

Significance of some Sites Mentioned in *Memorials of the Faithful*

Foad Seddigh

Abstract

Memorials of the Faithful is not merely a book devoted to the hagiography of some believers and to some extent a historical narrative of their lives, it is also a depository of matchless beauty in Persian writing, an exquisite text with profound meaning, and a testimonial to the devotion of believers to the Cause of God and the Covenant. The believers whose stories appear in the book comprised a diverse cross-section of the Bábí and Bahá'í communities including believers that society would consider low in rank as well as high, poor and rich, semi-literate and learned.

In the book *Memorials of the Faithful*, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the course of portraying the life history of these believers, cited many countries, cities, towns, villages and sites, some of which were blessed by the foot-steps of the Twin Manifestations of God for this age, and others which were important due to their association with significant historical events of the Faith. In this paper three such places were selected from among all the sites mentioned in the book and their niche in the history and the Writings of the Faith were further elaborated. These are: (1) The Most Great House in Baghhdad, (2) The ruins of Mada'in,

located some thirty kilometers south of Baghhdad, on the banks of the River Tigris, a place where the Blessed Beauty visited many times, and which once graced the palaces of great kings of the Sassanid dynasty, and (3) the city of Mosul in northern Iraq on the banks of the River Tigris where a number of believers and the Holy family were kept as captives for several years, a city which Bahá'u'lláh's caravan passed through on His journey to exile in the seat of the Ottoman Empire.

The Most Great House

Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Baghhdad on April 8, 1853 and stayed a few days in the old quarters of the city then moved to al-Kázimíyyah (Kázimayn),¹ a holy town in the eyes of Shí'ah, Islám [King of Glory p. 106]. Al-Kázimíyyah houses the shrines of two Shí'ah Imáms and therefore is a place of pilgrimage for Shí'ahs. At the time, this place was at a distance of 10 km from Baghhdad, and now is one of the nine administrative districts within the city. Soon after Bahá'u'lláh's arrival, an official from the Iranian consulate paid Him a visit and advised Him, in utmost humility, that this place was not suitable for His residence. Therefore, after staying a month in al-Kázimíyyah, He moved to a house in the Al-Karkh² district of Baghhdad, referred to as the House of Hájí 'Alí Madad. Due to the inadequacy of space in this house, the holy Family was not comfortable, and lived in cramped conditions. During the absence of Bahá'u'lláh during his sojourn in the mountains of Kurdistan, the Family moved to a house known by the name of Sulaymán-i-Ghannám, belonging to Musá Javáhirí; this house was also located in the Al-Karkh district (Bahá'u'lláh left Baghhdad for Kurdistan on April 10, 1854 and returned on March 19, 1856 [King of Glory pp. 112-115]). The Guardian describes this residence of Bahá'u'lláh with the following words [GPB 129-130]:

Within a few years after Bahá'u'lláh's return from Sulaymáníyyih the situation had been completely reversed. The house of Sulaymán-i-Ghannám, on which

the official designation of the Bayt-i-'Aẓam (the Most Great House) was later conferred, known, at that time, as the house of Mírzá Músá, the Bábí, an extremely modest residence, situated in the Karkh quarter, in the neighborhood of the western bank of the river, to which Bahá'u'lláh's family had moved prior to His return from Kurdistán, had now become the focal center of a great number of seekers, visitors and pilgrims, including Kurds, Persians, Arabs and Turks, and derived from the Muslim, the Jewish and Christian Faiths. It had, moreover, become a veritable sanctuary to which the victims of the injustice of the official representative of the Persian government were wont to flee, in the hope of securing redress for the wrongs they had suffered.

The exact date of the family's transfer to this house is not known. The house of Sulaymán-i-Ghannám was rented at the beginning and later on became a property of Bahá'u'lláh. This transition is a fascinating story which has been narrated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in one of the chapters from the *Memorials of the Faithful* where the life history of Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Vakíl is narrated. A brief extract from His explanation is given below:

There was a notable in Baghdád by the name of Ḥájí Mírzá Hádí, the jeweler. He had a distinguished son, Áqá Mírzá Músá,³ who had received from Bahá'u'lláh the title "Letter of Eternity." This son had become a staunch believer. As for his father, the Ḥájí, he was a princely individual known for his lavish open-handedness not only in Persia and 'Iráq but as far away as India....

