

The following story is from the book

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



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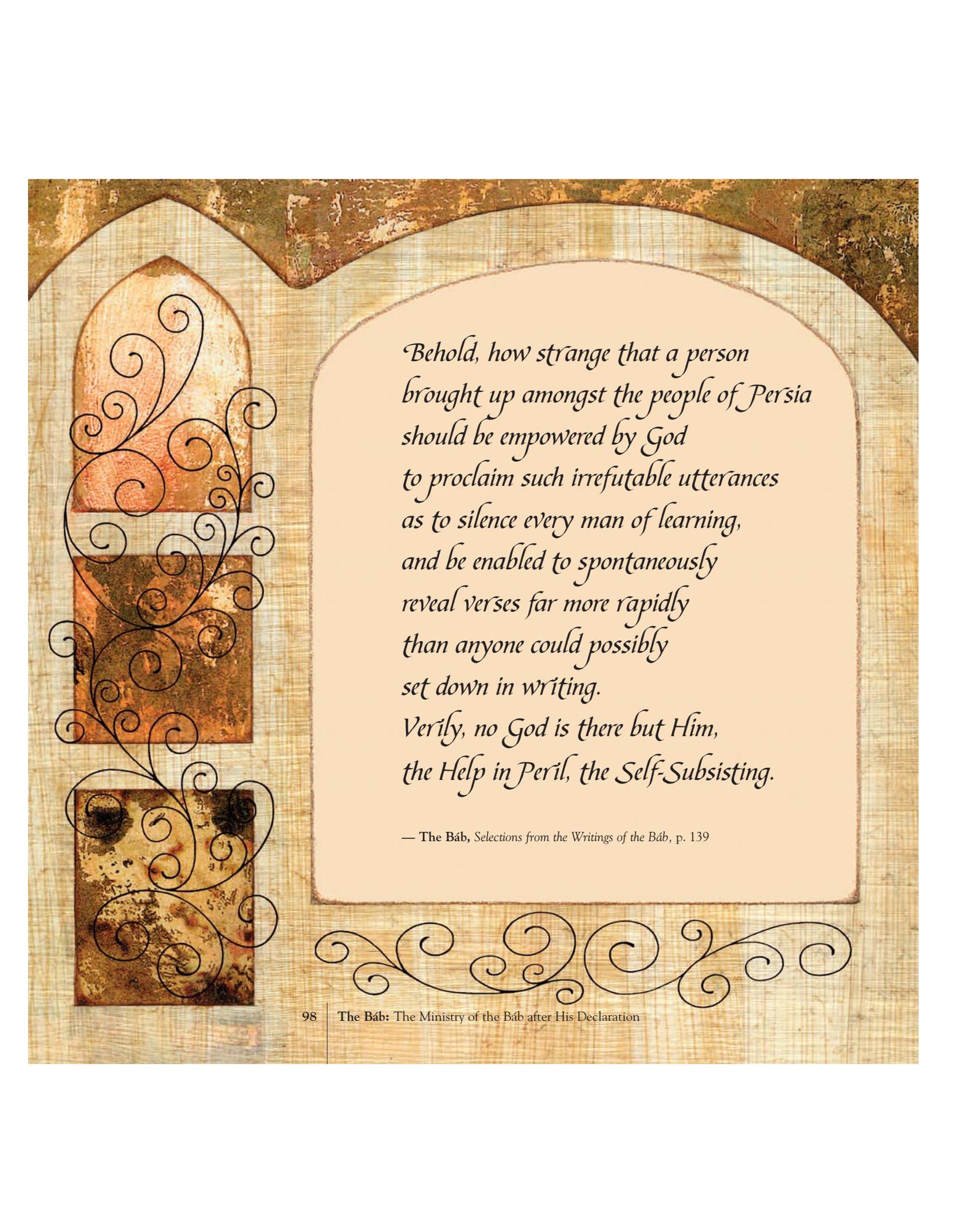
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*Behold, how strange that a person  
brought up amongst the people of Persia  
should be empowered by God  
to proclaim such irrefutable utterances  
as to silence every man of learning,  
and be enabled to spontaneously  
reveal verses far more rapidly  
than anyone could possibly  
set down in writing.*

*Verily, no God is there but Him,  
the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.*

