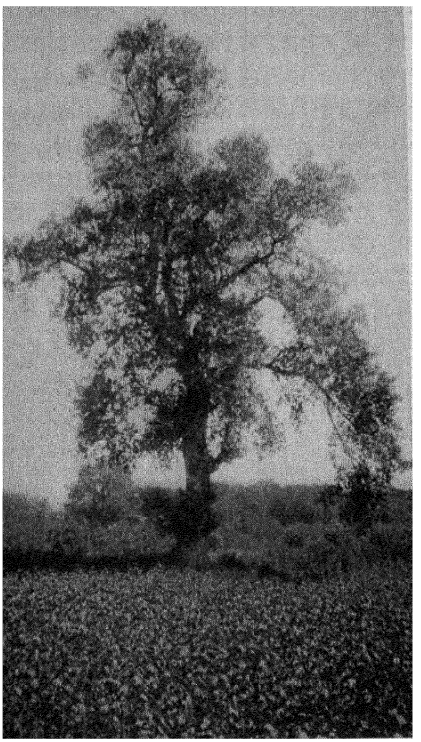
The scarcity of water had, in the meantime, compelled those who were besieged to dig a well within the enclosure of the fort. On the day the work was to be completed, the eighth day of the month of Rabí'u'l-Avval,[1] Mullá Ḥusayn, who was watching his companions perform this task, remarked: "To-day we shall have all the water we require for our bath. Cleansed of all earthly defilements, we shall seek the court of the Almighty, and shall hasten to our eternal abode. Whoso is willing to partake of the cup of martyrdom, let him prepare himself and wait for the hour when he can seal with his life-blood his faith in his Cause. This night, ere the hour of dawn, let those who wish to join me be ready to issue forth from behind these walls and, scattering once again the dark forces which have beset our path, ascend untrammelled to the heights of glory."

That same afternoon, Mullá Ḥusayn performed his ablutions, clothed himself in new garments, attired his head with the Báb's turban, and prepared for the approaching encounter. An undefinable joy illumined his face. He serenely alluded to the hour of his departure, and continued to his last moments to animate the zeal of his companions. Alone with Quddús, who so powerfully reminded him of his Beloved, he poured forth, as he sat at his feet in the closing moments of his earthly life, all that an enraptured soul could no longer restrain. Soon after midnight, as soon as the morning-star had risen, the star that heralded to him the dawning light of eternal reunion with his Beloved, he started to his feet and, mounting his charger, gave the signal that the gate of the fort be opened. As he rode out at the head of three hundred and thirteen of his companions to meet the enemy, the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!"[2] again broke forth, a cry so intense and powerful that forest, fort, and camp vibrated to its resounding echo.

Mullá Ḥusayn first charged the barricade which was defended by Żakaríyyáy-i-Qádí-Ḳalá'í, one of the enemy's most valiant officers. Within a short space of time, he had broken

renforts. Ainsi partirent en toute hâte Muḥsin Khán-i-Ṣúrití avec ses cavaliers, une troupe d'Afghâns, Muhammad-Karím Khán-i-Ashrafí avec des tufang-chís de la ville et Khalíl Khán, de Savád-Kúh avec les hommes de Qâdí-Kalá." (*Ibid.*, p. 171.)

[1] February 1, 1849 A.D. [2] See Glossary.



TREE FROM WHICH MULLÁ ḤUSAYN WAS SHOT

through that barrier, disposed of its commander, and scattered his men. Dashing forward with the same swiftness and intrepidity, he overcame the resistance of both the second and third barricades, diffusing, as he advanced, despair and consternation among his foes. Undeterred by the bullets which rained continually upon him and his companions, they pressed forward until the remaining barricades had all been captured and overthrown. In the midst of the tumult which ensued, 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání had climbed a tree, and, hiding himself in its branches, lay waiting in ambush for his opponents. Protected by the darkness which surrounded him, he was able to follow from his hiding place the movements of Mullá Ḥusayn and his companions, who were exposed to the fierce glare of the conflagration which they had raised. The steed of Mullá Ḥusayn suddenly became entangled in the rope of an adjoining tent, and ere he was able to extricate himself, he was struck in the breast by a bullet from his treacherous assailant. Though the shot was successful, 'Abbás-Qulí Khán was unaware of the identity of the horseman he had wounded. Mullá Ḥusayn, who was bleeding profusely, dismounted from his horse, staggered a few steps, and, unable to proceed further, fell exhausted upon the ground. Two of his young companions, of Khurásán, Qulí, and Ḥasan, came to his rescue and bore him to the fort.[1]

[1] "Ainsi blessé, le chef Bábí n'en continua pas moins à donner des ordres et à conduire et activer les mouvements des siens jusqu'au moment où, voyant que la somme des résultats possibles était acquise, il donna le signal de la retraite en se tenant lui-même à l'arrière-garde." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 174.)

I have heard the following account from Mullá Ṣádiq and Mullá Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Furúghí: "We were among those who had remained in the fort with Quddús. As soon as Mullá Ḥusayn, who seemed to have lost consciousness, was brought in, we were ordered to retire. 'Leave me alone with him,' were the words of Quddús as he bade Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir close the door and refuse admittance to anyone desiring to see him. 'There are certain confidential matters which I desire him alone to know.' We were amazed a few moments later when we heard the voice of Mullá Ḥusayn replying to questions from Quddús. For two hours they continued to converse with each other. We were surprised to see Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir so greatly agitated. 'I was watching Quddús,' he subsequently informed us, 'through a fissure in the door. As soon as he called his name, I saw Mullá Ḥusayn arise and seat himself, in his customary manner, on bended knees beside him. With bowed head and downcast eyes, he listened to every word that fell from the lips of Quddús, and answered his questions. "You have hastened the hour of your departure," I was able to hear Quddús remark, "and have abandoned me to the mercy of my foes. Please God, I will ere long join you and taste the sweetness of heaven's ineffable delights." I was able to gather the following words uttered by Mullá Ḥusayn: "May my life be a ransom for you. Are you well pleased with me?" '

"A long time elapsed before Quddús bade Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir open the door and admit his companions. 'I have bade my last farewell to him,' he said, as we entered the room. 'Things which previously I deemed it unallowable to utter I have now shared with him.' We found on our arrival that Mullá Ḥusayn had expired. A faint smile still lingered upon his face. Such was the peacefulness of his countenance that he seemed to have fallen asleep. Quddús attended to his burial, clothed him in his own shirt, and gave instructions to lay him to rest to the south of, and adjoining, the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí.[1] 'Well is it with you to have remained to your last hour faithful to the Covenant

[1] "His [Mullá Ḥusayn's] mortal remains still repose in the little inner room of the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí where, at the direction of Mullá Muḥammad-'Alí Bárfurúshí, they were reverently laid by the hands of his sorrowing comrades in the beginning of the year A.D. 1849." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note F, p. 245.)

of God,' he said, as he laid a parting kiss upon his eyes and forehead. 'I pray God to grant that no division ever be caused between you and me.' He spoke with such poignancy that the seven companions who were standing beside him wept profusely, and wished they had been sacrificed in his stead. Quddús, with his own hands, laid the body in the tomb, and cautioned those who were standing near him to maintain secrecy regarding the spot which served as his resting place, and to conceal it even from their companions. He afterwards instructed them to inter the bodies of the thirty-six martyrs who had fallen in the course of that engagement in one and the same grave on the northern side of the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí. 'Let the loved ones of God,' he was heard to remark as he consigned them to their tomb, 'take heed of the example of these martyrs of our Faith. Let them in life be and remain as united as these are now in death.' "

No less than ninety of the companions were wounded that night, most of whom succumbed. From the day of their arrival at Bárfurúsh to the day they were first attacked, which fell on the twelfth of Dhi'l-Qa'dih in the year 1264 A.H.,[1] to the day of the death of Mullá Ḥusayn, which took place at the hour of dawn on the ninth of Rabí'u'l-Avval in the year 1265 A.H.,[2] the number of martyrs, according to the computation of Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir, had reached a total of seventy-two.

From the time when Mullá Ḥusayn was assailed by his enemies to the time of his martyrdom was a hundred and sixteen days, a period rendered memorable by deeds so heroic that even his bitterest foes felt bound to confess their wonder. On four distinct occasions, he rose to such heights of courage and power as few indeed could attain. The first encounter took place on the twelfth of Dhi'l-Qa'dih,[3] in the outskirts of Bárfurúsh; the second, in the immediate neighbourhood of the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, on the fifth day of the month of Muḥarram,[4] against the forces of 'Abdu'lláh Khán-i-Turkamán; the third, in Vás-Kas, on the twenty-fifth day of Muharram,[5] and was directed against the army of Prince

[1] October 10, 1848 A.D.
[2] February 2, 1849 A.D.
[3] October 10, 1848 A.D.
[4] December 1, 1848 A.D.
[5] December 21, 1848 A.D.

Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá. The last and most memorable battle of all was directed against the combined forces of 'Abbás-Qulí Khán, of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, and of Sulaymán Khán-i-Afshár, assisted by a company of forty-five officers of tried ability and matured experience. From each of these hot and fierce engagements Mullá Ḥusayn emerged, in spite of the overwhelming forces arrayed against him, unscathed and triumphant. In each encounter he distinguished himself by such acts of valour, of chivalry, of skill, and of strength that each one would alone suffice to establish for all time the transcendent character of a Faith for the protection of which he had so valiantly fought, and in the path of which he had so nobly died. The traits of mind and of character which, from his very youth, he displayed, the profundity of his learning, the tenacity of his faith, his intrepid courage, his singleness of purpose, his high sense of justice and unswerving devotion, marked him as an outstanding figure among those who, by their lives, have borne witness to the glory and power of the new Revelation. He was six and thirty years old when he quaffed the cup of martyrdom. At the age of eighteen he made the acquaintance, in Karbilá, of Siyyid Kázim-i-Rashtí. For nine years he sat at his feet, and imbibed the lesson which was destined to prepare him for the acceptance of the Message of the Báb. The nine remaining years of his life were spent in the midst of a restless, a feverish activity which carried him eventually to the field of martyrdom, in circumstances that have shed imperishable lustre upon his country's history.[1]

[1] "Among them was Mullá Ḥusayn, who was made the recipient of the effulgent glory of the Sun of Revelation. But for him, God would not have been established upon the seat of His mercy, nor ascended the throne of eternal glory." (The "Kitáb-i-Íqán," p. 188.) See note 5, p. 23. "Frail of form, but a gallant soldier and an impassioned lover of God, he combined qualities and characteristics which even in the spiritual aristocracy of Persia are seldom found united in the same person." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 83.) "Enfin," writes Gobineau, "il expira, et la religion nouvelle, qui reçut en lui son proto-martyr, perdit du même coup un homme dont la force de caractère et l'habileté lui auraient rendu des services bien utiles, si sa vie avait pu se prolonger. Les musulmans ont naturellement une profonde horreur pour le souvenir de ce chef; les Bábís lui vouent une vénération correspondante. Ils ont raison des deux parts. Ce qui est certain, c'est que Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushrú'í a le premier donné au Bábisme, dans l'empire persan, cette situation qu'un parti religieux ou politique ne gagne dans l'esprit des peuples qu'après avoir fait acte de virilité guerrière." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 176.) "The late Ḥájí Mírzá Jání writes: 'I myself met him [Mírzá Muḥammad-Ḥasan, the younger brother of Mullá Ḥusayn] when he was bringing his mother and sister from Karbilá to Qazvín and from Qazvín to Ṭihrán. His sister was the wife of

So complete and humiliating a rout paralysed for a time the efforts of the enemy. Five and forty days passed before they could again reassemble their forces and renew their attack. During these intervening days, which ended with the day of Naw-Rúz, the intense cold which prevailed induced them to defer their venture against an opponent that had covered them with so much reproach and shame. Though their attacks had been suspended, the officers in charge of the remnants of the imperial army had given strict orders prohibiting the arrival of all manner of reinforcements at the fort. When the supply of their provisions was nearly exhausted, Quddús instructed Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir to distribute among his companions the rice which Mullá Ḥusayn had stored for such time as might be required. When each had received his portion, Quddús summoned them and said: "Whoever feels himself strong enough to withstand the calamities that are soon to befall us, let him remain with us in this fort. And whoever perceives in himself the least hesitation and fear, let him betake himself away from this place. Let him leave immediately ere the enemy has again assembled his forces and assailed us. The way will soon be barred before our face; we shall very soon encounter the severest hardship and fall a victim to devastating afflictions."

The very night Quddús had given this warning, a siyyid from Qum, Mírzá Ḥusayn-i-Mutavallí, was moved to betray his companions. "Why is it," he wrote to 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání, "that you have left unfinished the work

Shaykh Abú-Turáb of Qazvín, who was a scholar and philosopher such as is rarely met with, and believed with the utmost sincerity and purity of purpose, while such was his love and devotion to the Báb that if anyone did so much as mention the name of His Supreme Holiness (the souls of all beside him be His sacrifice) he could not restrain his tears. Often have I seen him, when engaged in the perusal of the writings of His Supreme Holiness, become almost beside himself with rapture, and nearly faint with joy. Of his wife he used to say: "I married her three years ago in Karbilá. She was then but an indifferent scholar even in Persian, but now she can expound texts from the Qur'án and explain the most difficult questions and most subtle points of the doctrine of the Divine Unity in such wise that I have never seen a man who was her equal in this, or in readiness of apprehension. These gifts she has obtained by the blessing of His Holiness the Supreme and through converse with her holiness the Pure (Qurratu'l-'Ayn). I have seen in her a patience and resignation rare even in the most self-denying men, for during these three years, though I have not sent her a single dínár for her expenses, and she has supported herself only with the greatest difficulty, she has never uttered a word; and now that she has come to Ṭihrán, she refrains altogether from speaking of the past, and though, in accordance with the wishes of Jináb-i-Bábu'l-Báb, she now desires to proceed to Khurásán, and has literally nothing to put on save the one well-worn dress which she wears, she never asks for clothes or travelling-money, but ever seeks

which you have begun? You have already disposed of a formidable opponent. By the removal of Mullá Ḥusayn, who was the moving force behind these walls, you have demolished the pillar on which the strength and security of the fort depend. Had you been patient for one more day, you would have assuredly won for yourself the laurels of victory. With no more than a hundred men, I pledge my word that within the space of two days you will be able to capture the fort and secure the unconditional surrender of its occupants. They are worn with famine and are being grievously tested." The sealed letter was entrusted to a certain Siyyid 'Alíy-i-Zargar, who, as he carried with him the share of the rice he had received from Quddús, stole out of the fort at the hour of midnight and delivered it to 'Abbás-Qulí Khán, with whom he was already acquainted. The message reached him at a time when he had sought refuge in a village situated at a distance of four farsangs[1] from the fort, and knew not whether he should return to the capital and present himself after such a humiliating defeat to his sovereign, or repair to his home in Láríján, where he was sure to face the reproaches of his relations and friends.

He had just risen from his bed when, at the hour of sunrise, the siyyid brought him the letter. The news of the death of Mullá Ḥusayn nerved him to a fresh resolve. Fear-

reasonable excuses wherewith to set me at my ease and prevent me from feeling ashamed. Her purity, chastity, and virtue are boundless, and during all this while no unprivileged person hath so much as heard her voice." But the virtues of the daughter were surpassed by those of the mother, who possessed rare attainments and accomplishments, and had composed many poems and eloquent elegies on the afflictions of her sons. Although Jináb-i-Bábu'l-Báb had warned her of his approaching martyrdom and foretold to her all the impending calamities, she still continued to exhibit the same eager devotion and cheerful resignation, rejoicing that God had accepted the sacrifice of her sons, and even praying that they might attain to this great dignity and not be deprived of so great blessedness. It is indeed wonderful to meditate on this virtuous and saintly family, the sons so conspicuous for their single-minded devotion and self-sacrifice, the mother and daughter so patient and resigned. When I, Mírzá Jání, met Mírzá Muḥammad-Ḥasan, he was but seventeen years of age, yet I observed in him a dignity, gravity, composure, and virtue which amazed me. After the death of Jináb-i-Bábu'l-Báb, Ḥaḍrat-i-Quddús bestowed on him the sword and turban of that glorious martyr, and made him captain of the troops of the True King. As to his martyrdom, there is a difference of opinion as to whether he was slain at the breakfast-table in the camp, or suffered martyrdom with Jináb-i-Quddús in the square of Bárfurúsh.'" (The "Taríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 93–5.) The sister of Mullá Ḥusayn was surnamed "Varaqatu'l-Firdaws," and was intimately associated, while in Karbilá, with Ṭáhirih. ("Memorials of the Faithful," p. 270.)

[1] See Glossary.

ing lest the messenger should spread the report concerning the death of so redoubtable an opponent, he instantly killed him, and then contrived by some strange device to divert from himself the suspicion of murder. Resolved to take the fullest advantage of the distress of the besieged and of the depletion of their forces, he undertook immediately the necessary preparations for the resumption of his attacks. Ten days before Naw-Rúz, he had encamped at half a farsang from the fort, and had ascertained the accuracy of the message that treacherous siyyid had brought him. In the hope of obtaining for himself every possible credit for the eventual surrender of his opponents, he refused to divulge, to even his closest officers, the information he had received.

The day had just broken when he hoisted his standard[1] and, marching at the head of two regiments of infantry and cavalry, encompassed the fort and ordered his men to open fire upon the sentinels who were guarding the turrets. "The betrayer," Quddús informed Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir, who had hastened to acquaint him with the gravity of the situation, "has announced the death of Mullá Ḥusayn to 'Abbás-Qulí Khán. Emboldened by his removal, he is now determined to storm our stronghold and to secure for himself the honour of being its sole conqueror. Sally out and, with the aid of eighteen men marching at your side, administer a befitting chastisement upon the aggressor and his host. Let him realise that though Mullá Ḥusayn be no more, God's

[1] "Cette fois la terreur fut à son comble dans la province; le peuple surexcité par les défaites successives de l'Islâm commençait à pencher pour la nouvelle religion: les chefs militaires sentaient leur autorité chancelante, les chefs religieux voyaient leur échapper les consciences, la situation était tendue à l'extrême, et le moindre incident pouvait précipiter le Mázindarán aux pieds du Réformateur." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 315.) "But when the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá' was informed of this, he (fearing lest the Bábís should enter Bárfurúsh and mete out to him the punishment which he deserved) was overcome with trouble and consternation, and wrote several successive letters to 'Abbás-Qulí Khán, saying: 'I congratulate you on your courage and discretion, but how much to be deplored it is that after you have been at such pains, lost so many of your kinsmen, and gained at length so signal a victory, you did not follow it up. You have made a great multitude food for the sword, and have returned, leaving only a few decrepit old men as survivors. Alas, that, after all your efforts and perseverance, the prince is now prepared to march against the castle and take captive these few poor wretches, so that after all he will get the credit of this signal victory, and will appropriate to himself all the money and property of the vanquished! You must make it your first and most important business to return to the castle ere he has set out, for the government of a province like Mázindarán is not a thing to be trifled with. Strive, then, to gain the entire credit of this victory, and let your exertions accomplish what your zeal has begun.' He also wrote at great length to the clergy of Ámul, urgently exhorting them to use their best endeavours to make the Sartíp 'Abbás-Qulí Khán

invincible power still continues to sustain his companions and enable them to triumph over the forces of their enemies."

No sooner had Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir selected his companions than he ordered that the gate of the fort be flung open. Leaping upon their chargers and raising the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!" they plunged headlong into the camp of the enemy. The whole army fled in confusion before so terrific a charge. All but a few were able to escape. They reached Bárfurúsh utterly demoralised and laden with shame. 'Abbás-Qulí Khán was so shaken with fear that he fell from his horse. Leaving, in his distress, one of his boots hanging from the stirrup, he ran away, half-shod and bewildered, in the direction which the army had taken. Filled with despair, he hastened to the prince and confessed the ignominious reverse he had sustained.[1] Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir, on his part, emerging together with his eighteen companions unscathed from that encounter, and holding in his hand the

start at once without further delay. So they continued to remind him incessantly that it was his duty to march with all speed against the castle; and the Sartíp, though he knew that what the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá' had written to him was utterly false and baseless, was eager, if it should be possible, to make some amends for what had passed, and so to clear himself in some measure of the disgrace which he had incurred in the eyes of the Láríjání women whose husbands he had sacrificed, and of the government. But inwardly he was consumed with anxiety, fearing that, as in the previous campaign, he might fail to accomplish anything. Most of his men, too, were wounded, while many had fled and concealed themselves in the surrounding villages distant four or five farsangs from the city. So, as a makeshift, he wrote to the clergy of Ámul, saying: 'If indeed this be a religious war, you, who are such zealous champions of the Faith, and to whom men look for example, should take the lead, and make the first move, so that others may follow you.' The clergy, not being prepared with a suitable answer, and seeing no way of excusing themselves, were obliged to send a message to the effect that the war was a religious war. A great company of tradesmen, common people, and roughs was assembled, and these, with the clergy and students, set out, ostensibly for the accomplishment of a religious duty, but really bent on plunder and rapine. Most of these went to Bárfurúsh and there joined the advance of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, who, on reaching a village distant one farsang from the castle, sent a body of his men to reconnoitre and collect information about the movements of the Bábí garrison." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 72–3.)

[1] "The reverend divines, who with their pupils, had come to take part in the holy war, were scarce able to sleep at night for fear (though their quarters were in a place distant two farsangs from the castle), and continually in their conversation would they roundly abuse the prince and 'Abbás-Qulí Khán and curse the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá'; 'for,' said they, 'these have, without sufficient reason, taken us away from our studies, our discussions, and the earning of our livelihood, besides bringing us into dire peril; since to fight with men like these, who have renounced the world and carry their lives in their hands, is to incur great risk.' So the holy verse, 'Cast not yourselves into peril with your own hands,' became their daily utterance. One said: 'Certain circumstances exonerate me from the duty of taking part in this war at present.' Another (adducing thirty different pretexts) said: 'I am lawfully excused and am compelled to turn back.' A third said: 'I have little children dependent on me; what can I do?' A fourth said: 'I have made no provision for my wife, so I must go, but, should it be necessary, I will return again.' A fifth said: 'My accounts with certain persons

standard which an affrighted enemy had abandoned, repaired with exultation to the fort and submitted to his chief, who had inspired him with such courage, this evidence of his victory.

So complete a rout immediately brought relief to the hard-pressed companions. It cemented their unity and reminded them afresh of the efficacy of that power with which their Faith had endowed them. Their food, alas, was by this time reduced to the flesh of horses, which they had brought away with them from the deserted camp of the enemy. With steadfast fortitude they endured the afflictions which beset them from every side. Their hearts were set on the wishes of Quddús; all else mattered but little. Neither the severity of their distress nor the continual threats of the enemy could cause them to deviate a hairbreadth from the path which their departed companions had so heroically trodden. A few were found who subsequently faltered in the darkest hour of adversity. The faint-heartedness which this negligible element was compelled to betray paled, however, into insignificance before the radiance which the mass of their stout-hearted companions shed in the hour of realised doom.

are not yet settled; should I fall a martyr, my wealth will be wasted, and an injustice will be done to my wife and children; and both waste and injustice are condemned as repugnant to our holy religion and displeasing to God.' A sixth said: 'I owe money to certain persons, and have none to acquit me of my debt. Should I fall, my debt will not allow me to cross the Bridge of Ṣiráṭ.' A seventh said: 'I came away without the knowledge of my mother, and she had said to me: "Shouldst thou go, I will make the milk wherewith I nourished thee unlawful to thee." I fear, therefore, that I may be cast off as undutiful by my mother.' An eighth wept, saying: 'I have made a vow to visit Karbilá this year; one circumambulation of the holy sepulchre of the Chief of Martyrs is equivalent in merit to a hundred thousand martyrdoms or a thousand pilgrimages to Mecca. I fear to fail in the fulfilment of my vow, and so to be disappointed of this great blessing.' Others said: 'We, for our part, have neither seen in these people, nor heard of them, aught that showeth them to be unbelievers, for they also say: "There is no god but God, Muḥammad is the Apostle of God, and 'Alí is the Friend of God." At most, they maintain that the advent of the Imám Miḥdí has taken place. Let them be; for at all events they are no worse than the sunnís, who reject the twelve Imáms and the fourteen immaculate saints, recognise such an one as 'Umar as caliph, prefer 'Uthmán to 'Alí-ibn-i-Abí-Ṭálib, and accept Abú-Bakr as the successor of our holy Prophet. Why should our divines leave those alone, and fight with these about matters whereof the rights and wrongs have not been properly determined?' In short, throughout the camp, murmurs arose from every tongue, and complaints from every mouth; each one sang a different tune and devised a different pretext; and all awaited but some plausible excuse to betake themselves to flight. So when 'Abbás-Qulí Khán perceived this to be the case, he, fearing lest the contagion of their terror might spread to his soldiers, was forced to accept the excuses of these reverend divines and their disciples and followers, who forthwith departed, rejoicing greatly, and uttering prayers for the Sartíp's success." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 74–6.)

Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, who was stationed in Sárí, welcomed with keen delight the news of the defeat that had overtaken the forces under the immediate command of his colleague 'Abbás-Qulí Khán. Though himself desirous of extirpating the band that had sought shelter behind the walls of the fort, he rejoiced at the knowledge that his rival had failed to secure the victory which he coveted.[1] He wrote immediately to Ṭihrán and demanded that reinforcements in the form of bomb-shells and camel-artillery, with all the necessary equipments, be despatched without delay to the neighbourhood of the fort, he being determined, this time, to effect the complete subjugation of its obstinate occupants.

Whilst their enemies were preparing for yet another and still fiercer attack upon their stronghold, the companions of Quddús, utterly indifferent to the gnawing distress that afflicted them, acclaimed with joy and gratitude the approach of Naw-Rúz. In the course of that festival, they gave free vent to their feelings of thanksgiving and praise in return for the manifold blessings which the Almighty had bestowed upon them. Though oppressed with hunger, they indulged in songs and merriment, utterly disdaining the danger with which they were beset. The fort resounded with the ascriptions of glory and praise which, both in the daytime and in the night-season, ascended from the hearts of that joyous band. The verse, "Holy, holy, the Lord our God, the Lord of the angels and the spirit," issued unceasingly from their lips, heightened their enthusiasm, and reanimated their courage.

All that remained of the cattle they had brought with them to the fort was a cow which Ḥájí Naṣíru'd-Dín-i-Qazvíní had set aside, and the milk of which he made into a pudding every day for the table of Quddús. Unwilling to

[1] "Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá fut un peu surpris. Ce n'était pas ce à quoi il s'attendait. Mais, en somme, ce qui le frappa davantage, c'est que le Sardár pouvait être considéré comme ayant été battu aussi bien qu'il l'avait été lui-même, et cette réflexion, accompagnée de tous les corollaires consolants pour son amour-propre, lui rendit l'affaire très agréable. Non seulement il ne craignait plus qu'un de ses lieutenants se fût paré d'une gloire enviable en prenant le château des Bábís, mais encore ce n'était plus seulement lui qui avait échoué: il avait un compagnon et un compagnon auquel il espérait bien faire porter la responsabilité des deux défaites. Enchanté, il réunit ses chefs, grands et petits, et leur fit part de la nouvelle, en déplorant, bien entendu, le triste sort du Sardár, et en faisant des vœux ardents pour qu'une autre fois ce vaillant soldat fût plus heureux." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 179.)

deny his hunger-stricken friends their share of the delicacy which his devoted companion prepared for him, Quddús would, after partaking of a few teaspoonfuls of that dish, invariably distribute the rest among them. "I have ceased to enjoy," he was often heard to remark, "since the departure of Mullá Ḥusayn, the meat and drink which they prepare for me. My heart bleeds at the sight of my famished companions, worn and wasted around me." Despite these adverse circumstances, he unfailingly continued further to elucidate in his commentary the significance of the Ṣád of Ṣamad, and to exhort his friends to persevere till the very end in their heroic endeavours. At morn and at eventide, Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir would chant, in the presence of the assembled believers, verses from that commentary, the reading of which would quicken their enthusiasm and brighten their hopes.

I have heard Mullá Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Furúghí testify to the following: "God knows that we had ceased to hunger for food. Our thoughts were no longer concerned with matters pertaining to our daily bread. We were so enraptured by the entrancing melody of those verses that, were we to have continued for years in that state, no trace of weariness and fatigue could possibly have dimmed our enthusiasm or marred our gladness. And whenever the lack of nourishment would tend to sap our vitality and weaken our strength, Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir would hasten to Quddús and acquaint him with our plight. A glimpse of his face, the magic of his words, as he walked amongst us, would transmute our despondency into golden joy. We were reinforced with a strength of such intensity that, had the hosts of our enemies appeared suddenly before us, we felt ourselves capable of subjugating their forces."

On the day of Naw-Rúz, which fell on the twenty-fourth of Rabí'u'th-Thání in the year 1265 A.H.,[1] Quddús alluded, in a written message to his companions, to the approach of such trials as would bring in their wake the martyrdom of a considerable number of his friends. A few days later, an innumerable host,[2] commanded by Prince Mihdí-Qulí

[1] 1849 A.D.

[2] "Le prince distribua les postes que chacun aurait à garder sur le développement de cette ligne d'investissement; il chargea de l'approvisionement des troupes Ḥájí Khán Núrí et Mírzá 'Abdu'lláh Navayy. Pour principaux officiers, il prit le Sardár 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-

Mírzá[1] and seconded by the joint forces of Sulaymán Khán-i-Afshár, of 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání, and of Ja'far-Qulí Khán, assisted by about forty other officers, encamped in the neighbourhood of the fort, and set about constructing a series of trenches and barricades in its immediate vicinity.[2] On the ninth day of the month of Bahá,[3] the commanding officer gave orders to those in charge of his artillery to open fire in the direction of the besieged. While the bombardment was in progress, Quddús emerged from his room and walked to the centre of the fort. His face was wreathed in smiles, and his demeanour breathed forth the utmost tranquillity. As he was pacing the floor, a cannon-ball fell suddenly before him. "How utterly unaware," he calmly remarked, as he rolled it with his foot, "are these boastful aggressors of the power of God's avenging wrath! Have they forgotten that a creature as insignificant as the gnat was capable of extin-

i-Láríjání, auquel, depuis son peu de succès, il portait plus d'intérêt; puis Naṣru'lláh Khán-i-Bandibi, autre chef de tribu, et Muṣṭafá Khán, d'Ashraf, auquel il donna le commandement des braves tufang-chís de cette ville et celui des súritís. D'autres seigneurs moins considérables commandèrent les gens de Dúdánkih et de Bálá-Rastáq, ainsi qu'un certain nombre de nomades turks et kurdes, qui ne se trouvaient pas compris dans les bandes des grands chefs. Ces nomades turks et kurdes furent plus particulièrement chargés de la surveillance de l'ennemi. On commençait, après des expériences assez multipliées, à admettre qu'il ne serait pas mal de se garder un peu mieux que par le passé. Turks et Kurdes furent donc chargés de ne pas perdre de vue, soit de jour, soit de nuit, ce qui se ferait du côté de l'ennemi, et d'avoir l'œil au guet de manière à prévenir les surprises." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 180–81.)

[1] "Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, pourtant, voulut réunir aux moyens antiques quelque chose des inventions modernes, afin de rien négliger, et il fit venir de Ṭihrán deux pièces de canon et deux mortiers avec les munitions nécessaires. Il se procura en même temps le secours d'un homme de Hirát, qui avait le secret d'une substance explosive, laquelle, étant allumée, se projetait à sept cents mètres et incendiait tout. On en fit l'épreuve, et les résultats furent satisfaisants. Cette composition fut lancée dans le château, et elle y mit en flammes et bientôt en cendres toutes les habitations de bois, de roseau ou de paille que les Bábís s'étaient construites à l'intérieur, soit dans la cour, soit sur le rempart. Tandis que cette destruction avait lieu, les bombes lancées par les mortiers et les boulets faisaient un tort considérable à une bâtisse élevée à la hâte par des gens qui n'étaient pas architectes, encore bien moins ingénieurs, et qui n'avaient pas songé qu'on pût venir les attaquer avec de l'artillerie. En peu de temps, les défenses du château furent démantelées; ce n'étaient plus que poutres écroulées sous l'action du feu, débris de bois noircis et fumants, tas de pierres bouleversées." (*Ibid.*, pp. 181–2.)

[2] "Ces précautions établies, on creusa des trous et des fossés pour y placer des tufang-chís, qui reçurent l'ordre de tirer sur tous les Bábís qui se montreraient. On construisit de grandes tours, d'une élévation égale et même supérieurs à celle des différents étages de la forteresse, et, au moyen d'un feu plongeant continu, on rendit plus difficile encore aux ennemis de circuler sur leurs murailles ou de traverser même la cour intérieure. C'était un avantage considérable. Mais au bout de quelques jours, les chefs Bábís profitant de la longueur des nuits, exhaussèrent leurs retranchements de telle sorte que les tours d'attaque se trouvèrent dépassées." (*Ibid.*, p. 181.)

[3] The ninth day after Naw-Rúz.

guishing the life of the all-powerful Nimrod? Have they not heard that the roaring of the tempest was sufficient to destroy the people of 'Ād and Thamúd and to annihilate their forces? Seek they to intimidate the heroes of God, in whose sight the pomp of royalty is but an empty shadow, with such contemptible evidences of their cruelty?" "You are," he added, as he turned to his friends, "those same companions of whom Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, has thus spoken: 'Oh, how I long to behold the countenance of my brethren; my brethren who will appear in the end of the world! Blessed are we, blessed are they; greater is their blessedness than ours.' Beware lest you allow the encroachments of self and desire to impair so glorious a station. Fear not the threats of the wicked, neither be dismayed by the clamour of the ungodly. Each one of you has his appointed hour, and when that time is come, neither the assaults of your enemy nor the endeavours of your friends will be able either to retard or to advance that hour. If the powers of the earth league themselves against you, they will be powerless, ere that hour strikes, to lessen by one jot or tittle the span of your life. Should you allow your hearts to be agitated for but one moment by the booming of these guns which, with increasing violence, will continue to shower their shot upon this fort, you will have cast yourselves out of the stronghold of Divine protection."

So powerful an appeal could not fail to breathe confidence into the hearts of those who heard it. A few, however, whose countenances betrayed vacillation and fear, were seen huddled together in a sheltered corner of the fort, viewing with envy and surprise the zeal that animated their companions.[1]

[1] "Once, indeed, some few of them did go out to try to obtain a little tea and sugar for Jináb-i-Quddús. The most notable of these was Mullá Sa'íd of Zarḳanád. Now he was a man so accomplished in science that when certain learned men of the kindred of Mullá Muḥammad-Taqí of Núr addressed to Jináb-i-Quddús in writing certain questions touching the sciences of divination and astrology, the latter said to Mullá Sa'íd: 'Do you speedily write for them a brief and compendious reply, that their messenger be not kept waiting, and a more detailed answer shall be written subsequently.' So Mullá Sa'íd, though hurried by the presence of the messenger, and distracted by the turmoil of the siege, rapidly penned a most eloquent address, wherein, while replying to the questions asked, he introduced nearly a hundred well-authenticated traditions bearing on the truth of the new Manifestation of the promised Proof, besides several which foreshadowed the halting of those who had believed in the Lord about Ṭabarsí, and their martyrdom. The learned men of Núr were amazed beyond all measure at his erudition, and said: 'Candour compels us to admit that such a presentation of these matters is a great miracle, and that such erudition and eloquence are

The army of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá continued for a few days to fire in the direction of the fort. His men were surprised to find that the booming of their guns had failed to silence the voice of prayer and the acclamations of joy which the besieged raised in answer to their threats. Instead of the unconditional surrender which they expected, the call of the muadhdhin,[1] the chanting of the verses of the Qur'án, and the chorus of gladsome voices intoning hymns of thanksgiving and praise reached their ears without ceasing.

Exasperated by these evidences of unquenchable fervour and impelled by a burning desire to extinguish the enthusiasm which swelled within the breasts of his opponents, Ja'far-qulí Khán erected a tower, upon which he stationed his cannon,[2] and from that eminence directed his fire into the heart of the fort. Quddús immediately summoned Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir and instructed him to sally again and inflict upon the "boastful newcomer" a humiliation no less crushing than the one which 'Abbás-Qulí Khán had suffered.

far beyond the Mullá Sa'íd whom we knew. Assuredly this talent hath been bestowed on him from on high, and he in turn hath made it manifest to us.' Now Mullá Sa'íd and his companions, while they were without the castle, fell into the hands of the royal troops, and were by them carried before the prince. The prince strove by every means to extract from them some information about the state of the Bábí garrison, their numbers, and the amount of their munitions; but, do what he would, he could gain nothing. So, when he perceived Mullá Sa'íd to be a man of talent and understanding, he said to him: 'Repent, and I will release you and not suffer you to be slain.' To this Mullá Sa'íd replied: 'Never did anyone repent of obedience to God's command; why, then, should I? Rather do you repent, who are acting contrary to His good pleasure, and more evilly than anyone hath heretofore done.' And he spoke much more after the same fashion. So at length they sent him to Sárí in chains and fetters, and there slew him, under circumstances of the utmost cruelty, along with his companions, who appear to have been five in number." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 79–80.)

[1] See Glossary.

[2] "Thus the latter constructed four towers on the four sides of the castle, and raised them so high that they were able to command the interior of the fortress with their guns, and to make the garrison targets for their bullets. Then the faithful, seeing this, began to dig subterranean passages and to retreat thither. But the ground of Mázindarán lies near the water and is saturated with moisture, added to which rain fell continually, increasing the damage, so that these poor sufferers dwelt amidst mud and water till their garments rotted away with damp. . . . Whenever one of their comrades quaffed the draught of martyrdom before their eyes, instead of grieving they rejoiced. Thus, for instance, on one occasion a bomb-shell fell on the roof of a hut, which caught fire. Shaykh Ṣálih of Shíráz went to extinguish the fire. A bullet struck his head and shattered his skull. Even as they were raising his corpse, a second bullet carried away the hand of Áqá Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, the son of Siyyid Aḥmad, who was the father of Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn, 'the beloved.' So, too, was Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn, 'the beloved,' a child ten years of age, slain before his father's eyes, and he fell rolling in mud and gore, with limbs quivering like those of a half-killed bird." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 81–3.)

"Let him know," he added, "that God's lion-hearted warriors, when pressed and driven by hunger, are able to manifest deeds of such heroism as no ordinary mortals can show. Let him know that the greater their hunger, the more devastating shall be the effects of their exasperation."

Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir again ordered eighteen of his companions to hurry to their steeds and follow him. The gates of the fort were thrown open, and the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!"—fiercer and more thrilling than ever—diffused panic and consternation in the ranks of the enemy. Ja'far-Qulí Khán, with thirty of his men, fell before the sword of their adversary, who rushed to the tower, captured the guns, and hurled them to the ground. Thence they threw themselves upon the barricade which had been erected, demolished a number of them, and would, but for the approaching darkness, have captured and destroyed the rest.

Triumphant and unhurt, they repaired to the fort, carrying back with them a number of the stoutest and best-fed stallions which had been left behind. A few days elapsed during which there was no sign of a counter-attack.[1] A sudden explosion in one of the ammunition stores of the enemy, which had caused the death of several artillery officers and a number of their fellow-combatants, forced them for one whole month to suspend their attacks upon the garrison.[2] This lull enabled a number of the companions to emerge occasionally from their stronghold and gather such grass as they could find in the field as the only means wherewith to

[1] "Il y avait quatre mois que cela durait; aussi le Sháh commença-t-il à s'impatienter: le succès Bábí enflammèrent sa colère qu'il exhala en ces termes, suivant l'historien persan: 'Nous pensions que notre armée entrerait sans hésiter dans l'eau ou dans le feu, que sans peur elle lutterait contre un lion et une baleine. Nous l'avons envoyé combattre une poignée d'hommes faibles et sans force et elle ne fait rien! Les grands du Mázindarán pensent-ils que ces retards nous agréent? Laissent-ils grandirent l'incendie pour grandir leurs succès? Eh bien qu'ils le sachent, je ferai comme si Allah n'avait pas crée le Mázindarán et j'en exterminerai les habitants jusqu'au dernier.' " (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 322.)

[2] "Le siège durait depuis quatre mois et on ne faisait pas de progrès sensibles. Les fortifications primitives avaient été renversées; mais, avec une énergie qui ne se démentait pas, les Bábís les avaient remplacées par d'autres et, jour et nuit, les réparaient et les augmentaient. On ne pouvait prévoir l'issue de cette affaire, d'autant moins que, comme je le raconterai tout à l'heure, le Mázindarán n'était plus la seule partie de la Perse où les partisans de la religion nouvelle donnassent de si terribles preuves de leur foi, de leur zèle et de leur intrépidité. Le roi et le premier ministre, inquiets d'une telle situation, firent éclater leur colère contre les chefs envoyés par eux. On ne se borna pas à leur reprocher leur incapacité dans les termes les plus amers, on les menaça, eux et tous les peuples de la province,

allay their hunger. The flesh of horses, even the leather of their saddles, had been consumed by these hard-pressed companions. They boiled the grass and devoured it with piteous avidity.[1] As their strength declined, as they languished exhausted within the walls of their fort, Quddús multiplied his visits to them, and endeavoured by his words of cheer and of hope to lighten the load of their agony.

The month of Jamádíyu'th-Thaní[2] had just begun when the artillery of the enemy was heard again discharging its showers of balls upon the fort. Simultaneously with the booming of the cannons, a detachment of the army, headed by a number of officers and consisting of several regiments of infantry and cavalry, rushed to storm it. The sound of their approach impelled Quddús to summon promptly his valiant lieutenant, Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir, and to bid him emerge with thirty-six of his companions and repulse their attack.

de les traiter comme des Bábís si l'affaire n'était terminée au plus vite. Là-dessus le commandement fut ôté à Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá et donné à l'Afshár Sulaymán Khán, homme d'une fermeté connue et d'une grande influence, non seulement sur sa propre tribu, une des plus nobles de la Perse, mais encore sur tous les gens de guerre, qui le connaissaient et le tenaient en grande estime. Il emporta les instructions les plus rigoureuses." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 183–4.)

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers, in the "Memorials of the Faithful" (pp. 16–17), to the hardships and sufferings endured by the heroic defenders of the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí. He pays a glowing tribute to the constancy, the zeal and courage of the besieged, mentioning in particular Mullá Ṣádiq-i-Muqaddas. "For eighteen days," He says, "they remained 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 famished 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 resistance. . . . Under such circumstances to maintain an unwavering faith and patience is extremely difficult, and to endure such dire afflictions a rare phenomenon." "Ceux qui restaient fermes avaient achevé de manger, non seulement leurs dernières provisions, mais le peu d'herbes qu'ils avaient pu recueillir dans leur enceinte et l'écorce entière des arbres. Ils leur restait le cuir de leurs ceinturons et les fourreaux de sabre. Ils recouraient aussi à l'expédient indiqué jadis par l'ambassadeur d'Espagne aux ligueurs assiégés dans Paris: ils broyaient des ossements de morts et en faisaient une sorte de farine. Enfin, poussés à bout ils se déterminèrent à une sorte de profanation. Le cheval de Mullá Ḥusayn était mort des blessures qu'il avait reçues dans cette nuit sanglante où son maître avait succombé. Les Bábís l'avaient enterré par respect pour la mémoire de leur saint, et quelques rayons de sa gloire, quelque chose de la vénération profonde qu'il inspirait, flottaient sur la tombe du pauvre animal. Un conseil de guerre se réunit et, en déplorant la nécessité de discuter de semblables sujets, on mit en délibération de savoir si l'excès de la détresse pouvait autoriser les fidèles à déterrer le coursier sacré et à s'en faire un aliment. Avec une douleur vive on décréta que l'action serait excusable. On reprit donc à la terre ce qu'on lui avait donné, on se partagea les lambeaux du cheval, et, les ayant fait cuire avec de la farine d'ossements, on les mangea, puis on reprit les fusils." (*Ibid.*, pp. 186–7.)

[2] April 24–May 23, 1849 A.D.

"Never since our occupation of this fort," he added, "have we under any circumstances attempted to direct any offensive against our opponents. Not until they unchained their attack upon us did we arise to defend our lives. Had we cherished the ambition of waging holy war against them, had we harboured the least intention of achieving ascendancy through the power of our arms over the unbelievers, we should not, until this day, have remained besieged within these walls. The force of our arms would have by now, as was the case with the companions of Muhammad in days past, convulsed the nations of the earth and prepared them for the acceptance of our Message. Such is not the way, however, which we have chosen to tread. Ever since we repaired to this fort, our sole, our unalterable purpose has been the vindication, by our deeds and by our readiness to shed our blood in the path of our Faith, of the exalted character of our mission. The hour is fast approaching when we shall be able to consummate this task."

Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir once more leaped on horseback and, with the thirty-six companions whom he had selected, confronted and scattered the forces which had beset him. He carried with him, as he re-entered the gate, the banner which an alarmed enemy had abandoned as soon as the reverberating cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!" had been raised. Five of his companions suffered martyrdom in the course of that engagement, all of whom he bore to the fort and interred in one tomb close to the resting place of their fallen brethren.

Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, astounded by this further evidence of the inexhaustible vitality of his opponents, took counsel with the chiefs of his staff, urging them to devise such means as would enable him to bring that costly enterprise to a speedy end. For three days he deliberated with them, and finally came to the conclusion that the most advisable course to take would be to suspend all manner of hostilities for a few days in the hope that the besieged, exhausted with hunger and goaded by despair, would decide to emerge from their retreat and submit to an unconditional surrender.

As the prince was waiting for the consummation of the plan he had conceived, there arrived from Ṭihrán a messenger

bearing to him the farmán[1] of his sovereign. This man was a resident of the village of Kand, a place not far from the capital. He succeeded in obtaining leave from the prince to enter the fort and attempt to induce two of its occupants, Mullá Mihdí and his brother Mullá Báqir-i-Kandí, to escape from the imminent danger to which their lives were exposed. As he approached its walls, he called the sentinels and asked them to inform Mullá Mihdíy-i-Kandí that an acquaintance of his desired to see him. Mullá Mihdí reported the matter to Quddús, who permitted him to meet his friend.

I have heard Áqáy-i-Kalím give the following account, as related to him by that same messenger whom he met in Ṭihrán: " 'I saw,' the messenger informed me, 'Mullá Mihdí appear above the wall of the fort, his countenance revealing an expression of stern resolve that baffled description. He looked as fierce as a lion, his sword was girded on over a long white shirt after the manner of the Arabs, and he had a white kerchief around his head. "What is it that you seek?" he impatiently enquired. "Say it quickly, for I fear that my master will summon me and find me absent." The determination that glowed in his eyes confused me. I was dumbfounded at his looks and manner. The thought suddenly flashed through my mind that I would awaken a dormant sentiment in his heart. I reminded him of his infant child, Raḥmán, whom he had left behind in the village, in his eagerness to enlist under the standard of Mullá Ḥusayn. In his great affection for the child, he had specially composed a poem which he chanted as he rocked his cradle and lulled him to sleep. "Your beloved Raḥmán," I said, "longs for the affection which you once lavished upon him. He is alone and forsaken, and yearns to see you." "Tell him from me," was the father's instant reply, "that the love of the true Raḥmán,[2] a love that transcends all earthly affections, has so filled my heart that it has left no place for any other love besides His." The poignancy with which he uttered these words brought tears to my eyes. "Accursed," I indignantly exclaimed, "be those who consider you and your fellow-disciples as having strayed from the path of God!"

[1] See Glossary.

[2] Reference to God, the word Raḥmán meaning "merciful."

"What," I asked him, "if I venture to enter the fort and join you?" "If your motive be to seek and find the Truth," he calmly replied, "I will gladly show you the way. And if you seek to visit me as an old and lifelong friend, I will accord you the welcome of which the Prophet of God has spoken: 'Welcome your guests though they be of the infidels.' I will, faithful to that injunction, offer you the boiled grass and the churned bones which serve as my meat, the best I can procure for you. But if your intention be to harm me, I warn you that I will defend myself and will hurl you from the heights of these walls to the ground." His unswerving obstinacy convinced me of the futility of my efforts. I could feel that he was fired with such enthusiasm that, were the divines of the realm to assemble and endeavour to dissuade him from the course he had chosen to pursue, he would, alone and unaided, baffle their efforts. Neither, was I convinced, could all the potentates of the earth succeed in luring him away from the Beloved of his heart's desire. "May the cup," I was moved to say, "which your lips have tasted, bring you all the blessings you seek." "The prince," I added, "has vowed that whoever steps out of this fort will be secure from danger, that he will even receive a safe passage from him, as well as whatever expenses he may require for the journey to his home." He promised to convey the prince's message to his fellow-companions. "Is there anything further you wish to tell me?" he added. "I am impatient to join my master." "May God," I replied, "assist you in accomplishing your purpose." "He has indeed assisted me!" he burst forth in exultation. "How else could I have been delivered from the darkness of my prison-home in Kand? How could I have reached this exalted stronghold?" No sooner had he uttered these words than, turning his face away from me, he vanished from my sight.' "

As soon as he had joined his companions, Mullá Mihdí conveyed the prince's message to them. On the afternoon of that same day, Siyyid Mírzá Ḥusayn-i-Mutavallí, accompanied by his servant, left the fort and went directly to join the prince in his camp. The next day, Rasúl-i-Bahnimírí and a few other of his companions, unable to resist the ravages of famine, and encouraged by the explicit assurances

of the prince, sadly and reluctantly separated themselves from their friends. No sooner had they stepped out of the fort than they were all instantly slain at the order of 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání.

During the few days that elapsed after that incident, the enemy, still encamped in the neighbourhood of the fort, refrained from any act of hostility towards Quddús and his companions. On Wednesday morning, the sixteenth of Jamádíyu'th-Thání,[1] an emissary of the prince arrived at the fort and requested that two representatives be delegated by the besieged to conduct confidential negotiations with them in the hope of arriving at a peaceful settlement of the issues outstanding between them.[2]

Accordingly, Quddús instructed Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí and Siyyid Riḍáy-i-Khurásání to act as his representatives, and bade them inform the prince of his readiness to accede to his wish. Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá courteously received them, and invited them to partake of the tea which he had prepared. "We should," they said, as they declined his offer, "feel it to be an act of disloyalty on our part were we to partake of either meat or drink whilst our beloved leader languishes worn and famished in the fort." "The hostilities between us," the prince remarked, "have been unduly prolonged. We, on both sides, have fought long and suffered grievously. It is my fervent wish to achieve an amicable settlement of our differences." He took hold of a copy of the Qur'án that lay beside him, and wrote, with his own hand, in confirmation of his statement, the following words on the margin of the opening Súrih: "I swear by this most holy Book, by the righteousness of God who has revealed it, and the Mission of Him who was inspired with its verses, that I cherish no other purpose than to promote peace and friendliness between us. Come forth from your stronghold and rest assured that no hand will be stretched forth against you. You yourself

[1] May 9, 1849 A.D.

[2] "Ce courage sombre et désespéré, cette ardeur invincible, cet enthousiasme irréductible donnaient fort à penser aux chefs de l'armée impériale. Désespérant d'arriver à forcer des retranchements d'où ils avaient été si souvent repoussés, ils songèrent à la ruse. Le Prince ye était naturellement porté, et Sulaymán Khán-i-Afshár envoyé en dernier lieu par le Sháh pour contrôler les opérations militaires y poussait de toutes ses forces, songeant que de plus longs délais compromettaient sa fortune et sa vie." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 325.)

and your companions, I solemnly declare, are under the sheltering protection of the Almighty, of Muḥammad, His Prophet, and of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, our sovereign. I pledge my honour that no man, either in this army or in this neighbourhood, will ever attempt to assail you. The malediction of God, the omnipotent Avenger, rest upon me if in my heart I cherish any other desire than that which I have stated."

He affixed his seal to his statement and, delivering the Qur'án into the hands of Mullá Yúsuf, asked him to convey his greetings to his leader and to present him this formal and written assurance. "I will," he added, "in pursuance of my declaration, despatch to the gate of the fort, this very afternoon, a number of horses, which I trust he and his leading companions will accept and mount, in order to ride to the neighbourhood of this camp, where a special tent will have been pitched for their reception. I would request them to be our guests until such time as I shall be able to arrange for their return, at my expense, to their homes."

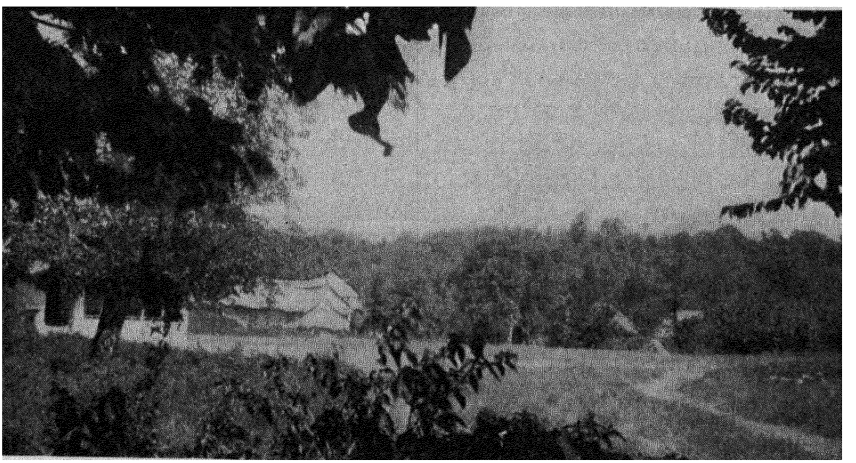
Quddús received the Qur'án from the hand of his messenger, kissed it reverently, and said: "O our Lord, decide between us and between our people with truth; for the best to decide art Thou."[1] Immediately after, he bade the rest of his companions prepare themselves to leave the fort. "By our response to their invitation," he told them, "we shall enable them to demonstrate the sincerity of their intentions."

As the hour of their departure approached, Quddús attired his head with the green turban which the Báb had sent to him at the time He sent the one that Mullá Ḥusayn wore on the day of his martyrdom. At the gate of the fort, they mounted the horses which had been placed at their disposal, Quddús mounting the favourite steed of the prince which the latter had sent for his use. His chief companions, among whom were a number of siyyids and learned divines, rode behind him, and were followed by the rest, who marched on foot, carrying with them all that was left of their arms and belongings. As the company, who were two hundred and two in number, reached the tent which the prince had ordered to be pitched for Quddús in the vicinity of the public bath

[1] Qur'án, 7: 88.

of the village of Dízvá, overlooking the camp of the enemy, they alighted and proceeded to occupy their lodgings in the neighbourhood of that tent.

Soon after their arrival, Quddús emerged from his tent and, gathering together his companions, addressed them in these words: "You should show forth exemplary renunciation, for such behaviour on your part will exalt our Cause and redound to its glory. Anything short of complete detachment will but serve to tarnish the purity of its name and to obscure its splendour. Pray the Almighty to grant that even to your



VILLAGE OF DÍZVÁ

last hour He may graciously assist you to contribute your share to the exaltation of His Faith."

A few hours after sunset, they were served with dinner brought from the camp of the prince. The food that was offered them in separate trays, each of which was assigned to a group of thirty companions, was poor and scanty. "Nine of us," those who were with Quddús subsequently related, "were summoned by our leader to partake of the dinner which had been served in his tent. As he refused to taste it, we too, following his example, refrained from eating. The attendants who waited upon us were delighted to partake of the dishes which we had refused to touch, and devoured their contents with appreciation and avidity." A few of the companions

who were dining outside the tent were heard remonstrating with the attendants, pleading that they were willing to buy from them, at however exorbitant a price, the bread which they needed. Quddús strongly disapproved of their conduct and rebuked them for the request they had made. But for the intercession of Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir, he would have severely punished them for having so completely disregarded his earnest exhortations.

At daybreak a messenger arrived, summoning Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir to the presence of the prince. With the consent of Quddús, he responded to that invitation, and returned an hour later, informing his chief that the prince had, in the presence of Sulaymán Khán-i-Afshár, reiterated the assurances he had given, and had treated him with great consideration and kindness. " 'My oath,' he assured me," Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir explained, " 'is irrevocable and sacred.' He cited the case of Ja'far-Qulí Khán, who, notwithstanding his shameless massacre of thousands of soldiers of the imperial army, in the course of the insurrection fomented by the Sálár, was pardoned by his sovereign and promptly invested with fresh honours by Muḥammad Sháh. To-morrow the prince intends to accompany you in the morning to the public bath, from whence he will proceed to your tent, after which he will provide the horses required to convey the entire company to Sang-Sar, from where they will disperse, some returning to their homes in 'Iráq, and others proceeding to Khurásán. At the request of Sulaymán Khán, who urged that the presence of such a large gathering at such a fortified centre as Sang-Sar would be fraught with risk, the prince decided that the party should disperse, instead, at Fírúz-Kúh. I am of opinion that what his tongue professes, his heart does not believe at all." Quddús, who shared his view, bade his companions disperse that very night, and stated that he himself would soon proceed to Bárfurúsh. They hastened to implore him not to separate himself from them, and begged to be allowed to continue to enjoy the blessings of his companionship. He counselled them to be calm and patient, and assured them that, whatever afflictions the future might yet reveal, they would meet again. "Weep not," were his parting words; "the reunion which will follow this separation

will be such as shall eternally endure. We have committed our Cause to the care of God; whatever be His will and pleasure, the same we joyously accept."

The prince failed to redeem his promise. Instead of joining Quddús in his tent, he called him, with several of his companions, to his headquarters, and informed him, as soon as they reached the tent of the Farrásh-Báshí,[1] that he himself would summon him at noon to his presence. Shortly after, a number of the prince's attendants went and told the rest of the companions that Quddús permitted them to join him at the army's headquarters. Several of them were deceived by this report, were made captives, and were eventually sold as slaves. These unfortunate victims constitute the remnant of the companions of the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, who survived that heroic struggle and were spared to transmit to their countrymen the woful tale of their sufferings and trials.

Soon after, the prince's attendants brought pressure to bear upon Mullá Yúsuf to inform the remainder of his companions of the desire of Quddús that they immediately disarm. "What is it that you will tell them exactly?" they asked him, as he was being conducted to a place at some distance from the army's headquarters. "I will," was the bold reply, "warn them that whatever be henceforth the nature of the message you choose to deliver to them on behalf of their leader, that message is naught but downright falsehood." These words had hardly escaped his lips when he was mercilessly put to death.

From this savage act they turned their attention to the fort, plundered it of its contents, and proceeded to bombard and demolish it completely.[2] They then immediately encompassed the remaining companions and opened fire upon them. Any who escaped the bullets were killed by the swords of the officers and the spears of their men.[3] In the

[1] See Glossary.

[2] "On rasa toutes les constructions élevées par les Bábí, on nivela le sol afin de ne laisser aucun vestige de l'héroique défense de ceux qui étaient morts pour leur foi, s'imaginant ainsi qu'on baillonnerait l'histoire." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 327.)

[3] "On les fit aligner sur un rang et l'on s'amusa à leur fendre le ventre: opération d'autant plus réjouissante que des intestins fendus sortait de l'herbe, non encore digéreé, témoignage éclatant des souffrances qu'ils avaient éprouvées, mais aussi de la foi qui les avait soutenus. Quelques-uns, bien rares, parvinrent à s'enfuir dans la forêt." (*Ibid.*)

very throes of death, these unconquerable heroes were still heard to utter the words, "Holy, holy, O Lord our God, Lord of the angels and the spirit," words which in moments of exultation had fallen from their lips, and which they now repeated with undiminished fervour at this crowning hour of their lives.

As soon as these atrocities had been perpetrated, the prince ordered those who had been retained as captives to be ushered, one after another, into his presence. Those among them who were men of recognised standing, such as the father of Badí',[1] Mullá Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Furúghí, and Ḥájí Naṣír-i-Qazvíní,[2] he charged his attendants to conduct to Ṭihrán and obtain in return for their deliverance a ransom from each one of them in direct proportion to their capacity and wealth. As to the rest, he gave orders to his executioners that they be immediately put to death. A few were cut to pieces with the sword,[3] others were torn asunder, a number were bound to trees and riddled with bullets, and still others were blown

[1] Ḥájí 'Abdu'l-Majíd-i-Níshábúrí, who was eventually martyred in Khurásán.

[2] "Ce fut alors, dit Mírzá Jání, que l'Islám donna au monde un honteux spectacle. Les vainqueurs, si l'on peut leur donner ce titre, voulurent s'offrir les ivresses du triomphe. On couvrit de chaînes Quddús, Mírzá Muḥammad-Ḥasan Khán frère du Báb, Ákhúnd Mullá Muḥammad-Ṣádiq-i-Khurásání, Mírzá Muḥammad Ṣádiq-i-Khurásání, Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥasan-i-Khurásání, Shaykh Ni'matu'lláh-i-Ámulí, Ḥájí Náṣír-i-Qazvíní, Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí, Áqá Siyyid 'Abdu'l-'Aẓím-i-Khu'í et quelques autres. On les plaça au milieu du cortège qui se mit en marche au son des tambours et de la musique: et on les frappait chaque fois que l'on passait dans un endroit habité." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muhammad dit le Báb," pp. 327–8.) "Là ne se bornèrent pas les scènes de sauvagerie. Si quelques-uns échappèrent à la mort, ayant été vendus comme esclaves, d'autres furent martyrisés. Ceux qui trouvèrent des acquéreurs bienveillants furent Ákhúnd Mullá Muḥammad-Ṣádiq-i-Khurásání, Mullá Muhammad-i-Maḥvalátíy-i-Dúgh-Ábádí, Áqá Siyyid 'Azím-i-Khu'í, Ḥájí Náṣír-i-Qazvíní, Ḥájí 'Abdu'l-Majíd-i-Níshábúrí, Mírzá Ḥusayn-i-Mutavallíy-i-Qumí. Quatre Bábís souffrirent le martyr à Bárfurúsh. Deux furent envoyés à Ámul: parmi ces derniers, Mullá Ni'matu'lláh-i-Ámulí, l'autre Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir-i-Khurásáníy-i-Qá'iní, cousin de notre auteur Bábí. Qá'iní demeurait auparavant à Mashhad, dans l'avenue nommée Khíyábán-Bálá, et sa maison, qu'on avait surnommé Bábíyyih, était le lieu de rendez-vous des secrétaires en même temps que la demeure des religionnaires en voyage. C'est là que demeurèrent Quddús et le Bábu'l-Báb dans leur voyage au Khurásán. Outre sa science religieuse, Qá'iní était fort adroit de ses mains et c'est à lui qu'étaient dues les fortifications de Shaykh Ṭabarsí." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 329.)

[3] "Quant au reste, il fit étendre par terre, les uns à côté des autres, tous les captifs, et, un à un, on leur ouvrit le ventre. On remarqua qu'il y eut plusieurs de ces malheureux dont les entrailles étaient remplies d'herbe crue. Cette exécution achevée, on trouva qu'il restait encore quelque chose à faire et on assassina les transfuges auxquels on avait pardonné. Il y avait aussi des enfants et des femmes; on les égorgea de même. Ce fut une journée complète. On tua beaucoup et on ne risqua rien." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 189.) "À l'arrivée à Amul, Mullá Ni'matu'lláh fut torturé avec une implacable férocité. Peut-être ce spectacle porta-t-il la fureur de Qá'iní à son comble. Toujours est-il que, quand le bourreau s'approcha de lui, Qá'iní brisa les liens qui

from the mouths of cannons and consigned to the flames.[1]

This terrible butchery had hardly been concluded when three of the companions of Quddús, who were residents of Sang-Sar, were ushered into the presence of the prince. One of them was Siyyid Ahmad, whose father, Mír Muhammad-'Alí, a devoted admirer of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsá'í, had been a man of great learning and distinguished merit. He, accompanied by this same Siyyid Aḥmad and his brother, Mír Abu'l-Qásim, who met his death the very night on which Mullá Ḥusayn was slain, had departed for Karbilá in the year preceding the declaration of the Báb, with the intention of introducing his two sons to Siyyid Kázim. Ere his arrival, the siyyid had departed this life. He immediately determined to leave for Najaf. While in that city, the Prophet Muhammad one night appeared to him in a dream, bidding the Imám 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, announce to him that after his death both his sons, Siyyid Aḥmad and Mír Abu'l-Qásim, would attain the presence of the promised Qá'im and would each suffer martyrdom in His path. As soon as he awoke, he called for his son Siyyid Aḥmad and acquainted him with his will and last wishes. On the seventh day after that dream he died.

In Sang-Sar two other persons, Karbilá'í 'Alí and Karbilá'í Abú-Muhammad, both known for their piety and spiritual insight, strove to prepare the people for the acceptance of

l'enveloppaient, sauta sur l'exécuteur, lui arracha son sarbre et l'en frappa avec tant de violence que sa tête alla rouler à 15 pas. La foule se précipita sur lui, mais, terrible, il abattit à ses pieds tous ceux qui s'approchaient à portée de son arme. On fut obligé de le tuer de loin à coups de fusil. Après sa mort, on trouva dans sa poche un morceau de viande de cheval rôtie, souvenir des misères qu'il avait endurées pour sa foi." (*Ibid.*, pp. 329–30.)

[1] "The whole world marvelled at the manner of their sacrifice. . . . The mind is bewildered at their deeds, and the soul marvelleth at their fortitude and bodily endurance. . . . These holy lights have, for eighteen years, heroically endured the showers of afflictions which, from every side, have rained upon them. With what love, what devotion, what exultation and holy rapture they sacrificed their lives in the path of the All-Glorious! To the truth of this all witness. And yet how can they belittle this Revelation? Hath any age witnessed such momentous happenings? If these companions be not the true strivers after God, who else could be called by this name? Have these companions been seekers after power or glory? Have they ever yearned for riches? Have they cherished any desire except the good pleasure of God? If these companions, with all their marvellous testimonies and wondrous works, be false, who, then, is worthy to claim for himself the truth? By God! their very deeds are a sufficient testimony, and an irrefutable proof unto all the peoples of the earth, were men to ponder in their hearts the mysteries of Divine Revelation. 'And they who act unjustly shall soon know what a lot awaiteth them!' " (The "Kitáb-i-Íqán," pp. 189–91.)

the promised Revelation, the advent of which they felt was fast approaching. In the year 1264 A.H.,[1] they publicly announced that in that very year a man named Siyyid 'Alí would, preceded by a Black Standard and accompanied by a number of his chosen companions, set forth from Khurásán and proceed to Mázindarán. They urged every loyal adherent of Islám to arise and lend him every possible assistance. "The standard which he will hoist," they declared, "will be none other than the standard of the promised Qá'im; he who will unfurl it, none other than His lieutenant and chief promoter of His Cause. Whoso follows him will be saved, and he who turns away will be among the fallen." Karbilá'í Abú-Muḥammad urged his two sons, Abu'l-Qásim and Muḥammad-'Alí, to arise for the triumph of the new Revelation and to sacrifice every material consideration for the attainment of that end. Both Karbilá'í Abú-Muhammad and Karbilá'í 'Alí died in the spring of that same year.

These two sons of Karbilá'í Abú-Muhammad were the two companions who had been ushered, together with Siyyid Aḥmad, into the presence of the prince. Mullá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín-i-Shahmírzádí, one of the trusted and learned counsellors of the government, acquainted the prince with their story and related the experiences and activities of their respective fathers. "For what reason," Siyyid Aḥmad was asked, "have you chosen to tread a path that has involved you and your kinsmen in such circumstances of wretchedness and disgrace? Could you not have been satisfied with the vast number of erudite and illustrious divines who are to be found in this land and in 'Iráq?" "My faith in this Cause," he fearlessly retorted, "is born not of idle imitation. I have dispassionately enquired into its precepts, and am convinced of its truth. When in Najaf, I ventured to request the preeminent mujtahid of that city, Shaykh Muḥammad-Ḥasan-i-Najafí, to expound for me certain truths connected with the secondary principles underlying the teachings of Islám. He refused to accede to my request. I reiterated my appeal, whereupon he angrily rebuked me and persisted in his refusal. How can I, in the light of such experience, be expected to seek enlightenment on the abstruse articles of the Faith

[1] 1847–8 A.D.

of Islám from a divine, however illustrious, who refuses to answer my question on such simple and ordinary matters and who expresses his indignation at my having put such questions to him?" "What is your belief concerning Ḥájí Muḥammad-'Alí?" asked the prince. "We believe," he replied, "Mullá Husayn to have been the bearer of the standard of which Muḥammad has spoken: 'Should your eyes behold the Black Standards proceeding from Khurásán, hasten ye towards them, even though ye should have to crawl over the snow.' For this reason we have renounced the world and have flocked to his standard, a standard which is but a symbol of our Faith. If you wish to bestów upon me a favour, bid your executioner put an end to me and enable me to be gathered to the company of my immortal companions. For the world and all its charms have ceased to allure me. I long to depart this life and return to my God." The prince, who was reluctant to take the life of a siyyid, refused to order his execution. His two companions, however, were immediately put to death. He, with his brother Siyyid Abú-Ṭálib, was delivered into the hands of Mullá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín, who was instructed to conduct them to Sang-Sar.

Meanwhile Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, accompanied by seven of the 'ulamás of Sárí, set out from that town to share in the meritorious act of inflicting the punishment of death upon the companions of Quddús. When they found that they had already been put to death, Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí urged the prince to reconsider his decision and to order the immediate execution of Siyyid Aḥmad, pleading that his arrival at Sárí would be the signal for fresh disturbances as grave as those which had already afflicted them. The prince eventually yielded, on the express condition that he be regarded as his guest until his own arrival at Sárí, at which time he would take whatever measures were required to prevent him from disturbing the peace of the neighbourhood.

No sooner had Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí taken the direction of Sárí than he proceeded to vilify Siyyid Aḥmad and his father. "Why ill-treat a guest," his captive pleaded, "whom the prince has committed to your charge? Why ignore the Prophet's injunction, 'Honour thy guest though he be an infidel'?" Roused to a burst of fury, Mírzá Mu-

ḥammad-Taqí, together with his seven companions, drew their swords and cut his body to pieces. With his last breath Siyyid Ahmad was heard invoking the aid of the Sáhibu'z-Zamán. As to his brother Siyyid Abú-Ṭálib, he was safely conducted to Sang-Sar by Mullá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín, and to this day resides with his brother Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍá in Mázindarán. Both are engaged in the service of the Cause and are accounted among its active supporters.

As soon as his work was completed, the prince, accompanied by Quddús, returned to Bárfurúsh. They arrived on Friday afternoon, the eighteenth of Jamádíyu'th-Thání.[1] The Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá', together with all the 'ulamás of the town, came out to welcome the prince and to extend their congratulations on his triumphal return. The whole town was beflagged to celebrate the victory, and the bonfires which blazed at night witnessed to the joy with which a grateful population greeted the return of the prince. Three days of festivities elapsed during which he gave no indication as to his intention regarding the fate of Quddús. He vacillated in his policy, and was extremely reluctant to ill-treat his captive. He at first refused to allow the people to gratify their feelings of unrelenting hatred, and was able to restrain their fury. He had originally intended to conduct him to Ṭihrán and, by delivering him into the hands of his sovereign, to relieve himself of the responsibility which weighed upon him.

The Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá''s unquenchable hostility, however, interfered with the execution of this plan. The hatred with which Quddús and his Cause inspired him blazed into furious rage as he witnessed the increasing evidences of the prince's inclination to allow so formidable an opponent to slip from his grasp. Day and night he remonstrated with him and, with every cunning that his resourceful brain could devise, sought to dissuade him from pursuing a policy which he thought to be at once disastrous and cowardly. In the fury of his despair, he appealed to the mob and sought, by inflaming their passions, to awaken the basest sentiments of revenge in their hearts. The whole of Bárfurúsh had been aroused by the persistency of his call. His diabolical skill

[1] May 11, 1849 A.D.

soon won him the sympathy and support of the masses. "I have vowed," he imperiously protested, "to deny myself both food and sleep until such time as I am able to end the life of Hájí Muḥammad-'Alí with my own hands!" The threats of an agitated multitude reinforced his plea and succeeded in arousing the apprehensions of the prince. Fearing that his own life might be endangered, he summoned to his presence the leading 'ulamás of Bárfurúsh for the purpose of consulting as to the measures that should be taken to allay the tumult of popular excitement. All those who had been invited responded with the exception of Mullá Muḥammad-i-Ḥamzih, who pleaded to be excused from attending that meeting. He had previously, on several occasions, endeavoured, during the siege of the fort, to persuade the people to refrain from violence. To him Quddús, a few days before his abandonment of the fort, had committed, through one of his trusted companions of Mázindarán, a locked saddlebag containing the text of his own interpretation of the Ṣád of Ṣamad as well as all his other writings and papers that he had in his possession, the fate of which remains unknown until the present day.

No sooner had the 'ulamás assembled than the prince gave orders for Quddús to be brought into their presence. Since the day of his abandoning the fort, Quddús, who had been delivered into the custody of the Farrásh-Báshí, had not been summoned to his presence. As soon as he arrived, the prince arose and invited him to be seated by his side. Turning to the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá', he urged that his conversations with him be dispassionately and conscientiously conducted. "Your discussions," he asserted, "must revolve around, and be based upon, the verses of the Qur'án and the traditions of Muḥammad, by which means alone you can demonstrate the truth or falsity of your contentions." "For what reason," the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá' impertinently enquired, "have you, by choosing to place a green turban upon your head, arrogated to yourself a right which only he who is a true descendant of the Prophet can claim? Do you not know that whoso defies this sacred tradition is accursed of God?" "Was Siyyid Murtaḍá," Quddús calmly replied, "whom all the recognised 'ulamás praise and esteem, a descendant of

the Prophet through his father or his mother?" One of those present at that gathering instantly declared the mother alone to have been a siyyid. "Why, then, object to me," retorted Quddús, "since my mother was always recognised by the inhabitants of this town as a lineal descendant of the Imám Ḥasan? Was she not, because of her descent, honoured, nay venerated, by every one of you?"

No one dared to contradict him. The Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá' burst forth into a fit of indignation and despair. Angrily he flung his turban to the ground and arose to leave the meeting. "This man," he thundered, ere he departed, "has succeeded in proving to you that he is a descendant of the Imám Ḥasan. He will, ere long, justify his claim to be the mouthpiece of God and the revealer of His will!" The prince was moved to make this declaration: "I wash my hands of all responsibility for any harm that may befall this man. You are free to do what you like with him. You will yourselves be answerable to God on the Day of Judgment." Immediately after he had spoken these words, he called for his horse and, accompanied by his attendants, departed for Sárí. Intimidated by the imprecations of the 'ulamás and forgetful of his oath, he abjectly surrendered Quddús to the hands of an unrelenting foe, those ravening wolves who panted for the moment when they could pounce, with uncontrolled violence, upon their prey, and let loose on him the fiercest passions of revenge and hate.

No sooner had the prince freed them from the restraints which he had exercised than the 'ulamás and the people of Bárfurúsh, acting under orders from the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá',[1] arose to perpetrate upon the body of their victim acts of such atrocious cruelty as no pen can describe. By the testimony of Bahá'u'lláh, that heroic youth, who was still on the threshold of his life, was subjected to such tortures and suffered

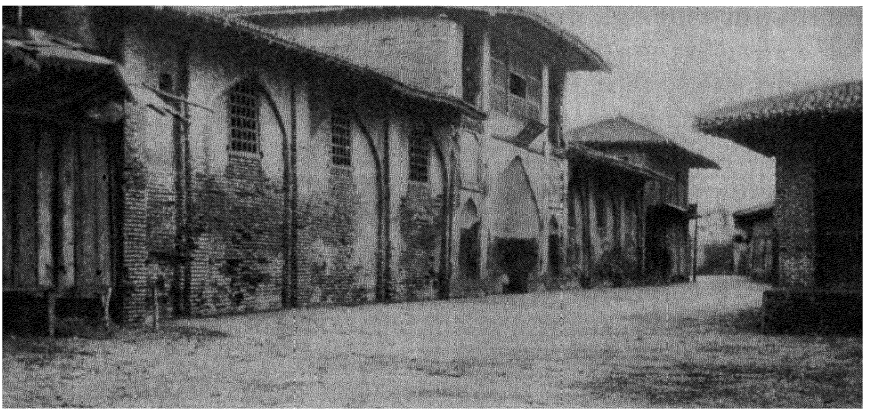
[1] "Les Bábís remarquent avec intérêt que quelque temps après, Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá' fut pris d'une maladie étrange. Malgré les fourrures dont il s'enveloppait, malgré le feu qui brûlait continuellement dans sa chambre il grelottait de froid, et cependant le feu intérieur qui le dévorait était si intense, que rien ne pouvait calmer sa soif inextinguible. Il mourut, et sa maison qui était fort belle resta abandonnée. Elle tomba en ruines et, petit à petit, on prit l'habitude d'aller jeter les ordures sur l'emplacement où elle s'élevait autrefois. Ces faits se sont gravés si profondément dans la mémoire des Mázindaránís que, quand ils s'insultent entre eux, ils finissent toujours par se dire: 'Que ta maison rencontre le même sort que celle de Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá'.' " (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb." p. 330.)

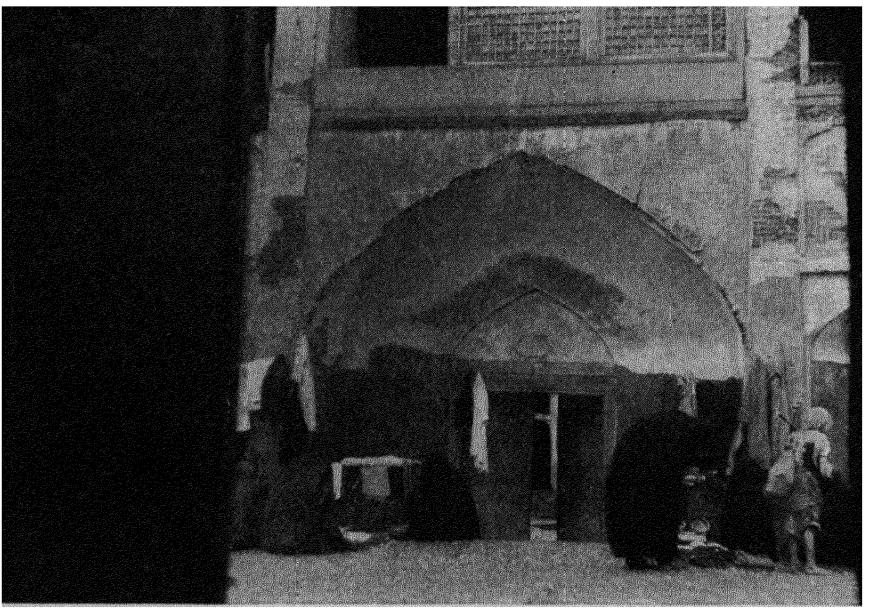
such a death as even Jesus had not faced in the hour of His greatest agony. The absence of any restraint on the part of the government authorities, the ingenious barbarity which the torture-mongers of Bárfurúsh so ably displayed, the fierce fanaticism which glowed in the breasts of its shí'ah inhabitants, the moral support accorded to them by the dignitaries of Church and State in the capital—above all, the acts of heroism which their victim and his companions had accomplished and which had served to heighten their exasperation, all combined to nerve the hand of the assailants and to add to the diabolical ferocity which characterised his martyrdom.

Such were its circumstances that the Báb, who was then confined in the castle of Chihríq, was unable for a period of six months either to write or to dictate. The deep grief which he felt had stilled the voice of revelation and silenced His pen. How deeply He mourned His loss! What cries of anguish He must have uttered as the tale of the siege, the untold sufferings, the shameless betrayal, and the wholesale massacre of the companions of Shaykh Tabarsí reached His ears and was unfolded before His eyes! What pangs of sorrow He must have felt when He learned of the shameful treatment which His beloved Quddús had undergone in his hour of martyrdom at the hands of the people of Bárfurúsh; how he was stripped of his clothes; how the turban which He had bestowed upon him had been befouled; how, barefooted, bareheaded, and loaded with chains, he was paraded through the streets, followed and scorned by the entire population of the town; how he was execrated and spat upon by the howling mob; how he was assailed with the knives and axes of the scum of its female inhabitants; how his body was pierced and mutilated, and how eventually it was delivered to the flames!

Amidst his torments, Quddús was heard whispering forgiveness to his foes. "Forgive, O my God," he cried, "the trespasses of this people. Deal with them in Thy mercy, for they know not what we already have discovered and cherish. I have striven to show them the path that leads to their salvation; behold how they have risen to overwhelm and kill me! Show them, O God, the way of Truth, and turn their ignorance into faith." In his hour of agony, the Siyyid-i-

Qumí, who had so treacherously deserted the fort, was seen passing by his side. Observing his helplessness, he smote him in the face. "You claimed," he cried in haughty scorn,





VIEWS OF THE MADRISIH OF MÍRZÁ ZAKÍ, IN BÁRFÚRÚSH, THE RESTING PLACE OF QUDDÚS

"that your voice was the voice of God. If you speak the truth, burst your bonds asunder and free yourself from the hands of your enemies." Quddús looked steadfastly into his

face, sighed deeply, and said: "May God requite you for your deed, inasmuch as you have helped to add to the measure of my afflictions." Approaching the Sabzih-Maydán, he raised his voice and said: "Would that my mother were with me, and could see with her own eyes the splendour of my nuptials!" He had scarcely spoken these words when the enraged multitude fell upon him and, tearing his body to pieces, threw the scattered members into the fire which they had kindled for that purpose. In the middle of the night, what still remained of the fragments of that burned and mutilated body was gathered by the hand of a devoted friend[1] and interred in a place not far distant from the scene of his martyrdom.[2]

It would be appropriate at this juncture to place on record the names of those martyrs who participated in the defence of the fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, in the hope that generations yet to come may recall with pride and gratitude the names, no less than the deeds, of those pioneers who, by their life and death, have so greatly enriched the annals of God's immortal Faith. Such names as I have been able to collect from various sources, and for which I am particularly indebted

[1] "At all events it appears that after the martyrdom of Jináb-i-Quddús, a pious divine, Ḥájí Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Ḥamzih by name, whose skill in exegesis and spiritual gifts was recognised by all, secretly sent several persons to bury the mutilated remains in the ruined college already mentioned. And he, far from approving the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá''s conduct, used to curse and revile him, and never himself pronounced sentence of death against any Bábí, but, on the contrary, used to obtain decent burial for those slain by the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá'. And when men questioned him concerning the garrison of the castle, he would reply: 'I do not condemn them or speak evil of them.' For this reason half of Bárfurúsh remained neutral, for at first he used to forbid men to traduce or molest the Bábís, though later, when the trouble waxed great, he deemed it prudent to be silent and shut himself up in his house. Now his austerity of life, piety, learning, and virtue were as well known to the people of Mázindarán as were the irreligion, immorality, and worldliness of the Sa'ídu'l-'Ulamá'." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," p. 92.)

[2] "Celui qui le connut et qui fit le pèlerinage avec lui [Quddús] est celui-là même sur lequel huit unités ont passées et Dieu l'honora auprès de ses anges au plus haut des cieux à cause de la façon dont il s'était séparé de tous, et son acte d'être sans reproche dans le contentement de Dieu." ("Le Bayán Persan," vol. 2, p. 164.) "Yet more wonderful than the events above described is the account of them given by 'Abbás-Qulí Khán, with many expressions of admiration, to Prince Aḥmad Mírzá. The late Ḥájí Mírzá Jání writes: 'About two years after the disaster of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, I heard one, who, though not a believer, was honest, truthful, and worthy of credit, relate as follows: "We were sitting together when some allusion was made to the war waged by some of those present against Ḥaḍrat-i-Quddús and Jináb-i-Bábu'l-Báb. Prince Aḥmad Mírzá and 'Abbás-Qulí Khán were amongst the company. The prince questioned 'Abbás-Qulí Khán about the matter, and he replied thus: 'The truth of the matter is that anyone who had not seen Karbilá would, if he had seen Ṭabarsí, not only have comprehended what there took place, but would have ceased to

to Ismu'lláhu'l-Mím, Ismu'lláhu'l-Javád, and Ismu'lláhu'l-Asad, I now proceed to enumerate, trusting that even as in the world beyond their souls have been invested with the light of unfading glory, their names may likewise linger for ever on the tongues of men; that their mention may continue to evoke a like spirit of enthusiasm and devotion in the hearts of those to whom this priceless heritage has been transmitted. From my informants I not only have been able to gather the names of most of those who fell in the course of that memorable siege, but have also succeeded in obtaining a representative, though incomplete, list of all those martyrs who, from the year '60[1] until the present day, the latter part of the month of Rabí'u'l-Avval in the year 1306 A.H.,[2] have laid down their lives in the path of the Cause of God. It is my intention to make mention of each of these names in connection with the particular event with which it is chiefly connected. As to those who quaffed the cup of martyrdom while defending the fort of Ṭabarsí, their names are as follows:

1. First and foremost among them stands Quddús, upon whom the Báb bestowed the name of Ismu'lláhu'l-Ākhar.[3] He, the Last Letter of the Living and the Báb's chosen com-

consider it; and had he seen Mullá Ḥusayn of Bushrúyih, he would have been convinced that the Chief of Martyrs had returned to earth; and had he witnessed my deeds, he would assuredly have said: "This is Shimr come back with sword and lance." I swear by the sacred plume of His Majesty the Centre of the Universe that one day Mullá Ḥusayn, having on his head a green turban, and over his shoulder a shroud, came forth from the castle, stood forth in the open field, and, leaning on a lance which he held in his hand, said: "O people, why, without enquiry, and under the influence of passion and prejudiced misrepresentation, do ye act so cruelly towards us, and strive without cause to shed innocent blood? Be ashamed before the Creator of the universe, and at least give us passage, that we may depart out of this land." Seeing that the soldiers were moved, I opened fire, and ordered the troops to shout so as to drown his voice. Again I saw him lean on his lance and heard him cry: "Is there any who will help me?" three times, so that all heard his cry. At that moment all the soldiers were silent, and some began to weep, and many of the horsemen were visibly affected. Fearing that the army might be seduced from their allegiance, I again ordered them to fire and shout. Then I saw Mullá Ḥusayn unsheathe his sword, raise his face towards heaven, and heard him exclaim: "O God, I have completed the proof to this host, but it availeth not." Then he began to attack us on the right and on the left. I swear by God that on that day he wielded the sword in such wise as transcends the power of man. Only the horsemen of Mázindarán held their ground and refused to flee. And when Mullá Ḥusayn was well warmed to the fray, he overtook a fugitive soldier. The soldier sheltered himself behind a tree, and further strove to shield himself with his musket. Mullá Ḥusayn dealt him such a blow with his sword that he clave him and the tree and the musket into six pieces. And, during all

[1] 1844 A.D. [2] November–December, 1888 A.D.

