



Nigar's paternal grandfather was Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's half-brother who, like Azal, broke Bahá'u'lláh's covenant. Despite the prophet's clear injunction in his Book of Covenant (Kitáb-i-'Ahd) that all his family should follow 'Abdu'l-Bahá as his legitimate successor, upon Bahá'u'lláh's death in 1892, Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí refused to do so and continued to challenge 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He remained unrepentant to his death. Nigar's mother was Qamar Bahá'í, a daughter of Badi'ulláh, another of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's half-brothers. Both Badi'ulláh and Qamar also broke Bahá'u'lláh's covenant and sided with Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí. Additionally, Nigar's mother not only rejected Shoghi Effendi's guardianship but publicly defied him in 1950-1951 by raising a trumped-up court case that challenged Shoghi Effendi's right to carry out major construction work around the shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. This court case is referred to by Shoghi Effendi himself in a telegram dated April 5, 1952. The entire case, though, fell apart when the star witness that Qamar had recruited, Nayyir Afnan (Shoghi Effendi's brother-in-law), passed away in April 1952.[7]

In short, on both sides of the family, Nigar comes from two half brothers that broke Bahá'u'lláh's covenant and opposed his legitimate successor. Nigar's mother, Qamar, also aligned herself with Jalal Azal. The two tried to unite all three generations of the internal opponents of the Bahá'í Faith:

First generation: Followers of Mírzá Yahya in his opposition to Bahá'u'lláh.

Second generation: Followers of Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí in his opposition to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Third generation: Opponents of Shoghi Effendi, both from within the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and others such as Ahmad Sohrab who rejected Shoghi Effendi's authority.[8]

Their attempt at unification eventually failed. Considering Nigar's lineage and her close family ties with Azal's descendants as well as those of Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí and Badi'ulláh – all of whom broke Bahá'u'lláh's covenant – it is highly unlikely that today she would have any positive or even neutral feelings or attitudes towards Bahá'u'lláh's legitimate successors: 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice. In the documentary, Nigar calls herself a true Bahá'í; yet true Bahá'ís are naturally expected to be loyal to Bahá'u'lláh and his covenant. Here is Shoghi Effendi's definition of what constitutes a true Bahá'í:

I would only venture to state very briefly and as adequately as present circumstances permit the principal factors that must be taken into consideration before deciding whether a person may be regarded a true believer or not. Full recognition of the station of the Forerunner, the Author, and the True Exemplar of the Bahá'í Cause, as set forth in Abdu'l-Bahá's Testament; unreserved acceptance of, and submission to, whatsoever has been revealed by their Pen; loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of our Beloved's

sacred Will; and close association with the spirit as well as the form of the present day Bahá'í administration throughout the world – these I conceive to be the fundamental and primary considerations that must be fairly, discreetly and thoughtfully ascertained before reaching such a vital decision.[9]

It can be objectively said that Nigar does not fit this criteria laid out by Shoghi Effendi, as evidenced by her uncooperativeness with the House of Justice among other things. More recently, she publicly attempted to show disrespect for Bahá'u'lláh by disregarding the legitimacy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and glorifying his arch-rival, Mírzá Muhammad-`Alí. She did so by building a dome over Mírzá Muhammad-`Alí's tomb near Abu Atibba (about 1.5 km south of Bahjí) as a riposte to the development of the Baha'i gardens there.[10] This is the same Mírzá Muhammad-`Alí who not only broke Bahá'u'lláh's covenant after the latter's death but during Bahá'u'lláh's own lifetime:

had the audacity to make claims to revelation in a written statement, sealed and signed by him.[11]

had tampered with the text of his father's holy writings when the latter entrusted some of his writings to Mírzá Muhammad-`Alí and sent him to India for publishing those writings.[12]

For whom Bahá'u'lláh had issued the following direct warning:  
"Should he for a moment pass out from under the shadow of the Cause, he surely shall be brought to naught." [13]

In conclusion, it is apparent that when one looks at Nigar's family history as well as her own acts of defiance, Nigar Bahai Amsalem's claim in Baha'is in my Backyard that she is a "true Bahá'í" and that she is "doing exactly what Bahá'u'lláh wanted us [Nigar and her family] to do" rings hollow.

#### References:

[1] The independent clip featuring Nigar can be viewed on YouTube, [youtube.com/watch?v=q2F-mV4rsNA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2F-mV4rsNA).

[2] Notes of Jalal Azal at Princeton University Library, pp. 560-572.

[3] The genealogical table compiled by Shoghi Effendi and published in Baha'i World, vol. 5: 1932-4, New York: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1936, between pp. 204 and 205.

[4] Ustad Muhammad 'Alí Salmání, My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh, translated by Marzieh Gail (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1982), pp 50-51.

[5] Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By (Wilmette, Illinois: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1970) p 165.

[6] Bahiyih Khanum, narrative in Myron Phelps, The Master in Akka (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1985) pp 40-41.

[7] This telegram also serves as an obituary for Nayyir Afnan; Baha'i News, no. 256.

[8] Moojan Momen, "The Cyprus Exiles." Published in Baha'i Studies Bulletin, vol. 5, no. 3 - vol. 6, no. 1, June 1991, p. 101. Accessible online at [momen.org/relstud/CyprusEx.htm](http://momen.org/relstud/CyprusEx.htm).

[9] Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, page 91.

[10] There is a plaque commemorating the fact that Nigar and her sister built the shrine for Mirzá Muhammad-`Alí on the shrine.

[11] GPB, p. 249.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ma`iydih-i Asmani vol. 8, p. 40.

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