— The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 139

# Vahíd

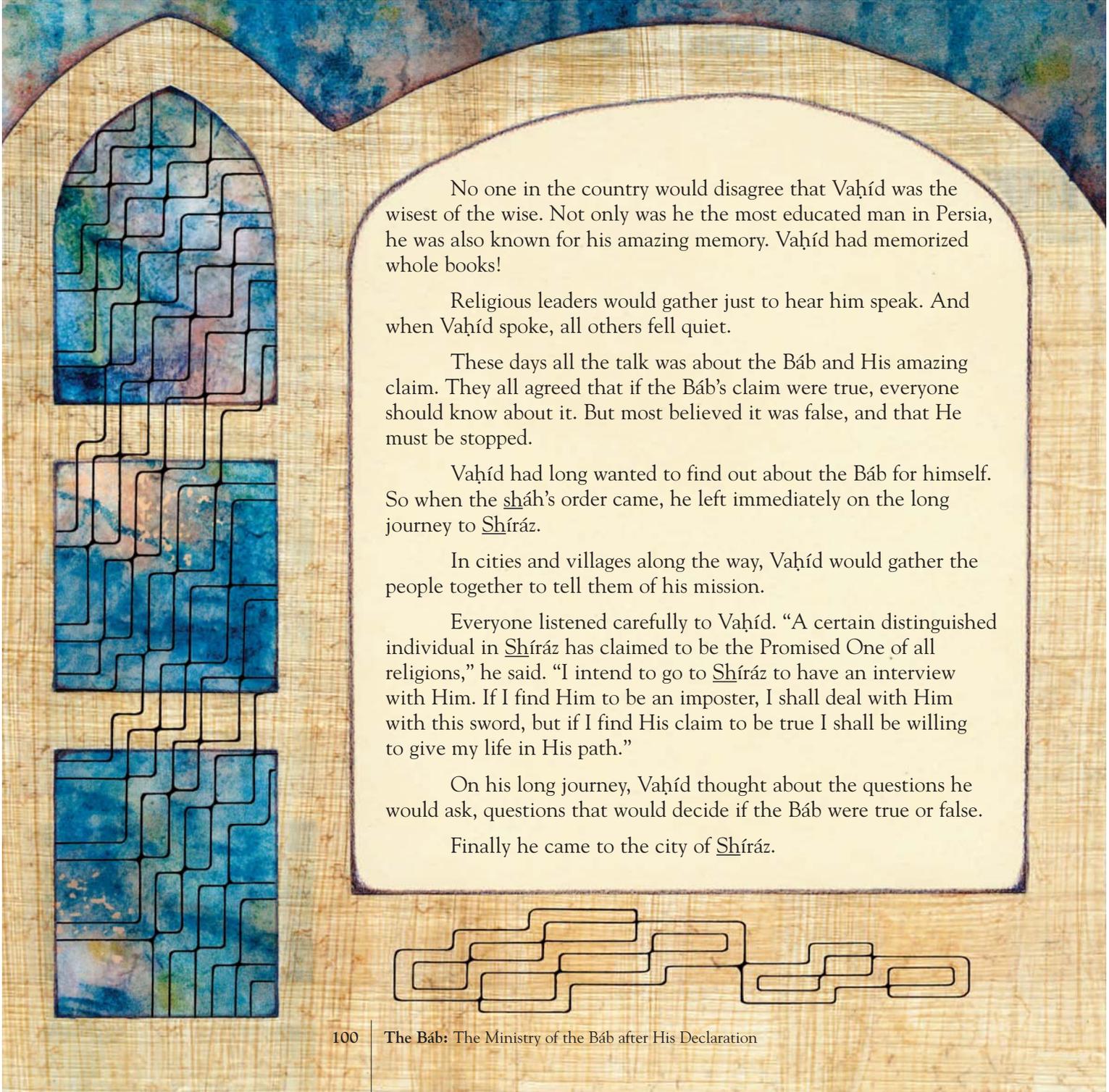
Written by Clark Donnelly and Mary Darling  
Illustrated by Marilyn Lindsley

Not so very long ago in a country called Persia, there was a great commotion. In restaurants and on street corners, in poor houses and rich, the people could speak of one thing and one thing only—a claim made by a Young Man in far-off Shíráz. A claim that He was a Messenger from God.