[3] Literally "The Last Name of God."

panion on His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, was, together with Mullá Ṣádiq and Mullá 'Alí-Akbar-i-Ardistání, the first to suffer persecution on Persian soil for the sake of the Cause of God. He was only eighteen years of age when he left his native town of Bárfurúsh for Karbilá. For about four years he sat at the feet of Siyyid Káẓim, and at the age of twenty-two met and recognised his Beloved in Shíráz. Five years later, on the twenty-third day of Jamádíyu'th-Thání in the year 1265 A.H.,[1] he was destined to fall, in the Sabzih-Maydán of Bárfurúsh, a victim of the most refined and wanton barbarity at the hands of the enemy. The Báb and, at a later time, Bahá'u'lláh have mourned in unnumbered Tablets and prayers his loss, and have lavished on him their eulogies. Such was the honour accorded to him by Bahá'u'lláh that in His commentary on the verse of Kullu't-Ṭa'ám,[2] which He revealed while in Baghdád, He conferred upon him the unrivalled station of the Nuqtiy-i-Ukhrá,[3] a station second to none except that of the Báb Himself.[4]

2. Mullá Ḥusayn, surnamed the Bábu'l-Báb, the first to recognise and embrace the new Revelation. At the age of eighteen, he, too, departed from his native town of Bushrúyih in Khurásán for Karbilá, and for a period of nine years

that war, not once was his sword-stroke at fault, but every blow that he struck fell true. And by the nature of their wounds I could recognise all whom Mullá Ḥusayn had cut down with his sword, and since I had heard and knew that none could rightly wield the sword save the Chief of Believers, and that it was well-nigh impossible for sword to cut so true, therefore I forbade all who were aware of this thing to mention it or make it known, lest the troops should be discouraged and should wax faint in the fight. But in truth I know not what had been shown to these people, or what they had seen, that they came forth to battle with such alacrity and joy, and engaged so eagerly and gladly in the strife, without displaying in their countenances any trace of fear or apprehension. One would imagine that in their eyes the keen sword and blood-spilling dagger were but means to the attainment of everlasting life, so eagerly did their necks and bosoms welcome them as they circled like salamanders round the fiery hail of bullets. And the astonishing thing was that all these men were scholars and men of learning, sedentary recluses of the college and the cloister, delicately nurtured and of weakly frame, inured indeed to austerities, but strangers to the roar of cannon, the rattle of musketry, and the field of battle. During the last three months of the siege, moreover, they were absolutely without bread and water, and were reduced to the extreme of weakness through lack of even such pittance of food as is sufficient to sustain life. Notwithstanding this, it seemed as if in time of battle a new spirit were breathed into their frames, insomuch that the imagination of man cannot conceive the vehemence of their courage and valour. They used to expose their bodies to the bullets and cannon-balls not only fearlessly and courageously, but eagerly and joyously, seeming to regard the battle-field as a banquet, and to be bent on casting away their lives.' " ' " (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 106–9.)

[1] May 16, 1849 A.D.
[2] Qur'án, 3: 93.
[3] Literally "The Last Point."
[4] Refer to note 2, p. 413.

remained closely associated with Siyyid Káẓim. Four years prior to the Declaration of the Báb, acting according to the instructions of Siyyid Káẓim, he met in Iṣfáhán the learned mujtahid Siyyid Báqir-i-Rashtí and in Mashhad Mírzá 'Askarí, to both of whom he delivered with dignity and eloquence the messages with which he had been entrusted by his leader. The circumstances attending his martyrdom evoked the Báb's inexpressible sorrow, a sorrow that found vent in eulogies and prayers of such great number as would be equivalent to thrice the volume of the Qur'án. In one of His visiting Tablets, the Báb asserts that the very dust of the ground where the remains of Mullá Ḥusayn lie buried is endowed with such potency as to bring joy to the disconsolate and healing to the sick. In the Kitáb-i-Íqán, Bahá'u'lláh extols with still greater force the virtues of Mullá Ḥusayn. "But for him," He writes, "God would not have been established upon the seat of His mercy, nor have ascended the throne of eternal glory!"[1]

3. Mírzá Muḥammad-Ḥasan, the brother of Mullá Ḥusayn.

4. Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqir, the nephew of Mullá Ḥusayn. He, as well as Mírzá Muḥammad-Ḥasan, accompanied Mullá Ḥusayn from Bushrúyih to Karbilá and from thence to Shíráz, where they embraced the Message of the Báb and were enrolled among the Letters of the Living. With the exception of the journey of Mullá Ḥusayn to the castle of Máh-Kú, they continued to be with him until the time they suffered martyrdom in the fort of Ṭabarsí.

5. The brother-in-law of Mullá Ḥusayn, the father of Mírzá Abu'l-Ḥasan and Mírzá Muḥammad-Ḥusayn, both of whom are now in Bushrúyih, and into whose hands the care of the Varaqatu'l-Firdaws, Mullá Ḥusayn's sister, is committed. Both are firm and devoted adherents of the Faith.

6. The son of Mullá Aḥmad, the elder brother of Mullá Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Furúghí. He, unlike his uncle, Mullá Mírzá Muḥammad, suffered martyrdom and was, as testified by the latter, a youth of great piety and distinguished for his learning and his integrity of character.

[1] Refer to note 1, p. 383.

7. Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir, known as Harátí, though originally a resident of Qáyin. He was a close relative of the father of Nabíl-i-Akbar, and was the first in Mashhad to embrace the Cause. It was he who built the Bábíyyih, and who devotedly served Quddús during his sojourn in that city. When Mullá Ḥusayn hoisted the Black Standard, he, together with his child, Mírzá Muhammad-Kázim, eagerly enrolled under his banner and went forth with him to Mázindarán. That child was saved eventually, and has now grown up into a fervent and active supporter of the Faith in Mashhad. It was Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir who acted as the standard-bearer of the company, who designed the plan of the fort, its walls and turrets and the moat which surrounded it, who succeeded Mullá Husayn in organising the forces of his companions and in leading the charge against the enemy, and who acted as the intimate companion, the lieutenant and trusted counsellor of Quddús until the hour when he fell a martyr in the path of the Cause.

8. Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Juvaynı́, a native of Sabzihvár, who was distinguished for his literary accomplishments and was often entrusted by Mullá Ḥusayn with the task of leading the charge against the assailants. His head and that of his fellow-companion, Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir, were impaled on spears and paraded through the streets of Bárfurúsh, amid the shouts and howling of an excited populace.

9. Qambar-'Alí, the fearless and faithful servant of Mullá Ḥusayn, who accompanied him on his journey to Máh-Kú and who suffered martyrdom on the very night on which his master fell a victim to the bullets of the enemy.

10. Hasan and

11. Qulí, who, together with a man named Iskandar, a native of Zanján, bore the body of Mullá Husayn to the fort on the night of his martyrdom and placed it at the feet of Quddús. He it was, the same Ḥasan, who, by the orders of the chief constable of Mashhad, was led by a halter through the streets of that city.

12. Muhammad-Ḥasan, the brother of Mullá Ṣádiq, whom the comrades of Khusraw slew on the way between Bárfurúsh and the fort of Tabarsí. He distinguished himself

by his unwavering constancy, and had been one of the servants of the shrine of the Imám Riḍá.

13. Siyyid Ridá, who, with Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí, was commissioned by Quddús to meet the prince, and who brought back with him the sealed copy of the Qur'án bearing the oath which the prince had written. He was one of the well-known siyyids of Khurásán, and was recognised for his learning as well as for the integrity of his character.

14. Mullá Mardán-'Alí, one of the noted companions from Khurásán, a resident of the village of Míyámay, the site of a well-fortified fortress situated between Sabzihvár and Sháh-Rúd. He, together with thirty-three companions, enlisted under the banner of Mullá Ḥusayn on the day of the latter's passage through that village. It was in the masjid of Míyámay, to which Mullá Ḥusayn had repaired in order to offer the Friday congregational prayer, that he delivered his soul-stirring appeal in which he laid stress upon the fulfilment of the tradition relating to the hoisting of the Black Standard in Khurásán, and in which he declared himself to be its bearer. His eloquent address profoundly impressed his hearers, so much so that on that very day the majority of those who heard him, most of whom were men of distinguished merit, arose and followed him. Only one of those thirty-three companions, a Mullá 'Ísá, survived, whose sons are at present in the village of Míyámay, actively engaged in the service of the Cause. The names of the martyred companions of that village are as follows:

15. Mullá Muḥammad-Mihdí,
16. Mullá Muḥammad-Ja'far,
17. Mullá Muhammad-ibn-i-Mullá Muhammad,
18. Mullá Raḥím,
19. Mullá Muḥammad-Riḍá,
20. Mullá Muḥammad-Husayn,
21. Mullá Muḥammad,
22. Mullá Yúsuf,
23. Mullá Ya'qúb,
24. Mullá 'Alí,
25. Mullá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín,
26. Mullá Muhammad, son of Mullá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín,
27. Mullá Báqir,

28. Mullá 'Abdu'l-Muhammad,
29. Mullá Abu'l-Hasan,
30. Mullá Ismá'íl,
31. Mullá 'Abdu'l-'Alí,
32. Mullá Áqá-Bábá,
33. Mullá 'Abdu'l-Javád,
34. Mullá Muhammad-Ḥusayn,
35. Mullá Muḥammad-Báqir,
36. Mullá Muḥammad,
37. Ḥájí Ḥasan,
38. Karbilá'í 'Alí,
39. Mullá Karbilá'í 'Alí,
40. Karbilá'í Núr-Muḥammad,
41. Muḥammad-Ibráhím,
42. Muḥammad-Ṣá'im,
43. Muḥammad-Hádí,
44. Siyyid Mihdí,
45. Abú-Muhammad.

Of the companions of the village of Sang-Sar, which forms part of the district of Simnán, eighteen were martyred. Their names are as follows:

46. Siyyid Aḥmad, whose body was cut to pieces by Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí and the seven 'ulamás of Sárí. He was a noted divine and greatly esteemed for his eloquence and piety.

47. Mír Abu'l-Qásim, Siyyid Aḥmad's brother, who won the crown of martyrdom on the very night on which Mullá Ḥusayn met his death.

48. Mír Mihdí, the paternal uncle of Siyyid Aḥmad,

49. Mír Ibráhím, the brother-in-law of Siyyid Ahmad,

50. Ṣafar-'Alí, the son of Karbilá'í 'Alí, who, together with Karbilá'í Muḥammad, had so strenuously endeavoured to awaken the people of Sang-Sar from their sleep of heedlessness. Both of them, owing to their infirmities, were unable to proceed to the fort of Ṭabarsí.

51. Muhammad-'Alí, the son of Karbilá'í Abú-Muhammad,

52. Abu'l-Qásim, the brother of Muḥammad-'Alí,

53. Karbilá'í Ibráhím,

54. 'Alí-Ahmad,

55. Mullá ʻAlí-Akbar,
56. Mullá Ḥusayn-ʻAlí,
57. ʻAbbás-ʻAlí,
58. Ḥusayn-ʻAlí,
59. Mullá ʻAlí-Aṣghar,
60. Karbilá'í Ismá'íl,
61. ʻAlí Khán,
62. Muḥammad-Ibráhím,
63. ʻAbdu'l-ʻAẓím.

From the village of Shah-Mírzád, two fell in defending the fort:

64. Mullá Abú-Raḥím and
65. Karbilá'í Káẓim.

As to the adherents of the Faith in Mázindarán, twenty-seven martyrs have thus far been recorded:

66. Mullá Riḍay-i-Sháh,
67. ʻAẓím,
68. Karbilá'í Muhammad-Ja'far,
69. Siyyid Ḥusayn,
70. Muḥammad-Báqir,
71. Siyyid Razzáq,
72. Ustád Ibráhím,
73. Mullá Sa'íd-i-Zirih-Kinárí,
74. Riḍáy-i-ʻArab,
75. Rasúl-i-Bahnimírí,
76. Muḥammad-Ḥusayn, the brother of Rasúl-i-Bahnimírí,
77. Ṭáhir,
78. Shafí',
79. Qásim,
80. Mullá Muḥammad-Ján,
81. Masíḥ, the brother of Mullá Muḥammad-Ján,
82. Iṭá-Bábá,
83. Yúsuf,
84. Faḍlu'lláh,
85. Bábá,
86. Ṣafí-Qulí,
87. Niẓám,
88. Rúḥu'lláh,
89. ʻAlí-Qulí,

90. Sulṭán,
91. Ja'far,
92. Khalíl.

Of the believers of Savád-Kúh, the five following names have thus far been ascertained:

93. Karbilá'í Qambar-Kálish,
94. Mullá Nád-'Alíy-i-Mutavallí,
95. 'Abdu'l-Ḥaqq,
96. Iṭábakí-Chúpán,
97. Son of Iṭábakí-Chúpán.

From the town of Ardistán, the following have suffered martyrdom:

98. Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad, son of Mírzá Muhammad-Sa'íd,
99. Mírzá 'Abdu'-Vási', son of Ḥájí 'Abdu'l-Vahháb,
100. Muḥammad-Ḥusayn, son of Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ṣádiq,
101. Muhammad-Mihdí, son of Hájí Muhammad-Ibráhím,
102. Mírzá Ahmad, son of Muhsin,
103. Mírzá Muhammad, son of Mír Muḥammad-Taqí.

From the city of Isfáhán, thirty have thus far been recorded:

104. Mullá Ja'far, the sifter of wheat, whose name has been mentioned by the Báb in the Persian Bayán.
105. Ustád Áqá, surnamed Buzurg-Banná,
106. Ustád Ḥasan, son of Ustád Áqá,
107. Ustád Muḥammad, son of Ustád Áqá,
108. Muḥammad-Ḥusayn, son of Ustád Áqá, whose younger brother Ustád Ja'far was sold several times by his enemies until he reached his native city, where he now resides.
109. Ustád Qurbán-'Alíy-i-Banná,
110. 'Alí-Akbar, son of Ustád Qurbán-'Alíy-i-Banná,
111. 'Abdu'lláh, son of Ustád Qurbán-'Alí-i-Banná,
112. Muḥammad-i-Báqir-Naqsh, the maternal uncle of Siyyid Yaḥyá, son of Mírzá Muhammad-'Alíy-i-Nahrí. He was fourteen years old and was martyred the very night that Mullá Ḥusayn met his death.
113. Mullá Muhammad-Taqí,
114. Mullá Muhammad-Riḍá, both brothers of the late 'Abdu's-Sáliḥ, the gardener of the Ridván at 'Akká.
115. Mullá Ahmad-i-Saffár,

116. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Miskar,
117. Aḥmad-i-Payvandí,
118. Ḥasan-i-Sha'r-Báf-i-Yazdí,
119. Muḥammad-Taqí,
120. Muḥammad-'Aṭṭár, brother of Ḥasan-i-Sha'r-Báf,
121. Mullá 'Abdu'l-Kháliq, who cut his throat in Badasht and whom Ṭáhirih named Dhabíh.
122. Ḥusayn,
123. Abu'l-Qásim, brother of Ḥusayn,
124. Mírzá Muhammad-Riḍá,
125. Mullá Haydar, brother of Mírzá Muḥammad-Riḍá,
126. Mírzá Mihdí,
127. Muhammad-Ibráhím,
128. Muhammad-Husayn, surnamed Dastmál-Girih-Zan,
129. Muḥammad-Ḥasan-i-Chít-Sáz, a well-known cloth manufacturer who attained the presence of the Báb.
130. Muḥammad-Ḥusayn-i-'Aṭṭár,
131. Ustád Ḥájí Muḥammad-i-Banná,
132. Maḥmúd-i-Muqári'í, a noted cloth dealer. He was newly married and had attained the presence of the Báb in the castle of Chihríq. The Báb urged him to proceed to the Jazíriy-i-Khaḍrá and to lend his assistance to Quddús. While in Ṭihrán, he received a letter from his brother announcing the birth of a son and entreating him to hasten to Iṣfáhán to see him, and then to proceed to whichever place he felt inclined. "I am too much fired," he replied, "with the love of this Cause to be able to devote any attention to my son. I am impatient to join Quddús and to enlist under his banner."
133. Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍáy-i-Pá-Qal'iyí, a distinguished siyyid and a highly esteemed divine, whose declared purpose to enlist under the banner of Mullá Ḥusayn caused a great tumult among the 'ulamás of Isfáhán.

Among the believers of Shíráz, the following attained the station of martyrdom:

134. Mullá 'Abdu'lláh, known also by the name of Mírzá Sáliḥ,
135. Mullá Zaynu'l-'Abidín,
136. Mírzá Muḥammad.

Of the adherents of the Faith in Yazd, only four have thus far been recorded:

137. The siyyid who walked on foot all the way from Khurásán to Bárfurúsh, where he fell a victim to the bullet of the enemy.

138. Siyyid Aḥmad, the father of Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-'Azíz, the amanuensis of the Báb,

139. Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, son of Siyyid Ahmad, whose head was blown off by the ball from a cannon as he was standing at the entrance of the fort, and who, because of his tender age, was greatly loved and admired by Quddús.

140. Shaykh 'Alí, son of Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Kháliq-i-Yazdí, a resident of Mashhad, a youth whose enthusiasm and untiring energy were greatly praised by Mullá Ḥusayn and Quddús.

Of the believers of Qazvín, the following were martyred:

141. Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, a noted divine, whose father, Ḥájí Mullá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, was one of the most distinguished mujtahids in Qazvín. He attained the presence of the Báb in Shíráz, and was enrolled as one of the Letters of the Living.

142. Muḥammad-Hádí, a noted merchant, son of Ḥájí 'Abdu'l-Karím, surnamed Bághbán-Báshí,

143. Siyyid Aḥmad,

144. Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Jalíl, a noted divine,

145. Mírzá Mihdí.

146. From the village of Lahárd, a man named Ḥájí Muḥammad-'Alí, who had greatly suffered as a result of the murder of Mullá Taqí in Qazvín.

Of the believers of Khuy, the following have suffered martyrdom:

147. Mullá Mihdí, a distinguished divine, who had been one of the esteemed disciples of Siyyid Káẓim. He was noted for his learning, his eloquence, and his staunchness of faith.

148. Mullá Mahmúd-i-Khu'í, brother of Mullá Mihdí, one of the Letters of the Living and a distinguished divine.

149. Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí, one of the Letters of the Living, noted for his learning, his enthusiasm and eloquence. It was he who had aroused the apprehensions of Ḥájí Karím Khán on his arrival at Kirmán, and who struck terror to the hearts of his adversaries. "This man," Ḥájí Karím Khán was heard to say to his congregation, "must needs be expelled from this town, for if he be allowed to remain, he will as-

suredly cause the same tumult in Kirmán as he has already done in Shíráz. The injury he will inflict will be irreparable. The magic of his eloquence and the force of his personality, if they do not already excel those of Mullá Ḥusayn, are certainly not inferior to them." By this means he was able to force him to curtail his stay in Kirmán and to prevent him from addressing the people from the pulpit. The Báb gave him the following instructions: "You must visit the towns and cities of Persia and summon their inhabitants to the Cause of God. On the first day of the month of Muḥarram in the year 1265 A.H.,[1] you must be in Mázindarán and must arise to lend every assistance in your power to Quddús." Mullá Yúsuf, faithful to the instructions of his Master, refused to prolong his stay beyond a week in any of the towns and cities which he visited. On his arrival in Mázindarán, he was made captive by the forces of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, who immediately recognised him and gave orders that he be imprisoned. He was eventually released, as we have already observed, by the companions of Mullá Ḥusayn on the day of the battle of Vás-Kas.

150. Mullá Jalíl-i-Urúmí, one of the Letters of the Living, noted for his learning, his eloquence, and tenacity of faith.

151. Mullá Ahmad, a resident of Marághih, one of the Letters of the Living, and a distinguished disciple of Siyyid Kázim.

152. Mullá Mihdíy-i-Kandí, a close companion of Bahá'u'lláh, and a tutor to the children of His household.

153. Mullá Báqir, brother of Mullá Mihdí, both of whom were men of considerable learning, to whose great attainments Baha'u'lláh testifies in the "Kitáb-i-Íqán."

154. Siyyid Kázim, a resident of Zanján, and one of its noted merchants. He attained the presence of the Báb in Shíráz, and accompanied Him to Isfáhán. His brother, Siyyid Murtadá, was one of the Seven Martyrs of Ṭihrán.

155. Iskandar, also a resident of Zanján, who, together with Ḥasan and Qulí, bore the body of Mullá Ḥusayn to the fort.

156. Ismá'íl,

157. Karbilá'í 'Abdu'l-'Alí,

[1] November 27, 1848 A.D.

158. 'Abdu'l-Muhammad,
159. Ḥájí 'Abbás,
160. Siyyid Ahmad—all residents of Zanján.
161. Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Kuláh-Dúz, a resident of Bárfurúsh, whose head was impaled on a lance and was paraded through its streets.
162. Mullá Ḥasan-i-Rashtí,
163. Mullá Ḥasan-i-Bayájmandí,
164. Mullá Ni'matu'lláh-i-Bárfurúshí,
165. Mullá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Qarákhílí,
166. Ustád Zaynu'l-'Abidín,
167. Ustád Qásim, son of Ustád Zaynu'l-'Abidín,
168. Ustád 'Alí-Akbar, brother of Ustád Zaynu'l-'Abidín.

The last three were masons by profession, were natives of Kirmán, and resided in Qáyin in the province of Khurásán.

169 and 170. Mullá Riḍáy-i-Sháh and a young man from Bahnimír were slain two days after the abandonment of the fort by Quddús, in the Panj-Shanbih-Bázár of Bárfurúsh. Ḥájí Mullá Muḥammad-i-Ḥamzih, surnamed the Sharí'at-Madár, succeeded in burying their bodies in the neighbourhood of the Masjid-i-Káẓim-Big, and in inducing their murderer to repent and ask forgiveness.

171. Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mu'allim-i-Núrí, an intimate companion of Bahá'u'lláh who was closely associated with Him in Núr, in Ṭihrán, and in Mázindarán. He was famed for his intelligence and learning, and was subjected, Quddús only excepted, to the severest atrocities that have ever befallen a defender of the fort of Ṭabarsí. The prince had promised that he would release him on condition that he would execrate the name of Quddús, and had pledged his word that, should he be willing to recant, he would take him back with him to Tihrán and make him the tutor of his sons. "Never will I consent," he replied, "to vilify the beloved of God at the bidding of a man such as you. Were you to confer upon me the whole of the kingdom of Persia, I would not for one moment turn my face from my beloved leader. My body is at your mercy, my soul you are powerless to subdue. Torture me as you will, that I may be enabled to demonstrate to you the truth of the verse, 'Then, wish for death, if ye be men of

truth.' "[1] The prince, infuriated by his answer, gave orders that his body be cut to pieces and that no effort be spared to inflict upon him a most humiliating punishment.

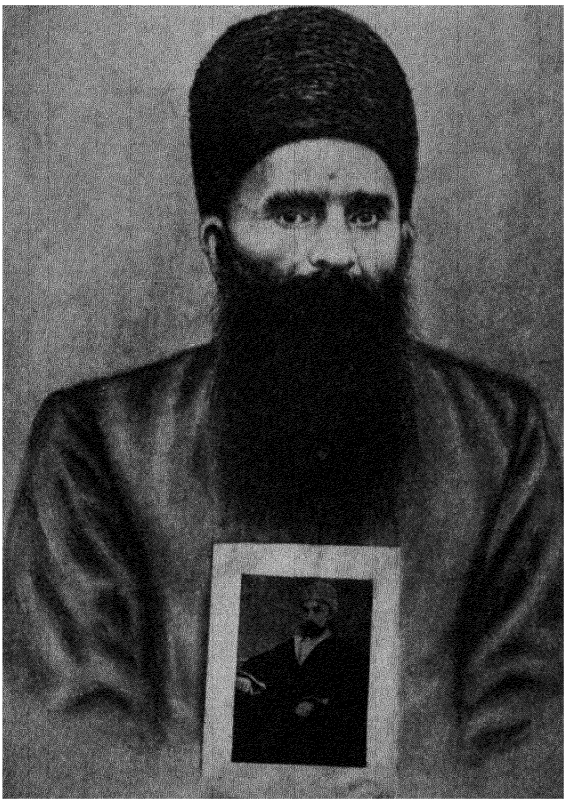
172. Ḥájí Muhammad-i-Karrádí, whose home was situated in one of the palm groves adjoining the old city of Baghdád, a man of great courage who had fought and led a hundred men in the war against Ibráhím Páshá of Egypt. He had been a fervent disciple of Siyyid Káẓim, and was the author of a long poem in which he expatiated upon the virtues and merits of the siyyid. He was seventy-five years old when he embraced the Faith of the Báb, whom he likewise eulogised in an eloquent and detailed poem. He distinguished himself by his heroic acts during the siege of the fort, and eventually became a victim of the bullets of the enemy.

173. Sa'íd-i-Jabbáví, a native of Baghdád, who displayed extraordinary courage during the siege. He was shot in the abdomen, and, though severely wounded, managed to walk until he reached the presence of Quddús. He joyously threw himself at his feet and expired.

The circumstances of the martyrdom of these last two companions were related by Siyyid Abú-Ṭálib-i-Sang-Sarí, one of those who survived that memorable siege, in a communication he addressed to Bahá'u'lláh. In it he relates, in addition, his own story, as well as that of his two brothers, Siyyid Aḥmad and Mír Abu'l-Qásim, both of whom were martyred while defending the fort. "On the day on which Khusraw was slain," he wrote, "I happened to be the guest of a certain Karbilá'í 'Alí-Ján, the kad-khudá[2] of one of the villages in the neighbourhood of the fort. He had gone to assist in the protection of Khusraw, and had returned and was relating to me the circumstances attending his death. On that very day, a messenger informed me that two Arabs had arrived at that village and were anxious to join the occupants of the fort. They expressed their fear of the people of the village of Qádí-Kalá, and promised that they would amply reward whoever would be willing to conduct them to their destination. I recalled the counsels of my father, Mír Muhammad-'Alí, who exhorted me to arise and

[1] Qur'án, 2: 94. [2] See Glossary.

help in the promotion of the Cause of the Báb. I immediately decided to seize the opportunity that had presented itself to me, and, together with these two Arabs, and with the aid and assistance of the Kad-khudá, reached the fort, met Mullá Husayn, and determined to consecrate the remaining



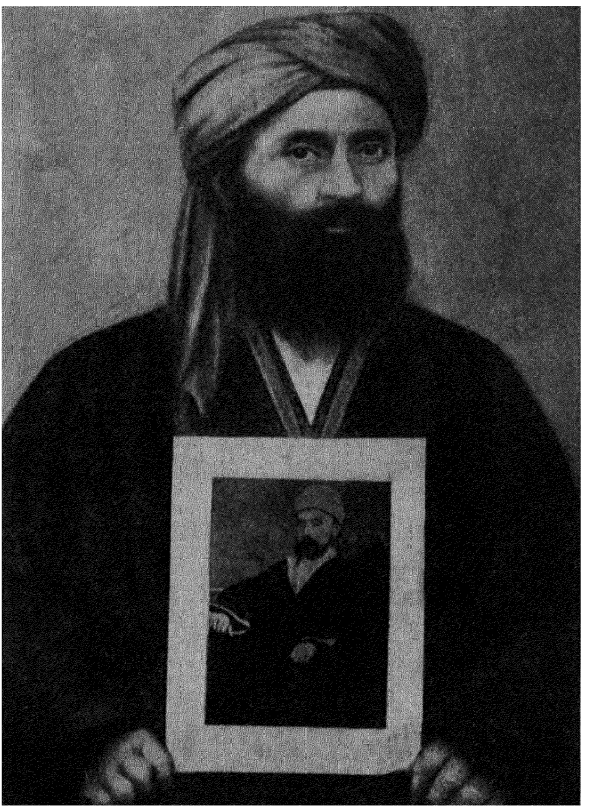
MUḤAMMAD-RIḌÁ, ONE OF THE COMPANIONS OF QUDDÚS WHO SURVIVED THE STRUGGLE OF SHAYKH ṬABARSÍ

days of my life to the service of the Cause he had chosen to follow."

The names of some of the officers who distinguished themselves among the opponents of the companions of Quddús are as follows:

1. Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, brother of the late Muḥammad Sháh,

2. Sulaymán Khán-i-Afshár,
3. Ḥájí Muṣṭafá Khán-i-Súr-Tíj,
4. 'Abdu'lláh Khán, brother of Ḥájí Muṣṭafá Khán,
5. 'Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Láríjání, who shot Mullá Husayn,
6. Núru'lláh Khán-i-Afghán,



MÍRZÁ ABÚ-ṬÁLIB, ONE OF THE COMPANIONS OF QUDDÚS WHO SURVIVED THE STRUGGLE OF SHAYKH ṬABARSÍ

7. Ḥabíbu'lláh Khán-i-Afghán,
8. Dhu'l-Faqár Khán-i-Karávulí,
9. 'Alí-Aṣghar Khán-i-Du-Dungi'í,
10. Khudá-Murád Khán-i-Kurd,
11. Khálíl Khán-i-Savád-Kúhí,
12. Ja'far-Qulí Khán-i-Surkh-Karri'í,
13. The Sartíp of the Fawj-i-Kalbát,

14. Zakaríyyáy-i-Qádí-Kalá'í, a cousin of Khusraw, and his successor.

As to those believers who participated in that memorable siege and survived its tragic end, I have been thus far unable to ascertain in full either their names or their number. I have contented myself with a representative, though incomplete, list of the names of its martyrs, trusting that in the days to come the valiant promoters of the Faith will arise to fill this gap, and will, by their research and industry, be able to remedy the imperfections of this altogether inadequate description of what must ever remain as one of the most moving episodes of modern times.*

CHAPTER XXI

THE SEVEN MARTYRS OF ṬIHRĀN

THE news of the tragic fate which had befallen the heroes of Ṭabarsí brought immeasurable sorrow to the heart of the Báb. Confined in His prison-castle of Chihríq, severed from the little band of His struggling disciples, He watched with keen anxiety the progress of their labours and prayed with unremitting zeal for their victory. How great was His sorrow when, in the early days of Sha'bán in the year 1265 A.H.,[1] He came to learn of the trials that had beset their path, of the agony they had suffered, of the betrayal to which an exasperated enemy had felt compelled to resort, and of the abominable butchery with which their career had ended.

"The Báb was heart-broken," His amanuensis, Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-'Azíz, subsequently related, "at the receipt of this unexpected intelligence. He was crushed with grief, a grief that stilled His voice and silenced His pen. For nine days He refused to meet any of His friends. I myself, though His close and constant attendant, was refused admittance. Whatever meat or drink we offered Him, He was disinclined to touch. Tears rained continually from His eyes, and expressions of anguish dropped unceasingly from His lips. I could hear Him, from behind the curtain, give vent to His feelings of sadness as He communed, in the privacy of His cell, with His Beloved. I attempted to jot down the effusions of His sorrow as they poured forth from His wounded heart. Suspecting that I was attempting to preserve the lamentations He uttered, He bade me destroy whatever I had recorded. Nothing remains of the moans and cries with which that heavy-laden heart sought to relieve itself of the pangs that had seized it. For a period of five months He languished, immersed in an ocean of despondency and sorrow."

[1] June 22–July 21, 1849 A.D.

With the advent of Muharram in the year 1266 A.H.,[1] the Báb again resumed the work He had been compelled to interrupt. The first page He wrote was dedicated to the memory of Mullá Ḥusayn. In the visiting Tablet revealed in his honour, He extolled, in moving terms, the unswerving fidelity with which he served Quddús throughout the siege of the fort of Ṭabarsí. He lavished His eulogies on his magnanimous conduct, recounted his exploits, and asserted his undoubted reunion in the world beyond with the leader whom he had so nobly served. He too, He wrote, would soon join those twin immortals, each of whom had, by his life and death, shed imperishable lustre on the Faith of God. For one whole week the Báb continued to write His praises of Quddús, of Mullá Ḥusayn, and of His other companions who had gained the crown of martyrdom at Ṭabarsí.

No sooner had He completed His eulogies of those who had immortalised their names in the defence of the fort, than He summoned, on the day of 'Ásh<u></u>úrá,[2] Mullá Ádí-Guzal,[3] one of the believers of Marágh<u></u>ih, who for the last two months had been acting as His attendant instead of Siyyid Ḥasan, the brother of Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-'Azíz. He affectionately received him, bestowed upon him the name Sayyáḥ, entrusted to his care the visiting Tablets He had revealed in memory of the martyrs of Ṭabarsí, and bade him perform, on His behalf, a pilgrimage to that spot. "Arise," He urged him, "and with complete detachment proceed, in the guise of a traveller, to Mázindarán, and there visit, on My behalf, the spot which enshrines the bodies of those immortals who, with their blood, have sealed their faith in My Cause. As you approach the precincts of that hallowed ground, put off your shoes and, bowing your head in reverence to their memory, invoke their names and prayerfully make the circuit of their shrine. Bring back to Me, as a remembrance of your visit, a handful of that holy earth which covers the remains of My beloved ones, Quddús and Mullá

[1] November 17–December 17, 1849 A.D.

[2] The tenth of Muḥarram, the anniversary of the martyrdom of the Imám Ḥusayn, which fell in that year on November 26, 1849 A.D.

[3] According to the "Kash<u></u>fu'l-Ghiṭá' " (p. 241), his full name was Mírzá 'Alíy-i-Sayyáḥ-i-Marágh<u></u>ih'í. He had acted as the servant of the Báb in Máh-Kú, ranked among His leading companions, and subsequently embraced the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Ḥusayn. Strive to be back ere the day of Naw-Rúz, that you may celebrate with Me that festival, the only one I probably shall ever see again."

Faithful to the instructions he had received, Sayyáḥ set out on his pilgrimage to Mázindarán. He reached his destination on the first day of Rabí'u'l-Avval in the year 1266 A.H.,[1] and by the ninth day of that same month,[2] the first anniversary of the martyrdom of Mullá Ḥusayn, he had performed his visit and acquitted himself of the mission with which he had been entrusted. From thence he proceeded to Ṭihrán.

I have heard Āqáy-i-Kalim, who received Sayyáḥ at the entrance of Bahá'u'lláh's home in Ṭihrán, relate the following: "It was the depth of winter when Sayyáḥ, returning from his pilgrimage, came to visit Bahá'u'lláh. Despite the cold and snow of a rigorous winter, he appeared attired in the garb of a dervish, poorly clad, barefooted, and dishevelled. His heart was set afire with the flame that pilgrimage had kindled. No sooner had Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí, surnamed Vaḥíd, who was then a guest in the home of Bahá'u'lláh, been informed of the return of Sayyáḥ from the fort of Ṭabarsí, than he, oblivious of the pomp and circumstance to which a man of his position had been accustomed, rushed forward and flung himself at the feet of the pilgrim. Holding his legs, which had been covered with mud to the knees, in his arms, he kissed them devoutly. I was amazed that day at the many evidences of loving solicitude which Bahá'u'lláh evinced towards Vahíd. He showed him such favours as I had never seen Him extend to anyone. The manner of His conversation left no doubt in me that this same Vahíd would ere long distinguish himself by deeds no less remarkable than those which had immortalised the defenders of the fort of Ṭabarsí."

Sayyáḥ tarried a few days in that home. He was, however, unable to perceive, as did Vaḥíd, the nature of that power which lay latent in his Host. Though himself the recipient of the utmost favour from "Bahá'u'lláh, he failed to apprehend the significance of the blessings that were being showered upon him. I have heard him recount his experiences, during his sojourn in Famagusta: "Bahá'u'lláh overwhelmed

[1] January 15, 1850 A.D. [2] January 23, 1850 A.D.

me with His kindness. As to Vaḥíd, notwithstanding the eminence of his position, he invariably gave me preference over himself whenever in the presence of his Host. On the day of my arrival from Mázindarán, he went so far as to kiss my feet. I was amazed at the reception accorded me in that home. Though immersed in an ocean of bounty, I failed, in those days, to appreciate the position then occupied by Bahá'u'lláh, nor was I able to suspect, however dimly, the nature of the Mission He was destined to perform."

Ere the departure of Sayyáḥ from Ṭihrán, Bahá'u'lláh entrusted him with an epistle, the text of which He had dictated to Mírzá Yahyá,[1] and sent it in his name. Shortly after, a reply, penned in the Báb's own handwriting, in which He commits Mírzá Yaḥyá to the care of Bahá'u'lláh and urges that attention be paid to his education and training, was received. That communication the people of the Bayán[2] have misconstrued as an evidence of the exaggerated claims[3] which they have advanced in favour of their leader. Although the text of that reply is absolutely devoid of such pretensions, and does not, beyond the praise it bestows upon Bahá'u'lláh and the request it makes for the upbringing of Mírzá Yaḥyá, contain any reference to his alleged position, yet his followers have idly imagined that that letter constitutes an assertion of the authority with which they have invested him.[4]

At this stage of my narrative, when I have already recounted the outstanding events that occurred in the course

[1] Surnamed Subh-i-Azal. [2] Followers of Mírzá Yaḥyá.

[3] "The claims of this young man were based on a nomination-document now in the possession of Prof. Browne, and have been supported by a letter given in a French version by Mons. Nicolas. Forgery, however, has played such a great part in written documents of the East that I hesitate to recognise the genuineness of this nomination. And I think it very improbable that any company of intensely earnest men should have accepted the document in preference to the evidence of their own knowledge respecting the inadequate endowments of Ṣubḥ-i-Azal. . . . The probability is that the arrangement already made was further sanctioned, viz. that Bahá'u'lláh was for the present to take the private direction of affairs and exercise his great gifts as a teacher, while Ṣubḥ-i-Azal (a vain young man) gave his name as ostensible head, especially with a view to outsiders and to agents of the government." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp. 118–19.)

[4] "I adjure thee by God, the One, the Mighty, the Omnipotent, to ponder in thine heart those writings which were sent in his [Mírzá Yaḥyá's] name to the Primal Point [the Báb], that thou mayest recognise and distinguish, as manifest as the sun, the signs of the True One." ("The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p. 125.)

of the year 1265 A.H.,[1] I am reminded that that very year witnessed the most significant event in my own life, an event which marked my spiritual rebirth, my deliverance from the fetters of the past, and my acceptance of the message of this Revelation. I seek the indulgence of the reader if I dwell too long on the circumstances of my early life, and recount with too great detail the events that led to my conversion. My father belonged to the tribe of Ṭáhirí, who led a nomadic life in the province of Khurásán. His name was Ghulám 'Alí, son of Ḥusayn-i-'Arab. He married the daughter of Kalb-'Alí, and by her had three sons and three daughters. I was his second son, and was given the name of Yár-Muḥammad. I was born on the eighteenth of Ṣafar in the year 1247 A.H.,[2] in the village of Zarand. I was a shepherd by profession, and was given in my early days a most rudimentary education. I longed to devote more time to my studies, but was unable to do so, owing to the exigencies of my situation. I read the Qur'án with eagerness, committed several of its passages to memory, and chanted them whilst I followed my flock over the fields. I loved solitude, and watched the stars at night with delight and wonder. In the quiet of the wilderness, I recited certain prayers attributed to the Imám 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, and, as I turned my face towards the Qiblih,[3] supplicated the Almighty to guide my steps and enable me to find the Truth.

My father oftentimes took me with him to Qum, where I became acquainted with the teachings of Islám and the ways and manners of its leaders. He was a devout follower of that Faith, and was closely associated with the ecclesiastical leaders who congregated in that city. I watched him as he prayed at the Masjid-i-Imám-Ḥasan and performed, with scrupulous care and extreme piety, all the rites and ceremonies prescribed by his Faith. I heard the preaching of several eminent mujtahids who had arrived from Najaf, attended their lectures, and listened to their disputations. Gradually I came to perceive their insincerity and to loathe the baseness of their character. Eager as I was to ascertain the trustworthiness of the creeds and dogmas which they strove to impose upon me, I could neither find the time nor obtain the

[1] 1848–9 A.D. [2] July 29, 1831 A.D. [3] See Glossary.

facilities with which to satisfy my desire. I was often rebuked by my father for my temerity and restlessness. "I fear," he often remarked, "that your aversion to these mujtahids may some day involve you in great difficulties and bring upon you reproach and shame."

I was in the village of Rubát-Karím, on a visit to my maternal uncle, when, on the twelfth day after Naw-Rúz, in the year 1263 A.H.,[1] I accidentally overheard, in the masjid of that village, a conversation between two men which first made me acquainted with the Revelation of the Báb. "Have you heard," one of them remarked, "that the Siyyid-i-Báb has been conducted to the village of Kinár-Gird and is on his way to Ṭihrán?" Finding his friend ignorant of that episode, he proceeded to relate the whole story of the Báb, giving a detailed account of the circumstances attending His Declaration, of His arrest in Shíráz, His departure for Iṣfáhán, the reception which both the Imám-Jum'ih and Manúchihr Khán had extended to Him, the prodigies and wonders He had manifested, and the verdict that the 'ulamás of Iṣfáhán had pronounced against Him. Every detail of that story excited my curiosity and stirred in me a keen admiration for a Man who could throw such a spell over His countrymen. His light seemed to have flooded my soul; I felt as if I were already a convert to His Cause.

From Rubát-Karím I returned to Zarand. My father remarked upon my restlessness, and expressed his surprise at my behaviour. I had lost my appetite and sleep, and was determined to conceal the secret of my inner agitation from my father, lest its disclosure might interfere with the eventual realisation of my hopes. I remained in that state until a certain Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Zavári'í arrived at Zarand and was able to enlighten me on a subject which had become the ruling passion of my life. Our acquaintance speedily ripened into a friendship which encouraged me to share with him the longings of my heart. To my great surprise, I found him already enthralled by the secret of the theme which I had begun to disclose to him. "One of my cousins," he proceeded to relate, "Siyyid Ismá'íl-i-Zavári'í by name, convinced me of the truth of the Message proclaimed by the Siyyid-i-Báb.

[1] 1847 A.D.

He informed me that he had several times met the Siyyid-i-Báb in the house of the Imám-Jum'ih of Iṣfáhán, and had seen Him actually reveal, in the presence of His host, a commentary on the Súrih of Va'l-'Asr.[1] The rapidity of the Báb's composition, and the force and originality of His style, had excited his surprise and admiration. He was amazed to find that, whilst revealing His commentary, and without lessening the speed of His writing, He was able to answer whatever questions those who were present were moved to ask Him. The fearlessness with which my cousin arose to preach the Message aroused the hostility of the kadkhudás[2] and siyyids of Zavárih, who compelled him to return to Iṣfáhán, where he had of late been residing. I too, unable to remain in Zavárih, departed for Káshán, in which town I spent the winter and met Ḥájí Mírzá Jání, of whom my cousin had spoken, and who gave me a treatise written by the Báb, entitled 'Risáliy-i-'Adlíyyih,' urging me to read it carefully and return it to him after a few days. I was so charmed by the theme and language of that treatise that I proceeded immediately to transcribe the whole text. When I returned it to its owner, he, to my profound regret, informed me that I had just missed the opportunity of meeting its Author. 'The Siyyid-i-Báb Himself,' he said, 'arrived on the eve of the day of Naw-Rúz and spent three nights as a Guest in my home. He is now on His way to Ṭihrán, and if you start immediately, you will certainly overtake Him.' Straightway I arose and departed, walking all the way from Káshán to a fortress in the neighbourhood of Kinár-Gird. I was resting under the shadow of its walls when a pleasant-looking man emerged from that fortress and asked me who I was and whither I was going. 'I am a poor siyyid,' I replied, 'a wayfarer and stranger to this place.' He took me to his home and invited me to spend the night as his guest. In the course of his conversation with me, he said: 'I suspect you to be a follower of the Siyyid who was staying for a few days in this fortress, from whence He was transferred to the village of Kulayn, and who, three days ago, left for Ádhirbáyján. I esteem myself as one of His adherents. My name is Ḥájí Zaynu'l-'Ábidín. I intended not to separate myself

[1] Qur'án, 103. [2] See Glossary.

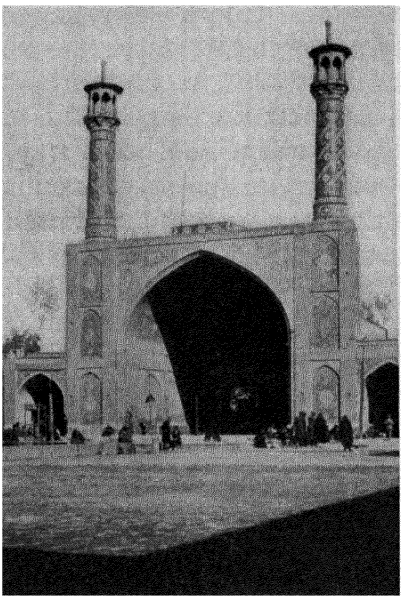
from Him, but He bade me remain in this place and convey to any of His friends whom I might meet His loving greetings, and dissuade them from following Him. "Tell them," He instructed me, "to consecrate their lives to the service of My Cause, that haply the barriers that hinder the progress of this Faith may be removed, so that My followers may, with safety and freedom, worship their God and observe the precepts of their Faith." I immediately abandoned my project and, instead of returning to Qum, decided to come to this place.' "

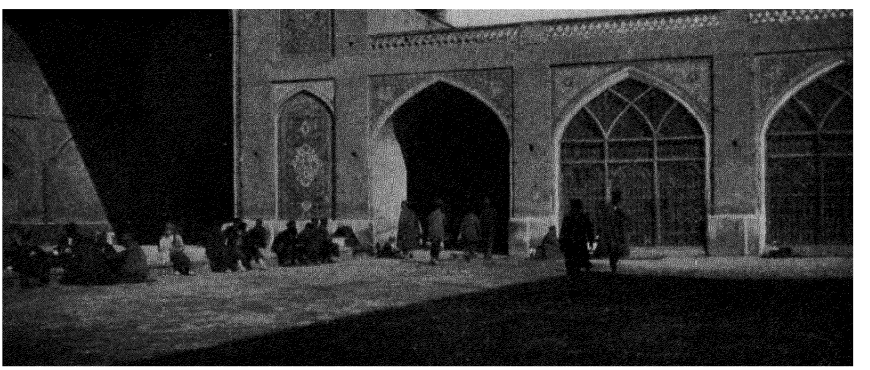
The story which this Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Zavári'í related to me served to allay my agitation. He shared with me the copy of the "Risáliy-i-'Adlíyyih" he had brought with him, the reading of which imparted strength and refreshment to my soul. In those days I was a pupil of a siyyid who taught me the Qur'án and whose incapacity to enlighten me on the tenets of his Faith became more and more evident in my eyes. Siyyid Ḥusayn, whom I asked for further information about the Cause, advised me to meet Siyyid Ismá'íl-i-Zavári'í, whose invariable practice it was to visit, every spring, the shrines of the imám-zádihs[1] of Qum. I induced my father, who was reluctant to separate himself from me, to send me to that city with the object of perfecting my knowledge of the Arabic language. I was careful to conceal from him my real purpose, fearing that its disclosure might involve him in embarrassments with the Qáḍí[2] and the 'ulamás of Zarand and prevent me from achieving my end.

While I was in Qum, my mother, my sister, and my brother came to visit me in connection with the festival of Naw-Rúz, and stayed with me for about a month. In the course of their visit, I was able to enlighten my mother and my sister about the new Revelation, and succeeded in kindling in their hearts the love of its Author. A few days after their return to Zarand, Siyyid Ismá'íl, whom I impatiently awaited, arrived, and was able, in the course of his discussions with me, to set forth in detail all that was required to win me over completely to the Cause. He laid stress on the continuity of Divine Revelation, asserted the fundamental oneness of the Prophets of the past, and explained their close relationship

[1] See Glossary. [2] See Glossary.

to the Mission of the Báb. He also disclosed the nature of the work accomplished by Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í and Siyyid Káẓim-i-Rashtí, neither of whom I had previously heard. I asked as to the duty incumbent at the present time upon every loyal adherent of the Faith. "The injunction of the Báb," he replied, "is that all those who have accepted His Message should proceed to Mázindarán and lend their assistance to Quddús, who is now hemmed in by the forces of an unrelenting foe." I expressed my eagerness to join him,





VIEWS OF THE MASJID-I-SHÁH OF ṬIHRÁN

as he himself was intending to journey to the fort of Tabarsí. He advised me, however, to remain in Qum together with a certain Mírzá Fathu'lláh-i-Ḥakkák, a lad of my age whom he had recently guided to the Cause, until the receipt of his message from Ṭihrán.

I waited in vain for that message, and, finding that no word came from him, decided to leave for the capital. My friend Mírzá Fatḥu'lláh subsequently followed me. He was eventually arrested and shared the fate of those who were put to death in the year 1268 A.H.[1] as a result of the attempt on the life of the Sháh. Arriving in Ṭihrán, I proceeded directly to the Masjid-i-Sháh, which was opposite a madrisih,[2] at the entrance of which I, later on, unexpectedly encountered Siyyid Ismá'íl-i-Zavárí'í, who hastened to inform me that he had just written me the letter and was on the point of despatching it to Qum.

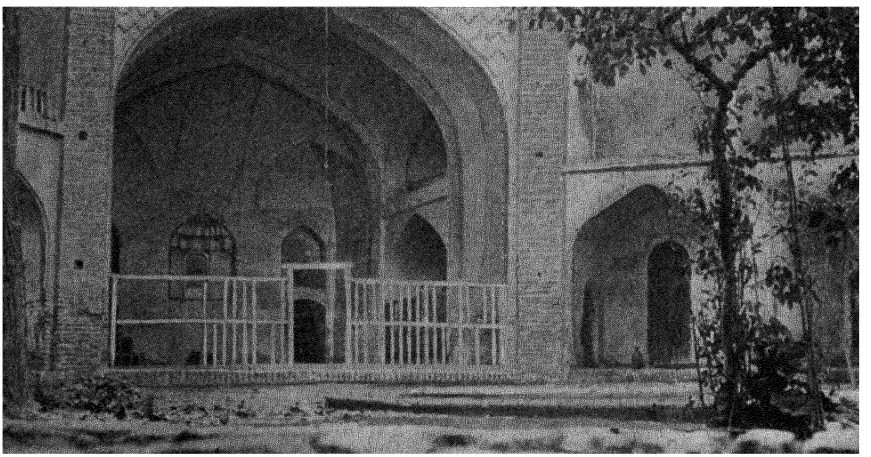
We were preparing ourselves to leave for Mázindarán, when the news reached us that the defenders of the fort of Ṭabarsí had been treacherously slaughtered and that the fort itself had been levelled with the ground. We were filled with distress at the receipt of the appalling news, and mourned the tragic fate of those who had so heroically defended their beloved Cause. One day I unexpectedly came across my maternal uncle, Naw-Rúz-'Alí, who had come on purpose to fetch me. I informed Siyyid Ismá'íl, who advised me to leave for Zarand and not to arouse further hostility on the part of those who insisted upon my return.

On my arrival at my native village, I was able to win over my brother to the Cause, which my mother and my sister had already embraced. I also succeeded in inducing my father to allow me to leave again for Ṭihrán. I took up my residence in the same madrisih where I had been accommodated on my previous visit, and there met a certain Mullá 'Abdu'l-Karím, whom, I subsequently learned, Bahá'u'lláh had named Mírzá Ahmad. He affectionately received me and told me that Siyyid Ismá'íl had entrusted me to his care and wished me to remain in his company until the former's return to Tihrán. The days of my companionship with Mírzá Ahmad will never be forgotten. I found him

[1] 1851–2 A.D. [2] See Glossary.

the very incarnation of love and kindness. The words with which he inspired me and animated my faith are indelibly graven upon my heart.

Through him I was introduced to the disciples of the Báb, with whom I associated and from whom I obtained fuller information regarding the teachings of the Faith. Mírzá Ahmad was in those days earning his livelihood as a scribe, and devoted his evenings to copying the Persian Bayán and other writings of the Báb. The copies which he so devotedly prepared were given by him as gifts to his fellow-disciples. I myself was several times the bearer of such



THE MADRISIH OF MÍRZÁ ṢÁLIḤ IN ṬIHRÁN

gifts from him to the wife of Mullá Mihdíy-i-Kandí, who had forsaken his infant son and hastened to join the occupants of the fort of Ṭabarsí.

During those days I was informed that Ṭáhirih, who, ever since the dispersal of the gathering at Badasht, had been living in Núr, had arrived at Ṭihrán and was confined in the house of Mahmúd Khán-i-Kalantar, where, although a prisoner, she was treated with consideration and courtesy.

One day Mírzá Ahmad conducted me to the house of Bahá'u'lláh, whose wife, the Varaqatu'l-'Ulyá,[1] the mother of the Most Great Branch,[2] had already healed my eyes with an ointment which she herself had prepared and sent to me

[1] Literally "The Most Exalted Leaf." [2] Title of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

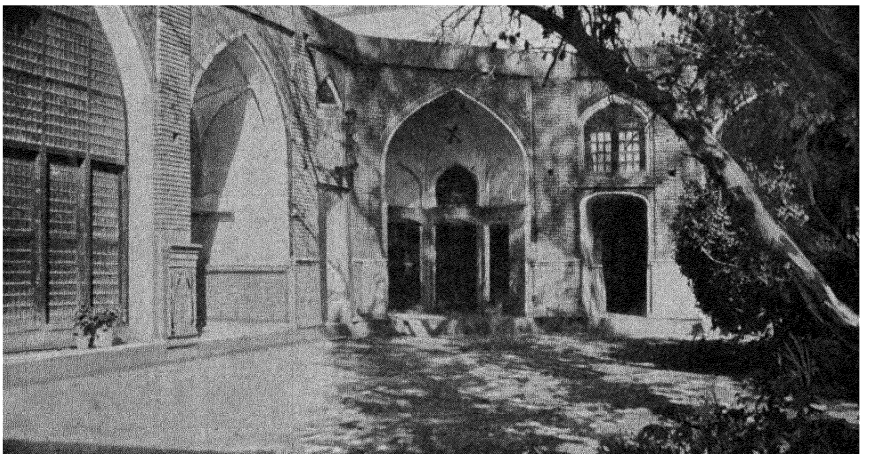
by this same Mírzá Aḥmad. The first one I met in that house was that same beloved Son of hers, who was then a child of six. He smiled His welcome to me as He was standing at the door of the room which Bahá'u'lláh occupied. I passed that door, and was ushered into the presence of Mírzá Yaḥyá, utterly unaware of the station of the Occupant of the room I had left behind me. When brought face to face with Mírzá Yahyá, I was startled, immediately I observed his features and noted his conversation, at his utter unworthiness of the position that had been claimed for him.

On another occasion, when I visited that same house, I was on the point of entering the room that Mírzá Yaḥyá occupied, when Áqáy-i-Kalím, whom I had previously met, approached and requested me, since Isfandíyár, their servant, had gone to market and had not yet returned, to conduct "Áqá"[1] to the Madrisiy-i-Mírzá-Ṣálih in his stead and then return to this place. I gladly consented, and as I was preparing to leave, I saw the Most Great Branch, a child of exquisite beauty, wearing the kuláh[2] and cloaked in the jubbiy-i-hizári'í,[3] emerge from the room which His Father occupied, and descend the steps leading to the gate of the house. I advanced and stretched forth my arms to carry Him. "We shall walk together," He said, as He took hold of my hand and led me out of the house. We chatted together as we walked hand in hand in the direction of the madrisih known in those days by the name of Pá-Minár. As we reached His classroom, He turned to me and said: "Come again this afternoon and take me back to my home, for Isfandíyár is unable to fetch me. My Father will need him to-day." I gladly acquiesced, and returned immediately to the house of Bahá'u'lláh. There again I met Mírzá Yaḥyá, who delivered into my hands a letter which he asked me to take to the Madrisiy-i-Ṣadr and hand to Bahá'u'lláh, whom I was told I would find in the room occupied by Mullá Báqir-i-Bastámí. He asked me to bring back the reply immediately. I fulfilled the commission and returned to the madrisih in time to conduct the Most Great Branch to His home.

One day Mírzá Ahmad invited me to meet Ḥájí Mírzá

[1] Meaning "Master" by which title 'Abdu'l-Bahá was then designated.
[2] See Glossary. [3] A kind of overcoat.

Siyyid 'Alí, the Báb's maternal uncle, who had recently returned from Chihríq and was staying in the home of Muḥammad Big-i-Chapárchí, in the neighbourhood of the gate of Shimírán. I was struck, when I gazed at his face, with the nobility of his features and the serenity of his countenance. My subsequent visits to him served to heighten my admiration for the sweetness of his temper, his mystical piety and strength of character. I well remember how on one occasion Áqáy-i-Kalím urged him, at a certain gathering, to leave Ṭihrán, which was then in a state of great ferment, and escape its dangerous atmosphere. "Why fear for my safety?"

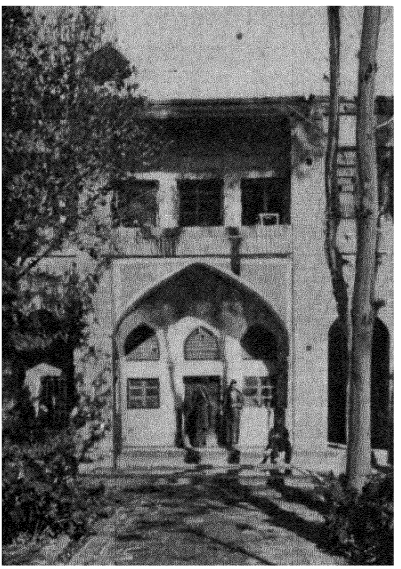


THE MADRISIY-I-SADR IN ṬIHRAN (MARK X SHOWING THE ROOM BAHÁ'U'LLÁH OCCUPIED)

he confidently replied. "Would that I too could share in the banquet which the hand of Providence is spreading for His chosen ones!"

Shortly after, the stirrers-up of mischief were able to kindle a grave turmoil in that city. Its immediate cause was the action of a certain siyyid from Káshán, who was living in the Madrisiy-i-Dáru'sh-Shafá' and whom the well-known Siyyid Muḥammad had taken into his confidence and claimed to have converted to the Báb's teachings. Mírzá Muḥammad-Ḥusayn-i-Kirmání, who lodged in that same madrisih and who was a well-known lecturer on the metaphysical doctrines of Islám, attempted several times to induce Siyyid Muḥam-

mad, who was one of his pupils, to break off his acquaintance with that siyyid, whom he believed to be unreliable, and to refuse him admittance to the gathering of the believers. Siyyid Muḥammad refused, however, to be admonished by this warning, and continued to associate with him until the beginning of the month of Rabí'u'th-Thání in the year 1266 A.H.,[1] at which time the treacherous siyyid went to a certain Siyyid Ḥusayn, one of the 'ulamás of Káshán, and delivered into his hands the names and addresses of about fifty of the



THE MADRISIH OF DÁRU'SH-SHAFÁY-I-MASJID-I-SHÁH, IN ṬIHRÁN

believers who were then residing in Ṭihrán. That same list was immediately submitted by Siyyid Ḥusayn to Maḥmúd Khán-i-Kalantar, who ordered that all of them be arrested. Fourteen of them were seized and brought before the authorities.

On the day they were captured, I happened to be with my brother and my maternal uncle, who had arrived from Zarand and had lodged in a caravanserai outside the gate of Naw. The next morning they departed for Zarand, and

[1] February 14–March 15, 1850 A.D.

as I returned to the Madrisiy-i-Dáru'sh-Shafá', I discovered in my room a package upon which was placed a letter addressed to me by Mírzá Ahmad. That letter informed me that the treacherous siyyid had at last denounced us and had raised a violent commotion in the capital. "The package which I have left in this room," he wrote, "contains all the sacred writings that are in my possession. If you ever reach this place in safety, take them to the caravanserai of Ḥájí Nád-'Alí, where you will find in one of its rooms a man bearing that name, a native of Qazvín, to whom you will deliver the package together with the letter which accompanies it. From thence you will proceed immediately to the Masjid-i-Sháh, where I hope to be able to meet you." Following his directions, I delivered the package to the Ḥájí and succeeded in reaching the masjid, where I met Mírzá Aḥmad and heard him relate how he had been assailed and had sought refuge in the masjid, in the precincts of which he was immune from further attack.

In the meantime, Bahá'u'lláh had sent from the Madrisiy-i-Ṣadr a message to Mírzá Aḥmad informing him of the designs of the Amír-Niẓám, who had, already on three different occasions, demanded his arrest from the Imám-Jum'ih. He was also warned that the Amír, ignoring the right of asylum with which the masjid had been invested, intended to arrest those who had sought refuge in that sanctuary. Mírzá Ahmad was urged to leave in disguise for Qum, and was charged to direct me to return to my home in Zarand.

Meanwhile, my relations, who had recognised me in the Masjid-i-Sháh, pressed me to leave for Zarand, pleading that my father, who had been misinformed of my arrest and impending execution, was in grave distress, and that it was my duty to hasten and relieve him of his anxieties. Acting on the advice of Mírzá Aḥmad, who counselled me to seize this God-sent opportunity, I left for Zarand and celebrated the Feast of Naw-Rúz with my family, a Feast that was doubly blessed inasmuch as it coincided with the fifth day of Jamádíyu'l-Avval in the year 1266 A.H.,[1] the anniversary of the day on which the Báb had declared His Mission. The Naw-Rúz of that year has been mentioned in the "Kitáb-i-Panj-

[1] 1850 A.D.

Sha'n," one of the last works of the Báb. "The sixth Naw-Rúz," He wrote in that Book, "after the Declaration of the Point of the Bayán,[1] has fallen on the fifth day of Jamádíyu'l-Avval, in the seventh lunar year after that same Declaration." In that same passage, the Báb alludes to the fact that the Naw-Rúz of that year would be the last He was destined to celebrate on this earth.

In the midst of the festivities which my relatives celebrated in Zarand, my heart was set upon Ṭihrán, and my thoughts centred round the fate which might have befallen my fellow-disciples in that agitated city. I longed to hear of their safety. Though in the house of my father, and surrounded with the solicitude of my parents, I felt oppressed by the thought of being severed from that little band, whose perils I could well imagine and whose afflictions I longed to share. The terrible suspense under which I lived, while confined in my home, was unexpectedly relieved by the arrival of Ṣádiq-i-Tabrízí, who came from Ṭihrán and was received in the house of my father. Though delivering me from the uncertainties which had been weighing so heavily upon me, he, to my profound horror, unfolded to my ears a tale of such terrifying cruelty that the anxieties of suspense paled before the ghastly light which that lurid story cast upon my heart.

The circumstances of the martyrdom of my arrested brethren in Ṭihrán—for such was their fate—I now proceed to relate. The fourteen disciples of the Báb, who had been captured, remained incarcerated in the house of Maḥmúd Khán-i-Kalantar from the first to the twenty-second day of the month of Rabí'u'th-Thání.[2] Ṭáhirih was also confined on the upper floor of that same house. Every kind of ill treatment was inflicted upon them. Their persecutors sought, by every device, to induce them to supply the information they required, but failed to obtain a satisfactory answer. Among the captives was a certain Muhammad-Husayn-i-Marághi'í, who obstinately refused to utter a single word despite the severe pressure that was brought to bear upon him. They tortured him, they resorted to every possible measure in order to extort from him any hint that could

[1] One of the titles of the Báb. [2] February 14–March 15, 1850 A.D.

serve their purpose, but failed to achieve their end. Such was his unswerving obstinacy that his oppressors thought him to be dumb. They asked Ḥájí Mullá Ismá'íl, who had converted him to his Faith, whether or not he could talk. "He is mute, but not dumb," he replied; "he is fluent of speech and is free from any impediment." He had no sooner called him by his name than the victim answered, assuring him of his readiness to abide by his will.

Convinced of their powerlessness to bend their will, they referred the matter to Maḥmúd Khán, who, in his turn, submitted their case to the Amír-Nizám, Mírzá Taqí Khán,[1] the Grand Vazír of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh. The sovereign in those days refrained from direct interference in matters pertaining to the affairs of the persecuted community, and was often ignorant of the decisions that were being made with regard to its members. His Grand Vazír was invested with plenary powers to deal with them as he saw fit. No one questioned his decisions, nor dared disapprove of the manner in which he exercised his authority. He immediately issued a peremptory order threatening with execution whoever among these fourteen prisoners was unwilling to recant his faith. Seven were compelled to yield to the pressure that was brought to bear upon them, and were immediately released. The remaining seven constitute the Seven Martyrs of Ṭihrán:

1. Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, surnamed Khál-i-A'ẓam,[2] the Báb's maternal uncle, and one of the leading merchants of Shíráz. It was this same uncle into whose custody the Báb, after the death of His father, was entrusted, and who, on his Nephew's return from His pilgrimage to Hijáz and His arrest by Husayn Khán, assumed undivided responsibility for Him by pledging his word in writing. It was he who surrounded Him, while under his care, with unfailing solicitude, who served Him with such devotion, and who acted as intermediary between Him and the hosts of His followers who flocked to Shíráz to see Him. His only child, a Siyyid Javád, died in infancy. Towards the middle of the year 1265 A.H.,[3]

[1] He was the son of Qurbán, the head cook of the Qá'im-Maqám, the predecessor of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí.

[2] Literally "The Greatest Uncle."

[3] 1848-9 A.D.

this same Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí left Shíráz and visited the Báb in the castle of Chihríq. From thence he went to Tihrán and, though having no special occupation, remained in that city until the outbreak of the sedition which brought about eventually his martyrdom.

Though his friends appealed to him to escape the turmoil that was fast approaching, he refused to heed their counsel and faced, until his last hour, with complete resignation, the persecution to which he was subjected. A considerable number among the more affluent merchants of his acquaintance offered to pay his ransom, an offer which he rejected. Finally he was brought before the Amír-Niẓám. "The Chief Magistrate of this realm," the Grand Vazír informed him, "is loth to inflict the slightest injury upon the Prophet's descendants. Eminent merchants of Shíráz and Ṭihrán are willing, nay eager, to pay your ransom. The Maliku't-Tujjár has even interceded in your behalf. A word of recantation from you is sufficient to set you free and ensure your return, with honours, to your native city. I pledge my word that, should you be willing to acquiesce, the remaining days of your life will be spent with honour and dignity under the sheltering shadow of your sovereign." "Your Excellency," boldly replied Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, "if others before me, who quaffed joyously the cup of martyrdom, have chosen to reject an appeal such as the one you now make to me, know of a certainty that I am no less eager to decline such a request. My repudiation of the truths enshrined in this Revelation would be tantamount to a rejection of all the Revelations that have preceded it. To refuse to acknowledge the Mission of the Siyyid-i-Báb would be to apostatise from the Faith of my forefathers and to deny the Divine character of the Message which Muḥammad, Jesus, Moses, and all the Prophets of the past have revealed. God knows that whatever I have heard and read concerning the sayings and doings of those Messengers, I have been privileged to witness the same from this Youth, this beloved Kinsman of mine, from His earliest boyhood to this, the thirtieth year of His life. Everything in Him reminds me of His illustrious Ancestor and of the imáms of His Faith whose lives our recorded traditions have portrayed. I only request of you that you allow me to be

the first to lay down my life in the path of my beloved Kinsman."

The Amír was stupefied by such an answer. In a frenzy of despair, and without uttering a word, he motioned that he be taken out and beheaded. As the victim was being conducted to his death, he was heard, several times, to repeat these words of Ḥáfiẓ: "Great is my gratitude to Thee, O my God, for having granted so bountifully all I have asked of Thee." "Hear me, O people," he cried to the multitude that pressed around him; "I have offered myself up as a willing sacrifice in the path of the Cause of God. The entire province of Fárs, as well as 'Iráq, beyond the confines of Persia, will readily testify to my uprightness of conduct, to my sincere piety and noble lineage. For over a thousand years, you have prayed and prayed again that the promised Qá'im be made manifest. At the mention of His name, how often have you cried, from the depths of your hearts: 'Hasten, O God, His coming; remove every barrier that stands in the way of His appearance!' And now that He is come, you have driven Him to a hopeless exile in a remote and sequestered corner of Ádhirbáyján and have risen to exterminate His companions. Were I to invoke the malediction of God upon you, I am certain that His avenging wrath would grievously afflict you. Such is not, however, my prayer. With my last breath, I pray that the Almighty may wipe away the stain of your guilt and enable you to awaken from the sleep of heedlessness."[1]

These words stirred his executioner to his very depths. Pretending that the sword he had been holding in readiness in his hands required to be resharpened, he hastily went away, determined never to return again. "When I was appointed to this service," he was heard to complain, weeping bitterly the while, "they undertook to deliver into my hands only those who had been convicted of murder and highway robbery. I am now ordered by them to shed the blood of

[1] "He took off his turban, and, raising his face towards heaven, exclaimed, 'O God, Thou art witness of how they are slaying the son of Thy most honourable Prophet without fault on his part.' Then he turned to the executioner and recited this verse: 'How long shall grief of separation from Him slay me? Cut off my head, that Love may bestow on me a head.'" (Mathnaví, Book 6, p. 649, 1, 2; ed. 'Alá'u'd-Dawlih.) ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note B, p. 174.)

one no less holy than the Imám Músáy-i-Káẓim[1] himself!" Shortly after, he departed for Khurásán and there sought to earn his livelihood as a porter and crier. To the believers of that province, he recounted the tale of that tragedy, and expressed his repentance of the act which he had been compelled to perpetrate. Every time he recalled that incident, every time the name of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí was mentioned to him, tears which he could not repress flowed from his eyes, tears that were a witness to the affection which that holy man had instilled into his heart.

2. Mírzá Qurbán-'Alí,[2] a native of Bárfurúsh in the province of Mázindarán, and an outstanding figure in the community known by the name of Ni'matu'lláhí. He was a man of sincere piety and endowed with great nobleness of nature. Such was the purity of his life that a considerable number among the notables of Mázindarán, of Khurásán and Ṭihrán had pledged him their loyalty, and regarded him as the very embodiment of virtue. Such was the esteem in which he was held by his countrymen that, on the occasion of his pilgrimage to Karbilá, a vast concourse of devoted admirers thronged his route in order to pay their homage to him. In Hamadán, as well as in Kirmánsháh, a great number of people were influenced by his personality and joined the company of his followers. Wherever he went, he was greeted with the acclamations of the people. These demonstrations of popular enthusiasm were, however, extremely distasteful to him. He avoided the crowd and disdained the pomp and circumstance of leadership. On his way to Karbilá, while passing through Mandalíj, a shaykh of considerable influence became so enamoured of him that he renounced all that he had formerly cherished and, leaving his friends and disciples, followed him as far as Ya'qúbíyyih. Mírzá Qurbán-'Alí, however, succeeded in inducing him to return to Mandalíj and resume the work which he had abandoned.

On his return from his pilgrimage, Mírzá Qurban-'Alí met Mullá Ḥusayn and through him embraced the truth of the Cause. Owing to illness, he was unable to join the de-

[1] The Seventh Imám.

[2] According to Ḥájí Mu'ínu's-Salṭanih's narrative (p. 131), Mírzá Qurbán-'Alí the dervish, met the Báb in the village of Khánliq.

fenders of the fort of Ṭabarsí, and, but for his unfitness to travel to Mázindarán, would have been the first to join its occupants. Next to Mullá Ḥusayn, among the disciples of the Báb, Vaḥíd was the person to whom he was most attached. During my visit to Ṭihrán, I was informed that the latter had consecrated his life to the service of the Cause and had risen with exemplary devotion to promote its interests far and wide. I often heard Mírzá Qurbán-'Alí, who was then in the capital, deplore that illness. "How greatly I grieve," I heard him several times remark, "to have been deprived of my share of the cup which Mullá Ḥusayn and his companions have quaffed! I long to join Vaḥíd and enrol myself under his banner and strive to make amends for my previous failure." He was preparing to leave Ṭihrán, when he was suddenly arrested. His modest attire witnessed to the degree of his detachment. Clad in a white tunic, after the manner of the Arabs, cloaked in a coarsely woven 'abá,[1] and wearing the head-dress of the people of 'Iráq, he seemed, as he walked the streets, the very embodiment of renunciation. He scrupulously adhered to all the observances of his Faith, and with exemplary piety performed his devotions. "The Báb Himself conforms to the observances of His Faith in their minutest details," he often remarked. "Am I to neglect on my part the things which are observed by my Leader?"

When Mírzá Qurbán-'Alí was arrested and brought before the Amír-Niẓám, a commotion such as Ṭihrán had rarely experienced was raised. Large crowds of people thronged the approaches to the headquarters of the government, eager to learn what would befall him. "Since last night," the Amír, as soon as he had seen him, remarked, "I have been besieged by all classes of State officials who have vigorously interceded in your behalf.[2] From what I learn of the position you occupy and the influence your words exercise, you are not

[1] See Glossary.

[2] "Mírzá Qurbán-'Alí was famous amongst mystics and dervishes, and had many friends and disciples in Ṭihrán, besides being well known to most of the nobles and chief men, and even to the Sháh's mother. She, because of her friendship for him and the compassion she felt for his plight, said to his Majesty the king: 'He is no Bábí, but has been falsely accused.' So they sent and brought him out, saying: 'Thou art a dervish, a scholar, and a man of learning; thou dost not belong to this misguided sect; a false charge has been preferred against thee.' He replied: 'I reckon myself one of the followers and servants of His

much inferior to the Siyyid-i-Báb Himself. Had you claimed for yourself the position of leadership, better would it have been than to declare your allegiance to one who is certainly inferior to you in knowledge." "The knowledge which I have acquired," he boldly retorted, "has led me to bow down in allegiance before Him whom I have recognised to be my Lord and Leader. Ever since I attained the age of manhood, I have regarded justice and fairness as the ruling motives of my life. I have judged Him fairly, and have reached the conclusion that should this Youth, to whose transcendent power friend and foe alike testify, be false, every Prophet of God, from time immemorial down to the present day, should be denounced as the very embodiment of falsehood! I am assured of the unquestioning devotion of over a thousand admirers, and yet I am powerless to change the heart of the least among them. This Youth, however, has proved Himself capable of transmuting, through the elixir of His love, the souls of the most degraded among His fellow men. Upon a thousand like me He has, unaided and alone, exerted such influence that, without even attaining His presence, they have flung aside their own desires and have clung passionately to His will. Fully conscious of the inadequacy of the sacrifice they have made, these yearn to lay down their lives for His sake, in the hope that this further evidence of their devotion may be worthy of mention in His Court."

"I am loth," the Amír-Niẓám remarked, "whether your words be of God or not, to pronounce the sentence of death against the possessor of so exalted a station." "Why hesitate?" burst forth the impatient victim. "Are you not aware that all names descend from Heaven? He whose name is 'Alí,[1] in whose path I am laying down my life, has

Holiness, though whether or no He hath accepted me as such, I wot not.' When they continued to persuade him, holding out hopes of a pension and salary, he said: 'This life and these drops of blood of mine are of but small account; were the empire of the world mine, and had I a thousand lives, I would freely cast them all at the feet of His friends:

'To sacrifice the head for the Beloved,
In mine eyes appears an easy thing indeed;
Close thy lips, and cease to speak of mediation,
For of mediation lovers have no need.'

So at length they desisted in despair, and signified that he should die." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," p. 254.)

[1] Reference to the Báb.

from time immemorial inscribed my name, Qurbán-'Alí,[1] in the scroll of His chosen martyrs. This is indeed the day on which I celebrate the Qurbán festival, the day on which I shall seal with my life-blood my faith in His Cause. Be not, therefore, reluctant, and rest assured that I shall never blame you for your act. The sooner you strike off my head, the greater will be my gratitude to you." "Take him away from this place!" cried the Amír. "Another moment, and this dervish will have cast his spell over me!" "You are proof against that magic," Mírzá Qurbán-'Alí replied, "that can captivate only the pure in heart. You and your like can never be made to realise the entrancing power of that Divine elixir which, swift as the twinkling of an eye, transmutes the souls of men."

Exasperated by the reply, the Amír-Niẓám arose from his seat and, his whole frame shaking with anger, exclaimed: "Nothing but the edge of the sword can silence the voice of this deluded people!" "No need," he told the executioners who were in attendance upon him, "to bring any more members of this hateful sect before me. Words are powerless to overcome their unswerving obstinacy. Whomever you are able to induce to recant his faith, release him; as for the rest, strike off their heads."

As he drew near the scene of his death, Mírzá Qurbán-'Alí, intoxicated with the prospect of an approaching reunion with his Beloved, broke forth into expressions of joyous exultation. "Hasten to slay me," he cried with rapturous delight, "for through this death you will have offered me the chalice of everlasting life. Though my withered breath you now extinguish, with a myriad lives will my Beloved reward me; lives such as no mortal heart can conceive!" "Hearken to my words, you who profess to be the followers of the Apostle of God," he pleaded, as he turned his gaze to the concourse of spectators. "Muḥammad, the Day-Star of Divine guidance, who in a former age arose above the horizon of Ḥijáz, has to-day, in the person of 'Alí-Muḥammad, again risen from the Day-Spring of Shíráz, shedding the same radiance and imparting the same warmth. A rose is a rose in whichever garden, and at whatever time, it may bloom." Seeing on

[1] Qurbán means "Sacrifice"; hence, "Sacrifice for the Báb."

every side how the people were deaf to his call, he cried aloud: "Oh, the perversity of this generation! How heedless of the fragrance which that imperishable Rose has shed! Though my soul brim over with ecstasy, I can, alas, find no heart to share with me its charm, nor mind to apprehend its glory."

At the sight of the body of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, beheaded and bleeding at his feet, his fevered excitement rose to its highest pitch. "Hail," he shouted as he flung himself upon it, "hail the day of mutual rejoicing, the day of our reunion with our Beloved!" "Approach," he cried to the executioner, as he held the body in his arms, "and strike your blow, for my faithful comrade is unwilling to release himself from my embrace, and calls me to hasten together with him to the court of the Well-Beloved." A blow from the executioner fell immediately upon the nape of his neck. A few moments later, and the soul of that great man had passed away. That cruel stroke stirred in the bystanders feelings of mingled indignation and sympathy. Cries of sorrow and lamentation ascended from the hearts of the multitude, and provoked a distress that was reminiscent of the outbursts of grief with which every year the populace greets the day of 'Ásh<u></u>úrá.[1]

3. Then came the turn of Ḥájí Mullá Ismá'íl-i-Qumí, who was a native of Faráhán. In his early youth, he departed for Karbilá in quest of the Truth which he was diligently striving to discover. He had associated with all the leading 'ulamás of Najaf and Karbilá, had sat at the feet of Siyyid Káẓim, and had acquired from him the knowledge and understanding which enabled him, a few years later when in Shíráz, to acknowledge the Revelation of the Báb. He distinguished himself by the tenacity of his faith and the fervour of his devotion. As soon as the injunction of the Báb, bidding His

[1] "When he was brought to the foot of the execution-pole, the headsman raised his sword and smote him on the neck from behind. The blow only bowed his head, and caused the dervish's turban which he wore to roll some paces from him on the ground. Immediately, as it were with his last breath, he sent a fresh pang through the heart of everyone capable of emotion by reciting these verses:

'Happy he whom love's intoxication
So hath overcome that scarce he knows
Whether at the feet of the Beloved
It be head or turban which he throws!' "

(The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 254–5.)

followers hasten to Khurásán, reached him, he enthusiastically responded, joined the companions who were proceeding to Badasht, and there received the appellation of Sirru'l-Vujúd. Whilst in their company, his understanding of the Cause grew deeper and his zeal for its promotion correspondingly increased. He grew to be the very embodiment of detachment, and felt more and more impatient to demonstrate in a befitting manner the spirit with which his Faith had inspired him. In the exposition of the meaning of the verses of the Qur'án and the traditions of Islám, he displayed an insight which few could rival, and the eloquence with which he set forth those truths won him the admiration of his fellow-disciples. In the days when the fort of Ṭabarsí had become the rallying centre for the disciples of the Báb, he languished disconsolate upon a sick-bed, unable to lend his assistance and play his part for its defence. No sooner had he recovered than, finding that that memorable siege had ended with the massacre of his fellow-disciples, he arose, with added determination, to make up by his self-sacrificing labours for the loss which the Cause had sustained. That determination carried him eventually to the field of martyrdom and won him its crown.

Conducted to the block and waiting for the moment of his execution, he turned his gaze towards those twin martyrs who had preceded him and who still lay entwined in each other's embrace. "Well done, beloved companions!" he cried, as he fixed his gaze upon their gory heads. "You have turned Tihrán into a paradise! Would that I had preceded you!" Drawing from his pocket a coin, which he handed to his executioner, he begged him to purchase for him something with which he could sweeten his mouth. He took some of it and gave the rest to him, saying: "I have forgiven you your act; approach and deal your blow. For thirty years I have yearned to witness this blessed day, and was fearful lest I should carry this wish with me unfulfilled to the grave." "Accept me, O my God," he cried, as he turned his eyes to heaven, "unworthy though I be, and deign to inscribe my name upon the scroll of those immortals who have laid down their lives on the altar of sacrifice." He was

still offering his devotions when the executioner, at his request, suddenly cut short his prayer.[1]

4. He had hardly expired when Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Turshízí, the mujtahid, was conducted in his turn to the block. He was a native of Turshíz, a village in Khurásán, and was highly esteemed for his piety and rectitude of conduct. He had studied for a number of years in Najaf, and was commissioned by his fellow-mujtahids to proceed to Khurásán and there propagate the principles he had been taught. When he arrived at Káẓimayn, he met Ḥájí Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Kirmání, an old acquaintance of his, who ranked among the foremost merchants of Kirmán, and who had opened a branch of his business in Khurásán. As he was on his way to Persia, he decided to accompany him. This Ḥájí Muḥammad-Taqí had been a close friend of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, the Báb's maternal uncle, through whom he had been converted to the Cause in the year 1264 A.H.,[2] while preparing to leave Shíráz on a pilgrimage to Karbilá. When informed of the projected journey of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí to Chihríq for the purpose of visiting the Báb, he expressed his eager desire to accompany him. Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí advised him to carry out his original purpose and proceed to Karbilá and there await his letter, which would inform him whether it would be advisable to join him. From Chihríq, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí was ordered to depart for Ṭihrán, in the hope that after a short stay in the capital he would be able to renew his visit to his Nephew. Whilst in Chihríq, he expressed his reluctance to return to Shíráz, inasmuch as he could no longer endure the increasing arrogance of its in-

[1] "Now when they were ready to begin their work of decapitation and slaughter, and it was Ḥájí Mullá Ismá'íl's turn to die, one came to him, saying: 'Such an one of your friends will give such-and-such a sum of money to save you from death, on condition of your recanting, that thus they may be induced to spare you. In a case of dire necessity, when it is a question of saving your life, what harm is there in merely saying, "I am not a Bábí," so that they may have a pretext for releasing you?' He replied: 'Were I willing to recant, even without money none would touch me.' Being further pressed and greatly importuned, he drew himself up to his full height amidst the crowd, and exclaimed, so that all might hear:

'Zephyr, prithee bear for me a message
To that Ishmael who was not slain:
"Living from the street of the Beloved
Love permits not to return again."' "

(The 'Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 253–4.)

[2] 1847–8 A.D.

habitants. Upon his arrival in Ṭihrán, he requested Hájí Muhammad-Taqí to join him. Siyyid Ḥusayn accompanied him from Baghdád to the capital and through him was converted to the Faith.

As he faced the multitude that had gathered round him to witness his martyrdom, Siyyid Ḥusayn raised his voice and said: "Hear me, O followers of Islám! My name is Ḥusayn, and I am a descendant of the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhadá, who also bore that name.[1] The mujtahids of the holy cities of Najaf and Karbilá have unanimously testified to my position as the authorised expounder of the law and teachings of their Faith. Not until recently had I heard the name of the Siyyid-i-Báb. The mastery I have obtained over the intricacies of the Islamic teachings has enabled me to appreciate the value of the Message which the Siyyid-i-Báb has brought. I am convinced that, were I to deny the Truth which He has revealed, I should, by this very act, have renounced my allegiance to every Revelation that has preceded it. I appeal to every one of you to call upon the 'ulamás and mujtahids of this city and to convene a gathering, at which I will undertake in their presence to establish the truth of this Cause. Let them then judge whether I am able to demonstrate the validity of the claims advanced by the Báb. If they be satisfied with the proofs which I shall adduce in support of my argument, let them desist from shedding the blood of the innocent; and if I fail, let them inflict upon me the punishment I deserve." These words had scarcely dropped from his lips when an officer in the service of the Amír-Niẓám haughtily interjected: "I carry with me your death-warrant signed and sealed by seven of the recognised mujtahids of Ṭihrán, who have in their own handwriting pronounced you an infidel. I will myself be answerable to God on the Day of Judgment for your blood, and will lay the responsibility upon those leaders in whose judgment we have been asked to put our trust and to whose decisions we have been compelled to submit." With these words he drew out his dagger and stabbed him with such force that he immediately fell dead at his feet.

5. Soon after, Ḥájí Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Kirmání was led

[1] The Imám Ḥusayn.



THE SABZIH-MAYDÁN OF ṬIHRÁN WHERE MANY BELIEVERS SUFFERED MARTYRDOM

to the scene of execution. The ghastliness of the sight he beheld provoked his violent indignation. "Approach, you wretched and heartless tyrant," he burst forth as he turned to his persecutor, "and hasten to slay me, for I am impatient to join my beloved Ḥusayn. To live after him is a torture I cannot endure."

