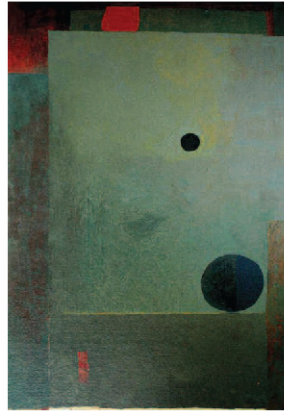


The following story is from the book

*The Central Figures*  
*The Báb*  
*Volume Two*



These stories are lovingly provided to download as a convenience to teachers or communities otherwise unable to acquire the book. Each book in this storybook series also includes an appendix with questions for discussion and reflection, a glossary of words and phrases used in the stories, a bibliography, and an index.

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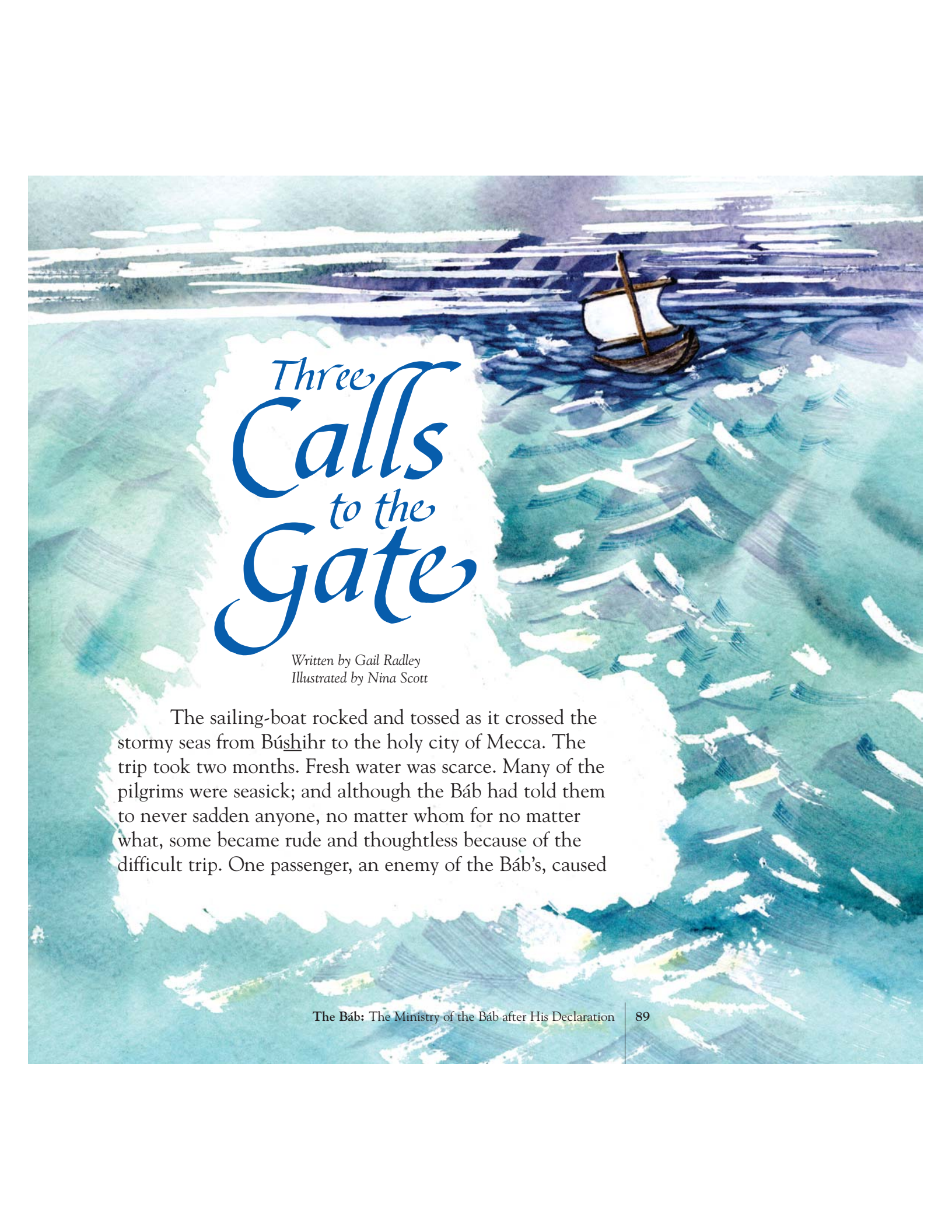
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*These are the glorious days  
on the like of which the sun  
hath never risen in the past.  
These are the days which  
the people in bygone times  
eagerly expected.  
What hath then befallen you  
that ye are fast asleep?*

