

References

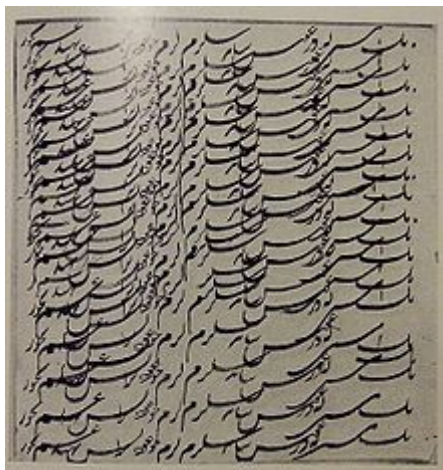
Bahá'í resources

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Life

Early life



Calligraphic exercise of the Báb written before ten years old.

Born on October 20, 1819 (1 Muharram 1235 AH) in Shiraz to a middle-class merchant of the city and given the name Ali Muhammad. His father was Muhammad Ridá, and his mother was Fátimih (1800–1881), a daughter of a prominent merchant in Shiraz. She later became a Bahá'í. He was orphaned when his father died while he was quite young and his maternal uncle Hájí Mírzá Siyyid `Alí, a merchant, raised him.^{[4][5]} A descendant from Muhammad, a sayyid, through Husayn ibn Ali through both his parents.^{[6][7][8]} In Shiraz his uncle sent him to maktab, primary school, and stayed for six or seven years.^{[9][10]} Sometime between 15 and 20 he joined his uncle in the family business, a trading house, and became a merchant in the city of Bushehr, Iran, near the Persian Gulf.^{[4][9]} Some of his earlier writings suggest that he did not enjoy the business and instead applied himself to the study of religious literature.^[9] One of his contemporary followers described him as "very taciturn, and [he] would never utter a word unless it was absolutely necessary. He did not even answer our questions. He was constantly absorbed in his own thoughts, and was preoccupied with repetition of his prayers and verses. He is described as a handsome man with a thin beard, dressed in clean clothes, wearing a green shawl and a black turban."^[11]

An English physician described the young man by saying: "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."^[1,2]

Marriage

In 1842 he married Khadíjih-Bagum (1822–1882); he was 23 and she was 20.^[9] She was the daughter of a prominent merchant in Shíráz. The marriage proved a happy one,^[13] and they had one child, a boy named Ahmad who died the year he was born - 1843.^[13] The pregnancy jeopardized Khadíjih's life and she never conceived again. The young couple occupied a modest house in Shiraz along with the Báb's mother. Later, Khadíjih became a Bahá'í.

The Shaykhi movement

In the 1790s in Persia, Shaykh Ahmad (1753–1826) began a religious movement within Twelver Shia Islam. His followers, who became known as Shaykhis, were expecting the imminent appearance of the *al-Qa'im* of the Ahl al-Bayt also called "the Mahdi". After the death of Shaykh Ahmad, leadership was passed on to Kazim Rashti (1793–1843).

In 1841 the Báb went on pilgrimage to Iraq, and for seven months stayed mostly in and around Karbala.^[14] There he may have met Kazim Rashti, who showed a high regard for him.^[4] He is believed to have attended some of Kazim Rashti's lectures; however, this period is almost entirely undocumented.^[9]

As of his death in December 1843, Kazim Rashti counselled his followers to leave their homes to seek the Mahdi, who, according to his prophecies, would soon appear.^[4] One of these followers, Mullá Husayn, after keeping vigil for forty days in a mosque, travelled to Shiraz, where he met the Báb.^[15]

Declaration to Mullá Husayn



The room where the Declaration of the Báb took place on the evening of 22 May 1844, in his house in Shiraz.