The Young Man was called the Báb. He was the most perfect and kind human being anyone had ever seen, and His Message would one day bring peace to the whole world. The Báb called out to people everywhere, inviting them to investigate His claim and to learn about these teachings.

News of the Báb reached the sháh, the ruler of Persia. He was troubled. Was the Báb's claim true or false? Those around him whispered that the Báb was a threat to his power. But the sháh was not so sure.

He decided to send someone to Shíráz to interview the Báb. It would have to be someone he could trust completely—the wisest man in the land. He called for his servant. *Take this sword and one of my best horses as a gift to the only man I can trust with such a sacred mission. Take them to Vahíd.*



No one in the country would disagree that Vaḥíd was the wisest of the wise. Not only was he the most educated man in Persia, he was also known for his amazing memory. Vaḥíd had memorized whole books!

Religious leaders would gather just to hear him speak. And when Vaḥíd spoke, all others fell quiet.

These days all the talk was about the Báb and His amazing claim. They all agreed that if the Báb's claim were true, everyone should know about it. But most believed it was false, and that He must be stopped.

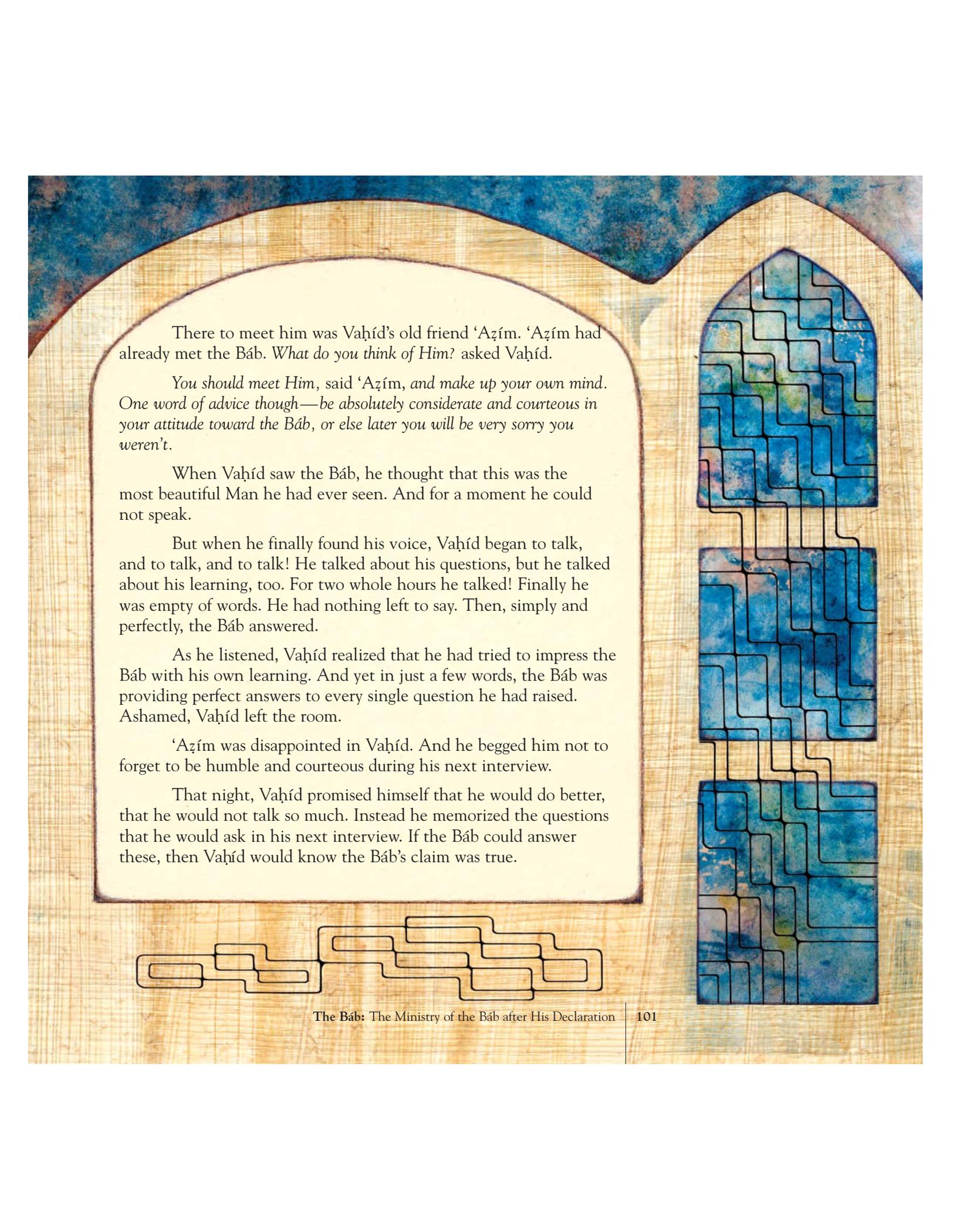
Vaḥíd had long wanted to find out about the Báb for himself. So when the sháh's order came, he left immediately on the long journey to Shíráz.

