

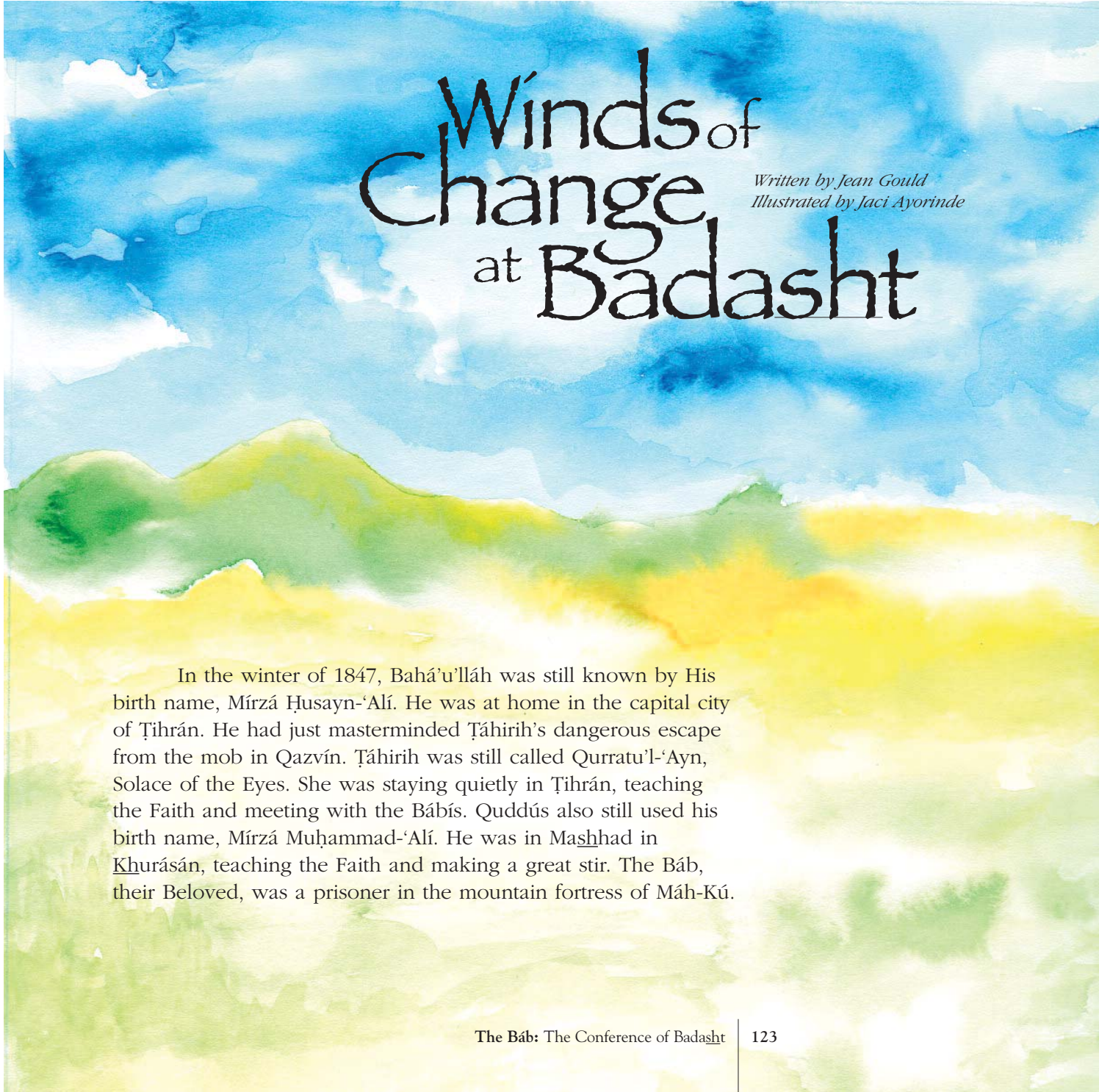


Become as true brethren in the one and indivisible religion of God, free from distinction, for verily God desireth that your hearts should become mirrors unto your brethren in the Faith, so that ye find yourselves reflected in them, and they in you.