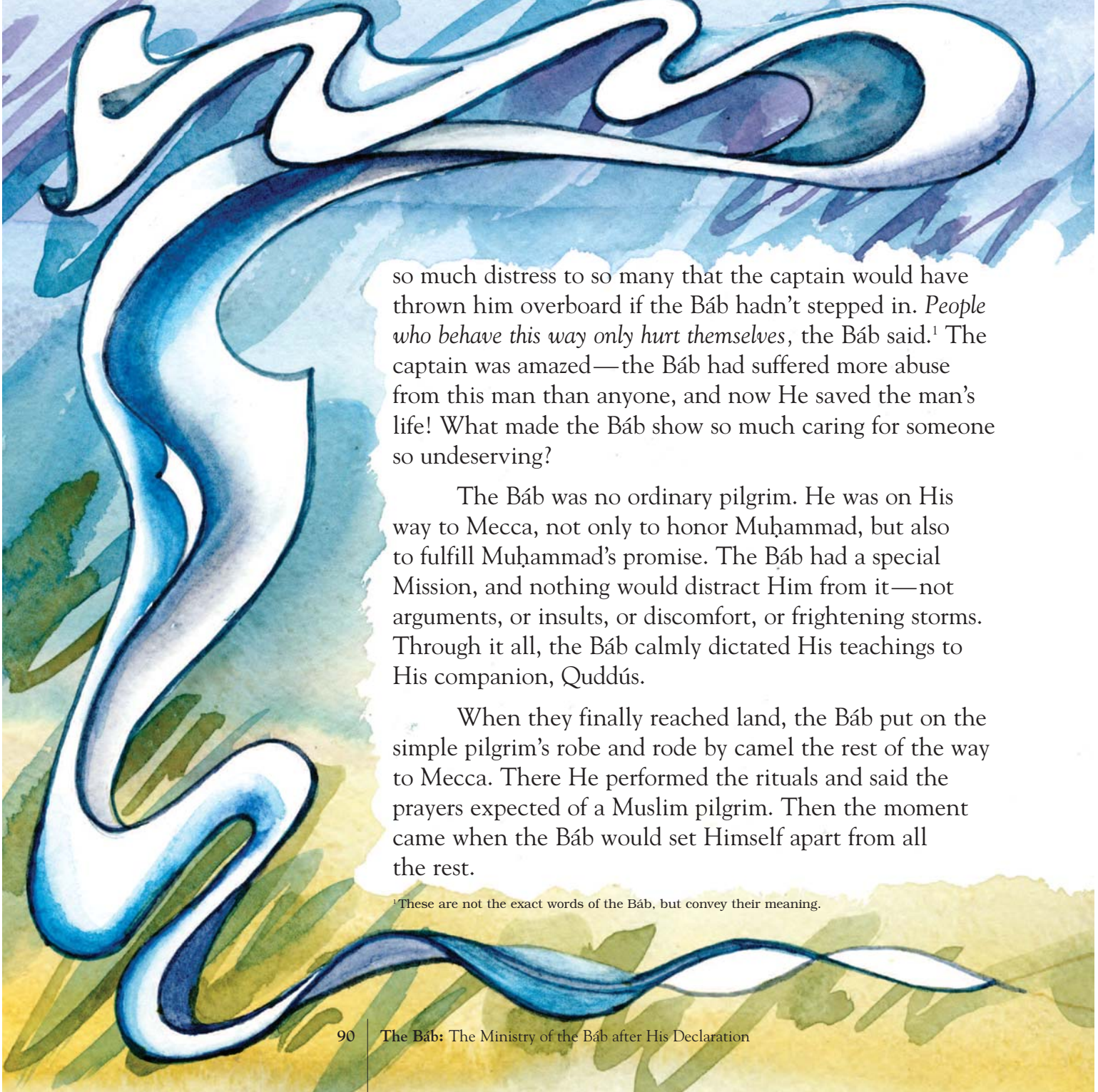
— The Báb, *Selections from the Writings  
of the Báb*, p. 161



