

The following story is from the book

The Central Figures

The Báb

Volume One



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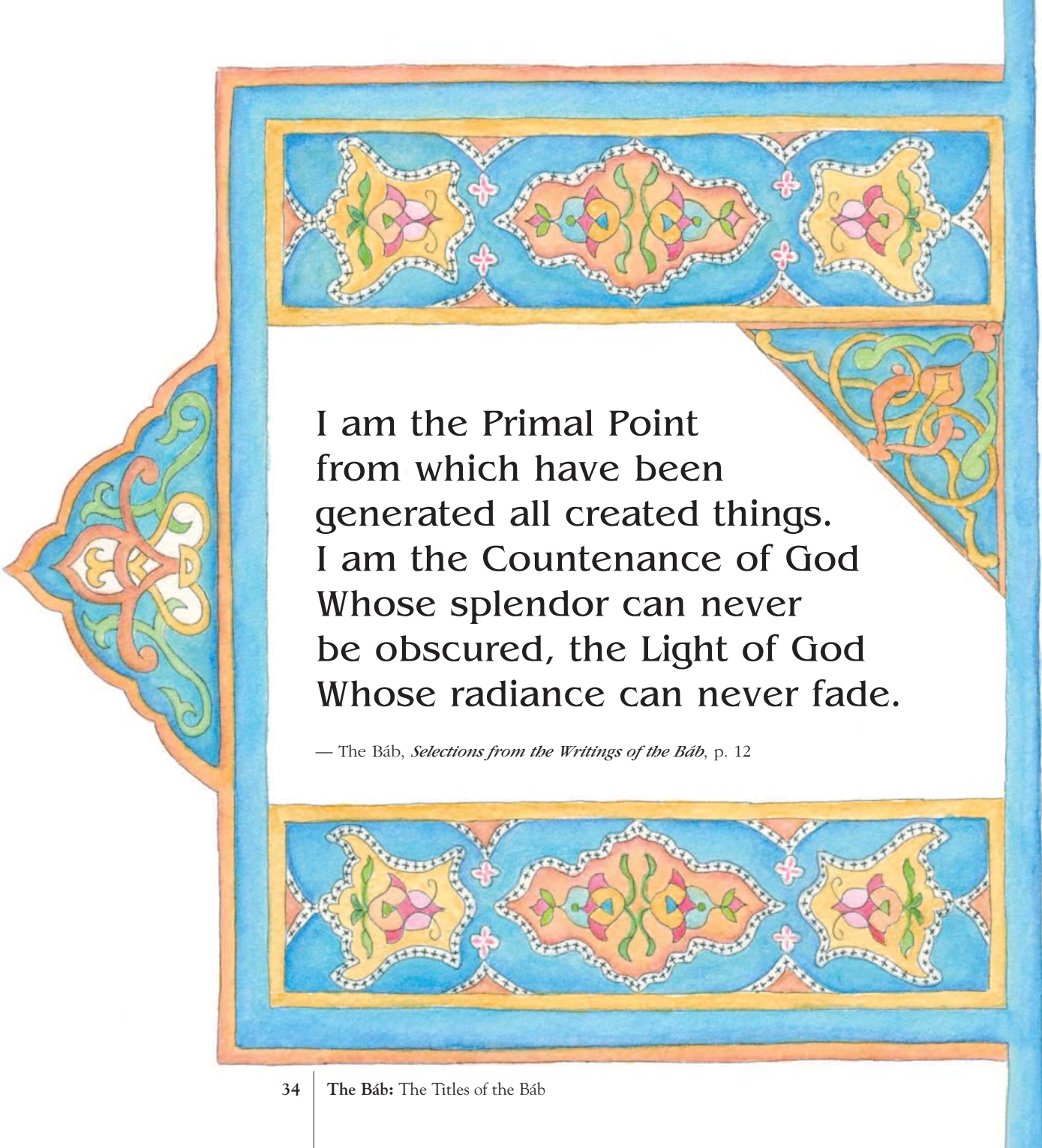
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I am the Primal Point
from which have been
generated all created things.
I am the Countenance of God
Whose splendor can never
be obscured, the Light of God
Whose radiance can never fade.

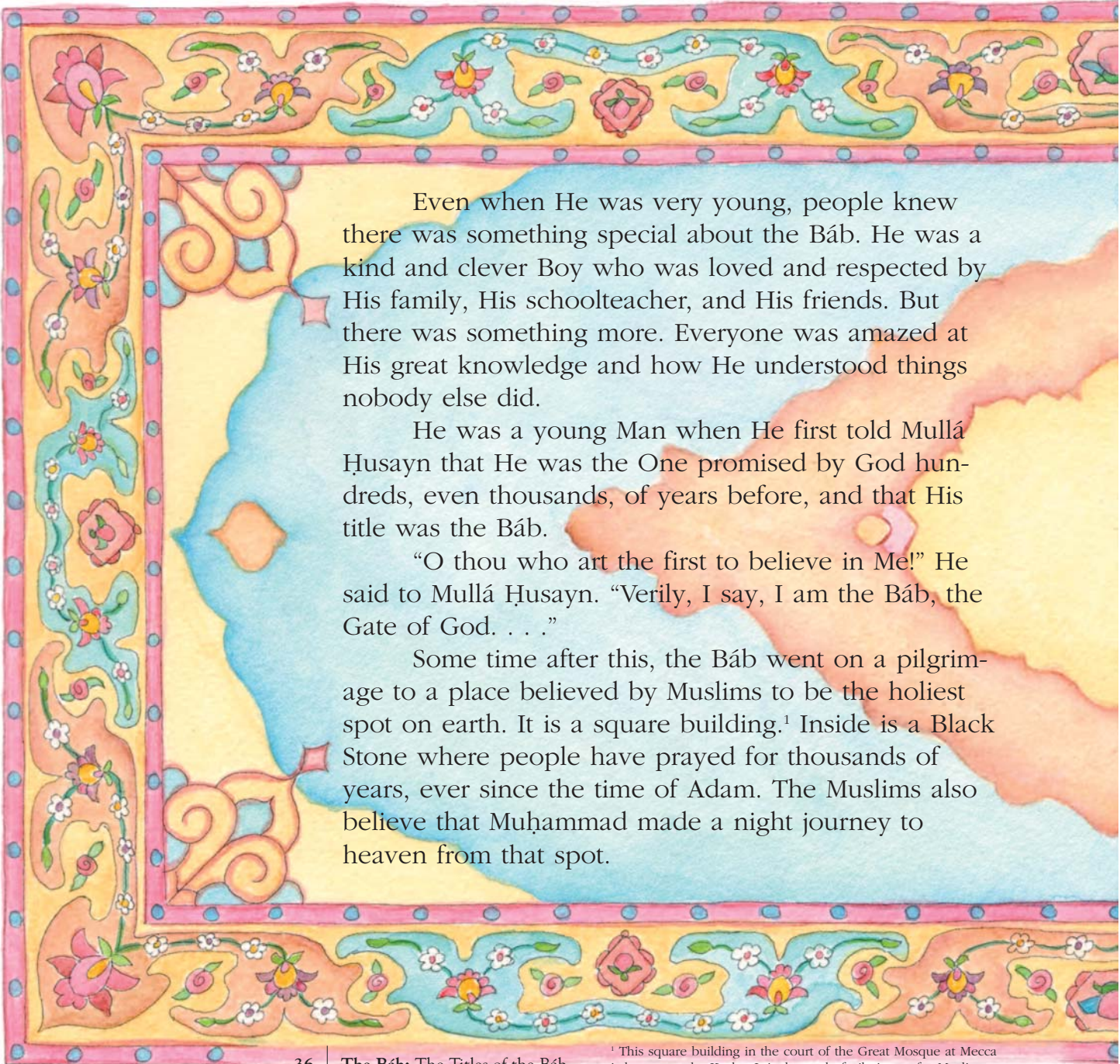
— The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 12



The Promised One

*Written by Jacqueline Mebrabi
Illustrated by Jeannie Hunt*

When the Báb was a boy, there was great excitement in the land. Not just in Persia, where He lived, but all over the world. Religious thinkers were discussing the old prophecies in the Holy Books, and they knew that a new Messenger of God would soon appear. One of the titles of this Messenger of God was the Promised One, because His coming had been promised in all the religions of the past.



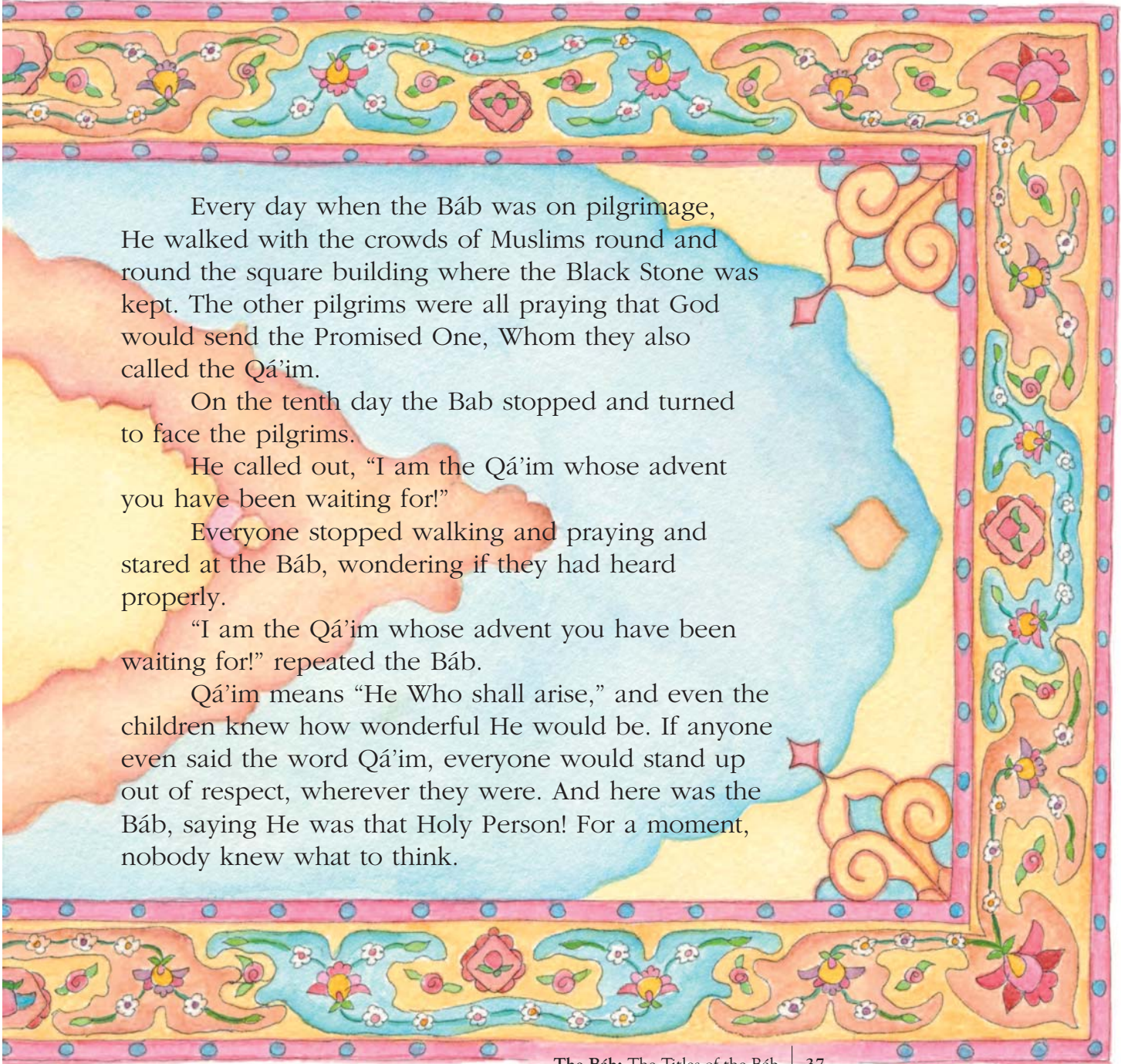
Even when He was very young, people knew there was something special about the Báb. He was a kind and clever Boy who was loved and respected by His family, His schoolteacher, and His friends. But there was something more. Everyone was amazed at His great knowledge and how He understood things nobody else did.

