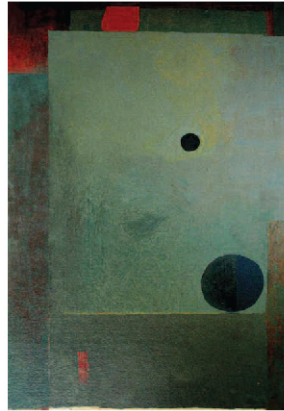


The following story is from the book

The Central Figures
The Báb
Volume Two



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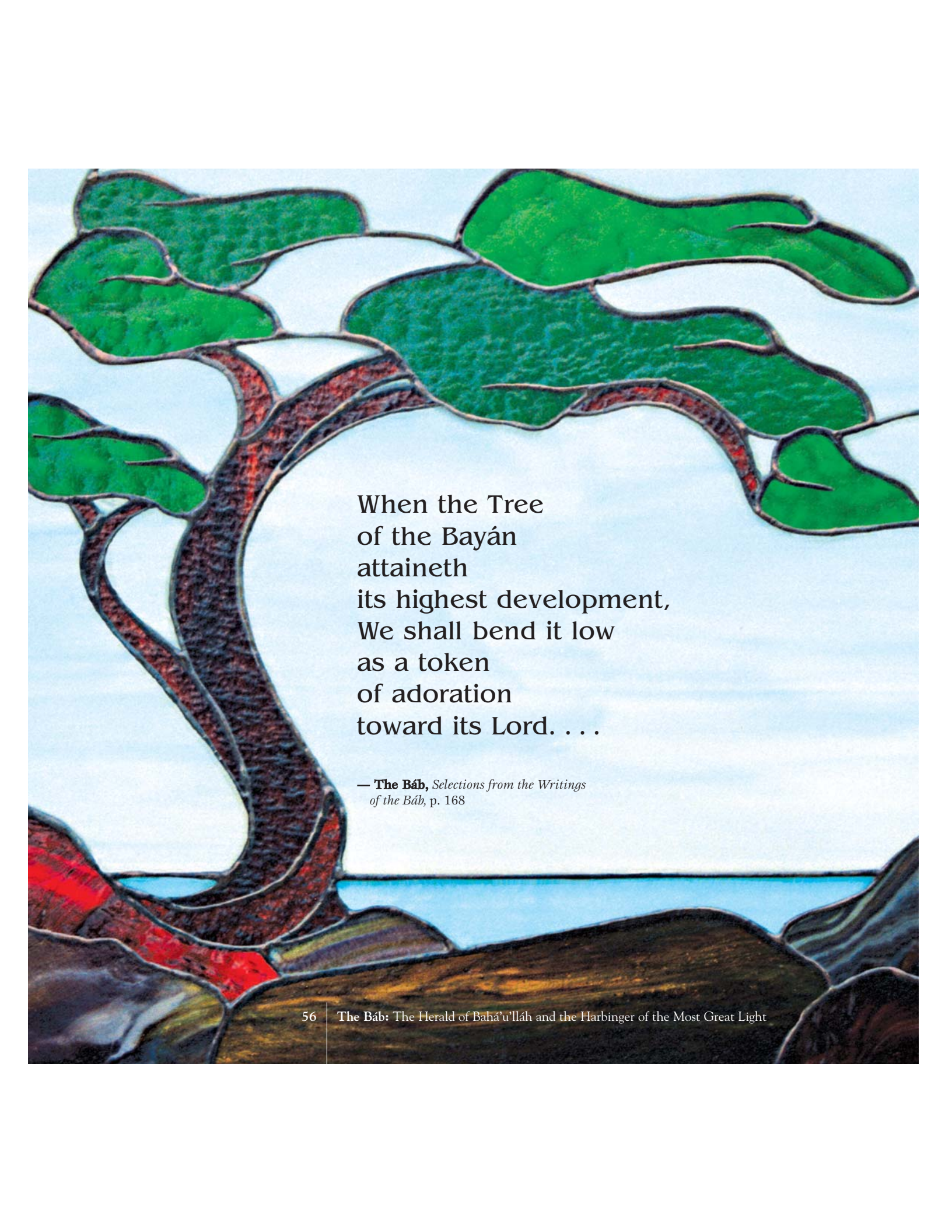
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When the Tree
of the Bayán
attaineth
its highest development,
We shall bend it low
as a token
of adoration
toward its Lord. . . .