In cities and villages along the way, Vaḥíd would gather the people together to tell them of his mission.

Everyone listened carefully to Vaḥíd. "A certain distinguished individual in Shíráz has claimed to be the Promised One of all religions," he said. "I intend to go to Shíráz to have an interview with Him. If I find Him to be an imposter, I shall deal with Him with this sword, but if I find His claim to be true I shall be willing to give my life in His path."

On his long journey, Vaḥíd thought about the questions he would ask, questions that would decide if the Báb were true or false.

Finally he came to the city of Shíráz.



There to meet him was Vaḥíd's old friend 'Azím. 'Azím had already met the Báb. *What do you think of Him?* asked Vaḥíd.

*You should meet Him, said 'Azím, and make up your own mind. One word of advice though—be absolutely considerate and courteous in your attitude toward the Báb, or else later you will be very sorry you weren't.*

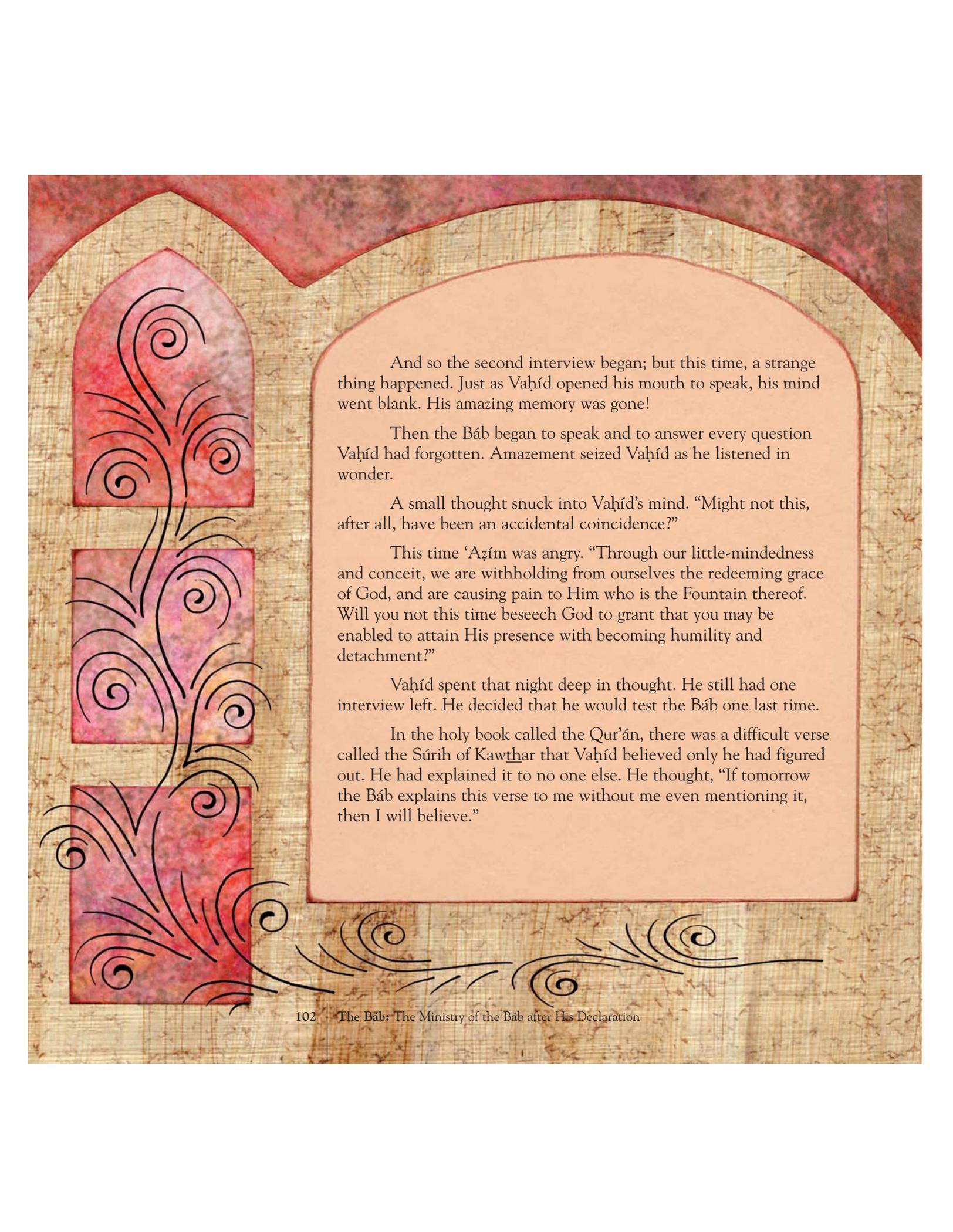
When Vaḥíd saw the Báb, he thought that this was the most beautiful Man he had ever seen. And for a moment he could not speak.