6. No sooner had Ḥájí Muhammad-Taqí uttered these words than Siyyid Murtaḍá, who was one of the noted merchants of Zanján, hastened to take precedence of his companions. He flung himself over the body of Ḥájí Muḥammad-Taqí, and pleaded that, being a siyyid, his martyrdom would be more meritorious in the sight of God than that of Ḥájí Muhammad-Taqí. As the executioner un-



GATE OF NAW, ṬIHRÁN

sheathed his sword, Siyyid Murtadá invoked the memory of his martyred brother, who had struggled side by side with Mullá Ḥusayn; and such were his references that the onlookers marvelled at the unyielding tenacity of the faith with which he was inspired.

7. In the midst of the turmoil which the stirring words of Siyyid Murtaḍá had raised, Muḥammad-Ḥusayn-i-Marághi'í rushed forward and begged that he be allowed to be martyred immediately ere his companions were put to the sword. As soon as his eyes fell upon the body of Ḥájí Mullá Ismá'íl-i-Qumí, for whom he entertained a deep affection, he impulsively threw himself upon him and, holding him in his embrace, exclaimed: "Never will I consent to separate myself from my dearly beloved friend, in whom I have reposed the utmost confidence and from whom I have received so many evidences of a sincere and deep-felt affection!"

Their eagerness to precede one another in laying down their lives for their Faith astonished the multitude who wondered which of the three would be preferred to his companions. They pleaded with such fervour that eventually they were beheaded, all three, at one and the same moment.

So great a faith, such evidences of unbridled cruelty, human eye has rarely beheld. Few as they were in number, yet when we recall the circumstances of their martyrdom, we are compelled to acknowledge the stupendous character of that force which could evoke so rare a spirit of self-sacrifice. When we remember the exalted rank these victims had occupied, when we observe the degree of their renunciation and the vitality of their faith, when we recall the pressure which from influential quarters had been exerted to avert the danger with which their lives were threatened, above all when we picture to our minds the spirit that defied the atrocities which a heartless enemy so far bemeaned themselves as to inflict upon them, we are impelled to look upon that episode as one of the most tragic occurrences in the annals of this Cause.[1]

[1] "After detailing the occurrences briefly set forth above, the Bábí historian proceeds to point out the special value and unique character of the testimony given by the 'Seven Martyrs.' They were men representing all the more important classes in Persia—divines, dervishes, merchants, shopkeepers, and government officials; they were men who had enjoyed the respect and consideration of all; they died fearlessly, willingly, almost eagerly, declining

At this stage of my narrative I was privileged to submit to Bahá'u'lláh such sections of my work as I had already revised and completed. How abundantly have my labours been rewarded by Him whose favour alone I seek, and for whose satisfaction I have addressed myself to this task! He graciously summoned me to His presence and vouchsafed me His blessings. I was in my home in the prison-city of 'Akká, and lived in the neighbourhood of the house of Áqáy-i-Kalím, when the summons of my Beloved reached me. That day, the seventh of the month of Rabí'u'th-Thání in the year 1306 A.H.,[1] I shall never forget. I here reproduce the gist of His words to me on that memorable occasion:

"In a Tablet which We yesterday revealed, We have explained the meaning of the words, 'Turn your eyes away,'[2] in the course of Our reference to the circumstances attending the gathering at Badasht. We were celebrating, in the company of a number of distinguished notables, the nuptials of one of the princes of royal blood in Ṭihrán, when Siyyid Aḥmad-i-Yazdí, father of Siyyid Ḥusayn, the Báb's amanuensis, appeared suddenly at the door. He beckoned to Us, and seemed to be the bearer of an important message which he wished immediately to deliver. We were, however, unable at that moment to leave the gathering, and motioned to him to wait. When the meeting had dispersed, he informed

to purchase life by that mere lip-denial which, under the name of kitmán or taqíyyih, is recognised by the shí'ahs as a perfectly justifiable subterfuge in case of peril; they were not driven to despair of mercy as were those who died at Shaykh Ṭabarsí and Zanján; and they sealed their faith with their blood in the public square of the Persian capital wherein is the abode of the foreign ambassadors accredited to the court of the Sháh. And herein the Bábí historian is right: even those who speak severely of the Bábí movement generally, characterising it as a communism destructive of all order and all morality, express commiseration for these guiltless victims. To the day of their martyrdom we may well apply Gobineau's eloquent reflection on a similar tragedy enacted two years later: 'Cette journée donna au Báb plus de partisans secrets que bien des prédications n'auraient pu faire. Je l'ai dit, tout à l'heure, l'impression produite sur le peuple par l'effroyable impassibilité des martyrs fut profonde et durable. J'ai souvent entendu raconter les scènes de cette journée par des témoins oculaires, par des hommes tenant de près au gouvernement, quelques-uns occupant des fonctions éminentes. À les entendre, on eut pu croire aisément que tous étaient Bábís, tant ils se montraient pénétrés d'admiration pour des souvenirs où l'Islám ne jouait pas le plus beau rôle, et par la haute idée qu'ils avouaient des ressources, des espérances, et des moyens de succès de la secte.'" ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note B, pp. 175–6.)

[1] December 11, 1888 A.D.

[2] According to Islamic traditions, Fáṭimih, Muḥammad's daughter, will appear unveiled as she crosses the bridge "Ṣiráṭ" on the Day of Judgment. At her appearance a voice from heaven will declare: "Turn your eyes away, O concourse of people!"

Us that Ṭáhirih had been placed in strict confinement in Qazvín, and that her life was in great danger. We immediately summoned Muḥammad-Hádiy-i-Farhádí, and gave him the necessary directions to release her from her captivity, and escort her to the capital. As the enemy had seized Our house, We were unable to accommodate her indefinitely in Our home. Accordingly, We arranged for her transference from Our house to that of the Minister of War,[1] who, in those days, had been disgraced by his sovereign and had been deported to Káshán. We requested his sister, who still was numbered among Our friends, to act as hostess to Ṭáhirih.

"She remained in her company until the call of the Báb, bidding Us proceed to Khurásán, reached Our ears. We decided that Ṭáhirih should proceed immediately to that province, and commissioned Mírzá[2] to conduct her to a place outside the gate of the city, and from thence to any locality he deemed advisable in that neighbourhood. She was taken to an orchard in the vicinity of which was a deserted building, where they found an old man who acted as its caretaker. Mírzá Músá returned and informed Us of the reception which had been accorded to them, and highly praised the beauty of the surrounding landscape. We subsequently arranged for her departure for Khurásán, and promised that We would follow within the space of a few days.

"We soon joined her at Badasht, where We rented a garden for her use, and appointed the same Muḥammad-Hádí who had achieved her deliverance, as her doorkeeper. About seventy of Our companions were with Us and lodged in a place in the vicinity of that garden.

"We fell ill one day, and were confined to bed. Ṭáhirih sent a request to call upon Us. We were surprised at her message, and were at a loss as to what We should reply. Suddenly We saw her at the door, her face unveiled before Us. How well has Mírzá Áqá Ján[3] commented upon that incident. 'The face of Fáṭimih,' he said, 'must needs be revealed on the Day of Judgment and appear unveiled before the eyes of men. At that moment the voice of the Unseen

[1] Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Núrí, who succeeded the Amír-Niẓám as Grand Vazír of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh.

[2] Áqáy-i-Kalím, brother of Bahá'u'lláh. [3] Bahá'u'lláh's amanuensis.

shall be heard saying: "Turn your eyes away from that which ye have seen." '

"How great was the consternation that seized the companions on that day! Fear and bewilderment filled their hearts. A few, unable to tolerate that which was to them so revolting a departure from the established customs of Islám, fled in horror from before her face. Dismayed, they sought refuge in a deserted castle in that neighbourhood. Among those who were scandalised by her behaviour and severed from her entirely were the Siyyid-i-Nahrí[1] and his brother Mírzá Hádí, to both of whom We sent word that it was unnecessary for them to desert their companions and seek refuge in a castle.

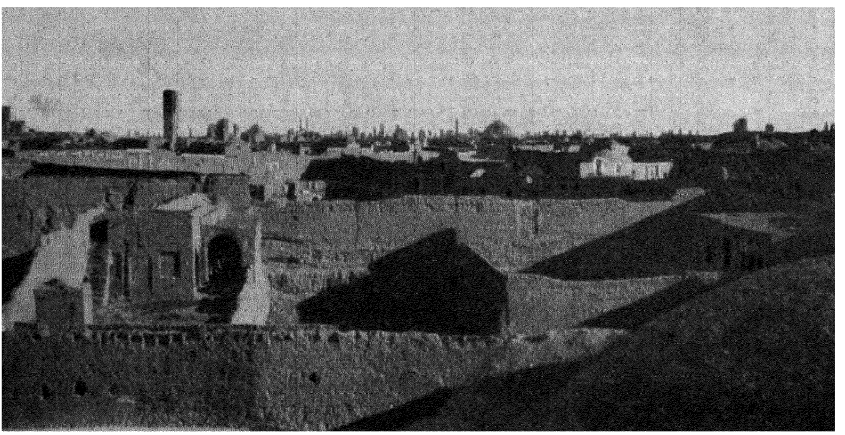
"Our friends eventually dispersed, leaving Us at the mercy of Our enemies. When, at a later time, We went to Ámul, such was the turmoil which the people had raised that above four thousand persons had congregated in the masjid and had crowded onto the roofs of their houses. The leading mullá of the town denounced Us bitterly. 'You have perverted the Faith of Islám,' he cried in his mázindaráni dialect, 'and sullied its fame! Last night I saw you in a dream enter the masjid, which was thronged by an eager multitude that had gathered to witness your arrival. As the crowd pressed round you, I beheld, and, lo, the Qá'im was standing in a corner with His gaze fixed upon your countenance, His features betraying great surprise. This dream I regard as evidence of your having deviated from the path of Truth.' We assured him that the expression of surprise on that countenance was a sign of the Qá'im's strong disapproval of the treatment he and his fellow-townsmen had accorded Us. He questioned Us regarding the Mission of the Báb. We informed him that, although We had never met Him face to face, yet We cherished, none the less, a great affection for Him. We expressed Our profound conviction that He had, under no circumstances, acted contrary to the Faith of Islám.

"The mullá and his followers, however, refused to believe Us, and rejected Our testimony as a perversion of the truth. They eventually placed Us in confinement, and forbade Our

[1] Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Nahrí.

friends to meet Us. The acting governor of Āmul succeeded in effecting Our release from captivity. Through an opening in the wall that he ordered his men to make, he enabled Us to leave that room, and conducted Us to his house. No sooner were the inhabitants informed of this act than they arose against Us, besieged the governor's residence, pelted Us with stones, and hurled in Our face the foulest invectives.

"At the time We purposed to send Muḥammad-Hádiy-i-Farhádí to Qazvín, in order to achieve the deliverance of Ṭáhirih and conduct her to Ṭihrán, Shaykh Abú-Turáb wrote Us, insisting that such an attempt was fraught with grave risks and might occasion an unprecedented tumult. We



PANORAMA OF YAZD

refused to be deflected from Our purpose. That Shaykh was a kind-hearted man, was simple and lowly in temper, and behaved with great dignity. He lacked courage and determination, however, and betrayed weakness on certain occasions."

A word should now be added regarding the closing stages of the tragedy that witnessed to the heroism of the Seven Martyrs of Ṭihrán. For three days and three nights they remained abandoned in the Sabzih-Maydán, which adjoined the imperial palace, exposed to untold indignities which an unrelenting foe heaped upon them. Thousands of devout shí'ahs gathered round their corpses, kicked them with their

feet, and spat upon their faces. They were pelted, cursed, and mocked by the angry multitude. Heaps of refuse were flung upon their remains by the bystanders, and the foulest atrocities were perpetrated upon their bodies. No voice was raised in protest, no hand was stretched to stay the arm of the barbarous oppressor.

Having allayed the tumult of their passion, they buried them outside the gate of the capital, in a place which lay beyond the limits of the public cemetery, adjoining the moat, between the gates of Naw and of Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Aẓím. They were all laid in the same grave, thus remaining united in body, as they had been in spirit during the days of their earthly life.[1]

The news of their martyrdom came as an added blow to the Báb, who was already plunged in sorrow at the fate that had befallen the heroes of Ṭabarsí. In the detailed Tablet He revealed in their honour, every word of which testified to the exalted position they occupied in His eyes, He referred to them as those very "Seven Goats" spoken of in the traditions of Islám, who on the Day of Judgment shall "walk in front of the promised Qá'im." They shall symbolise by their life the noblest spirit of heroism, and by their death shall manifest true acquiescence in His will. By preceding the Qá'im, the Báb explained, is meant that their martyrdom will precede that of the Qá'im Himself, who is their Shepherd. What the Báb had predicted came to be fulfilled, inasmuch as His own martyrdom occurred four months later in Tabríz.

That memorable year witnessed, in addition to the martyrdom of the Báb and that of His seven companions in Ṭihrán, the momentous happenings of Nayríz which culminated in the death of Vahíd. Towards the end of that same year, Zanján likewise became the centre of a storm which raged with exceptional violence throughout the surrounding district, bringing in its wake the massacre of a vast number of

[1] "When the executioners had completed their bloody work, the rabble onlookers, awed for a while by the patient courage of the martyrs, again allowed their ferocious fanaticism to break out in insults to the mortal remains of those whose spirits had now passed beyond the power of their malice. They cast stones and filth at the motionless corpses, abusing them, and crying out, 'This is the recompense of the people of affection and of such as pursue the Path of Wisdom and Truth!' Nor would they suffer their bodies to be interred in a burial-ground, but cast them into a pit outside the Gate of Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Aẓím, which they then filled up." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note B, pp. 174–5.)

the Báb's staunchest disciples. That year, rendered memorable by the magnificent heroism which those staunch supporters of His Faith displayed, not to speak of the marvellous circumstances that attended His own martyrdom, must ever remain as one of the most glorious chapters ever recorded in that Faith's blood-stained history. The entire face of the land was blackened by the atrocities in which a cruel and rapacious enemy freely and persistently indulged. From Khurásán, on the western confines of Persia, as far west as Tabríz, the scene of the Báb's martyrdom, and from the northern cities of Zanján and Ṭihrán, stretching south as far as Nayríz, in the province of Fárs, the whole country was enveloped in darkness, a darkness that heralded the dawning light of the Revelation which the expected Ḥusayn was soon to manifest, a Revelation mightier and more glorious than that which the Báb Himself had proclaimed.[1]

[1] "Pendant que ces événements se déroulaient au Nord de la Perse, les provinces du centre et du Sud étaient profondément remuées par les prédications enflammées des missionaires de la nouvelle doctrine. Le peuple, léger, crédule, ignorant, superstitieux à l'excès était frappé de stupeur par les miracles continuels qu'à chaque instant il entendait raconter; les mullás anxieux, sentant leurs troupeau frémissant prêt à leur échapper, redoublaient de calomnies et d'imputations infamantes; les mensonges les plus grossiers, les imaginations les plus sanglantes étaient par eux répandus dans la populace hésitante, partagée entre l'horreur et l'admiration." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 387.)

CHAPTER XXII

THE NAYRÍZ UPHEAVAL

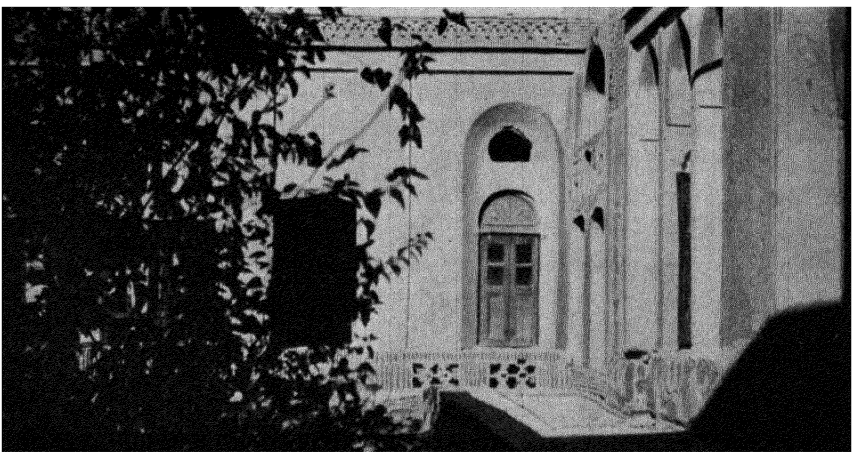
IN THE early days of the siege of the fort of Ṭabarsí, Vaḥíd was engaged in spreading the teachings of the Cause in Burújird as well as in the province of Kurdistán. He had resolved to win the majority of the inhabitants of those regions to the Faith of the Báb, and had intended to proceed from thence to Fárs and there continue his labours. As soon as he had learned of Mullá Ḥusayn's departure for Mázindarán, he hastened to the capital and undertook the necessary preparations for his journey to the fort of Ṭabarsí. He was preparing to leave, when Bahá'u'lláh arrived from Mázindarán and informed him of the impossibility of joining his brethren. He was greatly saddened at this news, and his only consolation in those days was to visit Bahá'u'lláh frequently, and to obtain the benefit of His wise and priceless counsels.[1]

Vaḥíd eventually determined to proceed to Qazvín and to resume the work in which he had been engaged. From thence he left for Qum and Káshán, where he met his fellow-disciples and was able to stimulate their enthusiasm and reinforce their efforts. He continued his journey to Iṣfáhán, to Ardistán and Ardikán, and in each of these cities he proclaimed, with zest and fearlessness, the fundamental teachings of his Master and succeeded in winning over a considerable

[1] "When, after the lapse of some time," writes Mírzá Jání, "I again had the honour of meeting Áqá Siyyid Yaḥyá in Ṭihrán, I observed in his august countenance the signs of a glory and power which I had not noticed during my first journey with him to the capital, nor on other occasions of meeting, and I knew that these signs portended the near approach of his departure from the world. Subsequently he said several times in the course of conversation: 'This is my last journey, and hereafter you will see me no more'; and often, explicitly or by implication, he gave utterance to the same thought. Sometimes when we were together, and the conversation took an appropriate turn, he would remark: 'The saints of God are able to foretell coming events, and I swear, by that loved One in the grasp of whose power my soul lies, that I know and could tell where and how I shall be slain, and who it is that shall slay me. And how glorious and blessed a thing it is that my blood should be shed for the uplifting of the Word of Truth!' " (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," p. 115.)

number of able supporters to the Cause. He reached Yazd in time to celebrate the festivities of Naw-Rúz with his brethren, who expressed their joy at his arrival and were greatly encouraged by his presence among them. Being a man of renowned influence, he possessed, in addition to his house in Yazd, where his wife and her four sons had settled, a home in Dáráb, which was the abode of his ancestors, and another one in Nayríz, which was superbly furnished.

He arrived at Yazd on the first day of the month of Jamádíyu'l-Avval, in the year 1266 A.H.,[1] the fifth day of which, the anniversary of the Báb's Declaration, coincided



VAḤÍD'S HOUSE AT YAZD

with the feast of Naw-Rúz. The leading 'ulamás and notables of the city all came on that day to greet him and to offer their best wishes. Navváb-i-Raḍaví, the meanest and most prominent among his adversaries, was present on that occasion, and maliciously hinted at the extravagance and splendour of that reception. "The Sháh's imperial banquet," he was heard to remark, "can scarcely hope to rival the sumptuous repast you have spread before us. I suspect that in addition to this national festival which to-day we are celebrating, you commemorate another one besides it." Vahíd's bold and sarcastic retort provoked the laughter of those who were present. All applauded, in view of the av-

[1] 1850 A.D.

arice and wickedness of the Navváb, the appropriateness of his remark. The Navváb, who had never encountered the ridicule of so large and distinguished a company, was stung by that answer. The smouldering fire which he nourished in his mind against his opponent now blazed forth with added intensity, and impelled him to satisfy his thirst for revenge.

Vaḥíd seized the occasion to proclaim, fearlessly and without reserve, in that gathering, the basic principles of his Faith, and to demonstrate their validity. The majority of those who heard him were but partially acquainted with the distinguishing features of the Cause, and were ignorant of its full import. Certain ones among them were irresistibly attracted, and readily embraced it; the rest, unable to challenge its claims publicly, denounced it in their hearts and swore to extirpate it by every means in their power. His eloquence and fearless exposition of the Truth inflamed their hostility and strengthened their determination to seek, without delay, the overthrow of his influence. That very day witnessed the combination of their forces against him, and marked the beginning of an episode that was destined to bring in its wake so much suffering and distress.[1]

To destroy the life of Vaḥíd became the paramount object of their activity. They spread the news that, on the day of Naw-Rúz, in the midst of the assembled dignitaries of the city, both civil and ecclesiastical, Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Dárábí had had the temerity to unveil the challenging features of the Faith of the Báb and had adduced, for the purpose of his argument, proofs and evidences gleaned both from the Qur'án and from the traditions of Islám. "Though his listeners," they urged, "ranked among the most illustrious of the mujtahids of the city, no one could be found in that assemblage to venture a protest against his vehement assertions of the

[1] "Son ardeur l'entraînait, et, rempli de l'amour de Dieu, il voulut faire connaître à la Perse tout entière la gloire et la joie de l'unique et éternelle Vérité. 'Aimer et cacher son secret est chose impossible' a dit le poète: aussi notre Siyyid se mit-il à prêcher ouvertement, dans les mosquées, dans les rues, dans les bazars, sur les places publiques, enfin partout où il rencontrait des auditeurs. Un tel enthousiasme porta ses fruits, et les conversions vinrent à lui, nombreuses et désintéressées: les mullás s'émurent et dénoncèrent violemment le sacrilège au Gouverneur de la ville." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 390.)

claims of his creed. The silence kept by those who heard him has been responsible for the wave of enthusiasm which has swept over the city in his favour, and has brought no less than half of its inhabitants to his feet, while the remainder are being fast attracted."

This report spread like wildfire throughout Yazd and the surrounding district. It kindled, on the one hand, the flame of bitter hatred, and, on the other, was instrumental in adding considerable numbers to those who had already identified themselves with that Faith. From Ardikán and Manshád, as well as from the more distant towns and villages, crowds of people, eager to hear of the new Message, flocked to the house of Vaḥíd. "What are we to do?" they asked him. "In what manner do you advise us to show forth the sincerity of our faith and the intensity of our devotion?" From morning till night, Vaḥíd was absorbed in resolving their perplexities and in directing their steps in the path of service.

For forty days, this feverish activity persisted on the part of his zealous supporters, both men and women. His house had become the rallying centre of an innumerable host of devotees who yearned to demonstrate worthily the spirit of the Faith that had fired their souls. The commotion that ensued provided the Navváb-i-Raḍaví with a fresh pretext for enlisting the support of the governor of the city,[1] who was young and inexperienced in the affairs of State, in his efforts against his adversary. He soon fell a victim to the intrigues and machinations of that evil plotter, who succeeded in inducing him to despatch a force of armed men to besiege the house of Vahíd. While a regiment of the army was proceeding to that spot, a mob composed of the degraded elements of the city were, at the instigation of the Navváb, directing their steps towards that same place, determined by their threats and imprecations to intimidate its occupants.

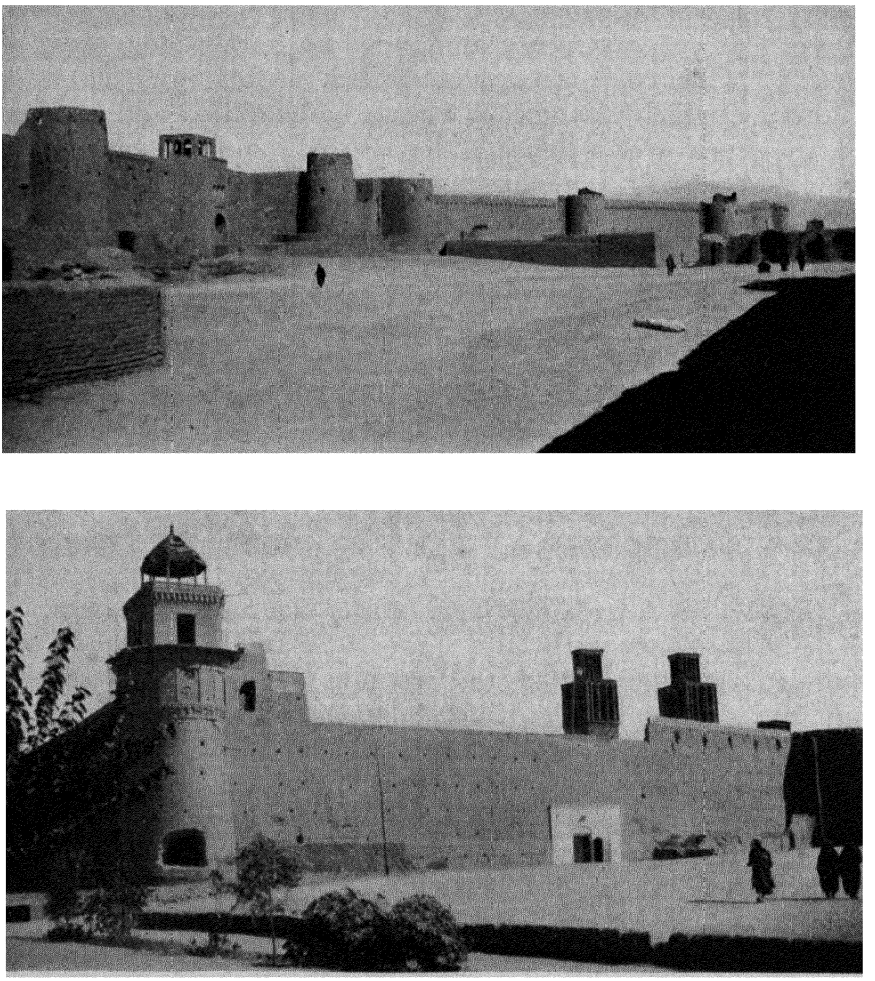
Though hemmed in by hostile forces on every side, Vaḥíd continued, from the window of the upper floor of his house, to animate the zeal of his supporters and to clarify whatever remained obscure in their minds. At the sight of a whole regiment, reinforced by an infuriated mob, preparing to at-

[1] His name was Áqá Khán.

tack them, they turned to Vaḥíd in their distress and begged him to direct their steps. "This very sword that lies before me," was his answer, as he remained seated beside the window, "was given me by the Qá'im Himself. God knows, had I been authorised by Him to wage holy warfare against this people, I would, alone and unaided, have annihilated their forces. I am, however, commanded to refrain from such an act." "This very steed," he added, as his eyes fell upon the horse which his servant Ḥasan had saddled and brought to the front of his house, "the late Muḥammad Sháh gave me, that with it I might undertake the mission with which he entrusted me, of conducting an impartial investigation into the nature of the Faith proclaimed by the Siyyid-i-Báb. He asked me to report personally to him the results of my enquiry, inasmuch as I was the only one among the ecclesiastical leaders of Ṭihrán in whom he could repose implicit confidence. I undertook that mission with the firm resolution of confuting the arguments of that siyyid, of inducing Him to abandon His ideas and to acknowledge my leadership, and of conducting Him with me to Tihrán as a witness to the triumph I was to achieve. When I came into His presence, however, and heard His words, the opposite of that which I had imagined took place. In the course of my first audience with Him, I was utterly abashed and confounded; by the end of the second, I felt as helpless and ignorant as a child; the third found me as lowly as the dust beneath His feet. He had indeed ceased to be the contemptible siyyid I had previously imagined. To me, He was the manifestation of God Himself, the living embodiment of the Divine Spirit. Ever since that day, I have yearned to lay down my life for His sake. I rejoice that the day I have longed to witness is fast approaching."

Seeing the agitation that had seized his friends, he exhorted them to be calm and patient, and to rest assured that the omnipotent Avenger would ere long inflict, with His own invisible hand, a crushing defeat upon the forces arrayed against His loved ones. No sooner had he uttered these words than the news arrived that a certain Muḥammad-'Abdu'lláh, whom no one suspected of being still alive, had suddenly emerged with a number of his comrades, who had

likewise disappeared from sight, and, raising the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!"[1] had flung themselves upon their assailants and dispersed their forces. He displayed such courage that the whole detachment, abandoning their arms, had



VIEWS OF THE FORT OF NÁRÍN, YAZD

sought refuge, together with the governor, in the fort of Nárín.

That night, Muḥammad-'Abdu'lláh asked to be introduced into the presence of Vahíd. He assured him of his

[1] See Glossary.

faith in the Cause, and acquainted him with the plans he had conceived of subjugating the enemy. "Although your intervention," Vaḥíd replied, "has to-day averted from this house the danger of an unforeseen calamity, yet you must recognise that until now our contest with these people was limited to an argument centring round the Revelation of the Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán. The Navváb, however, will henceforth be induced to instigate the people against us, and will contend that I have arisen to establish my undisputed sovereignty over the entire province and intend to extend it over the whole of Persia." Vaḥíd advised him to leave the city immediately, and to commit him to the care and protection of the Almighty. "Not until our appointed time arrives," he assured him, "will the enemy be able to inflict upon us the slightest injury."

Muḥammad-'Abdu'lláh, however, preferred to ignore the advice of Vaḥíd. "It would be cowardly of me," he was heard to remark as he retired, "to abandon my friends to the mercy of an irate and murderous adversary. What, then, would be the difference between me and those who forsook the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhadá[1] on the day of Ásh<u></u>úrá,[2] and left him companionless on the field of Karbilá? A merciful God will, I trust, be indulgent towards me and will forgive my action."

With these words, he directed his steps to the fort of Nárín and compelled the forces that had massed in its vicinity to seek an inglorious refuge within the walls of the fort; and succeeded in keeping the governor confined along with those who were besieged. He himself kept watch, ready to intercept whatever reinforcements might seek to reach them.

Meanwhile the Navváb had succeeded in raising a general upheaval in which the mass of the inhabitants took part. They were preparing to attack the house of Vaḥíd when he summoned Siyyid 'Abdu'l-'Aẓím-i-Khu'í, surnamed the Siyyid-i-Khál-Dár, who had participated for a few days in the defence of the fort of Ṭabarsí, and whose dignity of bearing attracted widespread attention, and bade him mount his own steed and address publicly, through the streets and

[1] The Imám Ḥusayn.

[2] The tenth of Muḥarram, the day on which the Imám Ḥusayn was martyred.

bazaars, an appeal on his behalf to the entire populace, and urge them to embrace the Cause of the Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán. "Let them know," he added, "that I disclaim any intention of waging holy warfare against them. Let them be warned, however, that if they persist in besieging my house and continue their attacks upon me, in utter defiance of my position and lineage, I shall be constrained, as a measure of self-defence, to resist and disperse their forces. If they choose to reject my counsel and yield to the whisperings of the crafty Navváb, I will order seven of my companions to repulse their forces shamefully and to crush their hopes."

The Siyyid-i-Khál-Dár leaped upon the steed and, escorted by four of his chosen brethren, rode out through the market and pealed out, in accents of compelling majesty, the warning he had been commissioned to proclaim. Not content with the message with which he had been entrusted, he ventured to add, in his own inimitable manner, a few words by which he sought to heighten the effect which the proclamation had produced. "Beware," he thundered, "if you despise our plea. My lifted voice, I warn you, will prove sufficient to cause the very walls of your fort to tremble, and the strength of my arm will be capable of breaking down the resistance of its gates!"

His stentorian voice rang out like a trumpet, and diffused consternation in the hearts of those who heard it. With one voice, the affrighted population declared their intention to lay down their swords and cease to molest Vaḥíd, whose lineage they said they would henceforth recognise and respect.

Constrained by the blank refusal of the people to fight against Vaḥíd, the Navváb induced them to direct their attack against Muḥammad-'Abdu'lláh and his comrades, who were stationed in the neighbourhood of the fort. The clash of these forces induced the governor to sally from his refuge and to instruct the besieged detachment to join hands with those who had been recruited by the Navváb. Muḥammad-'Abdu'lláh had begun to disperse the mob that had rushed forth from the city against him, when he was suddenly assailed by the fire which the troops opened upon him by order of the governor. A bullet struck his foot and threw him to the ground. A number of his supporters were also

wounded. His brother hurriedly got him away to a place of safety, and from thence carried him, at his request, to the house of Vahíd.

The enemy followed him to that house, fully determined to seize and slay him. The clamour of the people that had massed around his house compelled Vahíd to order Mullá Muḥammad-Riḍáy-i-Manshádí, one of the most enlightened 'ulamás of Manshád, who had discarded his turban and offered himself as his doorkeeper, to sally forth and, with the aid of six companions, whom he would choose, to scatter their forces. "Let each one of you raise his voice," he commanded them, "and repeat seven times the words 'Alláh-u-Akbar,'[1] and on your seventh invocation spring forward at one and the same moment into the midst of your assailants."

Mullá Muḥammad-Riḍa, whom Bahá'u'lláh had named Raḍa'r-Rúḥ, sprang to his feet and, with his companions, straightway proceeded to fulfil the instructions he had received. Those who accompanied him, though frail of form and inexperienced in the art of swordsmanship, were fired with a faith that made them the terror of their adversaries. Seven of the most redoubtable among the enemy perished that day, which was the twenty-seventh of the month of Jamádíyu'th-Thání.[2] "No sooner had we routed the enemy," Mullá Muḥammad-Riḍá related, "and returned to the house of Vaḥíd, than we found Muḥammad-'Abdu'lláh lying wounded before us. He was carried to our leader, and partook of the food with which the latter had been served. Afterwards he was borne to a hiding place, where he remained concealed until he recovered from his wound. Eventually he was seized and slain by the enemy."

That very night, Vaḥíd bade his companions disperse and exercise the utmost vigilance to secure their safety. He advised his wife to remove, with her children and all their belongings, to the home of her father, and to leave behind whatever was his personal property. "This palatial residence," he informed her, "I have built with the sole intention that it should be eventually demolished in the path of the Cause, and the stately furnishings with which I have adorned it have been purchased in the hope that one day I shall be

[1] "God is the Most Great." [2] May 10, 1850 A.D.

able to sacrifice them for the sake of my Beloved. Then will friend and foe alike realise that he who owned this house was endowed with so great and priceless a heritage that an earthly mansion, however sumptuously adorned and magnificently equipped, had no worth in his eyes; that it had sunk, in his estimation, to the state of a heap of bones to which only the dogs of the earth could feel attracted. Would that such compelling evidence of the spirit of renunciation were able to open the eyes of this perverse people, and to stir in them the desire to follow in the steps of him who showed that spirit!"

In the mid-watches of that same night, Vaḥíd arose and, collecting the writings of the Báb that were in his possession, as well as the copies of all the treatises that he himself had composed, entrusted them to his servant Ḥasan, and ordered him to convey them to a place outside the gate of the city where the road branches off to Mihríz. He bade him await his arrival, and warned him that, were he to disregard his instructions, he would never again be able to meet him.

No sooner had Ḥasan mounted his horse and prepared to leave than the cries of the sentinels, who kept watch at the entrance of the fort, reached his ears. Fearing lest they should capture him and seize the precious manuscripts in his possession, he decided to follow a different route from the one which his master had instructed him to take. As he was passing behind the fort, the sentinels recognised him, shot his horse, and captured him.

Meanwhile Vaḥíd was preparing to depart from Yazd. Leaving his two sons, Siyyid Ismá'íl and Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad, in the care of their mother, he left, accompanied by his two other sons, Siyyid Aḥmad and Siyyid Mihdí, together with two of his companions who were both residents of Yazd and had asked permission to accompany him on his journey. The first, who was named Ghulám-Riḍá, was a man of exceptional courage, while the latter, Ghulám-Riḍáy-i-Kúchik, had distinguished himself in the art of marksmanship. He chose the same route that he had advised his servant to take, and, arriving safely at that spot, was surprised to find that Hasan was missing. Vahid knew immediately that he had disregarded his directions and had been captured by the

enemy. He deplored his fate, and was reminded of the action of Muhammad-'Abdu'lláh, who had similarly acted against his will and had in consequence suffered injury. They were subsequently informed that on the morning of that same day Hasan was blown from the mouth of a cannon[1] and that a certain Mírzá Ḥasan, who had been the imám of one of the quarters of Yazd, and who was a man of renowned piety, had an hour later also been captured and subjected to the same fate as his comrade.

The departure of Vaḥíd from Yazd roused the enemy to fresh exertions. They rushed to his house, plundered his possessions, and demolished it completely.[2] He himself was meanwhile directing his steps towards Nayríz. Though unaccustomed to walking, he covered, that night, seven farsangs[3] on foot, while his sons were carried part of the way by his two companions. In the course of the ensuing day, he concealed himself within the recesses of a neighbouring mountain. As soon as his brother, who resided in that vicinity and entertained a deep affection for him, was informed of his arrival, he secretly despatched to him whatever provisions he required. That same day a body of the governor's mounted attendants, who had set out in pursuit of Vaḥíd, arrived at that village, searched the house of his brother, where they suspected that he was concealed, and appropriated a large amount of his property. Unable to find him, they retraced their steps to Yazd.

Vahíd, in the meantime, made his way through the mountains until he reached the district of Bavánát-i-Fárs. Most of its inhabitants, who were numbered among his fervent admirers, readily embraced the Cause, among whom was the

[1] "When they would have bound him with his back towards the gun, he said: 'Bind me, I pray you, with my face towards the gun, that I may see it fired.' The gunners and those who stood by looking on were all astonished at his composure and cheerfulness, and indeed one who can be cheerful in such a plight must needs have great faith and fortitude." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," p. 117.)

[2] "Áqá Khán, quand il eut constaté la disparition du rebelle, poussa un soupir de soulagement. Il jugea d'ailleurs que la poursuite des fugitifs pouvait offrir quelques dangers et qu'il était infiniment plus pratique, plus salutaire, plus profitable et moins dangereux de torturer —à la condition qu'ils fussent riches—les Bábís ou soi-disant tels qui restaient dans la ville. Il fit donc rechercher les plus opulents, les fit mettre à mort et confisqua leurs biens, vengeant ainsi la religion outragée, ce qui peut-être lui importait peu, mais remplissant ainsi ses coffres, ce qui lui plaisait infiniment." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 391.)

[3] See Glossary.

well-known Ḥájí Siyyid Ismá'íl, the Shaykhu'l-Islám of Bavánát. A considerable number of these people accompanied him as far as the village of Fasá, where the inhabitants refused to respond to the Message which he invited them to follow.

All along his route, wherever he tarried, Vaḥíd's first thought, as soon as he had dismounted, was to seek the neighbouring masjid, wherein he would summon the people to hear him announce the tidings of the New Day. Utterly oblivious of the fatigues of his journey, he would promptly ascend the pulpit and fearlessly proclaim to his congregation the character of the Faith he had risen to champion. He would spend only one night in that place if he had succeeded in winning to the Cause souls upon whom he could rely to propagate it after his departure. Otherwise he would straightway resume his march and refuse further to associate with them. "Through whichever village I pass," he often remarked, "and fail to inhale from its inhabitants the fragrance of belief, its food and its drink are both distasteful to me."

Arriving at the village of Rúníz, in the district of Fasá, Vahíd decided to tarry for a few days. Those hearts which he found receptive to his call he strove to attract and to inflame with the fire of God's love. As soon as the news of his arrival reached Nayríz, the entire population of the Chinár-Súkhtih quarter hastened out to meet him. People from other quarters likewise, impelled by their love and admiration for him, decided to join them. Fearing lest Zaynu'l-'Abidín Khán, the governor of Nayríz, should object to their visit, the majority of them set out at night. From the quarter of Chinár-Súkhtih alone more than a hundred students, preceded by their leader, Ḥájí Shaykh 'Abdu'l-'Alí, the father-in-law of Vaḥíd, and a judge of recognised standing throughout that district, were moved to join a number of the most distinguished among the notables of Nayríz in greeting the expected visitor ere his arrival at their town. Among these figured Mullá 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn, a venerable man of eighty who was highly esteemed for his piety and learning; Mullá Báqir, who was the imám of the Chinár-Súkhtih quarter; Mírzá Ḥusayn-i-Qutb, the kad-khudá[1] of the Bázár quarter,

[1] See Glossary.

with all his relatives; Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, a relative of the governor; Ḥájí Muḥammad-Taqí, who has been mentioned by Bahá'u'lláh in the "Súriy-i-Ayyúb," together with his son-in-law; Mírzá Nawrá and Mírzá 'Alí-Riḍá, both of the Sádát quarter.[1]

All of these, some by day and others by night, went as far as the village of Rúníz in order to extend their welcome to the visitor, and to assure him of their unalterable devotion. Although the Báb had revealed a general Tablet addressed specially to those who had newly embraced His Cause in Nayríz, yet its recipients remained ignorant of its significance and fundamental principles. It was given to Vaḥíd to enlighten them regarding its true purpose and set forth its distinguishing features.

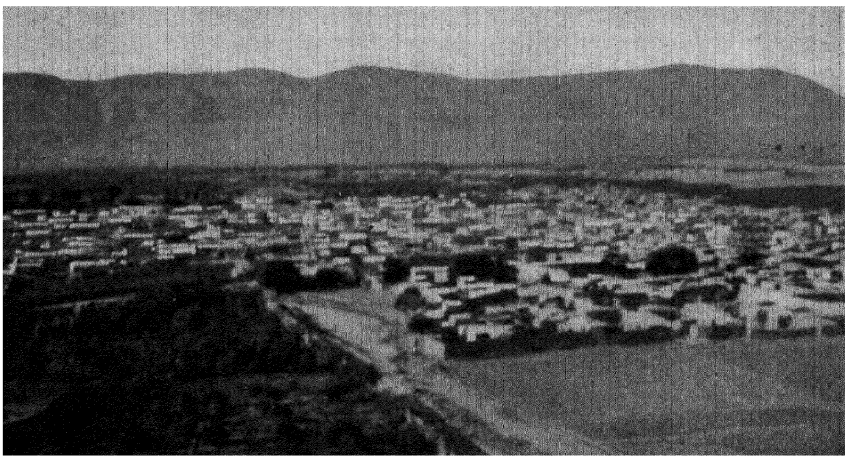
No sooner had Zaynu'l-'Abidín Khán been made aware of the considerable exodus that had taken place for the purpose of welcoming the arrival of Vaḥíd, than he despatched a special messenger to overtake and inform those who had already departed of his determination to take the life, capture the wives, and confiscate the property of everyone who persisted in giving allegiance to him. Not one of those who departed heeded the warning, but rather did they cling still more passionately to their leader. Their unyielding determination and disdainful neglect of his messenger filled the governor with dismay. Fearful lest these should arise against him, he decided to transfer his residence to the village of Quṭrih, where his original home had been, and which lay at a distance of eight farsangs[2] from Nayríz. He chose that

[1] "Les Nayrízis accueillirent Siyyid Yaḥyá avec le plus grand enthousiasme; il n'y avait pas deux jours qu'il était arrivé qu'une foule de gens venaient le voir de nuit, par crainte du Gouvernement, dit le Fárs-Námih, et se mirent à sa disposition en haine de l'autorité. D' autres, fort nombreux, et habitant plus particulièrement le quartier du Chinár-Súkhtih, se convertirent en masse. Ceci en entraîna d'autres et bientôt les Bábís comptèrent dans leurs rangs les ṭullábs de Chinár-Súkhtih qui étaient environ une centaine, leur chef Ḥájí Shaykh 'Abdu'l-'Alí—père de la femme de Siyyid Yaḥyá—, feu Ákhúnd Mullá 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn, homme fort âgé et versé dans les lettres religieuses, Ákhúnd Mullá Báqir, Pish-namáz du quartier Mullá 'Alí Kátib, un autre Mullá 'Alí avec ses quatres frères, et le kad-khudá, et des Rísh-Safíd, et des gens du quartier dit Bázár, tels que feu Mashhadí Mírzá Ḥusayn surnommé Qutb, avec toute sa famille et ses parents, feu Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim qui était neuveu du Gouverneur, feu Ḥájí Muḥammad-Taqí, surnommé Ayyúb et son gendre, Mírzá Ḥusayn et bien d'autres du quartier des Sádáts [Siyyids], et le fils de Mírzá Nawrá, et Mírzá 'Alí-Riḍá, fils de Mírzá Ḥusayn, et le fils de Ḥájí 'Alí, etc., etc. Tous se convertirent, les uns de nuit et en tremblant, les autres sans peur et en plein jour." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 393.)

[2] See Glossary.

village because in its vicinity there stood a massive fortress which he could utilise as a place of refuge in case of danger. He was, moreover, assured that its inhabitants were trained in the art of marksmanship and could be relied upon whenever summoned to defend him.

Vaḥíd had meanwhile left Rúníz for the shrine of Pír-Murád, which was situated outside the village of Iṣṭahbánát. Despite the interdiction pronounced by the 'ulamás of that village against his admittance, no less than twenty of its inhabitants went out to welcome him, and accompanied him as far as Nayríz. When they arrived, in the forenoon of



PANORAMA OF NAYRÍZ

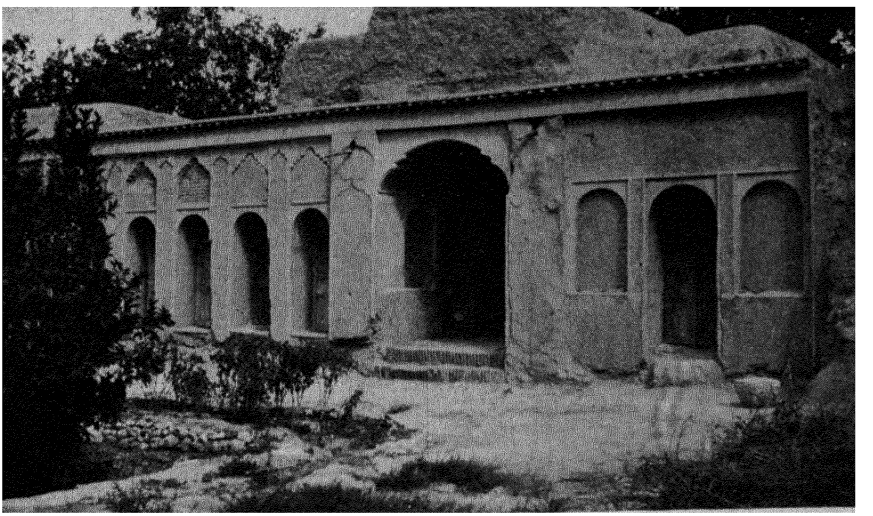
the fifteenth of Rajab,[1] the first thing Vaḥíd did, as soon as he reached his native quarter of Chinár-Súkhtih, even before going to his own house, was to enter the masjid and summon the congregation that had gathered to acknowledge and embrace the Message of the Báb. Impatient to face the multitude that awaited him, still wearing his dust-laden garments, he ascended the pulpit and spoke with such convincing eloquence that the whole audience was electrified by his appeal.[2] No less than a thousand persons, all natives

[1] May 27, 1850 A.D.

[2] "Il monta sur la chaire et s'écria: 'Ne suis-je donc pas celui que vous avez toujours considéré comme votre pasteur et votre guide? N'est-ce pas sur mon avis et sur mes ordrez que vous dirigiez vos consciences dans la voie du salut? Ne suis-je pas celui dont vous avez

of the Chinár-Súkhtih quarter, and five hundred others from other sections of Nayríz, all of whom had thronged the building, spontaneously responded. "We have heard and we obey!" cried, with unrestrained enthusiasm, the jubilant multitude, as they came forward to assure him of their homage and gratitude. The spell which that impassioned address threw over the hearts of those who heard it was such as Nayríz had never before experienced.

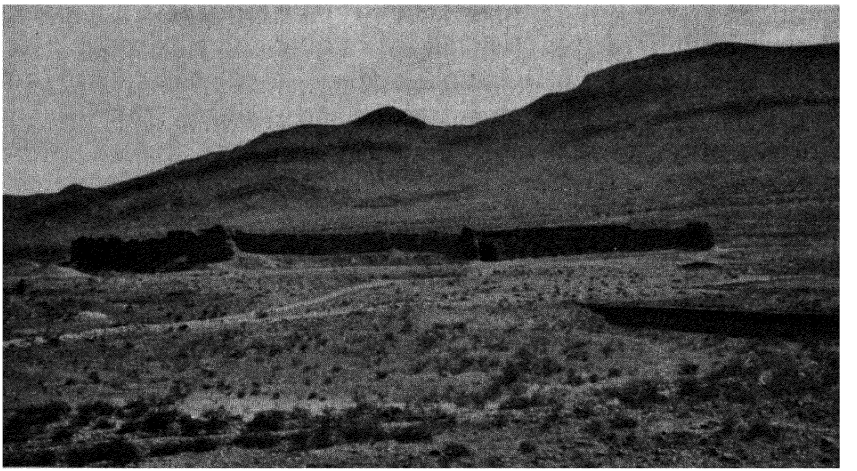
"My sole purpose," Vahíd went on, explaining to his



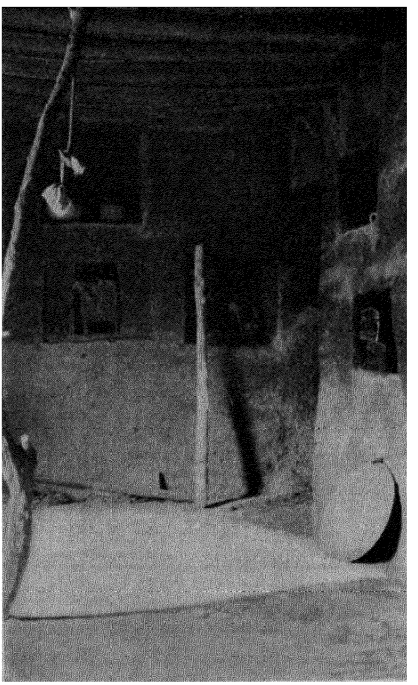
VAḤÍD'S HOUSE AT NAYRÍZ

audience, as soon as the first flush of excitement had subsided, "in coming to Nayríz is to proclaim the Cause of God. I thank and glorify Him for having enabled me to touch your hearts with His Message. No need for me to tarry any longer in your midst, for if I prolong my stay, I fear that the governor will ill-treat you because of me. He may seek reinforcement

toujours écouté la parole et les conseils? Que s'est-il donc passé que vous me traitiez aujourd'hui en ennemi de votre religion et de vous-mêmes? Quelle chose licite ai-je défendue? Quelle chose défendue ai-je permise? Quelle impiété ai-je commise? Dans quelle erreur vous ai-je engagés? Et voilà que parce que j'ai dit la vérité, que parce que loyalement j'ai cherché à vous instruire, on m'opprime et on me torture! Mon cœur brûle d'amour pour vous, et vous me martyrisez. Souvenez-vous, souvenez-vous bien que quiconque me contriste, contriste mon aïeul, Muḥammad le radieux Prophète, et quiconque me vient en aide vient à son secours. Au nom de tout ce que vous avez de plus sacré, quiconque aime le Prophète me suive!' " (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 395.)



THE FORT OF KHĀJIH



VAḤÍD'S ROOM IN THE FORT

from Shíráz and destroy your homes and subject you to untold indignities." "We are ready and resigned to the will of God," answered, with one voice, the congregation. "God grant us His grace to withstand the calamities that may yet befall us. We cannot, however, reconcile ourselves to so abrupt and hasty a separation from you."

No sooner had these words escaped their lips than men and women joined hands in conducting Vaḥíd triumphantly to his home. Wild with excitement and exultant with joy, they pressed round him and, with cheers and acclamations, escorted him to the very entrance of his house.

The few days Vaḥíd consented to tarry in Nayríz were spent mostly in the masjid, where he continued with his cus-

tomary eloquence and without the least reservation to propound the fundamental teachings which he had received from his Master. Every day witnessed an increase in the number of his audience, and from every side evidences of his marvellous influence became more and more manifest.

The fascination which he exerted over the people could not fail to fan to fury the dormant hostility of Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán. He was roused to new exertions, and gave orders that an army be raised for the avowed purpose of eradicating a Cause which he felt was fast undermining his own position. He soon succeeded in recruiting about a thousand men, consisting of both cavalry and infantry, all of whom were well trained in the art of warfare and were equipped with an ample store of munitions. His plan was, by a sudden onset, to make him a prisoner.

Vaḥíd, as soon as he was informed of the designs of the governor, ordered those twenty companions who had left Iṣṭahbánát to welcome him, and who had accompanied him as far as Nayríz, to occupy the fort of Kházih, which was situated in the vicinity of the Chinár-Súkhtih quarter. He appointed Shaykh Hádí, son of Shaykh Muḥsin, as the leader of the band, and urged his followers who resided in that quarter to fortify the gates, the turrets, and the walls of that stronghold.

The governor had meanwhile transferred his seat to his own house in the Bázár quarter. The force he had raised accompanied him and occupied the fort situated in its vicinity. Its towers and walls, which he began to reinforce, overlooked the whole town. Having compelled Siyyid Abú-Ṭálib, the kad-khudá[1] of that quarter and one of the companions of Vahíd, to evacuate his house, he fortified its roof and, stationing upon it a number of his men, under the command of Muhammad-'Alí Khán, he gave orders to open fire upon his adversary. The first to suffer was that same Mullá 'Abdu'l-Husayn who, despite his advanced age, had walked out to welcome Vaḥíd. He was offering his prayer on the roof of his house when a bullet struck his right foot, causing him to bleed profusely. That cruel blow evoked the sympathy of Vahíd, who hastened, in a written message to the sufferer,

[1] See Glossary.

to express his grief at the injury he had sustained, and to cheer him with the thought that he, at this advanced stage of his life, was the first to be chosen to fall a victim in the path of the Cause.

The suddenness of the attack dismayed a number of the companions who had hastily embraced the Message and had failed to appreciate its full meaning. Their faith was so severely shaken that a few were induced, in the dead of night, to separate themselves from their companions and join forces with the enemy. Vaḥíd had no sooner been informed of their action than he arose at the hour of dawn and, mounting his steed and accompanied by a number of his supporters, rode out to the fort of Khájih, where he fixed his residence.

His arrival was the signal for a fresh attack upon him. Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán immediately despatched his elder brother, 'Alí-Aṣghar Khán, together with a thousand men, all armed and well trained, to lay siege to that fort, in which seventy-two companions had already taken shelter. At the hour of sunrise, a certain number of them, acting in accordance with the instructions of Vaḥíd, sallied forth, and with extraordinary rapidity forced the besiegers to disperse.

No more than three of the companions met their death in the course of that encounter. The first was Táju'd-Dín, a man renowned for his fearlessness, whose business was the manufacture of the woollen kuláh;[1] the second was Zayníl, son of Iskandar, who was an agriculturist by profession; the third was Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, who was a man of distinguished merit.

This complete and sudden rout aroused the apprehensions of Prince Fírúz Mírzá, the Nuṣratu'd-Dawlih, governor of Shíráz, who gave orders for the prompt extermination of the occupants of the fort. Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán despatched one of the prince's attendants to Vaḥíd, urging him, in view of the strained relations between them, to depart from Nayríz, in the hope that the mischief that had been kindled might soon be extinguished. "Tell him," replied Vaḥíd, "that my two children, together with their two attendants, are all the company I have with me. If my presence in this town will cause mischief, I am willing to depart. Why is it that, in-

[1] See Glossary.

stead of according us the welcome which befits a descendant of the Prophet, he has deprived us of water and has incited his men to besiege and attack us? If he persists in denying us the necessities of life, I warn him that seven of my companions, whom he regards as the most contemptible among men, will inflict upon his combined forces a humiliating defeat."

Finding that Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán ignored his warning, Vaḥíd ordered his companions to emerge from the fort and punish their assailants. With admirable courage and confidence, they succeeded, though extremely young in years, and utterly inexperienced in the use of arms, in demoralising a trained and organised army. 'Alí-Aṣghár Khán himself perished, and two of his sons were captured. Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán disgracefully retreated, with what still remained of his scattered forces, to the village of Quṭrih, acquainted the prince with the gravity of the situation, and begged him to send immediate reinforcements, stressing in particular the need for heavy artillery and a large detachment of both infantry and cavalry.

Vaḥíd, on his part, finding that the enemy was bent on their extermination, gave orders that the defences of the fort be strengthened, that a water-cistern be constructed within its enclosure, and that the tents they had carried away be pitched outside its gates. That day certain of his companions had assigned to them special functions and duties. Karbilá'í Mírzá Muḥammad was made the gatekeeper of the fort; Shaykh Yúsuf, the custodian of the funds; Karbilá'í Muḥammad, son of Shamsu'd-Dín, the superintendent of the gardens adjoining the fort and its barricades; Mírzá Aḥmad, the uncle of 'Alíy-i-Sardár, was appointed the officer in charge of the tower of the mill known by the name of Chinár, situated in the vicinity of the fort; Shaykháy-i-Shívih-Kash to be the executioner; Mírzá Muḥammad-Ja'far, cousin of Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, the chronicler; Mírzá Faḍlu'lláh as the reader of these records; Mashhadí Taqí-Baqqál to be the gaoler; Ḥájí Muḥammad-Taqí, the registrar; and Ghulám-Riḍáy-i-Yazdí to be the captain of the forces. In addition to the seventy-two companions who were with him within the fort and had accompanied him

from Iṣṭahbánát to Nayríz, Vaḥíd was induced, at the instance of Siyyid Ja'far-i-Yazdí, a well-known divine, and Shaykh 'Abdu'l-'Alí, Vahíd's father-in-law, to admit to the fort a number of the residents of the Bázár quarter, together with several of his own kindred.

Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán again renewed his appeal to the prince, and enclosed this time with his petition, which pleaded for urgent and adequate reinforcements, the sum of five thousand túmáns[1] as his personal gift to him. He entrusted his letter to one of his intimate friends, Mullá Báqir, allowed him to mount his own steed, and instructed him to deliver it in person to the prince. He chose him for his intrepidity, his fluency of speech, and tactfulness. Mullá Báqir took an unfrequented route, and after a day's journey reached a place called Hudashtak, in the neighbourhood of which was a fort around which tribes who roved the country sometimes pitched their tents.

Mullá Báqir dismounted near one of these tents, and whilst he was talking with its occupants, Ḥájí Siyyid Ismá'íl, the Shaykhu'l-Islám of Bavánát, arrived. He had obtained leave from Vaḥíd to proceed to his native village on some urgent affair, and to return immediately to Nayríz. After his lunch, he saw that a richly caparisoned horse was tethered to the ropes of one of the neighbouring tents. Being informed that it belonged to one of the friends of Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, who had arrived from Nayríz and was on his way to Shíráz, Ḥájí Siyyid Ismá'íl, who was a man of exceptional courage, immediately went to that tent, mounted the horse, and, unsheathing his sword, sternly spoke these words to the owner of the tent with whom Mullá Báqir was still conversing: "Arrest this scoundrel, who has fled from before the face of the Ṣáhibu'z-Zamán.[2] Tie his hands and deliver him to me." Affrighted by the words and manner of Ḥájí Mullá Ismá'íl, the occupants of the tent immediately obeyed. They bound his hands and delivered the rope with which they had tied him to Ḥájí Siyyid Ismá'íl, who spurred on his charger in the direction of Nayríz and compelled his captive to follow him. At a distance of two farsangs from that town, he reached the village of Rastáq and delivered his

[1] See Glossary. [2] See Glossary.

captive into the hands of its kad-khudá, whose name was Ḥájí Akbar, urging that he be conducted into the presence of Vaḥíd. When brought before him, the latter enquired as to the purpose of his journey to Shíráz, to which he gave a frank and detailed reply. Though Vahíd was willing to forgive him, yet Mullá Báqir, by reason of his attitude towards him, was eventually put to death at the hands of the companions.

Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, far from relaxing in his determination to solicit the aid he needed from Shíráz, appealed this time with increased vehemence to the prince, begging him to redouble his efforts for the extermination of what he regarded as the gravest menace to the security of his province. Not content with his earnest entreaty, he despatched to Shíráz a number of his trusted men, whom he loaded with presents for the prince, hoping thereby to induce him to act with promptness. In a further effort to ensure the success of his endeavours, he addressed several appeals to the leading 'ulamás and siyyids of Shíráz, wherein he glaringly misrepresented the aims of Vaḥíd, expatiated upon his subversive activities, and urged them to intercede with the prince and entreat him to expedite the despatch of reinforcements.

The prince readily granted their request. He instructed 'Abdu'lláh Khán, the Shujá'u'l-Mulk, to set out at once for Nayríz, accompanied by the Hamadání and Sílákhurí regiments, headed by several officers, and provided with an adequate force of artillery. He, moreover, instructed his representative in Nayríz to recruit all the able-bodied men from the surrounding district, including the villages of Istahbánát, Iraj, Panj-Ma'ádin, Qutrih, Bashnih, Dih-Cháh, Mushkán, and Rastáq. To these he added the members of the tribe known by the name of Vísbaklaríyyih, whom he commanded to join the army of Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán.

An innumerable host suddenly surrounded the fort in which Vahíd and his companions were besieged, and began to dig trenches around it and to set up barricades along those trenches.[1] No sooner was the work accomplished than they

[1] "L'auteur du Násikhu't-Taváríkh constate sans la moindre mélancolie que les troupes impériales étaient mal exercées et fort peu désireuses de se battre: aussi, ne songeant pas une seconde à donner l'assaut, elles établirent un camp qu'elles se hâtèrent de fortifier le plus possible." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 401.)

opened fire on them. A bullet struck the horse on which one of Vahíd's attendants was riding as he was keeping watch at the gate. Another bullet followed immediately upon the first, and penetrated the turret above that gate. In the course of that bombardment, one of the companions, aiming with his rifle at the officer in charge of the artillery, shot him dead instantly, as a result of which the roar of the guns was immediately silenced. The assailants meanwhile retreated and hid themselves within their trenches. That night neither the besieged nor those who attacked them ventured to sally forth from their places of shelter.

The second night, however, Vaḥíd summoned Ghulám-Riḍáy-i-Yazdí and instructed him, together with fourteen of his companions, to sally forth from the fort and drive off the enemy. Those who were called upon to perform that task were for the most part men of advanced age, whom no one would have thought capable of bearing the brunt of so fierce a struggle. Among them was a shoemaker who, though more than ninety years of age, showed such enthusiasm and vigour as no youth could hope to exceed. The rest of the fourteen were mere lads, as yet wholly unprepared to face the perils and endure the strain which such a sally entailed. Age, however, to those heroes, whom a dauntless will and an immovable confidence in the high destiny of their Cause had wholly transformed, mattered but little. They were instructed by their leader to divide immediately after they left the cover of the fort and, raising simultaneously the cry of "Alláh-u-Akbar!"[1] to spring into the midst of the enemy.

No sooner had the signal been given than they arose and, hurrying to their steeds and rifles, marched out of the gate of the fort. Undaunted by the fire which spouted from the mouths of the cannons and by the bullets which rained upon their heads, they plunged headlong into the midst of their adversaries. This sudden encounter lasted for no less than eight hours, during which that fearless band was able to demonstrate such skill and bravery as amazed the veterans in the ranks of the enemy. From the town of Nayríz, as well as from its surrounding fortifications, reinforcements rushed to the aid of the small company that had withstood so val-

[1] See Glossary.

iantly the combined forces of a whole army. As the scope of the struggle extended, the voices of the women of Nayríz, who had rushed to the roofs of their houses to acclaim the heroism which was being so strikingly displayed, were raised from every side. Their exulting cheers swelled the roar of the guns, which acquired added intensity by the shout of "Alláh-u-Akbar!" which the companions, in a frenzy of excitement, raised amidst that tumult. The uproar caused by their womenfolk, their amazing audacity and self-confidence, utterly demoralised their opponents and paralysed their efforts. The camp of the enemy was desolate and forsaken, and offered a sad spectacle as the victors retraced their steps to the fort. They carried with them, in addition to those who were grievously wounded, no less than sixty dead, among whom were the following:

1. Ghulám-Riḍáy-i-Yazdí (not to be confounded with the captain of the forces who bore the same name),
2. Brother of Ghulám-Riḍáy-i-Yazdí,
3. 'Alí, son of Khayru'lláh,
4. Khájih Ḥusayn-i-Qannád, son of Khájih Ghaní,
5. Aṣghar, son of Mullá Mihdí,
6. Karbilá'í 'Abdu'l-Karím,
7. Ḥusayn, son of Mashhadí Muhammad,
8. Zaynu'l-'Ábidín, son of Mashhadí Báqir-i-Ṣabbágh,
9. Mullá Ja'far-i-Mudhahhib,
10. 'Abdu'lláh, son of Mullá Músá,
11. Muḥammad, son of Mashhadí Rajab-i-Ḥaddád,
12. Karbilá'í Ḥasan, son of Karbilá'í Shamsu'd-Dín-i-Malikí-Dúz,
13. Karbilá'í Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Zári',
14. Karbilá'í Báqir-i-Kafsh-Dúz,
15. Mírzá Ahmad, son of Mírzá Ḥusayn-i-Káshí-Sáz,
16. Mullá Ḥasan, son of Mullá 'Abdu'lláh,
17. Mashhadí Ḥájí Muḥammad,
18. Abú-Ṭálib, son of Mír Ahmad-i-Nukhud-Biríz,
19. Akbar, son of Muhammad-i-'Áshúr,
20. Taqíy-i-Yazdí,
21. Mullá 'Alí, son of Mullá Ja'far,
22. Karbilá'í Mírzá Ḥusayn,
23. Husayn Khán, son of Sharíf,

24. Karbilá'í Qurbán,
25. Khájih Káẓim, son of Khájih 'Alí,
26. Áqá, son of Ḥájí 'Alí,
27. Mírzá Nawrá, son of Mírzá Mu'ínà.

So complete a failure convinced Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán and his staff of the futility of their efforts to compel, in an open contest, the submission of their adversaries.[1] As was the case with the army of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, who had miserably failed to subdue his opponents fairly in the field, treachery and fraud proved eventually the sole weapons with which a cowardly people could conquer an invincible enemy. By the devices to which Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán and his staff eventually resorted, they betrayed their powerlessness, despite the vast resources at their disposal and the moral support which the governor of Fárs and the inhabitants of the whole province had extended to them, to vanquish what to outward appearance seemed but a handful of untrained and contemptible people. In their hearts, they were convinced that behind the walls of that fort were clustered a band of volunteers which no force at their command could face and defeat.

By raising the cry of peace, they sought, through such base cunning, to beguile those pure and noble hearts. For a few days they suspended all manner of hostility, after which they addressed a solemn and written appeal to the besieged, which in substance ran as follows: "Hitherto, as we were ignorant of the true character of your Faith, we have allowed the mischief-makers to induce us to believe that every one of you has violated the sacred precepts of Islám. Therefore did we arise against you, and have endeavoured to extirpate your Faith. During the last few days, we have been made aware of the fact that your activities are untinged by any political motive, that none of you cherish any inclination to subvert the foundations of the State. We also have been convinced of the fact that your teachings do not involve any grave departure from the fundamental teachings of Islám. All that you seem to uphold is the claim that a man has

[1] "Quoique les pertes fussent à peu près égales cette fois, les troupes impériales n'en avaient pas moins fort peur: les choses traînaient en longueur, et pouvaient au surplus tourner à la confusion des musulmans. Ceux-ci résolurent donc d'user de ruse." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 403.)

appeared whose words are inspired and whose testimony is certain, and whom all the followers of Islám must recognise and support. We can in no wise be convinced of the validity of this claim unless you consent to repose the utmost confidence in our sincerity, and accept our request to allow certain of your representatives to emerge from the fort and meet us in this camp, where we can, within the space of a few days, ascertain the character of your belief. If you prove yourselves able to demonstrate the true claims of your Faith, we too will readily embrace it, for we are not the enemies of Truth, and none of us wish to deny it. Your leader we have always recognised as one of the ablest champions of Islám, and we regard him as our example and guide. This Qur'án, to which we affix our seals, is the witness to the integrity of our purpose. Let that holy Book decide whether the claim you advance is true or false. The malediction of God and His Prophet rest upon us if we should attempt to deceive you. Your acceptance of our invitation will save a whole army from destruction, whilst your refusal will leave them in suspense and doubt. We pledge our word that as soon as we are convinced of the truth of your Message, we shall strive to display the same zeal and devotion you already have so strikingly manifested. Your friends will be our friends, and your enemies our enemies. Whatever your leader may choose to command, the same we pledge ourselves to obey. On the other hand, if we fail to be convinced of the truth of your claim, we solemnly promise that we shall in no wise interfere with your safe return to the fort, and shall be willing to resume our contest against you. We entreat you to refuse to shed more blood before attempting to establish the truth of your Cause."

Vaḥíd received the Qur'án with great reverence and kissed it devoutly. "Our appointed hour has struck," he remarked. "Our acceptance of their invitation will surely make them feel the baseness of their treachery." "Though I am well aware of their designs," he added, as he turned to his companions, "I feel it my duty to accept their call and take the opportunity to attempt once again to unfold the verities of my beloved Faith." He bade them continue to discharge their duties, and place no reliance whatever on

what their adversaries might profess to believe. He, moreover, ordered them to suspend all manner of hostilities until further notice from him.

With these words he bade farewell to his companions and, accompanied by five attendants, among whom were Mullá 'Alíy-i-Mudhahhib and the treacherous Ḥájí Siyyid 'Ábid, set out for the camp of the enemy. Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, accompanied by Shujá'u'l-Mulk and all the members of his staff, came out to welcome him. They ceremoniously received him, conducted him to a tent that had been specially pitched for his reception, and introduced him to the rest of the officers. He seated himself upon a chair, while the rest of the company, with the exception of Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, Shujá'u'l-Mulk, and another officer, whom he motioned to be seated, all stood before him. The words in which he addressed them were such that even a stone-hearted man could not fail to feel their power. Bahá'u'lláh, in the "Súriy-i-Ṣabr," has immortalised that noble appeal and revealed the full measure of its significance. "I am come to you," Vaḥíd declared, "armed with the testimony with which my Lord has entrusted me. Am I not a descendant of the Prophet of God? Wherefore should you have risen to slay me? For what reason have you pronounced my death-sentence, and refused to recognise the undoubted rights with which my lineage has invested me?"

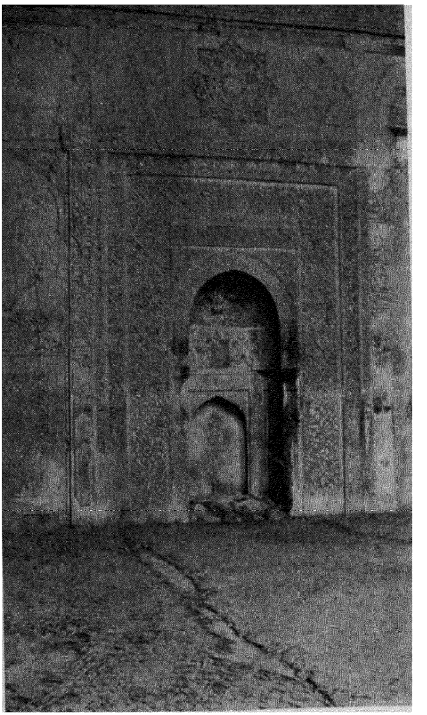
The majesty of his bearing, combined with his penetrating eloquence, confounded his hearers. For three days and three nights, they lavishly entertained him and treated him with marked respect. In their congregational prayer, they invariably followed his lead, and attentively listened to his discourse. Though outwardly they seemed to be bowing to his will, yet they were secretly plotting against his life and were conspiring to exterminate the remnant of his companions. They knew full well that, were they to inflict upon him the least injury while his companions remained entrenched behind the walls of their fort, they would be exposing themselves to a peril still greater than the one they had already been compelled to face. They trembled at the fury and vengeance of their women no less than at the bravery and skill of their men. They realised that all the resources of

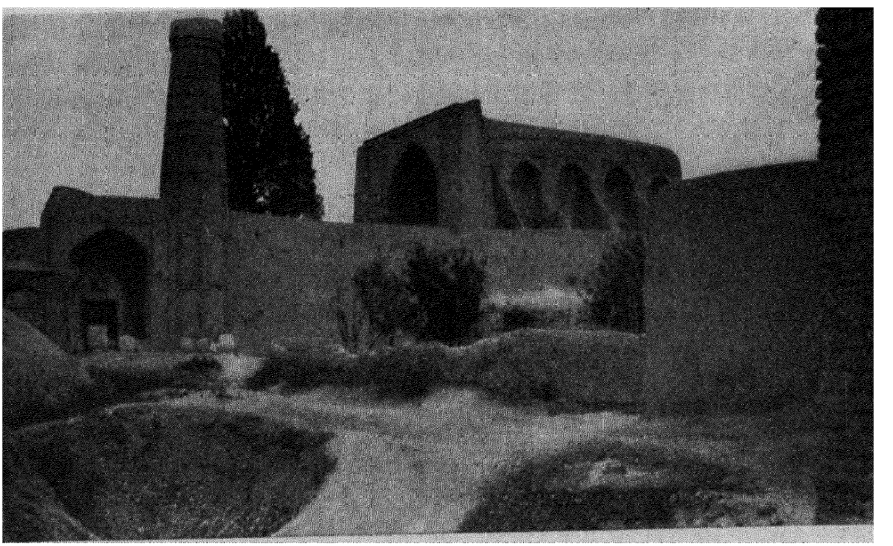
the army had been powerless to subdue a handful of immature lads and decrepit old men. Nothing short of a bold and well-conceived stratagem could ensure their ultimate victory. The fear that filled their hearts was to a great extent inspired by the words of Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, who, with unrelaxing determination, sought to maintain undiminished the hatred with which he had inflamed their souls. Vaḥíd's repeated exhortations had aroused his apprehensions lest he should succeed, by the magic of his words, in inducing them to transfer their allegiance to so eloquent an opponent.

Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán and his friends at last decided to request Vaḥíd to address in his own handwriting a message to his companions who were still within the fort, to inform them that an amicable settlement of their differences had been effected, and to urge them either to join him at the headquarters of the army or to return to their homes. Though reluctant to give his assent to such a request, Vaḥíd was eventually forced to submit. In addition to this message, he confidentially informed his companions, in a second letter, of the evil designs of the enemy, and warned them not to allow themselves to be deceived. He entrusted both letters to Ḥájí Siyyid 'Ábid, instructing him to destroy the former and deliver the latter to his companions. He charged him, moreover, to urge them to choose the ablest among their number, and to sally forth in the dead of night and scatter the forces of the enemy.

No sooner had Ḥájí Siyyid 'Ábid received these directions than he treacherously communicated them to Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán. The latter immediately sought to induce him to urge the occupants of the fort, in the name of their leader, to disperse, promising that he would in return abundantly reward him. The disloyal messenger delivered the first letter to Vaḥíd's companions, and informed them that their leader had succeeded in winning over to his Faith the entire army, and that in view of this conversion he had advised them to leave for their homes.

Though extremely bewildered by such a message, the companions felt unable to disregard the wishes Vaḥíd had so clearly expressed. They reluctantly dispersed, leaving all the fortifications unguarded. Obedient to the commands





THE MASJID-I-JÁMI' AT NAYRÍZ, WHERE VAḤÍD ADDRESSED THE CONGREGATION

written by their leader, several of them discarded their arms, and directed their steps towards Nayríz.

Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, anticipating the immediate evacuation of the fort, despatched a detachment of his forces to intercept their entry into the town. They were soon encompassed by a multitude of armed men, who were being continually reinforced from the army's headquarters. Finding themselves thus unexpectedly hemmed in, they determined by every means in their power to repulse the attack and gain the Masjid-i-Jámi' as swiftly as possible. By the aid of swords and rifles which some of them were carrying, others with sticks and stones only, they sought to force their way to the town. The cry of "Alláh-u-Akbar!"[1] rose again, fiercer and more compelling than ever. A few among them suffered martyrdom, as they forced their way through the ranks of their treacherous assailants. The rest, though wounded and harassed by fresh reinforcements which had beset them from every side, eventually succeeded in attaining the shelter of the masjid.

Meanwhile the notorious Mullá Ḥasan, the son of Mullá Muḥammad-'Alí, an officer in the army of Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, succeeded, together with his men, in outdistancing his opponents and, concealing himself in one of the minarets of that masjid, lay in wait for the fugitives. No sooner had the scattered band approached the masjid than he opened fire upon them. A certain Mullá Ḥusayn recognised him and, raising the cry of "Alláh-u-Akbar!" scaled the minaret, aimed his rifle at that cowardly officer, and hurled him to the ground. His friends carried him away to a place where he was enabled to recover from his wound.

The companions, unable any longer to obtain shelter in the masjid, were compelled to hide in whatever place of safety they could find, until such time as they might ascertain the fate of their leader. Their first thought after their betrayal was to seek his presence and follow whatever instructions he might wish to give them. They were, however, unable to discover what had befallen him, and trembled at the thought that he might have been put to death.

Meanwhile Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán and his staff, em-

[1] See Glossary.

boldened by the dispersal of the companions, were strenuously exerting themselves to discover means whereby they could evade the obligations of their solemn oath and proceed unhindered to slay their chief opponent. They endeavoured by some specious device to set aside their sacred promises and to hasten the fulfilment of a long-cherished desire. In the midst of their deliberations, 'Abbás-Qulí Khán, a man notorious for his ruthlessness and cruelty, assured his comrades that if the thought of having taken that oath perplexed them, he himself had in no wise participated in that declaration, and was ready to execute what they felt unable to perform. "I can arrest at any time," he burst forth in a fit of indignation, "and put to death whomever I deem guilty of having violated the laws of the land." He immediately afterwards called upon all those whose kinsmen had perished to execute the sentence of death pronounced against Vaḥíd. The first to present himself was Mullá Riḍá, whose brother Mullá Báqir had been captured by the Shaykhu'l-Islám of Bavánát; the next was a man named Ṣafar, whose brother Sha'bán had perished; the third was Áqá Khán, whose father, 'Alí-Aṣghar Khán, elder brother of Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, had suffered the same fate.

In their eagerness to carry out the suggestion of 'Abbás-Qulí Khán, these men snatched the turban from the head of Vaḥíd, wound it around his neck, and, binding him to a horse, dragged him ignominiously through the streets.[1] The indignities that were heaped upon him reminded those who witnessed that awful spectacle of the tragic end of the Imám Ḥusayn, whose body was abandoned to the mercy of an infuriated enemy, and upon which a multitude of horsemen pitilessly trampled. The women of Nayríz, stirred to the highest pitch of excitement by the shouts of triumph which a murderous enemy was raising, pressed from every side around the corpse, and, to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals, gave free vent to their feelings of unrestrained fanaticism.

[1] "Il s'empara de la ceinture verte de Yahyá, symbole de sa descendance sacrée, la lui noua autour du cou par un nœud et se prit à le traîner par terre. Puis vint Ṣafar, dont le frère Sha'bán était tombé victime de la guerre, puis Áqá Ján, fils de 'Ali-Aṣghar Khán, frère de Zanynu'l-'Ábidín Khán. Et les musulmans, excités par ce spectacle, lapidèrent le malheureux et l'achevèrent à coups de bâton. On lui coupa alors la tête, on en arracha la peau qu'on remplit de paille et l'on envoya ce trophée à Shíráz." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 406.)

They danced merrily around it, scornful of the words which Vaḥíd, in the midst of his agony, had spoken, words which the Imám Ḥusayn, in a former age and in similar circumstances, had uttered: "Thou knowest, O my Beloved, that I have abandoned the world for Thy sake, and have placed my trust in Thee alone. I am impatient to hasten to Thee, for the beauty of Thy countenance has been unveiled to my eyes. Thou dost witness the evil designs which my wicked persecutor has cherished against me. Nay, never will I submit to his wishes or pledge my allegiance to him."

Thus was brought to an end a noble and heroic life. Such an eventful and brilliant career, distinguished by such vast learning,[1] such dauntless courage, and so rare a spirit of self-sacrifice, surely required for crown a death as glorious as that which completed his martyrdom.[2] The extinction of that life was the signal for a fierce onslaught on the lives and property of those who had identified themselves with his Faith. No less than five thousand men were commissioned for that villainous task. The men were seized, chained, ill-treated, and eventually slaughtered. The women and children were captured and subjected to brutalities which no pen dare describe. Their property was confiscated, and their houses were destroyed. The fort of Khájih was burned to the ground. The majority of the men were first conducted in chains to Shíráz, and there, for the most part, suffered a cruel death.[3] Those whom Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, for pur-

[1] According to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's testimony, he had committed to memory no less than thirty thousand traditions. (Manuscript entitled "Bahá'í Martyrs.")

[2] Bahá'u'lláh refers to him as "that unique and peerless figure of his age." (The "Kitáb-i-Íqán," p. 188.) The Báb, in the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih," refers to him in the following terms: "Vois encore le nombre du nom de Dieu (Siyyid Yaḥyá). Cet homme vivait tranquille et pur au point que personne, ami ou ennemi ne nie ses talents et sa sainteté; tous admirèrent sa grandeur dans les sciences et la hauteur à laquelle il s'était élevé dans la philosophie. Reporte-toi au commentaire de la Súratu'l-Kawthar (Qur'án: S. 108) et aux autres traités qui ont été écrits pour lui et qui prouvent l'élévation du rang qu'il occupe près de Dieu!" ("Le Livre des Sept Preuves," traduction par A. L. M. Nicolas, pp. 54–5.)

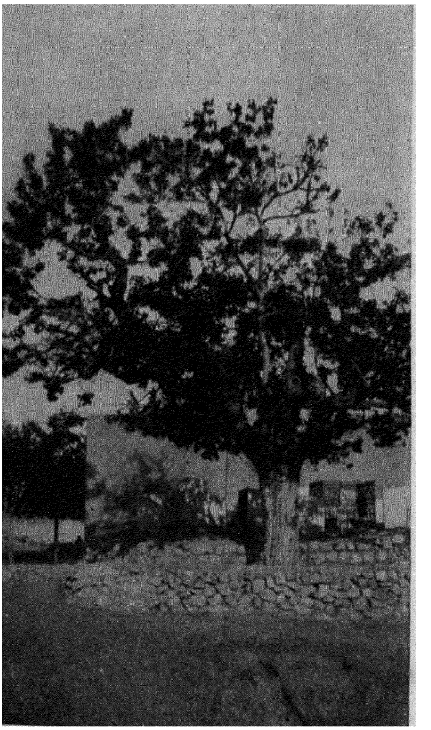
[3] "Siyyid Yaḥyá was strangled with his own girdle by one whose two brothers had been killed during the siege, and the other Bábís likewise died by the hands of the executioner. The heads of the victims were stuffed with straw, and, bearing with them these grim trophies of their prowess, together with some forty or fifty Bábí women and one child of tender age as captives, the victorious army returned to Shíráz. Their entry into that city was made the occasion of general rejoicings; the captives were paraded through the streets and bazaars and finally brought before Prince Fírúz Mírzá, who was feasting in a summer-house called Kuláh-i-Farangí. In his presence Mihr-'Alí Khán, Mírzá Na'ím, and the other officers recounted the details of their victory, and received congratulations and marks of favour. The

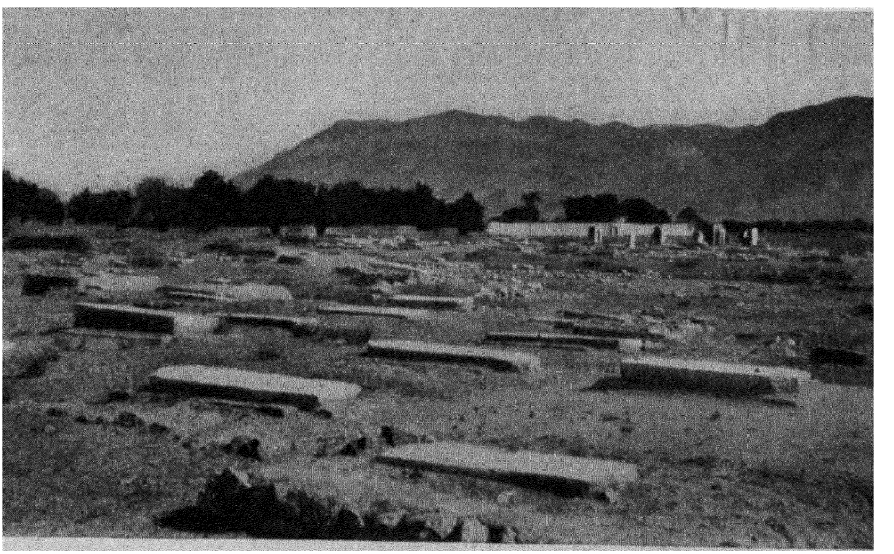
poses of personal benefit, had plunged into dark and subterranean dungeons were, as soon as his object had been achieved, delivered into the hands of his myrmidons, who perpetrated upon them acts of unspeakable cruelty.[1] They were paraded at first through the streets of Nayríz, after which they were subjected to atrocious treatment in the hope of extracting from them whatever material advantage their persecutors had hitherto been unable to obtain. These having satisfied their greed, each victim was made to suffer an agonising death. Every instrument of torture their executioners could devise was utilised to quench their thirst for revenge. They were branded, their nails were pulled out, their bodies were lashed, an incision was made in the nose through which a string was driven, nails were hammered into their hands and feet, and in that piteous state each of them was dragged through the streets, an object of contempt and derision to all the people.

Among them was a certain Siyyid Ja'far-i-Yazdí, who in former days had exercised immense influence and had been

captive women were finally imprisoned in an old caravanserai outside the Isfáhán gate. What treatment they experienced at the hands of their captors is left to our conjecture." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note H, p. 190.) "C'était un jour de fête, ce jour-là, raconte un témoin oculaire. Les habitants s'étaient répandus dans les campagnes avoisinantes, apportant leur repas et beaucoup d'entre eux buvant, à la dérobée, de pleines bouteilles de vin. L'air retentissait des sons de musique, des chants des musiciennes, des cris et des rires des filles publiques: le bazar était pavoisé, la joie éclatait partout. Soudain ce fut un grand silence. Le peuple venait d'apercevoir 32 chameaux, chargés, chacun d'un malheureux prisonnier, d'une femme ou d'un enfant, ficelés et jetés en travers de la selle comme un paquet. Tout autour des soldats portaient de longues lances au bout desquelles étaient fichées les têtes des Bábís tués à Nayríz. La hideur du spectacle saisit violemment la mobile population de Shíráz, et chacun rentra tristement chez soi. L'horrible caravane traversa les bazars et parvint jusqu'au palais du Gouverneur. Celui-ci se trouvait dans son jardin et avait réuni dans son kiosque, surnommé Kuláh-i-Farangí, tout ce que Shíráz comptait d'hommes riches ou éminents. La musique se tut d'elle-même, les danseurs s'arrêtèrent et Muḥammad-'Alí Khán ainsi que Mírzá Na'ím, deux petits chefs de tribu qui avaient pris part à la campagne, vinrent raconter leurs hauts faits et nommer les prisonniers un à un." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 407.)

