

and Mírzá Ja`far Yazdí the majority of Bábís in this province became Bahá'ís. This included such prominent names as Mullá Mahmúd Furúghí, Mullá Sádiq Muqaddas (q.v.) and Hájí `Abdu'l-Majíd Nishapúrí (martyred 1877). There is no mention of any Azalí remnant here.

A number of important government officers as well as other notables of the province either became Bahá'ís or were sympathetic: in Mashhad, Mírzá `Alí-Ridá Mustasháru'd-Dawlih (d. 1298/1881) and Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá Mutaminu's-Saltanih (poisoned 1890), who were government finance officers (mustawfís) were Bahá'ís, together with other members of their families; in Tabas, the governor, Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán, `Imádu'l-Mulk, was a Bahá'í as was his son and successor, `Alí-Akbar Khán (d. 1319/1901); in Qúchán, the governor, Shuja`u'd-Dawlih, was very sympathetic and his son Hasan `Alí Khán was a Bahá'í; the leading cleric in Sabzivár, Hájí Ibráhím Khán

Shari`atmadar, and in Tabas, Mullá `Abdu'l-`Azím Mujtahid, were sympathetic and, according to some accounts, secret converts. The former had met the Báb in Isfahan. Perhaps the most well-known Bahá'í of this province was Hájí Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís, a Qájár prince who was a prominent figure in the reform movement.

One consequence of the sympathy of these highly-placed government officials and clerics was that there was little persecution of the Bahá'ís in the early years of this period. Most of the prominent `ulamá, for example, had dealings with Mutaminu's-Saltanih, who was responsible for assessing their tax liability to the government, and they were well aware of his religious adherence. Due to the relative safety afforded by having such high government officials sympathetic to the Bahá'í Faith, a number of Bahá'ís from such places as Isfahan migrated to Sabzivár and Quchán. Some Bahá'ís moved from Khurásán to Ashkhabad and other places in Turkistan.

The protection did not encompass the whole province, however, and in a few places such as Nishápúr and Turbat-i Haydarí, the governors were unfriendly towards the Bahá'ís. The one major martyrdom that did occur in this province during the early period of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry was that of Hájí `Abdu'l-Majíd Nishapúri, the father of Badf, in 1877. This episode was instigated by a cleric who was not a native of Khurásán and was only temporarily there,

Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir of Isfahan (q.v., "the Wolf"). As this earlier generation of highly-placed

protectors of the Bahá'í community died out, however, a number of episodes of persecution began to occur, such as the martyrdom of Hájí Muhammad-i-Turk in Mashhad in 1898, of Ismá'íl-i-Kadkhudá in Hissár in 1909, and of Shaykh `Alí-Akbar-i-Qúchání in 1915.

The Bahá'í Faith expanded in many of the towns and villages of Khurásán. In Mashhad itself there was steady increase in numbers. Shaykh Ahmad, known as Shaykh

Fání (executed 1867), took the new religion to Nishápúr and to his home village of Ma`múrih (Fu'ádí 249-50. ZH 6:127). The Bahá'í community in the Turbat-i Haydarí area continued to expand and took a new direction when a number of the Jews in that area were converted. They had begun to be interested when Mullá Ahmad Azghandí had been arrested in his home village and brought to Turbat in fetters during the Bábí period. Later they were converted by Karbalá'í Ya`qúb in about 1290/1873 (Fu'ádí 183-6; ZH6:134-5). These then began to convert their co-religionists in Mashhad (in fact these were Jews whose families had been forcibly converted to Islam in the previous century but kept their former religion in secret) so that by the 1890s there were some 60 Jewish converts at meetings in Mashhad (See Fu'ádí 183-194; ZH6:133-136). Shaykh Muhammad-`Alí Hidáyat began the first school to be run along modern lines in Mashhad, and later began schools in other towns in Khurásán. A Bahá'í school was begun in Bushrúyih

In Námiq and Hissár, two villages in the Turshíz area, Shaykh Ahmad Mu`allim, one of the leading religious authorities of the area and a former Shaykhí brought a large number to the Bábí movement and these later became Bahá'ís (Fu'ádí 275-285). In Tún, Áqá Mír Muhammad Bayk (d. 1317/1899) and his son Hájí

Sháh Khalílu'lláh Bayk, who was descended through his mother from Sháh Ni`matu'lláh Walí the famous Sufi Shaykh, both notables of the town, became known as Bahá'ís. Later a number of other prominent individuals in Tún were converted (Fu'ádí, pp. 334-339; ZH6:75-7). In Tabas, Hájí Mír `Abdu'r-Rahím Bayk, a prominent citizen of the town converted and while he was alive, the Bahá'ís were free to propagate the religion. After his death in 1297/1880, however, a certain amount of opposition arose (ZH6:77-9). From about 1300/1882-3 onwards, a number of Bahá'ís settled in the Gunábád area and a number of the notables of the area were converted (Fu'ádí 352-354). In Bushrúyih, there was a steady stream of conversions, several from among the `ulamá.

Áqá Muhammad Nabíl Akbar (q.v.), after having studied in Iraq and obtained a certificate of recognition from Shaykh Murtadá Ansárí, the foremost religious authority of the time, and having taught at a religious college in Tehran, returned to Qá'in. He immediately became one of the religious leaders of the town. During his travels, however, he had encountered the Bahá'ís and had even met Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad and was now a Bahá'í. He began to teach the new religion in Qá'in. One of his early converts was Áqá Muhammad `Alí Nabíl Qá'iní. Within a short time there were some 150 Bahá'ís in Qá'in (ZH6:98-102).

During the time of `Abdu'l-Bahá, the Bahá'í community of Khurásán continued to expand and there were a number of important conversions such as that of Shaykh `Ali-Akbar of Quchán and later Siyyid `Abbas `Alaví in Mashhad in 1341/1922.

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