But when he finally found his voice, Vaḥíd began to talk, and to talk, and to talk! He talked about his questions, but he talked about his learning, too. For two whole hours he talked! Finally he was empty of words. He had nothing left to say. Then, simply and perfectly, the Báb answered.

As he listened, Vaḥíd realized that he had tried to impress the Báb with his own learning. And yet in just a few words, the Báb was providing perfect answers to every single question he had raised. Ashamed, Vaḥíd left the room.

'Azím was disappointed in Vaḥíd. And he begged him not to forget to be humble and courteous during his next interview.

That night, Vaḥíd promised himself that he would do better, that he would not talk so much. Instead he memorized the questions that he would ask in his next interview. If the Báb could answer these, then Vaḥíd would know the Báb's claim was true.



And so the second interview began; but this time, a strange thing happened. Just as Vaḥíd opened his mouth to speak, his mind went blank. His amazing memory was gone!

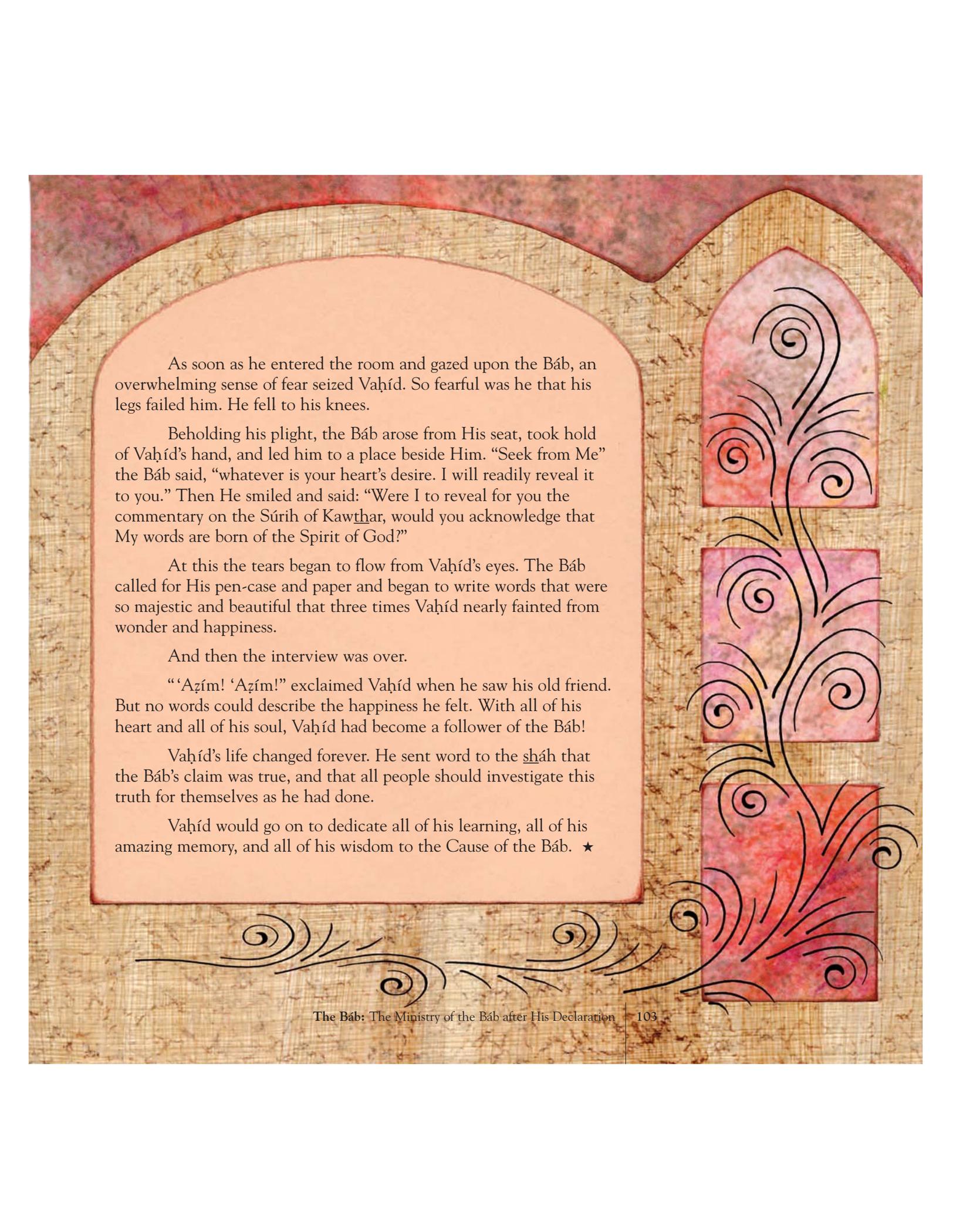
Then the Báb began to speak and to answer every question Vaḥíd had forgotten. Amazement seized Vaḥíd as he listened in wonder.

A small thought snuck into Vaḥíd's mind. "Might not this, after all, have been an accidental coincidence?"

This time 'Azím was angry. "Through our little-mindedness and conceit, we are withholding from ourselves the redeeming grace of God, and are causing pain to Him who is the Fountain thereof. Will you not this time beseech God to grant that you may be enabled to attain His presence with becoming humility and detachment?"