Toward the close of his life he conceived a remarkable love for Bahá'u'lláh, and most humbly, would enter His presence.... Such was the situation of that illustrious prince when he passed away, leaving as heirs a son and two daughters....

Mírzá Músá was a staunch believer; his sisters, however, were from a different mother, and they knew nothing of the Cause. One day the two sisters, accompanied by the son-in-law of the late Mírzá Siyyid Riḍá, came to the house of Bahá'u'lláh. The two sisters entered the family apartments while the son-in-law settled down in the public reception rooms. The two girls then said to Bahá'u'lláh: "The Persian envoy, the judge, and the faithless mujtahids have destroyed us. Toward the close of his life, the late Ḥájí trusted no one but Yourself. We ourselves have been remiss and we should have sought Your protection before; in any case we come now to implore Your pardon and help...." [MF 108 -109]

The Blessed Beauty refused to become involved in such matters and they insisted and begged him to the extent that they said they would not leave the house until He acceded to their requests. 'Abdu'l-Bahá further explains:

Finally one day Bahá'u'lláh summoned me to His presence. "These esteemed ladies," He said, "with all their exactions, have put Us to considerable inconvenience. There is no help for it—you will have to see to this case. But you must solve this entire, complicated matter in a single day..." [MF 112]

The Blessed Beauty accepted to intervene and instructed 'Abdu'l-Bahá to spend only one day to settle the matter. 'Abdu'l-Bahá followed His instructions and resolved all the matters of dispute to the best satisfaction of all. In return, they gave one third of the inheritance to Him which at long last He accepted and donated in its entirety to Mírzá Músá Javáhirí. Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains further that:

Grateful for the bounty he had received, Mírzá Músá offered Bahá'u'lláh everything he possessed: orchards, lands, estates—but it was refused. Then he appointed the 'ulamás of 'Iráq to intercede for him. They hastened to Bahá'u'lláh in a body and begged Him to accept the

proffered gifts. He categorically refused. They respectfully told Him: "Unless You accept, in a very short time Mírzá Músá will scatter it all to the winds. For his own good, he should not have access to this wealth."

Then in his own hand, Mírzá Músá penned deeds of gift, made out according to each of the five creeds, in Arabic and Persian; two copies he made, and chose the 'ulamás as his witnesses. Through certain 'ulamás of Baghdád, among them the famed scholar 'Abdu's-Salám Effendi, and the erudite and widely known Siyyid Dávúd Effendi, he presented the deed of gift to Bahá'u'lláh. The Blessed Beauty told them: "We are appointing Mírzá Músá himself as Our deputy...." [MF 119]

This house was later on called the "Most Great House," by Bahá'u'lláh, which is one of the three locations designated for pilgrimage for the Bahá'ís. The Most Great House in Baghdád and the House of the Báb in Shiráz were designated in the Most Holy Book (The *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*) for pilgrimage; 'Abdu'l-Bahá added to this list the third place which is Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in Akká, but He did not specify any rites for this pilgrimage [KA 191]. In Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh and His family lived in this house for a longer period than they did elsewhere in Iraq. The Most Great House witnessed many events during the earlier years of Bahá'u'lláh's mission while He had not yet declared. Many Tablets were revealed in this House, many believers attained Bahá'u'lláh's presence in this House, and many dignitaries and men of status and knowledge met Him in this House.

When Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to Istanbul and Edirnih (Adrianople) several believers became custodians of the House among whom were: Gawhar Khánum (His wife from Káshán), Mírzá Mihdí Káshání (Gawhar Khánum's brother) and Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Vakíl. Towards the end of Bahá'u'lláh's stay in Edirnih, nearly seventy believers among whom was Jináb-i-Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín were arrested in Baghdad and sent as

prisoners to the city of Mosul. This deprived the House of lawful custodians and in the interim some individuals looked after the House. This is the earlier period that provided an opportunity for the enemies of the Cause to transgress against this House. It has been reported that a number of believers on their way to 'Akká stayed in this House. This included Badí', the pride of the martyrs.