The Báb's first religious inspiration experience claimed, and witnessed by his wife, is dated to about the evening of 3 April 1844.^[16] The Báb's first public connection with his sense of a mission came with the arrival of Mullá Husayn in Shiraz. On the night of 22 May Mullá Husayn was invited by the Báb to his home where Mullá Husayn told him of his search for the possible successor to Kazim Rashti, the Promised One. The Báb claimed this, and the bearer of divine knowledge.^[9] Mullá Husayn became the first to accept the Báb's claims to be an inspired figure and a likely successor to Kazim Rashti.^{[4][9]} The Báb had replied satisfactorily to all of Mullá Husayn's questions and had written in his presence, with extreme rapidity, a long *tafsir*, commentary, on *surah* "Yusuf", known as the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* and considered the Báb's first revealed work.^[4]

Letters of the Living

Mullá Husayn became the Báb's first disciple. Within five months, seventeen other disciples of Kazim Rashti recognized the Báb as a Manifestation of God.^[17] Among them, one woman, Fátimih Zarrín Táj Baraghání, a poet, who later received the name of *Táhirih*, the Pure. These 18 disciples later became known as the *Letters of the Living* (each soul containing one letter of the Spirit of God, which combine to form the Word) and given the task of spreading the new faith (understood as the return or continuation of the one Faith of Abraham) across Iran and Iraq.^[9] The Báb emphasized the spiritual station of these 18 individuals, who, along with himself, made the first "Unity" of his religion^[18] according to the Arabic term *wāhid*, unity, that has a numerical value of 19 using *abjad numerals*. The Báb's book, the *Persian Bayán*, gives the metaphorical identity of the Letters of the Living as the *Fourteen Infallibles* of Twelver Shi'i Islam: *Muhammad*, the *Twelve Imams*, and *Fatimah*, and the four *archangels*.^[18] Paralleling the *first followers of Christ*.^[19]

Proclamation

In his early writings, the Báb appears to identify himself as the gate (*báb*) to the *Hidden Twelfth Imam*, and later begins explicitly to proclaim his station as that of the Hidden Imam and a new messenger from God.^[20] Rather than being a discontinued or evolving consciousness, Saiedi states that the works of the Báb are unitary throughout, and that the gradual disclosure of the Báb's identity is defined by the principle of unity in diversity.^[20]



The Báb stood on this pulpit in the Masjid-i-Vakíl, addressing the populace of Shiraz in September 1846

In the Báb's early writings, the exalted identity he was claiming was unmistakable, but because of the reception of the people, his writings appear to convey the impression that he is only the gate to the Hidden Twelfth Imam.^[20] To his circle of early believers, the Báb was equivocal about his exact status, gradually confiding in them as not merely a gate to the Hidden Imam, but the Manifestation of the Hidden Imam and the *Qa'im* himself.^[21] During his early meetings with Mullá Husayn, the Báb described himself as the Master and the Promised One. He did not consider himself as simply Kazim Rashti's successor, but claimed a prophetic status, a kind of deputy, delegated not just by the Hidden Imam but through Divine authority.^[22] His early texts such as the *"Commentary on the Surih of Joseph"* used Quranic language that implied divine authority and identified himself effectively with the Imam.^{[9][23]} When Mullá `Alí Basṭámí, the second Letter of the Living, was put on trial in *Baghdad* for preaching about the Báb, clerics studied the *"Commentary on the*

Surih of Joseph," recognized in it a claim to divine revelation, and quoted from it in opposition to prove he had done so.^[23]

However, in the early phase of his declaration to the public, the title *báb* was emphasized as that of the gate leading to the Hidden Imam, as the Báb had told his early believers not to fully disclose his claims or reveal his name.^[24] The approach of laying claim to a lower position was intended to create a sense of anticipation for the appearance of the Hidden Imam, as well to avoid persecution and imprisonment, because a public proclamation of *mahdí* status could bring a swift penalty of death.^[24] After a couple of months, as the Báb observed further acceptance and readiness among his believers and the public, he gradually shifted his public claim to that of the Hidden Imam.^[24] Then in his final years he publicly announced his station as a Manifestation of God. In his trial, he boldly proclaimed himself, in the presence of the Heir to the Throne of Persia and other notables, the Promised One.^{[24][25]} Finally, in his last authored work, the *Haykal al-din*,^[26] he claimed the "essence of God", *dhātu'llāh*.^[27] In the early months of his public declarations, the adoption of a cautious policy had essentially achieved maximum attention with minimum controversy.^[24]

However, the gradual unfolding of his claims caused some confusion, both among the public and for some of his believers. A number of his early followers had instantly recognized his station as a messenger from God with divine authority, and this resulted in disagreement within the Bábí community.^[24] Even though the Báb had intended to convey his message with discretion, many of his followers such as Táhirih openly declared the coming of the promised Hidden Imam and Mahdí.^[24]

