

The following story is from the book  
*The Central Figures*

# *Bahá'u'lláh*

*Volume Three*



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.

These books may be purchased from the Louhelen Bahá'í School bookstore for \$15.25 each, including shipping in the United States, or \$23.00 to most international locations. Email: [Louhelen@usbnc.org](mailto:Louhelen@usbnc.org) for details.

Graphic Design by Pepper Peterson Oldziej

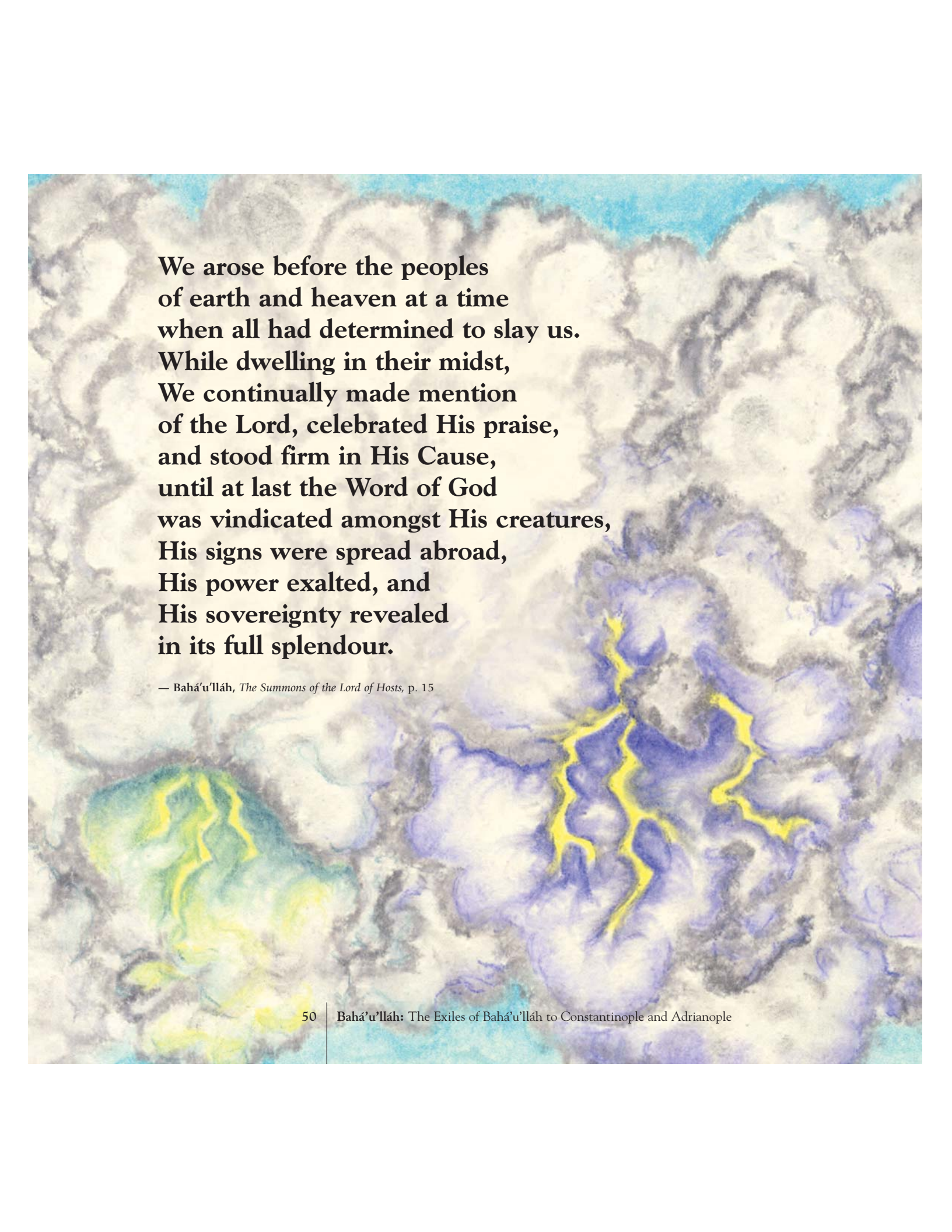
Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-2886  
Copyright © 2003 by the National Spiritual Assembly  
of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America  
All rights reserved  
Published 2003  
06 05 04 03 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America