In the first year of His stay in Edirnih (Adrianople), Bahá'u'lláh revealed two Tablets of pilgrimage (Surih-i-Hajj)⁴, one for the House of the Báb and the other one for the Most Great House and sent them to Nabíl Zarandí (Nabíl A'zam) who was travelling in Iran at the time proclaiming the news of the appearance of the promised one of the Bayán. Bahá'u'lláh instructed Nabíl to perform the pilgrimage according to the instructions given in the Tablets. Nabíl Zarandí proceeded at once and performed the pilgrimage according to the instructions contained in these two Tablets. As far as the history has recorded, Nabíl Zarandí is the only person who has performed the pilgrimage in accordance with all the instructions of the Tablet of Pilgrimage. Sheikh Muḥammad Damirtchi⁵ was another person directed by Bahá'u'lláh to visit the House and read a Tablet of Visitation at the House which had been revealed in his honor. He performed the pilgrimage according to the instructions, disregarding the mobs who were throwing stones at him.

The Nobility of the Most Great House

Bahá'u'lláh extols the station of this House in several Tablets, including the one which was revealed in the honor of the aforementioned Sheikh Muḥammad Damirtchi. Some passages from this Tablet appear below:

When thou art departed out of the court of My presence, O Muḥammad, direct thy steps towards My House (Baghdád House), and visit it on behalf of thy

Lord. When thou reachest its door, stand thou before it and say: Whither is the Ancient Beauty gone, O most great House of God, He through Whom God hath made thee the cynosure of an adoring world, and proclaimed thee to be the sign of His remembrance unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth? Oh! for the former days when thou, O House of God, wert made His footstool, the days when in ceaseless strains the melody of the All-Merciful poured forth from thee! What hath become of thy jewel whose glory hath irradiated all creation? Whither are gone the days in which He, the Ancient King, had made thee the throne of His glory, the days in which He had chosen thee alone to be the lamp of salvation between earth and heaven, and caused thee to diffuse, at dawn and at eventide, the sweet fragrance of the All-Glorious?

Where, O House of God, is the Sun of majesty and power Who had enveloped thee with the brightness of His presence? Where is He, the Day Spring of the tender mercies of thy Lord, the Unconstrained, Who had established His seat within thy walls? What is it, O throne of God, that hath altered thy countenance, and made thy pillars to tremble? What could have closed thy door to the face of them that eagerly seek thee? What hath made thee so desolate? Couldst thou have been told that the Beloved of the world is pursued by the swords of His enemies? The Lord bless thee, and bless thy fidelity unto Him, inasmuch as thou hast remained His companion through all His sorrows and His sufferings...

[GWB 111-112]

In relation to the names and titles of this House, The Guardian states:

Most Great House of God," His "Footstool" and the "Throne of His Glory," "the Cynosure of an adoring

world,” the “Lamp of Salvation between earth and heaven,” the “Sign of His remembrance to all who are in heaven and on earth,” enshrining the “Jewel whose glory hath irradiated all creation,” the “Standard” of His Kingdom, the “Shrine round which will circle the concourse of the faithful” was irrevocably founded and permanently consecrated. Upon it, by virtue of its sanctity as Bahá’u’lláh’s “Most Holy Habitation” and “Seat of His transcendent glory,” was conferred the honor of being regarded as a center of pilgrimage second to none except the city of ‘Akká, His “Most Great Prison...” [GPB 110]

It is evident that the high station given to a House is due to its association with the Manifestation of God and not because of the materials, stones, bricks and concrete used to construct the house.