Travels and imprisonment

After the eighteen Letters of the Living recognized him, the Báb and the eighteenth Letter of the Living, Quddús, left on a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, the sacred cities of Islam.^[9] At the Kaaba in Mecca, the Báb publicly claimed the Qa'im,^[28] and wrote to the Sharif of Mecca, the Custodian of the Kaaba, proclaiming his mission. After their pilgrimage, the Báb and Quddús returned to Bushehr, Iran.^[5]

After some time, preaching by the Letters of the Living led to opposition by the Islamic clergy, prompting the Governor of Shiraz to order the Báb's arrest. The Báb, upon hearing of the arrest order, left Bushehr for Shiraz in June 1845 and presented himself to the authorities and placed under house arrest at the home of his uncle until a cholera epidemic broke out in the city in September 1846.^[9] Once released he departed for Isfahan. There, many came to see him at the house of the *imam jum'a*, head of the local clergy, who became sympathetic. After an informal gathering where the Báb debated the local clergy and displayed his speed in producing instantaneous verses, his popularity soared.^[29] After the death of the governor of Isfahan, Manouchehr Khan Gorji, his supporter, pressure from the clergy of the province led to Mohammad Shah Qajar ordering the Báb to Tehran in January 1847.^[30] After spending several months in a camp outside Tehran, and before the Báb could meet the Shah, the Prime Minister sent the Báb to Tabriz in the northwestern corner of the country to his confinement.^[9]

After forty days in Tabriz, the Báb transferred to the fortress of Maku, Iran in the province of Azerbaijan close to the Turkish border. During his incarceration there, the Báb began his most important work, the Persian Bayán, that he never finished. Because of the Báb's growing popularity in Maku, even the governor of Maku converting, the prime minister transferred him to the fortress of Chehríq in April 1848.^[4] There too the Báb's popularity grew and his jailors relaxed restrictions on him. It was at this time that Áqa Bálá Big Shíshvání Naqshbandí painted the portrait of the Báb.^[31] Then the Prime Minister ordered the Báb back to Tabriz, where the government called on religious authorities to put the Báb on trial for blasphemy and apostasy.^[9]



Fortress of Maku, Iran (2008)

Trial

The trial, attended by the Crown Prince, occurred in July 1848 and involved numerous local clergy. They questioned the Báb about the nature of his claims, his teachings, and demanded that he produce miracles to prove his divine authority. They admonished him to recant his claims. There are nine extant eyewitness reports of the trial, of which several may originate from an earlier source. Six of the reports are from Muslim accounts, and portray the Báb in an unfavourable light.^[25] There are 62 questions found in the nine sources, however eighteen occur in one source, fifteen in two, eight in three, five in four, thirteen in five, and three in six. Not

including "yes" and "he did not answer", only thirty-five answers remain, of which ten occur in one source, eight in two, six in three, three in four, two in five, five in six. Only one answer is found in all nine eyewitness sources, where the Báb states that "I am that person you have been awaiting for one thousand years."^[25]

The trial did not bring a decisive result. Some clergy called for capital punishment, but the government pressured them to issue a lenient judgement because the Báb was popular. The government asked medical experts to declare the Báb insane to order his execution. To appease the religious clergy, the government may have spread rumours that the Báb recanted.^[32]

The Shaykh al-Islām, a champion of the anti-Bábist campaign, not at the Báb's trial, issued a conditional death sentence if the Báb was found to be sane. A fatwa was issued establishing the Báb's apostasy and stated "The repentance of an incorrigible apostate is not accepted, and the only thing which has caused the postponement of thy execution is a doubt as to thy sanity of mind."^[32]

The crown prince's physician, William Cormick, examined the Báb and complied with the government's request to find grounds for clemency.^[25] The physician's opinion saved the Báb from execution for a time, but the clergy insisted that he face corporal punishment instead, so the Báb suffered foot whipping - twenty lashes to the bottoms of his feet.^[32]

The unsigned and undated official government report states that because of his harsh beating, the Báb orally and in writing recanted, apologized, and stated that he would not continue to advance claims of divinity.^[33] The document of his alleged recantation was written shortly after his trial in Tabriz.^[25] Some authors theorise that the assertions were made to embarrass the Báb and undermine his credibility with the public and that the language of this document is very different from the Báb's usual style, and so prepared by the authorities.^[32]