This is the true Path of God, the Almighty, and He is indeed watchful over your actions.

— **The Báb**, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 56

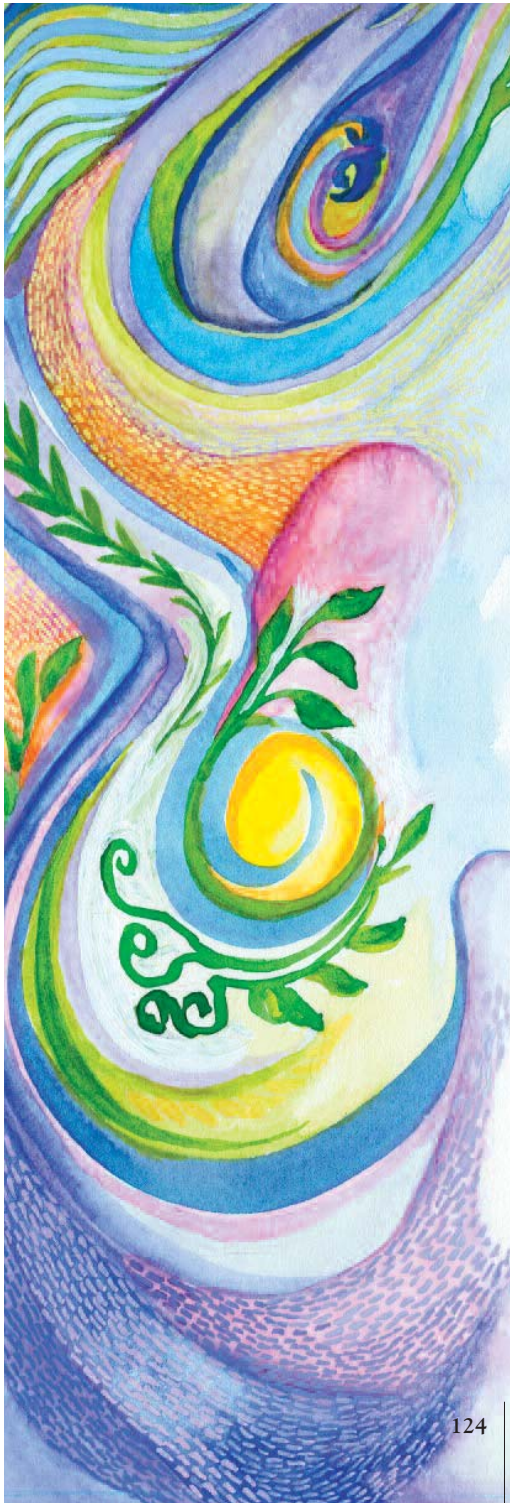
Illustrated by Mitra Paik



Winds of Change at Badasht

*Written by Jean Gould
Illustrated by Jaci Ayorinde*

In the winter of 1847, Bahá'u'lláh was still known by His birth name, Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí. He was at home in the capital city of Ṭíhrán. He had just masterminded Ṭáhirih's dangerous escape from the mob in Qazvín. Ṭáhirih was still called Qurratu'l-'Ayn, Solace of the Eyes. She was staying quietly in Ṭíhrán, teaching the Faith and meeting with the Bábís. Quddús also still used his birth name, Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí. He was in Mashhad in Khurásán, teaching the Faith and making a great stir. The Báb, their Beloved, was a prisoner in the mountain fortress of Máh-Kú.



Mírzá Ḥusayn-‘Alí was always in close correspondence with the Báb. As spring approached, They planned a certain conference in the province of Khurásán. Mírzá Ḥusayn-‘Alí sent messages all across Persia. Soon 81 believers began to come together at the small hamlet of Badašht. It was 400 long kilometers from the capital city. By horseback and howdah they traveled. The busy road bordered the Alborz Mountains and the great Persian desert.

It was late June 1848 when Mírzá Ḥusayn-‘Alí reached Badašht. There He rented three gardens. The fruit trees were in bloom and a mountain stream flowed through the green foothills. One garden went to Qurratu’l-‘Ayn and her attendants. Another went to Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí. The other went to Mírzá Ḥusayn-‘Alí, the nobleman from Núr, the Host of this gathering. The remaining Bábís were housed in surrounding smaller tents. The gardens of Badašht were a beautiful backdrop for the conference. And amazing events were about to unfold.