— **The Báb**, *Selections from the Writings
of the Báb*, p. 168



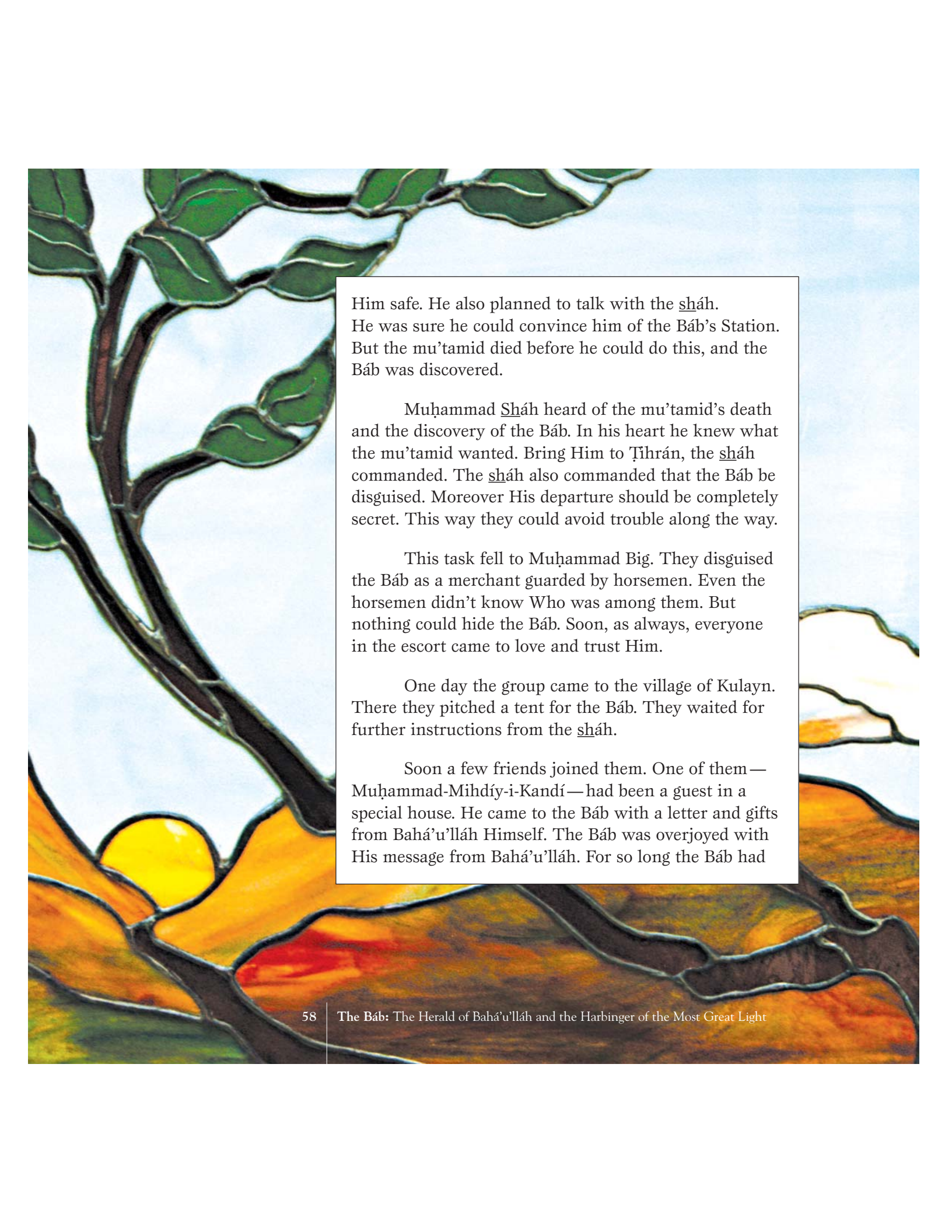
On the Road to Tīhrán

*Written by Jean Gould
Illustrated by Carl Cordini*

It is said that the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh never met. They shared every kind of hardship. Their devotion to each other never failed. They were in constant communication in spirit and by letter. Each was ready at every moment to die for the Other. But these two mighty Pillars of the new Faith never met in person. However, something wonderful happened one night outside the capital city of Tīhrán.

Early in 1847, the Báb was living quietly in Shíráz. Soon, though, His charm and His Teachings drew many people to His door. These crowds greatly alarmed the religious leaders in the area. It wasn't long before they tried to have the Báb banished, and even killed.