Orientalist Edward Granville Brown received copies of the trial documents from Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney the first French Baha'i. A facsimile of the recantation is published in Brown's *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion*, where he states, "[The document], unsigned and undated, was claimed to be in the Báb's handwriting and consists of a complete recantation and renunciation of any superhuman claim which he may have advanced or have appeared to advance. There is nothing to show to whom it is addressed, or whether it is the recantation referred to in the last paragraph of the [government report] or another. The handwriting, though graceful, is not easily legible..."^[34] This is a translation of the relevant section of the document:

Never have I desired aught contrary to the Will of God, and, if words contrary to His good pleasure have flowed from my pen, my object was not disobedience, and in any case I repent and ask forgiveness of Him. This servant has absolutely no knowledge connected with any [superhuman] claim. I ask forgiveness of God my Lord and I repent unto Him of [the idea] that there should be ascribed to me any [Divine] Mission. As for certain prayers and words which have flowed from my tongue, these do not imply any such Mission (amr), and any [apparent] claim to any special vicegerency for His Holiness the Proof of God (on whom be Peace!) is a purely baseless claim, such as this servant has never put forward, nay nor any claim like unto it!^[35]

After the trial, the Báb was ordered back to the fortress of Chehríq.

Execution

In mid-1850 a new prime-minister, Amir Kabir,^[36] ordered the execution of the Báb, probably because various Bábí insurrections' defeats and the movement's popularity appeared waning. The Báb was brought back to Tabriz from Chehríq for an execution by firing squad. The night before his execution, while being conducted to his cell, a young Bábí, Muhammad-Ali "Anís" from Zonuz, threw himself at the feet of the Báb and begged martyrdom with him, then was immediately arrested and placed in the same cell as the Báb.

On the morning of July 9, 1850 (28 Sha'ban 1266AH), taken to the courtyard of the barracks where held, there appeared thousands of people gathered to watch his execution. The Báb and Anís were suspended on a wall and a large firing squad of Christian soldiers prepared to shoot.^[9] Numerous eye-witness reports, including those of Western diplomats, recount the result.^[37] The order was given to fire and the barracks square filled with musket smoke. When it cleared, the Báb was no longer in the courtyard and his companion

stood there unharmed; the bullets apparently had not harmed either man, but had cut the rope suspending them from the wall.^[38] There was a great commotion, many in the crowd believing the Báb had ascended to heaven or simply disappeared. But the soldiers subsequently found the Báb in another part of the barracks, completely unharmed, giving his final instructions to his secretary. He and Anís were tied up for execution a second time, and a second firing squad of Muslim soldiers ranged in front of them. A second order to fire was given. This time the Báb and his companion were killed.^[9] In Bábí and Bahá'í tradition, the failure of the first firing to kill the Báb is believed a miracle. Their remains were dumped outside the gates of the town to be eaten by animals.



The barrack square in Tabriz, where the Báb was executed

However, their remains were clandestinely rescued by a handful of Bábís and then hidden. Over time the remains secretly transported according to the instructions of Bahá'u'lláh and then `Abdu'l-Bahá by way of Isfahan, Kirmanshah, Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut, and then by sea to Acre on the plain below Mount Carmel in 1899.^[39] On March 21, 1909, the remains were interred in a special tomb, the Shrine of the Báb, erected for this purpose by `Abdu'l-Bahá, on Mount Carmel in present-day Haifa, Israel.^[40] In its vicinity, the Bahá'í World Centre welcomes visitors to tour the gardens.

Succession

In most of his prominent writings, the Báb alluded to a Promised One, most commonly referred to as *man yazhiruhu'lláh*, "Him Whom God shall make manifest", and that he himself was "but a ring upon the hand of Him Whom God shall make manifest." Within 20 years of the Báb's death, over 25 people claimed to be the Promised One, most significantly Bahá'u'lláh.

