APPENDIX FOUR

CONVERSION OF THE GREAT UNCLE OF THE BÁB

Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, the eldest of the maternal uncles of the Báb and the recipient of the Kitáb-i Íqán, was born in 1798 and is commonly referred to as the Khál Akbar [the great uncle]. He was the first-born of Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, son of Áqá Mírzá ʿAbid (known as Zaynu’ll-ʿAbidín),399 son of Áqá Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad. This family ranked among the best-known and most trustworthy merchants in the Province of Fárs. His wife, Hájíyyih Bíbí Fátimih-Sáhib, was a daughter of Hájí Muhammad-Muhsin and a member of another prominent merchant family of ʿAbduʾl-Husaynī, trading in Shíráz and Búshihr, and eventually having commercial interests that extended from India to Europe.400

Khál Akbar ran the family office in Búshihr, and consequently the Báb was closely associated with him during the first four years He worked as a merchant there. During this period, Khál Akbar was concerned that the Báb's preoccupation with religious matters would create problems and had remained skeptical of such proclivities. Later in the summer of 1844 the Báb instructed Mullá ʿAlí Bastámí—the second to believe in Him—to journey to Búshihr and to share the news of His proclamation with Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad. It appears that in the course of this visit, the uncle grew considerably in his understanding of the Báb’s claim.

A few months later, on His pilgrimage journey, the Báb stayed with the same uncle and once more, on 15 May 1845, visited him for ten days on His return as He passed through Búshihr.401 It seems that by this time, the uncle had developed a deep sense of respect and devotion towards the saintly character and even the claim of his Nephew and warmly welcomed Him. It was during this visit of the Báb that the following letter was sent by the Khál Akbar to his own mother and sister—respectively, the grandmother and the mother of the Báb. The original of this letter in

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399 Fayzí, Hadrat Nuqṭih Ullá, p. 64.
401 For a discussion of the dates associated with the Báb’s hajj journey see, MacEoin, Sources for the Early Bábí Doctrine and History, p. 48.
the hand of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad is among the private papers of Abú’l-Qásim Afnán, and the text was printed in Khándán Afnán.\textsuperscript{402}

O the Best of the Protectors!

To be conveyed to the illumined presence of the exalted lady, my mother, and my sister, upon them rest the contentment of God.

He is.

To your sanctified presence it is respectfully submitted that, first, may your eyes and mine, and indeed all eyes be illumined that, praise be to God, the honored Hájí [i.e., the Báb] has arrived in the utmost health and well-being, and presently I stand in His service. It is deemed prudent for Him to tarry for a while in this place before coming to you [in Shíráz]. God willing, He will return to that city soon. Your blessed self should be assured that He sent forth a letter from Muscat and a separate one that was addressed to my honored sister, though they arrived after His Own arrival. When I first opened the envelope, I did not notice that it was addressed to my dear and honored sister and only noticed that there was a short letter addressed to the sister of Áqá Mírzá Abú’l-Qásim,\textsuperscript{403} which was forwarded. Now that I have determined it was meant separately for my sister, it has been sent as well. Peruse them all.

All eyes be lit! In truth, His grace-bestowing Self brings light to the eyes of this world and of the next. He is the source of our pride. Praise be to God, a thousand praises be to God and His Chosen Ones! God willing, you have remained certain in His Cause and have not allowed the sayings of the people to introduce doubt or uncertainty into your hearts. Feel neither fear nor anxiety on account of what you may hear. The Lord of creation is His protector and His support.

I have no other matter to present before you. With infinite longing, I stand eager to serve Him. I beseech you prayers. Peace, tranquility, and the blessings of God rest upon you all. My children convey their warm greetings and state, “May your eyes be brightened by His arrival.” The mother of the lights of mine eye\textsuperscript{404} also joins in conveying her greetings and further adds her good wishes and informs my honored sister, “I am unable to be there to tell the mother of Áqá Mírzá Abú’l-Qásim\textsuperscript{<11>}, ‘Praise be to God that

\textsuperscript{402} Fayzí, Khándán Afnán, pp. 25–27. Over the years and in particular during the 1960s, two of Mírzá Habíbulláh’s sons, Abú’l-Qásim and Hasan Afnán, had the opportunity to examine and classify the Afnán family papers dating back to the late 1700s. These dealt mostly with the extensive commercial enterprises of the family—including a large amount of records pertaining to the Báb’s business activities—which had been accumulated over the span of several generations. In the course of this effort, they located a great many historical documents of prime importance, and several of those documents are translated in this appendix.

\textsuperscript{403} A reference to Khadíjih Bagum.

\textsuperscript{404} Presumably, a reference to his wife.