



The Live Voice of Children, was published in the official journal of the Ministry of Education of the Soviet Union in the same year. Despite his academic excellence, he was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1930 due to his involvement in Bahai activities (Furutan, Hekayat-e del, tr., p. 34). Forutan knew and fluently spoke five languages: Persian, Russian, Turkish, English, and Arabic (Harper, p. 155).

Forutan proceeded to Tabriz. While there he began teaching a course on the moral education of children and junior youth in order to train teachers and parents. He continued working on this project for many years and developed a comprehensive curriculum and twelve volumes of textbooks on Bahai moral education, using the methodology of modern systems of education. He was the first person in Iran to produce a teacher's manual to go with the textbooks that he produced. The revised versions of these textbooks are translated into more than thirty languages and are currently being used in Bahai classes for children around the world. In addition to the development of curricula and textbooks, he was instrumental in creating a countrywide network of voluntary spiritual and moral education services for children, young adults, and parents in the Bahai community of Iran (Forutan, Hekayat-e del; ?Ala?i).

In 1931 Forutan married ?Ata?iya Korasani, and they had two daughters, Iran and Parvin. After two years in Tabriz, Forutan and his wife volunteered to move to Sisan, a village near Tabriz with a sizeable Bahai community. With the assistance of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of that village, he administered and developed the school there into a modern facility for a few hundred pupils, both Bahai and non-Bahai, boys and girls (Forutan, Hekayat-e del, tr., p. 44).

In 1934 Forutan was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of Iran; so he moved to Tehran and served as the Executive Secretary of that National Assembly for the next twenty-four years. During the first ten of those years, he simultaneously served as a member and the Executive Secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of Tehran. He had a small number of assistants, who, in spite of the lack of modern communication technologies in Iran and government-imposed restrictions on the Bahai community, maintained regular contact with over 1,500 Bahai local communities in Iran. In spite of all such problems, Forutan managed to introduce and establish a properly functioning and nationwide administrative structure in the Bahai community of Iran. He was at the same time also serving as the chief editor and publisher of Akbar-e amri (the Bahai news journal of Iran), and he wrote articles for it throughout his tenure as the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Forutan was a popular and impressive public speaker and constantly traveled around the country to deliver talks on various Bahai topics, including the education of children and the principles of Bahai administrative order. During his years of service at the National Spiritual Assembly, despite his heavy load of duties, Forutan conducted various study courses for youth and adults and wrote a number of essays on topics related to the Bahai Faith for various Bahai periodicals and print media. He greatly impacted the formation and development

of the administrative organization of the Bahai community and moral education of Bahai children in Iran (?Ala?i, pp. 547-60; Harper, pp. 149-52).

In 1934 Forutan was appointed the principal of the Tarbiat schools for boys and girls in Tehran, which were owned and managed by the Bahai community. He served in that position until a year later, when all of the Bahai schools in Iran were closed by the order of the government, since they had refused to stay open during a Bahai holy day. The appointment of Forutan as the principal of the Tarbiat schools, particularly the one for boys, began a new trend in school administration in Iran. As a Western-trained pedagogue and educational psychologist, he changed the traditional practices of Iranian schools. The Tarbiat schools became the first native Iranian schools to abolish harsh discipline, including corporal punishment, and introduced various motivational methods (only the Western missionary schools had done this previously). The changes that Forutan introduced at the Tarbiat schools pioneered changes in the school system and in disciplinary measures in educational institutions throughout Iran. Forutan was a firm believer and a prominent promoter of comprehensive or holistic education, emphasizing the importance of a multi-dimensional education covering the physical, intellectual, and spiritual development of children and youth in a balanced manner. The curriculum that he developed for moral education of children and junior youth, contained all these three elements (see Shahvar).

In 1946, Forutan was invited by the newly-established Radio Iran to conduct weekly talks on various educational topics for teachers and parents. These talks were designed to advise parents on how to raise their children, and they became very popular. During these radio talks, he raised issues such as the inadvisability of the corporal punishment of children. He delivered a total of twenty-four talks before his broadcasts were abruptly discontinued because of his religious affiliation. Transcripts of those radio talks were collated in a volume entitled *Majmu'a-ye resalat tarbiati* and published in 1968. In 1980 an expanded version of this book was translated into English and published under the title of *Mothers, Fathers and Children. Practical Advice to Parents*, which was subsequently translated and published in more than a dozen languages, including Russian and Chinese (by the governments of those countries). Its Braille version was published by Royal National Institute for the Blind in 1995.

In December 1951, Forutan was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God (*Ayadi-e Amr Allah*) by Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahai Faith and Head of the Bahai community (Shoghi Effendi, p. 123). In this capacity he embarked on his international Bahai services and traveled to more than sixty countries delivering lectures at hundreds of Bahai gatherings and conferences around the world.

In 1957, after the passing of Shoghi Effendi, he was appointed as one of the nine Hands of the Cause of God to reside permanently at the Bahai World Center in Haifa, where he settled with his wife (Bahai World Center, 1992, p. 25). He continued these duties and his travels around the world until his passing.

Those travels included representing the Universal House of Justice at Bahai conferences and at the establishment of several National Spiritual Assemblies around the world.