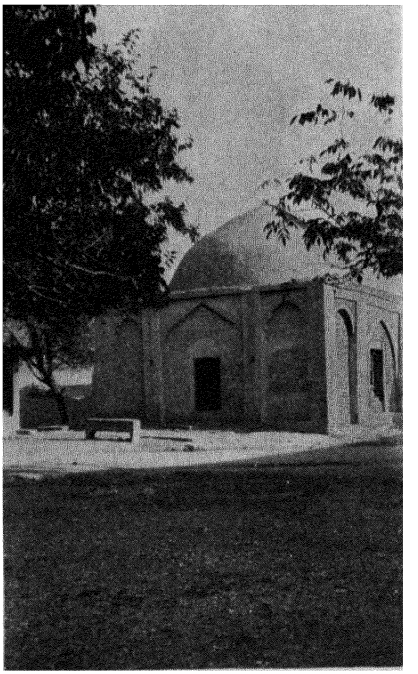
[1] "Il semble, hélas! que tout ce sang répandu eût dû suffire à apaiser la haine et la cupidité des musulmans; il n'en fut rien. Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, se sentant menacé par le désir de vengeance des gens qu'il avait trompés et vaincus, ne laissa ni trêve ni repos aux survivants de la secte: sa haine s'était déchaînée, elle ne devait finir qu'avec sa vie. C'était, en effet, les pauvres diables qu'on avait envoyés à Shíráz, les riches avaient été retenus. Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán les confia à un individu chargé de les promener en les bâtonnant à travers la ville. On s'amusait à Nayríz, en ce moment-là. On pendait les Bábís à quatre clous, et chacun venait se repaître de l'angoisse du malheureux supplicié, on leur mettait des roseaux enflammés sous les ongles, on les brûlait au fer rouge, on les privait d'eau et de pain, on leur faisait un trou dans le nez, on y introduisait une ficelle et on les promenait ainsi comme des ours." (*Ibid.*, p. 408.)





GRAVES OF MARTYRS AT NAYRÍZ

greatly honoured by the people. So great was the respect they owed him that Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán gave him precedence over himself and treated him with extreme deference and courtesy. He gave orders that the turban of that same man be befouled and flung into the fire. Shorn of the emblem of his lineage, he was exposed to the eyes of the public, who marched before him and overwhelmed him with abuse and ridicule.[1]



VAḤÍD'S RESTING PLACE AT NAYRÍZ

Another victim of their tyranny was Ḥájí Muḥammad-Taqí, who had enjoyed, in days past, such a reputation for honesty and justice that his opinion was invariably regarded by the judges of the court as the determining word in their judgment. So great and esteemed a man was, in the depth of winter, stripped of his clothes, thrown into a pond, and lashed severely. Siyyid Ja'far and Shaykh 'Abdu'l-'Alí, who

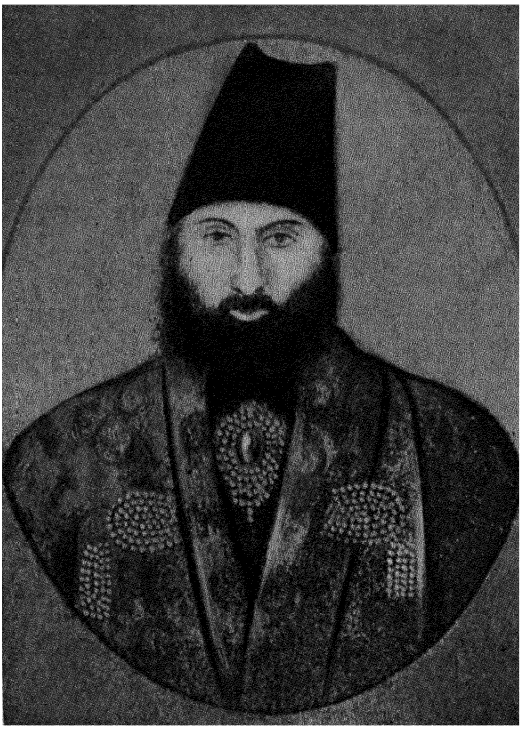
[1] "Áqá Siyyid Ja'far-i-Yazdí vit les bourreaux lui brûler son turban, puis le promener lui-même de porte en porte en réclamant de l'argent aux propriétaires." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 408.)

was Vaḥíd's father-in-law and the leading divine of Nayríz, as well as a judge of great reputation, together with Siyyid Ḥusayn, one of the notables of the town, were doomed to suffer the same fate. While they were exposed to the cold, the scum of the people was hired to heap upon their shivering bodies abominable cruelties. Many a poor man, who hastened to obtain the reward promised for this vile deed, revolted when informed of the nature of the task he was called upon to perform, and, rejecting the money, turned away with loathing and contempt.[1]

The day of Vaḥíd's martyrdom was the eighteenth of the month of Sha'bán, in the year 1266 A.H.[2] Ten days later, the Báb was shot in Tabríz.

[1] "Áqá Siyyid Abú-Ṭálib, qui était fort riche, fut chargé de chaînes, envoyé par le Gouverneur de Nayríz à Ma'dan et là empoisonné par Ḥájí Mírzá Naṣír, le même qui à Shíráz avait ordonné au Báb de baiser la main de Shaykh Abú-Turáb. Deux femmes Bábís, avant d'être faites prisonnières, se jetèrent dans un puits et se tuèrent. Quelques Bábís, desireux de se venger de Mírzá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín Khán, se dirigèrent sur Ṭihrán pour aller se plaindre à S. M. des atrocités qui avaient été commises. Ils étaient arrivés jusqu'à 2 ou 3 stations de la capitale et se reposaient des fatigues du voyage quand une caravane de Shírází, vint à passer qui les reconnurent, les arrêtèrent tous, sauf un certain Zaynu'l-'Ábidín qui put parvenir à Ṭihrán. On conduisit les autres à Shíráz où le prince les fit exécuter aussitôt. Là moururent Karbilá'í Abu'l-Ḥasan, faiencier, Áqá Shaykh Hádí, oncle de la femme de Vaḥíd, Mírzá 'Alí et Abu'l-Qásim-ibn-i-Ḥájí-Zayná, Akbar-ibn-i'Ábid, Mírzá Ḥasan et son frère Mírzá Bábá." (*Ibid.*, pp. 408–9.)

[2] June 29, 1850 A.D.



MÍRZÁ TAQÍ KHÁN, THE AMÍR-NIẒÁM

CHAPTER XXIII

MARTYRDOM OF THE BÁB

THE tale of the tragedy that marked the closing stages of the Nayríz upheaval spread over the length and breadth of Persia and kindled a startling enthusiasm in the hearts of those who heard it. It plunged the authorities of the capital into consternation and nerved them to a resolve of despair. The Amír-Niẓám, the Grand Vazír of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, was particularly overawed by these recurrent manifestations of an indomitable will, of a fierce and inflexible tenacity of faith. Though the forces of the imperial army had everywhere triumphed, though the companions of Mullá Ḥusayn and Vaḥíd had successively been mowed down in a ruthless carnage at the hands of its officers, yet to the shrewd minds of the rulers of Ṭihrán it was clear and evident that

the spirit responsible for such rare heroism was by no means vanquished, that its might was far from broken. The loyalty which the remnants of that scattered band bore to their captive Leader still remained unimpaired. Nothing had as yet been successful, despite the appalling losses they had sustained, in sapping that loyalty or in undermining that faith. Far from being extinguished, that spirit had blazed more intense and devastating than ever. Galled by the memory of the indignities they had suffered, that persecuted band clung ever more passionately to its Faith and looked with increasing fervour and hope to its Leader.[1] Above all, He who had kindled that flame and nourished that spirit was still alive, and, despite His isolation, was able to exercise the full measure of His influence. Even a sleepless vigilance had been powerless to stem the tide that had swept over the entire face of the land, and which had as its motive force the continued existence of the Báb. Extinguish that light, choke the stream at its very source, and the torrent that had brought so much devastation in its wake would run dry. Such was the thought that swayed the Grand Vazír of Naṣiri'd-Dín Sháh. To do Him to death seemed to that foolish minister the most efficacious means for the recovery of his country from the shame into which he thought it had sunk.[2]

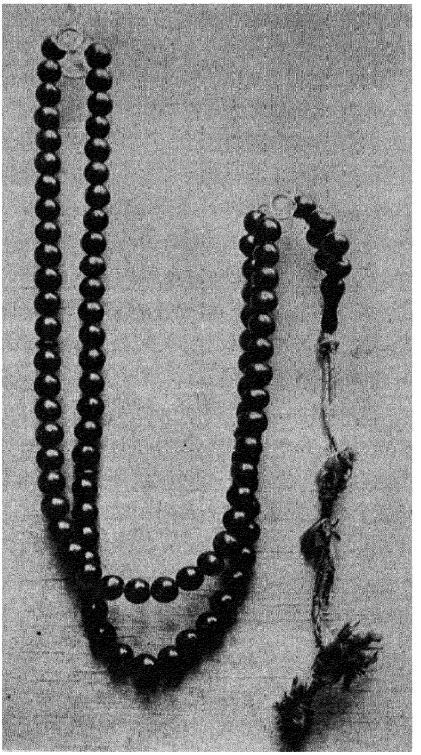
[1] "Des Bábís, il y en avait partout, on ne le savait que trop. La Perse en était pleine, et si les esprits inquiets de choses transcendantes, si les philosophes à la recherche de combinaisons nouvelles, si les âmes froissées à qui les injustices et les faiblesses du temps présent répugnaient, s'étaient jusqu'alors livrés avec emportement à l'idée et aux promesses d'un nouvel état de choses plus satisfaisant, on était en droit de penser que les imaginations turbulentes, amies de l'action, même au prix du désastre, que les esprits braves et passionés pour les batailles, et, enfin, les ambitieux hardis n'auraient que trop de tendance à se précipiter dans les rangs qui se montraient riches de tant de soldats propres à former d'intrépides phalanges. Mírzá Taqí Khán, maudissant la mollesse avec laquelle son prédécesseur, Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, avait laissé naître et grandîr un pareil péril, comprit qu'il ne fallait pas prolonger cette faute et voulut couper le mal dans sa racine. Il se persuada que la source en était le Báb lui-même, premier auteur de toutes les doctrines qui troublaient le pays, et il voulut faire disparaître cette source." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 210–11.)

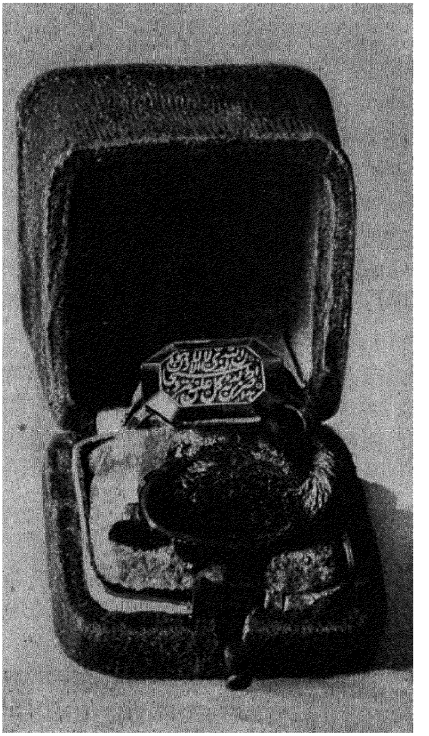
[2] "Cependant, Ḥájí Mírzá Taqí résolut de frapper le monstre du Bábisme à la tête, et il se persuada que, ce coup porté, l'instigateur du désordre une fois éloigné de la scène et n'exerçant plus d'action tout reprendrait son cour naturel. Toutefois—chose assez remarquable dans un gouvernement asiatique, et surtout chez un homme d'État comme Mírzá Taqí Khán, qui ne regardait pas de très près à une exagération de sévérité—ce ministre ne s'arrêta pas d'abord à ordonner la mort du novateur. Il pensa que le meilleur moyen de le détruire était de le perdre moralement. Le tirer de sa retraite de Chihríq, où une auréole de souffrance, de sainteté, de science, d'éloquence, l'entourait et le faisait briller comme un soleil; le montrer aux populations tel qu'il était, ce qui veut dire, tel qu'il se le figurait, c'était le meilleur moyen de l'empêcher de nuire en détruisant son prestige. Il se le représentait,

Bestirred to action, he summoned his counsellors, shared with them his fears and his hopes, and acquainted them with the nature of his plans. "Behold," he exclaimed, "the storm which the Faith of the Siyyid-i-Báb has provoked in the hearts of my fellow-countrymen! Nothing short of his public execution can, to my mind, enable this distracted country to recover its tranquillity and peace. Who dare compute the forces that have perished in the course of the engagements at Shaykh Ṭabarsí? Who can estimate the efforts exerted to secure that victory? No sooner had the mischief that convulsed Mázindarán been suppressed, than the flames of another sedition blazed forth in the province of Fárs, bringing in its wake so much suffering to my people. We had no sooner succeeded in quelling the revolt that had ravaged the south, than another insurrection breaks out in the north, sweeping in its vortex Zanján and its surroundings. If you are able to advise a remedy, acquaint me with it, for my sole purpose is to ensure the peace and honour of my countrymen."

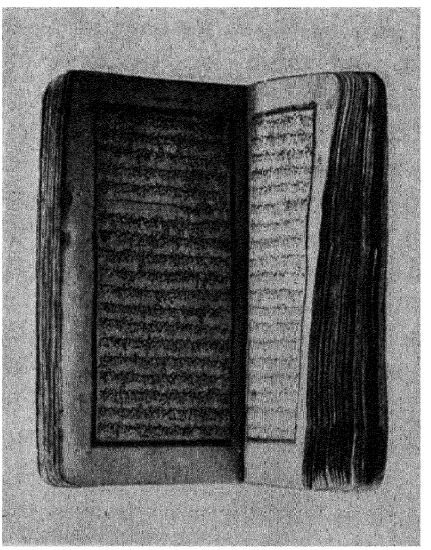
Not a single voice dared venture a reply, except that of Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Núrí, the Minister of War, who pleaded

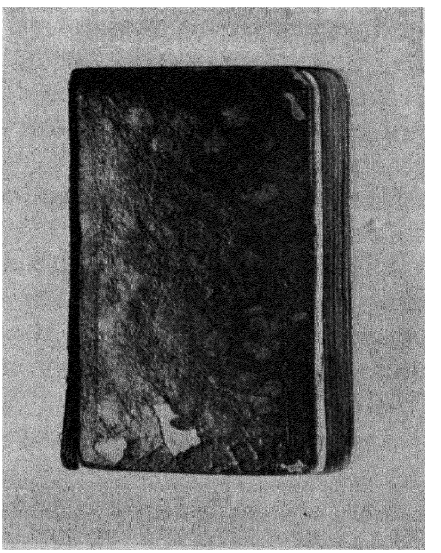
en effet, comme un charlatan vulgaire, un rêveur timide qui n'avait pas eu le courage de concevoir, encore moins de diriger les audacieuses entreprises de ses trois apôtres, ou même d'y prendre part. Un homme de cette espèce, amené á Ṭihrán et jeté en face des plus habiles dialecticiens de l'Islám, ne pourrait que plier honteusement, et son crédit s'évanouirait bien mieux par ce moyen que si, en supprimant le corps, on laissait encore flotter dans les esprits le fantôme d'une supériorité que la mort aurait rendue irréfutable. On forma donc le projet de le faire arrêter, de le faire venir à Ṭihrán, et, sur la route, de l'exposer en public, enchaîné, humilié; de le faire discuter partout avec des mullás, lui imposant silence lorsqu'il deviendrait téméraire: en un mot, de lui susciter une série de combats inégaux oú il serait nécessairement vaincu, étant d'avance démoralisé par tant de moyens propres à briser son courage. C'était un lion qu'on voulait énerver, tenir à la chaîne et désarmer d'ongles et de dents, puis livrer aux chiens pour montrer combien ceux-ci en pouvaient triompher aisément. Une fois vaincu, peu importait ce qu'on se déciderait à en faire. Ce plan ne manquait pas de portée; mais il se fondait sur des suppositions dont les principales n'étaient rien moins que prouvées. Ce n'était pas assez que d'imaginer le Báb sans courage et sans fermeté; il fallait qu'il le fût réellement. Or, l'attitude de ce personnage dans le fort de Chihríq ne le donnait pas à penser. Il priait et travaillait sans cesse. Sa douceur était inaltérable. Ceux qui l'approchaient subissaient malgré eux l'influence séductrice de son visage, de ses manières, de son langage. Les soldats qui le gardaient n'étaient pas tous restés exempts de cette faiblesse. Sa mort lui paraissait prochaine. Il en parlait fréquemment comme d'une idée qui lui était non seulement familière, mais aimable. Si donc, promené ainsi dans toute la Perse, il allait ne pas s'abattre? S'il ne se montrait ni arrogant, ni peureux, mais bien au-dessus de sa fortune présente? S'il allait confondre les prodiges de savoir, d'adresse et d'éloquence ameutés contre lui? S'il restait plus que jamais le Báb pour ses sectateurs anciens et le devenait pour les indifférents ou même pour ses ennemis? C'était beaucoup risquer afin de gagner beaucoup sans doute, mais aussi pour beaucoup perdre, et, tout réfléchi, on n'osa pas courir cette chance." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 211–13.)





THE BÁB'S PRAYER BEADS AND SIGNET RING





QUR'ÁN BELONGING TO THE BÁB

that to put to death a banished siyyid for the deeds committed by a band of irresponsible agitators would be an act of manifest cruelty. He recalled the example of the late Muḥammad Sháh, whose invariable practice it had been to disregard the base calumnies the enemies of that siyyid brought continually to his attention. The Amír-Niẓám was sorely displeased. "Such considerations," he protested, "are wholly irrelevant to the issue with which we are faced. The interests of the State are in jeopardy, and we can in no wise tolerate these periodic upheavals. Was not the Imám Ḥusayn, in view of the paramount necessity for safeguarding the unity of the State, executed by those same persons who had seen him more than once receive marks of exceptional affection from Muḥammad, his Grandfather? Did they not in such circumstances refuse to consider the rights which his lineage had conferred upon him? Nothing short of the remedy I advocate can uproot this evil and bring us the peace for which we long."

Disregarding the advice of his counsellor, the Amír-Niẓám despatched his orders to Navváb Ḥamzih Mírzá, the governor of Ádhirbáyján, who was distinguished among the princes of royal blood for his kind-heartedness and rectitude of conduct, to summon the Báb to Tabríz.[1] He was careful not to divulge to the prince his real purpose. The Navváb, assuming that the intention of the minister was to enable his Captive to return to His home, immediately directed one of his trusted officers, together with a mounted escort, to proceed to Chihríq, where the Báb still lay confined, and to bring Him back to Tabríz. He recommended Him to their care, urging them to exercise towards Him the utmost consideration.

Forty days before the arrival of that officer at Chihríq, the Báb collected all the documents and Tablets in His possession and, placing them, with His pen-case, His seals, and agate rings, in a coffer, entrusted them to the care of Mullá Báqir, one of the Letters of the Living. To him He also delivered a letter addressed to Mírzá Ahmad, His amanu-

[1] "Le premier ministre, ayant mandé Sulaymán Khán, l'Afshár, il le chargea de porter à Tabríz, au prince Ḥamzih Mírzá devenu gouverneur de l'Ádhirbáyján, l'ordre de tirer le Báb du fort de Chihríq et de l'amener dans la citadelle de Tabríz, où il apprendrait plus tard ce qu'il aurait à en faire." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 213.)

ensis, in which He enclosed the key to that coffer. He urged him to take the utmost care of that trust, emphasised the sacredness of its character, and bade him conceal its contents from anyone except Mírzá Aḥmad.

Mullá Báqir departed forthwith for Qazvín. Within eighteen days he reached that town and was informed that Mírzá Ahmad had departed for Qum. He left immediately for that destination and arrived towards the middle of the month of Shá'bán.[1] I was then in Qum, together with a certain Ṣádiq-i-Tabrízí, whom Mírzá Ahmad had sent to fetch me from Zarand. I was living in the same house with Mírzá Aḥmad, a house which he had hired in the Bágh-Panbih quarter. In those days Shaykh 'Azím, Siyyid Ismá'íl, and a number of other companions likewise were dwelling with us. Mullá Báqir delivered the trust into the hands of Mírzá Aḥmad, who, at the insistence of Shaykh 'Aẓím, opened it before us. We marvelled when we beheld, among the things which that coffer contained, a scroll of blue paper, of the most delicate texture, on which the Báb, in His own exquisite handwriting, which was a fine shikastih script, had penned, in the form of a pentacle, what numbered about five hundred verses, all consisting of derivatives from the word "Bahá."[2] That scroll was in a state of perfect preservation, was spotlessly clean, and gave the impression, at first sight, of being a printed rather than a written page. So fine and intricate was the penmanship that, viewed at a distance, the writing appeared as a single wash of ink on the paper. We were overcome with admiration as we gazed upon a masterpiece which no calligraphist, we believed, could rival. That scroll was replaced in the coffer and handed back to Mírzá Aḥmad, who, on the very day he received it, proceeded to Ṭihrán. Ere he departed, he informed us that all he could divulge of that letter was the injunction that the trust was to be delivered into the hands of Jináb-i-Bahá[3] in Tihrán.[4]

[1] June 12–July 11, 1850 A.D.

[2] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 42), the Báb had produced no less than three hundred and sixty derivatives from the word "Bahá."

[3] Title by which Bahá'u'lláh was designated in those days.

[4] "The end of the Báb's earthly Manifestation is now close upon us. He knew it himself before the event, and was not displeased at the presentiment. He had already 'set his house in order,' as regards the spiritual affairs of the Bábí community, which he had, if I mistake not, confided to the intuitive wisdom of Bahá'u'lláh. . . . It is impossible not to feel that

As to me, I was instructed by Mírzá Ahmad to proceed to Zarand and join my father, who anxiously awaited my return.

Faithful to the instructions he had received from Navváb Ḥamzih Mírzá, that officer conducted the Báb to Tabríz and showed Him the utmost respect and consideration. The prince had instructed one of his friends to accommodate Him in his home and to treat Him with extreme deference. Three days after the Báb's arrival, a fresh order was received from the Grand Vazír, commanding the prince to carry out the execution of his Prisoner on the very day the farmán[1] would reach him. Whoever would profess himself His follower was likewise to be condemned to death. The Armenian regiment of Urúmíyyih, whose colonel was Sám Khán, was ordered to shoot Him, in the courtyard of the barracks of Tabríz, which were situated in the centre of the city.

The prince expressed his consternation to the bearer of the farmán, Mírzá Ḥasan Khán, the Vazír-Nizám and brother of the Grand Vazír. "The Amír," he told him, "would do better to entrust me with services of greater merit than the one with which he has now commissioned me. The task I am called upon to perform is a task that only ignoble people would accept. I am neither Ibn-i-Zíyád nor Ibn-i-Sa'd[2] that he should call upon me to slay an innocent descendant of the Prophet of God." Mírzá Ḥasan Khán reported these sayings of the prince to his brother, who thereupon ordered him to follow, himself, without delay and in their entirety, the instructions he had already given. "Relieve us," the Vazír urged his brother, "from this anxiety that weighs upon our hearts, and let this affair be brought to an end ere the month of Ramaḍán breaks upon us, that we may enter the period of fasting with undisturbed tranquillity." Mírzá Ḥasan Khán attempted to acquaint the prince with these fresh instructions, but failed in his efforts, as the prince, pretending to be ill, refused to meet him. Undeterred by this refusal, he issued his instructions for the immediate transfer of the Báb and those in His company from the house

this is far more probable than the view which makes Subḥ-i-Azal the custodian of the sacred writings and the arranger of a resting-place for the sacred remains. I much fear that the Azalís have manipulated tradition in the interest of their party." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp. 65–6.)

[1] See Glossary. [2] Persecutors of the descendants of Muḥammad.

in which He was staying to one of the rooms of the barracks. He, moreover, directed Sám Khán to despatch ten of his men to guard the entrance of the room in which He was to be confined.

Deprived of His turban and sash, the twin emblems of His noble lineage, the Báb, together with Siyyid Ḥusayn, His amanuensis, was driven to yet another confinement which He well knew was but a step further on the way leading Him to the goal He had set Himself to attain. That day witnessed a tremendous commotion in the city of Tabríz. The great convulsion associated in the ideas of its inhabitants with the Day of Judgment seemed at last to have come upon them. Never had that city experienced a turmoil so fierce and so mysterious as the one which seized its inhabitants on the day the Báb was led to that place which was to be the scene of His martyrdom. As He approached the courtyard of the barracks, a youth suddenly leaped forward who, in his eagerness to overtake Him, had forced his way through the crowd, utterly ignoring the risks and perils which such an attempt might involve. His face was haggard, his feet were bare, and his hair dishevelled. Breathless with excitement and exhausted with fatigue, he flung himself at the feet of the Báb and, seizing the hem of His garment, passionately implored Him: "Send me not from Thee, O Master. Wherever Thou goest, suffer me to follow Thee." "Muhammad-'Alí," answered the Báb, "arise, and rest assured that you will be with Me.[1] To-morrow you shall witness what God has decreed." Two other companions, unable to contain themselves, rushed forward and assured Him of their unalterable loyalty. These, together with Mírzá Muhammad-'Alíy-i-Zunúzí, were seized and placed in the same cell in which the Báb and Siyyid Ḥusayn were confined.

I have heard Siyyid Ḥusayn bear witness to the following: "That night the face of the Báb was aglow with joy, a joy such as had never shone from His countenance. Indifferent to the storm that raged about Him, He conversed with us with gaiety and cheerfulness. The sorrows that had weighed

[1] "It is no doubt a singular coincidence that both 'Alí-Muḥammad and Jesus Christ are reported to have addressed these words to a disciple: 'To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.'" (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 185.)

so heavily upon Him seemed to have completely vanished. Their weight appeared to have dissolved in the consciousness of approaching victory. 'To-morrow,' He said to us, 'will be the day of My martyrdom. Would that one of you might now arise and, with his own hands, end My life. I prefer to be slain by the hand of a friend rather than by that of the enemy.' Tears rained from our eyes as we heard Him express that wish. We shrank, however, at the thought of taking away with our own hands so precious a life. We refused, and remained silent. Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí suddenly sprang to his feet and announced himself ready to obey whatever the Báb might desire. 'This same youth who has risen to comply with My wish,' the Báb declared, as soon as we had intervened and forced him to abandon that thought, 'will, together with Me, suffer martyrdom. Him will I choose to share with Me its crown.' "

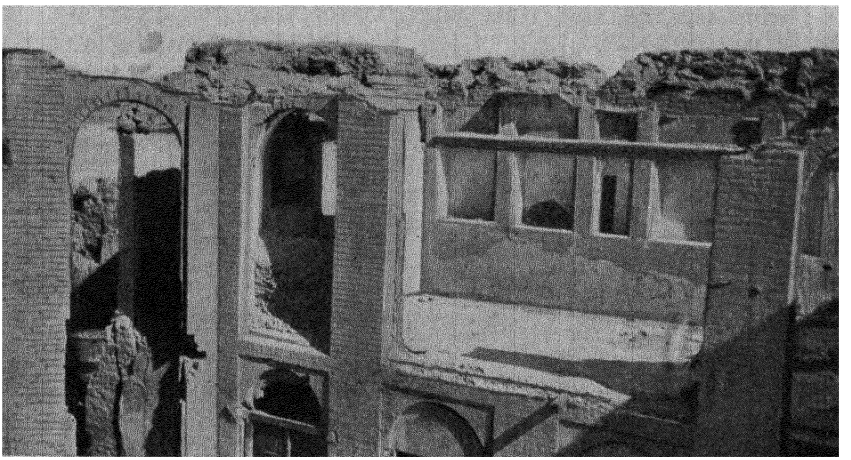
Early in the morning, Mírzá Ḥasan Khán ordered his farrásh-báshí[1] to conduct the Báb into the presence of the leading mujtahids of the city and to obtain from them the authorisation required for His execution.[2] As the Báb was leaving the barracks, Siyyid Ḥusayn asked Him what he should do. "Confess not your faith," He advised him. "Thereby you will be enabled, when the hour comes, to convey to those who are destined to hear you, the things of which you alone are aware." He was engaged in a confidential conversation with him when the farrásh-báshí sud-

[1] See Glossary.

[2] "Le lendemain, de grand matin, les gens de Ḥamzih Mírzá ayant ouvert les portes de la prison, en firent sortir le Báb et ses deux disciples. On s'assura que les fers qu'ils avaient au cou et aux mains étaient solides; on attacha de plus au carcan de chacun d'eux une longue corde dont un farrásh tenait le bout, puis, afin que chacun pût bien les voir et les reconnaître, on les promena ainsi par la ville, dans toutes les rues et dans tous les bazars, en les accablant d'injures et de coups. La foule remplissait les chemins et les gens montaient sur les épaules les uns des autres pour considérer de leur mieux l'homme dont on avait tant parlé. Les Bábís, les demi-Bábís, répandus de tous côtés tâchaient d'exciter, chez quelques-uns des spectateurs, un peu de commisération ou quelque autre sentiment dont ils auraient profité pour sauver leur maître. Les indifférents, les philosophes, les Shaykhís, les ṣúfís, se détournaient du cortège avec dégoût et rentraient chez eux, ou, l'attendant au contraire au coin des rues, le contemplaient avec une muette curiosité et rien davantage. La masse déguenillée, turbulente, impressionable, criait force grossièretés aux trois martyrs; mais elle était toute prête à changer d'avis pour peu qu'une circonstance quelconque vînt pousser ses esprits dans un sens différent. Enfin, les musulmans, maîtres de la journée, poursuivaient d'outrages les prisonniers, cherchaient à rompre l'escorte pour les frapper au visage ou sur la tête, et quand on ne les avait pas repoussés à temps ou qu'un tesson lancé par quelque enfant avait atteint le Báb ou l'un de ses compagnons à la figure, l'escorte et la foule éclataient de rire." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 220.)

denly interrupted and, holding Siyyid Ḥusayn by the hand, drew him aside and severely rebuked him. "Not until I have said to him all those things that I wish to say," the Báb warned the farrásh-báshí, "can any earthly power silence Me. Though all the world be armed against Me, yet shall they be powerless to deter Me from fulfilling, to the last word, My intention." The farrásh-báshí was amazed at such a bold assertion. He made, however, no reply, and bade Siyyid Ḥusayn arise and follow him.

When Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí was ushered into the presence of the mujtahids, he was repeatedly urged, in view



RUINS OF THE HOUSE OF MULLÁ MUḤAMMAD-I-MÁMÁQÁNÍ, THE MUJTAHID OF TABRÍZ

of the position which his stepfather, Siyyid 'Alíy-i-Zunúzí, occupied, to recant his faith. "Never," he exclaimed, "will I renounce my Master. He is the essence of my faith, and the object of my truest adoration. In Him I have found my paradise, and in the observance of His law I recognise the ark of my salvation." "Hold your peace!" thundered Mullá Muhammad-i-Mámáqání, before whom that youth was brought. "Such words betray your madness; I can well excuse the words for which you are not responsible." "I am not mad," he retorted. "Such a charge should rather be brought against you who have sentenced to death a man no less holy than the promised Qá'im. He is not a fool who

has embraced His Faith and is longing to shed his blood in His path."

The Báb was, in His turn, brought before Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mámáqání. No sooner had he recognised Him than he seized the death-warrant he himself had previously written and, handing it to his attendant, bade him deliver it to the farrásh-báshí. "No need," he cried, "to bring the Siyyid-i-Báb into my presence. This death-warrant I penned the very day I met him at the gathering presided over by the Valí-'Ahd. He surely is the same man whom I saw on that occasion, and has not, in the meantime, surrendered any of his claims."

From thence the Báb was conducted to the house of Mírzá Báqir, the son of Mírzá Aḥmad, to whom he had recently succeeded. When they arrived, they found his attendant standing at the gate and holding in his hand the Báb's death-warrant. "No need to enter," he told them. "My master is already satisfied that his father was right in pronouncing the sentence of death. He can do no better than follow his example."

Mullá Murtaḍá-Qulí, following in the footsteps of the other two mujtahids, had previously issued his own written testimony and refused to meet face to face his dreaded opponent. No sooner had the farrásh-báshí secured the necessary documents than he delivered his Captive into the hands of Sám Khán, assuring him that he could proceed with his task now that he had obtained the sanction of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of the realm.

Siyyid Ḥusayn had remained confined in the same room in which he had spent the previous night with the Báb. They were proceeding to place Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí in that same room, when he burst forth into tears and entreated them to allow him to remain with his Master. He was delivered into the hands of Sám Khán, who was ordered to execute him also, if he persisted in his refusal to deny his Faith.

Sám Khán was, in the meantime, finding himself increasingly affected by the behaviour of his Captive and the treatment that had been meted out to Him. He was seized with great fear lest his action should bring upon him the



THE BARRACK-SQUARE IN TABRÍZ, WHERE THE BÁB SUFFERED MARTYRDOM. PILLAR ON THE RIGHT MARKED X IS THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS SUSPENDED AND SHOT

wrath of God. "I profess the Christian Faith," he explained to the Báb, "and entertain no ill will against you. If your Cause be the Cause of Truth, enable me to free myself from the obligation to shed your blood." "Follow your instructions," the Báb replied, "and if your intention be sincere, the Almighty is surely able to relieve you from your perplexity."

Sám Khán ordered his men to drive a nail into the pillar that lay between the door of the room that Siyyid Ḥusayn occupied and the entrance to the adjoining one, and to make fast two ropes to that nail, from which the Báb and His companion were to be separately suspended.[1] Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí begged Sám Khán to be placed in such a manner that his own body would shield that of the Báb.[2] He was eventually suspended in such a position that his head reposed on the breast of his Master. As soon as they were fastened, a regiment of soldiers ranged itself in three files, each of two hundred and fifty men, each of which was ordered to open fire in its turn until the whole detachment had discharged the volleys of its bullets.[3] The smoke of the firing of the seven hundred and fifty rifles was such as to turn the light of the noonday sun into darkness. There had crowded onto

[1] "Báb gardait le silence; son pâle et beau visage qu'encadraient une barbe noire et de petites moustaches, sa tournure et ses manières distinguées, ses mains blanches et délicates, ses vêtements simples, mais d'une exquise propreté, tout enfin dans sa personne éveillait la sympathie et la compassion." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 378.)

[2] "Proof of the devotion and steadfastness of this noble man is afforded by a letter in his own blessed writing which was in the possession of his brother Mullá 'Abdu'lláh, who still lives in Tabríz. This letter he wrote from the prison, three days or two days before his martyrdom, in reply to his brother, who had written to him counselling him to turn aside from his devotion and thraldom; and therein he makes his apology. And since the martyr was the younger of the two brethren, therefore he adopts a respectful tone in his letter. The text of this letter of reply is as follows: 'He is the Compassionate. O my Qiblih! Thanks be to God, I have no fault to find with my circumstances, and "to every travail rest succeeds." As to what you wrote, that this matter hath no end, what matter, then, hath an end? We, at least, have no discontent therein; being, indeed, unable sufficiently to express our gratitude for this blessing. At most we can but be slain for God's sake, and, oh, what happiness were this! The Lord's will must be accomplished through His servants, neither can prudence avert predestined fate. What God wills comes to pass: there is no strength save in God. O my Qiblih! The end of the life of the world is death: "every soul shall taste of death." If the appointed destiny which the Lord (mighty and glorious is He) hath decreed should overtake me, then God is the guardian of my family, and thou art my trustee; act in such wise as accords with God's good pleasure. Forgive any failure in the respect or duty owed to an elder brother of which I may have been guilty, seek pardon for me from all those of my household, and commend me to God. God is my portion, and how good is He as a guardian!'" (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 301–3.)

[3] "Lorsqu'on fusille, en Perse, les condamnés sont attachés à un poteau, le dos touré aux spectateurs et de sorte qu'ils ne puissent voir les signes du commandement." (*Journal Asiatique*, 1866, tome 7, p. 377.)

the roof of the barracks, as well as the tops of the adjoining houses, about ten thousand people, all of whom were witnesses to that sad and moving scene.

As soon as the cloud of smoke had cleared away, an astounded multitude were looking upon a scene which their eyes could scarcely believe. There, standing before them alive and unhurt, was the companion of the Báb, whilst He Himself had vanished uninjured from their sight. Though the cords with which they were suspended had been rent in pieces by the bullets, yet their bodies had miraculously escaped the volleys.[1] Even the tunic which Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí was wearing had, despite the thickness of the smoke, remained unsullied. "The Siyyid-i-Báb has gone from our sight!" rang out the voices of the bewildered multitude. They set out in a frenzied search for Him, and found Him, eventually, seated in the same room which He had occupied the night before, engaged in completing His interrupted conversation, with Siyyid Ḥusayn. An expression of unruffled calm was upon His face. His body had emerged unscathed from the shower of bullets which the regiment had directed against Him. "I have finished My conversation with Siyyid Ḥusayn," the Báb told the farrásh-báshí. "Now you may proceed to fulfil your intention." The man was too much shaken to resume what he had already attempted. Refusing to accomplish his duty, he, that same moment, left that scene and resigned his post. He related all that he had seen to

[1] "Une clameur intense s'êleva de la foule à ce moment. C'est que les spectateurs venaient d'apercevoir Báb, délivré de ses entraves, s'avancer libre vers eux. Un hasard merveilleux avait fait qu'aucune balle n'avait atteint le condamné; au contraire, ses liens avaient été rompus, il était délivré. C'était un vrai miracle, et Dieu sait ce qui serait arrivé sans la fidélité et le sang-froid dont le régiment chrétien fit montré en cette circonstance. Les soldats, pour calmer l'effervescence de la foule qui s'agitait, prête à croire à la vérité d'une religion qui faisait ainsi ses preuves, lui montrèrent les cordes brisées par les balles, démonstration visible de l'inanité du miracle. En même temps on saisissait Báb et on le liait de nouveau au poteau fatal. . . . Cette fois le supplice fut bon; la justice musulmane et la loi canonique avaient repris leur droits. Mais la foule, vivement impressionée par le spectacle qu'elle avait eu sous les yeux, s'écoula lentement, mal convaincu que le Báb était un criminel. Sa faute, après tout, n'en était une que pour les gens de loi, et le monde est indulgeat aux crimes qu'il ne comprend point." (M. C. Huart's "La Religion de Báb," pp. 3–4.) "C'est alors que se passa un fait étrange, unique dans les annales de l'humanité. . . . Les balles étaient venues couper les cordes qui retenaient le Báb, celui-ci retomba sur ses pieds sans une égratignure." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 375.) "Par un hasard extraordinaire, les balles ne touchèrent que les cordes qui tenaient Báb attaché; elles se rompirent et il se sentit libre. Du bruit, des éclats de voix retentirent de tous les côtés sans qu'on comprît d'abord de quoi il s'agissait." (*Ibid.*, p. 379.)

his neighbour, Mírzá Siyyid Muḥsin, one of the notables of Tabríz, who, as soon as he heard the story, was converted to the Faith.

I was privileged to meet, subsequently, this same Mírzá Siyyid Muḥsin, who conducted me to the scene of the Báb's martyrdom and showed me the wall where He had been suspended. I was taken to the room in which He had been found conversing with Siyyid Ḥusayn, and was shown the very spot where He had been seated. I saw the very nail which His enemies had hammered into the wall and to which the rope which had supported His body had been attached.

Sám Khán was likewise stunned by the force of this tremendous revelation. He ordered his men to leave the barracks immediately, and refused ever again to associate himself and his regiment with any act that involved the least injury to the Báb. He swore, as he left that courtyard, never again to resume that task even though his refusal should entail the loss of his own life.

No sooner had Sám Khán departed than Áqá Ján Khán-i-Khamsih, colonel of the body-guard, known also by the names of Khamsih and Náṣirí, volunteered to carry out the order for execution. On the same wall and in the same manner, the Báb and His companion were again suspended, while the regiment formed in line to open fire upon them. Contrariwise to the previous occasion, when only the cord with which they were suspended had been shot into pieces, this time their bodies were shattered and were blended into one mass of mingled flesh and bone.[1] "Had you believed in Me, O wayward generation," were the last words of the Báb to the gazing multitude as the regiment was preparing to fire the final volley, "every one of you would have followed the example of this youth, who stood in rank above most of you, and willingly would have sacrificed himself in My path. The day will come when you will have recognised Me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you."[2]

[1] According to "A Traveller's Narrative" (p. 45), "the breasts [of the victims] were riddled, and their limbs were completely dissected, except their faces, which were but little marred."

[2] "Praise be to God who manifested the Point [the Báb] and caused to proceed therefrom the knowledge of all that was and shall be. . . . He is that Point which God hath made to be an Ocean of Light unto the faithful among His servants, and a Ball of Fire unto the deniers among His creatures and the impious among His people." (Bahá'u'lláh, the "Ishráqát,"

The very moment the shots were fired, a gale of exceptional severity arose and swept over the whole city. A whirlwind of dust of incredible density obscured the light of the sun and blinded the eyes of the people. The entire city remained enveloped in that darkness from noon till night. Even so strange a phenomenon, following immediately in the wake of that still more astounding failure of Sám Khán's regiment to injure the Báb, was unable to move

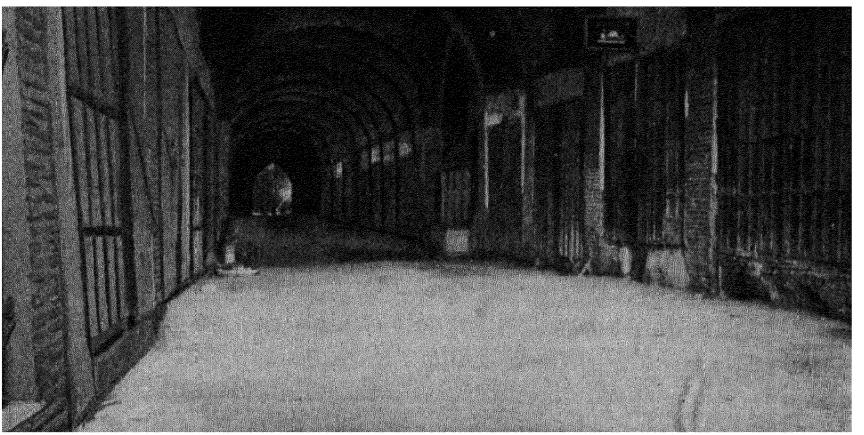
p. 3.) "In His interpretation of the letter 'Há,' He craved martyrdom, saying: 'Methinks I heard a voice calling in My inmost being: "Do Thou sacrifice the thing which Thou lovest most in the path of God, even as Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, hath offered up his life for My sake." And were I not regardful of this inevitable mystery, by Him in whose hand is My soul, even if all the kings of the earth were to be leagued together, they would be powerless to take from Me a single letter; how much less can such servants as these, who are worthy of no attention, and who verily are of the outcast? that all may know the degree of My patience, My resignation and self-sacrifice in the path of God.' " (*Idem*, the "Kitáb-i-Íqán," p. 195.) "The Báb, the Lord most high, may the life of all be a sacrifice unto Him, hath specifically revealed an Epistle unto the 'ulamás of every city, wherein He hath fully set forth the character of the denial and repudiation of each of them. Wherefore, take ye good heed, ye who are men of insight!" (*Ibid.*, p. 193.) "This illustrious Soul arose with such power that He shook the supports of the religion, of the morals, the conditions, the habits, and the customs of Persia, and instituted new rules, new laws, and a new religion. Though the great personages of the State, nearly all the clergy, and the public men, arose to destroy and annihilate Him, He alone withstood them, and moved the whole of Persia. . . . He imparted Divine education to an unenlightened multitude and produced marvellous results on the thoughts, morals, customs, and conditions of the Persians." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, "Some Answered Questions," pp. 30–31.) "Les chrétiens sont en effet convaincus que si Jésus-Christ avait voulu descendre vivant de la croix, il l'eût fait sans difficulté: il est mort volontairement, parce qu'il devait mourir et pour accomplir les prophéties. Il en est de même pour le Báb, disent les Bábís, qui voulut donner aussi une sanction évidente à ses paroles. Lui aussi mourut volontairement, parce que sa mort devait sauver l'humanité. Qui dira jamais les paroles que le Báb put prononcer au milieu du tumulte sans nom qui accueillit son départ: qui saura quels souvenirs agitaient sa belle âme, qui nous dira jamais le secret de cette mort. . . . Le spectacle des turpitudes, des hontes, des vices, du mensonge de ce clergé révoltait son âme pure et sincère: il sentait le besoin d'une réforme profonde à introduire dans les mœurs publiques et dut, plus d'une fois, hésiter devant la perspective de la révolution qu'il lui fallait déchaîner pour délivrer les corps et les intelligences du joug d'abrutissement et de violence qui pesait sur toute la Perse pour le plus grand profit d'un élite de . . . jouisseurs et pour la plus grande honte de la vraie religion du Prophète. Sa perplexité dut être grande, ses angoisses terribles, et il lui fallut le triple airain dont parle Horace pour se précipiter tête baissée dans l'océan des superstitions et des haines qui devait fatalement l'engloutir. C'est un des plus magnifiques exemples de courage qu'il ait été donné à l'humanité de contempler, et c'est aussi une admirable preuve de l'amour que notre héros portait à ses concitoyens. Il s'est sacrifié pour l'humanité: pour elle il a donné son corps et con âme, pour elle il a subi les privations, les affronts, les injures, la torture, et le martyre. Il a scellé de son sang le pacte de la fraternité universelle, et comme Jésus il a payé de sa vie l'annonce du règne de la concorde, de l'équité et de l'amour du prochain. Plus que tout autre il savait quels dangers formidables il accumulait sur sa tête, il avait pu juger par lui-même de l'exaspération à laquelle le fanatisme savamment excité peut atteindre: mais toutes les réflexions qu'il put faire à ce sujet ne furent point assez puissantes pour le détourner de la voie dans laquelle il avait désormais résolu d'entrer: la peur n'eut aucune prise sur son âme et tranquille, sans daigner jeter un regard en arrière, calme, en pleine possession de lui-même, il entra dans la fournaise." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 203–4, 376.) "Le

the hearts of the people of Tabríz, and to induce them to pause and reflect upon the significance of such momentous events. They witnessed the effect which so marvellous an occurrence had produced upon Sám Khán; they beheld the consternation of the farrásh-báshí and saw him make his irrevocable decision; they could even examine that tunic which, despite the discharge of so many bullets, had remained whole and stainless; they could read in the face of

chef de la religion nouvelle était mort, et suivant les calculs de Mírzá Taqí Khán, premier ministre, la paix la plus profonde allait se rétablir dans les esprits et ne plus être troublée au moins de ce côté-là. Mais la sagesse politique se trouva cette fois en défaut, et au lieu d' éteindre l'incendie on en avait au contraire attisé la violence." "On le verra tout à l'heure, quand j'examinerai les dogmes religieux prêchés par le Báb: la perpétuité de la secte ne tenait nullement à sa présence; tout pouvait marcher et se développer sans lui. Si le premier ministre avait eu connaissance de ce point fondamental de la religion ennemie, il est probable qu'il n'eût pas été aussi empressé à faire disparaître un homme dont l'existence, en définitive, ne lui eût pas dès lors importé plus que la mort." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 224, 225.) "Such a prophet," writes the Rev. Dr. T. K. Cheyne, "was the Báb; we call him 'prophet' for want of a better name; 'yea, I say unto you, a prophet and more than a prophet.' His combination of mildness and power is so rare that we have to place him in a line with super-normal men. . . . We learn that, at great points in his career, after he had been in an ecstasy, such radiance of might and majesty streamed from his countenance that none could bear to look upon the effulgence of his glory and beauty. Nor was it an uncommon occurrence for unbelievers involuntarily to bow down in lowly obeisance on beholding His Holiness; while the inmates of the castle, though for the most part Christians and Sunnís, reverently prostrated themselves whenever they saw the visage of His Holiness. Such transfiguration is well known to the saints. It was regarded as the affixing of the heavenly seal to the reality and completeness of [the] Báb's detachment." ("The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp. 8–9.) "Who can fail to be attracted by the gentle spirit of Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad? His sorrowful and persecuted life; his purity of conduct, and youth; his courage and uncomplaining patience under misfortune; his complete self-negation; the dim ideal of a better state of things which can be discerned through the obscure and mystic utterances of the Bayán; but most of all his tragic death, all serve to enlist our sympathies on behalf of the young Prophet of Shíráz. The irresistible charm which won him such devotion during his life still lives on, and still continues to influence the minds of the Persian people." (E. G. Browne's art. "The Bábís of Persia," *Journal of the R. A. S.*, 1889, p. 933.) "Few believe that by these sanguinary measures the doctrines of [the] Báb will cease from propagation. There is a spirit of change abroad among the Persians, which will preserve his system from extinction; besides which, his doctrines are of an attractive nature to Persians. Though now subdued, and obliged to lurk concealed in towns, it is conjectured that the creed of [the] Báb, far from diminishing, is daily spreading." (Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," p. 181.) "The story of the Báb, as Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad called himself, was the story of spiritual heroism unsurpassed in Svabhava's experience; and his own adventurous soul was fired by it. That a youth of no social influence and no education should, by the simple power of insight, be able to pierce into the heart of things and see the real truth, and then hold on to it with such firmness of conviction and present it with such suasion that he was able to convince men that he was the Messiah and get them to follow him to death itself, was one of those splendid facts in human history that Svabhava loved to meditate on. . . . The Báb's passionate sincerity could not be doubted, for he had given his life for his faith. And that there must be something in his message that appealed to men and satisfied their souls was witnessed to by the fact that thousands gave their lives in his cause and millions now follow him. If a young man could, in only six years of ministry, by the sincerity of his purpose and the attraction of his

the Báb, who had emerged unhurt from that storm, the expression of undisturbed serenity as He resumed His conversation with Siyyid Ḥusayn; and yet none of them troubled himself to enquire as to the significance of these unwonted signs and wonders.

The martyrdom of the Báb took place at noon on Sunday, the twenty-eighth of Sha'bán, in the year 1266 A.H.,[1] thirty-one lunar years, seven months, and twenty-seven days from the day of His birth in Shíráz.



SITE OF THE MOAT THAT SURROUNDED TABRIZ, WHERE THE BAB'S BODY WAS THROWN

On the evening of that same day, the mangled bodies of the Báb and His companion were removed from the court-

personality, so inspire rich and poor, cultured and illiterate, alike, with belief in himself and his doctrines that they would remain staunch though hunted down and without trial sentenced to death, sawn asunder, strangled, shot, blown from guns; and if men of high position and culture in Persia, Turkey and Egypt in numbers to this day adhere to his doctrines; his life must be one of those events in the last hundred years which is really worth study." (Sir Francis Younghusband's "The Gleam," pp. 183–4.) "Thus, in only his thirtieth year, in the year 1850, ended the heroic career of a true God-man. Of the sincerity of his conviction that he was God-appointed, the manner of his death is the amplest possible proof. In the belief that he would thereby save others from the error of their present beliefs he willingly sacrificed his life. And of his power of attaching men to him the passionate devotion of hundreds and even thousands of men who gave their lives in his cause is convincing testimony." (*Ibid.*, p. 210.) "The Báb was dead, but not Bábism. He was not the first, and still less the last, of a long line of martyrs who have testified that, even in a country gangrened with corruption and atrophied with indifferentism like Persia, the soul of a nation survives, inarticulate, perhaps, and in a way helpless, but still capable of sudden spasms of vitality." (Valentine Chirol's "The Middle Eastern Question," p. 120.)

[1] July 9, 1850 A.D.

yard of the barracks to the edge of the moat outside the gate of the city. Four companies, each consisting of ten sentinels, were ordered to keep watch in turn over them. On the morning following the day of martyrdom, the Russian consul in Tabríz, accompanied by an artist, went to that spot and ordered that a sketch be made of the remains as they lay beside the moat.[1]

I have heard Ḥájí 'Alí-'Askar relate the following: "An official of the Russian consulate, to whom I was related, showed me that same sketch on the very day it was drawn. It was such a faithful portrait of the Báb that I looked upon! No bullet had struck His forehead, His cheeks, or His lips. I gazed upon a smile which seemed to be still lingering upon His countenance. His body, however, had been severely mutilated. I could recognise the arms and head of His companion, who seemed to be holding Him in his embrace. As I gazed horror-struck upon that haunting picture, and saw how those noble traits had been disfigured, my heart sank within me. I turned away my face in anguish and, regaining my house, locked myself within my room. For three days and three nights, I could neither sleep nor eat, so overwhelmed was I with emotion. That short and tumultuous life, with all its sorrows, its turmoils, its banishments, and eventually the awe-inspiring martyrdom with which it had been crowned, seemed again to be re-enacted before my eyes. I tossed upon my bed, writhing in agony and pain."

On the afternoon of the second day after the Báb's martyrdom, Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán, son of Yaḥyá Khán, arrived at Bágh-Mishih, a suburb of Tabríz, and was received at the house of the Kalantar,[2] one of his friends and confidants,

[1] "'The Emperor of Russia,' he [Ḥájí Mírzá Jání] says, 'sent to the Russian consul at Tabríz, bidding him fully investigate and report the circumstances of His Holiness the Báb. As soon as this news arrived, they, i.e. the Persian authorities, put the Báb to death. The Russian consul summoned Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad-Ḥusayn, the Báb's amanuensis, who was imprisoned at Tabríz, into his presence, and enquired concerning the signs and circumstances of His Holiness. Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn, because there were Musulmáns present, dared not speak plainly about his Master, but managed by means of hints to communicate sundry matters, and also gave him [the Russian consul] certain of the Báb's writings.' That this statement is, in part at least, true is proved by the testimony of Dorn, who, in describing a MS. of one of the Báb's 'Commentaries on the Names of God' (which he calls 'Qur'án der Bábí'), says, on p. 248 of vol. 8 of the *Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St. Pétersbourg*, that it was 'received directly from the Báb's own secretary, who, during his imprisonment at Tabríz, placed it in European hands.'" (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 395–6.)

[2] See Glossary.

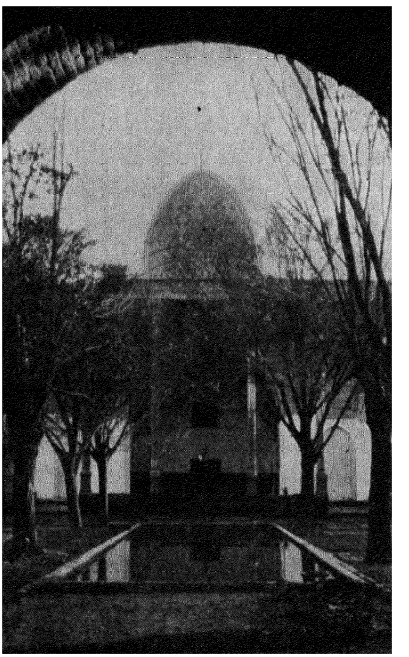
who was a dervish and belonged to the ṣúfí community. As soon as he had been informed of the imminent danger that threatened the life of the Báb, Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán had left Ṭihrán with the object of achieving His deliverance. To his dismay, he arrived too late to carry out his intention. No sooner had his host informed him of the circumstances that had led to the arrest and condemnation of the Báb, and related to him the events of His martyrdom, than he instantly resolved to carry away the bodies of the victims, even at the risk of endangering his own life. The Kalantar advised him to wait and follow his suggestion rather than expose himself to what seemed to him would be inevitable death. He urged him to transfer his residence to another house and to wait for the arrival, that evening, of a certain Ḥájí Alláh-Yár, who, he said, would be willing to carry out whatever he might wish him to do. At the appointed hour, Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán met Ḥájí Alláh-Yár, who succeeded, in the middle of that same night, in bearing the bodies from the edge of the moat to the silk factory owned by one of the believers of Mílán; laid them, the next day, in a specially constructed wooden case, and transferred them, according to Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán's directions, to a place of safety. Meanwhile the sentinels sought to justify themselves by pretending that, while they slept, wild beasts had carried away the bodies.[1] Their superiors, on their part, unwilling to compromise their own honour, concealed the truth and did not divulge it to the authorities.[2]

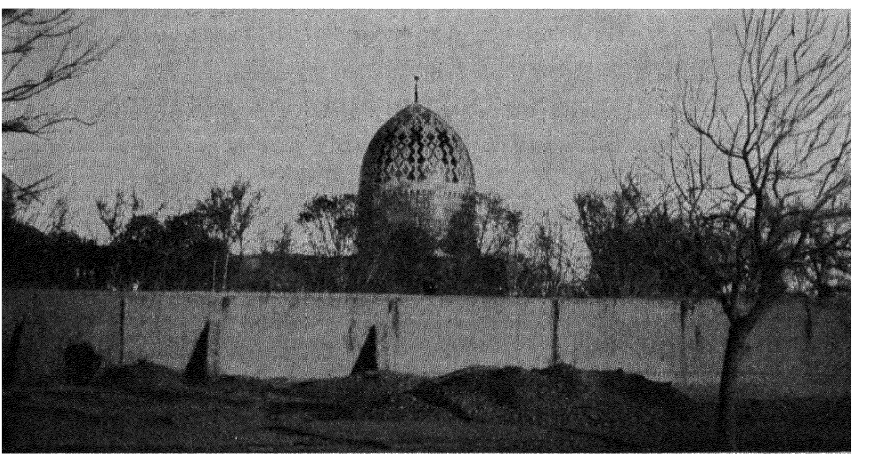
Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán immediately reported the matter

[1] "Suivant un usage immémorial en Orient, usage en vigueur au siège de Béthulie comme autour du tombeau de Notre-Seigneur, une sentinelle est un guerrier qui dort desonmieux auprès du poste qu'il est chargé de garder." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 166.) "On a pu voir au cours de cette histoire ce que sont les sentinelles persanes: leurs fonctions consistent essentiellement à dormir auprès du dépôt qu'ils sont sensés garder." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 378.)

[2] "M. de Gobineau, d'accord en cela avec les auteurs du Násikhu't-Taváríkh, du Rawḍatu's-Ṣafá, du Mir'átu'l-Buldán, en un mot avec tous les historiens officiels, rapporte qu' après l'exécution, le cadavre du Báb fut jeté dans les fossés de la ville et dévoré par les chiens. En réalité il n'en a pas été ainsi, et nous allons voir pourquoi ce bruit a été répandu tant par les autorités de Tauris peu soucieuses de s'attirer les réprimandes du gouvernement pour une complaisance chèrement vendue, que par les Bábís désireux de prévenir ainsi les recherches de la police. Les témoignages les plus sûrs des spectateurs même du drame ou de ses acteurs ne me laissent aucun doute que le corps de Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad n'ait été recueilli par des mains pieuses et n'ait enfin, après les péripéties que je vais raconter, reçu une sépulture digne de lui." (*Ibid.*, p. 377.)

to Bahá'u'lláh, who was then in Ṭihrán and who instructed Áqáy-i-Kalím to despatch a special messenger to Tabríz for the purpose of transferring the bodies to the capital. This decision was prompted by the wish the Báb Himself had ex-





VIEWS OF THE IMÁM-ZÁDIH-ḤASAN AT ṬIHRÁN, WHERE THE BÁB'S BODY WAS KEPT

pressed in the "Zíyárat-i-Sháh-'Abdu'l-'Aẓím," a Tablet He had revealed while in the neighbourhood of that shrine and which He delivered to a certain Mírzá Sulaymán-i-Khaṭíb, who was instructed by Him to proceed together with a number of believers to that spot and to chant it within its precincts.[1] "Well is it with you," the Báb addressed the buried saint in words such as these, in the concluding passages of that Tablet, "to have found your resting place in Rayy, under the shadow of My Beloved. Would that I might be entombed within the precincts of that holy ground!"

I was myself in Ṭihrán, in the company of Mírzá Aḥmad, when the bodies of the Báb and His companion arrived. Bahá'u'lláh had in the meantime departed for Karbilá, in pursuance of the instructions of the Amír-Niẓám. Áqáy-i-Kalím, together with Mírzá Aḥmad, transferred those remains from the Imám-Zádih-Ḥasan,[2] where they were first taken, to a place the site of which remained unknown to anyone excepting themselves. That place remained secret until the departure of Bahá'u'lláh for Adrianople, at which time Áqáy-i-Kalím was charged to inform Munír, one of his fellow-disciples, of the actual site where the bodies had been laid. In spite of his search, he was unable to find it. It was subsequently discovered by Jamál, an old adherent of the Faith, to whom that secret was confided while Bahá'u'lláh

[1] "Ṭihrán is thus endowed in respect of the mausoleum and sanctuary of Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Aẓím. Reposing beneath a golden-plated dome, whose scintillations I had seen from afar while riding towards the city, the remains of this holy individual are said to attract an annual visitation of 300 thousand persons. I find that most writers discreetly veil their ignorance of the identity of the saint by describing him as 'a holy Musulman, whose shrine is much frequented by the pious Ṭihránís.' It appears, however, that long before the advent of Islám this had been a sacred spot, as the sepulchre of a lady of great sanctity, in which connection it may be noted that the shrine is still largely patronised by women. Here, after the Musulman conquest, was interred Imám-Zádih Ḥamzih, the son of the seventh Imám, Muṣá-Káẓim; and here, flying from the Khalíf Mutavakkil, came a holy personage named Abu'l-Qásim 'Abdu'l-'Aẓím, who lived in concealment at Rayy till his death in about 861 A.D. (This is the account given by the Persian Kitáb-i-Majlisí, quoting Shaykh Najáshí, quoting Barkí.) Subsequently his fame obscured that of his more illustrious predecessor. Successive sovereigns, particularly those of the reigning dynasty, have extended and beautified the cluster of buildings raised above his grave, the ever-swelling popularity of which has caused a considerable village to spring up around the hallowed site. The mosque is situated in the plain, about six miles to the south-southeast of the capital, just beyond the ruins of Rayy, and at the extremity of the mountain-spur that encloses the Ṭihrán plain on the southeast." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," pp. 345–7.)

[2] A local shrine in Ṭihrán.

was still in Adrianople. That spot is, until now, unknown to the believers, nor can anyone conjecture where the remains will eventually be transferred.

The first in Ṭihrán to hear of the circumstances attending that cruel martyrdom, after the Grand Vazír, was Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Núrí, who had been banished to Káshán by Muhammad Sháh when the Báb was passing through that city. He had assured Ḥájí Mírzá Jání, who had acquainted him with the precepts of the Faith, that if the love he bore for the new Revelation would cause him to regain his lost position, he would exert his utmost endeavour to secure the well-being and safety of the persecuted community. Ḥájí Mírzá Jání reported the matter to his Master, who charged him to assure the disgraced minister that ere long he would be summoned to Ṭihrán and would be invested, by his sovereign, with a position that would be second to none except that of the Sháh himself. He was warned not to forget his promise, and to strive to carry out his intention. He was delighted with that message, and renewed the assurance he had given.

When the news of the Báb's martyrdom reached him, he had already been promoted, had received the title of I'timádu'd-Dawlih, and was hoping to be raised to the position of Grand Vazír. He hastened to inform Bahá'u'lláh, with whom he was intimately acquainted, of the news he had received, expressing the hope that the fire he feared would one day bring untold calamity upon Him, was at last extinguished. "Not so," Bahá'u'lláh replied. "If this be true, you can be certain that the flame that has been kindled will, by this very act, blaze forth more fiercely than ever, and will set up a conflagration such as the combined forces of the statesmen of this realm will be powerless to quench." The significance of these words Mírzá Áqá Khán was destined to appreciate at a later time. Scarcely did he imagine, when that prediction was uttered, that the Faith which had received so staggering a blow could survive its Author. He himself had, on one occasion, been cured by Bahá'u'lláh of an illness from which he had given up all hope of recovery.

His son, the Nizámu'l-Mulk, one day asked him whether he did not think that Bahá'u'lláh, who, of all the sons of the late Vazír, had shown Himself the most capable, had failed

to live up to the tradition of His father and had disappointed the hopes that had been reposed in Him. "My son," he replied, "do you really believe him to be an unworthy son of his father? All that either of us can hope to achieve is but a fleeting and precarious allegiance which will vanish as soon as our days are ended. Our mortal life can never be free from the vicissitudes that beset the path of earthly ambition. Should we even succeed in ensuring, in our lifetime, the honour of our name, who can tell whether, after our death, calumny may not stain our memory and undo the work we have achieved? Even those who, while we are still living, honour us with their lips would, in their hearts, condemn and vilify us were we, for but one moment, to fail to promote their interests. Not so, however, with Bahá'u'lláh. Unlike the great ones of the earth, whatever be their race or rank, he is the object of a love and devotion such as time cannot dim nor enemy destroy. His sovereignty the shadows of death can never obscure nor the tongue of the slanderer undermine. Such is the sway of his influence that no one among his lovers dare, in the stillness of night, evoke the memory of the faintest desire that could, even remotely, be construed as contrary to his wish. Such lovers will greatly increase in number. The love they bear him will never grow less, and will be transmitted from generation to generation until the world shall have been suffused with its glory."

The malicious persistence with which a savage enemy sought to ill-treat and eventually to destroy the life of the Báb brought in its wake untold calamities upon Persia and its inhabitants. The men who perpetrated these atrocities fell victims to gnawing remorse, and in an incredibly short period were made to suffer ignominious deaths. As to the great mass of its people, who watched with sullen indifference the tragedy that was being enacted before their eyes, and who failed to raise a finger in protest against the hideousness of those cruelties, they fell, in their turn, victims to a misery which all the resources of the land and the energy of its statesmen were powerless to alleviate. The wind of adversity blew fiercely upon them, and shook to its foundations their material prosperity. From the very day the hand of the assailant was stretched forth against the Báb, and sought to

deal its fatal blow to His Faith, visitation upon visitation crushed the spirit out of that ungrateful people, and brought them to the very brink of national bankruptcy. Plagues, the very names of which were almost unknown to them except for a cursory reference in the dust-covered books which few cared to read, fell upon them with a fury that none could escape. That scourge scattered devastation wherever it spread. Prince and peasant alike felt its sting and bowed to its yoke. It held the populace in its grip, and refused to relax its hold upon them. As malignant as the fever which decimated the province of Gílán, these sudden afflictions continued to lay waste the land. Grievous as were these calamities, the avenging wrath of God did not stop at the misfortunes that befell a perverse and faithless people. It made itself felt in every living being that breathed on the surface of that stricken land. It affected the life of plants and animals alike, and made the people feel the magnitude of their distress. Famine added its horrors to the stupendous weight of afflictions under which the people were groaning. The gaunt spectre of starvation stalked abroad amidst them, and the prospect of a slow and painful death haunted their vision. People and government alike sighed for the relief which they could nowhere obtain. They drank the cup of woe to its dregs, utterly unregardful of the hand which had brought it to their lips, and of the Person for whose sake they were made to suffer.

The first who arose to ill-treat the Báb was none other than Ḥusayn Khán, the governor of Shíráz. His disgraceful treatment of his Captive cost him the lives of thousands who had been committed to his protection and who connived at his acts. His province was ravaged by a plague which brought it to the verge of destruction. Impoverished and exhausted, Fárs languished helpless beneath its weight, calling for the charity of its neighbours and the assistance of its friends. Ḥusayn Khán himself witnessed with bitterness the undoing of all his labours, was condemned to lead in obscurity the remaining days of his life, and tottered to his grave, abandoned and forgotten, alike by his friends and his enemies.

The next who sought to challenge the Faith of the Báb

and to stem its progress was Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí. It was he who, for selfish purposes and in order to court the favour of the abject 'ulamás of his time, interposed between the Báb and Muḥammad Sháh and endeavoured to prevent their meeting. It was he who pronounced the banishment of his dreaded Captive to a sequestered corner of Ádhirbáyján and, with dogged vigilance, kept watch over His isolation. It was he who was made the recipient of that denunciatory Tablet in which his Prisoner foreshadowed his doom and exposed his infamy. Barely a year and six months had passed after the Báb had reached the neighbourhood of Ṭihrán, when Divine vengeance hurled him from power and drove him to seek shelter within the inglorious precincts of the shrine of Sháh-'Abdu'l-'Aẓím, a refugee from the wrath of his own people. From thence the hand of the Avenger drove him into exile beyond the confines of his native land, and plunged him into an ocean of afflictions until he met his death in circumstances of abject poverty and unspeakable distress.

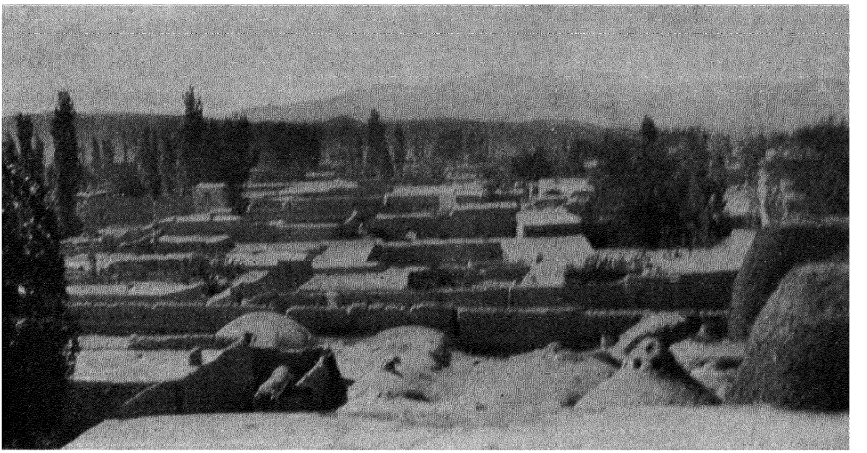
As to the regiment which, despite the unaccountable failure of Sám Khán and his men to destroy the life of the Báb, had volunteered to renew that attempt, and which eventually riddled His body with its bullets, two hundred and fifty of its members met their death in that same year, together with their officers, in a terrible earthquake. While they were resting on a hot summer day under the shadow of a wall on their way between Ardibíl and Tabríz, absorbed in their games and pleasures, the whole structure suddenly collapsed and fell upon them, leaving not one survivor. The remaining five hundred suffered the same fate as that which their own hands had inflicted upon the Báb. Three years after His martyrdom, that regiment mutinied, and its members were thereupon mercilessly shot by command of Mírzá Ṣádiq Khán-i-Núrí. Not content with a first volley, he ordered that a second one be fired in order to ensure that none of the mutineers had survived. Their bodies were afterwards pierced with spears and lances, and left exposed to the gaze of the people of Tabríz. That day many of the inhabitants of the city, recalling the circumstances of the Báb's martyrdom, wondered at that same fate which had overtaken those who had slain Him. "Could it be, by any chance, the venge-

ance of God," a few were heard to whisper to one another, "that has brought the whole regiment to so dishonourable and tragic an end? If that youth had been a lying impostor, why should his persecutors have been so severely punished?" These expressed misgivings reached the ears of the leading mujtahids of the city, who were seized with great fear and ordered that all those who entertained such doubts should be severely punished. Some were beaten, others were fined, all were warned to cease such whisperings, which could only revive the memory of a terrible adversary and rekindle enthusiasm for His Cause.

The prime mover of the forces that precipitated the Báb's martyrdom, the Amír-Niẓám, and also his brother, the Vazír-Niẓám, his chief accomplice, were, within two years of that savage act, subjected to a dreadful punishment, which ended miserably in their death. The blood of the Amír-Nizám stains, to this very day, the wall of the bath of Fín,[1] a witness to the atrocities his own hand had wrought.[2]

[1] "It is true," writes Lord Curzon, "that his [Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh's] reign has been disfigured by one or two acts of regrettable violence; worst among which was the murder of his first Prime Minister, Mírzá Taqí Khán, the Amír-Nizám. . . . The brother-in-law of the Sháh, and the first subject in the kingdom, he owed to the vindictiveness of court intrigue and to the maliciously excited jealousy of his youthful sovereign, a disgrace which his enemies were not satisfied until they had fulfilled by the death of their fallen, but still formidable victim." ("Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 1, p. 402.)

[2] "Tout le monde savait que les Bábís avaient prédit la fin prochaine du premier ministre et annoncés on genre de mort. Cela eut lieu exactement, dit-on, comme l'avaient annoncé les martyrs de Zanján, Mírzá Ridá, Ḥájí Muhammad-'Alí, et Ḥájí Muhsin. Le ministre, tombé en disgrâce et poursuivi par la haine royale, eut les veines ouvertes au village de Fín, près de Káshán, comme les avaient eu ses suppliciés. Son successeur fut Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Núrí, d'une tribu noble du Mázindarán, et jusqu'alors ministre de la guerre. Ce nouveau dépositaire du pouvoir prit le titre de Ṣadr-i-A'ẓam, que portent les grands vazirs de l'empire ottoman. On était alors en 1852." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 230.)



VIEW OF ZANJÁN

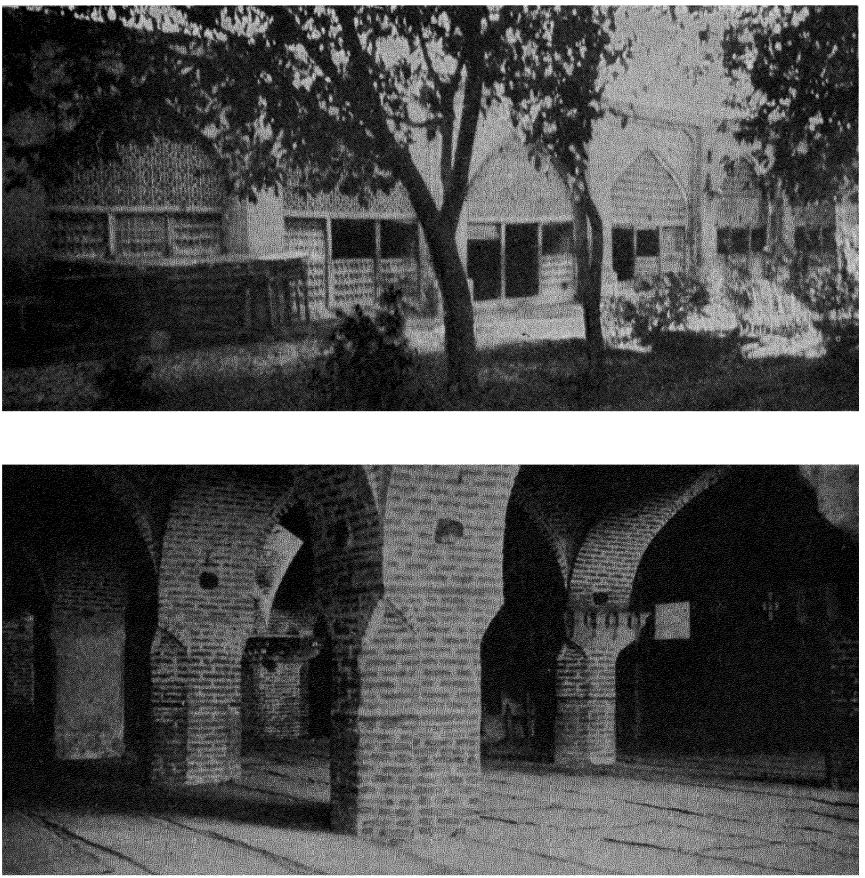
CHAPTER XXIV

THE ZANJÁN UPHEAVAL

THE spark that had kindled the great conflagrations of Mázindarán and Nayríz had already set aflame Zanján[1] and its surroundings when the Báb met His death in Tabríz. Profound as was His sorrow at the sad and calamitous fate that had overtaken the heroes of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, the news of the no less tragic sufferings that had been the lot of Vahíd and his companions, came as an added blow to His heart, already oppressed by the weight of manifold afflictions. The consciousness of the dangers that thickened around Him; the memory of the indignity He endured when He was last conducted to Tabríz; the strain of a prolonged and rigorous captivity amidst the mountain fastnesses of Ádhirbáyján; the terrible butcheries that marked the closing stages of the Mázindarán and Nayríz upheavals; the outrages to His Faith wrought by the persecutors of the Seven Martyrs of Ṭihrán—even these were not all the troubles

[1] Capital of the district of Khamsih. "Le Khamsih est une petite province à l'est du Kaflán-Kúh, ou montagne du Tigre, entre l'Iráq et l'Ádhirbáyján. Sa capitale, Zanján, d'un joli aspect, est ceinte d'un mur crénelé garni de tours, comme toutes les cités persanes. La population y est turque de race, et, si ce n'est pas les employés du gouvernement, le persan y est peu parlé. Les environs de la ville sont bien fournis de villages, qui ne sont pas pauvres; des tribus puissantes les fréquentent surtout au printemps et en hiver." (*Ibid.*, p. 191.)

that beclouded the remaining days of a fast-ebbing life. He was already prostrated by the severity of these blows when the news of the happenings at Zanján, which were then beginning to foreshadow their sad events, reached Him and served to consummate the anguish of His last days. What



VIEWS OF THE MASJID BUILT FOR ḤUJJAT BY HIS COMPANIONS

pangs must He have endured as the shadows of death were fast gathering about Him! In every field, whether in the north or in the south, the champions of His Faith had been subjected to undeserved sufferings, had been infamously deceived, had been robbed of their possessions, and had been inhumanly massacred. And now, as if to fill His cup of woes to over-

flowing, there broke forth the storm of Zanján, the most violent and devastating of them all.[1]

I now proceed to relate the circumstances that have made of that event one of the most thrilling episodes in the history of this Revelation. Its chief figure was Ḥujjat-i-Zanjání, whose name was Mullá Muhammad-'Alí,[2] one of the ablest ecclesiastical dignitaries of his age, and certainly one of the most formidable champions of the Cause. His father, Mullá Raḥím-i-Zanjání, was one of the leading mujtahids of Zanján, and was greatly esteemed for his piety, his learning and force of character. Mullá Muhammad-'Alí, surnamed Ḥujjat, was born in the year 1227 A.H.[3] From his very boyhood, he showed such capacity that his father lavished the utmost care upon his education. He sent him to Najaf, where he distinguished himself by his insight, his ability and fiery ardour.[4] His scholarship and keen intelligence excited the admiration of his friends, whilst his outspokenness and the strength of his character made him the terror of his adversaries. His father advised him not to return to Zanján,

[1] "Now in these years [A.H. 1266 and 1267] throughout all Persia fire fell on the households of the Bábís, and each one of them, in whatever hamlet he might be, was, on the slightest suspicion arising, put to the sword. More than four thousand souls were slain, and a great multitude of women and children, left without protector or helper, distracted and confounded, were trodden down and destroyed." ("A Traveller's Narrative," pp. 47–8.)

[2] "Il se trouvait dans cette ville un mujtahid appelé Mullá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Zanjání. Il était natif du Mázindarán et avait étudié sous un maître célèbre, décoré du titre de Sharífu'l-'Ulamá. Muhammad-'Alí s'était adonné particulièrement à la théologie dogmatique et à la jurisprudence; il avait acquis de la réputation. Les musulmans assurent que, dans ses fonctions de mujtahid, il faisait preuve d'un esprit inquiet et turbulent. Aucune question ne lui semblait ni suffisament étudiée ni convenablement résolue. Ses fatvás multipliés troublaient constamment la conscience et les habitudes des fidèles. Avide de nouveautés, il n'était ni tolérant dans la discussion, ni modéré dans la dispute. Tantôt il prolongeait indûment le jeûne du Ramaḍán pour des motifs que personne n'avait donnés avant lui; tantôt il réglait les formes de la prière d'une façon tout inusitée. Il était désagréable aux gens paisibles, odieux aux routiniers. Mais, on l'avoue aussi, il comptait de nombreux partisans qui le considéraient comme un saint, prisaient son zèle, et juraient d'après lui. À s'en faire une idée tout à fait impartiale, on peut voir en lui un de ces nombreux musulmans qui, au vrai, ne le sont pas du tout, mais que presse un fond très ample et très vivace de foi et de zèle religieux dont ils cherchent l'emploi avec passion. Son malheur était d'être mujtahid et de trouver, ou plutôt de croire trouver, un emploi naturel de ses forces dans le bouleversement des idées reçues en des matières qui ne comportent pas cette agitation." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 191–2.)

[3] 1812–13 A.D.

[4] "Parmi les 'ulamás de la ville se trouvait un personnage nommé Ákhúnd Mullá 'Abdu'r-Raḥím, célèbre par sa dévotion. Il avait un fils, qui se trouvait à Najaf et à Karbilá, où il suivait les cours du célèbre Sharífu'l-'Ulamáy-i-Mázindaráni. Ce jeune homme était d'esprit inquiet et se sentait un peu à l'étroit dans les bornes du Shí'isme." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 332.)

where his enemies were conspiring against him. He accordingly decided to establish his residence in Hamadán,[1] where he married one of his kinswomen, and lived there for about two and a half years, when the news of his father's death decided him to leave for his native town. The ovation accorded him on his arrival inflamed the hostility of the 'ulamás, who, despite their avowed opposition, received at his hands every mark of consideration and kindness.[2]

From the pulpit of the masjid which his friends erected in his honour, he urged the vast throng that gathered to hear him, to refrain from self-indulgence and to exercise moderation in all their acts.[3] He ruthlessly suppressed every form of abuse, and by his example encouraged the people to adhere rigidly to the principles inculcated by the Qur'án. Such were the care and ability with which he taught his disciples that they surpassed in knowledge and understanding the recognised 'ulamás of Zanján. For seventeen years, he pursued his meritorious labours and succeeded in purging the minds and hearts of his fellow-townsmen from whatever seemed contrary to the spirit and teachings of their Faith.[4]

When the Call from Shíráz reached him, he despatched his trusted messenger, Mullá Iskandar, to enquire into the claims of the new Revelation; and such was his response to

[1] "Quand il revint des lieux saints il passa par Hamadán où les habitants l'accueillirent admirablement et le supplièrent de rester dans leur ville." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 336.)

[2] "Tous les 'ulamás de la ville vinrent lui rendre visite et se retirèrent soucieux de quelques paroles qu'il avait prononcées et qui dénotaient une tournure d'esprit peu habituelle. En effet, l'attitude du nouvel arrivé ne tarda pas à démontrer à ces pieux personnages qu'ils ne s'étaient pas trompés dans leurs appréciations." (*Ibid.*)

[3] "Il existait un caravanserai, du temps de Sháh 'Abbás, qui s'était peu à peu transformé en ṣighih-khánih: pour ne pas permettre le viol de la loi Shí'ite un certain Mullá Dúst-Muḥammad s'était établi là à demeure et bénissait les unions passagères entre les hommes venus du dehors, et les pensionnaires de l'établissement. Ḥujjatu'l-Islám—car c'était le titre qu'avait pris notre héros—fit fermer la maison, maria la plupart de ces femmes et envoya les autres en service dans des familles honorables. Il fit également fouetter un nommé Murád, marchand de vins, dont il fit détruire la maison." (*Ibid.*, pp. 332–3.)

[4] "Mais là ne se bornait pas son action. Toujours préoccupé des problèmes que soulève une religion basée sur des hadis presque toujours contradictoires il troubla la conscience des fidèles par des fatvás singuliers qui renversaient toutes les idées reçues. Ainsi il releva le hadis d'après lequel Muḥammad aurait dit: 'Le mois de Ramadán est toujours plein.' Sans rechercher les origines de cette tradition, sans se préoccuper de savoir si ceux qui l'avaient rapportée étaient dignes de foi, il ordonna de la suivre à la lettre, incitant ainsi ceux qui l'écoutaient à jeûner le jour du Fiṭr, ce qui est un grave péché. Il permit aussi de faire les prosternations de la prière en appuyant la tête sur un caillou de cristal. Toutes ces nouveautés lui attirèrent un grand nombre de partisans qui admirèrent sa science et son activité; mais elles déplurent au clergé officiel dont la haine, avivée par l'inquiétude, ne connut bientôt plus de bornes." (*Ibid.*, p. 333.)

that Message that his enemies were stirred to redouble their attacks upon him. Unable, hitherto, to disgrace him in the eyes of the government and the people, they now endeavoured to denounce him as an advocate of heresy and a repudiator of all that is sacred and cherished in Islám. "His reputation for justice, for piety, wisdom, and learning," they whispered to one another, "has been such as to render it impossible for us to shake his position. When summoned to Ṭihrán, in the presence of Muḥammad Sháh was he not able, by his magnetic eloquence, to win him over to his side, and make of him one of his devoted admirers? Now, however, that he has so openly championed the cause of the Siyyid-i-Báb, we can surely succeed in obtaining from the government the order for his arrest and banishment from our town."

They accordingly drew up a petition to Muḥammad Sháh, in which they sought, by every device their malevolent and crafty minds could invent, to discredit his name. "While still professing himself a follower of our Faith," they complained, "he, by the aid of his disciples, was able to repudiate our authority. Now that he has identified himself with the cause of the Siyyid-i-Báb and won over to that hateful creed two-thirds of the inhabitants of Zanján, what humiliation will he not inflict upon us! The concourse that throngs his gates, the whole masjid can no longer contain. Such is his influence that the masjid that belonged to his father and the one that has been built in his honour, have been connected and made into one edifice in order to accommodate the ever-increasing multitude that hastens eagerly to follow his lead in prayer. The time is fast approaching when not only Zanján but the neighbouring villages also will have declared themselves his supporters."