Prophecy of the Desecration of the House

Bahá’u’lláh in some of His Tablets clearly predicted that the House of God (The Most Great House) will be dishonored:

Grieve not, O House of God, if the veil of thy sanctity be rent asunder by the infidels. God hath, in the world of creation, adorned thee with the jewel of His remembrance. Such an ornament no man can, at any time, profane. Towards thee the eyes of thy Lord shall, under all conditions, remain directed. He, verily, will incline His ear to the prayer of every one that visiteth thee, who will circle around thee, and calleth upon Him in thy name. He, in truth, is the Forgiving, the All-Merciful. [GWB 114]

Also the Sublime Pen writes in the following terms concerning the future humiliation awaiting the House:

Call thou to mind that which hath been revealed unto Mihdí, Our servant, in the first year of Our banishment to the Land of Mystery (Adrianople). Unto him have We predicted that which must befall Our House (Baghdád House), in the days to come, lest he grieve over the acts of robbery and violence already perpetrated against it. Verily, the Lord, thy God, knoweth all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth.

To him We have written: This is not the first humiliation inflicted upon My House. In days gone by the hand of the oppressor hath heaped indignities upon it. Verily, it shall be so abased in the days to come as to cause tears to flow from every discerning eye. Thus have We unfolded to thee things hidden beyond the veil, inscrutable to all save God, the Almighty, the All-Praised.... [GWB 114-115]

Although several attempts were made by the Shí‘ah clergy, the ever vigilant enemy of the Cause of God in Baghdad, who tried to wrestle away this House from the hands of its lawful owner, but all their efforts in this regard failed miserably. Towards the end of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Ministry, the condition of the House deteriorated to such an extent that it was in a sorry state. One of the new adherents of the Faith in Baghdad, Ḥájí Maḥmúd-i-Qassábchí,⁶ with the permission from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and with his own resources, undertook to repair the House. This period of time coincided with the termination of World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, Iraq came under the administration of the League of Nations, a new constitution was adopted and the freedom of religion and belief was announced. The reconstruction of the House and its development produced a steadily widening measure of publicity. This emboldened the Shí‘ah clerics to seize possession of the House through the favourable judgement of an obscure Shari‘ah Court which made several obvious and possibly deliberate mistakes. This crisis which originated about a year prior to

'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension eventually precipitated in its seizure by Shí'ah clerics in the summer of 1922. Since this time the House has not been returned to the Bahá'ís. This House had continued to be in the unbroken and undisputed possession of Bahá'u'lláh's followers ever since His departure from Baghdád, a period of more than six decades. As an example of an obvious mistake committed by the court was that it disregarded the rule that fifteen years of lawful possession and occupation of a house disqualifies any dispute attempted at the seizure of the house.

This unjust ruling became the object of the consideration of successive tribunals. First by the local Shí'ah Ja'fariyyih court in Baghdád, second by the Peace court, then the court of First Instance, then by the court of Appeal in Iraq, and finally by the League of Nations, the greatest international body in existence at that time. The League of Nations had been empowered to exercise supervision and control over all Mandated Territories. Though repossession of the House was not resolved due to a combination of causes, religious as well as political, it has already remarkably fulfilled Bahá'u'lláh's own prediction concerning the humiliation it will suffer in the hands of the enemies of the Cause of God.

The appeal of the local Bahá'í community in Iraq, and those of the International Bahá'í community from around the world, as well as the letters of the Guardian written as the Head of the Bahá'í Faith to the highest authorities and to King Faisal⁷ produced no results; and the Government of Iraq under the leadership of King Faisal remained adamant in acting in a manner which was just—as he was much afraid of the religious passion of the Shí'ahs. Details regarding these communications are comprehensively documented in the volumes of the *Bahá'í World*: *Bahá'í World* II pp. 33-34, *Bahá'í World* III pp. 198-210, *Bahá'í World* IV pp. 237-248, *Bahá'í World* V pp. 351-359, and *Bahá'í World* VI p. 437.⁸ In these volumes, we find the resolutions of various courts, minutes of the council of the League of Nations, as well as some important letters. Among