The Mu'tamid, the governor, of Iṣfáhán was a good brave man. He also loved the Báb. With a clever disguise, he hid the Báb in his own house to keep



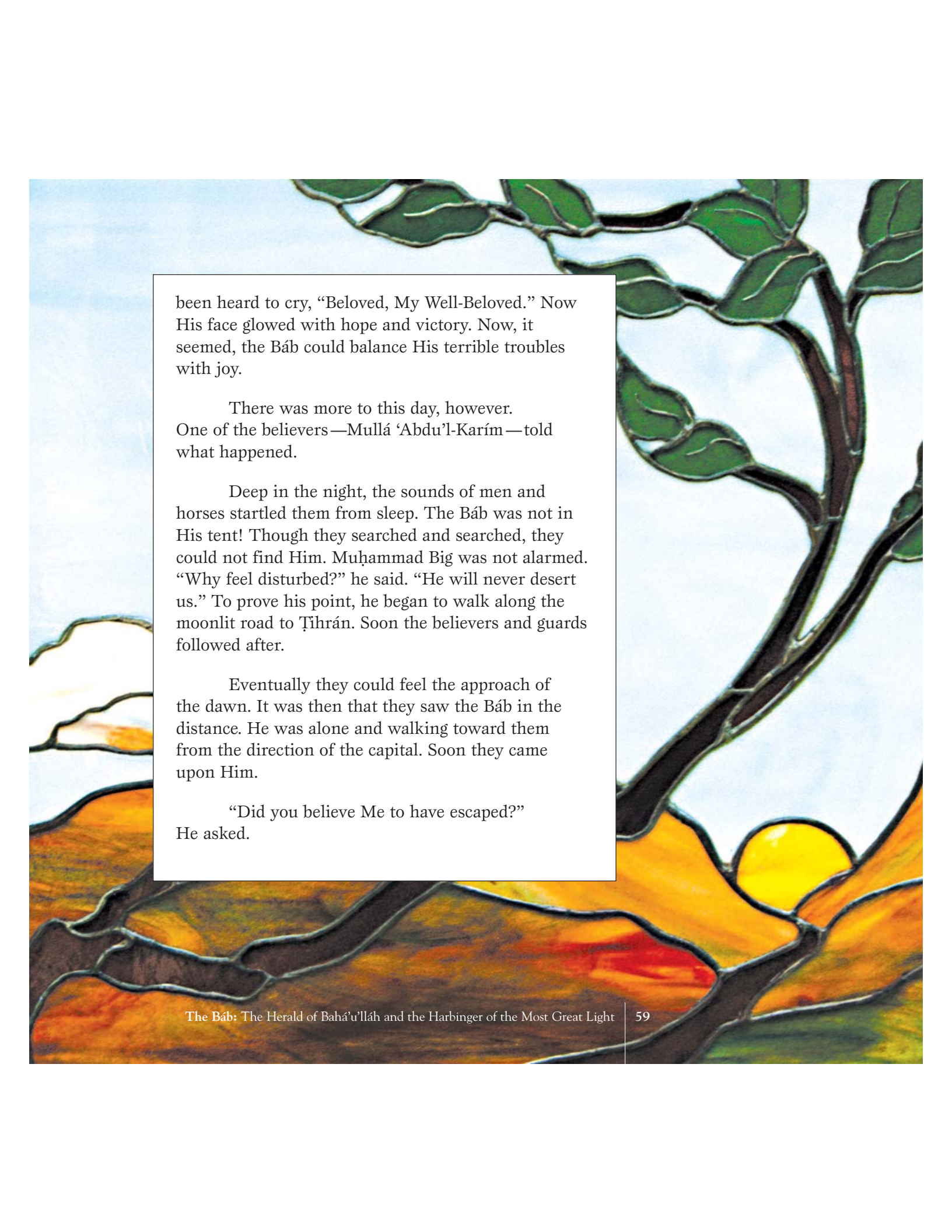
Him safe. He also planned to talk with the sháh. He was sure he could convince him of the Báb's Station. But the mu'tamid died before he could do this, and the Báb was discovered.

Muḥammad Sháh heard of the mu'tamid's death and the discovery of the Báb. In his heart he knew what the mu'tamid wanted. Bring Him to Ṭīhrán, the sháh commanded. The sháh also commanded that the Báb be disguised. Moreover His departure should be completely secret. This way they could avoid trouble along the way.

This task fell to Muḥammad Big. They disguised the Báb as a merchant guarded by horsemen. Even the horsemen didn't know Who was among them. But nothing could hide the Báb. Soon, as always, everyone in the escort came to love and trust Him.

One day the group came to the village of Kulayn. There they pitched a tent for the Báb. They waited for further instructions from the sháh.