Vaḥíd spent that night deep in thought. He still had one interview left. He decided that he would test the Báb one last time.

In the holy book called the Qur'án, there was a difficult verse called the Súrih of Kawthar that Vaḥíd believed only he had figured out. He had explained it to no one else. He thought, "If tomorrow the Báb explains this verse to me without me even mentioning it, then I will believe."



As soon as he entered the room and gazed upon the Báb, an overwhelming sense of fear seized Vaḥíd. So fearful was he that his legs failed him. He fell to his knees.

Beholding his plight, the Báb arose from His seat, took hold of Vaḥíd's hand, and led him to a place beside Him. "Seek from Me" the Báb said, "whatever is your heart's desire. I will readily reveal it to you." Then He smiled and said: "Were I to reveal for you the commentary on the Súrih of Kawthar, would you acknowledge that My words are born of the Spirit of God?"

At this the tears began to flow from Vaḥíd's eyes. The Báb called for His pen-case and paper and began to write words that were so majestic and beautiful that three times Vaḥíd nearly fainted from wonder and happiness.

And then the interview was over.

"'Aẓím! 'Aẓím!" exclaimed Vaḥíd when he saw his old friend. But no words could describe the happiness he felt. With all of his heart and all of his soul, Vaḥíd had become a follower of the Báb!

Vaḥíd's life changed forever. He sent word to the sháh that the Báb's claim was true, and that all people should investigate this truth for themselves as he had done.

Vaḥíd would go on to dedicate all of his learning, all of his amazing memory, and all of his wisdom to the Cause of the Báb. ★