the various accounts, Arnold Toynbee, the well-respected British historian provides an informed accounting of the situation concerning the House [Survey of International Affairs pp. 116-122]. The American Lawyer, Mountfort Mills, exerted tremendous efforts and dedication towards securing possession of the House for the Faith. In paying tributes to his effort, the Guardian referred to him as “Mr. Mountfort Mills, whose services to the Cause only future generations can estimate” [BA 127]. Other efforts included the audience of Miss Martha Root with King Faisal I⁹ in Baghhdad and her request for the intervention by the King. Finally, the Government of Iraq gained complete independence in 1932 and joined the League of Nations in 1933 and all those who were involved with this matter either died or were replaced and the case has remained unresolved until this time despite several fundamental changes of Government in Iraq. The final act was the news released by the Universal House of Justice in a letter dated 17 July, 2013,¹⁰ of razing the House almost to the ground by unknown elements, without any legal permit from the Government, between 24-26 June, 2013, in order to prepare the ground for building a mosque on the spot where the Most Great House was originally standing.

Promise of the Rise of the House of God

Bahá'u'lláh also prophesied that the House will suffer such humiliation which will cause tears of the faithful to flow; after that it will rise again and will find its high station which has been destined for it. The Supreme Pen provides this assurance with these words:

In the fullness of time, the Lord shall, by the power of truth, exalt it in the eyes of all men. He shall cause it to become the Standard of His Kingdom, the Shrine round which will circle the concourse of the faithful. Thus hath spoken the Lord, thy God... [GWB 115]

Al-Mada'in Becomes the Seat of Glory

One of the chapters of *Memorials of the Faithful* is devoted to the life of Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí, the Afnán who was eventually buried in the vicinity of the ancient city of Mada'in. Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí, the Afnán, was a cousin of the Báb and the eldest child of the eldest uncle of the Báb for whom the *Kitab-i-Íqán* was revealed. About a year prior to the departure of Bahá'u'lláh from Baghdád for Istanbul, Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí who was a resident of Shanghai in China, along with his younger brother, attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and became aware of His high station. For the second time he gained admittance to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in ‘Akká—this is the visit that ‘Abdu'l-Bahá describes in these terms:

One day I was up on the roof of the caravanserai. Some of the friends were with me and I was walking up and down. It was sunset. At that moment, glancing at the distant seashore, I observed that a carriage was approaching. "Gentlemen," I said, "I feel that a holy being is in that carriage." It was still far away, hardly within sight." Let us go to the gate," I told them. "Although they will not allow us to pass through, we can stand there till he comes." I took one or two people with me and we left... The gatekeeper stayed outside, the carriage drew up, the gentleman had arrived. What a radiant face he had! He was nothing but light from head to foot. Just to look at that face made one happy; he was so confident, so assured, so rooted in his faith, and his expression so joyous. He was truly a blessed being....

[MF 17]

During one of his trips from China, Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí Afnán arrived in Bombay and took his flight to the Abhá Kingdom due to an illness. However, the burial of his remains became problematic and one of the believers by the name Áqá Siyyid Asadu'lláh-i-Qumí according to the instructions of

‘Abdu’l-Bahá took the body to Iraq with the intention of finding a burial place in one of the holy cemeteries of Islám. Eventually, according to the instructions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, he buried the body of Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí in the Salmán Cemetery near Mada’in. Mada’in was once the seat of the Government of the Sassanid dynasty which ruled over Iran for five centuries, and eventually was defeated by the army of the Arab Muslim invaders who plundered the riches of this kingdom. Bahá’u’lláh is a descendant from this line of kings. The city of Mada’in consisted of several smaller fortified cities on both sides of the river Tigris. The city of Ctesiphon was one of the cities and the seat of the government, and it housed sprawling palaces which were the envy of the rulers of the world at that time—as for its location, Mada’in is located nearly thirty kilometers south of Baghdad. Salmán was the first Muslim ruler for the newly opened territories, stationed in Mada’in and after his death he was buried there in a place where it has become a cemetery bearing his name; in this place Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí Afnán was buried. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states that this place is a holy place because the Blessed Beauty walked there and revealed Tablets; moreover He states that in this place a house of worship (Mashriqu’l-Adhkár) should be built. The following is His statement in the Memorials of the Faithful:

Thus did God’s grace and favor encompass the Persians of an age long gone, in order that their ruined capital should be rebuilt and flourish once again. To this end, with the help of God, events were brought about which led to the Afnán’s being buried here; and there is no doubt that a proud city will rise up on this site.....

