

in order to meet him. In mid-June 1850 the Báb was again brought to Tabriz where his execution occurred (see "Báb, Martyrdom of" for details of this).

The Bábí community of Ádharbáyján was one of the strongest. Five of the Báb's leading disciples, the Letters of the Living (q.v.), came from here. Most of them returned to their home towns and villages and established important Bábí communities in Tabriz, Khuy, Urúmiyyih, and Marághih as well as in a number of villages such as Mílán, Mamaqán, and Saysán. In several places the growth was on the basis of pre-existing Shaykhí (q.v.) communities. There were numerous important converts such as Mírzá Asadu'lláh-i-Dayyán of Khúy, Mírzá `Ali Sayyáh (d. 1871), Mullá Husayn-i-Dakhíl (both of Marághih), Sulaymán Khán (martyred 1852), and Mírzá Muhammad-`Alí Anís, who was martyred with the Báb.

In 1852 there was persecution of the Bábí community in Mílán following the attempt on the life of the Shah. During the 1850s there was a great deal of confusion in Ádharbáyján. Many of the Bábís appear to have followed Mírzá Asadu'lláh Dayyán of Marághih and were called Dayyánís. Dayyán himself was murdered on the orders of Mírzá Yahyá Azal (q.v.) in 1856. In Tabriz itself, an Arab Bábí from Karbalá, Sayyid `Alí, who called himself Sayyid `Uluvv and whose influence in Karbalá Bahá'u'lláh had countered in 1851 (DB 593), won the allegiance of many of the Bábís.

After Bahá'u'lláh publicly declared his mission from Edirne, there was much disagreement among the various factions at first. Following the murder of Sayyid `Alí `Uluvv, three Bahá'ís who were on their way to Edirne were arrested and executed in Tabriz in January 1867 (BBR 251-3). Since Ádharbáyján was on the road to Edirne from the rest of Iran, many leading Bahá'ís passed through the province en route to visit Bahá'u'lláh in the 1860s. In consequence, most of the Bábís of the province became Bahá'ís, although numbers of Azalís remained for some time. In Mamaqán, for example, a number of Bábís became Bahá'ís but it was not until one of those who remained unconvinced, Hájí Mullá `Alí, visited Akka in the time of `Abdu'l-Bahá (1310/1892) and was there converted that the others became Bahá'ís. One source claims that after this, "the root of the Yahyá'ís [Azalís] was cut out of Ádharbáyján" (Uskú'í 34-5; ZH 6:16).

A number of the Bahá'ís were important officials in the province. These included Mírzá `Abdu'lláh

Khán

Núrí (d. c. 1317/1899), who was farrásh-khalwat

(chief steward of the household) to the Crown Prince and governor of the province, Muzaffaru'd-Dín Mírzá, and was converted by Nabl-i-Azam (q.v.) in 1292/1875; and Mírzá Mu`ínu's-Saltanih (d. c. 1344/1925), who was converted in 1293/1876 through Fádil Qá'iní. Other provincial officials such as Mírzá `Abdu'lláh

Khán Sar-rihtih-dár (vazír máliyyih, minister of finance) and Ridá Qulí Khán Afshár (governor of Sá'in Qal`ih) had been Bábís and later became Bahá'ís.

In addition to those communities that had existed from the time of the Báb, a number of new ones were established. From SAYSÁN, a number of Bahá'ís settled in nearby villages such as Bábákandí, Díznáb and Matanih. Similarly, from Marághih, Bahá'ís moved to Khurmázad, while Mullá Husayn Khusrawsháhi in Malik-kandí converted a number of the Chádúlú tribe. This resulted in Bahá'í communities in villages such as Qijilú, Nawrúzlú, and Áqjah. Although one of the Letters of the Living was from Ardabíl, there does not appear to have been much Bahá'í activity in that town until the conversion in about 1920 of Mullá `Abdu'l-`Azím, known as Amínu'l-`Ulamá. He was martyred in Ardabíl in 1927.

Being an area of relative safety for Bahá'ís, some migrated to this province after persecution in their own hometowns. From Yazd came Hájí Mullá Mihdí and his two sons, `Alí Muhammad Varqá (q.v.) and Mírzá Husayn; from Naráq, Mírzá Mahmúd; from Gurgán, Mírzá Husayn Hudá (martyred 1333/1914). A number of Bahá'ís, however, migrated from this province to Ashkhabad, to the Caucasus, and to the Haifa-Akka area.

There was a crisis in the affairs of the Bahá'í community after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, when Mírzá Jalíl Khú'í, a prominent Bahá'í of this province, became a partisan of Mírzá Muhammad `Alí. He and Áqá Jamál Burújjirdí caused much disruption to the community from about 1311/1893 to 1316/1898. At first they had some success. For example, it is recorded that in Tabriz only four remained followers of `Abdu'l-Bahá until the arrival, at `Abdu'l-Bahá's instruction, of the Hand of the Cause Ibn-i-Abhar (q.v.), Hájí Mírzá Haydar-`Alí Isfahání (q.v.) and others (ZH 6:69).

During the time of `Abdu'l-Bahá, the Bahá'í community of Ádharbáyján increased in numbers and influence. There was expansion into new villages such as Khalkhál, where a number of prominent citizen were converted, and to new areas such as Qarih-Shírán, where some sixty members of the Yurtchí tribe were enrolled. A number of those who were in the retinue of the Prince-Governor of the province were Bahá'ís, such as Siyyid Ridá Khán Ábdár. Through such Bahá'ís, episodes of persecution such as erupted in Marághih in March 1905 or in Saysán in 1315/1897 were kept to small proportions. In Mamaqán, where there were about fifty Bahá'ís, Mírzá Ismá'íl Hujjatu'l-Islám was favorable to them and tried to avert a persecution in February 1897. The Ahmadof brothers from Mílán controlled an important commercial empire trading with the Caucasus and beyond until the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. There were also close links to the Bahá'í community in Russian Ádharbáyján.

Holy Places

There are a number of Bahá'í holy places associated with the life of the Báb in this province. The ruins of the fortresses of Chihríq and Mákú where the Báb was imprisoned; the citadel in Tabriz where the Báb was kept and the public square where he was executed; the building in Mílán to which the remains of the Báb were taken after his execution; the apartment and public baths in Urúmiyyih used by the Báb. Most of these being public buildings have never been in Bahá'í hands.

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