Most of the Bábís were certain that they knew the purpose of the conference. They thought they were there to plan how to spring the Báb from His prison in Máh-Kú. Perhaps they wondered why the fiery Mullá Ḥusayn was absent from such a plan. They would soon learn about a different purpose. And the principle players were already among them, waiting in their gardens.

They held conference together among the gardens for 22 days. Every day, Mírzá Ḥusayn-‘Alí revealed a Tablet. One of the believers would chant it for his fellow Bábís. Each person there received a new name from Mírzá Ḥusayn-‘Alí. These names became their new titles of honor. To Muḥammad-‘Alí of Bárfarúsh He gave the name Quddús, the Most Holy One. To Quarratu’l-‘Ayn—the one they called Fátimih of Qazvín—He gave the name Ṭáhirih, the Pure One. To Himself He gave the

name Bahá, the Glorious One. Not one among the gathering objected to this amazing title. Mírzá Ḥusayn-‘Alí possessed unfailing courage and an astonishing intellect. He was, indeed, excellent in all things.

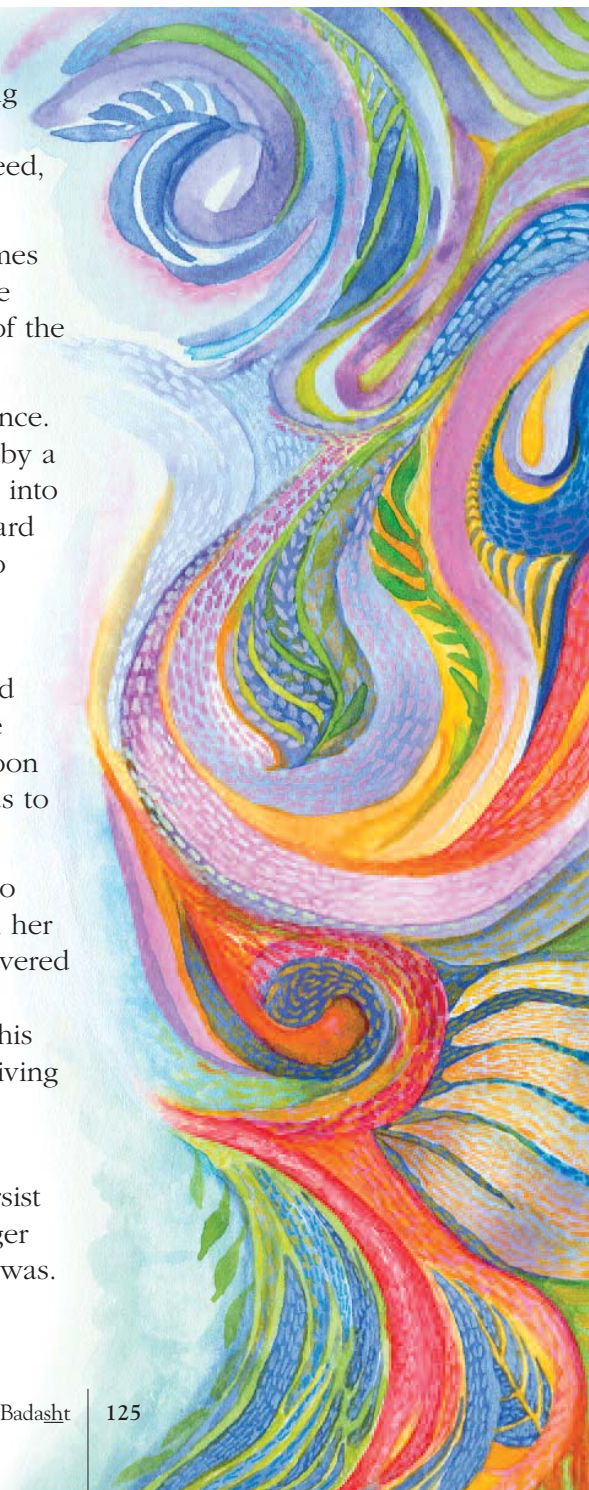
No one knew for certain from Whom these new names had come, or why. There could be no question of their true nature, however. The Báb later revealed a Tablet for each of the believers. And He addressed them by their new names.