The Sháh was greatly surprised at the tone and language with which the petitioners sought to arraign Ḥujjat. He shared his astonishment with Mírzá Nazar-'Alí, the Hakím-Báshí, and recalled the glowing tribute which many a visitor to Zanján had paid to the abilities and integrity of the accused. He decided to summon him, together with his opponents, to Tihrán. In a special gathering at which he himself, together with Hájí Mírzá Áqásí and the leading officials of the government, as well as a number of the recognised 'ulamás

of Ṭihrán, had assembled, he called upon the ecclesiastical leaders of Zanján to vindicate the claims they had advanced. Whatever questions they submitted to Ḥujjat, regarding the teachings of their Faith, he answered in a manner that could not fail to win the unqualified admiration of his hearers and to establish the sovereign's confidence in his innocence. The Sháh expressed his entire satisfaction, and amply rewarded Ḥujjat for the excellent manner in which he had succeeded in refuting the allegations of his enemies. He bade him return to Zanján and resume his valuable services to the cause of his people, assuring him that he would under all circumstances support him and asking to be informed of any difficulty with which he might be faced in the future.[1]

His arrival at Zanján was the signal for a fierce outburst on the part of his humiliated opponents. As the evidences of their hostility multiplied, the marks of devotion on the part of his friends and supporters correspondingly increased.[2] Utterly disdainful of their machinations, he pursued his activities with unrelaxing zeal.[3] The liberal principles which he unceasingly and fearlessly advocated struck at the very root of the fabric which a bigoted enemy had laboriously reared. They beheld with impotent fury the disruption of their authority and the collapse of their institutions.

It was in those days that his special envoy, Mashhadí Ahmad, whom he had confidentially despatched to Shíráz with a petition and gifts from him to the Báb, arrived at

[1] "Celui-ci vint et, par la politesse de ses manières, par le charme qui s'exhalait de sa personne, ne tarda pas à séduire toutes les personnes qui se trouvaient en contact avec lui, et même Sa Majesté. On raconte qu'un jour qu'il se trouvait chez le Sháh avec quelques-uns de ses collégues, l'un d'entre eux, 'ulamá de Káshán, sortit un papier de son sein et le remit au Roi pour le faire signer. Il s'agissait d'un farmán accordant des appointements. Ḥujjat ayant compris se leva et, avec véhémence, flétrit un clergé qui se faisait pensionner par le Gouvernement. Il démontra hadis et Qur'án en main tout ce qu'avait de honteux un pareil compromis dont les origines remontaient aux Baní-Umayyih. Ces collègues furent transportés de fureur, mais le Sháh auquel plut cette franchise, se tourna vers notre héros, lui remit une canne et une bague et l'autorisa à rentrer à Zanján." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 333–4.)

[2] "Les gens de Zanján, en foule vinrent au devant de lui, sacrifiant des bœufs, des moutons et des poules. Douze enfants de douze ans, ayant au cou un mouchoir rouge pour indiquer qu'ils étaient prêts à se sacrifier dans sa route, se tenaient au milieu du cortège. Ce fut une entrée triomphale." (*Ibid.*, p. 334.)

[3] "Il fit de ses disciples des modèles de vertu et de tempérance: désormais les hommes se désaltérèrent à la coupe des significations religieuses. Ils jeunèrent pendant trois mois, prolongeaient les prières en y ajoutant chaque jour celle de Ja'far-i-Ṭayyár, faisaient une fois par jour leurs ablutions avec l'eau du Qur (mesure légale de pureté), et enfin le vendredi le peuple assiégeait les Mosquées." (*Ibid.*, p. 334.)

Zanján and delivered into his hands, while he was addressing his disciples, a sealed letter from his Beloved. In the Tablet he received, the Báb conferred upon him one of His own titles, that of Ḥujjat, and urged him to proclaim from the pulpit, without the least reservation, the fundamental teachings of His Faith. No sooner was he informed of the wishes of his Master than he declared his resolve to devote himself to the immediate enforcement of whatever injunction that Tablet contained. He immediately dismissed his disciples, bade them close their books, and declared his intention of discontinuing his courses of study. "Of what profit," he said, "are study and research to those who have already found the Truth, and why strive after learning when He who is the Object of all knowledge is made manifest?"

As soon as he attempted to lead the congregation in offering the Friday prayer, enjoined upon him by the Báb,[1] the Imám-Jum'ih, who had hitherto performed that duty, vehemently protested, on the ground that this right was the exclusive privilege of his own forefathers, that it had been conferred upon him by his sovereign, and that no one, however exalted his station, could usurp it. "That right," Ḥujjat retorted, "has been superseded by the authority with which the Qá'im Himself has invested me. I have been commanded by Him to assume that function publicly, and I cannot allow any person to trespass upon that right. If attacked, I will take steps to defend myself and to protect the lives of my companions."

His fearless insistence on the duty laid upon him by the Báb caused the 'ulamás of Zanján to league themselves with the Imám-Jum'ih[2] and to lay their complaints before Ḥájí Mírzá Āqásí, pleading that Hujjat had challenged the validity

[1] "Enfin, il se mit à prononcer à haute voix la prière du vendredi, qui doit remplacer celle de tous les jours quand apparaît l'Imám. Alors il commenta quelques-unes des paroles du Báb et termina ainsi: 'Le but que le monde poursuivait est entre nos mains aujourd'hui, sans rideau, sans obstacles. Le soleil de la Vérité s'est levé et les lumières de l'imagination et de l'imitation se sont éteintes. Que vos yeux se fixent sur le Báb, non sur moi qui suis le plus humble de ses esclaves. Ma science auprès de la sienne est comme une chandelle éteinte auprès de l'astre du jour. Connaissez Dieu par Dieu et le soleil par ses rayons. Donc, aujourd'hui est apparu le Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán, le Sulṭán des Possibilités est vivant.' Je laisse à penser si ce discours fit une profonde impression sur son auditoire. Presque tous se laissèrent convaincre et ne disputèrent plus entre eux que de la véritable qualité du Báb." (*Ibid.*, p. 335.)

[2] "C'est qu'en effet la conversion de Mullá Muḥammad-'Alí et de ses nombreux partisans, avait encore une fois fait perdre patience à l'Imám-Jum'ih et au Shaykhu'l-Islám. Ils écrivirent des lettres furibondes à S. M. qui leur répondit en faisant arrêter le coupable." (*Ibid.*, p. 336.)

of recognised institutions and trampled upon their rights. "We must either flee from this town with our families and belongings," they pleaded, "and leave him in sole charge of the destinies of its people, or obtain from Muhammad Sháh an edict for his immediate expulsion from this country; for we firmly believe that to allow him to remain on its soil would be courting disaster." Though Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, in his heart, distrusted the ecclesiastical order of his country and had a natural aversion to their beliefs and practices, he was forced eventually to yield to their pressing demands, and submitted the matter to Muḥammad Sháh, who ordered the transfer of Ḥujjat from Zanján to the capital.

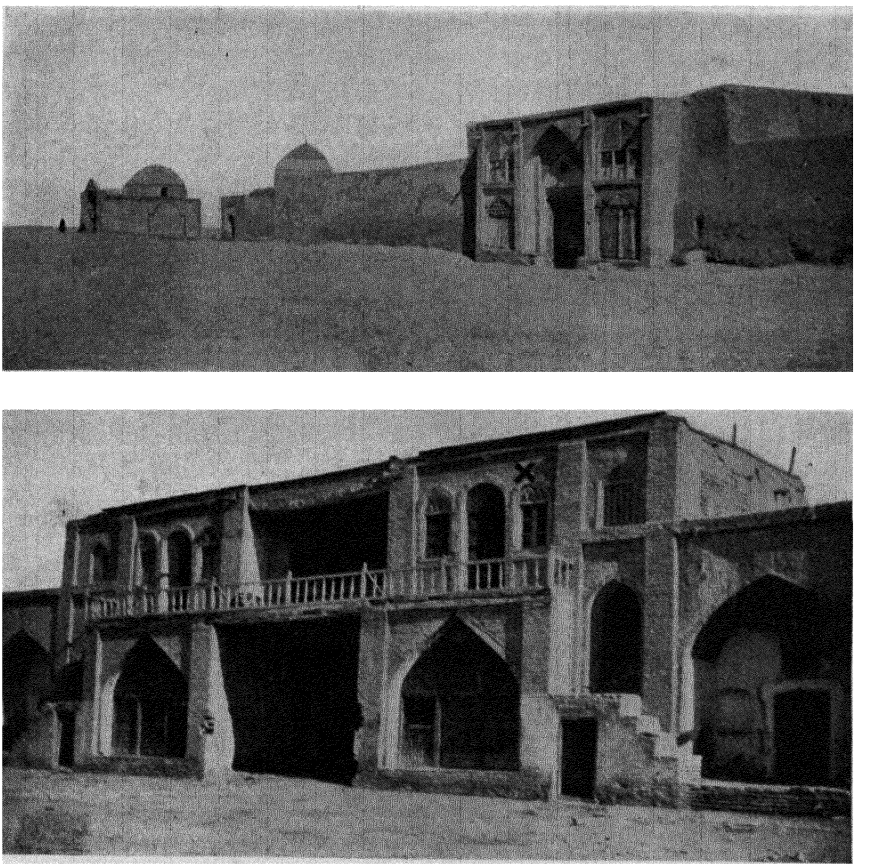
A Kurd named Qilíj Khán was commissioned by the Sháh to deliver the royal summons to Ḥujjat. The Báb had meanwhile arrived in the neighbourhood of Ṭihrán on His way to Tabríz. Ere the arrival of the royal messenger at Zanján, Ḥujjat had sent one of his friends, a certain Khán-Muḥammad-i-Túb-Chí, to his Master with a petition in which he begged to be allowed to rescue Him from the hands of the enemy. The Báb assured him that His deliverance the Almighty alone could achieve and that no one could escape from His decree or evade His law. "As to your meeting with Me," He added, "it soon will take place in the world beyond, the home of unfading glory."

The day Ḥujjat received that message, Qilíj Khán arrived at Zanján, acquainted him with the orders he had received, and set out, accompanied by him, for the capital. Their arrival at Ṭihrán coincided with the Báb's departure from the village of Kulayn, where He had been detained for some days.

The authorities, apprehensive lest a meeting between the Báb and Ḥujjat might lead to fresh disturbances, had taken the necessary precautions to ensure the absence of the latter from Zanján during the Báb's passage through that town. The companions who were following Ḥujjat at a distance, whilst he was on his way to the capital, were urged by him to return and try to meet their Master and to assure Him of his readiness to come to His rescue. On their way back to their homes, they encountered the Báb, who again expressed His desire that no one of His friends should attempt to

deliver Him from His captivity. He even directed them to tell the believers among their fellow-townsmen not to press round Him, but even to avoid Him wherever He went.

No sooner had that message been delivered to those who had gone out to welcome Him on His approach to their town



THE CARAVANSERAI OF MÍRZA MA'ṢÚM-I-ṬABIB AT ZANJÁN, MARK X SHOWING ROOM THE BÁB OCCUPIED

than they began to grieve and deplore their fate. They could not, however, resist the impulse that drove them to march forth to meet Him, forgetful of the desire He had expressed.

As soon as they were met by the guards who were marching in advance of their Captive, they were ruthlessly dispersed. On reaching a fork in the road, there arose an altercation

between Muḥammad Big-i-Chápárchí and his colleague, who had been despatched from Ṭihrán to assist in conducting the Báb to Tabríz. Muḥammad Big insisted that their Prisoner should be taken into the town, where He should be allowed to pass the night in the caravanserai of Mírzá Ma'ṣúm-i-Ṭabíb, the father of Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Ṭabíb, a martyr of the Faith, before resuming their march to Ádhirbáyján. He pleaded that to pass the night outside the gate would be to expose their lives to danger, and would encourage their opponents to attempt an attack upon them. He eventually succeeded in convincing his colleague that he should conduct the Báb to that caravanserai. As they were passing through the streets, they were amazed to see the multitude that had crowded onto the housetops in their eagerness to catch a glimpse of the face of the Prisoner.

Mírzá Ma'súm, the former owner of the caravanserai, had lately died, and his eldest son, Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí, the leading physician of Hamadán, who, though not a believer, was a true lover of the Báb, had arrived at Zanján and was in mourning for his father. He lovingly received the Báb in the caravanserai he had specially prepared beforehand for His reception. That night he remained until a late hour in His presence and was completely won over to His Cause.

"The same night that witnessed my conversion," I heard him subsequently relate, "I arose ere break of day, lit my lantern, and, preceded by my father's attendant, directed my steps towards the caravanserai. The guards who were stationed at the entrance recognised me and allowed me to enter. The Báb was performing His ablutions when I was ushered into His presence. I was greatly impressed when I saw Him absorbed in His devotions. A feeling of reverent joy filled my heart as I stood behind Him and prayed. I myself prepared His tea and was offering it to Him when He turned to me and bade me depart for Hamadán. 'This town,' He said, 'will be thrown into a great tumult, and its streets will run with blood.' I expressed my strong desire to be allowed to shed my blood in His path. He assured me that the hour of my martyrdom had not yet come, and bade me be resigned to whatever God might decree. At the hour

of sunrise, as He mounted His horse and was preparing to depart, I begged to be allowed to follow Him, but He advised me to remain, and assured me of His unfailing prayers. Resigning myself to His will, with regret I watched Him disappear from my sight."

On his arrival at Ṭihrán, Ḥujjat was conducted into the presence of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, who, on behalf of the Sháh and himself, expressed his annoyance at the intense hostility which his conduct had aroused among the 'ulamás of Zanján. "Muhammad Sháh and I," he told him, "are continually besieged by the oral as well as written denunciations brought against you. I could scarcely believe their indictment relating to your desertion of the Faith of your forefathers. Nor is the Sháh inclined to credit such assertions. I have been commanded by him to summon you to his capital and to call upon you to refute such accusations. It grieves me to hear that a man whom I consider infinitely superior in knowledge and ability to the Siyyid-i-Báb has chosen to identify himself with his creed." "Not so," replied Ḥujjat; "God knows that if that same Siyyid were to entrust me with the meanest service in His household, I would deem it an honour such as the highest favours of my sovereign could never hope to surpass." "This can never be!" burst forth Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí. "It is my firm and unalterable conviction," Ḥujjat reaffirmed, "that this Siyyid of Shíráz is the very One whose advent you yourself, with all the peoples of the world, are eagerly awaiting. He is our Lord, our promised Deliverer."

Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí reported the matter to Muḥammad Sháh, to whom he expressed his fears that to allow so formidable an adversary, whom the sovereign himself believed to be the most accomplished of the 'ulamás of his realm, to pursue unhindered the course of his activities would be a policy fraught with gravest danger to the State. The Sháh, disinclined to credit such reports, which he attributed to the malice and envy of the enemies of the accused, ordered that a special meeting be convened at which he should be asked to vindicate his position in the presence of the assembled 'ulamás of the capital.

Several meetings were held for that purpose, before each

of which Ḥujjat eloquently set forth the basic claims of his Faith and confounded the arguments of those who tried to oppose him. "Is not the following tradition," he boldly declared, "recognised alike by shí'ah and sunní Islám: 'I leave amidst you my twin testimonies, the Book of God and my family'? Has not the second of these testimonies, in your opinion, passed away, and is not our sole means of guidance, as a result, contained in the testimony of the sacred Book? I appeal to you to measure every claim that either of us shall advance, by the standard established in that Book, and to regard it as the supreme authority whereby the righteousness of our argument can be judged." Unable to defend their case against him, they, as a last resort, ventured to ask him to produce a miracle whereby to establish the truth of his assertion. "What greater miracle," he exclaimed, "than that He should have enabled me to triumph, alone and unaided, by the simple power of my argument, over the combined forces of the mujtahids and 'ulamás of Ṭihrán?"

The masterly manner in which Ḥujjat refuted the unsound claims advanced by his adversaries won for him the favour of his sovereign, who from that day forth was no longer swayed by the insinuations of his enemies. Although the entire company of the 'ulamás of Zanján, as well as a number of the ecclesiastical leaders of Ṭihrán, had declared him to be an infidel and condemned him to death, yet Muḥammad Sháh continued to bestow his favours upon him and to assure him that he could rely on his support. Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, though at heart unfriendly to Ḥujjat, was unable, in the face of such unmistakable evidences of royal favour, to resist his influence openly, and by his frequent visits to his house, and by the gifts he lavished upon him, that deceitful minister sought to conceal his resentment and envy.

Ḥujjat was virtually a prisoner in Ṭihrán. He was unable to go beyond the gates of the capital, nor was he allowed free intercourse with his friends. The believers among his fellow-townsmen eventually determined to send a deputation and ask him for fresh instructions regarding their attitude towards the laws and principles of their Faith. He charged them to observe with absolute loyalty the admonitions he had received from the Báb through the messengers he had

sent to investigate His Cause. He enumerated a series of observances, some of which constituted a definite departure from the established traditions of Islám. "Siyyid Kázim-i-Zanjání," he assured them, "has been intimately connected with my Master both in Shíráz and in Isfáhán. He, as well as Mullá Iskandar and Mashhadí Ahmad, both of whom I sent to meet Him, have positively declared that He Himself is the first to practise the observances He has enjoined upon the faithful. It therefore behoves us who are His supporters to follow His noble example."

These explicit instructions were no sooner read to his companions than they became inflamed with an irresistible desire to carry out his wishes. They enthusiastically set to work to enforce the laws of the new Dispensation, and, giving up their former customs and practices, unhesitatingly identified themselves with its claims. Even the little children were encouraged to follow scrupulously the admonitions of the Báb. "Our beloved Master," they were taught to say, "Himself is the first to practise them. Why should we who are His privileged disciples hesitate to make them the ruling principles of our lives?"

Ḥujjat was still a captive in Ṭihrán when the news of the siege of the fort of Ṭabarsí reached him. He longed, and deplored his inability, to throw in his lot with those of his companions who were struggling with such splendid heroism for the emancipation of their Faith. His sole consolation in those days was his close association with Bahá'u'lláh, from whom he received the sustaining power that enabled him, in the time to come, to distinguish himself by deeds no less remarkable than those which that company had manifested in the darkest hours of their memorable struggle.

He was still in Ṭihrán when Muhammad Sháh passed away, leaving the throne to his son Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh.[1] The Amír-Nizám, the new Grand Vazír, decided to make Ḥujjat's imprisonment more rigorous, and to seek in the meantime a way of destroying him. On being informed of the imminence of the danger that threatened his life, his captive decided to

[1] "Il était à Ṭihrán jusqu'au moment où Muḥammad Sháh étant mort, Násiri'd-Dín Mírzá devenu Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, nomma Gouverneur de Zanján, un de ses oncles, Amír Arslán Khán Majdu'd-Dawlih qui était Ishíq Ághásí du Palais." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 337.)

leave Ṭihrán in disguise and join his companions, who eagerly awaited his return.

His arrival at his native town, which a certain Karbilá'í Valí-'Aṭṭár announced to his companions, was a signal for a tremendous demonstration of devoted loyalty on the part of his many admirers. They flocked out, men, women, and children, to welcome him and to renew their assurances of abiding and undiminished affection.[1] The governor of Zanján, Majdu'd-Dawlih,[2] the maternal uncle of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, astounded by the spontaneity of that ovation, ordered, in the fury of his despair, that the tongue of Karbilá'í Valí-'Aṭṭár be immediately cut out. Though at heart he loathed Ḥujjat, he pretended to be his friend and well-wisher. He often visited him and showed him unbounded consideration, yet he was secretly conspiring against his life and was waiting for the moment when he could strike the fatal blow.

That smouldering hostility was soon to be fanned into flame by an incident that was of little importance in itself. The occasion was afforded when a quarrel suddenly broke out between two children of Zanján, one of whom belonged to a kinsman of one of the companions of Ḥujjat. The governor immediately ordered that child to be arrested and placed in strict confinement. A sum of money was offered

[1] "Il y fit une entrée triomphale et telle qu'il ne l'aurait pas eue quelques mois auparavant. En effet, devenu Bábí, il vit s'ajouter à tous ses anciens amis ceux de la doctrine nouvelle. Une grande quantité d'hommes riches et considérés, des militaires, des négociants, des mullás même, vinrent à sa rencontre à une ou deux stations de distance et le conduisirent à sa demeure, non comme un réfugié qui rentre, non comme un suppliant qui ne demande que le repos, non pas même comme un rival assez fort pour se faire craindre: ce fut un maître qui apparut." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 193.) "L'auteur du 'Násikhu't-Taváríkh' reconnaît lui-même qu'un bon nombre d'habitants de Zanján, et parmi eux de hauts fonctionnaires de la ville, vinrent jusqu'à deux stations au devant du fugitif. Il fut reçu comme un vainqueur, et l'on immola un grand nombre de moutons en son honneur. Personne, dans le camp adverse, n'osa lui demander compte de sa fuite de Ṭihrán et de son retour à Zanján. Mais l'Islám en vit de dures, car le Zanjání ne se gêna nullement pour prêcher à tous les échos du bazar la nouvelle doctrine. L'auteur musulman remarque que tous les Zanjání étant des imbéciles donnèrent immédiatement dans le panneau; mais, s'infligeant aussitôt un démenti à lui-même, il déclare que seuls les gueux, envieux des richesses de ce monde et les hommes sans religion se groupèrent autour du nouveau chef. Ils étaient en grand nombre, s'il faut l'en croire, car il les estime à quinze mille personnes, ce qui me semble un peu exagéré." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 337–8.)

[2] "Majdu'd-Dawlih, gouverneur de la ville, homme cruel et sévère, furieux de voir revenir un personnage aussi importun que Ḥujjat, fit fouetter Muḥammad Bik et couper la langue à Karbilá'í Valí." (*Ibid.*, p. 337.)

by the believers to the governor, in order to induce him to release his young prisoner. He refused their offer, whereupon they complained to Ḥujjat, who vehemently protested. "That child," he wrote to the governor, "is too young to be held responsible for his behaviour. If he deserves punishment, his father and not he should be made to suffer."

Finding that the appeal had been ignored, he renewed his protest and entrusted it to the hands of one of his influential comrades, Mir Jalíl, father of Siyyid Ashraf and martyr of the Faith, directing him to present it in person to the governor. The guards stationed at the entrance of the house at first refused him admittance. Indignant at their refusal, he threatened to force his way through the gate, and succeeded, by the mere threat of unsheathing his sword, in overcoming their resistance and in compelling the infuriated governor to release the child.

The unconditional compliance of the governor with the demand of Mir Jalíl stirred the furious indignation of the 'ulamás. They violently protested, and deprecated his submission to the threats with which their opponents had sought to intimidate him. They expressed to him their fear that such a surrender on his part would encourage them to make still greater demands upon him, would enable them before long to assume the reins of authority and to exclude him from any share in the administration of the government. They eventually induced him to consent to the arrest of Ḥujjat, an act which they were convinced would succeed in checking the progress of his influence.

The governor reluctantly consented. He was repeatedly assured by the 'ulamás that his action would under no circumstances endanger the peace and security of the town. Two of their supporters, Pahlaván[1] Asadu'lláh and Pahlaván Ṣafar-'Alí, both notorious for their brutality and prodigious strength, volunteered to seize Ḥujjat and deliver him handcuffed to the governor. Each was promised a handsome reward in return for this service. Clad in their armour, with helmets on their heads, and followed by a band of ruffians recruited from among the most degraded of the population,

[1] See Glossary.

they set out to accomplish their purpose. The 'ulamás were in the meantime busily engaged in inciting the populace and encouraging them to reinforce their efforts.

As soon as the emissaries arrived in the quarter in which Ḥujjat was living, they were unexpectedly confronted by Mír Ṣaláḥ, one of his most formidable supporters, who, together with seven of his armed companions, strenuously opposed their advance. He asked Asadu'lláh whither he was bound, and, on receiving from him an insulting answer, unsheathed his sword and, with the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!"[1] sprang upon him and wounded him in the forehead. Mír Ṣaláḥ's audacity, in spite of the heavy armour which his adversary was wearing, frightened the whole band and caused them to flee in different directions.[2]

The cry which that stout-hearted defender of the Faith raised on that day was heard for the first time in Zanján, a cry that spread panic through the town. The governor was terrified by its tremendous force, and asked what that shout could mean and whose voice had been able to raise it. He was gravely shaken when told that it was the watchword of Ḥujjat's companions, with which they called for the assistance of the Qá'im in the hour of distress.

The remnants of that affrighted band encountered, shortly after, Shaykh Muḥammad-i-Túb-Chí, whom they immediately recognised as one of their ablest adversaries. Finding him unarmed, they fell upon him and, with an axe one of them was carrying, struck him and broke his head. They bore him to the governor, and no sooner had they laid down the wounded man than a certain Siyyid Abu'l-Qásim, one of the mujtahids of Zanján who was present, leaped forward and, with his penknife, stabbed him in the breast. The governor too, unsheathing his sword, struck him on the mouth and was followed by the attendants who, with the weapons they carried with them, completed the murder of their hapless victim. As their blows rained upon him, unmindful of his sufferings, he was heard to say: "I thank Thee, O my God, for having vouchsafed me the crown of martyr-

[1] See Glossary.

[2] "Les musulmans s'enfuirent à ce spectacle, et le blessé fut soigné par la propre tante de Mír Ṣaláḥ, dans sa maison." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 341.)

dom." He was the first among the believers of Zanján to lay down his life in the path of the Cause. His death, which occurred on Friday, the fourth of Rajab, in the year 1266 A.H.,[1] preceded by forty-five days the martyrdom of Vahíd and by fifty-five days that of the Báb.

The blood that was shed on that day, far from allaying the hostility of the enemy, served further to inflame their passions, and to reinforce their determination to subject to the same fate the rest of the companions. Encouraged by the governor's tacit approval of their expressed intentions, they resolved to put to death all upon whom they could lay their hands, without obtaining beforehand an express authorisation from the government officials. They solemnly covenanted among themselves not to rest until they had extinguished the fire of what they deemed a shameless heresy.[2] They compelled the governor to bid a crier proclaim throughout Zanján that whoever was willing to endanger his life, to forfeit his property, and expose his wife and children to misery and shame, should throw in his lot with Ḥujjat and his companions; and that those desirous of ensuring the well-being and honour of themselves and their families, should withdraw from the neighbourhood in which those companions resided and seek the shelter of the sovereign's protection.

That warning immediately divided the inhabitants into two distinct camps, and severely tested the faith of those who were still wavering in their allegiance to the Cause. It gave rise to the most pathetic scenes, caused the separation of fathers from their sons and the estrangement of brothers and of kindred. Every tie of worldly affection seemed to be dissolving on that day, and the solemn pledges were forsaken in favour of a loyalty mightier and more sacred than any earthly allegiance. Zanján fell a prey to the wildest excitement. The cry of distress which members of divided families, in a frenzy of despair, raised to heaven, mingled with the blasphemous shouts which a threatening enemy

[1] May 16, 1850 A.D.

[2] "Le Gouverneur et les 'ulamás écrivirent à Sa Majesté des rapports où ils laissaient percer leur peur et leur embarras. Le Sháh, a peine délivré de la guerre de Mázindarán, furieux de voir une autre sédition sur un nouveau point de son empire, poussé d'ailleurs par son Ṣadr-i-A'ẓam et par les 'ulamás qui avaient déclaré la guerre sainte, donna l'ordre de tuer les Bábí et de piller leurs biens. Ce fut le vendredi 3 de Rajab, que l'ordre arriva à Zanján." (*Ibid.*, pp. 341–2.)

hurled upon them. Shouts of exultation hailed at every turn those who, tearing themselves from their homes and kinsmen, enrolled themselves as willing supporters of the Cause of Ḥujjat. The camp of the enemy hummed with feverish activity in preparation for the great struggle upon which they had secretly determined. Reinforcements were rushed into the town from the neighbouring villages, at the command of its governor and with the encouragement of the mujtahids, the siyyids, and the 'ulamás who supported him.[1]

Undeterred by the growing tumult, Ḥujjat ascended the pulpit and, with uplifted voice, proclaimed to the congregation: "The hand of Omnipotence has, in this day, separated truth from falsehood and divided the light of guidance from the darkness of error. I am unwilling that because of me you should suffer injury. The one aim of the governor and of the 'ulamás who support him is to seize and kill me. They cherish no other ambition. They thirst for my blood and seek no one besides me. Whoever among you feels the least desire to safeguard his life against the perils with which we are beset, whoever is reluctant to offer his life for our Cause, let him, ere it is too late, betake himself from this place and return whence he came."[2]

That day more than three thousand men were recruited by the governor from the surrounding villages of Zanján. Meanwhile Mír Ṣaláḥ, accompanied by a number of his comrades, who observed the growing restiveness of their

[1] "Ce fut un beau tumulte. Les musulmans affolés couraient de tous côtés, cherchant leurs femmes, leurs enfants, telle partie de leur mobilier. Ils allaient et revenaient, fous, éperdus, pleurant ce qu'ils ne pouvaient emporter. On voyait des familles se séparer, des pères repousser leurs fils, des femmes leurs maris, des enfants leur mères. Des maisons entières restèrent abandonnées tant la hâte était grande, et le Gouverneur envoya dans les villages avoisinants raccoler des hommes par force pour la guerre sainte." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 342.)

[2] "Les Bábí, de leur côté, ne restaient pas inactifs: ils s'organisaient et préparaient leur défense. Ḥujjat les exhortait à ne jamais attaquer, mais à toujours se défendre: 'O frères, leur disait-il, n'ayez pas honte de moi. Ne croyez pas que parce que vous êtes les compagnons du Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán vous deviez conquérir le monde à la pointe de votre sabre. Non j'en jure par Dieu. On vous tuera, on vous brûlera, on enverra vos têtes de villes en villes. La seule victoire qui vous reste consiste à vous sacrifier, vous vos femmes et votre bien. Dieu a toujours voulu qu'à chaque époque le sang des confesseurs fût l'huîle de la lampe de la religion. Vous avez entendu raconter les tourments au milieu desquels sont morts les saints martyrs du Mázindarán. On les a tués parce qu'ils affirmaient que le Mihdí promis était apparu. Je vous le dis, quiconque n'a pas la force de supporter les tourments, s'en aille de l'autre côté, car nous serons martyrisés: notre maître n'est-il pas entre leurs mains?' " (*Ibid.*, pp. 342–3.)

opponents, sought the presence of Ḥujjat and urged him, as a precautionary measure, to transfer his residence to the fort of 'Alí-Mardán Khán,[1] adjacent to the quarter in which he was residing. Ḥujjat gave his consent and ordered that their women and children, together with such provisions as they might require, be taken to the fort. Though they found it occupied by its owners, the companions eventually induced them to withdraw, and gave them in exchange the houses in which they themselves had been dwelling.

The enemy was meanwhile preparing for a violent attack upon them. No sooner had a detachment of their forces opened fire upon the barricades the companions had raised than Mír Riḍá, a siyyid of exceptional courage, asked his leader to allow him to attempt to capture the governor and to bring him as a prisoner to the fort. Hujjat, unwilling to comply with his request, advised him not to risk his life.

The governor was so overcome with fear when informed of that siyyid's intention that he decided to leave Zanján immediately. He was, however, dissuaded from taking that course by a certain siyyid who pleaded that his departure would be the signal for grave disturbances such as would disgrace him in the sight of his superiors. The siyyid himself

[1] "Il faut s'imaginer une ville persane. Les rues sont étroites, d'une largeur de quatre, cinq ou huit pieds tout au plus. Le sol, qui n'est pas pavé, est rempli de trous profonds, de sorte qu'on ne saurait cheminer qu'avec des précautions infinies pour ne pas se casser les jambes. Les maisons, sans fenêtres sur la rue, montrent des deux côtés une continuité de murs, le plus souvent hauts d'une quinzaine de pieds et surmontés d'une terrasse sans garde-fous, quelquefois aussi çà et là dominée par ce qu'on appelle un bálá-Khánih ou pavillon presque à jour, qui indique d'ordinaire la maison d'un personnage riche. Tout cela est en terre, en pisé, en briques cuites au soleil, avec les montants en briques cuites au four. Ce genre de construction, d'une antiquité vénérable et qui, dès avant les temps historiques, était en usage dans les antiques cités de la Mésopotamie, est véritablement pourvu de grands avantages: il est à bon marché, il est sain, il se prête également aux proportions modestes et aux prétentions les plus vastes; on en peut faire une chaumière à peine blanchie à la chaux: on en peut faire aussi un palais, couvert de haut en bas d'étincelantes mosaïques en faïence, de peintures et de dorures précieuses. Mais, comme il arrive pour toute chose au monde, tant d'avantages sont un peu compensés par la facilité avec laquelle de pareilles demeures s'écroulent sous le plus petit effort. Il n'est pas besoin du canon; la pluie, si l'on n'y prend garde, suffit. C'est ainsi qu'on peut comprendre la physionomie particulière de ces emplacements célèbres où le souvenir et la tradition montrent des villes immenses dont on n'aperçoit plus rien que quelques débris de temples, de palais, et des tumulus semés dans la plaine. En quelques années, en effet, des quartiers entiers disparaissent sans laisser de traces, si les maisons ne sont pas entretenues. Comme toutes les villes de Perse sont construites sur les mêmes données et formées des mêmes éléments, on peut se représenter Zanján, avec son enceinte crénelée et munie de tours, sans fossés, ses rues tortueuses, étroites et défoncées. Au milieu existait une sorte de citadelle grossière nommée 'Château d'"Alí-Mardán Khán.'" (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 197–8.)

set out, as evidence of his earnestness, to launch an offensive against the occupants of the fort. He had no sooner given the signal for attack and advanced at the head of a band of thirty of his comrades, than he unexpectedly encountered two of his adversaries who were marching with drawn swords towards him. Believing that they intended to assail him, he, with the whole of his band, was suddenly seized with panic, straightway regained his home, and, forgetful of the assurances he had given to the governor, remained the whole day closeted within his room. Those who were with him promptly dispersed, renouncing the thought of pursuing the attack. They were subsequently informed that the two men they had encountered had no hostile intention against them, but were simply on their way to fulfil a commission with which they had been entrusted.

That humiliating episode was soon followed by a number of similar attempts on the part of the supporters of the governor, all of which utterly failed to achieve their purpose. Every time they rushed to attack the fort, Ḥujjat would order a few of his companions, who were three thousand in number, to emerge from their retreat and scatter their forces. He never failed, every time he gave them such orders, to caution his fellow-disciples against shedding unnecessarily the blood of their assailants. He constantly reminded them that their action was of a purely defensive character, and that their sole purpose was to preserve inviolate the security of their women and children. "We are commanded," he was frequently heard to observe, "not to wage holy war under any circumstances against the unbelievers, whatever be their attitude towards us."

This state of affairs continued[1] until the orders of the

[1] "He [the governor of Zanján], fearing for himself, at once took measures to safeguard his authority, and forwarded to Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí Khán Amír-i-Kabír a garbled account of the affair; for he was fearful lest another should acquire more influence than he possessed, and so his authority and consideration should be weakened. In consequence of his representations, Siyyid 'Alí Khán, Lieutenant-Colonel, of Fírúz-Kúh, received the royal command to proceed with a numerous body of horse and foot to Zanján, and to arrest Mullá Muḥammad-'Alí, who had retired with his followers (nearly five thousand in number) to the citadel. On his arrival, Siyyid 'Alí Khán laid siege to the citadel, and thus was the fire of strife kindled, and day by day the number of those slain on either side increased, until at length he suffered an ignominious defeat and was obliged to ask for reinforcements from the capital. The government wished to send Ja'far-Qulí Khán, Lieutenant-Colonel, the brother of I'timádu'd-Dawlih, but he excused himself, and said to Mírzá Taqí Khán Amír-i-Kabír:

Amír-Nizám reached one of the generals of the imperial army, Ṣadru'd-Dawliy-i-Isfáhání by name,[1] who had set out at the head of two regiments for Ádhirbáyján. The written orders of the Grand Vazír reached him in Khamsih, bidding him cancel his projected journey and proceed immediately to Zanján and there give his assistance to the forces that had been mustered by the government. "You have been commissioned by your sovereign," the Amír-Nizám wrote him, "to subjugate the band of mischief-makers in and around Zanján. It is your privilege to crush their hopes and exterminate their forces. So signal a service, at so critical a moment, will win for you the Sháh's highest favour, no less than the applause and esteem of his people."

This encouraging farmán stirred the imagination of the ambitious Sadru'd-Dawlih. He marched instantly on Zanján at the head of his two regiments, organised the forces which the governor placed at his disposal, and gave orders for a combined attack upon the fort and its defenders.[2] The

'I am not an Ibn-i-Zíyád to go and make war on a band of siyyids and men of learning of whose tenets I know nothing, though I should be ready enough to fight Russians, Jews, or other infidels.' Other officers besides him showed a disinclination to take part in this war. Amongst these was Mír Siyyid Ḥusayn Khán of Fírúz-Kúh, whom Mírzá Taqí Khán the Amír dismissed and disgraced as soon as he became acquainted with his sentiments. So also many of the officers who were of the sect of the 'Alíyu'lláhís, although they went to the war, withdrew from it when they learned more of the matter. For their chief had forbidden them to fight, and therefore they fled. For it is written in their books that when the soldiers of Gúrán shall come to the capital of the king, then the Lord of the Age (whom they call God) shall appear; and this prophecy was now accomplished. They also possess certain poems which contain the date of the Manifestation, and these too came true. So they were convinced that this was the Truth become manifest, and begged to be excused from taking part in the war, which thing they declared themselves unable to do. And to the Bábís they said: 'In subsequent conflicts, when the framework of your religion shall have gathered strength, we will help you.' In short, when the officers of the army perceived in their opponents naught but devotion, godliness, and piety, some wavered in secret, and did not put forth their full strength in the war." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 138–43.)

[1] According to Gobineau (p. 198), he was the grandson of Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ḥusayn Khán-i-Iṣfáhání.

[2] "Le quatrième jour, les musulmans virent, avec une grande joie, entrer dans le quartier de la ville qu'ils occupaient, Ṣadru'd-Dawlih, petit-fils de Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ḥusayn Khán, d'Iṣfáhán, à la tête des cavaliers des tribus du Khamsih, arrivant de Sultániyyih. Le lendemain encore et les jours suivants, les renforts affluèrent. Ce furent d'abord Siyyid 'Alí Khán et Sháhbár Khán, l'un de Fírúz-Kúh, l'autre de Marághih, avec deux cents cavaliers de leurs tribus respectives; Muḥammad-'Alí Khán-i-Sháh-Sún, avec deux cents cavaliers afshárs; puis cinquante artilleurs avec deux pièces de canon et deux mortiers; de sorte que le gouverneur se trouva pourvu de toutes les ressources désirables, et entouré d'un bon nombre de chefs militaires dont plusieurs avaient de la réputation." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 198–9.) "Une des journées les plus terribles dont le journal du siège fasse mention, est celle du 5 de Ramaḍán. Muṣṭafá Khán, Qájár, avec le 15me régiment de Shigághí; Ṣadru'd-Dawlih, avec ses cavaliers du Khamsih;

contest raged in the environs of the fort three days and three nights, in the course of which the besieged, under the direction of Ḥujjat, resisted with splendid daring the fierce onslaught of their assailants. Neither their overwhelming numbers nor the superiority of their equipment and training could enable them to reduce the intrepid companions to an unconditional surrender.[1] Undeterred by the fire of the cannon with which they were deluged, and forgetful of both sleep and hunger, they rushed in a headlong charge out of the fort, utterly unmindful of the perils incurred by such a sally. To the imprecations with which an opposing host greeted their appearance from their retreat, they shouted their answer of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!" and, carried away by the spell which that invocation threw upon them, hurled themselves upon the enemy and scattered his forces. The frequency and success of these sallies demoralised their assailants and convinced them of the futility of their efforts. They were soon compelled to acknowledge their powerlessness to win a decisive victory. Ṣadru'd-Dawlih himself had to confess that after the lapse of nine months of sustained fighting, of all the men who had originally belonged to his two regiments, no more than thirty crippled soldiers were left to support him. Filled with humiliation, he was forced, eventually, to admit his powerlessness to daunt the spirit of his opponents. He was degraded from his rank and gravely reprimanded by his sovereign. The hopes he had fondly cherished were, as the result of that defeat, irretrievably shattered.

Siyyid 'Alí Khán de Fírúz-Kúh, avec son propre régiment; Muḥammad Áqá, colonel, avec le régiment de Náṣir, autrement dit le régiment du roi; Muḥammad-'Alí Khán, avec la cavalerie Afshár; Nabí Big, le major, avec la cavalerie de sa tribu, et une troupe des hommes de Zanján restés fidèles, tout cela s'acharna, dès avant le point du jour, contre les ouvrages des Bábí. La résistance fut terrible, mais désastreuse. Les sectaires virent tomber successivement des chefs qu'ils ne pouvaient guère remplacer, des chefs vaillants, et, à leurs yeux, des saints: Núr-'Alí, le chasseur; Bakhsh-'Alí, le charpentier, Khudádád et Fatḥu'lláh Big, tous essentiels à la cause. Ils tombèrent, les uns le matin, les autres le soir." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 200.)

[1] "J'ai vu à Zanján des ruines de cette rude journée; des quartiers entiers n'ont pu encore être rebâtis et ne le seront peut-être jamais. Certains acteurs de cette tragédie m'en ont raconté sur place des épisodes, les Bábí montant et descendant les terrasses et y portant à bras leurs canons. Souvent le plancher peu solide, en terre battue, s'enfonçait; on relevait, on remontait la pièce à force de bras; on étayait le sol pardessous avec des poutres. Quand l'ennemi arrivait, la foule entourait les pièces avec passion, tous les bras s'étendaient pour les relever, et quand les porteurs tombaient sous la mitraille, cent concurrents se disputaient le bonheur de les remplacer. Assurément c'était là de la foi." (*Ibid.*, pp. 200–201.)

So abject a defeat struck dismay into the hearts of the people of Zanján. Few were willing, after that disaster, to risk their lives in hopeless encounters. Only those who were compelled to fight ventured to renew their attacks upon the besieged. The brunt of the struggle was mainly borne by the regiments which were being successively despatched from Tihrán for that purpose. While the inhabitants of the town, and particularly the merchant class among them, profited greatly by the sudden influx of such a large number of forces, the companions of Ḥujjat suffered want and privation within the walls of the fort. Their supplies dwindled rapidly; their only hope of receiving any food from outside lay in the efforts, often unsuccessful, of a few women who could manage, under various pretexts, to approach the fort and sell them at an exorbitant price the provisions they so sadly needed.

Though oppressed with hunger and harassed by fierce and sudden onsets, they maintained with unflinching determination the defence of the fort. Sustained by a hope that no amount of adversity could dim, they succeeded in erecting no less than twenty-eight barricades, each of which was entrusted to the care of a group of nineteen of their fellow-disciples. At each barricade, nineteen additional companions were stationed as sentinels, whose function it was to watch and report the movements of the enemy.

They were frequently surprised by the voice of the crier whom the enemy sent to the neighbourhood of the fort to induce its occupants to desert Ḥujjat and his Cause. "The governor of the province," he would proclaim, "and the commander-in-chief too, are willing to forgive and extend a safe passage to whoever among you will decide to leave the fort and renounce his faith. Such a man will be amply rewarded by his sovereign, who, in addition to lavishing gifts upon him, will invest him with the dignity of noble rank. Both the Sháh and his representatives have pledged their honour not to depart from the promise they have given." To this call the besieged would, with one voice, return contemptuous and decisive replies.

Further evidence of the spirit of sublime renunciation animating those valiant companions was afforded by the behaviour of a village maiden, who, of her own accord, threw

in her lot with the band of women and children who had joined the defenders of the fort. Her name was Zaynab, her home a tiny hamlet in the near neighbourhood of Zanján. She was comely and fair of face, was fired with a lofty faith, and endowed with intrepid courage. The sight of the trials and hardships which her men companions were made to endure stirred in her an irrepressible yearning to disguise herself in male attire and share in repulsing the repeated attacks of the enemy. Donning a tunic and wearing a headdress like those of her men companions, she cut off her locks, girt on a sword, and, seizing a musket and a shield, introduced herself into their ranks. No one suspected her of being a maid when she leaped forward to take her place behind the barricade. As soon as the enemy charged, she bared her sword and, raising the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!" flung herself with incredible audacity upon the forces arrayed against her. Friend and foe marvelled that day at a courage and resourcefulness the equal of which their eyes had scarcely ever beheld. Her enemies pronounced her the curse which an angry Providence had hurled upon them. Overwhelmed with despair and abandoning their barricades, they fled in disgraceful rout before her.

Ḥujjat, who was watching the movements of the enemy from one of the turrets, recognised her and marvelled at the prowess which that maiden was displaying. She had set out in pursuit of her assailants, when he ordered his men to bid her return to the fort and give up the attempt. "No man," he was heard to say, as he saw her plunge into the fire directed upon her by the enemy, "has shown himself capable of such vitality and courage." When questioned by him as to the motive of her behaviour, she burst into tears and said: "My heart ached with pity and sorrow when I beheld the toil and sufferings of my fellow-disciples. I advanced by an inner urge I could not resist. I was afraid lest you would deny me the privilege of throwing in my lot with my men companions." "You are surely the same Zaynab," Ḥujjat asked her, "who volunteered to join the occupants of the fort?" "I am," she replied. "I can confidently assure you that no one has hitherto discovered my sex. You alone have recognised me. I adjure you by the Báb not to with-

hold from me that inestimable privilege, the crown of martyrdom, the one desire of my life."

Ḥujjat was profoundly impressed by the tone and manner of her appeal. He sought to calm the tumult of her soul, assured her of his prayers in her behalf, and gave her the name Rustam-'Alí as a mark of her noble courage. "This is the Day of Resurrection," he told her, "the day when 'all secrets shall be searched out.'[1] Not by their outward appearance, but by the character of their beliefs and the manner of their lives, does God judge His creatures, be they men or women. Though a maiden of tender age and immature experience, you have displayed such vitality and resource as few men could hope to surpass." He granted her request, and warned her not to exceed the bounds their Faith had imposed upon them. "We are called upon to defend our lives," he reminded her, "against a treacherous assailant, and not to wage holy war against him."

For a period of no less than five months, that maiden continued to withstand with unrivalled heroism the forces of the enemy. Disdainful of food and sleep, she toiled with fevered earnestness for the Cause she most loved. She quickened, by the example of her splendid daring, the courage of the few who wavered, and reminded them of the duty each was expected to fulfil. The sword she wielded remained, throughout that period, by her side. In the brief intervals of sleep she was able to obtain, she was seen with her head resting upon her sword and her shield serving as a covering for her body. Every one of her companions was assigned to a particular post which he was expected to guard and defend, while that fearless maid alone was free to move in whatever direction she pleased. Always in the thick and forefront of the turmoil that raged round her, Zaynab was ever ready to rush to the rescue of whatever post the assailant was threatening, and to lend her assistance to any one of those who needed either her encouragement or support. As the end of her life approached, her enemies discovered her secret, and continued, despite their knowledge that she was a maid, to dread her influence and to tremble at her approach. The

[1] Qur'án, 86: 9.

shrill sound of her voice was sufficient to strike consternation into their hearts and to fill them with despair.

One day, seeing that her companions were being suddenly enveloped by the forces of the enemy, Zaynab ran in distress to Ḥujjat and, flinging herself at his feet, implored him, with tearful eyes, to allow her to rush forth to their aid. "My life, I feel, is nearing its end," she added. "I may myself fall beneath the sword of the assailant. Forgive, I entreat you, my trespasses, and intercede for me with my Master, for whose sake I yearn to lay down my life."

Ḥujjat was too much overcome with emotion to reply. Encouraged by his silence, which she interpreted to mean that he consented to grant her appeal, she leaped out of the gate and, raising seven times the cry "Yá Ṣáhibu'z-Zamán!" rushed to stay the hand that had already slain a number of her companions. "Why befoul by your deeds the fair name of Islám?" she shouted, as she flung herself upon them. "Why flee abjectly from before our face, if you be speakers of truth?" She ran to the barricades which the enemy had erected, routed those who guarded the first three of the defences, and was engaging in overcoming the fourth, when, beneath a shower of bullets, she dropped dead upon the ground. Not a single voice among her opponents dared question her chastity or ignore the sublimity of her faith and the enduring traits of her character. Such was her devotion that after her death no less than twenty women of her acquaintance embraced the Cause of the Báb. To them she had ceased to be the peasant girl they had known; she was the very incarnation of the noblest principles of human conduct, a living embodiment of the spirit which only a Faith such as hers could manifest.

The messengers who acted as intermediaries between Ḥujjat and his companions were one day directed to inform the guards of the barricades to carry out the Báb's injunction to His followers and to repeat nineteen times, each night, each of the following invocations: "Alláh-u-Akbar,"[1] "Alláh-u-A'zam,"[2] "Alláh-u-Ajmal,"[3] "Alláh-u-Abhá,"[4] and "Alláh-u-Athar."[5] The very night the behest was received, all the

[1] "God the Great."
[2] "God the Most Great."
[3] "God the Most Beauteous."
[4] "God the Most Glorious."
[5] "God the Most Pure."

defenders of the barricades joined in shouting those words simultaneously. So loud and compelling was that cry that the enemy was rudely awakened from sleep, abandoned the camp in horror, and, hurrying to the environs of the governor's residence, sought shelter in the neighbouring houses. A few were so shocked with terror that they instantly dropped dead. A considerable number of the inhabitants of Zanján fled, panic-stricken, to the adjoining villages. Many believed that stupendous uproar to be a sign heralding the Day of Judgment; to others it signified the sending forth, on the part of Ḥujjat, of a fresh summons which they felt would be the prelude to a sudden offensive against them more terrible than any they had yet experienced.

"What," Ḥujjat was heard to remark, when informed of the terror that sudden invocation had inspired, "if I had been permitted by my Master to wage holy war against these cowardly miscreants! I am bidden by Him to instil into men's hearts the ennobling principles of charity and love, and to refrain from all unnecessary violence. My aim and that of my companions is, and ever will be, to serve our sovereign loyally and to be the well-wishers of his people. Had I chosen to follow in the footsteps of the 'ulamás of Zanján, I should, as long as I live, have continued to remain the object of the slavish adoration of this people. Never shall I be willing to barter for all the treasures and honours this world can give me, the undying loyalty I bear His Cause."

The memory of that night still lingers in the minds of those who experienced its awe and terror. I have heard several eye-witnesses express in glowing terms the contrast between the tumult and disorder that reigned in the camp of the enemy and the atmosphere of reverent devotion that filled the fort. While those in the fort were invoking the name of God and praying for His guidance and mercy, their opponents, officers and men alike, were absorbed in acts of debauchery and shame. Though worn and exhausted, the occupants of the fort continued to observe their vigils and chant such anthems as the Báb had instructed them to repeat. The camp of the enemy at that same hour resounded with peals of noisy laughter, with imprecations and blasphemies. That night in particular, no sooner had the in-

vocation pealed out than the dissolute officers, who were holding their wine-glasses in their hands, dropped them instantly to the ground and rushed out headlong, in bare feet, as if stunned by that stentorian outcry. Gambling tables were overturned in the midst of the disorder that ensued. Half dressed and bareheaded, a number ran out into the wilderness, while others betook themselves in haste to the homes of the 'ulamás and roused them from their sleep. Alarmed and overawed, these began to direct their fiercest invectives against one another for having kindled the fire of such great mischief.

As soon as the enemy had discovered the purpose of that loud clamour, they returned to their posts, reassured, though greatly humiliated, by their experience. The officers directed a certain number of their men to lie in ambush and to fire in any direction from which those voices might again proceed. Every night they succeeded in this way in slaying a number of the companions. Undeterred by the losses they were repeatedly sustaining, Ḥujjat's supporters continued to raise, with undiminished fervour, their invocation, despising the perils which the offering of the prayer involved. As their number diminished, that prayer grew louder and acquired added poignancy. Even the imminence of death was powerless to induce the intrepid defenders of the fort to give up what they deemed the noblest and most powerful reminder of their Beloved.

The contest was still raging when Ḥujjat was moved to address his written message to Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh. "The subjects of your Imperial Majesty," he wrote him, "regard you both as their temporal ruler and as the supreme custodian of their Faith. They appeal to you for justice, and look upon you as the supreme protector of their rights. Our controversy primarily concerned the 'ulamás of Zanján only, and under no circumstances involved either your government or people. I myself was summoned by your predecessor to Tihrán and was requested by him to set forth the basic claims of my Faith. The late Sháh was entirely satisfied, and highly commended my efforts. I resigned myself to leave my home and settle in Ṭihrán, with no other intention than that of abating the fury that raged round my person and of

extinguishing the fire which the mischief-makers had kindled. Though free to return to my home, I preferred to remain in the capital, wholly relying upon the justice of my sovereign. In the early days of your reign, the Amír-Niẓám, while the Mázindarán upheaval was still in progress, suspected me of treason and determined to destroy my life. Finding no one in Ṭihrán able to protect me, I determined, in self-defence, to flee to Zanján, where I resumed my labours and strove with all my might to advance the true interest of Islám. I was pursuing my work when Majdu'd-Dawlih arose against me. I several times appealed to him to exercise moderation and justice, but he refused to grant my request. Instigated by the 'ulamás of Zanján, and encouraged by the adulation they lavished upon him, he determined to arrest me. My friends intervened and attempted to stay his hand. He continued to rouse the people against me, and they in their turn have acted in a manner that has led to the present situation. Your Majesty has until now refrained from extending his gracious assistance to us, who are the innocent victims of such ferocious cruelty. Our enemies have even sought to represent our Cause, in the eyes of your Majesty, as a conspiracy against the authority with which you have been invested. Surely every unbiased observer will readily admit that we cherish in our hearts no such intention. Our sole aim is to advance the best interests of your government and people. I and my principal companions hold ourselves in readiness to leave for Ṭihrán, that we may, in your presence as well as in that of our chief opponents, establish the soundness of our Cause."

Not content with his own petition, he bade his leading supporters address similar appeals to the Sháh and stress his request for justice.

No sooner had the messenger who was carrying those petitions to Ṭihrán set out on his way than he was seized and brought back into the presence of the governor. Infuriated by the action of his opponents, he ordered the messenger to be immediately put to death. He destroyed the petitions and in their stead wrote the Sháh letters which he loaded with abuse and insult, and, adding the signatures of Hujjat and his chief companions, despatched them to Ṭihrán.

The Sháh was so indignant after the perusal of these insolent petitions that he gave orders for the immediate despatch of two regiments equipped with guns and munitions to Zanján, commanding that not one supporter of Ḥujjat be allowed to survive.

The news of the Báb's martyrdom had meanwhile reached the hard-pressed occupants of the fort through Siyyid Ḥasan, brother of Siyyid Ḥusayn, the Báb's amanuensis, who had arrived from Ádhirbáyján on his way to Qazvín. The news spread among the enemy and was welcomed by them with shouts of wild delight. They hastened to ridicule and hurl their taunts at the efforts of His adherents. "For what reason," they cried in haughty scorn, "will you henceforth be willing to sacrifice yourselves? He in whose path you long to lay down your lives, has himself fallen a victim to the bullets of a triumphant foe. His body is even now lost both to his enemies and to his friends. Why persist in your stubbornness when a word is sufficient to deliver you from your woes?" However much they strove to shake the confidence of the bereaved community, they failed, in the end, to induce the feeblest among them either to desert the fort or to recant his Faith.

The Amír-Niẓám was meanwhile urging his sovereign to despatch further reinforcements to Zanján. Muḥammad Khán, the Amír-Túmán, at the head of five regiments and equipped with a considerable amount of arms and munitions, was finally commissioned to demolish the fort and wipe out its occupants.

During the twenty days that hostilities were suspended, 'Azíz Khán-i-Mukrí, surnamed Sardár-i-Kull, who was on a military mission to Íraván,[1] arrived at Zanján and succeeded in meeting Ḥujjat through his host, Siyyid 'Alí Khán. The latter related to 'Azíz Khán the circumstances of a touching interview he had had with Ḥujjat, when he had obtained all the information he required regarding the intentions and proposals of the besieged. "Should the government," Ḥujjat

[1] According to Gobineau (p. 202), 'Azíz Khán was "général en chef des troupes de l'Ádhirbáyján, et alors premier aide de camp du roi: il passait à Zanján, se rendant à Tiflis pour féliciter le grand duc héritier de Russie, à l'occasion de son arrivée dans le Caucase."

had told him, "refuse to entertain my appeal, I am willing, with its permission, to depart with my family to a place beyond the confines of this land. Should it refuse to grant even this request and persist in attacking us, we should feel constrained to arise and defend ourselves." 'Azíz Khán assured Siyyid 'Alí Khán that he would do all in his power to induce the authorities to effect a speedy solution of this problem. No sooner had Siyyid 'Alí Khán retired than 'Azíz Khán was surprised by the farrásh[1] of the Amír-Niẓám, who had come to arrest Siyyid 'Alí Khán and to conduct him to the capital. He was seized with great fear and, in order to avert any suspicion from himself, began to abuse Ḥujjat and to denounce him openly before the farrásh. By this means he was able to ward off the danger that threatened his own life.

The arrival of the Amír-Túmán was the signal for the resumption of hostilities on a scale such as Zanján had never before experienced. Seventeen regiments of cavalry and infantry had rallied to his standard, and fought under his command.[2] No less than fourteen guns were, at his orders, directed against the fort. Five additional regiments, which the Amír had recruited from the neighbourhood, were being trained by him as reinforcements. The very night he arrived, he issued orders that the trumpets be sounded as a signal for the resumption of the attack. The officers in charge of his artillery were commanded to open fire instantly upon the besieged. The booming of the cannons, which could be heard distinctly at a distance of about fourteen farsangs,[3] had scarcely begun when Ḥujjat ordered his companions to make use of the two guns they themselves had constructed. One of them was transported to a high position commanding the Amír's headquarters. A ball struck his tent and mortally

[1] See Glossary.

[2] "Muḥammad Khán, alors Biglíyirbigí et Mír-panj, ou général de division, devenu aujourd'hui Amír-Túmán, fit sa jonction avec les troupes déjà occupées dans la ville; il leur amenait trois mille hommes des régiments de Shigágí et des régiments des gardes, puis six canons et deux mortiers. Presque en même temps entraient à Zanján, par un autre côté, Qásim Khán, venant de la frontière du Karabágh; Arslán Khán, le major, avec les cavaliers du Khirghán, et 'Alí-Akbar, capitaine de Khuy, avec de l'infanterie. Tous avaient reçu, chacun dans leurs pays respectifs, des ordres du roi et ils accouraient." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 201.)

[3] See Glossary.

wounded his steed. The enemy was meanwhile directing, with unrelenting fury, its fire upon the fort, and had succeeded in killing a large number of its occupants.

As the days went by, it became increasingly evident that the forces under the command of the Amír-Túmán, in spite of their great superiority in number, equipment, and training, were unable to achieve the victory they had fondly anticipated. The death of Farrukh Khán, son of Yaḥyá Khán and brother of Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán, one of the generals of the enemy's army, aroused the indignation of the Amír-Niẓám, who addressed a strongly worded communication to the commanding officer, reprimanding him for his failure to force the besieged to an unconditional surrender. "You have sullied the fair name of our country," he wrote him, "have demoralised the army, and have wasted the lives of its ablest officers." He was bidden enforce the strictest discipline among his subordinates and cleanse his camp from every stain of debauchery and vice. He was, moreover, urged to take counsel with the chiefs of the people of Zanján, and was warned that, failing to achieve his end, he would be degraded from his position. "If your combined endeavours," he added, "prove powerless to force their submission, I myself will proceed to Zanján, and will order a wholesale massacre of its inhabitants, irrespective of their position or belief. A town that can bring so much humiliation to the Sháh and distress to his people is utterly unworthy of the clemency of our sovereign."

In a frenzy of despair, the Amír-Túmán summoned all the kad-khudás[1] and chiefs of the people, showed them the text of that letter, and by his earnest entreaties succeeded in rousing them to immediate action. The next day every able-bodied man in Zanján had enlisted under the Amír-Túmán's standard. Headed by their kad-khudás and preceded by four regiments, a vast multitude of people marched, to the sound of a flourish of trumpets and the beating of drums, in the direction of the fort. Undaunted by their clamour, the companions of Ḥujjat raised simultaneously the cry of "Yá Ṣáhibu'z-Zamán!" then poured out of the gates and flung themselves upon them. That encounter was the fiercest and most desperate engagement that had yet

[1] See Glossary.

been experienced. The flower of Ḥujjat's supporters fell on that day, victims to a ruthless carnage. Many a son was butchered in circumstances of unbridled cruelty under the eyes of his mother, while sisters gazed with horror and anguish upon the heads of their brothers raised on spears and brutally disfigured by the weapons of their foes. In the midst of a tumult in which the boisterous enthusiasm of the companions of Ḥujjat faced the fury and barbarism of an exasperated enemy, the voices of women, who were struggling side by side with the men, could be heard from time to time, animating the zeal of their fellow-disciples. The victory that was miraculously achieved on that day was, in no small measure, attributable to the shouts of exultation which those women raised in the face of a mighty foe, shouts which acquired added poignancy by their own acts of heroism and self-sacrifice. Disguised in the garb of men, some had rushed forward, in their eagerness to supplant their fallen brethren, while the rest were seen carrying on their shoulders skins full of water, with which they strove to allay the thirst, and revive the strength, of the wounded. Confusion reigned meanwhile in the camp of the enemy. Deprived of water, and distressed by defection in their ranks, they fought a losing battle, unable to retreat and impotent to conquer. No less than three hundred companions quaffed, that day, the cup of martyrdom.

One of Hujjat's supporters was a man named Muḥsin, whose function it was to sound the adhán.[1] His voice was endowed with a quality of warmth and richness that no man in the neighbourhood could equal. Its reverberation, as he summoned the faithful to prayer, could be distinctly felt as far as the adjoining villages, and penetrated the hearts of those who heard it. Oftentimes did the worshippers in that vicinity, in whose ears the voice of Muhsin was ringing, express their indignation at the charges of heresy imputed to Ḥujjat and his friends. So loud grew their protestations that they eventually reached the ears of the leading mujtahid of Zanján, who, unable himself to impose silence upon them, implored the Amír-Túmán to devise some means of eradicating from the minds of the people the belief in the piety

[1] See Glossary.

and uprightness of Ḥujjat and his companions. "Day and night," he complained, "I strive through my public discourse, no less than by private converse with the people, to instil into their minds the conviction that that wretched band is the sworn enemy of the Prophet and the wrecker of His Faith. The cry of that evil man, Muḥsin, robs my words of their influence and nullifies my exertions. To exterminate that miserable wretch is surely your first obligation."

The Amír refused at first to entertain his appeal. "You and your like," he replied, "are to be held responsible for having declared the necessity of waging holy war against them. We are but the servants of the government, and our duty is to obey the orders we receive. If you seek, however, to put an end to his life, you should be prepared to make the proper sacrifice." The siyyid immediately understood the purpose of the Amír's allusion. He had no sooner regained his house than he sent him, by the hand of a messenger, the gift of a hundred túmáns.[1]

The Amír promptly ordered a number of his men, who were famed for their marksmanship, to lie in wait for Muḥsin and shoot him when in the act of prayer. It was the hour of dawn when, as he raised the cry of "Lá Iláh-a-Illa'lláh,"[2] a bullet struck him in the mouth and killed him instantly. Ḥujjat, as soon as he was informed of that cruel act, ordered another of his companions to ascend the turret and continue the prayer from where Muḥsin had left off. Though his life was spared until the cessation of hostilities, he, together with certain of his brethren, was made to suffer, eventually, a death no less atrocious than that of his fellow-disciple.

As the days of the siege were drawing to a close, Ḥujjat urged all those who were betrothed to celebrate their nuptials. For each unmarried youth among the besieged he chose a spouse, and, within the limits of the means at his disposal, contributed from his own purse whatever could add to the comfort and gladness of the newly married. He sold all the jewels his wife possessed, and, with the money, provided whatever could be obtained to bring happiness and pleasure to those he had joined in wedlock. During more than three months these festivities continued, festivities which were

[1] See Glossary.

[2] There is no God but God.

intermingled with the terrors and hardships of a long-protracted siege. How often did the clamour of an advancing foe drown the acclamations of joy with which bride and bridegroom greeted each other! How suddenly was the voice of merriment stilled by the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!" that summoned the faithful to arise and repulse the invader! With what tenderness would the bride entreat the bridegroom to tarry awhile longer beside her ere he rushed forth to win the crown of martyrdom! "I can spare no time," he would reply. "I must hasten to obtain the crown of glory. We shall surely meet again on the shores of the great Beyond, the home of a blissful and eternal reunion."

No less than two hundred youths were joined in wedlock during those tumultuous days. Some a month, others a few days, and still others for but a brief moment, were able to tarry undisturbed in the company of their brides; no one among them failed, as the beating of the drum announced the hour of his departure, to respond joyously to the call. Each and every one ungrudgingly offered himself as a sacrifice for his true Beloved; all drank, eventually, the cup of martyrdom. No wonder the spot that has been the theatre of untold sufferings and has witnessed such heroism has been named Arḍ-i-A'lá[1] by the Báb, a title that has remained for all time linked with His own blessed name.

Among the companions was a certain Karbilá'í 'Abdu'l-Báqí, the father of seven sons, five of whom Ḥujjat joined in wedlock. The nuptial ceremonies were hardly at an end when cries of terror suddenly announced the resumption of a fresh offensive against them. They sprang to their feet and, forsaking their loved ones, instantly rushed out to repulse the invader. All five fell in turn in the course of that encounter. The eldest of them, a youth greatly esteemed for his intelligence, and of renowned courage, was captured and conducted into the presence of the Amír-Túmán. "Lay him upon the ground," cried the infuriated Amír, "and kindle upon his breast, which dared nourish so great a love for Ḥujjat, a fire that shall consume it." "Wretched man," burst forth the undaunted youth, "no flame that the hands of your men are able to kindle, could destroy the love that

[1] "The Exalted Spot," title given to Zanján by the Báb.

glows in my heart." The praise of his Beloved lingered on his lips until the last moment of his life.

Among the women who distinguished themselves by the tenacity of their faith was one named Umm-i-Ashraf,[1] who was newly married when the storm of Zanján broke out. She was within the fort when she gave birth to her son Ashraf. Both mother and child survived the massacre that marked the closing stages of that tragedy. Years afterwards, when her son had grown into a youth of great promise, he was involved in the persecutions that afflicted his brethren. Unable to persuade him to recant, his enemies endeavoured



GRAVES OF ASHRAF (1) AND OF HIS MOTHER (2)

to alarm his mother and convince her of the necessity of saving him, ere it was too late, from his fate. "I will disown you as my son," cried the mother, when brought face to face with him, "if you incline your heart to such evil whisperings and allow them to turn you away from the Truth." Faithful to his mother's admonitions, Ashraf met his death with intrepid calm. Though herself a witness to the cruelties inflicted on her son, she made no lamentation, neither did she shed a tear. This marvellous mother showed a courage and fortitude that amazed the perpetrators of that shameless deed. "I have now in mind," she exclaimed, as she cast a parting glance at the corpse of her son, "the vow I made on

[1] "Mother of Ashraf."

the day of your birth, while besieged in the fort of Alí-Mardán Khán. I rejoice that you, the only son whom God gave me, have enabled me to redeem that pledge."

My pen is powerless to portray, much less to render befitting tribute to, the consuming enthusiasm that glowed in those valiant hearts. Violent as were the winds of adversity, they were powerless to quench its flame. Men and women laboured with unabating fervour to strengthen the defences of the fort and reconstruct whatever the enemy had demolished. What leisure they could obtain was consecrated to prayer. Every thought, every desire, was subordinated to the paramount necessity of guarding their stronghold against the onslaughts of the assailant. The part the women played in these operations was no less arduous than that accomplished by their men companions. Every woman, irrespective of rank and age, joined with energy in the common task. They sewed the garments, baked the bread, ministered to the sick and wounded, repaired the barricades, cleared away from the courts and terraces the balls and missiles fired upon them by the enemy, and, last but not least, cheered the faint in heart and animated the faith of the wavering.[1] Even the children joined in giving whatever assistance was in their power to the common cause, and seemed to be fired by an enthusiasm no less remarkable than that which their fathers and mothers displayed.

Such was the spirit of solidarity that characterised their labours, and such the heroism of their acts, that the enemy was led to believe their number was no less than ten thousand. It was generally conceded that a continual supply of provisions found its way, in an unaccountable manner, to the fort, and that fresh reinforcements were being steadily despatched from Nayríz, from Khurásán, and from Tabríz. The power of the besieged seemed to them as unshakable as ever, their resources inexhaustible.

The Amír-Túmán, exasperated by their unyielding tenacity

[1] "The desperate resistance offered by the Bábís must therefore be attributed less to the strength of the position which they occupied than to the extraordinary valour with which they defended themselves. Even the women took part in the defence, and I subsequently heard it stated on good authority that, like the Carthaginian women of old, they cut off their long hair, and bound it round the crazy guns to afford them the necessary support." (E. G. Browne's "A Year amongst the Persians," p. 74.)

and spurred by the rebukes and protestations of the authorities in Ṭihrán, determined to resort to the abject weapons of treachery in order to exact the complete submission of the besieged.[1] Firmly convinced of the futility of his efforts to face his opponents in the field honourably, he craftily called for the suspension of hostilities, and gave currency to the report that the Sháh had decided to abandon the whole enterprise. He represented his sovereign as having, from the very beginning, discountenanced the idea of extending his support to the forces that fought in Mázindarán and Nayríz, and of having deplored the shedding of so much blood for so insignificant a cause. The people of Zanján and the surrounding villages were led to believe that Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh had actually ordered the Amír-Túmán to negotiate a friendly settlement of the issues between him and Ḥujjat, and that it was his intention to put an end, as speedily as possible, to this unhappy state of affairs.

Assured that the people had been deceived by his cunning plot, he drew up an appeal for peace, in which he assured Ḥujjat of the sincerity of his intention of achieving a lasting settlement between him and his supporters. He accompanied that declaration with a sealed copy of the Qur'án, as a testimony of the sacredness of his pledge. "My sovereign," he added, "has forgiven you. You, as well as your followers, I hereby solemnly declare to be under the protection of his Imperial Majesty. This Book of God is my witness that if any of you decide to come out of the fort, you will be safe from any danger."

Ḥujjat reverently received the Qur'án from the hand of the messenger, and, as soon as he had read the appeal, bade its bearer inform his master that he would send an answer in the course of the following day. That night he gathered together his chief companions and spoke to them of the misgivings he entertained as to the sincerity of the enemy's declarations. "The treacheries of Mázindarán and of Nayríz

[1] "Décidément les choses tournaient mal pour les musulmans et il semblait qu'on ne pourrait jamais venir à boût d'une pareille résistance. Au surplus, pourquoi se donner tant de mal, pourquoi risquer inutilement la vie, non des soldats, chair à canon, mais des officiers et des généraux; pourquoi s'exposer quotidiennement au ridicule et au danger de défaites successives? n'avait-on pas l'exemple de Shaykh Ṭabarsí? ne pouvait-on user de ruse? ne pouvait-on prêter tous les serments imaginables, quitte à massacrer ensuite les imbéciles qui s'y seraient fiés." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 350.)

are still vivid in our minds. That which was perpetrated against them, the same they purpose to perpetrate against us. In deference to the Qur'án, however, we shall respond to their invitation, and shall despatch to their camp a number of our companions, that thereby their deceitfulness may be exposed."

I have heard Ustád Mihr-'Alíy-i-Ḥaddád, who survived the massacre of Zanján, relate the following: "I was one of the nine children, none of whom were more than ten years old, who accompanied the delegation sent by Ḥujjat to the Amír-Túmán. The rest were men of over eighty years of age. Among them were Karbilá'í Mawlá-Qulí-Áqá-Dádásh, Darvísh-Ṣaláḥ, Muḥammad-Raḥím, and Muḥammad. Darvísh-Ṣaláḥ was a most impressive figure, tall of stature, white-bearded, and of singular beauty. He was greatly esteemed for his honourable and just conduct. His intervention on behalf of the downtrodden invariably received the consideration and sympathy of the authorities concerned. He renounced, after his conversion, all the honours he had received, and, though far advanced in age, enrolled himself among the defenders of the fort. He marched before us carrying the sealed Qur'án as we were led into the presence of the Amír-Túmán.

"Reaching his tent, we stood at its entrance awaiting his orders. To our salute he gave no response, and treated us with marked contempt. He kept us standing half an hour before he deigned to address us in a tone of severe reprimand. 'A meaner and more shameless people than you,' he cried in haughty scorn, 'has never been seen!' He had hurled his denunciations at us when one of the companions, the oldest and feeblest among them, begged to be allowed to say a few words to him, and, on obtaining his permission, spoke, unlettered though he was, in a manner that could not fail to excite our profound admiration. 'God knows,' he pleaded, 'that we are, and will ever remain, loyal and law-abiding subjects of our sovereign, with no other desire than to advance the true interests of his government and people. We have been grievously misrepresented by our ill-wishers. No one of the Sháh's representatives was inclined to protect or befriend us; no one was found to plead our Cause before

him. We repeatedly appealed to him, but he ignored our entreaty and was deaf to our call. Our enemies, emboldened by the indifference which characterised the attitude of the ruling authorities, assailed us from every side, plundered our property, violated the honour of our wives and daughters, and captured our children. Undefended by our government and encompassed by our foes, we felt constrained to arise and defend our lives.'

"The Amír-Túmán turned to his lieutenant and asked him what action he would advise him to take. 'I am at a loss,' the Amír added, 'as to the answer I should give this man. Were I at heart religious, I would unhesitatingly embrace his cause.' 'Nothing but the sword,' replied his lieutenant, 'will deliver us from this abomination of heresy.' 'I still hold the Qur'án in my hand,' interposed Darvísh-Ṣaláḥ, 'and carry the declaration which you, of your own accord, chose to make. Are the words we have just heard our reward for having responded to your appeal?'

"The Amír-Túmán, in a burst of fury, ordered that Darvísh-Ṣaláḥ's beard be torn out, and that he, with those who were with him, be thrown into a dungeon. I and the rest of the children were scared, and attempted to escape. Raising the cry of 'Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!' we hurried in the direction of our barricades. Some of us were overtaken and made prisoners. As I was fleeing, the man who was pursuing me laid hold of the hem of my garment. I tore myself away from him and managed to reach the gate that led to the approaches of the fort, in a state of utter exhaustion. How great was my surprise when I saw one of the companions, a man named Imán-Qulí, being savagely mutilated by the enemy. I was horrified as I gazed upon that scene, knowing as I did that on that very day the cessation of hostilities had been proclaimed and the most solemn pledges given that no acts of violence would be committed. I was soon informed that the victim had been betrayed by his brother, who, on the pretext of desiring to speak with him, had handed him over to his persecutors.

"I straightway hastened to Ḥujjat, who lovingly received me and, wiping the dust from my face, and clothing me with new garments, invited me to be seated by his side and bade

me tell him the fate of his companions. I described to him all that I had seen. 'It is the tumult of the Day of Resurrection,' he explained, 'a tumult such as the world has never seen before. This is the day on which "man shall fly from his brother, and his mother and his father, and his wife and his children."[1] This is the day when man, not content with having abandoned his brother, sacrifices his substance in order to shed the blood of his nearest kinsman. This is the day when "every suckling woman shall forsake her sucking babe; and every woman that hath a burden in her womb shall cast her burden. And thou shalt see men drunken, yet are they not drunken; but it is the mighty chastisement of God!" '"[2]

Seating himself in the centre of the maydán,[3] Ḥujjat summoned his followers. On their arrival, he arose and, standing erect in their midst, spoke to them in these words: "I am well pleased with your unflinching endeavours, my beloved companions. Our enemies are bent upon our destruction. They harbour no other desire. Their intention was to trick you into coming out of the fort, and then to slaughter you mercilessly after their hearts' desire. Finding that their treachery has been exposed, they have, in the fury of their rage, ill-treated and imprisoned the oldest and the youngest among you. It is clear that not until they capture this fort and scatter you, will they lay down their arms or cease their persecutions against us. Your continued presence in this fort will eventually cause you to be taken captive by the enemy, who will of a certainty dishonour your wives and slay your children. Better is it, therefore, for you to make your escape in the middle of the night and to take your wives and children with you. Let each one seek a place of safety until such time as this tyranny shall be overpast. I shall remain alone to face the enemy. It were better that my death should allay their thirst for revenge than that you should all perish."

The companions were moved to their very depths and, with tears in their eyes, declared their firm resolve to remain, to the end, by his side. "We can never consent," they exclaimed, "to abandon you to the mercy of a murderous enemy! Our lives are not more precious than your life,

[1] Qur'án, 80: 34. [2] Qur'án, 22: 2. [3] See Glossary.

neither are our families of a more noble descent than that of your kinsmen. Whatever calamity may yet befall you, is what we shall welcome for ourselves."

All except a few remained true to their pledge. These, unable to bear the ever-increasing distress of a prolonged siege, and encouraged by the advice Ḥujjat himself had given them, betook themselves to a place of safety outside the fort, thus separating themselves from the rest of their fellow-disciples.

Nerved to a resolve of despair, the Amír-Túmán ordered all able-bodied men in Zanján to assemble in the neighbourhood of his camp, ready to receive his commands. He reorganised the forces of his regiments, appointed their officers, and added them to the host of fresh recruits that had massed in the town. He ordered no less than sixteen regiments, each equipped with ten guns, to march against the fort. Eight of these regiments were charged to attack the fort every forenoon, after which the remainder of the forces were to replace them in their offensive until the approach of evening. The Amír himself took the field, and was seen in the forenoon of every day directing the efforts of his host, assuring them of the reward awaiting their success, and warning them of the punishment which, in the event of defeat, the sovereign would inflict upon them.

For one whole month the siege continued. Not content with attacks by day, the enemy several times attacked them by night also. The fierceness of their onslaughts, the overwhelming force of their numbers, and the rapid succession of the onsets, thinned the ranks of the companions and aggravated their distress. Reinforcements for the enemy continued to pour in from all directions, while the besieged languished in a state of misery and hunger.[1]

The Amír-Niẓám meanwhile decided to strengthen the hands of the Amír-Túmán by the appointment of Ḥasan-'Alí Khán-i-Karrúsí, who was commanded to march at the head of two sunní regiments to Zanján. His arrival was the signal for the concentration of the enemy's artillery on

[1] "Enfin, les menaces de la cour, les encouragements et les renforts se succédèrent avec une telle rapidité, il s'établit une disproportion si écrasante, quant au nombre et aux ressources, entre les Bábís et leurs adversaires, que le résultat final devint évident et imminent." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 203.)

the fort. A tremendous bombardment threatened the structure with immediate destruction. It lasted for a number of days, during which the stronghold stood firm in spite of the increasing fire which was directed against it. The friends of Ḥujjat displayed, during those days, a valour and skill that even their bitterest foes were compelled to admire.

One day, while the bombardment was still in progress, a bullet struck Ḥujjat in the right arm, as he was performing his ablutions. Though he ordered his servant not to inform his wife of the wound he had received, yet such was the man's grief that he was powerless to conceal his emotion. His tears betrayed his distress, and no sooner had the wife of Ḥujjat learned of the injury inflicted on her husband than she ran in distress and found him absorbed in prayer in a state of unruffled calm. Though bleeding profusely from his wound, his face retained its expression of undisturbed confidence. "Pardon this people, O God," he was heard to say, "for they know not what they do. Have mercy upon them, for they who have led them astray are alone responsible for the misdeeds the hands of this people have wrought."

Ḥujjat sought to calm the agitation that had seized his wife and relatives at the sight of the blood that covered his body. "Rejoice," he told them, "for I am still with you and desire you to be wholly resigned to God's will. What you now behold is but a drop compared to the ocean of afflictions that will be poured forth at the hour of my death. Whatever be His decree, it is our duty to acquiesce and bow down to His will."

No sooner had the news that he had been wounded reached the companions than they laid down their arms and hastened to him. The enemy, meanwhile, taking advantage of the momentary absence of their adversaries, redoubled their attack upon the fort and were able to force their passage through its gate.[1] That day they took captive no less than a hundred of the women and children, and plundered all their

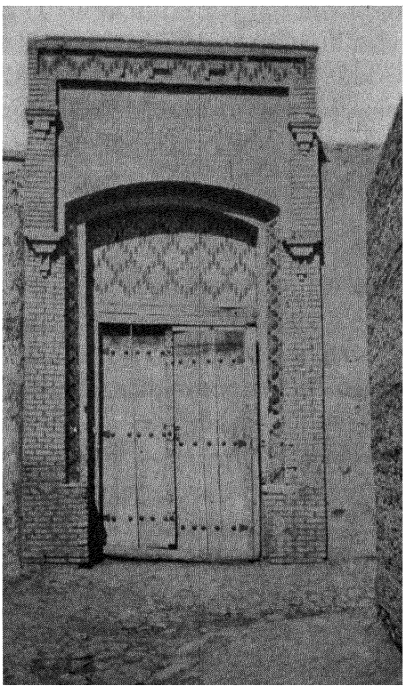
[1] "Le régiment de Karrús, commandé par le chef de la tribu, Ḥasan-'Alí Khán, aujourd'hui ministre à Paris, enleva le fort d''Alí-Mardán Khán; le 4ème régiment força la maison d'Áqá 'Azíz, un des points les plus fortifiés de la ville, et la réduisit en poussière; le régiment des gardes fit sauter le caravansaray, situé près de la porte d'Hamadán; il perdit un capitaine et assez de soldats par l'explosion, mais enfin resta maître de la place." (*Ibid.*, p. 203.)

possessions. Despite the severity of that winter, these captives were left exposed in the open for no less than fifteen days and nights to a biting cold such as Zanján had rarely experienced. Clad in the thinnest of garments, with no covering to protect them, they were abandoned, without food and shelter, in the wilderness. Their only protection was the gauze that covered their heads, with which they sought in vain to shield their faces from the icy wind that blew mercilessly upon them. Crowds of women, most of whom were inferior to them in social position, flocked from the various quarters of Zanján to the scene of their sufferings and poured upon them contempt and ridicule. "You have now found your god," they scornfully exclaimed, as they danced wildly around them, "and have been rewarded abundantly by him." They spat in their faces and heaped upon them the foulest invectives.

The capture of the fort, though robbing Ḥujjat's companions of their chief instrument of defence, failed either to daunt their spirit or discourage their efforts. All property on which the enemy could lay its hands was plundered, and the women and children who were left defenceless were made captives. The rest of the companions, together with the remaining women and children, crowded into the houses that lay in the close vicinity of Ḥujjat's residence. They were divided into five companies, each consisting of nineteen times nineteen companions. From each of these companies, nineteen would rush forth together and, raising with one voice the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!" would fling themselves into the midst of the enemy and would succeed in scattering its forces. The uplifted voices of these ninety-five companions would alone prove sufficient to paralyse the efforts, and crush the spirit, of their assailants.

This state of affairs continued for a few days, bringing in its wake both humiliation and loss to an enemy that had believed itself capable of achieving immediate and signal victory. Many were killed in the course of these encounters. Officers, to the distress of their superiors, were beginning to desert their posts, the captains of the artillery were abandoning their guns, whilst the rank and file of the army was demoralised and completely exhausted. The Amír-Túmán

was himself weary of the coercive measures to which he had been compelled to resort in order to maintain the discipline of his men and to keep unimpaired their efficiency and vigour. He was driven again to take counsel with the remainder of his officers, and to seek a desperate remedy for a situation that was fraught with grave danger to his own life no less than to that of the inhabitants of Zanján. "I am weary," he confessed, "of the grim resistance of this people. They



ENTRANCE TO ḤUJJAT'S RUINED HOUSE AT ZANJÁN

are evidently animated by a spirit which no amount of encouragement from our sovereign can hope to call forth in our men. Such self-renunciation surely no one in the ranks of our army is able to manifest. No power that I can command is able to arouse my men from the slough of despair into which they have fallen. Whether they triumph or fail, these soldiers believe themselves doomed to eternal damnation."

Their mature deliberations resulted in the decision to

dig out underground passages from the site which their camp occupied to a place underneath the quarter in which the dwellings of Ḥujjat's adherents were situated. They determined to blow up these houses and by this means to force them to an unconditional surrender. For one whole month they laboured to fill these underground passages with all manner of explosives, and continued, at the same time, to demolish with fiendish cruelty such houses as remained standing. Wishing to accelerate the work of destruction, the Amír-Túmán ordered the officers in charge of his artillery to direct their fire upon Ḥujjat's residence, as the buildings that intervened between that house and the camp of the enemy had been razed to the ground, there remaining no further obstacle in the way of its ultimate destruction.

A section of his dwelling had already collapsed when Ḥujjat, who was still living within its walls, turned to his wife Khadíjih, who was holding Ḥádí, their baby, in her arms, and warned her that the day was fast approaching when she and her infant might be taken captive, and bade her be prepared for that day. She was giving vent to her distress when a cannon-ball struck the room which she occupied, and killed her instantly. Her child, whom she was holding to her breast, fell into the brazier beside her, and shortly afterwards died of the injuries he had received, in the house of Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, the mujtahid of Zanján.

Hujjat, though filled with grief, refused to yield to idle sorrow. "The day whereon I found Thy beloved One, O my God," he cried, "and recognised in Him the Manifestation of Thy eternal Spirit, I foresaw the woes that I should suffer for Thee. Great as have been until now my sorrows, they can never compare with the agonies that I would willingly suffer in Thy name. How can this miserable life of mine, the loss of my wife and of my child, and the sacrifice of the band of my kindred and companions, compare with the blessings which the recognition of Thy Manifestation has bestowed on me! Would that a myriad lives were mine, would that I possessed the riches of the whole earth and its glory, that I might resign them all freely and joyously in Thy path."

The tragic loss their beloved leader had sustained, and the grievous wound inflicted upon him, distressed the com-

panions of Ḥujjat, and filled them with burning indignation. They determined to make a last and desperate effort to avenge the blood of their slaughtered brethren. Ḥujjat, however, dissuaded them from making that attempt, and exhorted them not to hasten the issue of the conflict. He bade them resign themselves to the will of God and to remain calm and steadfast to the end, whenever that end might come.

As time went on, their number diminished, their sufferings multiplied, and the area within which they could feel secure was reduced. On the morning of the fifth of the month of Rabí'u'l-Avval, in the year 1267 A.H.,[1] Ḥujjat, who had already, for nineteen days, endured the severe pain caused by his wound, was in the act of prayer and had fallen prostrate upon his face, invoking the name of the Báb, when he suddenly passed away.

His sudden death came as a severe shock to his kindred and companions. Their grief at the passing of so able, so accomplished, and so inspiring a leader, was profound; the loss was irreparable. Two of his companions, Dín-Muḥammad-Vazír and Mír Riḍáy-i-Sardár, straightway undertook, ere the enemy was made aware of his death, to inter his remains in a place which neither his kindred nor his friends could suspect. At midnight the body was borne to a room that belonged to Dín-Muḥammad-Vazír, where it received burial. They demolished that room in order to ensure the safety of the remains from desecration, and exercised the utmost care to maintain the secrecy of the spot.