At last, praised be God, it was laid down in the very spot to which time and again the Blessed Beauty had repaired; in that place honored by His footsteps, where He had revealed Tablets, where the believers of Baghdád had been in His company; that very place where the Most Great Name was wont to stroll. How did this come

about? It was due to the Afnán's purity of heart. Lacking this, all those ways and means could never have been brought to bear. Verily, God is the Mover of heaven and earth.

*I loved the Afnán very much. Because of him, I rejoiced. I wrote a long Visitation Tablet for him and sent it with other papers to Persia. **His burial site is one of the holy places where a magnificent Mashriqu'l-Adhkár must be raised up.** If possible, the actual arch of the royal palace should be restored and become the House of Worship. The auxiliary buildings of the House of Worship should likewise be erected there: the hospital, the schools and university, the elementary school, the refuge for the poor and indigent; also the haven for orphans and the helpless, and the travelers' hospice.... [MF 19-20]*

The Guardian made the transfer of the remains of Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí Afnán one of the goals of the Ten-Year Crusade; the Bahá’ís of Iraq identified his grave, and transferred his remains to the Bahá’í cemetery in Baghdad. The Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land informed the Bahá’í world community of the achievement of this goal of the plan on June 14, 1959.¹¹

Mosul

Mosul is another place which appears in the stories from *Memorials of the Faithful*. In fact, the city of Mosul has been mentioned twenty eight times in the book—this could be due to a number of reasons, some of which are enumerated as follows:

- Mosul is one of the places where the caravan of Bahá’u’lláh on His way to Istanbul chose to stop and rest for a few days.

- About four to five years after Bahá'u'lláh left Baghdad, some believers of Persian descent were rounded up and were sent to Mosul in captivity including the family of Bahá'u'lláh.
- For some believers who traveled to Edirnih or 'Akká via land, Mosul was one of the cities through which they passed on their way from Baghdad to Syria.
- Mosul is an old city near the ruins of the city of Nineveh and was built on it.
- Mosul and Nineveh is the city of Jonas the prophet which is mentioned in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, and in the Qur'án.

Now we will offer brief explanation regarding the above topics.

Mosul: Bahá'u'lláh's Caravan Passed Through

Mosul is located some 350 km north of Baghdad and built on the eastern banks of the river Tigris. Bahá'u'lláh's caravan stopped briefly in Mosul on its way to Istanbul. H.M. Balyuzi gives a detailed accounts of this phase of the land travel of Bahá'u'lláh to Istanbul [King of Glory 182]. In addition, the Guardian writes: "In Mosul, where He tarried three days..." [GPB 156]

Mosul: Place of Captivity of Believers

Mosul is also the place of captivity for some Persian believers. Approximately five years after Bahá'u'lláh left Baghdád, through the mischief of the Consul General of Iran in Baghdád, nearly seventy believers were arrested and sent in captivity to Mosul for nearly twenty years. Included in this group was the third wife of Bahá'u'lláh known as Gawhar Khánum. Her marriage took place sometime in Baghdád before the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh's mission. While Navváb and Mahd-i-'Ulya travelled with Him in all His exiles, Gawhar

Khánum remained in Baghdad with her brother, Mírzá Mihdiy-i-Káshání. Bahá'u'lláh writes in the Tablet to the King of Persia: “*O King! The lamps of equity have been extinguished, and the fire of tyranny hath so blazed on every side that My people have been led as captives from Zawra' [Baghdád] to Mosul, known as Hadba.*” In here, by “My people” He means his third wife, Gawhar Khánum.