Soon a few friends joined them. One of them—Muḥammad-Mihdíy-i-Kandí—had been a guest in a special house. He came to the Báb with a letter and gifts from Bahá'u'lláh Himself. The Báb was overjoyed with His message from Bahá'u'lláh. For so long the Báb had



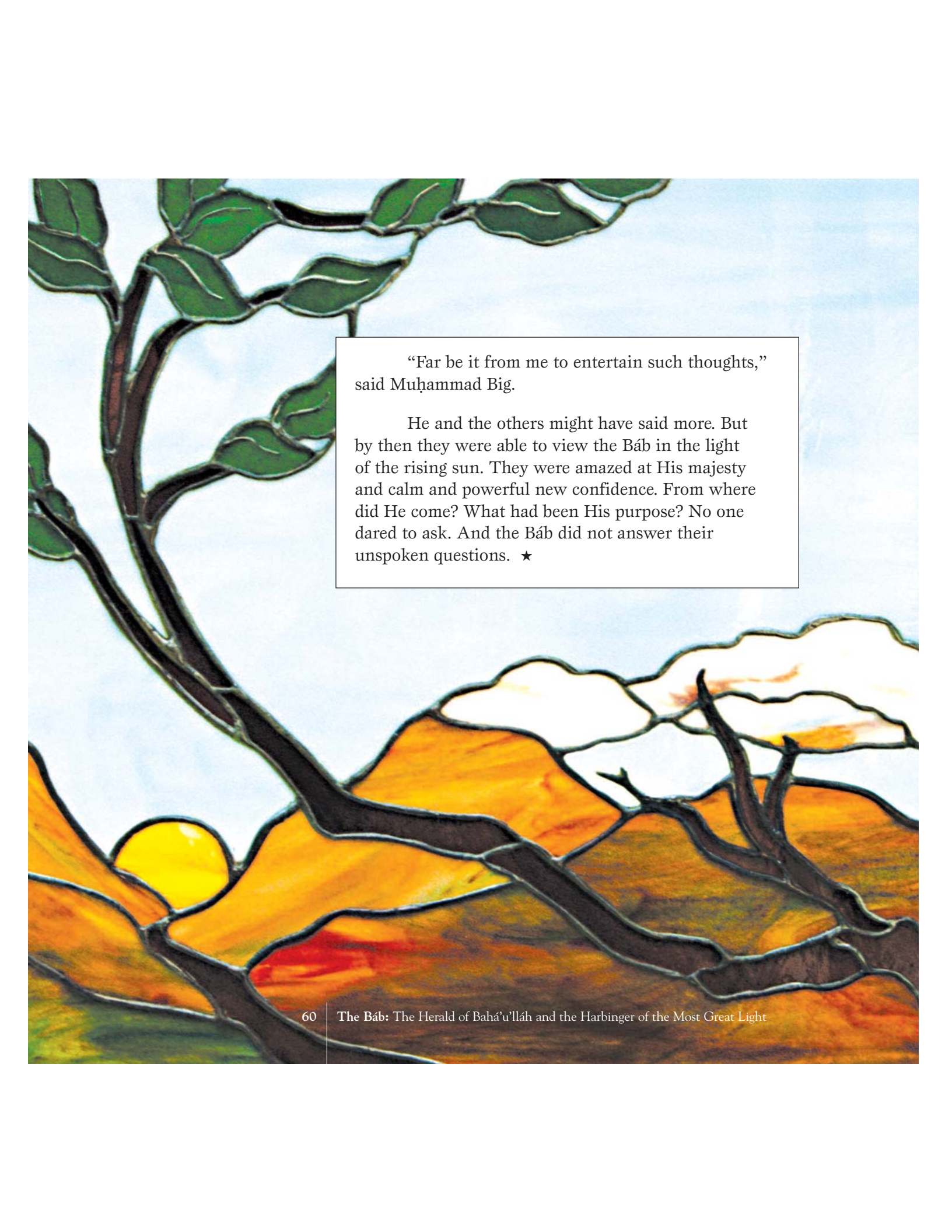
been heard to cry, “Beloved, My Well-Beloved.” Now His face glowed with hope and victory. Now, it seemed, the Báb could balance His terrible troubles with joy.

There was more to this day, however. One of the believers—Mullá ‘Abdu’l-Karím—told what happened.

Deep in the night, the sounds of men and horses startled them from sleep. The Báb was not in His tent! Though they searched and searched, they could not find Him. Muḥammad Big was not alarmed. “Why feel disturbed?” he said. “He will never desert us.” To prove his point, he began to walk along the moonlit road to Ṭīhrán. Soon the believers and guards followed after.

Eventually they could feel the approach of the dawn. It was then that they saw the Báb in the distance. He was alone and walking toward them from the direction of the capital. Soon they came upon Him.

“Did you believe Me to have escaped?” He asked.



“Far be it from me to entertain such thoughts,”
said Muḥammad Big.

He and the others might have said more. But by then they were able to view the Báb in the light of the rising sun. They were amazed at His majesty and calm and powerful new confidence. From where did He come? What had been His purpose? No one dared to ask. And the Báb did not answer their unspoken questions. ★