More than five hundred women who survived that terrible tragedy were, immediately after the death of Ḥujjat, gathered together in his house. His companions, in spite of the death of their leader, continued to face, with undiminished zeal, the forces of their assailants. Of the great multitude that had flocked to the standard of Ḥujjat, there remained only two hundred vigorous men; the rest either had died or were utterly incapacitated by the wounds they had received.

The knowledge of the removal of so inspiring a leader nerved the enemy to resistance and decided them to wipe

[1] January 8, 1851 A.D.

out what still remained of the formidable forces they had been unable to subdue. They launched a general attack, fiercer and more determined than any previous one. Animated by the beating of drums and the sound of trumpets, and encouraged by the shouts of exultation raised by the populace, they threw themselves upon the companions with unbridled ferocity, resolved not to rest until the whole company had been annihilated. In the face of this fierce onset, the companions raised once more the cry of "Yá Ṣáḥibu'z-Zamán!" and rushed forth, undismayed, to continue the heroic struggle until all of them had been either slain or captured.

That massacre had scarcely been perpetrated when the signal was given for a pillage, unexampled in its scope and ferocity. Had not the Amír-Túmán issued orders to spare what remained of the house and belongings of Ḥujjat, and to refrain from any acts of violence against his kindred, even more dastardly attacks would have been made by his rapacious army. His intention was to inform the authorities in Ṭihrán and to seek from them whatever advice they wished to give him. He failed, however, to restrain indefinitely the spirit of violence which animated his men. The 'ulamás of Zanján, flushed with the victory that had cost them such exertion and loss of life, and which had involved to such an unprecedented degree their reputation and prestige, endeavoured to incite the populace to commit every imaginable outrage against the lives of their men captives and the honour of their women. The sentinels who guarded the entrance to the house in which Ḥujjat had been living, were driven from their posts in the general tumult that ensued. The populace joined hands with the army to plunder the property and assail the persons of the few who still survived that memorable struggle. Neither the Amír-Túmán nor the governor was able to allay the thirst for plunder and revenge which had seized the whole town. Order and discipline no longer existed in the midst of the general confusion.

The governor of the province was, however, able to induce the officers of the army to gather together the captives into the house of a certain Ḥájí Ghulám and to keep them in custody until the arrival of fresh instructions from Ṭihrán.

The entire company were huddled together like sheep in that wretched place, exposed to the cold of a severe winter. The enclosure into which they were crowded was roofless and without furniture. For a few days they remained without food. From thence the women were removed to the house of a mujtahid named Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim, in the hope that he would induce them to recant, in return for which they would be offered their freedom. The greedy mujtahid, however, had, with the aid of his wives, his sisters and daughters, succeeded in seizing all they had been allowed to carry with them; had stripped them of their garments, clothed them in the meanest attire, and appropriated for himself whatever valuables he could find among their belongings.

After suffering untold hardships, these women captives were allowed to join their relatives, on condition that these would undertake full responsibility for their future behaviour. The rest were dispersed throughout the neighbouring villages, the inhabitants of which, unlike the people of Zanján, welcomed the newcomers with treatment that was at once affectionate and genuine. The family of Ḥujjat, however, was detained in Zanján until the arrival of definite instructions from Ṭihrán.

As to the wounded, they were placed in custody until such time as the authorities in the capital should send directions as to how they were to be treated. Meanwhile the severity of the cold to which they were exposed and the cruelties they underwent were such that within a few days they had all perished.

The rest of the captives were delivered by the Amír-Túmán into the hands of the Karrúsí, the Khamsih, and the 'Iráqí regiments, with orders that they be immediately executed. They were conducted in procession, to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets, to the camp where the army was stationed.[1] All these regiments combined to add

[1] "Alors Muḥammad Khán, Biglíyirbigí, Amír Arslán Khán, gouverneur, et les autres commandants, dont la parole avait garanti la vie sauve aux Bábís, ayant réuni ces derniers en prèsence des troupes, firent sonner les trompettes et battre les tambours, et donnèrent ordre que cent soldats choisis dans chaque régiment missent la main sur les prisonniers et les rangeassent sur une seule ligne devant eux. Cela fait, on commanda de massacrer ces gens à coups de baïonnette; ce qui fut fait. Ensuite on prit les chefs, Sulaymán le cordonnier, et Ḥájí Káẓim Giltúghí, et on les souffla à la bouche d'un mortier. Cette opération, d'invention asiatique, mais qui a été pratiquée par les autorités anglaises, dans la révolte de

to the horror of the abominations perpetrated against the poor sufferers. Armed with their lances and spears, they flung themselves upon the seventy-six companions who still remained, piercing and mutilating their bodies with a savage ruthlessness that excelled the dark deeds of even the most refined torture-mongers of their race. The spirit of revenge which that day dominated those barbarous men passed all bounds. Regiment vied with regiment in committing the foulest atrocities which their ingenious minds could devise. They were preparing to swoop afresh upon their victims when a certain Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ḥusayn, father of Abá-Baṣír, sprang to his feet and, raising the call of the adhán,[1] thrilled the multitude that had gathered about him. Though in the hour of his death, such were the fervour and majesty with which he pealed out the words "Alláh-u-Akbar,"[2] that the entire 'Iráqí regiment immediately proclaimed their refusal to continue participating in such shameful deeds. Deserting their posts, and raising the cry "Yá'Alí!" they fled from that place in horror and disgust. "Accursed be the Amír-Túmán!" they were heard to exclaim, as they turned their backs on that scene of bloodshed and horror. "That wretch

l'Inde, avec cette supériorité que la science et l'intelligence européennes apportent à tout ce qu'elles font, consiste à attacher le patient à la bouche d'une pièce d'artillerie, chargée seulement à poudre; suivant la quantité mise dans la charge, l'explosion emporte en lambeaux plus ou moins gros les membres déchirés de la victime. L'affaire finie, on fit encore un triage parmi les captifs. On réserva Mírzá Riḍá, lieutenant de Mullá Muḥammad-'Alí, puis tout ce qui avait quelque notoriété ou quelque importance, et ayant mis à ces malheureux la chaîne au cou et des entraves aux mains, on résolut, malgré la défense de la cour, de les emmener à Ṭihrán pour orner le triomphe. Quant au peu qui restait de pauvres diables dont la vie ou la mort n'importait à personne, on les abandonna, et l'armée victorieuse retourna dans la capitale, traînant avec elle ses prisonniers, qui marchaient devant les chevaux des généraux vainqueurs. Lorsqu'on fut arrivé à Ṭihrán, l'Amír-Niẓám, premier ministre, trouva nécessaire de faire encore des exemples, et Mírzá Riḍá, Ḥájí Muḥammad-'Alí et Ḥájí Muḥsin, furent condamnés à avoir les veines ouvertes. Les trois condamnés apprirent cette nouvelle sans émotion; seulement ils déclarèrent que le manque de foi dont on avait usé envers leurs compagnons et envers eux n'était pas de ces crimes que le Dieu Très-Haut pouvait se contenter de punir par les châtiments de la justice ordinaire; il lui fallait quelque chose de plus solennel et de plus signalé pour les persécuteurs de ses saints; en conséquence ils annonçaient au premier ministre que promptement, bien promptement, il périrait lui-même par le supplice qu'il leur faisait infliger. J'ai entendu citer cette prophétie; je ne doute pas un instant que ceux qui me l'ont fait connaître ne fussent profondément convaincus de sa réalité. Je dois pourtant noter ici que, lorsqu'on me l'a rapportée, il y avait déjà quatre ans au moins que l'Amír-Niẓám avait eut en effet les veines coupées par ordre du roi. Je ne puis donc rien affirmer autre chose, sinon qu'on m'a assuré que l'événement avait été annoncé par les martyrs de Zanján." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 207–9.)

[1] See Glossary.

[2] "God is Most Great."

has deceived us! With devilish persistence he sought to convince us of this people's disloyalty to the Imám 'Alí and to his kindred. Never, though we all be slain, will we consent to assist in such criminal deeds."

A number of these captives were blown from guns; others were stripped naked, ice-cold water was poured upon their bodies, and they were lashed severely. Still others were smeared with treacle and left to perish in the snow. Despite the shame and cruelties they were made to suffer, not one of these captives was known either to recant or to utter one angry word against his persecutors. Not even a whisper of discontent escaped their lips, nor did their countenances betray a shadow of regret or grief. No amount of adversity could succeed in darkening the light that shone in those faces; no words, however insulting, could disturb the serenity of their expressions.[1]

No sooner had the persecutors finished their work than they began to seek for the body of Hujjat, the place of whose burial the companions had carefully concealed. The most inhuman tortures had proved powerless to induce them to disclose the identity of that spot. The governor, exasperated by the failure of his search, asked that the seven-year-old son of Ḥujjat, whose name was Ḥusayn, be brought to him that he might attempt to induce him to disclose the secret.[2] "My son," he said, as he gently caressed him, "I am filled with grief at the knowledge of all the afflictions that have been the lot of your parents. Not I, but the mujtahids of Zanján,

[1] "L'exécution faite, les spectateurs envahirent le champ de mort, quelques-uns pour chercher et enterrer le corps d'un ami, d'autres poussés par une curiosité malsaine. On raconte qu'un musulman nommé Valí-Muhammad arriva près du corps d'un de ses voisins nommé Áqá Riḍá, et s'aperçut qu'il n'était pas tout à fait mort. Il l'appela et lui dit: 'Si tu as besoin de quelque chose, dis-le moi, je suis ton voisin Valí-Muḥammad.' L'autre lui fit comprendre qu'il avait soif. Aussitôt notre musulman alla chercher une énorme pierre et, revenant vers le malheureux: 'Ouvre la bouche, lui dit-il, je t'apporte de l'eau,' et comme celui-ci avait obéi, il lui écrasa la tête. Enfin le Biglíyirbigí se mit en route pour Ṭihrán emmenant avec lui 44 prisonniers parmi lesquels se trouvaient le fils de Mírzá Riḍá, Ḥájí Muḥammad-'Alí, Ḥájí Muḥsin le chirurgien. Ces trois individus furent exécutés dès leur arrivée, le reste pourrit en prison." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 363.)

[2] "Il ne leur suffisait pas dêtre vainqueurs, il leur fallait insulter le cadavre de leur ennemi. On songea à interroger les Bábí, mais, quels que fussent les supplices qu'on leur infligea, ils se refusèrent à parler. Áqá Dín-Muḥammad eut le crâne arrosé d'huile bouillante, mais il se tut. Enfin le Sardár fit venir le propre fils du chef défunt, âgé de sept ans et nommé Áqá Ḥusayn: par d'habiles menaces et d'insidieuses flatteries, il parvint enfin à le faire parler." (*Ibid.*, p. 361.)

should be held responsible for the abominations that have been committed. I am now willing to accord the remains of your father a befitting burial, and wish to atone for the shameful deeds that have been perpetrated against him." By his gentle insinuations, he succeeded in getting the child to reveal the secret, and thereupon sent his men to fetch the body. No sooner had the object of his desire been delivered into his hands than he ordered that it be dragged with a rope, to the sound of drums and trumpets, through the streets of Zanján. For three days and three nights, unspeakable injuries were heaped upon the body, which lay exposed to the



SQUARE IN ZANJÁN WHERE ḤUJJAT'S BODY WAS LEFT EXPOSED FOR THREE DAYS

eyes of the people in the maydán.[1] On the third night, it was reported that a number of horsemen had succeeded in carrying away the remnants of the corpse to a place of safety in the direction of Qazvín. As to Ḥujjat's kinsmen, orders were received from Ṭihrán to conduct them to Shíráz and to deliver them into the hands of the governor. There they languished in poverty and misery. Whatever possessions still remained to them the governor seized for himself, and condemned the victims of his rapacity to seek shelter in a ruined and dilapidated house. Ḥujjat's youngest son, Mihdí, died

[1] See Glossary.

of the privations he and his family were made to suffer, and was buried in the very midst of the ruins that had served as his shelter.

I was privileged, nine years after the termination of that memorable struggle, to visit Zanján and witness the scene of those terrible butcheries. I beheld with grief and horror the ruins of the fort of 'Alí-Mardán Khán, and trod the ground that had been saturated with the blood of its immortal de-



HÁJÍ ÍMÁN (MARKED X), ONE OF THE SURVIVORS OF THE STRUGGLE OF ZANJÁN

fenders. I could discern on its gates and walls traces of the carnage that marked its surrender to the enemy, and could discover upon the very stones that had served as barricades, stains of the blood that had been so profusely shed in that neighbourhood.

As to the number of those who fell in the course of these encounters, no accurate estimate has as yet been made. So numerous were those who participated in that struggle, and

so prolonged the siege which they withstood, that to ascertain their names and number would be a task that I would hesitate to undertake. A tentative list of such names, which readers might do well to consult, has been prepared by Ismu'lláhu'l-Mím and Ismu'lláhu'l-Asad. Many and conflicting are the reports as to the exact number of those who struggled and fell under the banner of Ḥujjat in Zanján. Some have estimated that there were as many as a thousand martyrs; according to others, they were more numerous. I have heard it stated that one of the companions of Ḥujjat who undertook to record the names of those who had suffered martyrdom, had left a written statement in which he had computed the number of those who had fallen prior to the death of Ḥujjat to be a thousand, five hundred and ninety-eight, whilst those who had suffered martyrdom afterwards were thought to have been in all two hundred and two persons.

For the account I have related of the happenings of Zanján I am primarily indebted to Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Ṭabíb-i-Zanjání, to Abá-Baṣír, and to Siyyid Ashraf, all martyrs of the Faith, with each of whom I was closely acquainted. The rest of my narrative is based upon the manuscript which a certain Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Zanjání wrote and sent to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, in which he recorded all the information he could glean from different sources regarding the events connected with that episode.

What I have related of the struggle of Mázindarán has been similarly inspired, to a very great extent, by the written account sent to the Holy Land by a certain Siyyid Abú-Ṭálib-i-Shahmírzádí, as well as by the brief survey prepared here by one of the believers named Mírzá Ḥaydar-'Alíy-i-Ardistání. I have, moreover, ascertained certain facts connected with that struggle from persons who actually participated in it, such as Mullá Muḥammad-Ṣádiq-i-Muqaddas, Mullá Mírzá Muhammad-i-Furúghí, and Ḥájí 'Abdu'l-Majíd, father of Badí' and martyr to the Faith.

As to the events relating to the life and deeds of Vaḥíd, I have obtained my information regarding what took place in Yazd from Riḍa'r-Rúh, who was one of his intimate companions. As to the later stages of that struggle in Nayríz, my narrative is mainly drawn from such information as I

could gather from the detailed account sent to the Holy Land by a believer of that town, named Mullá Shafí', who had carefully investigated the matter and had reported it to Bahá'u'lláh. Whatever my pen has failed to record, future generations will, I hope, gather together and preserve for posterity. Many, I confess, are the gaps in this narrative, for which I beg the indulgence of my readers. It is my earnest hope that these gaps may be filled by those who will, after me, arise to compile an exhaustive and befitting account of these stirring events, the significance of which we can as yet but dimly discern.

CHAPTER XXV

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S JOURNEY TO KARBILÁ

EVER since I began the writing of my narrative, it has been my firm intention to include, in such accounts as I might be able to relate of the early days of this Revelation, those gems of inestimable value which it has been my privilege to hear, from time to time, from the lips of Bahá'u'lláh. These words, some of which were addressed to me alone, others which I shared with my fellow-disciples as we sat in His presence, are mainly concerned with the very episodes I have essayed to describe. Bahá'u'lláh's comments on the conference of Badasht, and His references to the tumult that marked its closing stages, to which I have referred in a preceding chapter, are but instances of the passages with which I hope to enrich and ennoble my narrative.

Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of Zanján, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Bahá'u'lláh chose to tarry in the home of Áqáy-i-Kalím. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamádíyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306 A.H.,[1] I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Fárán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk.

"Praise be to God," He said, "that whatever is essential for the believers in this Revelation to be told has been revealed. Their duties have been clearly defined, and the deeds they are expected to perform have been plainly set forth in

[1] January 9, 1889 A.D.

Our Book. Now is the time for them to arise and fulfil their duty. Let them translate into deeds the exhortations We have given them. Let them beware lest the love they bear God, a love that glows so brightly in their hearts, cause them to transgress the bounds of moderation, and to overstep the limits We have set for them. In regard to this matter, We wrote thus, while in 'Iráq, to Ḥájí Mírzá Músáy-i-Qumí: 'Such is to be the restraint you should exercise that if you be made to quaff from the well-springs of faith and certitude all the rivers of knowledge, your lips must never be allowed to betray, to either friend or stranger, the wonder of the draught of which you have partaken. Though your heart be aflame with His love, take heed lest any eye discover your inner agitation, and though your soul be surging like an ocean, suffer not the serenity of your countenance to be disturbed, nor the manner of your behaviour to reveal the intensity of your emotions.'

"God knows that at no time did We attempt to conceal Ourself or hide the Cause which We have been bidden to proclaim. Though not wearing the garb of the people of learning, We have again and again faced and reasoned with men of great scholarship in both Núr and Mázindarán, and have succeeded in persuading them of the truth of this Revelation. We never flinched in Our determination; We never hesitated to accept the challenge from whatever direction it came. To whomsoever We spoke in those days, We found him receptive to our Call and ready to identify himself with its precepts. But for the shameful behaviour of the people of Bayán, who sullied by their deeds the work We had accomplished, Núr and Mázindarán would have been entirely won to this Cause and would have been accounted by this time among its leading strongholds.

"At a time when the forces of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá had besieged the fort of Tabarsí, We resolved to depart from Núr and lend Our assistance to its heroic defenders. We had intended to send 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, one of Our companions, in advance of Us, and to request him to announce Our approach to the besieged. Though encompassed by the forces of the enemy, We had decided to throw in Our lot with those steadfast companions, and to risk the dangers with which

they were confronted. This, however, was not to be. The hand of Omnipotence spared Us from their fate and preserved Us for the work We were destined to accomplish. In pursuance of God's inscrutable wisdom, the intention We had formed was, before Our arrival at the fort, communicated by certain inhabitants of Núr to Mírzá Taqí, the governor of Ámul, who sent his men to intercept Us. While We were resting and taking Our tea, We found Ourselves suddenly surrounded by a number of horsemen, who seized Our belongings and captured Our steeds. We were given, in exchange for Our own horse, a poorly saddled animal which We found it extremely uncomfortable to ride. The rest of Our companions were conducted, handcuffed, to Ámul. Mírzá Taqí succeeded, in spite of the tumult Our arrival had raised, and in the face of the opposition of the 'ulamás, in releasing Us from their grasp and in conducting Us to his own house. He extended to Us the warmest hospitality. Occasionally he yielded to the pressure which the 'ulamás were continuously bringing to bear upon him, and felt himself powerless to defeat their attempts to harm Us. We were still in his house when the Sardár, who had joined the army in Mázindarán, returned to Ámul. No sooner was he informed of the indignities We had suffered than he rebuked Mírzá Taqí for the weakness he had shown in protecting Us from Our enemies. 'Of what importance,' he indignantly demanded, 'are the denunciations of this ignorant people? Why is it that you have allowed yourself to be swayed by their clamour? You should have been satisfied with preventing the party from reaching their destination and, instead of detaining them in this house, you should have arranged for their safe and immediate return to Ṭihrán.'

"Whilst in Sárí, We were again exposed to the insults of the people. Though the notables of that town were, for the most part, Our friends and had on several occasions met Us in Ṭihrán, no sooner had the townspeople recognised Us, as We walked with Quddús in the streets, than they began to hurl their invectives at Us. The cry 'Bábí! Bábí!' greeted Us wherever We went. We were unable to escape their bitter denunciations.

"In Tihrán We were twice imprisoned as a result of Our

having risen to defend the cause of the innocent against a ruthless oppressor. The first confinement to which We were subjected followed the slaying of Mullá Taqíy-i-Qazvíní, and was occasioned by the assistance We were moved to extend to those upon whom a severe punishment had been undeservedly inflicted. Our second imprisonment, infinitely more severe, was precipitated by the attempt which irresponsible followers of the Faith made on the life of the Sháh. That event led to Our banishment to Baghdád. Soon after Our arrival, We betook Ourself to the mountains of Kurdistán, where We led for a time a life of complete solitude. We sought shelter upon the summit of a remote mountain which lay at some three days' distance from the nearest human habitation. The comforts of life were completely lacking. We remained entirely isolated from Our fellow men until a certain Shaykh Ismá'íl discovered Our abode and brought Us the food We needed.

"Upon Our return to Baghdád, We found, to Our great astonishment, that the Cause of the Báb had been sorely neglected, that its influence had waned, that its very name had almost sunk into oblivion. We arose to revive His Cause and to save it from decay and corruption. At the time when fear and perplexity had taken fast hold of Our companions, We reasserted, with fearlessness and determination, its essential verities, and summoned all those who had become lukewarm to espouse with enthusiasm the Faith they had so grievously neglected. We sent forth Our appeal to the peoples of the world, and invited them to fix their gaze upon the light of His Revelation.

"After Our departure from Adrianople, a discussion arose among the government officials in Constantinople as to whether We and Our companions should not be thrown into the sea. The report of such a discussion reached Persia, and gave rise to a rumour that We had actually suffered that fate. In Khurásán particularly, Our friends were greatly perturbed. Mírzá Ahmad-i-Azghandí, as soon as he was informed of this news, was reported to have asserted that under no circumstances could he credit such a rumour. 'The Revelation of the Báb,' he said, 'must, if this be true, be regarded as utterly devoid of foundation.' The news of Our safe arrival

in the prison-city of 'Akká rejoiced the hearts of Our friends, deepened the admiration of the believers of Khurásán for the faith of Mírzá Ahmad, and increased their confidence in him.

"From Our Most Great Prison We were moved to address to the several rulers and crowned heads of the world Epistles in which We summoned them to arise and embrace the Cause of God. To the Sháh of Persia We sent Our messenger Badí', into whose hands We entrusted the Tablet. It was he who raised it aloft before the eyes of the multitude and, with uplifted voice, appealed to his sovereign to heed the words that Tablet contained. The rest of the Epistles likewise reached their destination. To the Tablet We addressed to the Emperor of France, an answer was received from his minister, the original of which is now in the possession of the Most Great Branch.[1] To him We addressed these words: 'Bid the high priest, O Monarch of France, to cease ringing his bells, for, lo! the Most Great Bell, which the hands of the will of the Lord thy God are ringing, is made manifest in the person of His chosen One.' The Epistle We addressed to the Czar of Russia, alone failed to reach its destination. Other Tablets, however, have reached him, and that Epistle will eventually be delivered into his hands.

"Be thankful to God for having enabled you to recognise His Cause. Whoever has received this blessing must, prior to his acceptance, have performed some deed which, though he himself was unaware of its character, was ordained by God as a means whereby he has been guided to find and embrace the Truth. As to those who have remained deprived of such a blessing, their acts alone have hindered them from recognising the truth of this Revelation. We cherish the hope that you, who have attained to this light, will exert your utmost to banish the darkness of superstition and unbelief from the midst of the people. May your deeds proclaim your faith and enable you to lead the erring into the paths of eternal salvation. The memory of this night will never be forgotten. May it never be effaced by the passage of time, and may its mention linger for ever on the lips of men."

The seventh Naw-Rúz after the Declaration of the Báb

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá's title.

fell on the sixteenth day of the month of Jamádíyu'l-Avval in the year 1267 A.H.,[1] a month and a half after the termination of the struggle of Zanján. That same year, towards the end of spring, in the early days of the month of Sha'bán,[2] Bahá'u'lláh left the capital for Karbilá. I was, at that time, dwelling in Kirmánsháh, in the company of Mírzá Aḥmad, the Báb's amanuensis, who had been ordered by Bahá'u'lláh to collect and transcribe all the sacred writings, the originals of which were, for the most part, in his possession. I was in Zarand, in the home of my father, when the Seven Martyrs of Ṭihrán met their cruel fate. I subsequently succeeded in leaving for Qum, under the pretext of desiring to visit the shrine. Unable to find Mírzá Aḥmad, whom I wished to meet, I left for Káshán, on the advice of Ḥájí Mírzá Músáy-i-Qumí, who informed me that the only person who could enlighten me as to the whereabouts of Mírzá Ahmad was 'Aẓím, who was then living in Káshán. With him I again returned to Qum, where I was introduced to a certain Siyyid Abu'l-Qásim-i-'Aláqih-Band-i-Iṣfáhání, who had previously accompanied Mírzá Ahmad on his journey to Kirmánsháh. 'Azím instructed him to conduct me to the gate of the city, where he was to inform me of the place where Mírzá Ahmad was residing, and to arrange for my departure for Hamadán. Siyyid Abu'l-Qásim, in turn, referred me to Mírzá Muhammad-'Alíy-i-Ṭabíb-i-Zanjání, whom he said I was sure to find in Hamadán and who would direct me to the place where I could meet Mirzá Aḥmad. I followed his instructions and was directed by this Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí to meet, in Kirmánsháh, a certain merchant, Ghulám-Ḥusayn-i-Shushtarí by name, who would conduct me to the house where Mírzá Ahmad was residing.

A few days after my arrival, Mírzá Aḥmad informed me of his having succeeded, while in Qum, in teaching the Cause to Ildirím Mírzá, brother of Khánlar Mírzá, to whom he wished to present a copy of the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih,"[3] and expressed his desire that I should be its bearer. Ildirím Mírzá was in those days governor of Khurram-Ábád, in the province of Luristán, and had encamped with his army in the moun-

[1] 1851 A.D. [2] June 1–30, 1851 A.D.
[3] One of the Báb's best-known works.

tains of Khávih-Válishtar. I was only too glad to grant his request, and expressed my readiness to start immediately on that journey. With a Kurdish guide, we traversed mountains and forests for six days and six nights, until we reached the governor's headquarters. I delivered the trust into his hands and brought back with me for Mírzá Aḥmad a written message from him expressing his appreciation of the gift and assuring him of his devotion to the Cause of its Author.

On my return, I received from Mírzá Ahmad the joyful tidings of the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in Kirmánsháh. As we were being ushered into His presence, we found Him, it being the month of Ramadán, engaged in reading the Qur'án, and were blessed by hearing Him read verses of that sacred Book. I presented to Him Ildirím Mírzá's written message to Mírzá Aḥmad. "The faith which a member of the Qájár dynasty professes," He remarked, after reading the letter, "cannot be depended upon. His declarations are insincere. Expecting that the Bábís will one day assassinate the sovereign, he harbours in his heart the hope of being acclaimed by them the successor. The love he professes for the Báb is actuated by that motive." Within a few months we knew the truth of His words. This same Ildirím Mírzá gave orders that a certain Siyyid Baṣír-i-Hindí, a fervent adherent of the Faith, should be put to death.

It would be appropriate at this juncture to deviate from the course of our narrative and refer briefly to the circumstances of this martyr's conversion and death. Among the disciples whom the Báb had instructed, in the early days of His Mission, to disperse and teach His Cause, was a certain Shaykh Sa'íd-i-Hindí, one of the Letters of the Living, who had been directed by his Master to journey throughout India and proclaim to its people the precepts of His Revelation. Shaykh Sa'íd, in the course of his travels, visited the town of Mooltan, where he met this Siyyid Basír,[1] who,

[1] "From his childhood, Siyyid Baṣír showed signs of the wonderful faculties which he afterwards manifested. For seven years he enjoyed the blessings of sight, but then, even as the vision of his soul became clear, a veil of darkness fell on his outward eyes. From his infancy, he had displayed his good disposition and amiable character both in word and deed; he now added to this a singular piety and soberness of life. At length, at the age of twenty-one, he set out with great pomp and state (for he had much wealth in India) to perform the pilgrimage; and, on reaching Persia, began to associate with every sect and party (for he was well acquainted with the doctrines and tenets of all), and to give away large

though blind, was able to perceive immediately, with his inner eye, the significance of the message Shaykh Sa'íd had brought him. The vast learning he had acquired, far from hindering him from appreciating the value of the Cause to which he was summoned, enabled him to grasp its meaning and understand the greatness of its power. Casting behind him the trappings of leadership, and severing himself from his friends and kinsmen, he arose with a fixed resolve to render his share of service to the Cause he had embraced. His first act was to undertake a pilgrimage to Shíráz, in the hope of meeting his Beloved. Arriving in that city, he was informed, to his surprise and grief, that the Báb had been banished to the mountains of Ádhirbáyján, where He was leading a life of unrelieved solitude. He straightway proceeded to Ṭihrán, and from thence departed for Núr, where he met Bahá'u'lláh. This meeting relieved his heart from the burden of sorrow caused by his failure to meet his Master. To those he subsequently met, of whatever class or creed, he imparted the joys and blessings he had so abundantly received from the hands of Bahá'u'lláh, and was able to endow them with a measure of the power with which his intercourse with Him had invested his innermost being.

I have heard Shaykh Shahíd-i-Mázkán relate the following: "I was privileged to meet Siyyid Baṣír at the height of summer during his passage through Qamsar, whither the leading men of Káshán go to escape the heat of that town. Day and night, I found him engaged in arguing with the leading 'ulamás who had congregated in that village. With ability and insight, he discussed with them the subtleties of their Faith, expounded without fear or reservation the fundamental teachings of the Cause, and absolutely confuted their arguments. No one, however great his learning and experience, was able to reject the evidences he set forth in support of his claims. Such were his insight and his knowledge

sums of money in charity to the poor, submitting himself the while to the most rigorous religious discipline. And since his ancestors had foretold that in those days a Perfect Man should appear in Persia, he was continually engaged in making enquiries. He visited Mecca, and, after performing the rites of the pilgrimage, proceeded to the holy shrines of Karbilá and Najaf, where he met the late Ḥájí Siyyid Káẓim, for whom he conceived a sincere friendship. He then returned to India; but, on reaching Bombay, he heard that one claiming to be the Báb had appeared in Persia, whereupon he at once turned back thither." (The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 245–6.)

of the teachings and ordinances of Islám that his adversaries conceived him to be a sorcerer, whose baneful influence they feared would ere long rob them of their position."

I have similarly heard Mullá Ibráhím, surnamed Mullá-Báshí, who was martyred in Sultán-Ábád, thus recount his impression of Siyyid Baṣír: "Towards the end of his life, Siyyid Baṣír passed through Sulṭán-Ábád, where I was able to meet him. He was continually associated with the leading 'ulamás. No one could surpass his knowledge of the Qur'án and his mastery of the traditions ascribed to Muḥammad. He displayed an understanding which made him the terror of his adversaries. Often would his opponents question the accuracy of his quotations or reject the existence of the tradition which he produced in support of his contention. With unerring exactitude, he would establish the truth of his argument by his reference to the text of the 'Usúl-i-Káfí' and the 'Biḥáru'l-Anvár,'[1] from which he would instantly bring out the particular tradition demonstrating the truth of his words. He stood unrivalled alike in the fluency of his argument and the facility with which he brought out the most incontrovertible proofs in support of his theme."

From Sulṭán-Ábád, Siyyid Baṣír proceeded to Luristán, where he visited the camp of Ílderím Mírzá, and was received by him with marked respect and consideration. In the course of his conversation with him one day, the siyyid, who was a man of great courage, referred to Muḥammad Sháh in terms that aroused the fierce anger of Ílderím Mírzá. He was furious at the tone and vehemence of his remarks, and ordered that his tongue be pulled out through the back of his neck. The siyyid endured this cruel torture with amazing fortitude, but succumbed to the pain which his oppressor had mercilessly inflicted upon him. The same week a letter, in which Ílderím Mírzá had abused his brother, Khánlar Mírzá, was discovered by the latter, who immediately obtained the consent of his sovereign to treat him in whatever way he pleased. Khánlar Mírzá, who entertained an implacable hatred for his brother, ordered that he be stripped of his clothes and conducted, naked and in chains, to Ardibíl, where he was imprisoned and where eventually he died.

[1] Compilations of Muḥammadan traditions.

Bahá'u'lláh spent the entire month of Ramadán in Kirmánsháh. Shukru'lláh-i-Núrí, one of His kinsmen, and Mírzá Muhammad-i-Mázindaráni, who had survived the struggle of Tabarsí, were the only companions He chose to take with Him to Karbilá. I have heard Bahá'u'lláh Himself give the reasons for His departure from Ṭihrán. "The Amír-Niẓám," He told us, "asked Us one day to see him. He received Us cordially, and revealed the purpose for which he had summoned Us to his presence. 'I am well aware,' he gently insinuated, 'of the nature and influence of your activities, and am firmly convinced that were it not for the support and assistance which you have been extending to Mullá Ḥusayn and his companions, neither he nor his band of inexperienced students would have been capable of resisting for seven months the forces of the imperial government. The ability and skill with which you have managed to direct and encourage those efforts could not fail to excite my admiration. I have been unable to obtain any evidence whereby I could establish your complicity in this affair. I feel it a pity that so resourceful a person should be left idle and not be given an opportunity to serve his country and sovereign. The thought has come to me to suggest to you that you visit Karbilá in these days when the Sháh is contemplating a journey to Iṣfáhán. It is my intention to be enabled, on his return, to confer upon you the position of Amír-Díván, a function you could admirably discharge.' We vehemently protested against such accusations, and refused to accept the position he hoped to offer Us. A few days after that interview, We left Ṭihrán for Karbilá."

Ere Bahá'u'lláh's departure from Kirmánsháh, He summoned Mírzá Aḥmad and me to His presence and bade us depart for Tihrán. I was charged to meet Mírzá Yaḥyá immediately after my arrival and to take him with me to the fort of Dhu'l-Faqár Khán, situated in the vicinity of Sháhrúd, and remain with him until Bahá'u'lláh returned to the capital. Mírzá Aḥmad was instructed to remain in Tihrán until His arrival, and was entrusted with a box of sweetmeats and a letter addressed to Áqáy-i-Kalím, who was to forward the gift to Mázindarán, where the Most Great Branch and His mother were residing.

Mírzá Yaḥyá, to whom I delivered the message, refused to leave Ṭihrán, and directed me instead to leave for Qazvín. He compelled me to abide by his wish and to take with me certain letters which he bade me deliver to certain of his friends in that town. On my return to Ṭihrán, I was constrained, on the insistence of my kinsmen, to leave for Zarand. Mírzá Aḥmad, however, promised that he would again arrange for my return to the capital, a promise which he fulfilled. Two months later, I was again living with him in a caravanserai outside the gate of Naw, where I passed the whole winter in his company. He spent his days in transcribing the Persian Bayán and the "Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih," a work he accomplished with admirable enthusiasm. He entrusted me with two copies of the latter, asking me to present them on his behalf to Mustawfíyu'l-Mamálik-i-Áshtíyání and Mírzá Siyyid 'Alíy-i-Tafarshí, surnamed the Majdu'l-Ashráf. The former was so much affected that he was completely won over to the Faith. As for Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, the views he expressed were of a totally different character. At a gathering at which Áqáy-i-Kalím was present, he commented in an unfavourable manner upon the continued activities of the believers. "This sect," he publicly declared, "is still living. Its emissaries are hard at work, spreading the teachings of their leader. One of them, a youth, came to visit me the other day, and presented me with a treatise which I regard as highly dangerous. Anyone from among the common people who shall read that book will surely be beguiled by its tone." Áqáy-i-Kalím immediately understood from his allusions that Mírzá Aḥmad had sent the Book to him and that I had acted as his messenger. On that very day, Áqáy-i-Kalím asked me to visit him and advised me to return to my home in Zarand. I was asked to induce Mírzá Aḥmad to leave instantly for Qum, as both of us, in his opinion, were exposed to great danger. Acting according to Mírzá Aḥmad's instructions, I succeeded in inducing the siyyid to return the Book that had been offered him. Shortly after, I parted company with Mírzá Aḥmad, whom I never met again. I accompanied him as far as Sháh-'Abdu'l-'Aẓím, whence he departed for Qum, while I pursued my way to Zarand.

The month of Shavvál, in the year 1267 A.H.,[1] witnessed the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh at Karbilá. On His way to that holy city, He tarried a few days in Baghdád, that place which He was soon to visit again and where His Cause was destined to mature and unfold itself to the world. When He arrived at Karbilá, He found that a number of its leading residents, among whom were Shaykh Sultán and Ḥájí Siyyid Javád, had fallen victims to the pernicious influence of a certain Siyyid-i-'Uluvv, and had declared themselves his supporters. They were immersed in superstitions and believed their leader to be the very incarnation of the Divine Spirit. Shaykh Sultán ranked among his most fervent disciples and regarded himself, next to his master, as the foremost leader of his countrymen. Bahá'u'lláh met him on several occasions and succeeded, by His words of counsel and loving-kindness, in purging his mind from his idle fancies and in releasing him from the state of abject servitude into which he had sunk. He won him over completely to the Cause of the Báb and kindled in his heart a desire to propagate the Faith. His fellow-disciples, witnessing the effects of his immediate and marvellous conversion, were led, one after another, to forsake their former allegiance and to embrace the Cause which their colleague had risen to champion. Abandoned and despised by his former adherents, the Siyyid-i-'Uluvv was at length reduced to recognising the authority of Bahá'u'lláh and acknowledging the superiority of His position. He even went so far as to express repentance for his acts, and to pledge his word that he would never again advocate the theories and principles with which he had identified himself.

It was during that visit to Karbilá that Bahá'u'lláh encountered, as He was walking through the streets, Shaykh Ḥasan-i-Zunúzí, to whom He confided the secret He was destined to reveal at a later time in Baghdád. He found him eagerly searching after the promised Ḥusayn, to whom the Báb had so lovingly referred and whom He had promised he would meet in Karbilá. We have already, in a preceding chapter, narrated the circumstances leading to his meeting with Bahá'u'lláh. From that day, Shaykh Ḥasan became magnetised by the charm of his newly found Master, and

[1] July 30–August 28, 1851 A.D.

would, but for the restraint he was urged to exercise, have proclaimed to the people of Karbilá the return of the promised Ḥusayn whose appearance they were awaiting.

Among those who were made to feel that power was Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Ṭabíb-i-Zanjání, in whose heart was implanted a seed that was destined to grow and blossom into a faith of such tenacity that the fires of persecution were powerless to quench it. To his devotion, his high-mindedness and singleness of purpose Bahá'u'lláh Himself testified. That faith carried him eventually to the field of martyrdom. The same fate was shared by Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb-i-Shírází, son of Hájí 'Abdu'l-Majid, who owned a shop in Karbilá and who felt the impulse to forsake all his possessions and follow his Master. He was advised, however, not to abandon his work, but to continue to earn his livelihood until such time as he should be summoned to Ṭihrán. Bahá'u'lláh urged him to be patient, and gave him a sum of money wherewith he encouraged him to extend the scope of his business. Unable to concentrate his attention upon his trade, Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb hastened to Ṭihrán, where he remained until he was thrown into the dungeon in which his Master was confined and there suffered martyrdom for His sake.

Shaykh 'Alí-Mírzáy-i-Shírází was likewise attracted to, and remained to his last breath a staunch supporter of, the Cause to which he had been called and which he served with a selflessness and devotion beyond all praise. To friend and stranger alike he recounted his experiences of the marvellous influence the presence of Bahá'u'lláh had had upon him, and enthusiastically described the signs and wonders he had witnessed during and after the days of his conversion.

CHAPTER XXVI

ATTEMPT ON THE SHÁH'S LIFE, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

THE eighth Naw-Rúz after the Declaration of the Báb, which fell on the twenty-seventh day of the month of Jamádíyu'l-Avval, in the year 1268 A.H.,[1] found Bahá'u'lláh still iń 'Iráq, engaged in spreading the teachings, and making firm the foundations, of the New Revelation. Displaying an enthusiasm and ability that recalled His activities in the early days of the Movement in Núr and Mázindarán, He continued to devote Himself to the task of reviving the energies, of organising the forces, and of directing the efforts, of the Báb's scattered companions. He was the sole light amidst the darkness that encompassed the bewildered disciples who had witnessed, on the one hand, the cruel martyrdom of their beloved Leader and, on the other, the tragic fate of their companions. He alone was able to inspire them with the needful courage and fortitude to endure the many afflictions that had been heaped upon them; He alone was capable of preparing them for the burden of the task they were destined to bear, and of inuring them to brave the storm and perils they were soon to face.

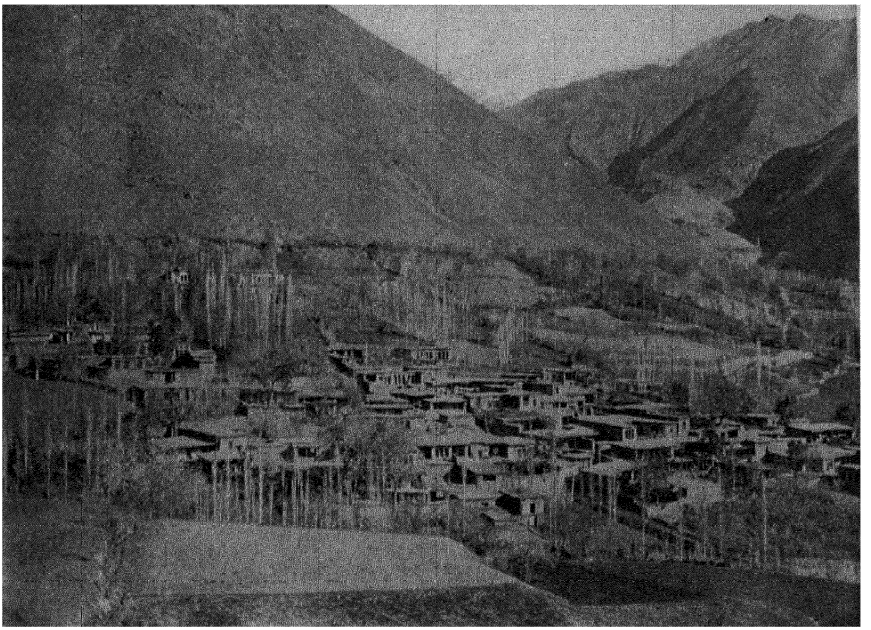
In the course of the spring of that year, Mírzá Taqí Khán, the Amír-Nizám, the Grand Vazír of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, who had been guilty of such infamous outrages against the Báb and His companions, met his death in a public bath in Fín, near Káshán,[2] having miserably failed to stay the

[1] 1852 A.D.

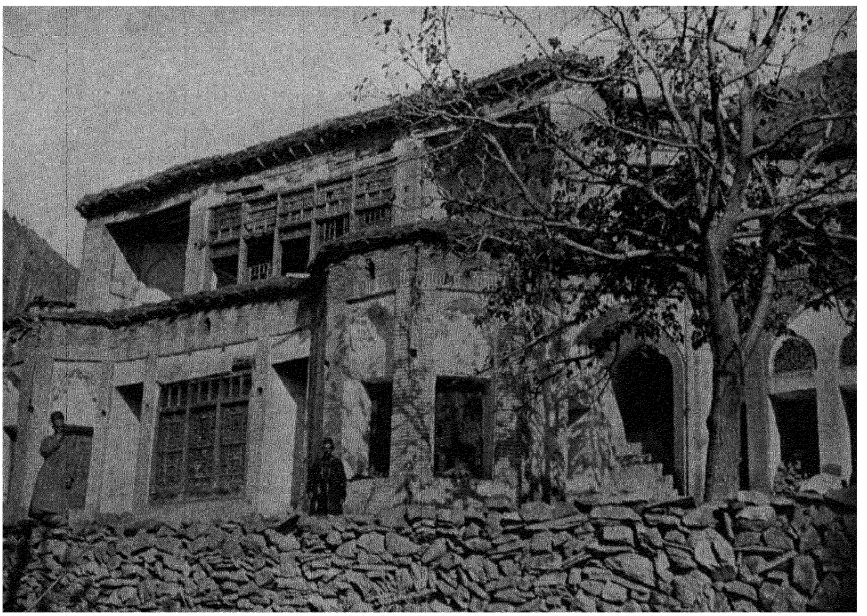
[2] "About four miles to the southwest of Káshán, on the slopes of the mountains, is situated the palace of Fín, the springs of which have rendered it a favourite resort of royalty from early times. . . . In later times, a gloomier memory has attached to the palace of Fín; for here, in 1852, Mírzá Taqí Khán, the first great minister of the reigning Sháh, and brother-in-law of the king, was put to death by the Royal order, his veins being opened in a bath. The place is now deserted." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 2, p. 16.) "A lady of the harem was sent to the Princess, telling her to dry her tears, for that the Sháh had relented, and that the Amír was to return to Ṭihrán or go to Karbilá, the usual haven for Persians who have lost court favour. 'The khal'at or coat of honour,' said

onrush of the Faith he had striven so desperately to crush. His own fame and honour were destined eventually to perish with his death, and not the influence of the life he had sought to extinguish. During the three years when he held the post of Grand Vazír of Persia, his ministry was stained with deeds of blackest infamy. What atrocities did not his hands commit as they were stretched forth to tear down the fabric the Báb had raised! To what treacherous measures did he not resort, in his impotent rage, in order to sap the vitality of a Cause which he feared and hated! The first year of his administration was marked by the ferocious onslaught of the imperial army of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh against the defenders of the fort of Ṭabarsí. With what ruthlessness he conducted the campaign of repression against those innocent upholders of the Faith of God! What fury and eloquence he displayed in pleading for the extermination of the lives of Quddús, of Mullá Ḥusayn, and of three hundred and thirteen of the best and noblest of his countrymen! The second year of his ministry found him battling with savage determination to extirpate the Faith in the capital. It was he who authorised and encouraged the capture of the believers who resided in that city, and who ordered the execution of the Seven Martyrs of Ṭihrán. It was he who unchained the offensive against Vahíd and his companions, who inspired that campaign of revenge which animated their persecutors, and who instigated them to commit the abominations with which that episode will for ever remain associated. That same year witnessed another blow more terrible than any he had hitherto dealt that persecuted community, a blow that brought to a tragic end the life of Him who was the Source of all the forces he had in vain sought to repress. The last years of that Vazír's life will for ever remain associated with the most revolting of the vast campaigns which his ingenious mind had devised,

she, 'is on the way, and will arrive in an hour or two; go, therefore, to the bath, and prepare to receive it.' The Amír all this time had not once ventured to quit the safety afforded by the apartment of the Princess, and of her presence. On hearing the joyful news, however, he resolved to take the advice of this woman, and indulge in the luxury of a bath. He left the Princess, and she never saw him more. When he reached the bath the fatal order was revealed to him, and the crime perpetrated. The farrásh-báshí and his vile crew presented themselves, and the choice of the mode of death was given to him. It is said he bore his fate with patience and fortitude. His veins were opened, and he at length expired." (Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," pp. 251–2.)



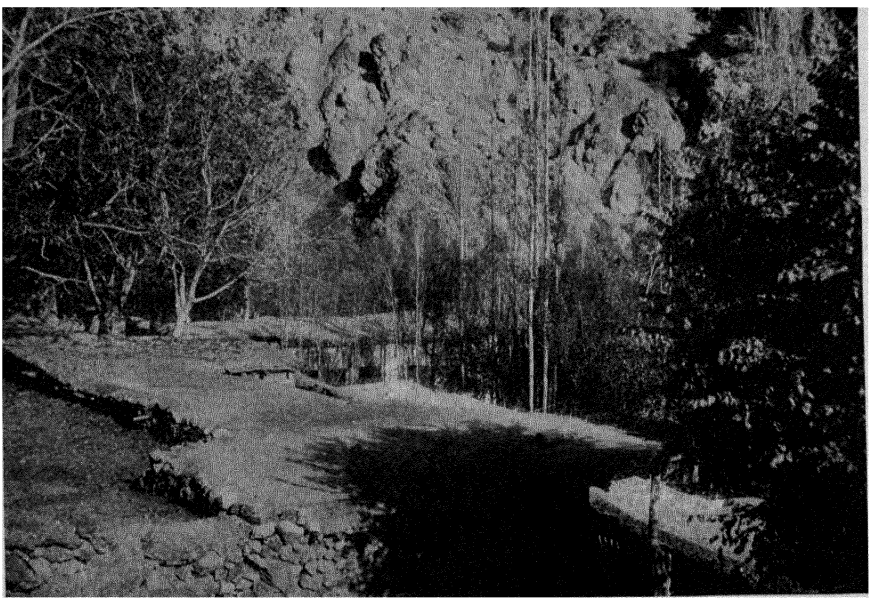
VILLAGE OF AFCHIH, NEAR ṬIHRÁN. THE HOUSE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS SEEN THROUGH THE TREES (LEFT REAR)



BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S HOUSE IN AFCHIH, NEAR ṬIHRÁN

a campaign that involved the destruction of the lives of Ḥujjat and of no less than eighteen hundred of his companions. Such were the distinguishing features of a career that began and ended in a reign of terror such as Persia had seldom seen.

He was succeeded by Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Núrí,[1] who endeavoured, at the very outset of his ministry, to effect a reconciliation between the government of which he was the head and Bahá'u'lláh, whom he regarded as the most capable



MURGH-MAḤALLIH, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S SUMMER RESIDENCE IN SHÍMÍRÁN

of the Báb's disciples. He sent Him a warm letter requesting Him to return to Ṭihrán, and expressing his eagerness to meet Him. Ere the receipt of that letter, Bahá'u'lláh had already decided to leave 'Iráq for Persia.

He arrived in the capital in the month of Rajab,[2] and was welcomed by the Grand Vazír's brother, Ja'far-Qulí Khán, who had been specially directed to go forth to receive Him. For one whole month, He was the honoured Guest of

[1] His title was the I'timádu'd-Dawlih, the Trusted of the State. (Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," p. 249.)

[2] April 21–May 21, 1852 A.D.

the Grand Vazír, who had appointed his brother to act as host on his behalf. So great was the number of the notables and dignitaries of the capital who flocked to meet Him that He found Himself unable to return to His own home. He remained in that house until His departure for Shimírán.[1]

I have heard it stated by Áqáy-i-Kalím that in the course of that journey Bahá'u'lláh was able to meet 'Azím, who had been endeavouring for a long time to see Him, and who in that interview was advised, in the most emphatic terms, to abandon the plan he had conceived. Bahá'u'lláh condemned his designs, dissociated Himself entirely from the act it was his intention to commit, and warned him that such an attempt would precipitate fresh disasters of unprecedented magnitude.

Bahá'u'lláh proceeded to Lavásán, and was staying in the village of Afchih, the property of the Grand Vazír, when the news of the attempt on the life of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh reached Him. Ja'far-Qulí Khán was still acting as His host on behalf of the Amír-Nizám. That criminal act was committed towards the end of the month of Shavvál, in the year 1268 A.H.,[2] by two obscure and irresponsible young men, one named Ṣádiq-i-Tabrízí, and the other Fatḥu'lláh-i-Qumí, both of whom earned their livelihood in Ṭihrán. At a time when the imperial army, headed by the Sháh himself, had encamped in Shimírán, these two ignorant youths, in a frenzy of despair, arose to avenge the blood of their slaughtered brethren.[3]

[1] "Shimírán or Shimrán (sometimes used in the plural, Shimránát) is the name applied generally to the villages and mansions situated on the lower slopes descending from Elburz which serve as summer residences to the wealthier inhabitants of Ṭihrán." ("A Traveller's Narrative," p. 81, footnote 1.)

[2] Shavvál 28; August 15, 1852 A.D.

[3] "Le matin, le roi, sortant du palais, monta à cheval pour aller faire une promenade. Il était précédé, comme de coutume, de gens de l'écurie portant de longues lances, de palefreniers menant des chevaux de main, couverts de housses brodées, et d'un gros de cavalier nomades, ayant le fusil en bandoulière et le sabre à la selle du cheval. Afin de ne pas incommoder le prince par la poussière que soulevaient les pieds des chevaux, cette avant-garde avait pris un peu d'avance, et le roi venait seul, marchant au pas, à quelque distance de la suite considérable de grands seigneurs, de chefs et d'officiers qui l'accompagnent partout. Il était encore tout près du palais et avait à peine dépassé la petite porte basse du jardin de Muḥammad-Ḥasan, sanduq-dár ou trésorier de l'Épargne, lorsqu'il aperçut sur le bord de la route, trois hommes, les trois ouvriers du jardin, debout, deux à sa gauche, un à sa droite, et paraissant l'attendre. Il n'en prit aucun soupçon et continua d'avancer. Quand il se trouva à leur hauteur, il les vit qui le saluaient profondément, et il les entendit s'écrier tous à la fois: 'Nous sommes votre sacrifice! Nous faisons une supplique!' C'est la formule ordinaire. Mais au lieu de rester à leur place, comme c'est l'usage, ils s'avancèrent rapidement vers lui, en répétant précipitamment: 'Nous faisons une supplique!' Un peu surpris, le roi

The folly that characterised their act was betrayed by the fact that in making such an attempt on the life of their sovereign, instead of employing effective weapons which would ensure the success of their venture, these youths charged their pistols with shot which no reasonable person would ever think of using for such a purpose. Had their action been instigated by a man of judgment and common sense, he would certainly never have allowed them to carry out their intention with such ridiculously ineffective instruments.[1]

s'écria: 'Drôles! que voulez-vous?' En ce moment, l'homme placé à droite saisit la bride du cheval de la main gauche, et de la main droite, armée d'un pistolet, fit feu sur le roi. Dans le même temps, les deux hommes de gauche faisaient feu également. Une des décharges coupa le gland de perles suspendu sous le cou du cheval, une autre cribla de chevrotines le bras droit du roi et ses reins. Aussitôt l'homme de droite se suspendit à la jambe de Sa Majesté, attirant le prince à terre, et il aurait sans nul doute réussi à l'arracher de la selle, mais les deux assassins de gauche faisaient exactement le même effort, le roi fut maintenu par eux. Cependant, le prince frappait de son poing fermé sur la tête des uns et des autres, et les sauts de côté ou autres mouvements du cheval épouvanté paralysaient les efforts des Bábís et prenaient du temps. Les gens de la suite, d'abord stupéfaits, accoururent. Asadu'lláh Khán, grand écuyer, et un cavalier nomade tuèrent à coups de sabre l'homme de droite. Pendant ce temps, d'autres seigneurs saisissaient les deux hommes de gauche, les renversaient et les garrottaient. Le docteur Cloquet, médecin du roi, aidé de quelques personnes, faisait entrer rapidement le prince dans le jardin de Muḥammad-Ḥasan, sanduq-dár; car on ne comprenait rien à ce qui venait d'arriver, et si l'on avait l'idée de la grandeur du péril, on n'avait aucune notion de son étendue. Ce fut, pendant plus d'une heure, un tumulte épouvantable dans tout Níyávarán. Tandis que les ministres, le Ṣadr-i-A'ẓam en tête, s'empressaient dans le jardin où le roi avait été conduit, les trompettes, les tambours, les tambourins et les fifres appelaient les troupes de tous côtés; les ghuláms montaient à cheval ou arrivaient ventre à terre; tout le monde donnait des ordres; personne ne voyait, n'écoutait, n'entendait ni ne savait rien. Comme on était dans ce désordre, un courrier arriva de Ṭihrán, envoyé par Ardishír Mírzá, gouverneur de la ville, pour demander s'il se passait quelque chose, et ce qu'il fallait faire dans la capitale. En effet, dès la veille au soir, le bruit que le roi avait été assassiné avait pris la consistance d'une certitude. Les bazars, parcourus par des troupes de gens armés, dans une attitude menaçante, avaient été quittés par les marchands. Toute la nuit les boutiques des boulangers avaient été environnées, chacun cherchant à faire des provisions pour plusieurs jours. C'est l'usage lorsqu'on prévoit des troubles. Enfin, à l'aube, le tumulte augmentant, Ardishír Mírzá avait fait fermer les portes de la citadelle et de la ville, mis les régiments sous les armes et placé ses canons en batterie, mèche allumée, bien qu'il ne sût pas, en réalité, à quel ennemi il avait affaire, et il demandait des ordres." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 231–3.)

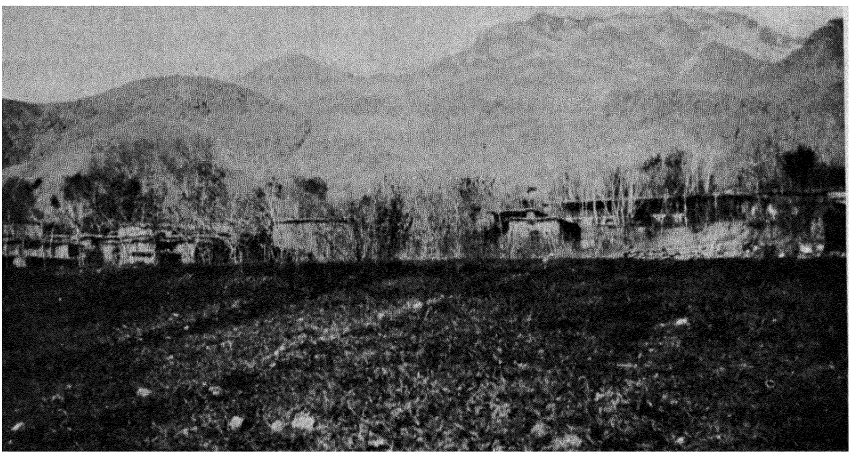
[1] Lord Curzon, who regards this event as being "most unfairly mistaken for a revolutionary and anarchical conspiracy," writes as follows: "From the facts that Bábism in its earliest years found itself in conflict with the civil powers, and that an attempt was made by Bábís upon the life of the Sháh, it has been wrongly inferred that the movement was political in origin and Nihilist in character. It does not appear from a study of the writings either of the Báb or his successors, that there is any foundation for such a suspicion. The persecution of the government very early drove the adherents of the new creed into an attitude of rebellion; and in the exasperation produced by the struggle, and by the ferocious brutality with which the rights of conquest were exercised by the victors, it was not surprising if fanatical hands were found ready to strike the sovereign down. At the present time the

That act, though committed by wild and feeble-minded fanatics, and in spite of its being from the very first emphatically condemned by no less responsible a person than Bahá'u'lláh, was the signal for the outbreak of a series of persecutions and massacres of such barbarous ferocity as could be compared only to the atrocities of Mázindarán and Zanján. The storm to which that act gave rise plunged the whole of Ṭihrán into consternation and distress. It involved the life of the leading companions who had survived the calamities to which their Faith had been so cruelly and repeatedly subjected. That storm was still raging when Bahá'u'lláh, with some of His ablest lieuṭenants, was plunged into a filthy, dark, and fever-stricken dungeon, whilst chains of such weight as only notorious criminals were condemned to carry, were placed upon His neck. For no less than four months He bore the burden, and such was the intensity of His suffering that the marks of that cruelty remained imprinted upon His body all the days of His life.

So grave a menace to their sovereign and to the institutions of his realm stirred the indignation of the entire body of the ecclesiastical order of Persia. To them so bold a deed called for immediate and condign punishment. Measures of unprecedented severity, they clamoured, should be undertaken to stem the tide that was engulfing both the government and the Faith of Islám. Despite the restraint which the followers of the Báb had exercised ever since the inception of the Faith in every part of the land; despite the repeated charges of the chief disciples to their brethren enjoining them

Bábís are equally loyal with any other subjects of the Crown. Nor does there appear to be any greater justice in the charges of socialism, communism, and immorality, that have so freely been levelled at the youthful persuasion. Certainly no such idea as communism in the European sense, i.e., a forcible redistribution of property, or as socialism in the nineteenth century sense, i.e., the defeat of capital by labour, ever entered the brain of the Báb or his disciples. The only communism known to and recommended by him was that of the New Testament and the early Christian Church, viz., the sharing of goods in common by members of the faith, and the exercise of almsgiving, and an ample charity. The charge of immorality seems to have arisen partly from the malignant inventions of opponents, partly from the much greater freedom claimed for women by the Báb, which in the Oriental mind is scarcely dissociable from profligacy of conduct. . . . Broadly regarded, Bábism may be defined as a creed of charity, and almost of common humanity. Brotherly love, kindness to children, courtesy combined with dignity, sociability, hospitality, freedom from bigotry, friendliness even to Christians, are included in its tenets. That every Bábí recognises or observes these precepts would be a foolish assertion; but let a prophet, if his gospel be in question, be judged by his own preaching." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," pp. 501–2.)

to refrain from acts of violence, to obey their government loyally, and to disclaim any intention of a holy war, their enemies persevered in their deliberate efforts to misrepresent the nature and purpose of that Faith to the authorities. Now that an act of such momentous consequences had been committed, what accusations would not these same enemies be prompted to attribute to the Cause with which those guilty of the crime had been associated! The moment seemed to have come when they could at last awaken the rulers of the



VIEW OF NÍYÁVARÁN NEAR ṬIHRÁN

country to the necessity of extirpating as speedily as possible a heresy which seemed to threaten the very foundations of the State.

Ja'far-Qulí Khán, who was in Shimírán when the attempt on the Sháh's life was made, immediately wrote a letter to Bahá'u'lláh and acquainted Him with what had happened. "The Sháh's mother," he wrote, "is inflamed with anger. She is denouncing you openly before the court and people as the 'would-be murderer' of her son. She is also trying to involve Mírzá Áqá Khán in this affair, and accuses him of being your accomplice." He urged Bahá'u'lláh to remain for a time concealed in that neighbourhood, until the passion of the populace had subsided. He despatched to Afchih an old and experienced messenger whom he ordered to be at the

disposal of his Guest and to hold himself in readiness to accompany Him to whatever place of safety He might desire.

Bahá'u'lláh refused to avail Himself of the opportunity Ja'far-Qulí Khán offered Him. Ignoring the messenger and rejecting his offer, He rode out, the next morning, with calm confidence, from Lavásan, where He was sojourning, to the headquarters of the imperial army, which was then stationed in Níyávarán, in the Shimírán district. Arriving at the village of Zarkandih, the seat of the Russian legation, which lay at a distance of one maydán[1] from Níyávarán, He was met by Mírzá Majíd, His brother-in-law, who acted as secretary to the Russian minister,[2] and was invited by him to stay at his home, which adjoined that of his superior. The attendants of Ḥájí 'Alí Khán, the Ḥájibu'd-Dawlih, recognised Him and went straightway to inform their master, who in turn brought the matter to the attention of the Sháh.

The news of the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh greatly surprised the officers of the imperial army. Násiri'd-Dín Sháh himself was amazed at the bold and unexpected step which a man who was accused of being the chief instigator of the attempt upon his life had taken. He immediately sent one of his trusted officers to the legation, demanding that the Accused be delivered into his hands. The Russian minister refused, and requested Bahá'u'lláh to proceed to the home of Mírzá Áqá Khán, the Grand Vazír, a place he thought to be the most appropriate under the circumstances. His request was granted, whereupon the minister formally communicated to the Grand Vazír his desire that the utmost care should be exercised to ensure the safety and protection of the Trust his government was delivering into his keeping, warning him that he would hold him responsible should he fail to disregard his wishes.[3]

Mírzá Áqá Khán, though he undertook to give the fullest assurances that were required, and received Bahá'u'lláh with every mark of respect into his home, was, however, too appre-

[1] See Glossary. [2] Prince Dolgorouki.

[3] "When I was in chains and fetters, in the prison of Ṭá, one of thine ambassadors assisted Me. Therefore hath God decreed unto thee a station which none but Himself can comprehend. Beware lest thou change this lofty station." (Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to the Czar of Russia.)

hensive for the safety of his own position to accord his Guest the treatment he was expected to extend.

As Bahá'u'lláh was leaving the village of Zarkandih, the minister's daughter, who felt greatly distressed at the dangers which beset His life, was so overcome with emotion that she was unable to restrain her tears. "Of what use," she was heard expostulating with her father, "is the authority with which you have been invested, if you are powerless to extend your protection to a guest whom you have received in your house?" The minister, who had a great affection for his daughter, was moved by the sight of her tears, and sought to com-



THE RUSSIAN LEGATION IN THE VILLAGE OF ZARKANDIH

fort her by his assurances that he would do all in his power to avert the danger that threatened the life of Bahá'u'lláh.

That day the army of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh was thrown into a state of violent tumult. The peremptory orders of the sovereign, following so closely upon the attempt on his life, gave rise to the wildest rumours and excited the fiercest passions in the hearts of the people of the neighbourhood. The agitation spread to Ṭihrán and fanned into flaming fury the smouldering embers of hatred which the enemies of the Cause still nourished in their hearts. Confusion, unprecedented in its range, reigned in the capital. A word of denunciation, a sign, or a whisper was sufficient to subject the

innocent to a persecution which no pen dare try to describe. Security of life and property had completely vanished. The highest ecclesiastical authorities in the capital joined hands with the most influential members of the government to deal what they hoped would be the fatal blow to a foe who, for eight years, had so gravely shaken the peace of the land, and whom no cunning or violence had yet been able to silence.[1]

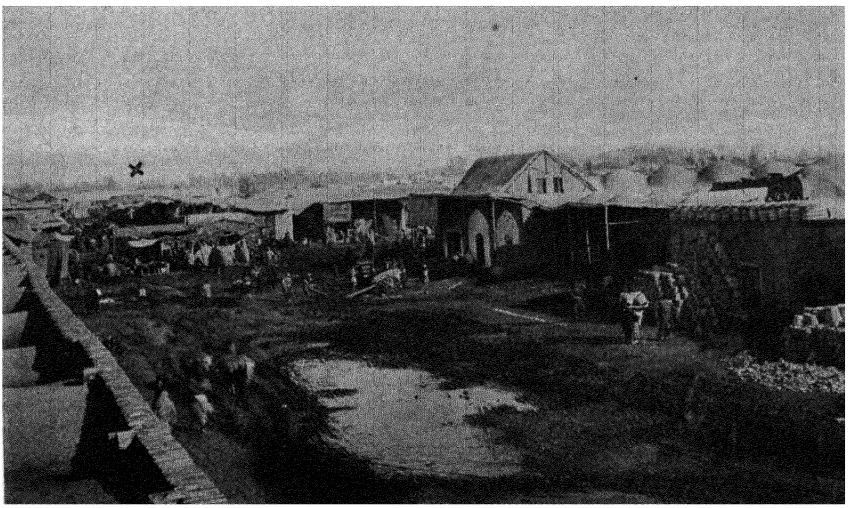
[1] Renan, in his work entitled "Les Apôtres" (p. 378), characterises the great massacre at Ṭihrán, following on the attempt made on the life of the Shâh, as "un jour sans pareil peut-être dans l'histoire du monde." (E. G. Browne's introduction to "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 45.) "The number of martyrdoms which have taken place in Persia has been estimated at ten thousand. [This estimate is conservative. Many place the number at from twenty to thirty thousand, and some even higher.] Most of these occurred during the early history of the faith, but they have continued with diminishing frequency, even down to the present time." (M. H. Phelps' "Life and Teachings of 'Abbás Effendi," introduction, p. 36.) "Amongst the documents referring to the Bábís in my possession is a manuscript copy of an article in German published on October 17, 1852, in No. 291 of some German or Austrian newspaper of which, unhappily, the name is not noted. I think that I received it a good many years ago from the widow of the late Dr. Polak, an Austrian doctor, who was physician to Náṣiri'd-Dín Shâh at the beginning of his reign, and who is the author of a valuable book and several smaller treatises on Persia and matters connected therewith. It is chiefly based on a letter written on August 29, 1852, by an Austrian officer, Captain von Goumoens, who was in the Shâh's service, but who was so disgusted and horrified at the cruelties he was compelled to witness that he sent in his resignation. The translation of this article is as follows: 'Some days ago we mentioned the attempt made on the life of the Shâh of Persia on the occasion of a hunting-party. The conspirators, as is well known, belonged to the Bábís, a religious sect. Concerning this sect and the repressive measures adopted against it, the letter of the Austrian Captain von Goumoens lately published in the "Soldier's Friend" (*Soldatenfreund*) contains interesting disclosures, and elucidates to some extent the attempt in question. This letter runs as follows: "Ṭihrán, August 29, 1852. Dear Friend, My last letter of the 20th inst. mentioned the attempt on the King. I will now communicate to you the result of the interrogation to which the two criminals were subjected. In spite of the terrible tortures inflicted, the examination extorted no comprehensive confession; the lips of the fanatics remained closed, even when by means of red-hot pincers and limb-rending screws they sought to discover the chief conspirator. . . . But follow me, my friend, you who lay claim to a heart and European ethics, follow me to the unhappy ones who, with gouged-out eyes, must eat, on the scene of the deed, without any sauce, their own amputated ears; or whose teeth are torn out with inhuman violence by the hand of the executioner; or whose bare skulls are simply crushed by blows from a hammer; or where the bazar is illuminated with unhappy victims, because on right and left the people dig deep holes in their breasts and shoulders and insert burning wicks in the wounds. I saw some dragged in chains through the bazar, preceded by a military band, in whom these wicks had burned so deep that now the fat flickered convulsively in the wound like a newly-extinguished lamp. Not seldom it happens that the unwearying ingenuity of the Orientals leads to fresh tortures. They will skin the soles of the Bábís' feet, soak the wounds in boiling oil, shoe the foot like the hoof of a horse, and compel the victim to run. No cry escaped from the victim's breast; the torment is endured in dark silence by the numbed sensation of the fanatic; now he must run; the body cannot endure what the soul has endured; he falls. Give him the *coup de grâce!* Put him out of his pain! No! The executioner swings the whip, and—I myself have had to witness it—the unhappy victim of hundredfold tortures runs! This is the beginning of the end. As for the end itself, they hang the scorched and perforated bodies by their hands and feet to a tree head downwards, and now every Persian may try his marksmanship to his heart's content from a fixed but not too proximate distance on the noble quarry placed at his disposal. I saw corpses torn by nearly 150 bullets. . . . When I read over again what

Bahá'u'lláh, now that the Báb was no more, appeared in their eyes to be the arch-foe whom they deemed it their first duty to seize and imprison. To them He was the reincarnation of the Spirit the Báb had so powerfully manifested, the Spirit through which He had been able to accomplish so complete a transformation in the lives and habits of His countrymen. The precautions the Russian minister had taken, and the warning he had uttered, failed to stay the hand that had been outstretched with such determination against that precious Life.

From Shimírán to Ṭihrán, Bahá'u'lláh was several times

I have written I am overcome by the thought that those who are with you in our dearly beloved Austria may doubt the full truth of the picture, and accuse me of exaggeration. Would to God that I had not lived to see it! But by the duties of my profession I was unhappily often, only too often, a witness of these abominations. At present I never leave my house, in order not to meet with fresh scenes of horror. After their death the Bábís are hacked in two and either nailed to the city gate, or cast out into the plain as food for the dogs and jackals. Thus the punishment extends even beyond the limits which bound this bitter world, for Musulmans who are not buried have no right to enter the Prophet's Paradise. Since my whole soul revolts against such infamy, against such abominations as recent times, according to the judgment of all, present, I will no longer maintain my connection with the scene of such crimes." ' (He goes on to say that he has already asked for his discharge, but has not yet received an answer.)" (E. G. Browne's "Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion," pp. 267–71.) "Ardishír Mírzá eut à agir en conséquence. Il maintint la fermeture des portes et les fit occuper par des piquets d'infanterie, en donnant l'ordre aux gardiens d'examiner avec soin les physionomies de ceux qui se présenteraient pour quitter la ville; et, tandis que l'on poussait la population à monter sur le rempart, près de la porte de Shimírán, pour voir, sur le terre-plein devant le pont qui traverse le fossé, le corps mutilé de Ṣádiq, le prince-gouverneur réunit le Kalántar, ou préfet de police, le Vazír de la ville, le Dárúghih ou juge de police, et les chefs des quartiers, et leur donna l'ordre de rechercher et d'arrêter toutes les personnes soupçonnées de Bábisme. Comme personne ne pouvait quitter la ville, on attendit la nuit pour commencer cette chasse au furet, où il fallait surtout de l'adresse et de la ruse. La police à Ṭihrán, comme dans toutes les villes d'Asie, est trés bien organisée. C'est un legs des Sassanides, que les Khalífs arabes ont précieusement conservé; et comme il était de l'intérêt direct de tous les gouvernements, si mauvais qu'ils fussent, et des pires encore plus que des autres, de le maintenir, il est resté, pour ainsi dire, intact au milieu des ruines de tant d'autres institutions également excellentes qui ont périclité. Il faut donc savoir que chaque chef de quartier, correspondant directement avec le Kalántar, a sous ses ordres un certain nombre d'hommes appelés sar-ghishmihs, sergents de ville, qui, sans costume particulier ni marque distinctive, ne quittent jamais les rues dont la surveillance leur est attribuée. Ils sont généralement bien vus des habitants et vivent familièrement avec le peuple. Ils rendent toutes sortes de services à chacun, et la nuit, couchés, hiver comme été, sous l'auvent de la première boutique venue, sans souci de la pluie ni de la neige, ils veillent sur les propriétés et rendent les vols fort rares, parce qu'ils les rendent fort difficiles. Du reste, ils connaissent les habitudes et les habitués de toutes les maisons, de manière à guider immédiatement les recherches en cas de besoin; ils savent les idées, les opinions, les accointances, les liaisons de chacun; et quand on invite à dînertrois amis, le sar-ghishmih, sans-même y mettre d'espionnage, tant il est familier avec tout le monde, sait à quelle heure les convives arrivent, ce qu'ils ont mangé, ce qu'ils ont fait et dit, et à quelle heure ils se sont retirés. Les kad-khudás ou chefs des quartiers prévinrent ces agents d'avoir à surveiller les Bábís de leurs circonscriptions respectives, et on attendit." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 234–5.)

stripped of His garments, and was overwhelmed with abuse and ridicule. On foot and exposed to the fierce rays of the midsummer sun, He was compelled to cover, barefooted and bareheaded, the whole distance from Shimírán to the dungeon already referred to. All along the route, He was pelted and vilified by the crowds whom His enemies had succeeded in convincing that He was the sworn enemy of their sovereign and the wrecker of his realm. Words fail me to portray the horror of the treatment which was meted out to Him as He was being taken to the Síyáh-Chál[1] of Ṭihrán. As He was



SOUTHERN PART OF ṬIHRÁN WHERE CRIMINALS WERE HANGED AND WHERE MANY BAHÁ'Í MARTYRDOMS TOOK PLACE (MARK X INDICATES SITE OF THE SÍYÁH-CHÁL)

approaching that dungeon, an old and decrepit woman was seen to emerge from the midst of the crowd, with a stone in her hand, eager to cast it at the face of Bahá'u'lláh. Her eyes glowed with a determination and fanaticism of which few women of her age were capable. Her whole frame shook with rage as she stepped forward and raised her hand to hurl her missile at Him. "By the Siyyidu'sh-Shuhadá,[2] I adjure you, she pleaded, as she ran to overtake those into whose hands Bahá'u'lláh had been delivered, "give me a chance to fling my stone in his face!" "Suffer not this woman to be

[1] Name of the dungeon, meaning "Black Pit." [2] The Imám Ḥusayn.

disappointed," were Bahá'u'lláh's words to His guards, as He saw her hastening behind Him. "Deny her not what she regards as a meritorious act in the sight of God."

The Síyáh-Chál, into which Bahá'u'lláh was thrown, originally a reservoir of water for one of the public baths of Ṭihrán, was a subterranean dungeon in which criminals of the worst type were wont to be confined. The darkness, the filth, and the character of the prisoners, combined to make of that pestilential dungeon the most abominable place to which human beings could be condemned. His feet were placed in stocks, and around His neck were fastened the Qará-Guhar chains, infamous throughout Persia for their galling weight.[1] For three days and three nights, no manner of food or drink was given to Bahá'u'lláh. Rest and sleep were both impossible to Him. The place was infested with vermin, and the stench of that gloomy abode was enough to crush the very spirits of those who were condemned to suffer its horrors. Such were the conditions under which He was held down that even one of the executioners who were watching over Him was moved with pity. Several times this man attempted to induce Him to take some tea which he had managed to introduce into the dungeon under the cover of his garments. Bahá'u'lláh, however, would refuse to drink it. His family often endeavoured to persuade the

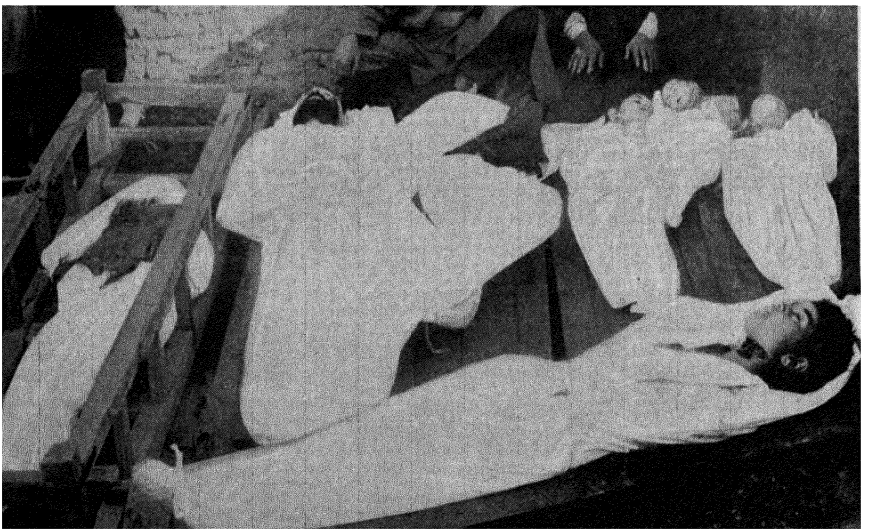
[1] "If sometime thou shouldst happen to visit the prison of His Majesty the Sháh, ask thou the director and chief of that place to show thee those two chains, one of which is known as Qará-Guhar and the other as Salásil. I swear by the Day-star of Justice, that during four months, I was weighted and tormented by one of these chains. 'The sorrow of Jacob paleth before my sorrow; and all the afflictions of Job were but a part of my calamities.'" ("The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p. 57.) "Concerning the Persian mode of imprisonment, the practice is as different from our own as in the case of penalties. There is no such thing as penal servitude for life, or even for a term of years; hard labour is unknown as a sentence; and confinement for any lengthy period is rare. There is usually a gaol-delivery at the beginning of the new year; and when a fresh governor is appointed, he not uncommonly empties the prison that may have been filled by his predecessor, one or two of the worst cases, perhaps, suffering the death penalty, in order to create a salutary impression of strength. There is no such thing as a female ward, women being detained, as also are male criminals of high rank, in the house of a priest. In Ṭihrán there are said to be three kinds of prison: the subterranean cells beneath the Ark, where criminals guilty of conspiracy or high treason are reported to have been confined; the town prison, where the vulgar criminals may be seen with iron collars round their neck, sometimes with their feet in stocks, and attached to each other by iron chains; and the private guard-house, that is frequently an appurtenance of the mansions of the great. It will be seen that the Persian theory of justice, as expressed both in judicial sentences, in the infliction of penalties, and in the prison code, is one of sharp and rapid procedure, whose object is the punishment (in a manner as roughly equivalent as possible to the original offence), but in no sense the reformation, of the culprit." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. i, pp. 458–9.)

guards to allow them to carry the food they had prepared for Him into His prison. Though at first no amount of pleading would induce the guards to relax the severity of their discipline, yet gradually they yielded to His friends' importunity. No one could be sure, however, whether that food would eventually reach Him, or whether He would consent to eat it whilst a number of His fellow-prisoners were starving before His eyes. Surely greater misery than had befallen these innocent victims of the wrath of their sovereign, could hardly be imagined.[1]

As to the youth Ṣádiq-i-Tabrízí, the fate he suffered was as cruel as it was humiliating. He was seized at the moment he was rushing towards the Sháh, whom he had thrown from his horse, hoping to strike him with the sword he held in his hand. The Sháṭir-Báshí, together with the Mustawfíyu'l-Mamálik's attendants, fell upon him and, without attempting to learn who he was, slew him on the spot. Wishing to allay the excitement of the populace, they hewed his body into two halves, each of which they suspended to the public

[1] "We had nothing to do with this odious deed, and Our innocence was indisputably proved before the tribunals. Nevertheless, they arrested Us and brought Us to the prison in Ṭihrán, from Níyávarán, which was then the seat of the royal residence; on foot, in chains, and with bare head and feet, for a brutal fellow who was accompanying Us on horseback snatched the hat from Our head, and many executioners and farráshes hurried Us along with great speed and put Us for four months in a place the like of which has not been seen. In reality, a dark and narrow cell were far better than the place where this wronged One and His companions were confined. When We entered the prison, on arrival, they conducted us along a dismal corridor, and thence We descended three steep stairs to the dungeon appointed for Us. The place was dark, and its inmates numbered nearly a hundred and fifty —thieves, assassins, and highway robbers. Holding such a crowd as this, it yet had no outlet but the passage through which We entered. The pen fails to describe this place and its putrid stench. Most of the company had neither clothes to wear nor mat to lie on. God knows what We endured in that gloomy and loathsome place! By day and by night, in this prison We reflected on the condition of the Bábís and their doings and affairs, wondering how, notwithstanding their greatness of soul, nobility, and intelligence, they could be capable of such a deed as this audacious attempt on the life of the sovereign. Then did this wronged One determine that, on leaving this prison, He would arise with the utmost endeavour for the regeneration of these souls. One night, in a dream, this all-glorious word was heard from all sides: 'Verily We will aid Thee to triumph by Thyself and by Thy pen. Grieve not for that which hath befallen Thee, and have no fear. Truly Thou art of them that are secure. Ere long shall the Lord send forth and reveal the treasures of the earth, men who shall give Thee the victory by Thyself and by Thy name wherewith the Lord hath revived the hearts of them that know.' " (Bahá'u'lláh's reference to the Síyáh-Chál in "The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf.") " 'Abdu'l-Bahá," writes Dr. J. E. Esslemont, "tells how one day He was allowed to enter the prison-yard to see His beloved Father when He came out for His daily exercise. Bahá'u'lláh was terribly altered, so ill He could hardly walk, His hair and beard unkempt, His neck galled and swollen from the pressure of a heavy steel collar, His body bent by the weight of His chains, and the sight made a never-to-be-forgotten impression on the mind of the sensitive boy." ("Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era," p. 61.)

gaze at the entrance of the gates of Shimírán and Sháh-'Abdu'l-'Aẓím.[1] His two other companions, Fatḥu'lláh-i-Ḥakkák-i-Qumí and Ḥájí Qásim-i-Nayrízí, who had succeeded in inflicting only slight wounds on the Sháh, were subjected to inhuman treatment, to which they ultimately owed their death. Fatḥu'lláh, though suffering unspeakable cruelties, obstinately refused to answer the questions they asked him. The silence he maintained in the face of manifold tortures, induced his persecutors to believe that he was devoid of the



BAHÁ'Í FAMILY MARTYRED IN PERSIA

power of speech. Exasperated by the failure of their efforts, they poured molten lead down his throat, an act which brought his sufferings to an end.

His comrade, Ḥájí Qásim, was treated with a savagery still more revolting. On the very day Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán was being subjected to that terrible ordeal, this poor wretch was receiving similar treatment at the hands of his persecutors in Shimírán. He was stripped of his clothes, lighted

[1] "On fit attacher le corps de Ṣádiq, le Bábí qui avait été tué, à la queue d'un mulet, et on le traîna à travers les pierres jusqu'à Ṭihrán, afin que toute la population pût voir que les conjurés avaient manqué leur coup. En même temps, on envoya des messagers à Ardishír Mírzá, pour lui dicter ce qu'il avait à faire." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 234.)

candles were thrust into holes driven into his flesh, and he was thus paraded before the eyes of a multitude who yelled at and cursed him. The spirit of revenge that animated those into whose hands he was delivered seemed insatiable. Day after day fresh victims were forced to expiate with their blood a crime which they had never committed, and of the circumstances of which they were wholly ignorant. Every ingenious device that the torture-mongers of Ṭihrán could employ was applied with merciless severity to the bodies of



BELIEVERS GATHERED AROUND THE BODY OF A MARTYR

these unfortunate ones who were neither brought to trial nor questioned, and whose right to plead and prove their innocence was entirely ignored.

Each of those days of terror witnessed the martyrdom of two companions of the Báb, one of whom was slain in Ṭihrán, whilst the other met his fate in Shimírán. Both were subjected to the same manner of torture, both were handed over to the public to wreak their vengeance upon them. Those arrested were distributed among the various classes of people, whose messengers would visit the dungeon each day and claim their

victim.[1] Conducting him to the scene of his death, they would give the signal for a general attack upon him, whereupon men and women would close upon their prey, tear his body to pieces, and so mutilate it that no trace of its original form would remain. Such ruthlessness amazed even the most brutal of the executioners, whose hands, however much accustomed to human slaughter, had never perpetrated the atrocities of which those people had proved themselves capable.[2]

[1] "It was on this occasion that Mírzá Áqá Khán, the Grand Vazír, in order to distribute the responsibility of punishment and to lessen the chances of blood-revenge, conceived the extraordinary idea of assigning the several criminals for execution to the principal ministers, generals, and officers of the Court, as well as to representatives of the priestly and merchant classes. The Foreign Secretary killed one, the Home Secretary another, the Master of the Horse a third, and so on." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," p. 402, note 2.)