In this captivity, a believer who rendered unique and valued services to the community was Mulla Zaynu'l-'Abidin, named by Bahá'u'lláh Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín (The Ornament of Those Who are Nigh). He acted as a father in relation to this small band of believers. Under his supervision a ‘charity fund’ was established. His knowledge and learning, his understanding of the Faith, his intelligent and well-balanced personality, together with a delightful sense of humour, endeared him to the believers and made him the focal point of the community. Bahá'u'lláh had also instructed him in His Tablets to gather the friends together, exhort them to unity and love, encourage them to deepen in the Faith, and help them to attain heavenly qualities. He spent most of his time transcribing the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and making them available to the friends. In particular he had to make several copies of those Tablets which were addressed to some or all of the believers in Mosul, and give each one a copy [*Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh* II, p. 335].

The Bahá'ís in Mosul, under the leadership and guidance of Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín, soon became a model Bahá'í community reflecting something of the spirit of the 'Akká community. While in Mosul, it became Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín's task to transcribe the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh that arrived from 'Akká on their way to Iran. Thus these Tablets could be distributed more widely and each of those to whom a Tablet was addressed could have a copy.

In the course of one of his journeys, Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Ali, the Angel of Carmel, visited Mosul. He has written his impression about the community in his popular book “Bahjat-us

Sudur”, *Delight of Hearts*. Mr. Taherzadeh has translated and quoted this report:

I attained the presence of Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín and other loved ones of God in Mosul including Áqá Mírzá Muḥammad-i-Vakil. The latter, owing to destitution, had to work as a cobbler in spite of old age... The friends in Mosul, together with the person of Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín, made one remember the days spent in Bahá'u'lláh's holy presence in the holy city of 'Akká. These believers were living in the utmost unity and harmony. They vied with each other in their efforts and their services. They had no desire except first, to gain the good pleasure of the Blessed Beauty, and secondly, to attain His presence... [Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh II, p. 335]

In October 1885 Bahá'u'lláh gave permission for Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín to go to 'Akká where he took up residence in the Khán-i-'Avamíd, continuing to transcribe Tablets and frequently having the honor of being in Bahá'u'lláh's company.

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

Three locations from among many places mentioned in *Memorials of the Faithful* were selected and their significance elaborated on the basis of events related to the Faith which occurred in these locations. These are The Most Great House, Madai'n, and the city of Mosul.

The author wishes to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Nabíl Seddigh in preparation of this paper.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Balyuzi, H.M., *Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory*, George Ronald Publisher, Oxford, 1980.

- Ishráq Khávarí, ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, *Muḥādirát*, Vol. 1 & 2, Mu’asisih Millí Maṭbu’át Amrí, 120 BE, Third print, Hofheim, 150BE.
- Ishráq Khávarí, ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, *Tasbíḥ va Tahlíl*, Tehran, Mu’asisih Millí Maṭbu’át Amrí, 129 BE, 1973.
- Mázindarání, Mírzá Asadu’lláh Fáḍil, *Amr va Khalq*, Vol. 4, Tehran, Mu’asisih Millí Maṭbu’át Amrí, 128 BE, 1971.
- Taherzadeh, Adib, *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh*, Vol. II, George Ronald Publisher, Oxford, 1977.
- Toynbee, Arnold, *Survey of International Affairs—1934*, assisted by V.M. Boulter, Oxford University Press, London, 1935.