# Three Calls to the Gate

Written by Gail Radley  
Illustrated by Nina Scott

The sailing-boat rocked and tossed as it crossed the stormy seas from Búshih̄r to the holy city of Mecca. The trip took two months. Fresh water was scarce. Many of the pilgrims were seasick; and although the Báb had told them to never sadden anyone, no matter whom for no matter what, some became rude and thoughtless because of the difficult trip. One passenger, an enemy of the Báb's, caused



so much distress to so many that the captain would have thrown him overboard if the Báb hadn't stepped in. *People who behave this way only hurt themselves*, the Báb said.<sup>1</sup> The captain was amazed—the Báb had suffered more abuse from this man than anyone, and now He saved the man's life! What made the Báb show so much caring for someone so undeserving?

The Báb was no ordinary pilgrim. He was on His way to Mecca, not only to honor Muḥammad, but also to fulfill Muḥammad's promise. The Báb had a special Mission, and nothing would distract Him from it—not arguments, or insults, or discomfort, or frightening storms. Through it all, the Báb calmly dictated His teachings to His companion, Quddús.

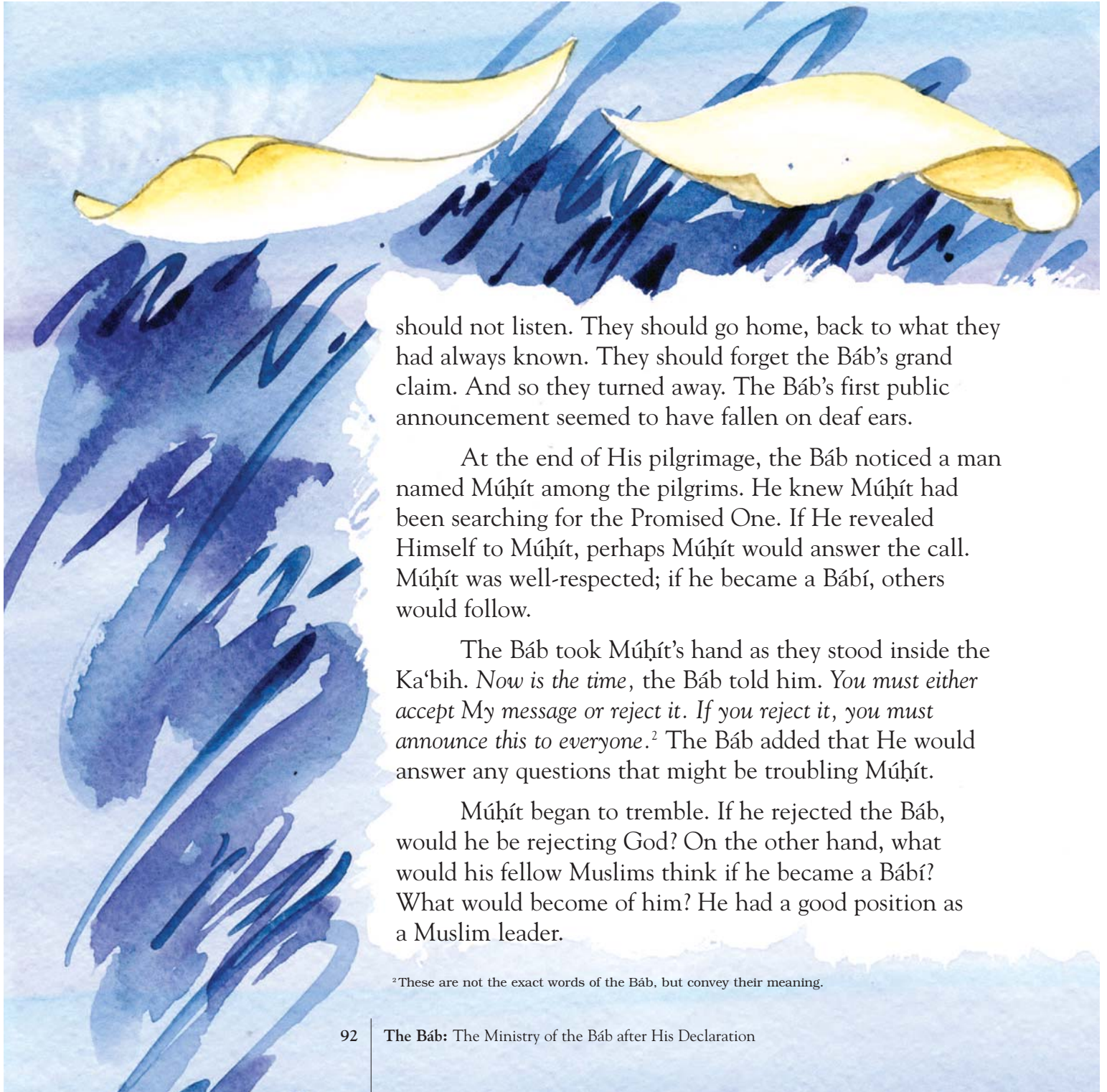
When they finally reached land, the Báb put on the simple pilgrim's robe and rode by camel the rest of the way to Mecca. There He performed the rituals and said the prayers expected of a Muslim pilgrim. Then the moment came when the Báb would set Himself apart from all the rest.

