Account of the Death of Mirza Yahya Subh-i-Azal

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world and passed into the world of Immortality. His household and its members applied to the
government and asked permission from the Governor [i.e. Commissioner] of Famagusta to
deposit his body in a place which belonged to that Blessed Being and which is situated about one
European mile outside Famagusta near to the house of Bárútjí-
záda Hájji Háfiz Efendi. His Excellency the
Commissioner granted this permission with the utmost kindness and consideration, and a grave
was dug in that place and built up with stones. A coffin was then constructed and prepared, and
in the afternoon all the government officials, by command of the Commissioner and at their own
wish and desire, together with a number of the people of the country, all on foot, bore the corpse
of that Holy Being on their shoulders, with pious ejaculations and prayers, and

every mark of extreme respect, from his house to the site of the Holy Sepulchre. But none were
to be found there of witnesses to the Bayán1, therefore the
Imám-Jum`a of Famagusta and some others of the doctors of Islám, having
uttered [the customary] invocations, placed the body in the coffin and buried it. And when they
brought it forth from the gate of Famagusta some of the Europeans also accompanied the Blessed
Body, and the son of the quarantine doctor took a photograph of it with a great number [of the
bystanders], and again took another photograph at the Blessed Tomb2.

"Now this Holy Person [i.e. Subhi-i-Azal] before his
death had nominated [as his executor or successor] the son of Aqá Mírzá Muhammad Hádí of Dawlatábád, who was one of the leading
believers and relatively better than the others, in accordance with the command of His Holiness
the Point [i.e. the Báb], glorious in his mention, who commanded saying, 'And if
God causeth mourning to appear in thy days, then make manifest the Eight Paths,' etc., until he
says, `But if not, then the authority shall return to the Witnesses of the Bayán3.' Therefore he appointed him, though hitherto no one has
found his testament amongst the writings of that Blessed Being. Moreover twenty-eight years
ago he had written for himself a lengthy form of visitation4 at the beginning of

which he wrote Li'l-Wahídi'l-Farídi'l-Mawtúr. Please
God after the lapse of some days, I will write it out for

1 i.e. Bábís.

2 These photographs were published by Mr. H. C. Lukach in his book
The Fringe of the East, pp. 264 and 266, and he has most kindly permitted me to
reproduce them here.

3 This obscure quotation is doubtless from the Bayán,
but I have not found it, and do not know the context.

4 Ziyárat-náma, i.e., a form of prayer
to be used by those visiting the tomb of a saint or martyr.

[two photographs]
Photographs of the Funeral of Mírzá Yahyá
Subh-i-Azal at
Famagusta, Cyprus, on April 29,
1912.(Reproduced by kind permission of Mr H.C. Lukach and Messrs Macmillian
from his book The Fringe of the East.)[blank page]

your Excellency and send it. I cannot copy it now because my eyes see badly. Please God you will
forgive me. I hope that God Most High will vouchsafe a complete cure to your Honour and remove
the sickness which you have.

"At all events that Most Blessed Being four hours before his death wept and
sorrowed because those of the notable and great men of Europe and other lands whom he had met
were not present at his last breath. I have nothing more to add except that whatever difficulties
you and equally Mr. Edward Browne may have, if you will refer them to me I will so far as
possible give a satisfactory answer. The Light be upon you, and may God heal you and assuage
your suffering.

"July 11, 1912. C. P." (Constantine the Persian).

The above account of Subhi-i-Azal's death and burial was
communicated to me on September 3, 1912, by Mr. C. D. Cobham, for whom it was written in
Persian by Rizwán `Ali (or, as he has called himself since his conversion to
Christianity [GREEK TEXT]. On the preceding May 19 Mr. H. C. Lukach, secretary to the High
Commissioner of Cyprus, had already written to ask me for a copy of my
"brochure on the

subject of the community of Bábís dwellng at Famagusta," adding that "the Báb" (meaning Subhi-i-Azal) "died on April 29th last, aet. circâ 82." On the 5th of September he very kindly communicated to me the following further particulars concerning Subhi-i-Azal's family and possessions:

"I am now able to give you a little further information with regard to the family of the late Subhi-i-Azal.

"It appears that Subhi-i-Azal left a letter saying that he of his sons who resembled him most closely in his mode of life and principles was to be his successor. The point as to

which of the sons fulfils this condition has not yet been decided; consequently all the children would appear at present to be co-heirs.

"The eldest surviving son is Ahmad Subhi-i-Azal, a poor man who is obliged to earn his living as a railway porter in Famagusta. The most affluent of the brothers is `Ali, who keeps a shop. Another, Mehmed (i.e. Muhammad) is not quite right in his head. The youngest, and, as far as I can gather, the favourite son (by a second wife) is one Taqiyyu'd-Dín, who was always near his father. `Constantine the Persian,' alias `Costi2', has been far away from Famagusta for some time. It may be that he will consent to sell some of his father's manuscripts in his possession. The other brothers are at present not prepared to sell theirs.

"No steps have, as far as I am aware, yet been taken to elect a walí (i.e. successor or executor). I am afraid this information is meagre, but, having been on Mount Troodos for the last few months, I have had no opportunity of making personal investigations in Famagusta."

On the 23rd of January, 1913, Mr. Lukach wrote to me again, enclosing a letter from a Syrian named Mughabghab who lived in Famagusta, and kindly offering his help should I desire to enter into negotiations for the purchase of any of the late Subhi-i-Azal's manuscripts. From Mr. Mughabghab's letter it appeared that Subhi-i-Azal's son "Costi" (i.e. Rizwán `Alí) was prepared to sell his share of his father's manuscripts, nine in number, but was anxious that his brothers

should not know
of his intention, as they desired to keep all these books and manuscripts together. The prices
demanded

1 This, I think, must be `Abdu'l-`Alí, who kept a
shop in Varoshia, a suburb of Famagusta

2 His proper original name was Rizwán
`Ali.

were, in my opinion, excessive, and I did not pursue the matter further. The list was as follows:

(1) Kitábu'n-Nur ("Book of Light") (see p.216
supra), the first and largest of the works so entitled, composed at Baghdád, £30.

(2) Díwánu'l-Azal (see p.214 supra), £20.

(3) Lahadhát, £20.

(4) Sata`át, £20.

(5) Jawámi-`u'l-Hayákil, £20.

(6) Lawámi`, £20.

(7) Lawáhidh wa Nafáyi` (507
súras), £20.

(8) As-Sawáti`, £20.

(9) Latá'ifu'l-Azal, £20.

Four of these manuscripts (nos. 3,4,6 and 7 in the above list) have, as I have recently learned (Sept.26, 1917), been offered to the British Museum. The title of No. 7 is
somewhat differently given as Lawáhidhu'n-
Nafá'ih, which is no doubt correct.

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