NOTES

- ¹ Al-Kázimíyyah (Kázimayn), literally “the Two Kázim” or “the Two who swallow their anger”, is regarded a holy city by Shí’ah Islám. It received its name from the two Shí’ah Imáms buried there: Imám Músá, son of Ja’far and his grandson, Imám Muḥammad at-Taquí. A shrine was first built over their tombs, and subsequently the al-Kázimíyyah Mosque. The area that now constitutes al-Kázimíyyah was originally the location of a graveyard reserved for members of the Quraysh tribe (prophet Muḥammad’s tribe). This land was set aside for this purpose by the Abbasid caliph, Harun ar-Rashíd.
- ² Al-Karkh is a district of Baghdad in western banks of the river Tigris.
- ³ Mírzá Músá Javahiri who received the title of “Letter of Eternity” from Bahá’u’lláh was the recipient of several Tablets from Bahá’u’lláh one of which is known by its Arabic title “Subhána-Rabbíya’l-A’lá” which means “My Exalted Lord is free from Imperfections.” He was very much devoted to Bahá’u’lláh and was one of the firm believers. His father, Hájí Mírzá Hádí, formerly a Persian vizier, was highly esteemed by the inhabitants of that city. Towards the end of his life, Hájí Mírzá Hádí became attracted to Bahá’u’lláh and was devoted to Him, but not as believer. He would often enter His presence and sit at His feet in humility and self-effacement.
- ⁴ In Adrianople (Edirnih), Bahá’u’lláh revealed two tablets concerning pilgrimage (hajj) to Bahá’í holy places. Surat al hajj II (Lawh-i-Hajj II, or Surat al-Hajj), addressed to Mírzá Muḥammad Nabíl-i Zarandí, describes the rites of the hajj to The Most Great House. These Tablets are published in: *Amr va Khalq* 4: pp. 109-117 and *Tasbíḥ va Tahlíl* pp. 77-90, 93-113.
- ⁵ Muḥammad Damirtchi was a staunch believer in Baghdád whose father deprived him of his inheritance due to his faith and belief in Bahá’u’lláh. He set out on foot from Baghdád to ‘Akká. Finally he reached ‘Akká enduring great hardships on the way. Bahá’u’lláh called him to His

presence and he passed through the rows of soldiers and nobody stopped him as though they had not seen him. For the story of his life, see (Muḥaḍirát 1 & 2: p. 120). Also his picture appears in (*Bahá'í World* III: p. 214).

- ⁶ Hájí Maḥmúd-i-Qassábchí was a newly declared Bahá'í during the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He served the cause in Baghdad during the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian. He was the chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Baghdad; his picture could be found in the (*Bahá'í World* II: p 68).
- ⁷ King Faisal of Iraq or Faisal Ibn Husayn Ibn Alí al-Hashimi was the King of Iraq from 23 August 1921 to 1933. He was a member of the Hashemite dynasty. While in power, Faisal tried to diversify his administration by including different ethnic and religious groups in offices. However, Faisal's attempt at pan-Arab nationalism may have contributed to the isolation of certain religious groups. King Faisal supported the forces of the British army and revolted against the ruling Turks towards the end of World War I. In 1921, Britain decided to step back from direct administration and create a monarchy to head Iraq while they maintained the mandate. Faisal agreed to become king. In August 1921 he was made king of Iraq. In 1932, the British mandate ended and Faisal was instrumental in making his country nominally independent. On 3 October, the Kingdom of Iraq joined the League of Nations. King Faisal died on 8 September 1933, at the age of 48. He was succeeded on the throne by his oldest son Ghazi. Soon King Ghazi was killed in a car accident and his son Faisal II who was 3 years old became the successor of his father, but he had to wait for several years until he reached adulthood. Finally he and the royal family and his prime minister were assassinated in a military coup d'état.
- ⁸ Many of these League of Nations documents can be found online at bahai-library.com/author/Permanent+Mandates+Commission
- ⁹ Details of the meeting of Miss Martha Root with King Faisal-I and the question of the Most Great House may be examined in *Bahá'í World* III pp. 198-210.
- ¹⁰ Complete letter of the Universal House of Justice dated 17 July 2013. Refer to the web-site: www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/
- ¹¹ Cable of the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land, dated June 14, 1959:

ANNOUNCE WITH PROFOUND GRATITUDE FULFILMENT ONE
 MOST DIFFICULT GOALS BELOVED GUARDIAN'S WORLD
 CRUSADE IDENTIFICATION REMAINS COUSIN BAB SUCCESSFUL
 TRANSFER CEMETERY EVIDENCE UNFAILING GRACE
 BAHÁ'U'LLAH VOUCHSAFED HIS FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS STOP
 SHARE JOYFUL NEWS HANDS NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES.