CHAPTER NINE

THE PASSING OF KHADÍJIH BAGUM

During this period, various teachers of God’s Cause and diffusers of the Divine Word arrived in Fárs in service to the Faith, thereby renewing the spiritual life of many souls. Amid such teachers coming to Shiráz was Áqá Mullá Muhammad Qá’íni, [surnamed] Nabil Akbar, who ranked among the foremost promoters of the Cause. His stay in Fárs lasted some thirteen months and produced many benefits for the province and nearby territories, resulting in the edification of a number of individuals.

*Munírih Khánum’s Sojourn in Shiráz*

During Shavvál of AH 1288 [December 1871], Munírih Khánum, who was traveling to the Holy Land for the purpose of her marriage to ʿAbdu’l-Bahá, arrived in Shiráz from Isfahán. [Prior to her arrival] a letter addressed to Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán was sent from Isfahán by Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan, the Sultánu’sh-Shuhadá188 [the King of Martyrs], indicating that in accordance with Bahá’u’lláh’s instructions, Munírih Khánum, an accomplished daughter of Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-ʿAlí Nahriy, together with her brother, Áqá Siyyid Yahyá, were to proceed to the Holy Land and en route would arrive [in Shiráz] and that a residence was to be designated for their stay.

After considering the contents of this letter from Isfahán, the Afnán consulted with Khadíjih Bagum and because of its proximity to her own residence, she proposed the house of the Khál [Akbar], Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, as the residence for the coming guests. At that time, Khadíjih Bagum lived in the house of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, the Khál [A’zam], with her maternal sister [Hájíyyih Bíbí Ján-Ján], who was the widow of the martyred-uncle, and the homes of the two uncles were adjacent to one another, connected by a common wall. Therefore, this house was designated for Munírih Khánum’s stay.

188 Balyúzí, *Eminent Bahá’ís in the Time of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 231, attributes the letter to the Mahbúbu’sh-Shuhadá [the Beloved of Martyrs].
Munírih Khánum and her brother, Áqá Siyyid Yahyá, arrived in the month of Dhi’l-Qa’dih [January 1872]. During their sojourn, she was a constant companion and consort of Khadíjih Bagum, and wherever they visited were in each other’s company. For a few nights, she also tarried at the residence of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán. After a stay of 15 days in Shíráz, Munírih Khánum departed for Búshihr and eventually the Holy Land.189

While she was in Shíráz, one day during the course of their conversations, Khadíjih Bagum stated, “Having been in the hands of diverse individuals, the Blessed House of the Báb has suffered extensively and stands in ruin. I wish for it to be renovated so that I could take my residence there. When you have attained the sacred presence [of Bahá’u’lláh], kindly implore Him that the request of this forsaken one be graced with the favor of acceptance so that I would be able to take my residence there for the protection of the House.” [Munírih Khánum] had written down her supplication and presented it to Bahá’u’lláh, Who graciously commanded Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán to renovate the House in whatever manner Khadíjih Bagum desired and for her residence to be transferred there afterwards.

Renovation of the House of the Báb

Subsequent to issuance of His blessed instruction, the Afnán commenced the repair work. He designated one of the believers Ustád ‘Abdu’r-Razzáq [a mason of Shíráz] as the construction supervisor and the laborers’ overseer, himself visiting the site two or three times daily. In the course of this renovation, major architectural modifications were introduced, and the design and configuration of the entire House were changed from the original layout.

This work was completed after several months. While the reconstruction was taking place, a small house adjacent on the eastern flank that belonged to a Jewish man who had recently converted to Islam was purchased at the owner’s insistence, renovated, and made part of the Blessed House of the Báb.

189 See Balyúzí, Bahá’u’lláh the King of Glory, pp. 344–47.