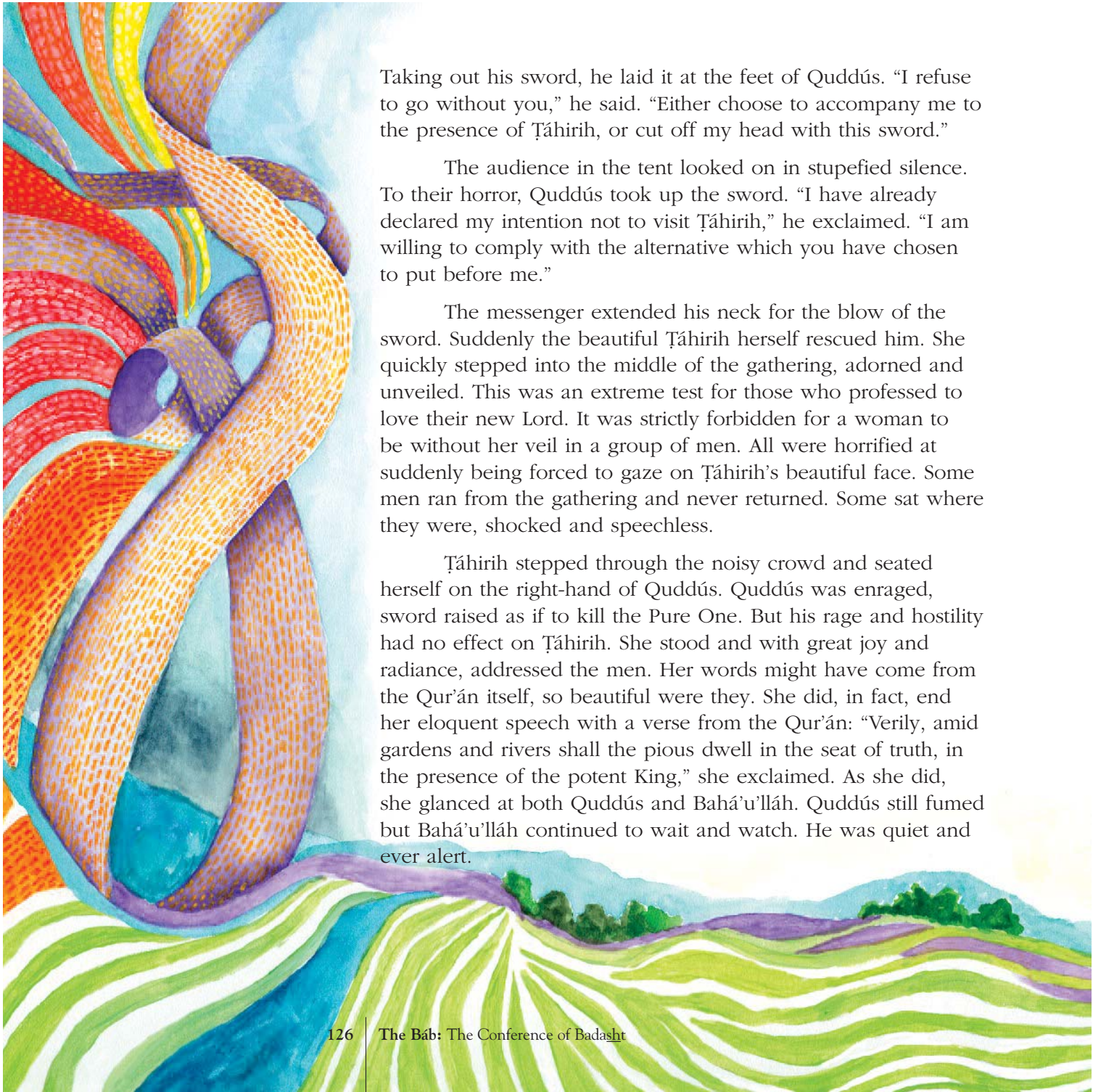
Something else happened during the 22-day conference. Every day an old law of Islám was discarded and replaced by a new one. Slowly, law by law, the Báb’s Revelation was put into place. The believers struggled to accept them. But it was hard to let go of the old and dear ways. Something was about to happen which would help them give up these traditions.