Illustrations: cover © 2002 David S. Ruhe; pp. 35–36 Courtesy of the Audio Visual Department of the Bahá'í World Center, Haifa, Israel; p. 23 Courtesy of the National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois; pp. 21, 32, 33–38, 55, 62–69, 75, 91, 94 Photographs courtesy of Pepper Oldziej; pp. 163, 166–169 © 2003 Pepper Oldziej; p. 136 © 2003 Autumn-Grace Dougherty; pp. 25–28 © 2002 Ed Phillips; pp. 10–15, 96–101 © 2003 Cam Herth; pp. 4, 56–61 © 2003 Carrie Kneisler; pp. 2, 6–9, 90, 92–93, 122–128 © 2003 Carla Trimble; pp. 1, 5, 44–54 © 2003 Beth Farkas; pp. 71–74, 137–140, 157–162 © 2003 Cindy Pacileo; pp. 70, 156 © 2003 Carl Cordini; pp. 107–112, 129, 141–146, 164–165 © 2003 Winifred Barnum Newman; pp. 113–117, 148–151 © 2003 Barbara Trauger; pp. 147, 152–155 © 2003 Omid Nolley and Majid Nolley; pp. 84–87, 89 © 2003 Leona Hosack, pp. 95, 102–106 © 2003 Jeanine Hunt. The illustrations appearing on pp. 109–110 include images reprinted with permission from *Children's Stories from the Dawn-Breakers* (Wilmette, IL: Bellwood Press, 2000), pp. 77 and 83. All other illustrations © 2003 National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States.

**Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education • Stories**  
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

  
**Bahá'í Publishing Trust**  
Wilmette, Illinois



**We arose before the peoples  
of earth and heaven at a time  
when all had determined to slay us.  
While dwelling in their midst,  
We continually made mention  
of the Lord, celebrated His praise,  
and stood firm in His Cause,  
until at last the Word of God  
was vindicated amongst His creatures,  
His signs were spread abroad,  
His power exalted, and  
His sovereignty revealed  
in its full splendour.**

— Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 15




# Accepting the Challenge

*Written by Jean Gould  
Illustrated by Beth Fleming*

For years Bahá'u'lláh had been watching over his half-brother, Mírzá Yaḥyá, who used his words and behavior to hurt Bahá'u'lláh, the Holy Family, and many others. Bahá'u'lláh had shown him every kindness, showered upon him every consideration, prayed at every turn for him to have a change of heart. In Baghdád, Bahá'u'lláh had walked away into the wilderness, leaving Mírzá Yaḥyá in the care of His own family for two years. This was Mírzá Yaḥyá's chance to prove his worth as the successor to the Báb, as he claimed he was. Not once did he prove himself capable of the leadership he craved.

Earlier in Adrianople, Mírzá Yaḥyá had become inflamed by Bahá'u'lláh's growing prestige and authority, and he had nearly managed to murder his Brother with poison. Worse, the poison of Mírzá Yaḥyá's lies and bad behavior infected every day of Bahá'u'lláh's life. These lies kept the believers in constant doubt and confusion. Such confusion was about to end, however.

One day in September 1867, as the small company of believers went about their business in Adrianople, Mír Muḥammad-i-Mukárí from Shíráz rode into town. He was a caravan driver, uneducated, but possessing a wonderfully logical mind. He was also wise and courageous. He had come to Adrianople to discover the truth for himself. Was Mírzá Yaḥyá the true leader of the Bábís as he claimed, or was he not? He resented Mírzá Yaḥyá's repeated and cowardly attempts to seclude himself from the Bahá'ís. Why did he not show himself to the people he was supposed to be leading?



In his search for the truth, Mír Muḥammad moved freely among the companions of Bahá'u'lláh as well as those who surrounded the half-brother. He heard the words of Siyyid Muḥammad, the one Bahá'u'lláh called the Antichrist of the Bahá'í Faith. Siyyid Muḥammad had challenged Bahá'u'lláh to a confrontation with Mírzá Yaḥyá in a public place. It was to be, he said, a confrontation to banish falsehood, once and for all, before God and man.

Mír Muḥammad, a courageous man, believed this to be a wonderful idea. Persistent and firm, he forced Siyyid Muḥammad to name a time and place.

Siyyid Muḥammad and Mírzá Yaḥyá felt wonderfully secure. Bahá'u'lláh, they were certain, would never agree to anything so public, so disagreeable. They named the mosque of Sulṭán Salím as the place of confrontation, thinking that He wouldn't come.