<sup>1</sup>These are not the exact words of the Báb, but convey their meaning.



Muslim pilgrims crowded the roofs of houses nearby and filled the courtyard of the Great Mosque. Within that courtyard stood a building called the Ka'bih, the most holy spot in the world for Muslims. The Báb walked to the Ka'bih. He took hold of the ring doorknob. In a loud clear voice, He announced, "I am that Qá'im whose advent you have been awaiting. I am that Qá'im whose advent you have been awaiting. I am that Qá'im whose advent you have been awaiting."

A startled silence fell over the crowd. What did this mean? In the quiet, one could hear the flapping wings of a sparrow passing overhead. Was this Man saying that He was the Messenger from God promised by Muḥammad? It was a shocking claim. Muḥammad had foretold it, and the people believed in Muḥammad—a few had thought they might live to see the Qá'im. But could this really be Him, standing there before them? If they believed the Báb, then they must accept new teachings—the Báb's teachings—and change their comfortable lives. It was too much, they told themselves. This Man could not be the Qá'im. They



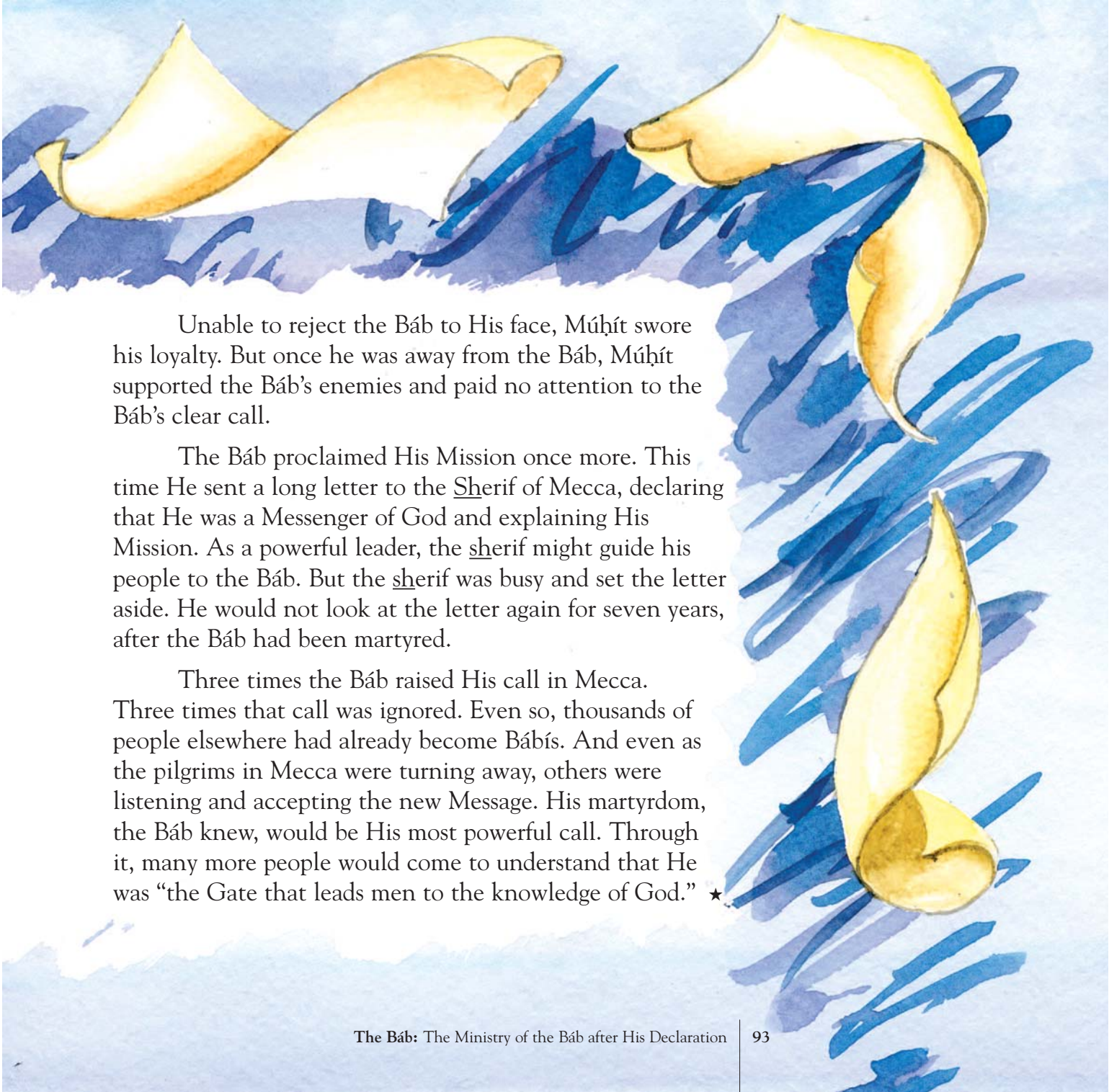
should not listen. They should go home, back to what they had always known. They should forget the Báb's grand claim. And so they turned away. The Báb's first public announcement seemed to have fallen on deaf ears.

At the end of His pilgrimage, the Báb noticed a man named Múhít among the pilgrims. He knew Múhít had been searching for the Promised One. If He revealed Himself to Múhít, perhaps Múhít would answer the call. Múhít was well-respected; if he became a Bábí, others would follow.