One of his most cherished visits was to the Soviet Union in 1991, from where he had been banished sixty years earlier. During his sojourn of over two months there, he gave a lecture in Russian at his former University Faculty and visited Bahais in Moscow and some cities in Russia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. In a second visit he represented the Universal House of Justice at the first National Convention of the Bahais of Soviet Union, held in Moscow in April 1991, when the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of Soviet Union was elected and established (ʻAndalib, 1992, no. 35, pp. 9-21).

#### Bibliography:

Selected works. Forutan's numerous writings of essays and books have been translated into more than sixty languages.

Atar-e goharbar; tr., as *The Source of Glory*, New Delhi, 1970.

Baqā-ye ruh, Tehran, 1968; tr. Iran Furutan Muhajer, as *The Human Soul and Its Immortality* New Delhi, 1970.

Cand baht-e amri, Tehran, 1967.

Dastanha-ye Hazrat-e Bahaʻ-Allah, Tehran, 1984; tr. Katayoon and Robert Crerar as *Stories of Baháʻulláh*, Oxford, 1986.

ʻElm wa din; tr. Iran Furutan Muhajer, as *Science and Religion*, New Delhi, 1970.

Islām wa diānat-e Bahaʻi, Tehran 1950.

Heart: *Memoirs of ʻAli-Akbar Furútan*, Oxford, 1984, repr. 7 times.

Hekayat-e del (an autobiography), Tehran, 1977; tr. Mahnaz Javid as *The Story of My*

*Logat-e fosaha wa logat-e nura*, Tehran, 1967.

Majmuʻa-ye maqalat-e tarbiati, Tehran, 1939; tr., as *Bahaʻi Education of Children and Junior Youth*, New Delhi, 2002.

Majmuʻa-ye maqalat-e tarbiati, Tehran, 1968; tr. Katayoon and Robert Crerar, as *Mothers Fathers and Children: Practical Advice to Parents*, Oxford, 1980.

Negah-i ba tarik, Tehran, 1966.

ʻOlum bara-ye tuda, Tehran, 1946.

Rahnema-ye tarbiat-e atfal; tr. as *Bahaʻi Education for Children: A Teacher's Guide*, New Delhi, 2000.

Rasaʻel-e ʻelmi, Tehran, 1965.

Saraparda-ye yaganagi; tr. Iran Furutan Muhajer, as *Raising the Tent of*

Unity, New Delhi, 1972.

Other sources.

Akbar-e amri, official organ of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of Iran, pub. Tehran, prior to 1980.

?Abd-al-?Ali ?Ala?i, Ayadi-e Amr-Allah, Tehran, 1973, pp. 547-60.

?Andalib (a quarterly journal, pub. by Institute of Baha?i Studies in Persian, Dundas, Canada).

Bahai World Center, The Ministry of the Custodians, 1957-1963: An Account of the Stewardship of the Hands of the Cause, Haifa, 1992.

The Baha'i World, vols. 10-20, Wilmette, Ill., and Haifa, 1949-98 and subsequent biennial volumes up to the volume for 2001-2, Haifa, 2003 (see Harper, pp. 216-20).

William P. Collins, Bibliography of English Language Works on the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, 1844-1985, Oxford 1990.

Barron Harper, Lights of Fortitude, 2nd ed., Oxford, 2007, pp. 147-57.

Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Baha?i World, Wilmette, Ill., 1958.

Soli Shahvar, The Forgotten Schools: The Baha?is and Modern Education in Iran, 1899-1934, London and New York, 2009.

(IRAJ AYMAN)

Last Updated: December 20, 2012

-->

METADATA

Views6485 views since posted 2013-04-16; last edit 2025-04-04 02:42 UTC;

previous at [archive.org.../ayman\\_iranica\\_ali-akbar\\_forutan](http://archive.org.../ayman_iranica_ali-akbar_forutan)

Language

English

Permission

fair use

Share

Shortlink: [bahai-library.com/4078](http://bahai-library.com/4078)

Citation: [ris/4078](http://ris/4078)

select Collection:

Archives

Articles

Articles-unpublished

Audio

Bibliographies

BIC

Biographies  
Books  
Chronologies  
Compilations  
Compilations-NSA  
Compilations-personal  
Documents  
East-asia  
Encyclopedia  
Essays  
Etc  
Excerpts  
Fiction  
Glossaries  
Guardian  
Histories  
Introductory  
Letters  
Maps  
Music  
Newspapers  
NSA-documents  
NSA-letters  
Personal  
Pilgrims  
Poetry  
Presentations  
Resources  
Reviews  
Scripts  
Software  
Statistics  
Study  
Talks  
Theses  
Transcripts  
Translations  
UHJ-documents  
UHJ-letters  
Video  
Visual  
Writings  
  
home  
  
sitemap  
  
series

[chronology](#)

[search:](#)

[author](#)

[title](#)

[date](#)

[tags](#)

[adv. search](#)

[languages](#)

[inventory](#)

[bibliography](#)

[abbreviations](#)

[links](#)

[about](#)

[contact](#)

[RSS](#)

[new](#)

— Forutan, Ali-Akbar (Used by permission of the curator)