Before the Báb's death, he sent a letter to Mírzá Yahyá, Subh-i-Azal, that some consider a will and testament.^[41] This recognized the appointing of Subh-i-Azal as the leader of the Bábí community after the death of the Báb, and ordered to obey the Promised One when he appears.^[42] At the time Subh-i-Azal, still a teenager, had never demonstrated leadership in the Bábí movement, and was still living in the house of his older brother, Bahá'u'lláh. All of this lends credence to the Bahá'í claim that the Báb appointed Subh-i-Azal the head of the Bábí Faith so as to divert attention away from Bahá'u'lláh, while allowing Bábís to visit Bahá'u'lláh and consult with him freely, and allowing Bahá'u'lláh to write to Bábís easily and freely. Shia Islam includes a vast history of hidden leaders, and their deputies wielding the true power. The first examples of this are the four bábs as is Ali-Muhammad's choice of the title "the Báb".



Shrine of the Báb, Haifa

In 1852 Bahá'u'lláh, while a prisoner in Tehran, was visited by a "Maid of Heaven", that symbolically marked the beginning of his mission as a Messenger of God. Eleven years later in Baghdad, he made his first public declaration and eventually was recognized by the vast majority of Bábís as "He Whom God shall make manifest". His followers began calling themselves Bahá'ís.^[43]

Subh-i-Azal continued to live with or close to Bahá'u'lláh throughout the latter's exiles from Iran to Baghdad and then to Istanbul and Edirne, though Bahá'u'lláh's claim as a Manifestation of God in 1863 theoretically rendered moot Subh-i-Azal's authority as the head of the Bábí community. In September 1867, in Edirne, the rival claims to authority came to a head. Subh-i-Azal challenged Bahá'u'lláh to a test of the divine will in a local mosque in Edirne such that "God would strike down the impostor". Bahá'u'lláh agreed and went to the Yavuz Selim Mosque at the appointed time, but Subh-i-Azal failed to show up.^[44]

Subh-i-Azal's followers became known as Azalís or Azali Bábís. For the Bábís who did not recognize Bahá'u'lláh, Subh-i-Azal remained their leader until his death in 1912, and Azali successorship remains disputed. Bahá'í sources report that 11 of the 18 "witnesses" appointed by Subh-i-Azal to oversee the Bábí community became Bahá'ís, as his son did. The man allegedly appointed

by Subh-i-Azal to succeed him, Hadíy-i-Dawlat-Abádí, later publicly recanted his faith in the Báb and Subh-i-Azal.^[46]

Bahá'u'llah emerged more successful and nearly all of the Báb's followers abandoned Subh-i-Azal and became Bahá'ís. Today Bahá'ís have several million followers, while estimates of the number of Azalís are generally around one thousand in Iran.^[46]

Teachings

The Báb's teachings have three broad stages, each with a dominant thematic focus. His earliest teachings are primarily defined by his interpretation of the Quran and hadith. This interpretive mode continues throughout all three stages of his teachings, but a shift takes place where his emphasis moves to philosophical elucidation, and finally to legislative pronouncements. In the second philosophical stage, the Báb gives an explanation of the metaphysics of being and creation, and in the third legislative stage his mystical and historical principles unite.^[47] An analysis of the Báb's writings throughout these stages show his teachings were animated by a common principle with multiple dimensions and forms.^[48]

Writings

Most of the writings of the Báb have been lost. The Báb himself stated they exceeded five hundred thousand verses in length; the Qur'an, in contrast, is 6300 verses in length. If one assumes 25 verses per page, that would equal 20,000 pages of text.^[49] Nabíl-i-Zarandí, in *The Dawn-breakers*, mentions nine complete commentaries on the Qur'an, revealed during the Báb's imprisonment at Maku, which have been lost without a trace.^[50] Establishing the true text of the works that are still extant, as already noted, is not always easy, and some texts will require considerable work. Others, however, are in good shape; several of the Báb's major works are available in the handwriting of his trusted secretaries.^[51]

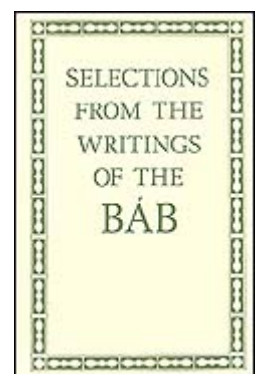
Most works were revealed in response to specific questions by Bábís. This is not unusual; the genre of the letter has been a venerable medium for composing authoritative texts as far back as Paul the Apostle. Three quarters of the chapters of the New Testament are letters, were composed to imitate letters, or contain letters within them.^[52] Sometimes the Báb revealed works very rapidly by chanting them in the presence of a secretary and eyewitnesses.