The Báb took Múhít's hand as they stood inside the Ka'bih. *Now is the time*, the Báb told him. *You must either accept My message or reject it. If you reject it, you must announce this to everyone.*<sup>2</sup> The Báb added that He would answer any questions that might be troubling Múhít.

Múhít began to tremble. If he rejected the Báb, would he be rejecting God? On the other hand, what would his fellow Muslims think if he became a Bábí? What would become of him? He had a good position as a Muslim leader.

<sup>2</sup>These are not the exact words of the Báb, but convey their meaning.



Unable to reject the Báb to His face, Múhít swore his loyalty. But once he was away from the Báb, Múhít supported the Báb's enemies and paid no attention to the Báb's clear call.

The Báb proclaimed His Mission once more. This time He sent a long letter to the Sherif of Mecca, declaring that He was a Messenger of God and explaining His Mission. As a powerful leader, the sherif might guide his people to the Báb. But the sherif was busy and set the letter aside. He would not look at the letter again for seven years, after the Báb had been martyred.

Three times the Báb raised His call in Mecca. Three times that call was ignored. Even so, thousands of people elsewhere had already become Bábís. And even as the pilgrims in Mecca were turning away, others were listening and accepting the new Message. His martyrdom, the Báb knew, would be His most powerful call. Through it, many more people would come to understand that He was “the Gate that leads men to the knowledge of God.” ★