He was a young Man when He first told Mullá Ḥusayn that He was the One promised by God hundreds, even thousands, of years before, and that His title was the Báb.

“O thou who art the first to believe in Me!” He said to Mullá Ḥusayn. “Verily, I say, I am the Báb, the Gate of God. . . .”

Some time after this, the Báb went on a pilgrimage to a place believed by Muslims to be the holiest spot on earth. It is a square building.¹ Inside is a Black Stone where people have prayed for thousands of years, ever since the time of Adam. The Muslims also believe that Muḥammad made a night journey to heaven from that spot.

¹ This square building in the court of the Great Mosque at Mecca is known as the Kaaba. It is the goal of pilgrimage for Muslims.



Every day when the Báb was on pilgrimage, He walked with the crowds of Muslims round and round the square building where the Black Stone was kept. The other pilgrims were all praying that God would send the Promised One, Whom they also called the Qá'im.

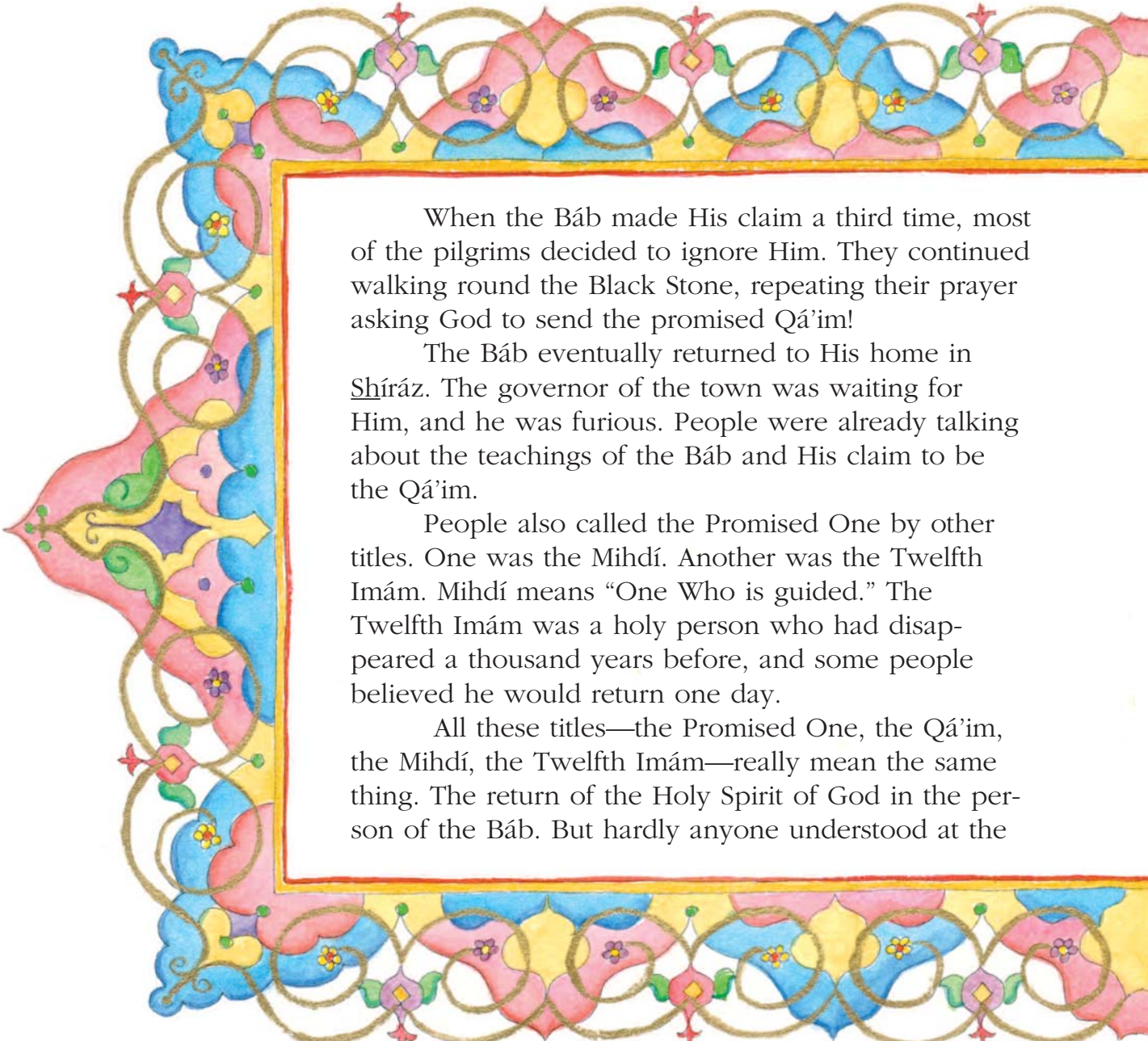
On the tenth day the Bab stopped and turned to face the pilgrims.