The Archives Department at the Bahá'í World Centre currently holds about 190 Tablets of the Báb.^[53] Excerpts from several principal works have been published in the only English-language compilation of the Báb's writings: *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*. Denis MacEoin, in his *Sources for Early Bábí Doctrine and History*, gives a description of many works; much of the following summary is derived from that source. In addition to major works, the Báb revealed numerous letters to his wife and followers, many prayers for various purposes, numerous commentaries on verses or chapters of the Qur'an, and many *khutbihs* or sermons (most of which were never delivered). Many of these have been lost; others have survived in compilations.^[54]

The Báb has been criticized for his inconsistent use of correct and incorrect Arabic grammar in his religious works, though in his Arabic letters made very few mistakes.^[55] A reason for this inconsistency could be to distinguish those who could not see past the outer form of the words from those that could understand the deeper meaning of his message.^{[55][56]}

Writings before his declaration

Todd Lawson noted this in his doctoral dissertation about the Báb's *Tafsir on Surah al-Baqara*.^[57] This tafsir was started by the Báb in November or December 1843, some six months before declaring his mission. The first half was completed by February or March 1844; the second half was revealed after the Báb's declaration. It is the only work of the Báb's revealed before his declaration that has survived intact. It also sheds light on the Báb's attitude toward Twelver beliefs.^[58] His wife also refers to important episodes before his declaration.^[59]



Shiraz, May – September 1844

- The first chapter of the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* ("Tafsir on the Surah *Yusu'*")^[60] was written by the Báb on the evening of his declaration to Mullá Husayn, on the evening of May 22, 1844. The entire work, which is several hundred pages in length and is considered to be revelation by Bahá'ís, required forty days to write; it is one of the Báb's longer Arabic works. It was widely distributed in the first year of the Bábí movement, functioning as something of a Qur'an or Bible for the Bábís. In the book the Báb states his claim to be a Manifestation of God, though the claim is disguised with other statements that he is the servant of the Hidden Imám.^[61] Táhirih translated the work into Persian.
- *Sahífiḥ-yi-makhzúniḥ* revealed before his departure for Mecca in September 1844, and consists of a collection of fourteen prayers, mostly to be recited on specific holy days and festivals. Its content remained within the expectations of Islam!^[62]

Pilgrimage, September 1844 – June 1845

During his 9½-month pilgrimage to Mecca, the Báb composed many works:

- *Khasá'il-i-sab'ih*. A work composed by the Báb on his sea journey back to Bushehr after his pilgrimage, which listed some regulations to be followed by the Bábí community. A copy of the manuscript probably still exists in Iran.^[63]
- *Kitáb-i-Rúḥ* ("Book of the Spirit"): This book contains 700 or 900 verses and was written while the Báb was sailing back to Bushehr from pilgrimage. The original was nearly destroyed when the Báb was arrested. Several manuscript copies are extant.^[64]
- *Sahífiḥ baynu'l-haramayn* ("Treatise Between the Two Sanctuaries"): This Arabic work was written while the Báb traveled from Mecca to Medina in early 1845 and is in response to questions posed to him by a prominent Shaykhí leader.^[65]
- *Kitáb-i-Fihrist* ("The Book of the Catalogue"): A list of the Báb's works, composed by the Báb himself after he returned from pilgrimage to Mecca, June 21, 1845. It is a bibliography of his earliest writings.^[66]

Bushehr and Shiraz, March 1845 – September 1846

The Báb was in Bushehr March through June 1845, then in Shiraz.

