


A Mysterious Power

THE BÁB'S EARLY YEARS

An Extraordinary Child

 On October 20, 1819, in Shíráz, Persia (now Iran), a baby Boy was born Who would grow up to have a powerful impact on the world. His mother and father were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, the Founder of Islam. They named their Son Siyyid 'Alí-Muhammad. Many years later, He became known as "the Báb," which means "the Gate."

When the Báb was a young Child, His father died. The Báb was then raised by a kind uncle who sent Him to school at about age five. His teacher was very knowledgeable, but the little Boy's intelligence amazed him. One day the Báb explained some words from the Qur'án, the Holy Book of Islam, with exceptional wisdom. His teacher felt unworthy to instruct Him. The teacher took the Báb back to His uncle and told him that the remarkable Child already showed a "mysterious power." The teacher said, "Keep Him in your house, for He, verily, stands in no need of teachers such as I."

But the Báb's uncle scolded Him and sent Him back to school. He wanted the Báb to listen to His teacher, like the other students. The Báb promised to obey. Still, the flow of His knowledge could not be stopped. Day after day He showed marvelous wisdom.

The Báb's dignity and noble character charmed everyone who knew Him. His devotion to God was well-known. When He was late for school, the other boys would often find Him praying. On Fridays, His class sometimes visited a garden. During this time, the Báb liked to find a quiet spot to pray and meditate.

A Trustworthy Merchant

When He was 15, the Báb joined His uncles as a merchant in the port city of Búshíhr. He soon took over management of the business, working with great fairness and careful attention to detail.

Once a man gave the Báb some goods to sell. The man was astonished when the Báb sent him more money than the goods were worth at the time. The man wanted to give back some of the money, but the Báb refused to accept it. The Báb told him that if his goods had been sold at a different time, they would have earned that amount.

A cousin of the Báb's late father, named Hájí Siyyid Javád, saw Him often during a six-month visit to Búshíhr. This relative said that the young Man's extreme courtesy and the serene expression on His face made an unforgettable impression on him.



He said that people often commented on the Báb's pure character.

Even in the intense summer heat of Búshíhr, the Báb spent many hours praying on the roof of His home. He also wrote His first work about Muslim teachings when He was about 19 years old. One of His uncles, the brother of the man who raised Him, worried that scholars would be jealous that a young merchant had so much knowledge. He wanted Háji Siyyid Javád to warn the Báb not to write such things. But Háji Siyyid Javád said, "We are earth-bound and He is celestial. Our counsel is of no use to Him."

A Loving Marriage

When He was 22, the Báb married a young woman named Khadíjih Bagum. They had known each other since childhood. Khadíjih Bagum knew without being told that her Husband was a Messenger of God. She said that when she dreamed of Him once, "I saw Him in an attitude of prayer, His vesture [clothing] was marvelous and beautiful, embroidered with fine needlework, and round its borders were written, in gold and in silver,

verses from the Qur'án. The radiance of a sacred light shone round Him."

The Báb and Khadíjih Bagum had a son named Ahmad, but he did not live long. In His Writings, the Báb comforted His wife, saying, "O well-beloved! . . . Be patient in all that God hath ordained . . ."

Courageous Uncle

The Báb was 25 when He announced that He was a Messenger of God, the Prophet that Muhammad had promised would come. It wasn't long before Háji Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, the uncle who had raised the Báb, became His devoted follower.

His uncle was one of many Bábís who faced death from those who wanted to stop the new Faith. When given a chance to deny the Báb's Message and return home safely, he refused. He compared his nephew to the Prophets of the past, saying, "God knows that whatever I have heard and read concerning the sayings and doings of those Messengers, I have been privileged to witness the same from this Youth, this beloved Kinsman of mine, from His earliest boyhood . . ." ✨