He called out, "I am the Qá'im whose advent you have been waiting for!"

Everyone stopped walking and praying and stared at the Báb, wondering if they had heard properly.

"I am the Qá'im whose advent you have been waiting for!" repeated the Báb.

Qá'im means "He Who shall arise," and even the children knew how wonderful He would be. If anyone even said the word Qá'im, everyone would stand up out of respect, wherever they were. And here was the Báb, saying He was that Holy Person! For a moment, nobody knew what to think.

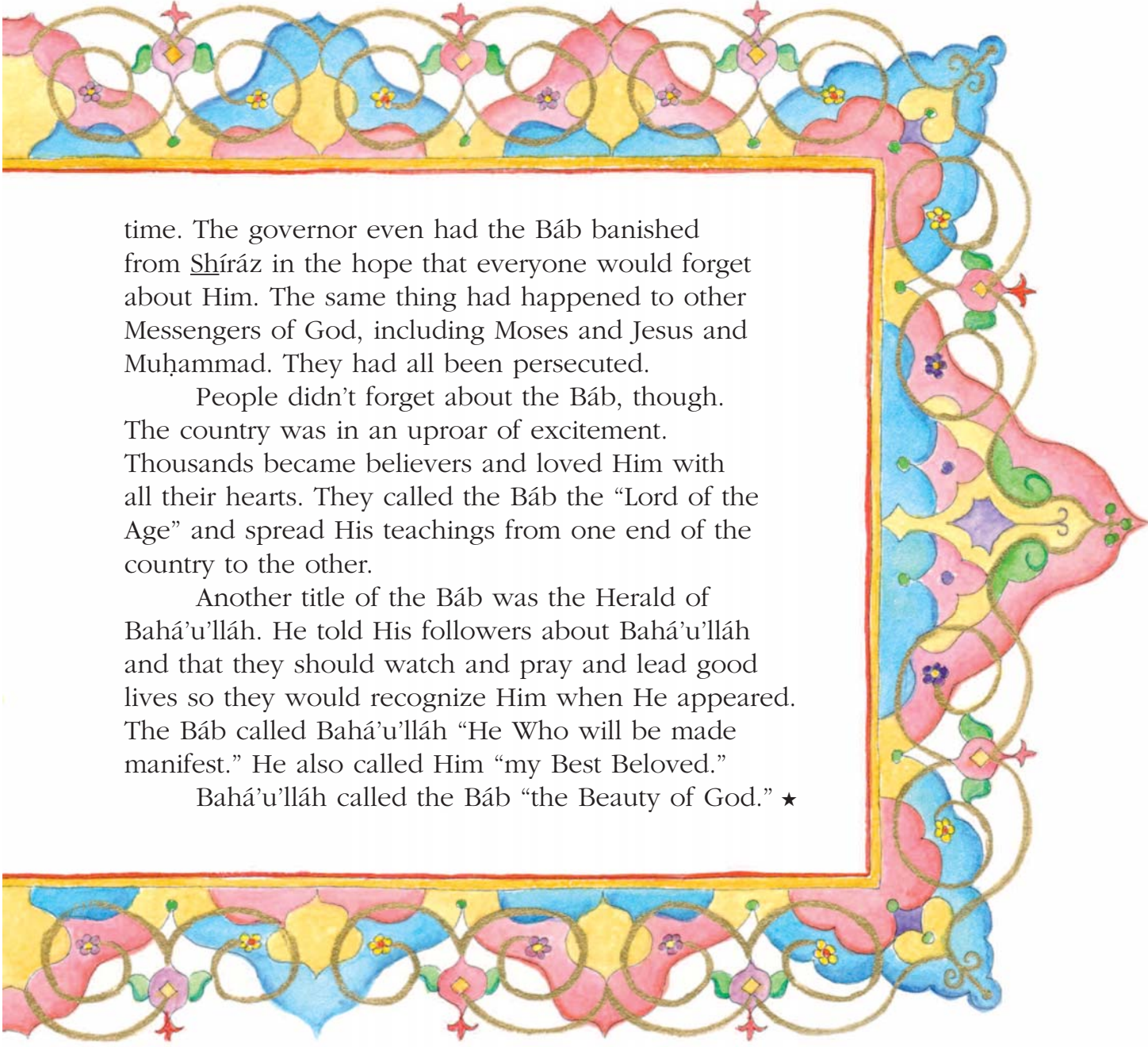


When the Báb made His claim a third time, most of the pilgrims decided to ignore Him. They continued walking round the Black Stone, repeating their prayer asking God to send the promised Qá'im!

The Báb eventually returned to His home in Shíráz. The governor of the town was waiting for Him, and he was furious. People were already talking about the teachings of the Báb and His claim to be the Qá'im.

People also called the Promised One by other titles. One was the Mihdí. Another was the Twelfth Imám. Mihdí means "One Who is guided." The Twelfth Imám was a holy person who had disappeared a thousand years before, and some people believed he would return one day.

All these titles—the Promised One, the Qá'im, the Mihdí, the Twelfth Imám—really mean the same thing. The return of the Holy Spirit of God in the person of the Báb. But hardly anyone understood at the



time. The governor even had the Báb banished from Shíráz in the hope that everyone would forget about Him. The same thing had happened to other Messengers of God, including Moses and Jesus and Muḥammad. They had all been persecuted.

People didn't forget about the Báb, though. The country was in an uproar of excitement. Thousands became believers and loved Him with all their hearts. They called the Báb the "Lord of the Age" and spread His teachings from one end of the country to the other.

Another title of the Báb was the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh. He told His followers about Bahá'u'lláh and that they should watch and pray and lead good lives so they would recognize Him when He appeared. The Báb called Bahá'u'lláh "He Who will be made manifest." He also called Him "my Best Beloved."

Bahá'u'lláh called the Báb "the Beauty of God." ★