[2] "His Excellency resolved to divide the execution of the victims among the different departments of the state; the only person he exempted was himself. First came the Sháh, who was entitled to Qiṣáṣ, or legal retaliation, for his wound. To save the dignity of the crown, the steward of the household, as the Sháh's representative, fired the first shot at the conspirator selected as his victim, and his deputies, the farráshes, completed the work. The Prime Minister's son headed the Home Office, and slew another Bábí. Then came the Foreign Office. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a pious, silly man, who spent his time in conning over the traditions of Muḥammad, with averted face made the first sword-cut, and then the Under-Secretary of State and clerks of the Foreign Office hewed their victim into pieces. The priesthood, the merchants, the artillery, the infantry, had each their allotted Bábí. Even the Sháh's admirable French physician, the late lamented Dr. Cloquet, was invited to show his loyalty by following the example of the rest of the Court. He excused himself, and pleasantly said he killed too many men professionally to permit him to increase their number by any voluntary homicide on his part. The Ṣadr was reminded that these barbarous and unheard-of proceedings were not only revolting in themselves, but would produce the utmost horror and disgust in Europe. Upon this he became very much excited, and asked angrily, 'Do you wish the vengeance of all the Bábís to be concentrated upon me alone?' The following is an extract from the 'Ṭihrán Gazette' of that day, and will serve as a specimen of a Persian 'leader': 'Some profligate, unprincipled individuals, destitute of religion, became disciples of the accursed Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad Báb, who some years ago invented a new religion, and who afterwards met his doom. They were unable to prove the truth of their faith, the falsehood of which was visible. For instance, many of their books having fallen into our hands, they are found to contain nothing but pure infidelity. In worldly argument, too, they never were able to support their religion, which seemed fit only for entering into a contest with the Almighty. They then began to think of aspiring to sovereignty, and to endeavour to raise insurrections, hoping to profit by the confusion, and to pillage the property of their neighbours. A wretched miserable gang, whose chief, Mullá Shaykh 'Alí of Turshíz, styled himself the deputy of the former Báb, and who gave himself the title of High Majesty, collected round themselves some of the former companions of [the] Báb. They seduced to their principles some dissolute debauchees, one of whom was Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán, son of the late Yahyá Khán of Tabríz. In the house of this Ḥájí it was their practice to assemble for consultation, and to plan an attempt on the auspicious life of his Majesty. Twelve of their number, who were volunteers for the deed, were selected to execute their purpose, and to each of them were given pistols, daggers, etc. It was resolved that the above number should proceed to the Sháh's residence at Níyávarán, and await their opportunity.' Then follows an account of the attack, which I have already given in

Of all the tortures which an insatiable enemy inflicted upon its victims, none was more revolting in its character than that which characterised the death of Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán. He was the son of Yaḥyá Khán, one of the officers in the service of the Náyibu's-Salṭanih, who was the father of Muḥammad Sháh. He retained that same position in the early days of the reign of Muḥammad Sháh. Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán showed from his earliest years a marked disinclination to rank and office. Ever since the day of his acceptance of

sufficient detail. 'Six persons, whose crimes were not so clearly proved, were condemned to perpetual imprisonment; the remainder were divided among the priesthood, the doctors of the law, the chief servants of the court, the people of the town, merchants, tradesmen, artizans, who bestowed on them their deserts in the following manner: The mullás, priests, and learned body slew Mullá Shaykh 'Alí, the deputy of [the] Báb, who gave himself the title of Imperial Majesty, and who was the author of this atrocity. The princes slew Siyyid Ḥasan, of Khurásán, a man of noted profligacy, with pistol-shots, swords, and daggers. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, full of religious and moral zeal, took the first shot at Mullá Zaynu'l-'Ábidín of Yazd, and the secretaries of his department finished him and cut him in pieces. The Niẓámu'l-Mulk (son of the Prime Minister) slew Mullá Ḥusayn. Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, of Shíráz, who was one of the twelve assassins, was slain by the brother and sons of the Prime Minister; his other relations cut him in pieces. Mullá Fatḥu'lláh, of Qum, who fired the shot which wounded the royal person, was killed thus: In the midst of the royal camp candles were placed in his body (by making incisions) and lighted. The steward of the household wounded him in the very place that he had injured the Sháh, and then the attendants stoned him. The nobles of the court sent Shaykh 'Abbás of Ṭihrán to hell. The Sháh's personal attendants put to death Muḥammad-Báqir, one of the twelve. The Sháh's master of the horse and the servants of the stable horse-shod Muḥammad-Taqí of Shíráz, and then sent him to join his companions. The masters of the ceremonies and other nobles, with their deputies, slew Muḥammad of Najaf-Ábád with hatchets and maces, and sent him to the depths of hell. The artillerymen first dug out the eye of Muḥammad-'Alí of Najaf-Ábád, and then blew him away from a mortar. The soldiers bayoneted Siyyid Ḥusayn, of Mílán, and sent him to hell. The cavalry slew Mírzá Rafi'. The adjutant-general, generals, and colonels slew Siyyid Ḥusayn.' " (Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," pp. 277–81.) "On vit, on vit alors, on vit ce jour-là, dans les rues et les bazars de Ṭihrán, un spectacle que la population semble devoir n'oublier jamais. Quand la conversation, encore aujourd'hui, se met sur cette matière, on peut juger de l'admiration horrible que la foule éprouva et que les années n'ont pas diminuée. On vit s'avancer, entre les bourreaux, des enfants et des femmes, les chairs ouvertes sur tout le corps, avec des mèches allumées flambantes fichées dans les blessures. On traînait les victimes par des cordes et on les faisait marcher à coups de fouet. Enfants et femmes s'avançaient en chantant un verset qui dit: 'En vérité, nous venons de Dieu et nous retournons à Lui!' Leurs voix s'élevaient éclatantes au-dessus du silence profond de la foule, car la population Ṭihráni n'est ni méchante ni très croyante à l'Islám. Quand un des suppliciés tombait et qu'on le faisait relever à coups de fouet ou de baïonnettes, pour peu que la perte de sang, qui ruisselait sur tous ses membres, lui laissât encore un peu de force, il se mettait à danser et criait avec un surcroît d'enthousiasme: 'En vérité, nous sommes à Dieu et nous retournons à Lui!' Quelques-uns des enfants expirèrent dans le trajet. Les bourreaux jetèrent leurs corps sous les pieds de leurs pères et de leurs sœurs, qui marchèrent fièrement dessus et ne leur donnèrent pas deux regards. Quand on arriva au lieu d'exécution, près de la Porte-Neuve, on proposa encore aux victimes la vie pour leur abjuration, et, ce qui semblait difficile, on trouva même à leur appliquer des moyens d'intimidation. Un bourreau imagina de dire à un père que, s'il ne cédait pas, il couperait la gorge à ses deux fils sur sa poitrine. C'étaient deux petits garçons dont l'aîné avait 14 ans, et qui, rouges de leur propre sang, les chairs calcinées, écoutaient froidement le

the Cause of the Báb, the petty pursuits in which the people around him were immersed excited his pity and contempt. The vanity of their ambitions had been abundantly demonstrated in his eyes. In his early youth, he felt a longing to escape from the turmoil of the capital and to seek refuge in the holy city of Karbilá. There he met Siyyid Káẓim and grew to be one of his most ardent supporters. His sincere piety, his frugality and love of seclusion were among the chief traits of his character. He tarried in Karbilá until the day when the Call from Shíráz reached him through Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí and Mullá Mihdíy-i-Khu'í, both of whom were among his best-known friends. He enthusiastically embraced the Message of the Báb.[1] He had intended, upon his return from Karbilá to Tihrán, to join the defenders of the fort of Ṭabarsí, but arrived too late to achieve his purpose. He remained in the capital and continued to wear the kind of dress he had adopted in Karbilá. The small turban he wore, and the white tunic which his black 'abá[2] concealed, were displeasing to the Amír-Niẓám, who induced him to discard these garments and to clothe himself instead in a

dialogue; le père répondit, en se couchant par terre, qu'il était prêt, et l'aîné des enfants réclamant avec emportement son droit d'aînesse, demanda à être égorgé le premier. Il n'est pas impossible que le bourreau lui ait refusé cette dernière satisfaction. Enfin, tout fut achevé; la nuit tomba sur un amas de chairs informes; les têtes étaient attachées en paquets au poteau de justice, et les chiens des faubourgs se dirigeaient par troupes de ce côté. Cette journée donna au Báb plus de partisans secrets que bien des prédications n'auraient pu faire. Je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, l'impression produite sur le peuple par l'effroyable impassibilité des martyrs fut profonde et durable. J'ai souvent entendu raconter les scènes de cette journée par des témoins oculaires, par des hommes tenant de près au gouvernement, quelques-uns occupant des fonctions éminentes. À les entendre, on eut pu croire aisément que tous étaient Bábí, tant ils se montraient pénétrés d'admiration pour des souvenirs où l'Islám ne jouait pas le beau rôle, et par la haute idée qu'ils avouaient des ressources, des espérances et des moyens de succès de la secte." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 248–50). "These executions were not merely criminal, but foolish. The barbarity of the persecutors defeated its own ends, and, instead of inspiring terror, gave the martyrs an opportunity of exhibiting a heroic fortitude which has done more than any propaganda, however skilful, could have done to ensure the triumph of the cause for which they died. . . . The impression produced by such exhibitions of courage and endurance was profound and lasting; nay, the faith which inspired the martyrs was often contagious, as the following incident shows. A certain Yazdí rough, noted for his wild and disorderly life, went to see the execution of some Bábís, perhaps to scoff at them. But when he saw with what calmness and steadfastness they met torture and death, his feelings underwent so great a revulsion that he rushed forward crying, 'Kill me too! I also am a Bábí!' And thus he continued to cry till he too was made a partaker in the doom he had come out only to gaze upon." (E. G. Browne's "A Year amongst the Persians," pp. 111–12.)

[1] According to Samandar (manuscript, p. 2), Sulaymán Khán attained to the presence of the Báb in the course of His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina.

[2] See Glossary.

military uniform. He was made to wear the kuláh,[1] a head-dress that was thought to be more in accordance with the rank his father held. Though the Amír insisted that he should accept a position in the service of the government, he obstinately refused to comply with his request. Most of his time was spent in the company of the disciples of the Báb, particularly those of His companions who had survived the struggle of Ṭabarsí. He surrounded them with a care and kindness truly surprising. He and his father were so influential that the Amír-Nizám was induced to spare his life and indeed to refrain from any acts of violence against him. Though he was present in Ṭihrán when the seven companions of the Báb, with whom he was intimately associated, were martyred, neither the officials of the government nor any of the common people ventured to demand his arrest. Even in Tabríz, whither he had journeyed for the purpose of saving the life of the Báb, not one among the inhabitants of that city dared to lift a finger against him. The Amír-Niẓám, who was duly informed of all his services to the Cause of the Báb, preferred to ignore his acts rather than precipitate a conflict with him and his father.

Soon after the martyrdom of a certain Mullá Zaynu'l-'Abidín-i-Yazdí, a rumour was spread that those whom the government intended to put to death, among whom were Siyyid Ḥusayn, the Báb's amanuensis, and Ṭáhirih, were to be released and that further persecution of their friends was to be definitely abandoned. It was reported far and wide that the Amír-Nizám, deeming the hour of his death to be approaching, had been seized suddenly with a great fear and, in an agony of repentance, had exclaimed: "I am haunted by the vision of the Siyyid-i-Báb, whom I have caused to be martyred. I can now see the fearful mistake I have made. I should have restrained the violence of those who pressed me to shed his blood and that of his companions. I now perceive that the interests of the State required it." His successor, Mírzá Āqá Khán, was similarly inclined in the early days of his administration, and was intending to inaugurate his ministry with a lasting reconciliation between him and the followers of the Báb. He was preparing to

[1] See Glossary.

undertake that task when the attempt on the life of the Sháh shattered his plans and threw the capital into a state of unprecedented confusion.

I have heard the Most Great Branch,[1] who in those days was a child of only eight years of age, recount one of His experiences as He ventured to leave the house in which He was then residing. "We had sought shelter," He told us, "in the house of My uncle, Mírzá Ismá'íl. Ṭihrán was in the throes of the wildest excitement. I ventured at times to sally forth from that house and to cross the street on My way to the market. I would hardly cross the threshold and step into the street, when boys of My age, who were running about, would crowd around Me crying, 'Bábí! Bábí!' Knowing well the state of excitement into which all the inhabitants of the capital, both young and old, had fallen, I would deliberately ignore their clamour and quietly steal away to My home. One day I happened to be walking alone through the market on My way to My uncle's house. As I was looking behind Me, I found a band of little ruffians running fast to overtake Me. They were pelting Me with stones and shouting menacingly, 'Bábí! Bábí!' To intimidate them seemed to be the only way I could avert the danger with which I was threatened. I turned back and rushed towards them with such determination that they fled away in distress and vanished. I could hear their distant cry, 'The little Bábí is fast pursuing us! He will surely overtake and slay us all!' As I was directing My steps towards home, I heard a man shouting at the top of his voice: 'Well done, you brave and fearless child! No one of your age would ever have been able, unaided, to withstand their attack.' From that day onward, I was never again molested by any of the boys of the streets, nor did I hear any offensive word fall from their lips."

Among those who, in the midst of the general confusion, were seized and thrown into prison was Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán, the circumstances of whose martyrdom I now proceed to relate. The facts I mention have been carefully sifted and verified by me, and I owe them, for the most part, to Āqáy-i-Kalím, who was himself in those days in Ṭihrán and was made

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá's title.

to share the terrors and sufferings of his brethren. "On the very day of Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán's martyrdom," he informed me, "I happened to be present, with Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Majíd, at a gathering in Ṭihrán at which a considerable number of the notables and dignitaries of the capital were present. Among them was Ḥájí Mullá Maḥmúd, the Niẓámu'l-'Ulamá, who requested the Kalantar to describe the actual circumstances of the death of Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán. The Kalantar motioned with his finger to Mírzá Taqí, the kad-khudá[1] who, he said, had conducted the victim from the vicinity of the imperial palace to the place of his execution, outside the gate of Naw. Mírzá Taqí was accordingly requested to relate to those present all that he had seen and heard. 'I and my assistants,' he said, 'were ordered to purchase nine candles and to thrust them, ourselves, into deep holes we were to cut in his flesh. We were instructed to light each one of these candles and to conduct him through the market to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets as far as the place of his execution. There we were ordered to hew his body into two halves, each of which we were asked to suspend on either side of the gate of Naw. He himself chose the manner in which he wished to be martyred. Ḥájibu'd-Dawlih[2] had been commanded by Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh to enquire into the complicity of the accused, and, if assured of his innocence, to induce him to recant. If he submitted, his life was to be spared and he was to be detained pending the final settlement of his case. In the event of his refusal, he was to be put to death in whatever manner he himself might desire.

" 'The investigations of Ḥájibu'd-Dawlih convinced him of the innocence of Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán. The accused, as soon as he had been informed of the instructions of his sovereign, was heard joyously exclaiming: "Never, so long as my life-blood continues to pulsate in my veins, shall I be willing to recant my faith in my Beloved! This world which the Commander of the Faithful[3] has likened to carrion will never allure me from my heart's Desire." He was asked to

[1] See Glossary.

[2] His name was Ḥájí 'Alí Khán. (See "A Traveller's Narrative," p. 52, note 1.)

[3] The Imám 'Alí.

determine the manner in which he wished to die. "Pierce holes in my flesh," was the instant reply, "and in each wound place a candle. Let nine candles be lighted all over my body, and in this state conduct me through the streets of Ṭihrán. Summon the multitude to witness the glory of my martyrdom, so that the memory of my death may remain imprinted in their hearts and help them, as they recall the intensity of my tribulation, to recognise the Light I have embraced. After I have reached the foot of the gallows and have uttered the last prayer of my earthly life, cleave my body in twain and suspend my limbs on either side of the gate of Ṭihrán, that the multitude passing beneath it may witness to the love which the Faith of the Báb has kindled in the hearts of His disciples, and may look upon the proofs of their devotion."

'Ḥájibu'd-Dawlih instructed his men to abide by the expressed wishes of Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán, and charged me to conduct him through the market as far as the place of his execution. As they handed to the victim the candles they had purchased, and were preparing to thrust their knives into his breast, he made a sudden attempt to seize the weapon from the executioner's trembling hands in order to plunge it himself into his flesh. "Why fear and hesitate?" he cried, as he stretched forth his arm to snatch the knife from his grasp. "Let me myself perform the deed and light the candles." Fearing lest he should attack us, I ordered my men to resist his attempt and bade them tie his hands behind his back. "Let me," he pleaded, "point out with my fingers the places into which I wish them to thrust their dagger, for I have no other request to make besides this."

" 'He asked them to pierce two holes in his breast, two in his shoulders, one in the nape of his neck, and the four others in his back. With stoic calm he endured those tortures. Steadfastness glowed in his eyes as he maintained a mysterious and unbroken silence. Neither the howling of the multitude nor the sight of the blood that streamed all over his body could induce him to interrupt that silence. Impassive and serene he remained until all the nine candles were placed in position and lighted.

" 'When all was completed for his march to the scene

of his death, he, standing erect as an arrow and with that same unflinching fortitude gleaming upon his face, stepped forward to lead the concourse that was pressing round him to the place that was to witness the consummation of his martyrdom. Every few steps he would interrupt his march and, gazing at the bewildered bystanders, would shout: "What greater pomp and pageantry than those which this day accompany my progress to win the crown of glory! Glorified be the Báb, who can kindle such devotion in the breasts of His lovers, and can endow them with a power greater than the might of kings!" At times, as if intoxicated with the fervour of that devotion, he would exclaim: "The Abraham of a bygone age, as He prayed God, in the hour of bitter agony, to send down upon Him the refreshment for which His soul was crying, heard the voice of the Unseen proclaim: 'O fire! Be thou cold, and to Abraham a safety!'[1] But this Sulaymán is crying out from the depths of his ravaged heart: 'Lord, Lord, let Thy fire burn unceasingly within me, and suffer its flame to consume my being.' " As his eyes saw the wax flicker in his wounds, he burst forth in an acclamation of frantic delight: "Would that He whose hand has enkindled my soul were here to behold my state!" "Think me not to be intoxicated with the wine of this earth!" he cried to the vast throng who stood aghast at the sight of his behaviour. "It is the love of my Beloved that has filled my soul and made me feel endowed with a sovereignty which even kings might envy!"

" 'I cannot recall the exclamations of joy which fell from his lips as he drew near to his end. All I remember are but a few of the stirring words which, in his moments of exultation, he was moved to cry out to the concourse of spectators. Words fail me to portray the expression of that countenance or to measure the effect of his words on the multitude.

" 'He was still in the bazaar when the blowing of a breeze excited the burning of the candles that were placed upon his breast. As they melted rapidly, their flames reached the level of the wounds into which they had been thrust. We who were following a few steps behind him could hear distinctly the sizzling of his flesh. The sight of gore and fire

[1] Qur'án, 21: 69.

which covered his body, instead of silencing his voice, appeared to heighten his unquenchable enthusiasm. He could still be heard, this time addressing the flames, as they ate into his wounds: "You have long lost your sting, O flames, and have been robbed of your power to pain me. Make haste, for from your very tongues of fire I can hear the voice that calls me to my Beloved!"

" 'Pain and suffering seemed to have melted away in the ardour of that enthusiasm. Enveloped by the flames, he walked as a conqueror might have marched to the scene of his victory. He moved through the excited crowd a blaze of light amidst the gloom that surrounded him. Arriving at the foot of the gallows, he again raised his voice in a last appeal to the multitude of onlookers: "Did not this Sulaymán whom you now see before you a prey to fire and blood, enjoy until recently all the favours and riches the world can bestow? What could have caused him to renounce this earthly glory and accept in return such great degradation and suffering?" Prostrating himself in the direction of the shrine of the Imám-Zádih Ḥasan, he murmured certain words in Arabic which I could not understand. "My work is now finished!" he cried to the executioner, as soon as his prayer was ended. "Come and do yours!" He was still alive when his body was hewn into two halves with a hatchet. The praise of his Beloved, despite such incredible sufferings, lingered upon his lips until the last moment of his life.'[1]

"That tragic tale stirred the listeners to the very depths of their souls. The Nizámu'l-'Ulamá, who was listening in-

[1] "The extraordinary heroism with which Sulaymán Khán bore these frightful tortures is notorious, and I have repeatedly heard it related how he ceased not during the long agony which he endured to testify his joy that he should be accounted worthy to suffer martyrdom for his Master's cause. He even sang and recited verses of poetry, amongst them the following: 'I have returned! I have returned! I have come by the way of Shíráz! I have come with winsome airs and graces! Such is the lover's madness!' 'Why do you not dance,' asked the executioners mockingly, 'since you find death so pleasant?' 'Dance!' cried Sulaymán Khán. 'In one hand the wine-cup, in one hand the tresses of the Friend. Such a dance in the midst of the market-place is my desire!' " ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note T, pp. 333–4.) He was martyred in August, 1852. "When they arrested Sulaymán Khán, and strove, in consideration of his faithful service and loyalty, to induce him, by promises of rewards from the king, to abandon the creed which he had adopted, he would not consent, but answered firmly: 'His Majesty the King has a right to demand from his servants fidelity, loyalty, and uprightness; but he is not entitled to meddle with their religious convictions.' In consequence of this boldness of speech, it was ordered that his body should be pierced with wounds, and that into each of these wounds a lighted candle should be inserted as an example to others. Another victim was similarly treated. In this state, with minstrels and drummers going in

tently to all its details, wrung his hands in horror and despair. 'How strange, how very strange, is this Cause!' he exclaimed. Without adding a further word of comment, he, immediately after, arose and departed."[1]

Those days of unceasing turmoil witnessed the martyrdom of yet another eminent disciple of the Báb. A woman, no less great and heroic than Ṭáhirih herself, was engulfed in the storm that was then raging with undiminished violence throughout the capital. What I now begin to relate regarding the circumstances of her martyrdom has been obtained from trustworthy informants, some of whom were themselves witnesses of the events I am attempting to describe. Her stay in Ṭihrán was marked by many proofs of the warm

advance, they led him through the bazaars, and he, meanwhile, with smiling countenance, kept repeating these verses:

'Happy he whom love's intoxication
So hath overcome that scarce he knows
Whether at the feet of the Beloved
It be head or turban which he throws!'

Whenever one of the candles fell from his body, he would with his own hand pick it up, light it from the others, and replace it. The executioners, seeing in him such exultation and rapture, said: 'If thou art so eager for martyrdom, why dost thou not dance?' Thereat he began to leap, and to sing, in verses appropriate to his condition:

'An ear no longer dulled with ignorance
And self-subdued entitles one to dance.
Fools dance and caper in the market-place;
Men dance the while their life-blood flows apace.
When self is slain, they clap their hands in glee,
And dance, because from evil they are free.'

In such fashion did they lead these two forth through the gate of Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Aẓím. When they were preparing to saw that brave man asunder, he stretched out his feet without fear or hesitation, while he recited these verses:

'I hold this body as of little worth;
A brave man's spirit scorns its house of earth.
Dagger and sword like fragrant basil seem,
Or flowers to deck death's banquet with their gleam.' "

(The "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 228–30.)

[1] "If one conclusion more than another has been forced upon our notice by the retrospect in which I have indulged, it is that a sublime and unmurmuring devotion has been inculcated by this new faith, whatever it be. There is, I believe, but one instance of a Bábí having recanted under pressure or menace of suffering, and he reverted to the faith and was executed within two years. Tales of magnificent heroism illumine the blood-stained pages of Bábí history. Ignorant and unlettered as many of its votaries are, and have been, they are yet prepared to die for their religion, and the fires of Smithfield did not kindle a nobler courage than has met and defied the more refined torture-mongers of Ṭihrán. Of no small account, then, must be the tenets of a creed that can awaken in its followers so rare and beautiful a spirit of self-sacrifice. . . . It is these little incidents, protruding from time to time their ugly features, that prove Persia to be not as yet quite redeemed, and that somewhat stagger the tall-talkers about Iranian civilisation." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 1, p. 501.)

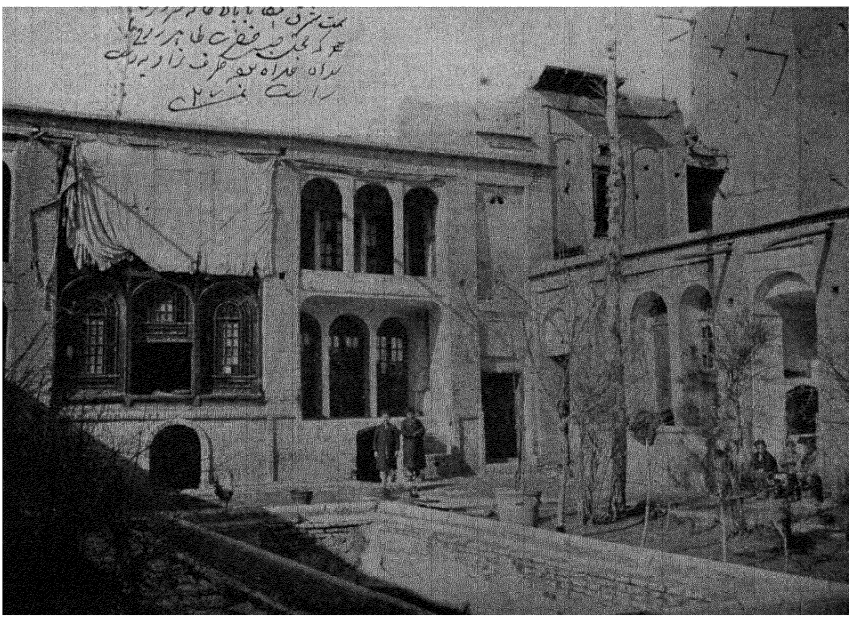
affection and high esteem in which she was held by the leading women of the capital. She had reached, indeed, in those days, the high-water mark of her popularity.[1] The house where she was confined was besieged by her women admirers, who thronged her doors, eager to enter her presence and to seek the benefit of her knowledge.[2] Among these ladies, the wife of Kalántar[3] distinguished herself by the extreme reverence she showed to Ṭáhirih. Acting as her hostess, she introduced into her presence the flower of womanhood in Ṭihrán, served her with extraordinary enthusiasm, and never failed to contribute her share in deepening her influence among her womenfolk. Persons with whom the wife of Kalántar was intimately connected have heard her relate the following: "One night, whilst Ṭáhirih was staying in my home, I was summoned to her presence and found her fully adorned, dressed in a gown of snow-white silk. Her room was redolent with the choicest perfume. I expressed to her my surprise at so unusual a sight. 'I am preparing to meet my Beloved,' she said, 'and wish to free you from the cares

[1] "Elle y resta longtemps, recevant de nombreuses visites tant d'hommes que de femmes: elle passionnait ces dernières en leur démontrant le rôle abject que l'Islám leur assignait: elle les séduisait en leur démontrant la liberté et le respect que la nouvelle religion leur accordait, et il y eut bien des scènes de ménage dont les maris ne sortirent pas toujours vainqueurs. Ces discussions eussent pu durer longtemps si Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Núrí n'avait pas été nommé Ṣadr-i-A'ẓam. Le premier ministre, en effet, donna l'ordre à Ḥájí Mullá Mírzá Muḥammad Andirmání et à Ḥájí Mullá 'Alí Kiní d'aller la voir pour examiner ses croyances. Il y eut sept conférences entre les deux hommes et la prisonnière: elle y discuta avec passion et affirma que le Báb était l'Imám promis et attendu. Ses adversaires lui firent alors remarquer qu'en vertu des prophéties, l'Imám promis devait venir de Jábulqá et de Jábulsá. Elle leur répondit violemment que cela était faux et inventé par de faux traditionnistes; que ces deux villes n'existaient pas et que ce ne pouvait être là qu'une superstition digne d'un cerveau maladif. Elle exposa la nouvelle doctrine, en fit ressortir la vérité, mais se heurtait toujours au même argument du Jábulqá. Impatientée, elle leur dit: 'Les raisonnements que vous tenez sont d'un enfant ignare et stupide. Jusques à quand vous arrêterez-vous à ces insanités, à ces mensonges: Quand donc élèverez-vous vos regards jusqu'au Soleil de la Vérité?' Outré du blasphème, Ḥájí Mullá 'Alí se leva et entraîna son compagnon en lui disant: 'Quelles discussions plus longues pouvons-nous avoir avec une infidèle.' Ils se rendirent chez l'un d'eux et rédigèrent la sentence qui, constatant son apostasie et son refus d'en faire pénitence, la condamnait à mort au nom du Qur'án!" (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 446–7.)

[2] "Pendant qu'elle était prisonnière, eut lieu dans la maison le mariage du fils du Kalántar. Toutes les femmes des grands personnages s'y trouvèrent naturellement conviées. Mais, quoiqu'on eût fait de grandes dépenses pour réunir tous les divertissements usités en la circonstance, elles réclamèrent à grands cris qu'on fit venir Qurratu'l-'Ayn. À peine celle-ci se fut-elle présentée et eut-elle commencé à parler qu'on renvoya musiciennes et danseuses, et qu'oubliant toutes les sucreries dont elles sont si friandes, ces dames n'eurent plus de regards et d'attention que pour Qurratu'l-'Ayn." (*Ibid.*, p. 448.)

[3] Maḥmúd Khán-i-Kalántar, in whose custody she was placed.

and anxieties of my imprisonment.' I was much startled at first, and wept at the thought of separation from her. 'Weep not,' she sought to reassure me. 'The time of your lamentation is not yet come. I wish to share with you my last wishes, for the hour when I shall be arrested and condemned to suffer martyrdom is fast approaching. I would request you to allow your son to accompany me to the scene of my death and to ensure that the guards and executioner into whose



THE HOUSE OF THE KALANTAR IN TIHRÁN, WHERE ṬÁHIRIH WAS CONFINED (UPPER ROOM BEHIND TREE IS THE ONE SHE OCCUPIED)

hands I shall be delivered will not compel me to divest myself of this attire. It is also my wish that my body be thrown into a pit, and that that pit be filled with earth and stones. Three days after my death a woman will come and visit you, to whom you will give this package which I now deliver into your hands. My last request is that you permit no one henceforth to enter my chamber. From now until the time when I shall be summoned to leave this house, let no one be allowed to disturb my devotions. This day I intend to fast—a fast which I shall not break until I am brought face to face

with my Beloved.' She bade me, with these words, lock the door of her chamber and not open it until the hour of her departure should strike. She also urged me to keep secret the tidings of her death until such time as her enemies should themselves disclose it.

"The great love I cherished for her in my heart, alone enabled me to abide by her instructions. But for the compelling desire I felt to fulfil her wishes, I would never have consented to deprive myself of one moment of her presence.





INDOOR DRESS OUTDOOR DRESS
COSTUME WORN BY THE PERSIAN LADIES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I locked the door of her chamber and retired to my own, in a state of uncontrollable sorrow. I lay sleepless and disconsolate upon my bed. The thought of her approaching martyrdom lacerated my soul. 'Lord, Lord,' I prayed in my despair, 'turn from her, if it be Thy wish, the cup which her lips desire to drink.' That day and night, I several times, unable to contain myself, arose and stole away to the threshold of that room and stood silently at her door, eager to listen to whatever might be falling from her lips. I was enchanted by the melody of that voice which intoned the praise of her Beloved. I could hardly remain standing upon my feet, so

great was my agitation. Four hours after sunset, I heard a knocking at the door. I hastened immediately to my son, and acquainted him with the wishes of Ṭáhirih. He pledged his word that he would fulfil every instruction she had given me. It chanced that night that my husband was absent. My son, who opened the door, informed me that the farráshes[1] of 'Azíz Khán-i-Sardár were standing at the gate, demanding that Ṭáhirih be immediately delivered into their hands. I was struck with terror by the news, and, as I tottered to her door and with trembling hands unlocked it, found her veiled and prepared to leave her apartment. She was pacing the floor when I entered, and was chanting a litany expressive of both grief and triumph. As soon as she saw me, she approached and kissed me. She placed in my hand the key to her chest, in which she said she had left for me a few trivial things as a remembrance of her stay in my house. 'Whenever you open this chest,' she said, 'and behold the things it contains, you will, I hope, remember me and rejoice in my gladness.'

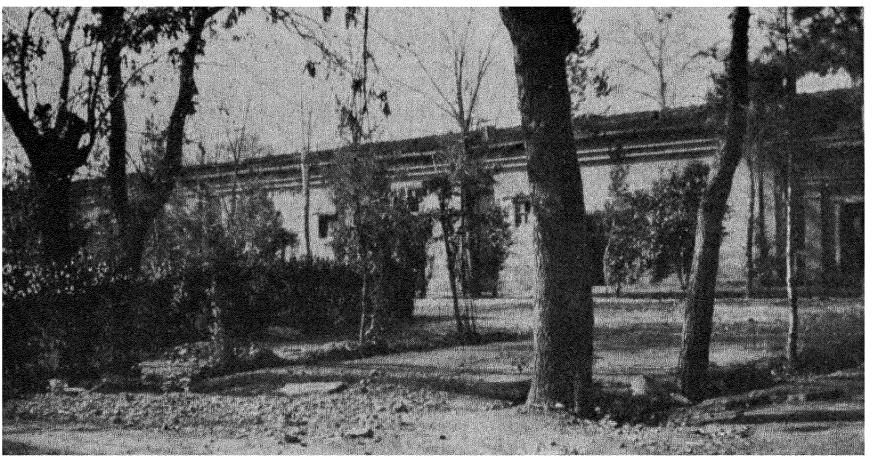
"With these words she bade me her last farewell, and, accompanied by my son, disappeared from before my eyes. What pangs of anguish I felt that moment, as I beheld her beauteous form gradually fade away in the distance! She mounted the steed which the Sardár had sent for her, and, escorted by my son and a number of attendants, who marched on each side of her, rode out to the garden that was to be the scene of her martyrdom.

"Three hours later my son returned, his face drenched with tears, hurling imprecations at the Sardár and his abject lieutenants. I tried to calm his agitation, and, seating him beside me, asked him to relate as fully as he could the circumstances of her death. 'Mother,' he sobbingly replied, 'I can scarcely attempt to describe what my eyes have beheld.' We straightway proceeded to the Ílkhání garden,[2]

[1] See Glossary.

[2] "En face de la Légation d'Angleterre et de l'Ambassade de Turquie s'étendait une place assez vaste qui a disparu depuis 1893. Vers le milieu de cette place, mais rentrant dans l'alignement de la rue, s'élevaient cinq ou six arbres solitaires marquant l'endroit où mourut l'héroine Bábí, car à cette époque le jardin d'Ílkhání s'étendait jusque-là. À mon retour, en 1898, la place avait disparu, envahie par les constructions modernes, et je ne sais si l'acquéreur actuel a respecté ces arbres qu'une main pieuse avait plantés." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," p. 452.)

outside the gate of the city. There I found, to my horror, the Sardár and his lieutenants absorbed in acts of debauchery and shame, flushed with wine and roaring with laughter. Arriving at the gate, Ṭáhirih dismounted and, calling me to her, asked me to act as her intermediary with the Sardár, whom she said she was disinclined to address in the midst of his revelry. 'They apparently wish to strangle me,' she said. 'I set aside, long ago, a silken kerchief which I hoped would be used for this purpose. I deliver it into your hands and wish you to induce that dissolute drunkard to use it as a means whereby he can take my life.'



SITE OF THE GARDEN OF ÍLKHÁNÍ WHERE ṬÁHIRIH WAS MARTYRED

"When I went to the Sardár, I found him in a state of wretched intoxication. 'Interrupt not the gaiety of our festival!' I heard him shout as I approached him. 'Let that miserable wretch be strangled and her body be thrown into a pit!' I was greatly surprised at such an order. Believing it unnecessary to venture any request from him, I went to two of his attendants, with whom I was already acquainted, and gave them the kerchief with which Ṭáhirih had entrusted me. They consented to grant her request. That same kerchief was wound round her neck and was made the instrument of her martyrdom. I hastened immediately afterwards to the gardener and asked him whether

he could suggest a place where I could conceal the body. He directed me, to my great delight, to a well that had been dug recently and left unfinished. With the help of a few others, I lowered her into her grave and filled the well with earth and stones in the manner she herself had wished. Those who saw her in her last moments were profoundly affected. With downcast eyes and rapt in silence, they mournfully dispersed, leaving their victim, who had shed so imperishable a lustre upon their country, buried beneath a mass of stones which they, with their own hands, had heaped upon her.

"I wept hot tears as my son unfolded to my eyes that tragic tale. I was so overcome with emotion that I fell prostrate and unconscious upon the ground. When I had recovered, I found my son a prey to an agony no less severe than my own. He lay upon his couch, weeping in a passion of devotion. Beholding my plight, he approached and comforted me. 'Your tears,' he said, 'will betray you in the eyes of my father. Considerations of rank and position will, no doubt, induce him to forsake us and sever whatever ties bind him to this home. He will, if we fail to repress our tears, accuse us before Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, as victims of the charm of a hateful enemy. He will obtain the sovereign's consent to our death, and will probably, with his own hands, proceed to slay us. Why should we, who have never embraced that Cause, allow ourselves to suffer such a fate at his hands? All we should do is to defend her against those who denounce her as the very negation of chastity and honour. We should ever treasure her love in our hearts and maintain in the face of a slanderous enemy the integrity of that life.'

"His words allayed my inner agitation. I went to her chest and, with the key she had placed in my hand, opened it. I found a small vial of the choicest perfume, beside which lay a rosary, a coral necklace, and three rings, mounted with turquoise, cornelian, and ruby stones. As I gazed upon her earthly belongings, I mused over the circumstances of her eventful life, and recalled, with a throb of wonder, her intrepid courage, her zeal, her high sense of duty and unquestioning devotion. I was reminded of her literary attainments, and brooded over the imprisonments, the shame, and the calumny which she had faced with a fortitude such as no other woman

in her land could manifest. I pictured to myself that winsome face which now, alas, lay buried beneath a mass of earth and stones. The memory of her passionate eloquence warmed my heart, as I repeated to myself the words that had so often dropped from her lips. The consciousness of the vastness of her knowledge, and her mastery of the sacred Scriptures of Islám, flashed through my mind with a suddenness that disconcerted me. Above all, her passionate loyalty to the Faith she had embraced, her fervour as she pleaded its cause, the services she rendered it, the woes and tribulations she endured for its sake, the example she had given to its followers, the impetus she had lent to its advancement, the name she had carved for herself in the hearts of her fellow-countrymen, all these I remembered as I stood beside her chest, wondering what could have induced so great a woman to forsake all the riches and honours with which she had been surrounded and to identify herself with the cause of an obscure youth from Shíráz. What could have been the secret, I thought to myself, of the power that tore her away from her home and kindred, that sustained her throughout her stormy career, and eventually carried her to her grave? Could that force, I pondered, be of God? Could the hand of the Almighty have guided her destiny and steered her course amidst the perils of her life?

"On the third day after her martyrdom,[1] the woman whose coming she had promised arrived. I enquired her name, and, finding it to be the same as the one Ṭáhirih had told me, delivered into her hands the package with which I had been entrusted. I had never before met that woman, nor did I ever see her again."[2]

The name of that immortal woman was Fáṭimih, a name which her father had bestowed upon her. She was surnamed Umm-i-Salmih by her family and kindred, who also designated her as Zakíyyih. She was born in the year 1233 A.H.,[3] the very year which witnessed the birth of Bahá'u'lláh. She was thirty-six years of age when she suffered martyrdom in Ṭihrán. May future generations be enabled to present a

[1] August, 1852 A.D.

[2] See *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, article 6, p. 492.

[3] 1817–18 A.D.

worthy account of a life which her contemporaries have failed adequately to recognise. May future historians perceive the full measure of her influence, and record the unique services this great woman has rendered to her land and its people. May the followers of the Faith which she served so well strive to follow her example, recount her deeds, collect her writings, unfold the secret of her talents, and establish her, for all time, in the memory and affections of the peoples and kindreds of the earth.[1]

Another distinguished figure among the disciples of the Báb who met his death during the turbulent time that had overwhelmed Ṭihrán was Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Yazdí, who was the Báb's amanuensis both in Máh-Kú and Chihríq. Such was his knowledge of the teachings of the Faith that the Báb, in a Tablet addressed to Mírzá Yaḥyá, urged the latter to seek enlightenment from him in whatever might pertain to the sacred writings. A man of standing and experience, in whom the Báb reposed the utmost confidence and with whom he had been intimately associated, he suffered, after the martyrdom of his Master in Tabríz, the agony of a long confinement in the subterranean dungeon of Ṭihrán, which confinement terminated in his martyrdom. To a very great

[1] "Beauty and the female sex also lent their consecration to the new creed, and the heroism of the lovely but ill-fated poetess of Qazvín, Zarrín-Táj (Crown of Gold), or Qurratu'l-'Ayn (Solace of the Eyes), who, throwing off the veil, carried the missionary torch far and wide, is one of the most affecting episodes in modern history." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 1, p. 497, note 2.) "No memory is more deeply venerated or kindles greater enthusiasm than hers, and the influence which she wielded in her lifetime still inures to her sex." (Valentine Chirol's "The Middle Eastern Question," p. 124.) "The appearance of such a woman as Qurratu'l-'Ayn is in any country and any age a rare phenomenon, but in such a country as Persia it is a prodigy—nay, almost a miracle. Alike in virtue of her marvellous beauty, her rare intellectual gifts, her fervid eloquence, her fearless devotion, and her glorious martyrdom, she stands forth incomparable and immortal amidst her countrywomen. Had the Bábí religion no other claim to greatness, this were sufficient—that it produced a heroine like Qurratu'l-'Ayn." ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note Q, p. 213.) "Almost the most remarkable figure in the whole movement was the poetess Qurratu'l-'Ayn. She was known for her virtue, piety and learning, and had been finally converted on reading some of the verses and exhortations of the Báb. So strong in her faith did she become that although she was both rich and noble she gave up wealth, child, name and position for her Master's service and set herself to proclaim and establish his doctrine. . . . The beauty of her speech was such as to draw guests from a marriage feast rather than listen to the music provided by the host. And her verses were among the most stirring in the Persian language." (Sir Francis Younghusband's "The Gleam," pp. 202–3.) "Looking back on the short career of Qurratu'l-'Ayn, one is chiefly struck by her fiery enthusiasm and by her absolute unworldliness. This world was, in fact, to her, as it was said to be to Quddús, a mere handful of dust. She was also an eloquent speaker and experienced in the intricate measures of Persian poetry. One of her few poems which have

extent, Bahá'u'lláh helped to allay the hardships from which he suffered. Regularly every month He sent him whatever financial assistance he required. He was praised and admired even by the gaolers who watched over him. His long and intimate companionship with the Báb, during the last and stormiest days of His life, had deepened his understanding and endowed his soul with a power which he was destined to manifest more and more as the days of his earthly life drew near to their close. He lay in the prison, longing for the time when he should be called upon to suffer a death similar to that of his Master. Deprived of the privilege of being martyred on the same day as the Báb, a privilege which it had been his supreme desire to attain, he now eagerly awaited the hour when he, in his turn, should drain to the very dregs the cup that had touched His lips. Many a time did the leading officials of Ṭihrán strive to induce him to accept their offer to deliver him from the rigours of his imprisonment, as well as from the prospect of a still more cruel death. He steadfastly refused. Tears flowed unceasingly from his eyes —tears born of his longing to see again that face whose radiance had shone so brightly amidst the darkness of a cruel incarceration in Ádhirbáyján, and whose glow warmed the chill

thus far been made known is of special interest, because of the belief which it expresses in the divine-human character of some one (here called Lord), whose claims, when once adduced, would receive general recognition. Who was this Personage? It appears that Qurratu'l-'Ayn thought Him slow in bringing forward these claims. Is there any one who can be thought of but Bahá'u'lláh? The poetess was a true Bahá'í." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," pp. 114, 115.) "The harvest sown in Islamic lands by Qurratu'l-'Ayn is now beginning to appear. A letter addressed to the "Christian Commonwealth" last June informs us that forty Turkish suffragettes are being deported from Constantinople to 'Akká (so long the prison of Bahá'u'lláh): 'During the last few years suffrage ideas have been spreading quietly behind in the harems. The men were ignorant of it; everybody was ignorant of it; and now suddenly the floodgate is opened and the men of Constantinople have thought it necessary to resort to drastic measures. Suffrage clubs have been organised, intelligent memorials incorporating the women's demands have been drafted and circulated; women's journals and magazines have sprung up, publishing excellent articles; and public meetings were held. Then one day the members of these clubs—four hundred of them—cast away their veils. The staid, fossilised class of society were shocked, the good Musulmans were alarmed, and the Government forced into action. These four hundred liberty-loving women were divided into several groups. One group composed of forty have been exiled to 'Akká, and will arrive in a few days. Everybody is talking about it, and it is really surprising to see how numerous are those in favour of removing the veils from the faces of the women. Many men with whom I have talked think the custom not only archaic, but thought-stifling. The Turkish authorities, thinking to extinguish this light of liberty, have greatly added to its flame, and their high-handed action has materially assisted the creation of a wider public opinion and a better understanding of this crucial problem.'" (*Ibid.*, pp. 115–16.) "L'autre missionaire, la femme dont je parle, était, elle,

of its wintry nights. As he mused in the gloom of his prison cell over those blissful days spent in the presence of his Master, there came to him One who alone could banish, by the light of His presence, the anguish that had settled upon his soul. His Comforter was none other than Bahá'u'lláh Himself. In His company Siyyid Ḥusayn was privileged to remain until the hour of his death. The hand of 'Azíz Khán-i-Sardár, which had struck down Ṭáhirih, was the hand that dealt the fatal blow to the Báb's amanuensis and sometime fellow-prisoner in Ádhirbáyján. I need not expatiate upon the circumstances of the death which that murderous Sardár inflicted upon him. Suffice it to say that he too, like those who went before, drank, in circumstances of shameful cruelty, the cup for which he had so long and so deeply yearned.

I now proceed to relate what befell the remaining companions of the Báb, those who had been privileged to share the horrors of the confinement with Bahá'u'lláh. From His own lips I have often heard the following account: "All those who were struck down by the storm that raged during that memorable year in Ṭihrán were Our fellow-prisoners in the Síyáh-Chál, where We were confined. We were all huddled together in one cell, our feet in stocks, and around our necks fastened the most galling of chains. The air we breathed was laden with the foulest impurities, while the floor on which

venue à Qazvín, et c'est assurément, en même temps que l'objet préféré de la vénération des Bábís, une des apparitions les plus frappantes et les plus intéressantes de cette religion." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 136.) "Beaucoup de gens qui l'ont connue et entendue à différentes époques de sa vie m'ont toujours fait la remarque, au contraire, que, pour une personne aussi notoirement savante et riche de lectures, le caractère principal de sa diction était une simplicité presque choquante; et quand elle parlait, ajoutait-on, on se sentait pourtant remué jusqu'au fond de l'âme, pénétré d'admiration, et les larmes coulaient des yeux." (*Ibid.*, p. 150.) "Bien que musulmans et Bábís se répandent aujourd'hui en éloges extraordinaires sur la beauté de la Consolation des Yeux, il est incontestable que l'esprit et le caractère de cette jeune femme étaient beaucoup plus remarquable encore. Ayant souvent, et, pour ainsi dire, quotidiennement assisté à des entretiens fort doctes, il paraît que, de bonne heure, elle y avait pris un grand intérêt, et il se trouva, un jour, qu'elle était parfaitement en état de suivre les subtiles discussions de son père, de son oncle, de son cousin, devenu son mari, et même de raisonner avec eux, et, souvent, de les étonner par la force et l'acuité de son intelligence. En Perse, ce n'est pas chose ordinaire que de voir des femmes appliquer leur esprit à de pareils emplois, mais ce n'est pas non plus un phénomène tout à fait rare; ce qui est là, comme ailleurs, vraiement extraordinaire, c'est de rencontrer une femme égale à Qurratu'l-'Ayn. Non seulement elle poussa la connaissance de l'arabe jusqu'à une perfection inusitée, mais elle devint encore éminente dans la science des traditions et celle des sens divers que l'on peut appliquer aux passages discutés du Qur'án et des grandes auteurs. Enfin elle passait à Qazvín, et à bon droit, pour un prodige." (*Ibid.*, p. 137.)

we sat was covered with filth and infested with vermin. No ray of light was allowed to penetrate that pestilential dungeon or to warm its icy-coldness. We were placed in two rows, each facing the other. We had taught them to repeat certain verses which, every night, they chanted with extreme fervour. 'God is sufficient unto me; He verily is the All-sufficing!' one row would intone, while the other would reply: 'In Him let the trusting trust.' The chorus of these gladsome voices would continue to peal out until the early hours of the morning. Their reverberation would fill the dungeon, and, piercing its massive walls, would reach the ears of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, whose palace was not far distant from the place where we were imprisoned. 'What means this sound?' he was reported to have exclaimed. 'It is the anthem the Bábís are intoning in their prison,' they replied. The Sháh made no further remarks, nor did he attempt to restrain the enthusiasm his prisoners, despite the horrors of their confinement, continued to display.

"One day, there was brought to Our prison a tray of roasted meat, which they informed Us the Sháh had ordered to be distributed among the prisoners. 'The Sháh,' We were told, 'faithful to a vow he made, has chosen this day to offer to you all this lamb in fulfilment of his pledge.' A deep silence fell upon Our companions, who expected Us to make answer on their behalf. 'We return this gift to you,' We replied; 'we can well dispense with this offer.' The answer We made would have greatly irritated the guards had they not been eager to devour the food we had refused to touch. Despite the hunger with which Our companions were afflicted, only one among them, a certain Mírzá Ḥusayn-i-Mutavallíy-i-Qumí, showed any desire to eat of the food the sovereign had chosen to spread before us. With a fortitude that was truly heroic, Our fellow-prisoners submitted, without a murmur, to endure the piteous plight to which they were reduced. Praise of God, instead of complaint of the treatment meted out to them by the Sháh, fell unceasingly from their lips—praise with which they sought to beguile the hardships of a cruel captivity.

"Every day Our gaolers, entering Our cell, would call the name of one of Our companions, bidding him arise and follow

them to the foot of the gallows. With what eagerness would the owner of that name respond to that solemn call! Relieved of his chains, he would spring to his feet and, in a state of uncontrollable delight, would approach and embrace Us. We would seek to comfort him with the assurance of an everlasting life in the world beyond, and, filling his heart with hope and joy, would send him forth to win the crown of glory. He would embrace, in turn, the rest of his fellow-prisoners and then proceed to die as dauntlessly as he had lived. Soon after the martyrdom of each of these companions, We would be informed by the executioner, who had grown to be friendly to Us, of the circumstances of the death of his victim, and of the joy with which he had endured his sufferings to the very end.

"We were awakened one night, ere break of day, by Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb-i-Shírází, who was bound with Us to the same chains. He had left Káẓimayn and followed Us to Ṭihrán, where he was arrested and thrown into prison. He asked Us whether We were awake, and proceeded to relate to Us his dream. 'I have this night,' he said, 'been soaring into a space of infinite vastness and beauty. I seemed to be uplifted on wings that carried me wherever I desired to go. A feeling of rapturous delight filled my soul. I flew in the midst of that immensity with a swiftness and ease that I cannot describe.' 'To-day,' We replied, 'it will be your turn to sacrifice yourself for this Cause. May you remain firm and steadfast to the end. You will then find yourself soaring in that same limitless space of which you dreamed, traversing with the same ease and swiftness the realm of immortal sovereignty, and gazing with that same rapture upon the Infinite Horizon.'

"That morning saw the gaoler again enter Our cell and call out the name of 'Abdu'l-Vahháb. Throwing off his chains, he sprang to his feet, embraced each of his fellow-prisoners, and, taking Us into his arms, pressed Us lovingly to his heart. That moment We discovered that he had no shoes to wear. We gave him Our own, and, speaking a last word of encouragement and cheer, sent him forth to the scene of his martyrdom. Later on, his executioner came to Us, praising in glowing language the spirit which that youth had shown.

How thankful We were to God for this testimony which the executioner himself had given!"

All this suffering and the cruel revenge the authorities had taken on those who had attempted the life of their sovereign failed to appease the anger of the Sháh's mother. Day and night she persisted in her vindictive clamour, demanding the execution of Bahá'u'lláh, whom she still regarded as the real author of the crime. "Deliver him to the executioner!" she insistently cried to the authorities. "What greater humiliation than this, that I, who am the mother of the Sháh, should be powerless to inflict upon that criminal the punishment so dastardly an act deserves!" Her cry for vengeance, which an impotent rage served to intensify, was doomed to remain unanswered. Despite her machinations, Bahá'u'lláh was saved from the fate she had so importunately striven to precipitate. The Prisoner was eventually released from His confinement, and was able to unfold and establish, beyond the confines of the kingdom of her son, a sovereignty the possibility of which she could never even have dreamed of. The blood shed in the course of that fateful year in Ṭihrán by that heroic band with whom Bahá'u'lláh had been imprisoned, was the ransom paid for His deliverance from the hand of a foe that sought to prevent Him from achieving the purpose for which God had destined Him. Ever since the time He espoused the Cause of the Báb, He had never neglected one single occasion to champion the Faith He had embraced. He had exposed Himself to the perils which the followers of the Faith had to face in its early days. He was the first of the Báb's disciples to set the example of renunciation and service to the Cause. Yet His life, beset as it was by the risks and dangers that a career such as His was sure to encounter, was spared by that same Providence who had chosen Him for a task which He, in His wisdom, deemed it as yet too soon to proclaim publicly.

The terror that convulsed Ṭihrán was but one of the many risks and dangers to which Bahá'u'lláh's life was exposed. Men, women, and children in the capital trembled at the ruthlessness with which the enemy pursued their victims. A youth named 'Abbás, a former servant of Ḥájí Sulaymán Khán, and fully informed, owing to the wide

circle of friends whom his master cultivated, of the names, the number, and the dwelling places of the Báb's disciples, was employed by the enemy as an instrument ready to hand for the prosecution of its designs. He had identified himself with the Faith of his master, and regarded himself as one of its zealous supporters. At the outset of the turmoil, he was arrested and compelled to betray all those whom he knew to be associated with the Faith. They sought by every manner of reward to induce him to reveal those who were his master's fellow-disciples, and warned him that, should he refuse to disclose their names, he would be subjected to inhuman tortures. He pledged his word that he would act according to their wishes and would inform the assistants of Ḥájí 'Alí Khán, the Ḥájibu'd-Dawlih, the Farrásh-Báshí, of their names and abodes. He was taken through the streets of Ṭihrán and directed to point out everyone he recognised as being a follower of the Báb. A number of people whom he had never met and known were in this manner delivered into the hands of Ḥájí 'Alí Khán's assistants—people who had never had any connection with the Báb and His Cause. These were able to recover their freedom only after having paid a heavy bribe to those who had captured them. Such was the greed of the Ḥájibu'd-Dawlih's attendants that they specially requested 'Abbás to salute as a sign of betrayal every person who he thought would be willing and able to pay large sums for his deliverance. They would even force him to betray such persons, threatening that his refusal would be fraught with grave danger to his own life. They would frequently promise to give him a share of the money they determined to extort from their victims.

This 'Abbás was taken to the Síyáh-Chál and introduced to Bahá'u'lláh, whom he had met previously on several occasions in the company of his master, in the hope that he would betray Him. They promised that the mother of the Sháh would amply reward him for such a betrayal. Every time he was taken into Bahá'u'lláh's presence, 'Abbás, after standing a few moments before Him and gazing upon His face, would leave the place, emphatically denying ever having seen Him. Having failed in their efforts, they resorted to poison, in the hope of obtaining the favour of the mother of

their sovereign. They were able to intercept the food that their Prisoner was permitted to receive from His home, and mixed with it the poison they hoped would be fatal to Him. This measure, though impairing the health of Bahá'u'lláh for years, failed to achieve its purpose.

The enemy was finally induced to cease regarding Him as the prime mover of that attempt, and decided to transfer the responsibility for this act to 'Aẓím, whom they now accused of being the real author of the crime. By this means they endeavoured to obtain the favour of the mother of the Sháh, a favour they greatly coveted. Ḥájí 'Alí Khán was only too happy to second their efforts. As he himself had taken no share in imprisoning Bahá'u'lláh, he seized upon the occasion which offered itself to denounce 'Azím, whom he had already succeeded in arresting, as the chief and responsible instigator.

The Russian minister, who, through one of his agents, was watching the developments of the situation and keeping in close touch with the condition of Bahá'u'lláh, addressed, through his interpreter, a strongly worded message to the Grand Vazír, in which he protested against his action, suggesting that a messenger should proceed, in the company of one of the government's trusted representatives and of Ḥájibu'd-Dawlih, to the Síyáh-Chál and there ask the newly recognised leader to declare publicly his opinion regarding Bahá'u'lláh's position. "Whatever that leader may declare," he wrote, "whether in praise or denunciation, I think ought to be immediately recorded and should serve as a basis for the final judgment which should be pronounced in this affair."

The Grand Vazír promised the interpreter that he would follow the minister's advice, and even appointed a time for the messenger to join the government representative and Ḥájibu'd-Dawlih and proceed with them to the Síyáh-Chál.

When 'Aẓím was questioned as to whether he regarded Bahá'u'lláh as the responsible leader of the group that had made the attempt on the Sháh's life, he answered: "The Leader of this community was none other than the Siyyid-i-Báb, who was slain in Tabríz, and whose martyrdom induced me to arise and avenge His death. I alone conceived this plan

and endeavoured to execute it. The youth who threw the Sháh from his horse was none other than Ṣádiq-i-Tabrízí, a servitor in a confectioner's shop in Ṭihrán who had been for two years in my service. He was fired with a desire even more burning than my own to avenge the martyrdom of his Leader. He acted too hastily, however, and failed to make certain the success of his attempt."

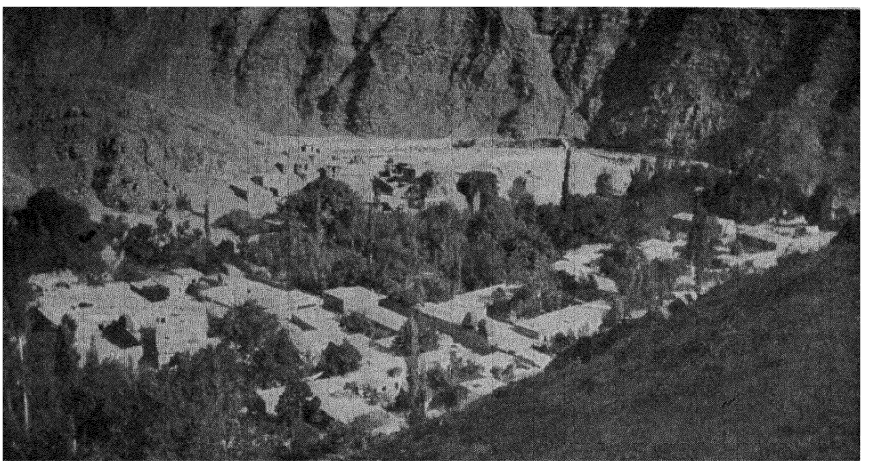
The words of his declaration were taken down by both the minister's interpreter and the Grand Vazír's representative, who submitted their records to Mírzá Áqá Khán. The documents which were placed in his hands were chiefly responsible for Bahá'u'lláh's release from His imprisonment.

'Azím was accordingly delivered into the hands of the 'ulamás, who, though themselves anxious to hasten his death, were prevented by the hesitancy of Mírzá Abu'l Qásim, the Imám-Jum'ih of Ṭihrán. Ḥájibu'd-Dawlih, because of the near approach of the month of Muḥarram, induced the 'ulamás to assemble on the upper floor of the barracks, where he succeeded in obtaining the presence of the Imám-Jum'ih, who still persisted in his refusal to consent to the death of 'Azím. He directed that the accused be brought to that place and there await the judgment that was to be pronounced against him. He was roughly conducted through the streets, overwhelmed with ridicule, and reviled by the populace. Through a subtle device which the enemy had contrived, they succeeded in obtaining a verdict for death. A siyyid armed with a club rushed at him and smashed his head. His example was followed by the people, who, with sticks, stones, and daggers, fell upon him and mutilated his body. Ḥájí Mírzá Jání also was among those who suffered martyrdom in the course of the agitation that followed the attempt on the life of the Sháh. Owing to the disinclination of the Grand Vazír to harm him, he was secretly put to death.

The conflagration kindled in the capital spread to the adjoining provinces, bringing in its wake devastation and misery to countless innocent people among the subjects of the Sháh. It ravaged Mázindarán, the home of Bahá'u'lláh, and was the signal for acts of violence which were directed mainly against all His possessions in that province. Two of the Báb's devoted disciples, Muhammad-Taqí Khán and

'Abdu'l-Vahháb, both residents of Núr, suffered martyrdom as the result of that turmoil.

The enemies of the Faith, finding to their disappointment that Bahá'u'lláh's deliverance from prison was almost assured, sought by intimidating their sovereign to involve Him in fresh complications and thus encompass His death. The folly of Mírzá Yaḥyá, who, driven by his idle hopes, had sought to secure for himself and the band of his foolish supporters a supremacy which hitherto he had in vain laboured to obtain, served as a further pretext for the enemy to urge the Sháh to take drastic measures for the destruction



GENERAL VIEW OF TÁKUR IN MÁZINDARÁN

of whatever influence his Prisoner still retained in Mázindarán.

The alarming reports received by the Sháh, who had scarcely recovered from his wounds, stirred in him a terrible thirst for revenge. He summoned the Grand Vazír and reprimanded him for having failed to maintain order and discipline among the people of his own province, who were bound to him by ties of kinship. Disconcerted by the rebuke of his sovereign, he expressed his readiness to fulfil whatever he would direct him to do. He was bidden despatch immediately to that province several regiments, with strict orders to repress with a ruthless hand the disturbers of the public peace.

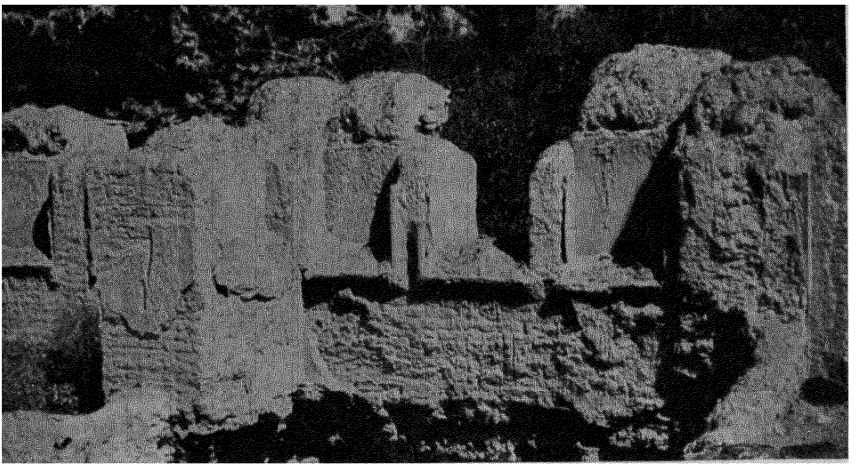
The Grand Vazír, though fully aware of the exaggerated character of the reports that had been submitted to him, found himself compelled, owing to the Sháh's insistence, to order the despatch of the Sháh-Sún regiment, headed by Ḥusayn-'Alí Khán-i-Sháh-Sún, to the village of Tákur, in the district of Núr, where the home of Báhá'u'lláh was situated. He gave the supreme command into the hands of his nephew, Mírzá Abú-Ṭálib Khán, brother-in-law of Mírzá Ḥasan, who was Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother. Mírzá Áqá Khán urged him to exercise the utmost caution and restraint while encamping in that village. "Whatever excesses," he urged him, "are committed by your men will react unfavourably on the prestige of Mírzá Ḥasan and be the cause of affliction to your own sister." He bade him investigate the nature of these reports and not to encamp more than three days in the vicinity of that village.

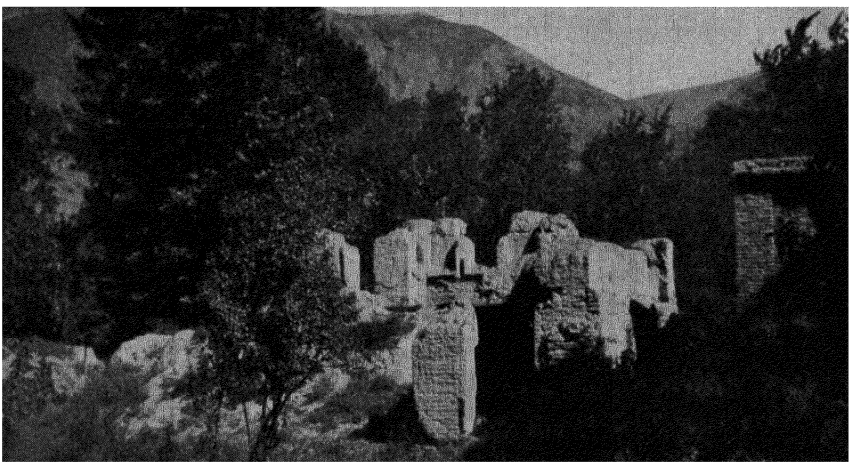
The Grand Vazír afterwards summoned Ḥusayn-'Alí Khán and exhorted him to conduct himself with the utmost circumspection and wisdom. "Mírzá Abú-Ṭálib," he said, "is still young and inexperienced. I have specially chosen him owing to his kinship to Mírzá Hasan. I trust that he will, for the sake of his sister, refrain from causing unnecessary injury to the inhabitants of Tákur. Being superior to him in age and experience, you must set him a noble example and impress on him the necessity of serving the interests of both government and people. You must never allow him to undertake any operations without having previously consulted with you." He assured Ḥusayn-'Alí Khán that he had issued written instructions to the chieftains of that district, calling upon them to come to his assistance whenever required.

Mírzá Abú-Ṭálib Khán, flushed with pride and enthusiasm, forgot the counsels of moderation the Grand Vazír had given him. He refused to be influenced by the pressing appeals of Ḥusayn-'Alí Khán, who entreated him not to provoke an unnecessary conflict with the people. No sooner had he reached the pass which divided the district of Núr from the adjoining province, which was not far distant from Tákur, than he ordered his men to prepare for an attack upon the people of that village. Ḥusayn-'Alí Khán ran to him in despair and begged him to refrain from such an act. "It is

for me," Mírzá Abú-Ṭálib haughtily retorted, "who am your superior, to decide what measures should be taken and in what manner I should serve my sovereign."

A sudden attack was launched upon the defenceless people





RUINS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S HOUSE, ORIGINALLY BELONGING TO THE VAZÍR, HIS FATHER, IN TÁKUR, MÁZINDARÁN

of Tákur. Surprised by so unexpected and fierce an onslaught, they appealed to Mírzá Hasan, who asked to be introduced into the presence of Mírzá Abú-Ṭálib but was refused admittance. "Tell him," was the commander's message, "that

I am charged by my sovereign to order a wholesale massacre of the people of this village, to capture its women and confiscate their property. For your sake, however, I am willing to spare such women as take refuge in your house."

Mírzá Ḥasan, indignant at this refusal, severely censured him and, denouncing the action of the Sháh, returned to his home. The men of that village had meanwhile left their dwellings and sought refuge in the neighbouring mountains. Their women, abandoned to their fate, betook themselves to the home of Mírzá Ḥasan, whom they implored to protect them from the enemy.

The first act of Mírzá Abú-Ṭálib Khán was directed against the house Bahá'u'lláh had inherited from the Vazír, His father, and of which He was the sole possessor. That house had been royally furnished and was decorated with vessels of inestimable value. He ordered his men to break open all its treasuries and to take away their contents. Such things as he was unable to carry away, he ordered to be destroyed. Some were shattered, others were burned. Even the rooms, which were more stately than those of the palaces of Ṭihrán, were disfigured beyond repair; the beams were burned down and the decorations utterly ruined.

He next turned to the houses of the people, which he levelled with the ground, appropriating to himself and his men whatever valuables they contained. The entire village, despoiled and deserted by its men inhabitants, was delivered to the flames. Not able to find any able-bodied men, he ordered that a search be conducted in the neighbouring mountains. Any who were found were to be either shot or captured. All they could lay their hands upon were a few aged men and shepherds who had been unable to proceed further afield in their flight from the enemy. They discovered two men lying in the distance on the slopes of a mountain beside a running brook. Their weapons gleaming under the rays of the sun had betrayed them. Finding them asleep, they shot them both from across the brook which intervened between the assailants and their victims. They recognised them as 'Abdu'l-Vahháb and Muḥammad-Taqí Khán. The former was shot dead, while the latter was severely wounded. They were carried into the presence of Mírzá Abú-Tálib,

who did his best to preserve the life of the victim whom he wished, owing to his far-famed courage, to take with him to Ṭihrán as a trophy of his victory. His efforts failed, however, for Muḥammad-Taqí Khán, two days after, died from his wounds. The few men they had been able to capture were led in chains to Ṭihrán and thrown into the same underground dungeon where Bahá'u'lláh had been confined. Among them was Mullá 'Alí-Bábá, who, together with a number of his fellow-prisoners, perished in that dungeon as a result of the hardships he had endured.

The year after, this same Mírzá Abú-Ṭálib was stricken with plague and taken in a state of wretched misery to Shimírán. Shunned by even his nearest kindred, he lay on his sick-bed until this same Mírzá Ḥasan, whom he had so haughtily insulted, offered to tend his sores and bear him company in his days of humiliation and loneliness. He was on the brink of death when the Grand Vazír visited him and found none at his bedside but the one whom he had so rudely treated. That very day that wretched tyrant expired, bitterly disappointed at the failure of all the hopes he had fondly cherished.

The commotion that had seized Ṭihrán, the effects of which had been severely felt in Núr and the surrounding district, spread as far as Yazd and Nayríz, where a considerable number of the Báb's disciples were seized and inhumanly martyred. The whole of Persia seemed, indeed, to have felt the shock of that great convulsion. Its tide swept as far as the remotest hamlets of the distant provinces, and brought in its wake untold sufferings to the remnants of a persecuted community. Governors, no less than their subordinates, inflamed with greed and revenge, seized the occasion to enrich themselves and obtain the favour of their sovereign. Without mercy, moderation, or shame, they employed any means, however base and lawless, to extort from the innocent the benefits they themselves coveted. Forsaking every principle of justice and decency, they arrested, imprisoned, and tortured whomsoever they suspected of being a Bábí, and would hasten to inform Násiri'd-Dín Sháh in Ṭihrán of the victories achieved over a detested opponent.

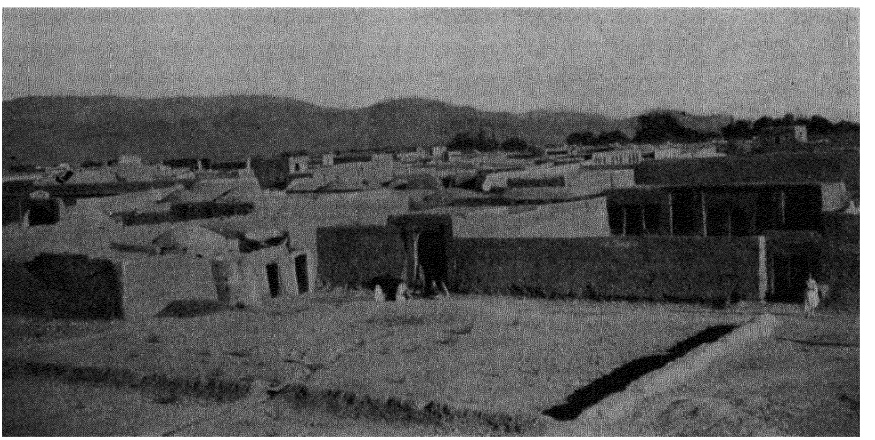
In Nayríz the full effects of that turmoil revealed them-

selves in the treatment accorded by its rulers and people to the followers of the Báb. About two months after the attempt on the life of the Sháh, a young man named Mírzá 'Alí, whose exceptional courage had earned for him the surname of 'Alíy-i-Sardár, distinguished himself by the extreme solicitude he extended to the survivors of the struggle which ended with the death of Vahíd and his supporters. He was often seen in the darkness of the night to emerge from his shelter, carrying whatever aid was in his power to the widows and orphans who had suffered from the consequences of that tragedy. To those in need he distributed food and garments with noble generosity, tended their injuries, and comforted them in their sorrow. The sight of the continuous sufferings of these innocent ones stirred the fierce indignation of some of Mírzá 'Alí's companions, who undertook to wreak their vengeance upon Zaynu'l-'Abidín Khán, who was still dwelling in Nayríz and whom they regarded as the author of their misfortunes. Believing that he had still in his heart a desire to subject them to even further afflictions, they determined to take his life. They surprised him in the public bath, where they succeeded in accomplishing their purpose. This led to an upheaval that recalled in its concluding stages the horror of the butcheries of Zanján.

Zaynu'l-'Abidín Khán's widow pressed Mírzá Na'ím, who held the reins of authority in his grasp and was then residing in Shíráz, to avenge the blood of her husband, promising that she would in return bestow all her jewels upon him and would transfer to his name whatever he might desire of her possessions. Through treachery, the authorities succeeded in capturing a considerable number of the Báb's followers, many of whom were savagely beaten. All were thrown into prison, pending the receipt of instructions from Ṭihrán. The Grand Vazír submitted the list of names he had received, together with the report that accompanied it, to the Sháh, who expressed his extreme satisfaction at the success that had attended the efforts of his representative in Shíráz, and whom he amply rewarded for his signal service. He asked that all those who were captured be brought to the capital.

I shall not attempt to record the various circumstances that led to the carnage which marked the termination of

that episode. I would refer my reader to the graphic and detailed account which Mírzá Shafí'-i-Nayrízí has written in a separate booklet, in which he refers with accuracy and force to every detail of that moving event. Suffice it to say that no less than one hundred and eighty of the Báb's valiant disciples suffered martyrdom. A like number were wounded and, though incapacitated by their injuries, were ordered to leave for Ṭihrán. Only twenty-eight persons among them survived the hardships of the journey to the capital. Of these twenty-eight, fifteen were taken to the gallows on the very day of their arrival. The rest were thrown into prison and made to suffer for two years the most horrible atrocities.



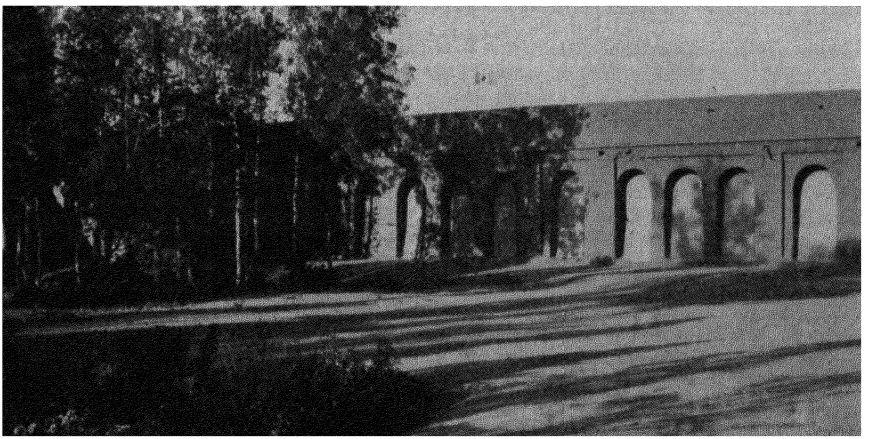
VIEW OF ÁBÁDIH

Though eventually released, many of them perished on their way to their homes, exhausted by the trials of a long and cruel captivity.

A large number of their fellow-disciples were slain in Shíráz by order of Ṭahmásb-Mírzá. The heads of two hundred of these victims were placed on bayonets and carried triumphantly by their oppressors to Ábádih, a village in Fárs. They were intending to take them to Ṭihrán, when a royal messenger commanded them to abandon their project, whereupon they decided to bury the heads in that village.

As to the women, who were six hundred in number, half of them were released in Nayríz, while the rest were carried,

each two being forced to ride together on an unsaddled horse, to Shíráz, where, after being submitted to severe tortures, they were abandoned to their fate. Many perished on their way to that city; many yielded up their lives to the afflictions they were made to endure ere they recovered their freedom. My pen shrinks in horror in attempting to describe what befell those valiant men and women who were made to suffer so severely for their Faith. The wanton barbarity that characterised the treatment meted out to them reached the lowest depths of infamy in the concluding stages



THE HADÍQATU'R-RAHMÁN, WHERE THE HEADS OF THE MARTYRS OF NAYRÍZ LIE BURIED

of that lamentable episode. What I have attempted to recount of the horrors of the siege of Zanján, of the indignities heaped upon Ḥujjat and his supporters, pales before the glaring ferocity of the atrocities perpetrated a few years later in Nayríz and Shíráz. A pen abler than mine to describe in all their tragic details these unspeakable savageries will, I trust, be found to place on record a tale which, however grim its features, must ever remain as one of the noblest evidences of the faith which the Cause of the Báb was able to inspire in His followers.[1]

[1] "Chose curieuse, on respecta les femmes qu'on rassembla et qu'on conduisit au mont Bíyábán. Il yavait parmi elles deux vieillards sans force pour se battre: Mullá Muḥammad-Músá, foulon, et Mashhadí Báqir, teinturier. On les tua. Mashhadí Báqir fut tué par

The confession of 'Aẓím freed Bahá'u'lláh from the danger to which His life had been exposed. The circumstances of the death of him who had declared himself the chief instigator of that crime served to abate the wrath with which an enraged populace clamoured for the immediate punishment of so daring an attempt. The cries of rage and vengeance, the appeals for immediate retribution, which had hitherto been focussed on Bahá'u'lláh were now diverted from Him. The ferocity of those claimant denunciations was, by degrees, much allayed. The conviction grew firmer in the minds of the responsible authorities in Ṭihrán that Bahá'u'lláh, hitherto regarded as the arch-foe of Naṣiri'd-

'Alí Big, capitaine des soldats Nayrízís. Il lui coupa la tête et la remit à un enfant: puis il prit la nièce de sa victime, lui mit sur la tête un voile noir, et montant à cheval, il la poussa jusqu'auprès de Mírzá Na'ím. Celui-ci se trouvait au mont Bíyábán, dans un jardin assis sur une pierre. Quand 'Alí Big arriva auprès de lui il lui jeta la tête de Báqir, et poussant d'un brusque coup la fillette qui tomba la face contre terre il s'écria: 'Nous avons fait ce que tu voulais, les Bábís n'existent plus.' Ákhúnd Mullá 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn, sur l'ordre de Mírzá Na'ím, eut la bouche remplie de terre; puis un ghulám lui tira un coup de fusil dans la tête, mais sans le tuer. Il y eut environ 603 femmes d'arrêtées. On semit en route avec les prisonniers jusqu'au moulin appelé Takht qui est tout près de Nayríz. Notre auteur raconte l'anecdote suivante comme preuve de la férocité des vainqueurs: 'J'étais bien jeune, alors, dit-il, et je suivais ma mère qui avait un autre fils plus jeune que moi. Un nommé Asadu'lláh avait pris mon frère sur ses épaules et le portait. L'enfant avait un chapeau avec quelques ornements. Un cavalier qui nous accompagnait, vit le chapeau, s'approcha et l'arracha avec tant de brutalité qu'il saisit en même temps le bébé par les cheveux. L'enfant alla rouler à dix mètres de là. Ma pauvre mère le trouva évanoui.' Je ne m'appesantirai pas sur les horreurs qui suivirent cette victoire. Qu'il nous suffise de savoir que Mírzá Na'ím monta à cheval, précédé et suivi d'hommes portant des piques au bout desquelles étaient fichées les têtes des martyrs. On poussait les prisonniers à coups de fouets ou de sabres. On poussait les femmes dans les fossés pleines d'eau. La nuit se passa au caravansarai Shírází. Le matin on fit sortir les femmes toutes nues et l'on s'amusa à les frapper à coups de pied, de pierres, de bâton, on leur crachait dessus. Quand on fut fatigué de ce jeu, on les conduisit à l'école de l'endroit, où elles restèrent 20 jours au milieu des insultes et des outrages. Quatre-vingt Bábís liés dix par dix furent confiés à 100 soldats pour être conduits à Shíráz. Siyyid Mír Muḥammad 'Abd mourut de froid à khánih-gird, d'autres moururent un peu plus loin. On leur coupait la tête au fur et à mesure. Enfin, ils entrèrent à Shíráz par la porte de Sa'dí. On les promena dans toute la ville, puis on les enchaîna dans la prison. Les femmes furent au bout de 20 jours sorties du collège où elles avaient été enfermées et divisées en deux groupes. Un groupe fut rendu à la liberté, l'autre fut dirigé sur Shíráz avec d'autres prisonniers, hommes qui avaient été arrêtés sur ces entrefaites. Arrivée à Shíráz, la caravane fut encore divisée en deux: les femmes furent dirigées vers le caravansarai Sháh Mír 'Alí-Ḥamzih, et les hommes allèrent rejoindre en prison leurs coreligionnaires. Le lendemain fut un jour de fête. Le Gouverneur, assisté de tout ce que Shíráz comptait de grands et de nobles, fit comparaître devant lui les prisonniers. Un Nayrízí nommé Jalál, et que Na'ím avait surnommé Bulbul, se chargeait de dénoncer ses compatriotes. Le premier qui comparut fut Mullá 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn: on lui ordonna de maudire le Báb; il s'y refusa et sa tête roula sur le sol. Ḥájí fils d'Aṣghar, 'Alí Garm-Sírí, Ḥusayn fils de Hádí Khayrí, Ṣádiq fils de Ṣáliḥ, Muḥammad-ibn-i-Muḥsin furent exécutés. Les femmes furent relâchées et le restant des hommes fut conduit en prison. Le Sháh ayant réclamé l'envoi des prisonniers, 73 furent expédiés sur Ṭihrán. Vingt-deux moururent en route et parmi eux Mullá 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn qui mourut à Saydán, 'Alí fils de Karbilá'í Zamán, à Ábádih; Akbar fils de Karbilá'í Muḥammad à Qinárih; Ḥasan

Dín Sháh, was by no means involved in any conspiracy against the sovereign's life. Mírzá Áqá Khán was therefore encouraged to send his trusted representative, a. man named Ḥájí 'Alí, to the Síyáh-Chál, and to present the order for His release to the Prisoner.

Upon his arrival, the sight which the emissary beheld filled him with grief and surprise. The spectacle which met his eyes was one he could scarcely believe. He wept as he saw Bahá'u'lláh chained to a floor that was infested with vermin, His neck weighed down by galling chains, His face laden with sorrow, ungroomed and dishevelled, breathing the pestilential atmosphere of the most terrible of dungeons.

fils d''Abdu'l-Vahháb, Mullá 'Alí-Akbar, à Iṣfáhán; Karbilá'í Báqir fils de Muḥammad-Zamán, Ḥasan et son frère Dhu'l-Faqár, Karbilá'í Naqí et 'Alí son fils, Valí Khán, Mullá Karím, Akbar Ra'ís, Ghulám-'Alí, fils de Pír Muḥammad, Naqí et Muḥammad-'Alí, fils de Muḥammad, en cours de route. Le reste parvint à Ṭihrán, et le jour même de leur arrivée, 15 d'entre eux furent exécutés, entr'autres Áqá Siyyid 'Alí, celui qui avait été laissé pour mort, Karbilá'í Rajab, le barbier; Sayfu'd-Dín, Sulaymán fils de K. Salmán, Ja'far, Murád Khayrí, Ḥusayn, fils de K. Báqir, Mírzá Abu'l-Ḥasan, fils de Mírzá Taqí, Mullá Muḥammad-'Alí, fils de Áqá Mihdí. Vingt-trois personnes moururent en prison, treize furent délivrés après trois ans, le seul qui resta à Ṭihrán, pour y mourir peu de temps après fut Karbilá'í Zaynu'l-'Ábidín." (A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 421–4.) "Their persecutors, having captured and killed the men, seized and slew forty women and children in the following manner: They placed them in the midst of a cave, heaped up in the cave a vast quantity of firewood, poured naphtha over the faggots strewn around, and set fire to it. One of those who took part in this deed related as follows: 'After two or three days, I ascended that mountain and removed the door from the cave. I saw that the fire had sunk down into the ashes; but all those women with their children were seated, each in some corner, clasping their little ones to their bosoms, and sitting round in a circle, just as they were when we left them. Some, as though in despair or in mourning, had suffered their heads to sink down on their knees in grief, and all retained the postures they had assumed. I was filled with amazement, thinking that the fire had not burned them. Full of apprehension and awe, I entered. Then I saw that all were burned and charred to a cinder, yet had they never made a movement which would cause the crumbling away of the bodies. As soon as I touched them with my hand, however, they crumbled away to ashes. And all of us, when we had seen this, repented what we had done. But of what avail was this?' " (The "Taríkh-i-Jadíd," pp. 128–31.) "The author of the 'Táríkh-i-Jadíd,' in concluding this narrative, takes occasion to point out how literally was fulfilled in these events the prophecy contained in a tradition referring to the signs which shall mark the appearance of the Imám Mihdí: 'In Him (shall be) the perfection of Moses, the preciousness of Jesus, and the patience of Job; His saints shall be abased in His time, and their heads shall be exchanged as presents, even as the heads of the Turk and the Daylamite are exchanged as presents; they shall be slain and burned, and shall be afraid, fearful, and dismayed; the earth shall be dyed with their blood, and lamentation and wailing shall prevail amongst their women; these are my saints indeed.' [This tradition, called Ḥadíth-i-Jábir, is also quoted from the "Kafí," one of the principal compilations of shí'ite traditions, in the "Íqán."] When I was at Yazd in the early summer of 1888, I became acquainted with a Bábí holding a position of some importance under government, two of whose ancestors had taken a prominent part in the suppression of the Nayríz insurrection. Of what he told me concerning this the following is a summary taken from my diary for May 18th, 1888: 'My maternal grandfather Mihr-'Alí Khán Shujá'u'l-Mulk and my great-uncle Mírzá Na'ím both took an active part in the Nayríz war—but on the wrong side. When orders came to Shíráz to quell the insur-

"Accursed be Mírzá Áqá Khán!" he burst forth, as his eyes recognised Bahá'u'lláh in the gloom that surrounded Him. "God knows I had never imagined that you could have been subjected to so humiliating a captivity. I should never have thought that the Grand Vazír could have dared commit so heinous an act."

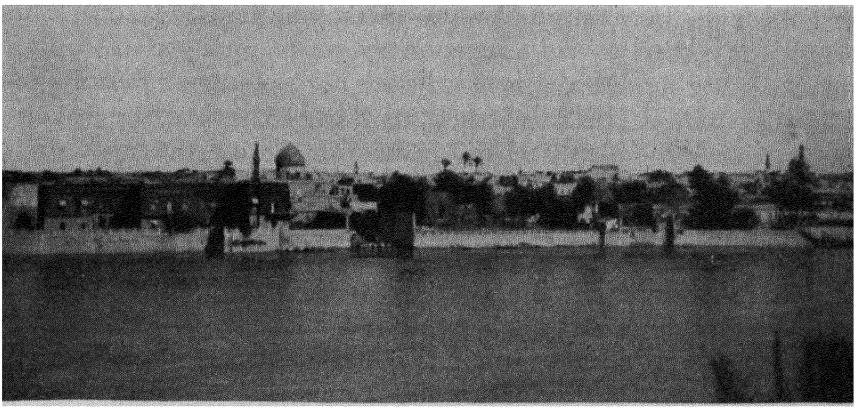
He removed the mantle from his shoulders and presented it to Bahá'u'lláh, entreating Him to wear it when in the presence of the minister and his counsellors. Bahá'u'lláh refused his request, and, wearing the dress of a prisoner, proceeded straightway to the seat of the imperial government.

The first word the Grand Vazír was moved to address to his Captive was the following: "Had you chosen to take my advice, and had you dissociated yourself from the faith of the Siyyid-i-Báb, you would never have suffered the pains and indignities that have been heaped upon you." "Had you, in your turn," Bahá'u'lláh replied, "followed my counsels, the affairs of the government would not have reached so critical a stage."

He was immediately reminded of the conversation he had

rection, my grandfather was instructed to take command of the expedition sent for that purpose. He did not like the task committed to him and communicated his reluctance to two of the 'ulamás, who, however, reassured him, declaring that the war on which he was about to engage was a holy enterprise sanctioned by Religion, and that he would receive reward therefor in Paradise. So he went, and what happened happened. After they had killed 750 men, they took the women and children, stripped them almost naked, mounted them on donkeys, mules, and camels, and led them through rows of heads hewn from the lifeless bodies of their fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands towards Shíráz. On their arrival there, they were placed in a ruined caravanserai just outside the Iṣfáhán gate and opposite to an Imám-zádih, their captors taking up their quarters under some trees hard by. Here they remained for a long while, subjected to many insults and hardships, and many of them died. Now see the judgment of God on the oppressors; for of those chiefly responsible for these cruelties not one but came to a bad end and died overwhelmed with calamity. My grandfather Mihr-'Alí Khán presently fell ill and was dumb till the day of his death. Just as he was about to expire, those who stood round him saw from the movement of his lips that he was whispering something. They leant down to catch his last words and heard him murmur faintly "Bábí! Bábí! Bábí!" three times. Then he fell back dead. My great-uncle Mírzá Na'ím fell into disgrace with the government and was twice fined ten thousand túmáns the first time, fifteen thousand the second. But his punishment did not cease here, for he was made to suffer diverse tortures. His hands were put in the "il-chik" (the torture consists in placing pieces of wood between the victim's fingers, binding them round tightly with cord. Cold water is then thrown over the cord to cause its further contraction) and his feet in the "tang-i-Qájár" (or "Qájár squeeze," an instrument of torture resembling the "boot" once used in England, for the introduction of which Persia is indebted to the dynasty which at present occupies the throne); he was made to stand bareheaded in the sun with treacle smeared over his head to attract the flies; and, after suffering these and other torments yet more painful and humiliating, he was dismissed a disgraced and ruined man.'" ("A Traveller's Narrative," Note H, pp. 191–3.)

had with Him on the occasion of the Báb's martyrdom. The words, "the flame that has been kindled will blaze forth more fiercely than ever," flashed through the mind of Mírzá Áqá Khán. "The warning you uttered," he remarked, "has, alas, been fulfilled. What is it that you advise me now to





VIEWS OF BAGHDÁD

do?" "Command the governors of the realm,"[2] was the instant reply, "to cease shedding the blood of the innocent, to cease plundering their property, to cease dishonouring their women and injuring their children. Let them cease the persecution of the Faith of the Báb; let them abandon the idle hope of wiping out its followers."

That same day orders were given, through a circular addressed to all the governors of the realm, bidding them desist from their acts of cruelty and shame. "What you have done is enough," Mírzá Áqá Khán wrote them. "Cease arresting and punishing the people. Disturb no longer the peace and tranquillity of your countrymen." The Sháh's government had been deliberating as to the most effective measures that should be taken to rid the country, once and for all, of the curse with which it had been afflicted. No sooner had Bahá'u'lláh recovered His freedom than the decision of the government was handed to Him, informing Him that within a month of the issuing of this order, He, with His family, was expected to leave Tihrán for a place beyond the confines of Persia.

The Russian minister, as soon as he learned of the action which the government contemplated taking, volunteered to take Bahá'u'lláh under his protection, and invited Him to go to Russia. He refused the offer and chose instead to leave for 'Iráq. Nine months after His return from Karbilá, on the first day of the month of Rabí'u'th-Thání, in the year 1269 A.H.,[1] Bahá'u'lláh, accompanied by the members of His family, among whom were the Most Great Branch[2] and Áqáy-i-Kalim,[3] and escorted by a member of the imperial body-guard and an official representing the Russian legation, set out from Ṭihrán on His journey to Baghdád.

[1] January 12, 1853 A.D. [2] 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

[3] Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sister, then a child seven years of age, accompanied the exiles.

EPILOGUE

NEVER had the fortunes of the Faith proclaimed by the Báb sunk to a lower ebb than when Bahá'u'lláh was banished from His native land to 'Iráq. The Cause for which the Báb had given His life, for which Bahá'u'lláh had toiled and suffered, seemed to be on the very verge of extinction. Its force appeared to have been spent, its resistance irretrievably broken. Discouragements and disasters, each more devastating in its effect than the preceding one, had succeeded one another with bewildering rapidity, sapping its vitality and dimming the hope of its stoutest supporters. Indeed, to a superficial reader of the pages of Nabíl's narrative, the whole story from its very beginning appears to be a mere recital of reverses and massacres, of humiliations and disappointments, each more severe than the previous one, culminating at last in the banishment of Bahá'u'lláh from His own country. To the sceptical reader, unwilling to recognise the celestial potency with which that Faith was endowed, the entire conception that had evolved in the mind of its Author seems to have been foredoomed to failure. The work of the Báb, so gloriously conceived, so heroically undertaken, would appear to have ended in a colossal disaster. To such a reader, the life of the ill-fated Youth of Shíráz would seem, judging from the cruel blows it sustained, to be one of the saddest and most fruitless that had ever been the lot of mortal men. That short and heroic career, which, swift as a meteor, flashed across the firmament of Persia, and seemed for a time to have brought the longed-for light of eternal salvation into the gloom that encircled the country, was plunged at last into an abyss of darkness and despair.

Every step He took, every endeavour He made, had but served to intensify the sorrows and disappointments that weighed upon His soul. The plan He had, at the very outset of His career, conceived of inaugurating His Mission with a public proclamation in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina

failed to materialise as He had hoped. The Sherif of Mecca, to whom Quddús was bidden deliver His Message, accorded him a reception that betrayed by its icy indifference the contemptuous disregard in which the Cause of a Youth of Shíráz was held by the ruler of Ḥijáz and custodian of its Ka'bih. The project He had in mind of returning triumphantly from His pilgrimage to the cities of Karbilá and Najaf, where He hoped to establish His Cause, in the very heart of that stronghold of shí'ah orthodoxy, was likewise hopelessly shattered. The programme which He had thought out, the essentials of which He had already communicated to the chosen nineteen of His disciples, remained for the most part unfulfilled. The moderation He had exhorted them to observe was forgotten in the first flush of enthusiasm that seized the early missionaries of His Faith, which behaviour was in no small measure responsible for the failure of the hopes He had so fondly cherished. The Mu'tamid, that wise and sagacious ruler, who had so ably warded off the danger with which that precious Life was threatened, and who had proved his capacity to render Him services of such distinction as few of His more modest companions could have hoped to offer, was suddenly taken from Him, leaving Him at the mercy of the perfidious Gurgín Khán, the most detestable and unscrupulous of all His enemies. The Báb's only chance of meeting Muḥammad Sháh—a meeting which He Himself had requested and on which He had pinned His fondest hopes—was dashed to the ground by the intervention of the cowardly and capricious Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, who trembled at the thought lest His contact with the sovereign, already unduly inclined to befriend that Cause, should prove fatal to his own interests. The attempts, inspired and initiated by the Báb, which two of His foremost disciples, Mullá 'Alíy-i-Basṭámí and Shaykh Sa'íd-i-Hindí, had made to introduce the Faith, the one in Turkish territory and the other in India, ended in dismal failure. The first enterprise collapsed at its very outset by reason of the cruel martyrdom of its promoter, whilst the latter was productive of what might seem a negligible result, its only fruit being the conversion of a certain siyyid whose chequered career of service was brought to a sudden end in Luristán by the action of the treacherous Ildirím

Mírzá. The captivity to which the Báb Himself, during the greater part of the years of His ministry, was condemned; His isolation in the mountain fastnesses of Ádhirbáyján from the body of His followers, who were being sorely tried by a rapacious enemy; above all, the tragedy of His own martyrdom, so intense, so terribly humiliating, would appear to have marked the lowest depths of ignominy which so noble a Cause, from the very hour of its birth, was doomed to suffer. His death, the culmination of a swift and stormy career, would seem to have set the seal of failure upon a task which, however heroic in the efforts it inspired, was impossible of achievement.

Much as He Himself had suffered, the agony He was made to endure was but a drop compared to the calamities which were to rain down upon the multitude of His avowed followers. The cup of sorrow that had touched His lips had yet to be drained to its very dregs by those who still remained after Him. The catastrophe of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, which robbed Him of His ablest lieutenants, Quddús and Mullá Ḥusayn, and which engulfed no less than three hundred and thirteen of His staunch companions, came as the cruelest blow that had yet fallen upon Him, and enveloped with a shroud of darkness the closing days of His fast-ebbing life. The struggle of Nayríz, with its attendant horrors and cruelties, involving as it did the loss of Vaḥíd, the most learned, the most influential, and the most accomplished among the followers of the Báb, was an added blow to the resources and numbers of those who continued to hold aloft the torch in their hands. The siege of Zanján, following closely in the wake of the disaster that had befallen the Faith in Nayríz, and marked by the butcheries with which the name of that province will ever remain associated, depleted still further the ranks of the upholders of the Faith, and deprived them of the sustaining strength with which the presence of Hujjat inspired them. With him was gone the last outstanding figure among the representative leaders of the Faith who towered, by virtue of their ecclesiastical authority, their learning, their fearlessness and force of character, above the rank and file of their fellow-disciples. The flower of the

Báb's followers had been mown down in a ruthless carnage, leaving behind it a vast company of enslaved women and children, who groaned beneath the yoke of an unrelenting foe. Their leaders, who, alike by their knowledge and example, had fed and sustained the flame that glowed in those valiant hearts, had also perished, their work seemingly abandoned amidst the confusion that afflicted a persecuted community.

Of all those who had shown themselves capable of carrying on the work which the Báb had handed down to His followers, Bahá'u'lláh alone remained.[1] All the rest had fallen by the sword of the enemy. Mírzá Yaḥyá, the nominal leader of the band that survived the Báb, had ingloriously sought refuge in the mountains of Mázindarán from the perils of the turmoil that had seized the capital. In the guise of a dervish, kashkúl[2] in hand, he had deserted his companions and fled from the scene of danger to the forests of Gílán. Siyyid Ḥusayn, the Báb's amanuensis, and Mírzá Aḥmad, his collaborator, who were both well-versed in the teachings and implications of the newly revealed Bayán and, by virtue of their intimacy with their Master and their familiarity with the precepts of His Faith, were in a position to enlighten the understanding, and consolidate the foundations of the faith, of their companions, lay in chains in the Síyáh-Chál of Ṭihrán, cut off entirely from the body of the believers who so greatly needed their counsel, both doomed to suffer, at an early date, a cruel martyrdom. Even His own maternal uncle, who, ever since His childhood, had surrounded Him with a paternal solicitude that no father could have surpassed, who had rendered Him signal services in the early days of His sufferings in Shíráz, and who, had he been allowed to survive Him by only a few years, could have ren-

[1] Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl quotes, in his "Farà'id" (pp. 50–51), the following remarkable tradition from Muḥammad, which is recognised as an authentic utterance of the Prophet and to which Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Vahháb-i-Sha'ráni refers in his work entitled "Kitábu'l-Yavágít-i-va'l-Javáhir": "All of them [the companions of the Qá'im] shall be slain except One who shall reach the plain of 'Akká, the Banquet-Hall of God." The full text is also mentioned, according to Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl, by Shaykh Ibnu'l-'Arabí in his "Futúḥát-i-Makkíyyih."

[2] "A hollow receptacle of about the size and shape of a cocoa-nut, round the orifice of which two chains are attached at four points to serve as a handle. It is used by dervishes as an alms-basket." ("A Traveller's Narrative," p. 51, note 3.)

dered inestimable services to His Cause, languished in prison, forlorn and hopeless of ever continuing the work that was so close to his heart. Ṭáhirih, that flaming emblem of His Cause who, alike by her indomitable courage, her impetuous character, her dauntless faith, her fiery ardour and vast knowledge, seemed for a time able to win the whole womanhood of Persia to the Cause of her Beloved, fell, alas, at the very hour when victory seemed near at hand, a victim to the wrath of a calumnious enemy. The influence of her work, the course of which was so prematurely arrested, seemed to those who stood near as they lowered her into the pit that served as her grave, to have been completely extinguished. The Báb's remaining Letters of the Living either had perished by the sword or were fettered in prison, or again were leading an obscure life in some remote corner of the realm. The body of the Báb's voluminous writings suffered, for the most part, a fate no less humiliating than that which had befallen His disciples. Many of His copious works were utterly obliterated, others were torn and reduced to ashes, a few were corrupted, much was seized by the enemy, and the rest lay a mass of disorganised and undeciphered manuscripts, precariously hidden and widely scattered among the survivors of His companions.

The Faith the Báb had proclaimed, and for which He had given His all, had indeed reached its lowest ebb. The fires kindled against it had almost consumed the fabric upon which its continued existence depended. The wings of death seemed to be hovering above it. Extermination, complete and irremediable, appeared to be threatening its very life. Amidst the shadows that were fast gathering about it, the figure of Bahá'u'lláh alone shone as the potential Deliverer of a Cause that was fast speeding to its end. The marks of clear vision, of courage and sagacity which He had shown on more than one occasion ever since He had risen to champion the Cause of the Báb, appeared to qualify Him, should His life and continued existence in Persia be ensured, to revive the fortunes of an expiring Faith. But this was not to be. A catastrophe, unexampled in the whole history of that Faith, precipitated a persecution fiercer than any that had

hitherto taken place, and this time drew into its vortex the person of Bahá'u'lláh Himself. The slender hopes which the remnants of the believers still entertained were wrecked amidst the confusion that ensued. For Bahá'u'lláh, their only hope and the sole object of their confidence, was so struck down by the severity of that storm that no recovery could any longer be thought possible. After He had been despoiled of all His possessions in Núr and Ṭihrán, denounced as the prime mover of a dastardly attempt upon the life of His sovereign, abandoned by His kindred and despised by His former friends and admirers, plunged into a dark and pestilential dungeon, and at last, with the members of His family, driven into hopeless exile beyond the confines of His native land, all the hopes that had centred round Him as the possible Redeemer of an afflicted Faith seemed for a moment to have completely vanished.

No wonder Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, under whose eyes and by whose impulse such blows were being dealt, was already priding himself on being the wrecker of a Cause against which he had so consistently battled, and which he had at last, to outward seeming, been able to crush. No wonder he imagined, as he sat musing over the successive stages of this vast and bloody enterprise, that by the act of banishment which his hands had signed, he was sounding the death-knell of that hateful heresy which had struck such terror to the hearts of his people. To Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh it appeared, at that supreme moment, that the spell of that terror was broken, that the tide that had swept over his country was at last turning and bringing back to his fellow-countrymen the peace for which they cried. Now that the Báb was no more; now that the mighty pillars that sustained His Cause had been crushed into dust; now that the mass of its devotees, throughout the length and breadth of his dominion, were cowed and exhausted; now that Bahá'u'lláh Himself, the one remaining hope of a leaderless community, had been driven into exile and had, of His own accord, sought refuge in the neighbourhood of the stronghold of shí'ah fanaticism, the spectre that had haunted him ever since he had ascended the throne had vanished for ever. Never again, he imagined,

would he hear of that detestable Movement which, if he were to believe his best counsellors, was swiftly receding into the shadows of impotence and oblivion.[1]

To even the followers of the Faith who were left to survive the abominations heaped upon their Cause—to even that small caravan, with perhaps a few exceptions, wending its way in the depth of winter through the snows of the mountains bordering on 'Iráq,[2] the Cause of the Báb, one can well imagine, might for a moment have seemed to have failed in accomplishing its purpose. The forces of darkness that had encompassed it on every side would seem to have at last triumphed over, and put out, the light which that young Prince of Glory had kindled in His land.

In the eyes of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, at all events, the power that had seemed for a time to have swept within its orbit the entire forces of his realm had ceased to count. Ill-starred from its very birth, it had eventually been forced to surrender to the violence of the blows which his sword had dealt. The Faith had suffered a disruption certainly well deserved. Delivered from its curse, which for many nights had robbed him of his sleep, he could now, with undivided attention, set about the task of rescuing his land from the devastating effects of that vast delusion. Henceforth his real mission, as he conceived it, was to enable both Church and State to consolidate their foundations and to reinforce their ranks against the intrusion of similar heresies, which might, in a future day, poison the life of his countrymen.

How vain were his imaginings, how vast his own delusion! The Cause he had fondly imagined to have been crushed was still living, destined to emerge from the midst of that great convulsion stronger, purer, and nobler than ever. The Cause

[1] "Excellency, After the carrying out of those energetic measures on the part of the Persian Government for the extirpation and extermination of the misguided and detestable sect of the Bábís, with the details of which Your Excellency is fully acquainted [allusion is made to the great persecution of the Bábís in Ṭihrán in the summer of 1852], praise be to God, by the attention of the Imperial mind of His most potent Majesty, whose rank is as that of Jamshíd, the refuge of the True Religion—may our lives be his sacrifice!—, their roots were torn up." (Extract from letter addressed by Mírzá Sa'íd Khán, ex-foreign minister of Persia, to the Persian ambassador in Constantinople; dated 12th of Dhu'l-Ḥijjih, 1278 [May 10, 1862]. Facsimile and translation of the document reproduced in E. G. Browne's "Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion," p. 283.)

[2] "It was a terrible journey in rough mountain country and the travellers suffered greatly from exposure." (Dr. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions," p. 121.)

which, to the mind of that foolish monarch, seemed to be speeding towards destruction was but passing through the fiery tests of a phase of transition that was to carry it a step further on the path of its high destiny. A new chapter in its history was being unfolded, more glorious than any that had marked its birth or its rise. The repression which that monarch had believed to have succeeded in sealing its doom was but the initial stage in an evolution destined to blossom, in the fulness of time, into a Revelation mightier than any that the Báb Himself had proclaimed. The seed His hand had sown, though subjected, for a time, to the fury of a storm of unexampled violence and though later transplanted to a foreign soil, was to continue to develop and grow, in due time, into a Tree destined to spread its shelter over all the kindreds and peoples of the earth. Though the Báb's disciples might be tortured and slain, and His companions humiliated and crushed; though His followers might dwindle in number; though the voice of the Faith itself might be silenced by the arm of violence; though despair might settle upon its fortunes; though its ablest defenders might apostatise from their faith, yet the promise embedded within the shell of His word no hand could succeed in ravishing, and no power stand in the way of its germination and growth.

Indeed, the first glimmerings of the dawning Revelation, of which the Báb had declared Himself to be the Herald, and to the approach and certainty of which He had so repeatedly alluded,[1] could already be discerned amidst the gloom that encircled Bahá'u'lláh in the Síyáh-Chál of Ṭihrán.[2] The

[1] "But just as remarkable as his boldness in claiming Divine authority is his restraint in insisting that his authority was not final. He felt competent and commissioned to reveal much, but he felt with equal certainty that there was infinitely more yet to be revealed. Herein was his greatness. And herein was his greatest sacrifice. He thereby risked the diminution of his personal fame. But he insured the continuance of his mission. . . . He insured that the movement he had started would grow and expand. He himself was but 'a letter out of that most mighty book, a dewdrop from that limitless ocean.' . . . This was the humility of true insight. And it had its effect. His movement has grown and expanded, and it has yet a great future before it." (Sir Francis Younghusband's "The Gleam," pp. 210–11.)

[2] "During the days when I was imprisoned in the Land of Ṭá [Ṭihrán], although the galling weight of chains and the loathsome atmosphere of the prison allowed me little sleep, yet occasionally, in my moments of slumber, I felt as if something were pouring forth over my breast, even as a mighty torrent, which, descending from the summit of a lofty mountain, precipitates itself over the earth. All my limbs seemed to have been set aflame. At such moments my tongue recited what mortal ears could not hear." ("The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p. 17.)

force that, growing out of the momentous Revelation released by the Báb, was at a later time to unfold itself in all its glory and encompass the globe, was already pulsating in the veins of Bahá'u'lláh as He lay exposed in His cell to the sword of His executioner. The still voice which, in the hour of bitter agony, announced to the Prisoner the Revelation of which He was chosen to be the Mouthpiece, could not, of a certainty, have reached the ears of the monarch who was already preparing the celebration of the extinction of the Faith his Captive had championed. That imprisonment which he who had caused it, believed to have branded with infamy the fair name of Bahá'u'lláh, and which he regarded as a prelude to a still more humiliating banishment to 'Iráq, was, indeed, the very scene that witnessed the first stirrings of that Movement of which Bahá'u'lláh was to be the Author, a Movement which was first to be made known in the city of Baghdád and at a later time to be proclaimed from the prison-city of 'Akká to the Sháh, no less than to the other rulers and crowned heads of the world.

Little did Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh imagine that by the very act of pronouncing the sentence of banishment against Bahá'u'lláh he was helping in the unfolding of God's irrepressible Purpose and that he himself was but an instrument in the execution of that Design. Little did he imagine that as his reign was drawing to a close it would witness a revival of the very forces he had sought so strenuously to exterminate—a revival that would manifest a vitality such as he, in the hour of darkest despair, had never believed that Faith to possess. Not only within the confines of his own realm,[1]

[1] Gobineau, writing in about the year 1865, testifies as follows: "L'opinion générale est que les Bábís sont répandus dans toutes les classes de la population et parmi tous les religionnaires de la Perse, sauf les Nuṣayrís et les Chrétiens; mais ce sont surtout les classes éclairées, les hommes pratiquant les sciences du pays, qui sont donnés comme trés suspects. On pense, et avec raison, ce semble, que beaucoup de mullás, et parmi eux des mujtahids considérables, des magistrats d'un rang élevé, des hommes qui occupent à la cour des fonctions importantes et qui approchent de près la personne du roi, sont des Bábís. D'après un calcul fait récemment, il y aurait à Ṭihrán cinq mille de ces religionnaires sur une population de quatre-vingt mille âmes à peu près. Mais les arguments dont on appuie ce calcul ne semblent pas bien solides, et j'incline à croire que si jamais les Bábís avaient le dessous en Perse, leur nombre dans la capitale se trouverait bien plus considérable. Car au même instant, on devra ajouter au chiffre des zélés, quel qu'il soit à cette heure, l'appoint d'une forte proportion de gens qui inclinent vers les doctrines aujourd'hui condamnées, et auxquels la victoire donnerait le courage de se prononcer." ("Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 251.) "Half a century has not yet elapsed since Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad, the young Seer

not only throughout the adjacent territories of 'Iráq and Russia, but as far as India in the East,[1] as far as Egypt and European Turkey in the West, a recrudescence of the Faith such as he had never expected, awakened him from the dreams in which he had so fondly indulged. The Cause of the Báb seemed as if risen from the dead. It appeared under a form infinitely more formidable than any under which it had appeared in the past. The fresh impetus which, despite his calculations, the personality of Bahá'u'lláh, and, above all, the inherent strength of the Revelation which He personified, had lent to the Cause of the Báb, was one Náṣirí'd Dín Sháh had never imagined. The rapidity with which a

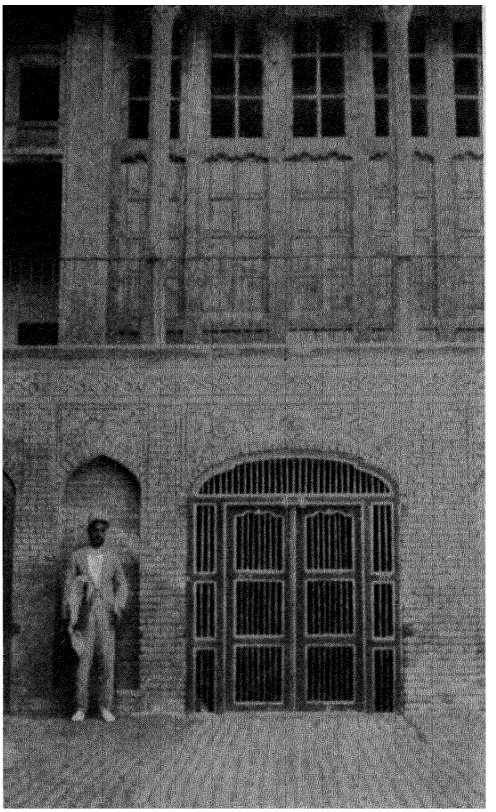
of Shíráz, first began to preach the religion which now counts its martyrs by hundreds and its adherents by hundreds of thousands; which seemed at one time to menace the supremacy alike of the Qájár dynasty and of the Muḥammadan faith in Persia, and may still not improbably prove an important factor in the history of Western Asia." (E. G. Browne's introduction to the "Táríkh-i-Jadíd," p. 7.) "Bábism," writes Professor James Darmesteter, "which diffused itself in less than five years from one end of Persia to another, which was bathed in 1852 in the blood of its martyrs, has been silently progressing and propagating itself. If Persia is to be at all regenerate it will be through this new faith." (Extract from "Persia: A Historical and Literary Sketch," translated by G. K. Narimán.) "If Bábism continues to grow at its present rate of progression, a time may conceivably come when it will oust Muḥammadanism from the field in Persia. This, I think, it would be unlikely to do, did it appear upon the ground under the flag of a hostile faith. But since its recruits are won from the best soldiers of the garrison whom it is attacking, there is greater reason to believe that it may ultimately prevail. To those who know anything of the Persian character, so extraordinarily susceptible of religious influences as it is, it will be obvious to how many classes in that country the new creed makes successful appeal. The Ṣúfís, or mystics, have long held that there must always be a Pír, or Prophet, visible in the flesh, and are very easily absorbed into the Bábí fold. Even the orthodox Musulman, whose mind's eye has ever been turned in eager anticipation upon the vanished Imám, is amenable to the cogent reasoning, by which it is sought to prove that either the Báb, or Bahá, is the Mihdí, according to all the predictions of the Qur'án and the traditions. The pure and suffering life of the Báb, his ignominious death, the heroism and martyrdom of his followers, will appeal to many others who can find no similar phenomena in the contemporaneous records of Islám." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 1, p. 503.) The author, in the same chapter, commenting on the prospects of Christian missionary enterprise in Persia, writes as follows: "Persia has even been described as the most hopeful among the fields of missionary labour in the East. While conscious of the valuable work that has been and is being done by the representatives of English, French, and American Mission societies in that country, by the spread

[1] Gobineau, writing in about 1865, gives the following testimony: "Ainsi, le Bábisme a pris une action considérable sur l'intelligence de la nation persane, et, se répandant même au delà des limites du territoire, il a débordé dans le pachalick de Baghdád, et passé aussi dans l'Inde. Parmi les faits qui le concernent, on doit noter comme un des plus curieux que, du vivant même du Báb, beaucoup de docteurs de la religion nouvelle, beaucoup de ses sectateurs les plus convaincus, les plus dévoués, n'ont jamais connu personnellement leur prophète, et ne paraissent pas avoir attaché une importance de premier ordre à recevoir ses instructions de sa propre bouche. Cependant ils lui rendaient complètement et sans réserve aucune les honneurs et la vénération auxquels, dans leur façon de voir, il avait certainement droit." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 255.)

slumbering Faith had been revived and consolidated within his own territory; its spreading out to States beyond its confines; the stupendous claims advanced by Bahá'u'lláh almost in the midst of the stronghold where He had chosen to dwell; the public declaration of that claim in European Turkey, and its proclamation in challenging Epistles to the crowned heads of the earth, one of which the Sháh himself was destined to receive; the enthusiasm that announcement evoked in the

of education, by the display of charity, by the free gift of medical assistance, by the force of example, and while in no way suggesting that these pious labours should be slackened, I am unable, from such knowledge as I possess, to participate in so sanguine a forecast of the future." (P. 504.) ". . . In Persia, however, not the least of the obstacles with which Christian communities are confronted arise from their own sectarian differences; and the Musulmans are perfectly entitled to scoff at those who invite them to enter a flock the different members of which love each other so bitterly. Protestants squabble with Roman Catholics, Presbyterians with Episcopalians, the Protestant Nestorians look with no very friendly eye upon the Nestorians proper, and these, again, are not on the most harmonious terms with the Chaldæans, or Catholic Nestorians. The Armenians gaze askance upon the United (or Catholic) Armenians, and both unite in retarding the work of the Protestant missions. Finally, the hostility of the Jews may, as a rule, be reckoned upon. In the various countries of the East in which I have travelled, from Syria to Japan, I have been struck by the strange, and, to my mind, sorrowful phenomenon, of missionary bands waging the noblest of warfares under the banner of the King of Peace with fratricidal weapons in their hands." (Pp. 507–8.) ". . . If, then, the criterion of missionary enterprise in Persia be the number of converts it has made from Islám, I do not hesitate to say that the prodigious expenditure of money, of honest effort, and of sacrificing toil that has been showered upon that country has met with a wholly inadequate return. Young Muḥammadans have sometimes been baptised by Christian missionaries. But this must not too readily be confounded with conversion, since the bulk of the newcomers relapse into the faith of their fathers; and I question if, since the day when Henry Martyn set foot in Shíráz up till the present moment, half a dozen Persian Muḥammadans have genuinely embraced the Christian creed. I have myself often enquired for, but have never seen, a converted Musulman (I exclude, of course, those derelicts or orphans of Musulman parents who are brought up from childhood in Christian schools). Nor am I surprised at even the most complete demonstration of failure. Putting aside the dogmatic assumptions of Christianity (e.g. the doctrine of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ), which are so repugnant to the Muḥammadan conception of the unity of God, we cannot regard the reluctance of a Musulman to desert his faith with much astonishment when we remember that the penalty for such an act is death. The chances of conversion are remote indeed so long as the body as well as the soul of the convert is thrown into the scales. But personal apprehensions, though an important, are not the deciding factor in the situation. It is against the impregnable rock-wall of Islám, as a system embracing every sphere, and duty, and act of life, that the waves of missionary effort beat and buffet in vain. Marvellously adapted alike to the climate, character, and occupations of those countries upon which it has laid its adamantine grip, Islám holds its votary in complete thrall from the cradle to the grave. To him, it is not only religion, it is government, philosophy, and science as well. The Muḥammadan conception is not so much that of a state church as, if the phrase may be permitted, of a church state. The undergirders with which society itself is warped round are not of civil, but of ecclesiastical, fabrication; and, wrapped in this superb, if paralysing, creed, the Musulman lives in contented surrender of all volition, deems it his highest duty to worship God and to compel, or, where impossible, to despise those who do not worship Him in the spirit, and then dies in sure and certain hope of Paradise. So long as this all-compelling, all-absorbing code of life holds an Eastern people in its embrace, determining every duty and regulating every act of existence, and finally meting out an assured salvation, missionary treasure and missionary self-denial will largely be spent in vain. Indeed, an

hearts of countless followers; the transference to the Holy Land of the centre of His Cause; the gradual relaxation of the severity of His confinement which marked the closing days of His life; the lifting of the ban that had been imposed by the Sultan of Turkey on His intercourse with visitors and pil-



BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S HOUSE IN BAGHDÁD

grims who flocked from various parts of the East to His prison; the awakening of the spirit of enquiry among the thinkers of the West; the utter disruption of the forces that had attempted to effect a schism in the ranks of His followers, and the fate that had befallen its chief instigator; above all,

active propaganda is, in my judgment, the worst of policies that a Christian mission in a bigoted Musulman country can adopt and the very tolerance with which I have credited the Persian government is in large measure due to the prudent abstention of the Christian missionaries from avowed proselytism." (Pp. 508–9.)

the sublimity of those teachings with which His published works abounded and which were being read, disseminated, and taught by an ever-increasing number of adherents in Russian Turkistán, in 'Iráq, in India, in Syria, and as far off as European Turkey—these were among the chief factors that convincingly revealed to the eyes of the Sháh the invincible character of a Faith he believed himself to have bridled and destroyed. The futility of his efforts, however much he might attempt to conceal his feelings, was only too apparent. The Cause of the Báb, the birth and tribulations of which he had himself witnessed, and the triumphant progress of which he was now beholding, had risen phœnix-like from its ashes and was pressing forward along the road leading to undreamt-of achievements.[1]

[1] "Elle y court, et voilà comme, mathématiquement, s'est produit un mouvement religieux tout particulier dont l'Asie centrale, c'est-à-dire la Perse, quelques points de l'Inde et une partie de la Turquie d'Asie, aux environs de Baghdád, est aujourd'hui vivement préoccupée, mouvement remarquable et digne d'être étudié à tous les titres. Il permet d'assister à des développements de faits, à des manifestations, à des catastrophes telles que l'on n'est pas habitué à les imaginer ailleurs que dans les temps reculés où se sont produites les grandes religions. . . . J'avoue même que, si je voyais en Europe une secte d'une nature analogue au Bâbisme se présenter avec des avantages tels que les siens, foi aveugle, enthousiasme extrême, courage et dévouement éprouvés, respect inspiré aux indifférents, terreur profonde inspirée aux adversaires, et de plus, comme je l'ai dit, un prosélytisme qui ne s'arrête pas, et dont les succès sont constants dans toutes les classes de la société; si je voyais, dis-je, tout cela exister en Europe, je n'hésiterais pas à prédire que, dans un temps donné, la puissance et le sceptre appartiendront de toute nécessité aux possesseurs de ces grands avantages." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," pp. 116, 293–4.) "Now it appears to me that the history of the Bábí movement must be interesting in different ways to others besides those who are directly engaged in the study of Persian. To the student of religious thought it will afford no little matter for reflection; for here he may contemplate such personalities as by lapse of time pass into heroes and demi-gods still unobscured by myth and fable; he may examine by the light of concurrent and independent testimony one of those strange outbursts of enthusiasm, faith, fervent devotion, and indomitable heroism—or fanaticism, if you will—which we are accustomed to associate with the earlier history of the human race; he may witness, in a word, the birth of a faith which may not impossibly win a place amidst the great religions of the world. To the ethnologist also it may yield food for thought as to the character of a people who, stigmatised as they often have been as selfish, mercenary, avaricious, egotistical, sordid, and cowardly, are yet capable of exhibiting under the influence of a strong religious impulse a degree of devotion, disinterestedness, generosity, unselfishness, nobility, and courage which may be paralleled in history, but can scarcely be surpassed. To the politician, too, the matter is not devoid of importance; for what changes may not be effected in a country now reckoned almost as a cypher in the balance of national forces by a religion capable of evoking so mighty a spirit? Let those who know what Muḥammad made the Arabs, consider well what the Báb may yet make the Persians." (E. G. Browne's introduction to "A Traveller's Narrative," pp. 8–9.) "So here at Bahjí was I installed as a guest, in the very midst of all that Bábism accounts most noble and most holy; and here did I spend five most memorable days, during which I enjoyed unparalleled and unhoped-for opportunities of holding intercourse with those who are the very fountain-heads of that mighty and wondrous spirit which works with invisible but ever-increasing force for the transformation and quickening of a people who slumber in

Little did Nabíl himself imagine that within twoscore years of the writing of his narrative the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, the flower and fruit of all the Dispensations of the past, would have been capable of advancing thus far on the road leading to its world-wide recognition and triumph. Little did he imagine that less than forty years after the death of Bahá'u'lláh His Cause, bursting beyond the confines of Persia and the East, would have penetrated the furthermost regions of the globe and would have encircled the whole earth. Scarcely would he have believed the prediction had he been told that the Cause would, within that period, have implanted its banner in the heart of the American continent, would have made itself felt in the leading capitals of Europe, would have reached out to the southern confines of Africa, and would

a sleep like unto death. It was in truth a strange and moving experience, but one whereof I despair of conveying any save the feeblest impression. I might, indeed, strive to describe in greater detail the faces and forms which surrounded me, the conversations to which I was privileged to listen, the solemn melodious reading of the sacred books, the general sense of harmony and content which pervaded the place, and the fragrant shady gardens whither in the afternoon we sometimes repaired; but all this was as nought in comparison with the spiritual atmosphere with which I was encompassed. Persian Muslims will tell you often that the Bábís bewitch or drug their guests so that these, impelled by a fascination which they cannot resist, become similarly affected with what the aforesaid Muslims regard as a strange and incomprehensible madness. Idle and absurd as this belief is, it yet rests on a basis of fact stronger than that which supports the greater part of what they allege concerning this people. The spirit which pervades the Bábís is such that it can hardly fail to affect most powerfully all subjected to its influence. It may appal or attract: it cannot be ignored or disregarded. Let those who have not seen disbelieve me if they will; but, should that spirit once reveal itself to them, they will experience an emotion which they are not likely to forget." (*Ibid.*, pp. 38–9.) "It will thus be seen that, in its external organisation, Bábism has undergone great and radical changes since it first appeared as a proselytising force half a century ago. These changes, however, have in no wise impaired, but appear, on the contrary, to have stimulated, its propaganda, which has advanced with a rapidity inexplicable to those who can only see therein a crude form of political or even of metaphysical fermentation. The lowest estimate places the present number of Bábís in Persia at half a million. I am disposed to think, from conversations with persons well qualified to judge, that the total is nearer one million. They are to be found in every walk of life, from the ministers and nobles of the Court to the scavenger or the groom, not the least arena of their activity being the Musulman priesthood itself. It will have been noticed that the movement was initiated by siyyids, ḥájís, and mullás—i.e. persons who, either by descent, from pious inclination, or by profession, were intimately concerned with the Muḥammadan creed; and it is among even the professed votaries of the faith that they continue to make their converts. Many Bábís are well known to be such, but, as long as they walk circumspectly, are free from intrusion or persecution. In the poorer walks of life the fact is, as a rule, concealed for fear of giving an excuse for the superstitious rancour of superiors. Quite recently the Bábís have had great success in the camp of another enemy, having secured many proselytes among the Jewish populations of the Persian towns. I hear that during the past year they are reported to have made 150 Jewish converts in Ṭihrán, 100 in Hamadán, 50 in Káshán, and 75 per cent of the Jews at Gulpáyigán." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 1, pp. 499–500.) "From that subtle race," writes Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, "issues the most remarkable movement which modern Muḥammadanism has produced. . . . Disciples

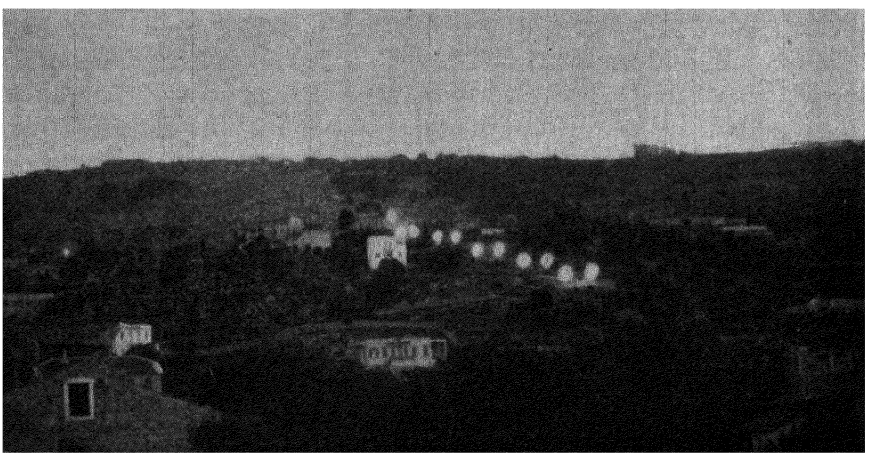
have established its outposts as far as Australasia. Hardly would his imagination, fired as it was by a conviction as to the destiny of his Faith, have carried him to a point at which he could have pictured to his mind the Tomb Shrine of the Báb, of the ultimate destination of whose remains he confesses himself to be ignorant, embosomed in the heart of Carmel, a place of pilgrimage and a beacon of light to many a visitor from the ends of the earth. Hardly could he have imagined that the humble dwelling of Bahá'u'lláh, lost amid the tortuous lanes of old Baghdád, would one day, as a result of the machinations of a tireless enemy, have forced itself on the attention, and become the object of the earnest deliberations, of the assembled representatives of the leading Powers of Europe. Little did he imagine that, with all the praise he, in his narrative, lavishes upon Him, there would proceed from the Most Great Branch[1] a power that within a short period would have awakened the northern States of the American continent to the glory of the Revelation bequeathed to Him by Bahá'u'lláh. Little did he imagine that the dynasties of those monarchs the evidences of whose tyranny he recounts so vividly in his narrative, would have tottered to their fall and suffered the very fate which their representatives had so desperately striven to inflict upon their dreaded opponents. Little did he imagine that the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy of his country, the prime mover and the willing instrument of the abominations heaped upon his Faith, would so swiftly and easily be overthrown by the very forces

gathered round him, and the movement was not checked by his arrest, his imprisonment for nearly six years and his final execution in 1850. . . . It, too, claims to be a universal teaching; it has already its noble army of martyrs and its holy books; has Persia, in the midst of her miseries, given birth to a religion which will go round the world?" ("Comparative Religion," pp. 70, 71.) "Once again," writes Professor E. G. Browne, "in the world's history has the East vindicated her claim to teach religion to the West, and to hold in the Spiritual World that pre-eminence which the Western nations hold in the Material." (Introduction to M. H. Phelps' "Life and Teachings of 'Abbás Effendi," p. 15.) "Il semble certain qu'au point de vue religieux, et surtout au point de vue moral, le Bábisme marque un progrès sur l'Islâm oriental; on peut soutenir, avec M. Vambéry (Académie, 12 Mars, 1892), que son chef a émis des doctrines dignes des plus grands penseurs. . . . Dans tous les cas, le développement du Bábisme est un épisode intérressant de l'histoire des religions et des civilisations modernes. Et puis, après tout, ceux-là qui le vantent ont peut-être raison; il se peut que du Bábisme sorte un jour la régénération des peuples Persans, même de l'Islâm tout entier, qui en a besoin; et, malheureusement il n'est guère de régénérations de peuples qui ne soient accompagnées d'une grande effusion de sang." (M. J. Balteau's "Le Bábisme," p. 28.)

[1] 'Abdu'l-Bahá's title.

it had attempted to subdue. Never would he have believed that the highest institutions of sunní Islám, the Sultanate and the Caliphate,[1] those twin oppressors of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, would have been swept away so ruthlessly by the very hands of the professing adherents of the Faith of





VIEWS OF THE ILLUMINATED SHRINE OF THE BÁB ON MOUNT CARMEL

[1] "The Caliphate began with the election of Abú-Bakr in A.D. 632 and lasted until A.D. 1258, when Hulagu Khán sacked Baghdád and put Mu'taṣim-Bi'lláh to death. For nearly three centuries after this catastrophe the title of Caliph was perpetuated in Egypt by descendants of the House of 'Abbás who lived under the protection of its Mameluke rulers, until in A.D. 1517 Sulṭán Salím, the Osmanli, having conquered the Mameluke dynasty, induced the helpless Caliph to transfer to him the title and insignia." (P. M. Sykes' "A History of Persia," vol. 2, p. 25.)

Islám. Little did he imagine that side by side with the steady expansion of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh the forces of consolidation and internal administration would so progress as to present to the world the unique spectacle of a Commonwealth of peoples, world-wide in its ramifications, united in its purpose, co-ordinated in its efforts, and fired by a zeal and enthusiasm that no amount of adversity can quench.

And yet who knows what achievements, greater than any that the past and the present have witnessed, may not still be in store for those into whose hands so precious a heritage has been entrusted? Who knows but that out of the turmoil which agitates the face of present-day society there may not emerge, sooner than we expect, the World-Order of Bahá'u'lláh, the bare outline of which is being but faintly discerned among the world-wide communities that bear His name? For, great and marvellous as have been the achievements of the past, the glory of the golden age of the Cause, whose promise lies embedded within the shell of Bahá'u'lláh's immortal utterance, is yet to be revealed. Fierce as may seem the onslaught of the forces of darkness that may still afflict this Cause, desperate and prolonged as may be that struggle, severe as may be the disappointments it may still experience, the ascendancy it will eventually obtain will be such as no other Faith has ever in its history achieved. The welding of the communities of East and West into the world-wide Brotherhood of which poets and dreamers have sung, and the promise of which lies at the very core of the Revelation conceived by Bahá'u'lláh; the recognition of His law as the indissoluble bond uniting the peoples and nations of the earth; and the proclamation of the reign of the Most Great Peace, are but a few among the chapters of the glorious tale which the consummation of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh will unfold.

Who knows but that triumphs, unsurpassed in splendour, are not in store for the mass of Bahá'u'lláh's toiling followers? Surely, we stand too near the colossal edifice His hand has reared to be able, at the present stage of the evolution of His Revelation, to claim to be able even to conceive the full measure of its promised glory. Its past history, stained by the blood of countless martyrs, may well inspire us with the

thought that, whatever may yet befall this Cause, however formidable the forces that may still assail it, however numerous the reverses it will inevitably suffer, its onward march can never be stayed, and that it will continue to advance until the very last promise, enshrined within the words of Bahá'u'lláh, shall have been completely redeemed.

APPENDIX

LIST OF THE BÁB'S BEST-KNOWN WORKS

1. The Persian Bayán
2. The Arabic Bayán
3. The Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'
4. The Ṣaḥífatu'l-Ḥaramayn
5. The Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih
6. Commentary on the Súrih of Kawthar
7. Commentary on the Súrih of Va'l-'Aṣr
8. The Kitáb-i-Asmá'
9. Ṣaḥífiy-i-Makhdhúmíyyih
10. Ṣaḥífiy-i-Ja'faríyyih
11. Zíyárat-i-Sháh-'Abdu'l-'Aẓím
12. Kitáb-i-Panj-Sha'n
13. Ṣaḥífiy-i-Raḍavíyyih
14. Risáliy-i-'Adlíyyih
15. Risáliy-i-Fiqhíyyih
16. Risáliy-i-Dhahabíyyih
17. Kitábu'r-Rúḥ
18. Súriy-i-Tawḥíd
19. Lawḥ-i-Ḥurúfát
20. Tafsír-i-Nubuvvat-i-Khāṣṣih
21. Risáliy-i-Furú'-i-'Adlíyyih
22. Khaṣá'il-i-Sab'ih
23. Epistles to Muḥammad Sháh and Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí

N.B. The Báb Himself states in one passage of the Persian Bayán that His writings comprise no less than 500,000 verses.

WORKS CONSULTED BY THE TRANSLATOR

1. Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question" (2 vols.)
   (Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1892)
2. A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme I"
   (Librairie Paul Geuthner, Rue Mazarine, Paris, 1910)
3. A. L. M. Nicolas' "Essai sur le Shaykhisme II"
   (Librairie Paul Geuthner, Rue Mazarine, Paris, 1914)
4. A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb"
   (Librairie Critique, Rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, Paris, 1908)
5. Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale"
   (Les Éditions G. Crés et Cie., Paris, Rue de Sèvres, 1928)
6. Lady Sheil's "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia"
   (John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, 1856)
7. "The Táríkh-i-Jadíd," by Mírzá Ḥusayn of Hamadán, translated from the Persian by E. G. Browne
   (The University Press, Cambridge, 1893)
8. M. Clément Huart's "La Religion de Báb"
   (Ernest Leroux, Rue Bonaparte, Paris, 1889)

9. "A Traveller's Narrative," translated from the Persian by E. G. Browne
(The University Press, Cambridge, 1891)
10. "Le Bayán Persan," traduit du Persan par A. L. M. Nicolas (4 vols.)
(Librairie Paul Geuthner, Rue Mazarine, Paris, 1911–14)
11. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1889, articles 6, 12
12. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1892, articles 7, 9, 13
13. "Le Livre des Sept Preuves," traduction par A. L. M. Nicolas
(J. Maisonneuve, Rue de Mézières, Paris, 1902)
14. E. G. Browne's "A Year amongst the Persians"
(Messrs. A. and C. Black, Ltd., London, 1893)
15. E. G. Browne's "A Literary History of Persia" (4 vols.)
(The University Press, Cambridge, 1924)
16. Lieutenant-Colonel P. M. Sykes' "A History of Persia" (2 vols.)
(Macmillan & Co., London, 1915)
17. Clements R. Markham's "A General Sketch of the History of Persia"
(Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1874)
18. R. G. Watson's "History of Persia"
19. Journal Asiatique, 1866, sixième série, tomes 7, 8
("Báb et les Bábis," by Mírzá Kázim Big)
20. M. J. Balteau's "Le Bábisme"
(Lecture faite par M. J. Balteau, membre titulaire, à la séance du 22 mai, 1896. Académie Nationale de Reims. Imprimerie de l'Académie, Reims, N. Monce, Directeur; 24 Rue Pluche, 1897)
21. Gabriel Sacy's "Du Règne de Dieu et de l'Agneau connu sous le nom de Bábisme"
(12 Juin, 1902)
22. J. E. Esslemont's "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era"
(The Bahá'í Publishing Committee, New York, 1927)
23. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá's "Risáliy-i-Amríyyih"
(Imprimerie Sa'ádih, Cairo, Egypt)
24. E. G. Browne's "Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion"
(The University Press, Cambridge, 1918)
25. Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl's manuscripts and notes (unpublished)
26. Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl's "The Kashfu'l-Ghiṭá' "
('Ishqábád, Russia)
27. M. H. Phelps' "Life and Teachings of 'Abbás Effendi"
(G. P. Putnam's Sons, London, 1912)
28. T. K. Cheyne's "The Reconciliation of Races and Religions"
(Adam and Charles Black, 1914)
29. Sir Francis Younghusband's "The Gleam"
(John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, 1923)
30. Samandar's manuscript (unpublished)
31. E. G. Browne's "The Persian Revolution"
(The University Press, Cambridge, 1910)
32. The Christian Commonwealth, January 22, 1913
33. G. K. Narimán's "Persia and Parsis," Part 1
(The Írán League, Bombay, 1925)
34. Valentine Chirol's "The Middle Eastern Question"
35. J. Estlin Carpenter's "Comparative Religion"
36. E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, Vol. 15
(Luzac & Co., London, 1910)
37. "The Násikhu't-Taváríkh" (Qájáríyyih volume), by Mírzá Taqí Mustawfí, Lisánu'l-Mulk, known as Sipihr
(Lithograph edition, Ṭihrán)
38. Ḥájí Mu'ínu's-Salṭanih's "History" (manuscript)
39. Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl's "Kitábu'l-Farà'id" (Cairo edition)

Works of Bahá'u'lláh:

"Kitáb-i-Íqán" (Cairo edition, 1900)
"Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" (Cairo edition, 1920)

"Iṣhráqát" (manuscript)
"Tablets to the Kings" (manuscript)

Works of the Báb:
"Ṣaḥífatu'l-Ḥaramayn" (manuscript)
"Qayyúmu'l-Asmá' " "
"Persian Bayán" "
"Arabic Bayán" "
"Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih" "

Works of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:
"Some Answered Questions" (Bahá'í Publishing Society, Chicago, 1918)
"Memorials of the Faithful" (Haifa edition, 1924)

N.B. For a general and fuller bibliography, refer to:
1. Bahá'í World, vol. iii, part 3
2. A. L. M. Nicolas' "Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad dit le Báb," pp. 22–53
3. E. G. Browne's "Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion," pp. 175–243
4. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1892, pp. 433–99, 637–710
5. "A Traveller's Narrative," pp. 173–211

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF PERSIA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

"There is no fixed principle or permanence in the administrative subdivisions of Persia. Their separation or combination is regulated by the ability or reputation of their governors, and by the scope that may be conceded thereto by the confidence or the fears of the sovereign. . . . It should further be remarked that no principle, geographical, ethnographical, or political, appears to be adopted in determining the borders and size of the various divisions, which vary in extent from a province larger than the whole of England, to a small and decayed town with its immediate surroundings."

LARGER PROVINCES OR DISTRICTS

Administrative Division	*Capital*
Ádhirbáyján	Tabríz
Khurásán and Sístán	Mashhad
Ṭihrán and Dependencies	Ṭihrán
Fárs	Shíráz
Iṣfáhán and Dependencies	Iṣfáhán
Kirmán and Persian Balúchistán	Kirmán
'Arabistán	Shushtar
Gílán and Ṭálish	Rasht
Mázindarán	Ámul
Yazd and Dependencies	Yazd
Persian Gulf Littoral and Islands	Búshihr

(From Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," vol. 1, p. 437.)

BRITISH AND RUSSIAN ENVOYS TO THE COURT OF PERSIA, 1814–1855

1814 November	Mr. Morier and Mr. Ellis.
1815 July	Sir Henry Willock.
1826 September	Sir John Macdonald.
1830 June	Sir John Campbell.
1835 November	Sir Henry Ellis.
1836 August	Sir John McNeill.
1842 August	Sir Justin Sheil.
1847 October	Colonel Farrant (acting).
1849 November	Sir Justin Sheil (returned from leave).
1853 February	Mr. Taylor Thomson (acting).
1855 April	Hon. A. C. Murray.

1817 August	General Yermoloff.
1819 April	M. Mazarowitch.
1823 January	M. Ambourger (acting).
1824 July	M. Mazarowitch (returned from leave).
1825 September	M. Ambourger.
1826 July	Prince Menschikoff.
1828	M. Grebayadoff.
1831	Prince Dolgorouki.
1833 February	Count Simonich.
1839	Count Meden.
1846 January	Prince Dolgorouki.
1854 September	M. Anitchkoff.

(From Clements R. Markham, C.B., F.R.S., "A General Sketch of the History of Persia," Appendix B. Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1874.)

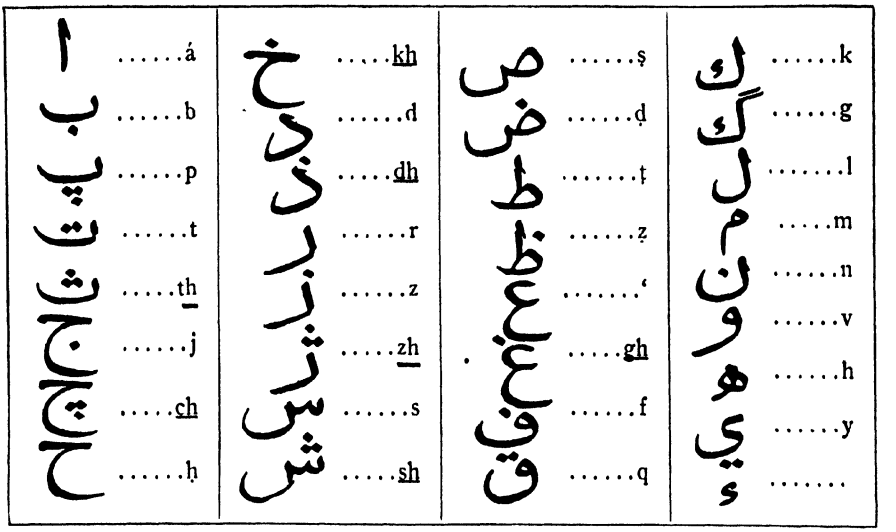
LIST OF MONTHS OF THE MUḤAMMADAN CALENDAR

Muḥarram	30 days
Ṣafar	29 "
Rabí'u'l-Avval	30 "
Rabí'u'th-Thání	29 "
Jamádíyu'l-Avval	30 "
Jamádíy'th-Thání	29 "
Rajab	30 "
Sha'bán	29 "
Ramaḍán	30 "
Shavvál	29 "
Dhi'l-Qa'dih	30 "
Dhi'l-Ḥijjih	29–30 "

Muḥarram 1, 1	A.H.	July 16, 622	A.D. Friday.
Muḥarram 1, 1260	"	January 22, 1844	" Monday.
Muḥarram 1, 1261	"	January 10, 1845	" Friday.
Muḥarram 1, 1262	"	December 30, 1845	" Tuesday.
Muḥarram 1, 1263	"	December 20, 1846	" Sunday.
Muḥarram 1, 1264	"	December 9, 1847	" Thursday.
Muḥarram 1, 1265	"	November 27, 1848	" Monday.
Muḥarram 1, 1266	"	November 17, 1849	" Saturday.
Muḥarram 1, 1267	"	November 6, 1850	" Wednesday.
Muḥarram 1, 1268	"	October 27, 1851	" Monday.
Muḥarram 1, 1269	"	October 15, 1852	" Friday.
Muḥarram 1, 1270	"	October 4, 1853	" Tuesday.

(From "Wüstenfeld-Mahler'sche Vergleichungs-Tabellen," Leipzig, 1926.)

GUIDE TO THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE PROPER NAMES TRANSLITERATED IN THE NARRATIVE



th	*pronounced as*	s		a	*as*	*in*	account
dh	*pronounced as*	z		á	*as*	*in*	arm
zh	*pronounced as*	j	(French)	i	*as* e	*in*	best
s	*pronounced as*	s		í	*as* ee	*in*	meet
ḍ	*pronounced as*	z		u	*as* o	*in*	short
ṭ	*pronounced as*	t		ú	*as* oo	*in*	moon
ẓ	*pronounced as*	z		aw	*as*	*in*	mown

The "ı" added to the name of a town signifies "belonging to"; thus Shírazí means native of Shíráz.

N.B. The spelling of the Oriental words and proper names used in this book is according to the system of transliteration established at one of the International Oriental Congresses.

GLOSSARY

'Abá: Cloak or mantle.
Adhán: Muslim call to prayer.
A.H.: "After Hijírah." Date of Muḥammad's migration from Mecca to Medina, and basis of Muḥammadan chronology.
Akbar: "Greater."
Amír: "Lord," "prince," "commander," "governor."
Áqá: "Master." Title given by Bahá'u'lláh to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
A'ẓam: "The greatest."
Báb: "Gate." Title assumed by Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad after the declaration of His Mission in Shíráz in May, 1844, A.D.
Bahá: "Glory," "splendour," "light." Title by which Bahá'u'lláh (Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí) is designated.
Baqíyyatu'lláh: "Remnant of God." Title applied both to the Báb and to Bahá'u'lláh.
Bayán: "Utterance," "explanation." Title given by the Báb to His Revelation, particularly to His Books.
Big: Honorary title; lower title than Khán.
Caravanserai: An inn for caravans.
Dárúghih: "High constable."
Dawlih: "State," "government."
Farmán: "Order," "command," "royal decree."
Farrásh: "Footman," "lictor," "attendant."
Farrásh-Báshí: The head farrásh.
Farsakh: Unit of measurement. Its length differs in different parts of the country according to the nature of the ground, the local interpretation of the term being the distance which a laden mule will walk in the hour, which varies from three to four miles. Arabicised from the old Persian "parsang," and supposed to be derived from pieces of stone (sang) placed on the roadside.
Ḥájí: A Muḥammadan who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca.
Howdah: A litter carried by a camel, mule, horse, or elephant for travelling purposes.
Íl: "Clan."
Imám: Title of the twelve shí'ah successors of Muḥammad. Also applied to Muslim religious leaders.
Imám-Jum'ih: The leading imám in a town or city; chief of the mullás.
Imám-Zádih: Descendant of an imám, or his shrine.
Jubbih: An upper coat.
Ka'bih: Ancient shrine at Mecca. Now recognised as the most holy shrine of Islám.
Kad-Khudá: Chief of a ward or parish in a town; headman of a village.

Kalantar: "Mayor."
Kalím: "One who discourses."
Karbilá'í: A Muḥammadan who has performed the pilgrimage to Karbilá.
Khán: "Prince," "lord," "nobleman," "chieftain."
Kuláh: The Persian lambskin hat worn by government employees and civilians.
Madrisih: Religious college.
Man-Yuẓhiruhu'lláh: "He whom God will make manifest." Title given by the Báb to the promised One.
Mashhadí: A Muḥammadan who has performed the pilgrimage to Mashhad.
Masjid: Mosque, temple, place of worship.
Maydán: A subdivision of a farsakh. A square or open place.
Mihdí: Title of the Manifestation expected by Islám.
Miḥráb: The principal place in a mosque, where the imám prays with his face turned towards Mecca.
Mi'ráj: "Ascent"; used with reference to Muḥammad's ascension to heaven.
Mírzá: A contraction of Amír-Zádih, meaning son of Amír. When affixed to a name, it signifies prince; when prefixed, simply Mr.
Mu'adhdhin: The one who sounds the Adhán, the Muḥammadan call to prayer.
Mujtahid: Muḥammadan doctor of law. Most of the mujtahids of Persia have received their diplomas from the most eminent jurists of Karbilá and Najaf.
Mullá: Muḥammadan priest.
Mustagháth: "He who is invoked"; the numerical value of which has been assigned by the Báb as the limit of the time fixed for the advent of the promised Manifestation.
Nabíl: "Learned," "noble."
Naw-Rúz: "New Day." Name applied to the Bahá'í New Year's Day; according to the Persian calendar, the day on which the sun enters Aries.
Nuqṭih: "Point."
Pahlaván: "Athlete," "champion." Term applied to brave and muscular men.
Qádí: Judge: civil, criminal, and ecclesiastical.
Qá'im: "He who shall arise." Title designating the promised One of Islám.
Qalyán: A pipe for smoking through water.
Qiblih: The direction to which people turn in prayer; especially Mecca, the Qiblih of all Muḥammadans.
Qurbán: "Sacrifice."
Ṣáhibu'z-Zamán: "Lord of the Age." One of the titles of the promised Qá'im.
Shahíd: "Martyr." The plural of martyr is "Shuhadá."

Shaykhu'l-Islám: Head of religious court, appointed to every large city by the Sháh.
Siyyid: Descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad.
Súrih: Name of the chapters of the Qur'án.
Túmán: A sum of money equivalent to a dollar.
Valí-'Ahd: "Heir to the throne."
Zádih: "Son."

MAP OF PERSIA



INDEX

'Abá Basír (son of Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ḥusayn, who repulsed the 'Iráqí regiment at Zanján), Nabíl gives acknowledgment in his account of upheaval of Zanján, 580
'Abbás Mírzá. *See* Mírzá Buzurg
'Abbás-Quilí Khán, instigates martyrdom of Vahíd at Nayríz, 434
'Abbás-Qulí-Khán-i-Láríjání, 339, 341, 375, 386, 391
'Abdu'l-'Alí Ḥájí Shaykh (Vahíd's father-in-law, distinguished among the notables of Nayríz), 476, 498
'Abdu'l-'Alí-Khán-i-Marághiyí (Captain of Prince Hamzí's artillery and a loyal friend to Mullá Ḥusayn at Mashhad), 290, 324
'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Qazvíní, Mullá, of Qazvín (also named Mírzá Aḥmad by Bahá'u'lláh), 159, 162, 163, 169, 170, 176, 212, 227, 439
'Abdu'l-'Azim-i-Khu'í, Siyyid (surnamed Siyyid-i-Khái-Dár) (one of the survivors of Ṭabarsí), 362, 471
'Abdu'l-Báqí, Siyyid, was noted for his learning, (present when Báb dictated Tablet to Ḥájí Mírzá Jání at Káshán; afterwards became a believer), 219, 221
'Abdu'l-Hamíd-Khán (whose son was healed by the Báb), 195, 197, 372
'Abdu'l-Qasím-i-'Alaqih-Band-i-Isfáhání, 587
'Abdu'l-Vahháb, Ḥájí, 6; story of, 87
'Abdu'l-Majíd, Ḥájí (Father of Badí, bearer of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Nasíri'd-Din-Sháh), 325, 580
'Abdu'lláh-Mullá, a native of Shíráz (recounts the murder of Mullá Taqí), 276
'Abdu'lláh Khán-i-Turkamán (Head of army ordered by the Sháh to attack Ṭabarsí), 359, 360 (note 2)
Abu'l-'Aliy-i-Harátí (An enemy of Mullá Ḥusayn), 159, 161
Abu'l-Ḥasan-i-Bazzáz, Ḥájí (A traveller with the Báb to Ḥijáz), 156
Abu'l-Ḥasan-i-Shírazí, Ḥájí, 130
Abú-Ṭálib, Siyyid (The kad-khudá of a district in Nayríz and one of the companions of Vahíd), 407, 408, 481
Abu'l Qasím, Mírzá (Son-in-law and trusted disciple of the mujtahid, Mírzá Muḥammad Taqí), investigates the message of Bahá'u'lláh, 114, 116
Abú-Turáb, Shaykh (a native of Ishtihárd, one of the disciples of Siyyid Kazím) (*See* note p. 39), 293, 299, 347
Abú-Tálib Khán, Mírzá (brother-in-law of Mírzá Ḥasan, Bahá'u'lláh's half brother), 639
'Abid Ḥájí, Siyyid (one of the attendants who accompanied Vahíd to the enemy's camp and to his martyrdom), 490
Ahmad-i-Aḥsá'í, Shaykh, 1 (notes 1, 2, 3), 1–18, 140, 201
Aḥmad-i-Azghandí, Mírzá (a learned 'Ulama of Khurásán), 125, 127, 184, 504, 587
'Akká (reference to the most great Prison), Turkish penal colony, now under Palestine British mandate, 314
Alláh-Yar, Ḥájí (who with Sulayman Khán transfers the Báb's remains to Ṭihrán), 519
'Alí Khán, Siyyid, arrest at Zanján, 557
'Alí-Ḥájí, Mírzá, Siyyid (surnamed Khál-i-A'zam), the Báb's maternal uncle, also one of The Seven Martyrs of Ṭihrán, 143, 151, 175, 443, 446
'Alí, Mírzá, Mullá, Shaykh (surnamed 'Azim), nephew of the Imám Jum'ih of the Masjid-i-Vakíl, 125, 155, 172, 306, 313, 505, 587, 599
'Alí-Askar, Ḥájí (visits Báb in Tabríz when imprisoned), 239, 240
relates account of Martyrdom of the Báb, 518
'Alí-Mardán Khán (Fort of), (Ḥujjat, transferred to), 545, (note 1)
'Alí Khán-i-Máh-Kú'í (warden of the Castle of Máh-Kú), 230, 243, 247, 256, 302

'Alíy-i-Bastámá, Mullá (one of the Letters of the Living)
arrival with companions in Shíráz, 66, 87; suffering of, 89
'Alíy-i-Mudhahhib, Mullá (one of the attendants who bore Vahíd to his martyrdom), 490
'Alíy-i-Zunúzí, Siyyid (a notable of Tabríz, Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Zunúzí's stepfather), 307, 509
Amír-Níẓam-Taqí Khán, Mírzá (Grand Vazír of Nasiri'd-Din Sháh), 332, 500, 504, 506, 526, 539, 547, 595
Amír-Tuman. *See* Muḥammad Khán
Áqá Khán-i-Núrí, Mírzá (the I'timádu'd-Dawlih who succeeded Mírzá Áqásí), 120, 279, 502, 522, 598, 650
Áqásí, Ḥájí, Mírzá (Grand Vazír of Muḥammad Sháh), 120, 121, 204, 226, 231, 244, 254, 259, 280, 301, 525, 531
Áqa Ján, Mírzá (Bahá'u'lláh's Amanuensis), 460
Áqa Ján Khán-i-Khamsih (known also by the name of Khamsih and Násirí), colonel of the body guard, executioner of the Báb), 514
Áqáy-i-Kalím (Bahá'u'lláh's brother), 183, 255, 286, 288, 397, 432, 441, 582
Áqáy-i-Rikáb-Sáz, Mírzá (one of those present in the Masjid-i-Vakíl and heard the Báb, he afterwards suffered martyrdom), 156
Asadu'lláh, Ḥájí (a noted merchant of Qazvín), one of the first to be martyred in Qazvín, 281
Asadu'lláh, Mírzá (surnamed Dayyán by the Báb), 303, 304
Áyatu'l-Kursí (verse of the Qur'án, commentary on, by Siyyid Kaẓím), 10
'Azím. *See* 'Alí, Mírzá, Shaykh
'Aziz (uncle of Bahá'u'lláh), 113
'Azíz Khán-i-Mukrí (surnamed Sardár-i-Kull), his meeting with Ḥujjat, 556

Báb ('Alí Muḥammad, Mírzá, of Shíráz), 27, 30, 52
early days of, 72
His birth, 72
school days, 75
marriage, 76
stay in Búshihr, 77
farewell address to Letters of Living, 92, 142, 143, 150, 151, 158
reference to His mother and wife, 191
His arrest and outbreak of the plague, 196
release of, 197
farewell to His relatives and departure from Shíráz, 198
His letter to Manúchihr Khán, 199
honours accorded by the people to, 202
His commentary on Súrih of Va'l-'Asr, 202, 203, 205, 208
death warrant of Báb issued by 'ulamás of Iṣfáhán, 209, 211, 212
His prediction of the approaching death of Manúchihr Khán, 213
His three days at the home of Ḥájí Mírzá Jání in Káshán, 219
His joy at the gift and message from Bahá'u'lláh, 227
Muḥammad Sháh, letter to, 229
last stage of His journey to Tabríz, 235
His farewell to His guards, 236
welcomed by a youthful disciple on arriving at Tabríz, 237, 238, 239
incarceration in the castle of Máh-Kú, 243
incident in the life of, at Máh-Kú, 252
dream of, prior to declaration of His mission, 253
His words to Mullá Ḥusayn, 258
His farewell to Mullá Ḥusayn, 260
His epistle to the believers, 269
incarceration at the castle of Chihríq, 302, 303
His examination at Tabríz, 311, 315
indignities inflicted upon Him, 319
return to Chihríq and His epistle to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, 323
effects of the Mázindarán disaster on Him, 430
disposal of His documents, 504

arrival at Tabríz, 506
His confinement in the barracks, 507
His warning to the Farrásh-Báshí, 508
issue of His death warrant, 510
Sám Khán's request, 512
miraculous escape, 513
renewed and final attempt on His life, 517
transference of His remains to Ṭihrán, 519
effects of His martyrdom, 523
Badasht (Hamlet of), conference of, 288, 293
significance of gathering, 293, 297
departure of Bahá'u'lláh from, 298
Baghdád, 271, 650
Bahá'í Martyrs
execution of first in Persia, 280
massacre of Qavín, 282
list of martyrs at Mázindarán, 414
execution of the seven martyrs of Ṭihrán, 446
burial of the seven martyrs, 463
names of martyrs at Nayríz (Fort of Khajíh), 487
martyrs of Zaján, 580
Bahá'u'lláh (Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí of Núr), 12, 32, 103, 118, 120, 269, 284, 286, 292, 297
incident in Níyálá as related by, 299
His visit to Fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, 348, 368
reference to His activities prior to the declaration of mission, 372, 433, 459
His journey to Karbilá, incidents related by, 582, 586, 591, 593, 596
His meeting with 'Azim, 599
His imprisonment in Síyah-Chál, 607
incident in the Síyah-Chál, related by, 631, 635
His possessions plundered in Mázindarán, 637
release and banishment to Baghdád, 650
Bahíyyih Khánum, "The Greatest Holy Leaf," 650 (note 3), also see Dedication page
Bálí-Sarí, explanation of the term, 84
Bárfurúsh, 183, 261, 336, 339, 408
Báqir, Mullá (the imám of the Chinár-Súkhtih), 476
Báqir-i-Tabrízí, Mullá (one of the Letters of the Living), 368, 505
Baṣír-i-Hindí, Siyyid (converted to the faith by Shaykh Sa'id-i-Hindí in India), 588 (note 1)
Bayán, Persian, reference to journey of Báb to Mecca and Medina in, 130, 169, 248, 304
Búshihr, 50, 74, 142, 671
Buzurq-i-Núrí, Mírzá (Mírzá 'Abbás, Father of Bahá'u'lláh; one of the wisest administrators among the Vazírs of Núshíraván-i-'Adil), 11, 109, 234

Chihríq, Castle of, Báb's transference to, 259, 301
attitude of people toward the Báb, 302, 303
believers dismissed from, 306
Báb's return to, 323

Farrásh-Báshí, the Báb's warning to, 509, 513
Fírúz, Mírzá, Prince (the Nusratu'd-Dawlih, of Nayríz), 482, 483, 485
Fatḥ-'Alí Sháh, 5

Genealogy of Báb, xlvii
Genealogy of Muḥammad, xliv
Ghulám-Riḍá-i-Yazdí (accompanied Vaḥíd to Nayríz; one of the martyrs of Khazíh), 474, 486
Ghulám-Riḍáy-i-Kúchik (accompanies Vaḥíd to Nayríz), 474
Gurgin Khán (successor to Manúchihr Khán), 213
his communication to Muḥammad Sháh, 214, 215

Ḥádí (Ḥujjat's infant son, killed at Zanján), 542
Ḥádí, Mírzá (brother of Prince Mírzá Muḥammad 'Alí), 14, 159, 161, 461
Ḥasan, 'Aka, Siyyid, of Yazd (brother of Siyyid Ḥusayn-i-Yazdí), 227, 245, 257
Ḥasan-i-Zúnúzí, Shaykh, 25, 30, 212, 245, 307, 593
Ḥujjat-i-Zanjání (Muhammad-'Alíy-i-Zanján, Mullá)
  conversion of, 178, 236
  activities prior to conversion, 529
  acceptance of message of Báb, 531, 534
  incarceration in Ṭihrán, 537, 539, 540, 544, 551
  his petition to Náṣirid-Dín Sháh, 554
  death of his wife and child, 572
  his death and his interment, 573
  indignities inflicted on his body and fate of his kinsmen, 578
Ḥusayn-i-Bushrú'í, Mullá (Báb'l Báb, First Letter of the Living), 47, 48
  interview with Báb in Shíráz, 52
  dismissal of, 85
  Báb's parting words to, 96, 97, 99, 111, 123
  his letter to the Báb, 126, 152
  his departure for Khurásán, 170
  departure for Mashhad and pilgrimage to Máh-Kú, 254
  visit to Ṭihrán, 255
  arrival at Máh-Kú, 256
  words of Báb to, 258
  farewell of Báb to, 260
  his arrival at Mashhad, 267
  attack by the people of Bárfurúsh, 329
  repulse by, 330, 338, 350, 355, 363, 378
  last moments of, 379
  death of, 381
  reference to his burial and achievements, 382, 386
  listed as second of martyrs of Fort Ṭabarsí, 415
Ḥusayn-i-Mutavallí, Siyyid (betrays Quddús to enemy), 384, 398
Ḥusayn-i-Tirshízí, Siyyid (a native of Turshíz, a village in Khurásán), and one of the seven martyrs, 455
Ḥusayn-i-Yazdí, Siyyid (the Báb's amanuensis in Máh-Kú and Chihríg and one of the Letters of the Living), 192, 193, 212, 219, 227, 243; account of his life and martyrdom, 257, 507, 508, 513; in Ṭihrán, 629
Ḥusayn Khán-i-Írvání (Governor of the province of Fárs; surnamed Ájúdán Báshí and generally designated in those days as Ṣahib Ikhtíyár), 145, 146
  Báb's meeting with, 151, 195, 196

Ibráhím, Mírzá (brother of Mírzá Muḥammad-i-'Alíy-i-Nahrí), 208, 209
Imám-Jum'ih, 201, 202
'Iraq, 1
Iṣfáhán
  visit of Mullá Ḥusayn to, 97
  Báb's sojourn in, 199. *See* reference, 671
Ismá'íl-i-Qumí, Ḥájí, Mullá (a native of Faráhán and one of the seven martyrs), 453

Jániy-i-Káshání, Ḥájí, Mírzá (surnamed Parpá), 217, 219, 368, 436
Ja 'Far-Qulí-Khán-i-Namdár, 254, 279, 391, 394
Javád-i-Karbilá'í, Ḥájí, Siyyid (was called the Siyyid-i-Núr), 188 (notes 2 and 3)
Javád-i-Kirmaní, Ḥájí, Siyyid, 180, 593

Kangávar (arrival of the believers and their meeting with Mullá Ḥusayn), 159
Karbilá, 2, 17, 32, 268, 582
Karbilá'í 'Abdu'l-Bagí (death of his five sons), 562
Káshán, 8, 101, 216, 223

Káẓim-i-Rashtí, Siyyid, 10
mission of, 19
his allusion to the promised one, 24
visit to the Báb, 25
Báb attends his class, 27
meeting with Bahá'u'lláh in Karbilá, 32, 36, 39, 40, 43
his death, 45, 103, 165, 264
Khusraw-i-Qádí-Kalá'í (a notorious scoundrel), 339, 342
Khurásán ("Land of Khá"), 10, first believers of, 125, 254, 267, 268, 286, 296. *See* reference, 671
Kinár-Gird (Fortress of), 224
Kirmánsháh, 13, 272, 587. *See* reference, 671
Kulayn (Village of), 226

Letters of the Living, *see* Tablets to, in front of Book
names of, 80, 82
Báb's farewell address to, 92
instruction of Báb to, 123

Máh-Kú (Castle of)
Báb's incarceration, 30, 183, 243, 244, 250
incidents in the life of the Báb at, 252, 254, 256
Maḥmúd-i-Qamṣarí, Mírzá, 8
Manúchihr Khán, the Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, 199, 203, 205, 211, 213, 214
Mashhad, 12, 267, 288, 324. *See* reference, 671
Mázindarán
upheaval of, 179, 299, 324, 362, 378, 387, 394, 396
general massacre, 404
list of martyrs, 414, 583. *See* reference, 671
Mecca, 18, 132, 138
Medina, 18, 140
Mihdí-Qulí, Mírzá, Prince, 332, 363, 368, 389, 393, 399, 583
"Most Great Branch" (Title given to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abbás Effendi who was Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son and whom He left as the interpreter of His Cause), 209, 440
incident related by, 616
Muḥammad, Mullá (son of Mullá Taqí and husband of Ṭáhirih), 113, 116, 117, 273, 275
Muḥammad-'Alí, Mírzá (brother of Búyúk-Áqá and a distinguished Siyyid of Khuy), 303, 307
Muḥammad-'Alí, Mírzá of Tabríz (who suffered martyrdom with the Báb), 509, 510, 512, 513
Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Nahrí, Mírzá, Prince (whose daughter, Munirih Khánum, was married to the "Most Great Branch" ('Abdu'l-Bahá), 14, 159, 161, 208, 461
Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Qazvíní, Mírzá (one of the Letters of the Living), 273, 290
Muḥammad-'Alíy-i-Zanján, Mullá (The Báb named him Ḥujjat-i-Zanjání). *See* Ḥujjat-i-Zanjání
Muḥammad-Báqir-i-Rashtí, Ḥájí, Siyyid (known as Hárátí), 19, 97, 264
Muḥammad Báqir (nephew of Mullá Ḥusayn and one of the Letters of the Living), 287
Muḥammad-Big-i-Cháparchí, 215, 226, 443, 537
Muhammad-Ḥasan-i-Qazvíní (given the name of Fatá'l-Qazvíní), 287
takes message from Ṭáhirih to Quddús, 294
Muhammad-Ḥasan-i-Marághi-'í (one of the seven martyrs), 458
Muḥammad-Khán (the Amír-Tu'mán), 556
Muḥammad-i-Furúghí, Mírzá, Mullá, 125, 332, 334, 353, 404, 580
Muḥammad-i-Gulpáyigání, Siyyid (pen name was Ta'ir, whom Ṭáhirih styled as Fatá'l-Malíh), 273
Muḥammad-i-Mámáqání, Mullá (noted and learned disciple of Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í), 11, 314, 509
Muḥammad-Mihdí (surnamed Safihu'l-'Ulama), 205
Muḥammad-Mihdíy-i-Kandí, Mullá (bearer of message from Bahá'u'lláh to the Báb), 227, 440
Muḥammad-Muṣṭafá (an Arab native of Baghdád), 271, 273

Muḥammad-i-Núrí, Mullá (surnamed Mu'allim of Núr), his meeting with Mullá Ḥusayn, his message to Bahá'u'lláh, 104
Muḥammad-Riḍá, Siyyid (the Báb's father), 14
Muḥammad-Ridáy-i-Manshádí, Mullá (one of the enlightened 'ulamas of Manshad), Bahá'u'lláh gave him the name of Rada'r-Rúh, 473
Muḥammad-Taqí, Mírzá (the leading mujtahid in Sárí, Mázindarán), 300, 346, 351, 357, 407
Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Harátí, Mullá, 202, 208
Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Milání, 239
Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Núrí, Mírzá (a celebrated mujtahid of Núr), his meeting with Bahá'u'lláh, 111
two dreams of, 11, 112
Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Kirmání, Ḥájí, (one of the seven martyrs), 456
Muḥammad Sháh, 121, 171, 177, 215, 229, 253, 324, 525, 531, 537, 539
Muḥit-i-Kirmání, Mírzá (the declaration of the Báb to), 134, 136, 137, 138
Murtaḍá, Siyyid (a noted merchant of Zanján, and one of the seven martyrs), 457
Muṣṭafa Big-i-Sanandají (a dervish; surnamed Majdhúb, one of the first to recognize the station of Bahá'u'lláh), 118

Nabíl-i-A'zam, Muḥammad-ı-Zarandí, 169, 434, 580, 586, 592
Najaf, 2, 7, 50
Násiri'd-Dín Sháh (the Vali-'Ahd, *See* Glossary), 314 (note 1), 358, 365, 400, 500, 539
Ḥujjat's petition to, 554
attempt on life, 599
Navváb Ḥamzih Mírzá (Governor of Ádhirbáyján), 504
Navváb-i-Raḍaví (the most prominent of Vaḥíd's adversaries), 467, 471
Náyríz (upheaval of), 465, 474, 479, 642
Naw-Rúz (feast of), 191, 219, 256, 466
Níyálá (incident related by Bahá'u'lláh), 299, 301, 324
Níyáz-i-Baghdádí, Ḥájí (incident related by), 138
Núr (in province of Mázindarán), 112; effects of Bahá'u'lláh's visit to, 118

Qahru'lláh (name given by the Báb to the dervish from India, at Iskí-Shahr), 305, 306
Qazvín, 260, 269, 273; massacre of, 282
Quddús (Báb bestowed upon him the name of Ismu'llahu'l-Ákhar: literally "The Last Name of God"; The last Letter of the Living)
arrival in Shíráz, 69
visits Báb's maternal uncle in Shíráz, 143
meeting with Ṣadiq-i-Khurásání, 145
visits Kirmán, Ṭihrán, and Mázindarán, 179, 180, 182, 183
visit from Mullá Ḥusayn in Bárfurúsh, 261
instruction to Mullá Ḥusayn, 265
departure for Mázindarán, 290
meeting with Bahá'u'lláh in Sháh-Rúd, 292, 351
arrival of Quddús at Fort of Shaykh Ṭabarsí, 352, 355
injury sustained by, 367
assists at last moments of Mullá Ḥusayn, 381
martyrdom of, 410
Qum, 101, 223
Qurban-'Alí, Mírzá (a native of Bárfurúsh, one of the seven martyrs), 449 (note 2)

Ṣádiq-i-Khurásání, Mullá (formerly known as Muqaddas and surnamed by Bahá'u'lláh, Ismu'lláhu'l-Aṣdaq), conversion of, 100, 102, 145, 184
Sadru'd-Dawlíy-i-Iṣfáhání (grandson of Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ḥusayn Khán-i-Iṣfáhání and a general in the imperial army), 547
Sa'idu'l-'Ulamá (the chief divine of Bárfurúsh), 265, 266, 358
Ṣalih, Ḥájí-Mullá (Ṭáhirih's father), 273
Sám Khán (Colonel of the Christian regiment of Urúmiyya), 510, 512, 514, 516
Sayyáh (Mírzá 'Alíy-i-Sayyáh-i-Marághihí), 431 (note 3), 432, 433

Shāh-Rūd (village of), 256, 257, 292, 299
Shīrāz, 4, 30
  Báb's stay in, 143
  reference to those who embraced the faith in, 156. *See* reference, 671
Síyáh-Chál (literally black pit)
  reference to, 372, 377
  Bahá'u'lláh's imprisonment in, 607, 631
Síyáh-Dihán (village of, near Qasvín), 235 (note 2)
Sulaymán Khán, Ḥájí, 610; martyrdom of, 617, 618
Sulaymán Khán-i-Afshar, 235, 391, 402
Sulṭán-i-Karbilá'í, Shaykh, 190, 270, 593
Súrih of Va'l-'Asr (Báb's commentary), 202

Ṭáhirih (also known as Qurral-i-'Ayní, and Zarrín-Táji)
  reference to, 81
  response to appeal of Báb, 269
  activities in Karbilá, 270
  activities in Baghdád, 271
  stay in Kirmánsháh, 272
  confinement in Qazvín, 273
  her deliverance by Bahá'u'lláh, 284
  removal to Ṭihrán, 284
  her attitude to the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, 285, 286, 287
Taqí, Mullá (uncle of Táhirih), 273, 276, 277, 278
Ṭihrán, 13, 101, 261, 287, 389, 433. *See* reference, 671

Unim-i-Ashraf, (one of the women who distinguished themselves by the tenacity of their faith in Zanján), heroism of, 562

Yahyáy-i-Darabí, Siyyid (surnamed Vaḥíd)
  interview with Báb, 173, 177
  journey to Ṭihrán and Yazd, 465
  declaration of, to people of Yazd, 469, 472, 474
  his departure for Nayríz, 474, 481, 483, 486, 489
  martyrdom of, 494, 495 (note 2)
  account of death, 495 (note 3)
Yazd, 5, 465, 642. *See* reference, 671
Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí, Mullá, 187, 367, 399

Zanján (upheaval of), 260, 527, 528, 532, 543
Zaynab (a village maiden), heroism of, 550
Zayn'l-'Ábidín Khán (governor of Nayríz), 476, 484, 490