- *Sahífiḥ-yi-Ja'fariyyih*. The Báb wrote this treatise to an unknown correspondent in 1845. Over a hundred pages in length, it states many of his basic teachings, especially in relation to some Shaykhi beliefs.^[67]
- *Tafsír-i-Súriḥ-i-Kawthar* ("Tafsir on the Surah *Kawthar*"): The Báb wrote this commentary for Ḥayyá Dárábí Vahíd while he was in Shiraz; it is the most important work revealed during the Shiraz period. Though the surah is only three verses in length, being the shortest in the Qur'an, the commentary on it is over two hundred pages in length. The work was widely distributed, and at least a dozen early manuscripts are extant.^[68]

Isfahan, September 1846 – March 1847

- *Nubuvviḥ khásish*. This work, of fifty pages' length, was revealed in two hours in response to a question by Governor Manouchehr Khan Gorji. It discusses the special prophethood of Muhammad, an important subject discussed in debates between Muslims and Christians.^[69]
- *Tafsír-i-Súriḥ-i-va'l-'asr* (Commentary on the Surah *al-'Asr*): This is one of the two important works the Báb penned in Isfahan. It was written spontaneously and publicly in response to a request by Mir Sayyid Muhammad, the chief cleric of the city; much of it was written in one evening, to the astonishment of those present.^[70]

Maku, late summer 1847 – May 1848

The Báb left Isfahan in March 1847, sojourned outside Tehran several months, then was sent to a fortress at Maku, Iran, close to the Turkish border. It witnessed the composition of some of the Báb's most important works.

- *Persian Bayán*. This is undoubtedly the most important work of the Báb and contains a mature summary of his teachings. It was composed in Maku in late 1847 or early 1848. The work consists of nine chapters titled váhids or "unities", which in turn are usually subdivided into nineteen bábs or "gates"; the one exception is the last unity which has only ten bábs. The Báb explained that it would be the task of "He Whom God shall make manifest" to complete the work; Bahá'ís believe Bahá'u'lláh's *Kitáb-i-Íqán* to be the completion of the Bayán. Each unity begins with an Arabic summary of its contents, which makes it easier to read than many of the Báb's works. Extracts of this work are published in *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*. A. L. M. Nicolas translated the entire work into French in four 150-page volumes.^[71]

- *Arabic Bayán*. This is the shorter and less important of the two Bayáns. It consists of eleven váhids or "unities", each with nineteen bábs or "gates". It offers a succinct summary of the Báb's teachings and laws. It was composed at Maku in late 1847 or early 1848.^[72]
- *Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih* ("Seven Proofs"): There are two works by this name, the longer one in Persian, the shorter one in Arabic; both were composed in Maku in late 1847 or early 1848. Nicholas called the Persian Seven Proofs "the most important of the polemical works that issued from the pen of Sayyid `Alí Muhammad".^[73] The work was written to either a non-Bábí or to a follower whose faith had been shaken, but the recipient's identity is unknown. The Arabic text summarizes the seven proofs found in the Persian text.

Chihriq, May 1848 – July 1850

The Báb spent two years in Chehriq, except for his brief visit to Tabriz for his trial. The works he produced there were more esoteric or mystical and less thematically organized.^[74] Two major books were produced, in addition to many minor works:

- *Kitabu'l-Asmá'* ("The Book of Names"): This is an extremely long book about the names of God. It was penned during the Báb's last days at Chehriq, before his execution. The various manuscript copies contain numerous variations in the text; the book will require considerable work to reconstruct its original text.^[75]
- *Kitáb-i-panj sha'n* ("Book of Five Grades"): Having been composed in March and April 1850, this is one of the Báb's last works. The book consists of eighty-five sections arranged in seventeen groups, each under the heading of a different name of God. Within each group are five "grades", that is, five different sorts of sections: verses, prayers, homilies, commentaries, and Persian language pieces. Each group was sent to a different person and was composed on a different day. Thus the work is a kind of miscellany of unrelated material. Some of the sections represent further exposition of basic themes in the Báb's teachings; others consists of lengthy iterations of the names of God, and variations on their roots.^[76]

Commemorations in the Bahá'í calendar

In the Bahá'í calendar the events of the birth, declaration and death of the Báb are commemorated by Bahá'í communities on a yearly basis.^[77] At the centennial of the declaration of the Báb to Mulla Husayn in May, 1944, the Bahá'ís had a viewing of the portrait of the Báb during the celebrations held at the Bahá'í House of Worship (Wilmette, Illinois).^[78] Speaking at the event were Dorothy Beecher Baker, Horace Holley, and others.

See also

- Comparison of the founders of religious traditions
- List of Mahdi claimants
- List of founders of religious traditions
- Capital punishment in Iran

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