CHAPTER TWELVE

TROUBLES IN ÁBÁDIH

Arrival of Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri’d-Dín

Subsequent to the Afnán’s return to Búshihr in AH 1313 [1895], he remained in that city for only a few days before proceeding to Shíráz. He arrived during the governorship of Muhammad-Taqí Mírzá, the Ruknu’d-Dawlih, was greeted by the friends, and settled at his residence where the believers warmly welcomed him. Having been away for several years, old friendships were revived, and the gatherings were infused with a new vigor. After a few months, Mashhádí Husayn arrived from Ábádih, and having renewed their acquaintance, at his insistence, Núri’d-Dín [and his family] left for Ábádih.\textsuperscript{235}

Furúghí in Shíráz

A few months later, Áqá Mírzá Mahmúd Furúghí arrived in Shíráz by way of Búshihr.\textsuperscript{236} En route he had became a travel companion of Siyyid Muhammad A’lamu’l-’Ulama, [known as] the Mujtahid Búshihrí and the Thaqatu’l-Islám, who was a brother of Áqá Najaf Isfahání,\textsuperscript{237} and [in the course of their conversations,] he grew cognizant that Furúghí was a Bahá’í. As a handsome prize, this news was brought by him to the circle of the ’ulamá of Shíráz who were told, “A prophet of these people [Bahá’ís] has arrived in Shíráz.” He provided exact details, and each of the ’ulamá was told of the depth of Furúghí’s knowledge and achievements, and was duly warned of his presence in the city.

\textsuperscript{235} Under the feudalistic system of the time, the Afnáns were among the affluent landlords, owning many properties throughout Fárs, including homes, farms, and other properties in Ábádih (Abú’l-Qásim Afnán, private communication, August 1995).

\textsuperscript{236} For a biography see Balyúzí, Eminent Bahá’ís in the Time of Bahá’u’lláh, pp. 156–70, and Sulaymání, Masúbíh Hidáyat, vol. 3, pp. 417–83.

\textsuperscript{237} In Bahá’u’lláh’s Writings he is referred to as “the son of the wolf.”
Unable to contain his zeal and enthusiasm, on his arrival the celebrated Furúghí began organizing many Bahá’í gatherings. Each day, a large number of the friends would assemble in various homes [to partake of this spiritual sustenance]. Soon, reports of these activities were sent to the ‘ulamá, which prompted them to cause sedition. They immediately sent a message to the Ruknu’d-Dawlíh, stating in essence, “A teacher of these people [Bahá’ís] has come to Shíráz and is deceiving the citizens [into joining the Bahá’í Faith]. He must be summarily arrested and punished as a lesson to others.” The governor-general was thus compelled into issuing orders for Furúghí’s arrest.

The news of the ‘ulamá’s schemes and the collusion of the governor reached Furúghí that day as he participated in a large Bahá’í gathering in the home of Áqá Muhammad-Hasan Khayyát [tailor]. After consultation with the friends, it was decided that, in the company of a trusted guide, Furúghí should leave Shíráz for Ábádíh. For this mission, Mashhádí ‘Abbás, a keen, righteous and agile man, was chosen, and that very night they left the city.

The governor, however, learning of their exit, immediately sent several officers in their pursuit, and on the way to Zarqán he was intercepted and apprehended. Furúghí was brought back to the governor’s orchard, and the Ruknu’d-Dawlíh was informed of his arrest. The governor came from the Ark to the orchard where the captive was kept. He was, however, charmed and won over by Furúghí and ordered his Túfangdár-Báshí [the chief gunner] to serve as the host for the captive.

While a guest in his home, Furúghí succeeded in teaching the Faith to his host, who was filled with love and admiration for the Cause. On hearing this, the Ruknu’d-Dawlíh was enraged [but took no action].

One day, in the course of a conversation with Furúghí, the governor voiced an insult [to the Bahá’í Faith], which instantly caused his guest to become infuriated, rebuking him, “Know well, O governor, that I possess a mighty serpent, and should it be unleashed, it will devour you and your Ark.” He spoke these words with such authority that the Prince was thoroughly overcome with fear and apologized profusely, assuring him that no offense was intended. Thereupon, Furúghí begun to recite many verses of the Qur’án and the Prophet’s Traditions that further served to deepen the admiration of the governor for his eloquence and learning.

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238 The symbolism is that of Moses’ admonishment to the Pharaoh.