CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PROFILE OF TURMOIL: SPRING 1903

The Journey of Æaqá Mirzé Æaqá Afnán, [Surnamed] Núrí’-d-Dín, from Shiráz—His Second Journey to the Holy Land

In AH 1316 [1898], ‘Abdu’l-Bahá summoned the Afnán to the Holy Land. He departed from Shiráz in the company of Maryam-Sultán Bagum, Túbá Khánum, and Mirzá Diýá’-u’d-Dín and arrived in the Holy Land. They had the bounty of dwelling for a month under the canopy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s favors where each day they drank their fill from the chalice of their Beloved’s infinite munificence and partook of the honor of being in His presence.

At the conclusion of the month’s stay, congruent with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s command, the Afnán went to Port Said, as Hájí Mirzá Buzurg and this servant [Mirzá Habíb’úlláh] were residing in that town. My mother, sister, and brother, Hájí Mirzá Diýá’t-Dín, accompanied my father, the Afnán. In that town, we were engaged in commerce.

We remained in Port Said for three years when, once more in accordance with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s command, we returned to Fárs to serve and protect the Blessed House of the Báb. Our entire family was permitted to travel [again] to the Holy Land and to remain there for some fifteen days. After acquiring spiritual sustenance, consonant with His wish, we returned for a brief period to Port Said and thence proceeded to Shiráz.

When the friends in Shiráz were informed of the safe transfer of the Báb’s sacred remains from Tihrán to the Holy Land and their interment on Mount Carmel, the celebrated Hájí Shaykhú’-Raí’s penned a poem in AH 1318 [1900] which marked that blessed date and submitted it to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence. This offering won His high praise…

The remains of the Báb were interred in His permanent Shrine on Naw-Rúz 1909. For the history of events leading to this interment, see, Rabbani, “Eff  orts to Preserve the Remains of the Báb: Four Historical Accounts.”

The text on page 412 quotes five lines of this poem that are not rendered into English in the present translation. The concluding verse gives the date of this event, 1327 [1909], as the numerical value of the phrase “Hadíratu’l-Qudsí.”
Similarly, at the time when the arch—Covenant-breaker [Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí] had hoisted the standard of violation, Shaykhur-Ra’ís composed a missive in Arabic and a poem in Persian and sent them to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence as well. These two documents are truly enchanting, and upon their consideration, one perceives the depth of certitude, faith, and purity of intent of this peerless and evanescent believer. . . .

Filled with joy and spirit, the Afnán arrived in Shíráz on 18 Sha‘bán AH 1319[30 November 1901], with this servant and my brother, Hájí Mírzá Buzurg, [and the womenfolk of our family,] in his company. We attained the presence of the friends of the Merciful, and regular weekly gatherings were organized, where all the believers would come together in the utmost enthusiasm and unity. Moreover, with great order and undiminished wisdom, the friends would visit the Blessed House of the Báb and place their brows in humility on the Threshold of that Sacred Edifice.

In the year AH 1320 [1902], while in Tihrán, the exalted Navváb [Prince] Malik Mansúr Mírzá, the Shu‘á’u’s-Saltanih, was appointed governor-general of the province of Fárs. 268 He arrived in Shíráz with a large retinue, entourage, and a regiment of soldiers, exhibiting princely splendor and authority.

As result of his high standing, policies, and rule, Shíráz was quiet, and freedom reigned throughout the region. Meetings and Bahá’í gatherings were [regularly] organized in the utmost radiance. Áqá Mírzá Jalál Zarihán and ‘Andalíb were steadfastly engaged in teaching the Cause. There was no hint of disturbance, and Bahá’í congregations and assemblies met routinely, particularly the meetings held in the homes of the Bashíru’s-Sultán or Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Ridá Khán, where the celebrated Shaykhur-Ra’ís would grace the assemblage with his presence and all would benefit from his vast erudition.

It went thus until towards the end of the year when certain trouble-makers raised mischief and commotion, and tumult and uproar became sovereign throughout the city.

267 The text on pages 413–15 contains a copy this missive and poem, which have not been reproduced in this translation.

268 Bámdád, Sharh Hál Rijál Iran, vol. 1, pp. 28–29, indicates that he was first appointed governor-general of Fárs in AH 1318 [1900]. See appendix 3 for a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about this governor’s potential.