One day, deep into the conference, a certain drama began to unfold. Bahá’u’lláh was apparently ill and confined to His tent. Upon hearing this news, Quddús hurried to see Him. There he seated himself at Bahá’u’lláh’s right hand. Soon the others had gathered in the tent. They, too, were anxious to know Bahá’u’lláh’s condition and offer their sympathy.

It wasn’t long before Ṭáhirih’s messenger appeared to issue an invitation. Ṭáhirih requested Quddús to visit her in her own garden. Quddús’ reply was quick and fiery. “I have severed myself entirely from her,” he said. “I refuse to meet her.” Perhaps the assembled listeners were surprised to hear of this separation. Surely they had never heard one Letter of the Living speak so of another.

The messenger hurried away, only to return almost immediately. “She insists on your visit,” he said. “If you persist in your refusal, she herself will come to you.” The messenger sensed Quddús’ anger and determination to stay where he was.





Taking out his sword, he laid it at the feet of Quddús. “I refuse to go without you,” he said. “Either choose to accompany me to the presence of Ṭāhīriḥ, or cut off my head with this sword.”

The audience in the tent looked on in stupefied silence. To their horror, Quddús took up the sword. “I have already declared my intention not to visit Ṭāhīriḥ,” he exclaimed. “I am willing to comply with the alternative which you have chosen to put before me.”

The messenger extended his neck for the blow of the sword. Suddenly the beautiful Ṭāhīriḥ herself rescued him. She quickly stepped into the middle of the gathering, adorned and unveiled. This was an extreme test for those who professed to love their new Lord. It was strictly forbidden for a woman to be without her veil in a group of men. All were horrified at suddenly being forced to gaze on Ṭāhīriḥ’s beautiful face. Some men ran from the gathering and never returned. Some sat where they were, shocked and speechless.

Ṭāhīriḥ stepped through the noisy crowd and seated herself on the right-hand of Quddús. Quddús was enraged, sword raised as if to kill the Pure One. But his rage and hostility had no effect on Ṭāhīriḥ. She stood and with great joy and radiance, addressed the men. Her words might have come from the Qur’án itself, so beautiful were they. She did, in fact, end her eloquent speech with a verse from the Qur’án: “Verily, amid gardens and rivers shall the pious dwell in the seat of truth, in the presence of the potent King,” she exclaimed. As she did, she glanced at both Quddús and Bahá’u’lláh. Quddús still fumed but Bahá’u’lláh continued to wait and watch. He was quiet and ever alert.

Surely the most faithful among the crowd that day recalled one Islámic prophecy: “the appearance of Fátimih herself unveiled while crossing the Bridge on the promised Day of Judgment.”

Eventually Bahá'u'lláh chose to step in and bring peace to the gathering. He called for a reading from the Qur'án, the Tablet of Resurrection. This Tablet called for new laws and customs. For soon, He said, humanity would pass through the Day of Judgment and into a new cycle.

For the remainder of their time at Badasht, Quddús and Ṭáhirih continued to challenge each other. They also challenged the faith of those gathered to hear them. Eventually though, Bahá'u'lláh brought His two wonderful players together in agreement. Quddús and Ṭáhirih even left Badasht together. They rode away in the same howdah as friends and fellow Bábís.

The conference of Badasht ended with its purposes completed: to throw out the old Law and bring in the new. To test the Bábís and separate the loyal from the disloyal. The Bábís at the conference would soon realize something else. In a very short time the Báb would be in Tabríz, standing before the authorities. He would make His public claim as the Qá'im, the Promised One of the House of Muḥammad.

Surely the lion-hearted at Badasht realized that they had received a great gift: the electrifying certainty that they had been present on the Day of Judgment. ★