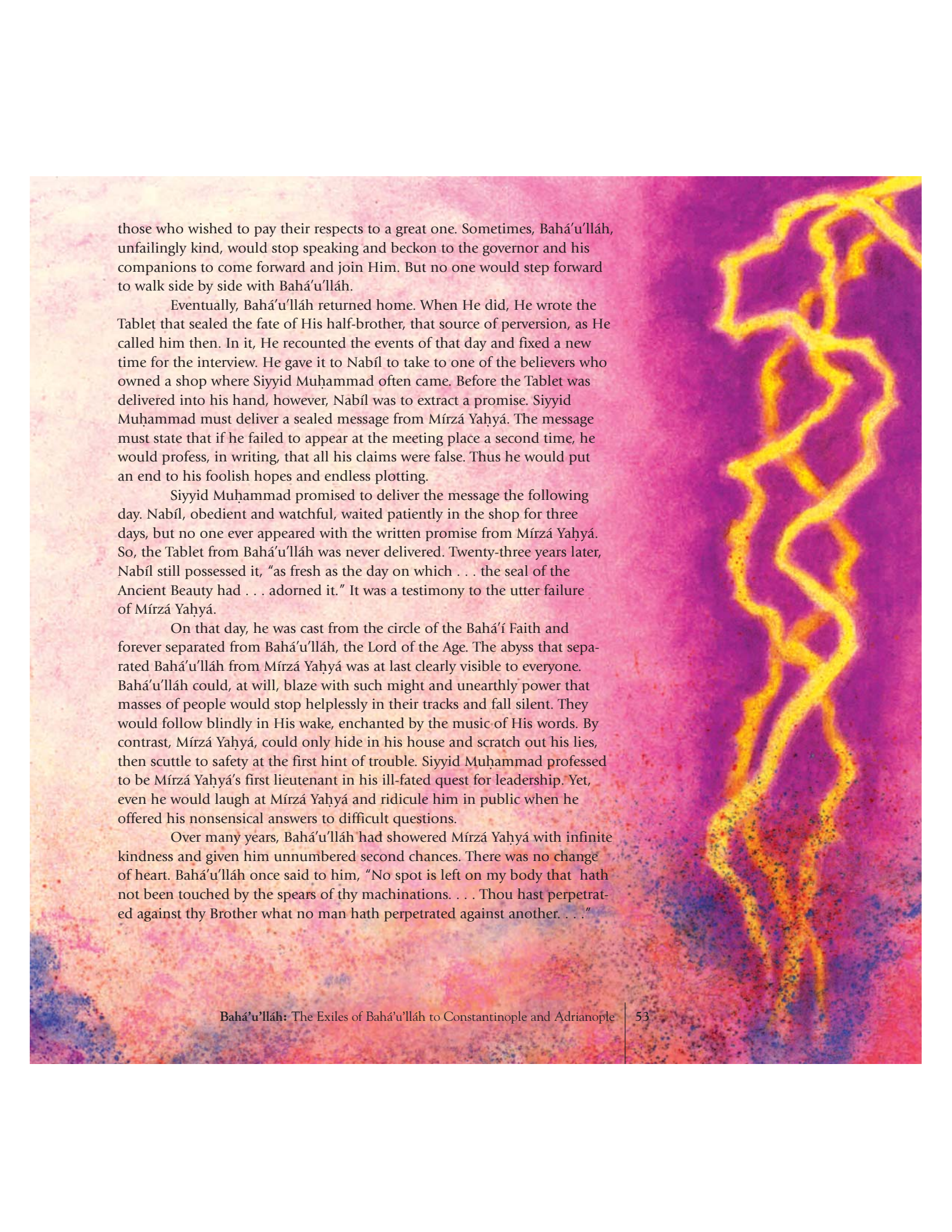
In fact, the second He heard of it, Bahá'u'lláh set out immediately to meet His challenger. He stepped from His door, blazing with energy, shimmering with an inner light. There, He was greeted by the people of Adrianople who had also heard the news. They sensed that something remarkable was about to happen. At the sight of Bahá'u'lláh, they bowed and fell to the ground. They kissed His feet, then made way to let Him pass. Bahá'u'lláh raised His hands before them and uttered these mighty words:

"O Muḥammad! He Who is the Spirit hath, verily, issued from His habitation. Were all the divines, all the wise men, all the kings and rulers on earth to gather together, I, in very truth, would confront them, and would proclaim the verses of God . . . I am He Who feareth no one . . ."

He continued on His way, uttering many such words. They found the mosque of Sulṭán Salím full of people at the hour of prayer, and the divine was mid-speech. At the sight of Bahá'u'lláh, his speech faltered and stopped. Into the silence, Bahá'u'lláh's words flowed. One Persian man trembled uncontrollably, while tears streamed from his eyes. Then, finished for the moment, Bahá'u'lláh took His seat. The people continued to be silent, however. They were unable to will themselves to resume until Bahá'u'lláh gave His permission for the service to continue. All the while, they waited for the challenger, who never came.

The worship service ended late in the day. Word came that Mírzá Yaḥyá was seemingly ill. He must, regretfully, come another day.

Bahá'u'lláh rose and left the mosque. Mír Muḥammad, the caravan driver, followed, along with the governor of Adrianople, other dignitaries, and the divines. They walked four or five steps behind Him, as was the custom of



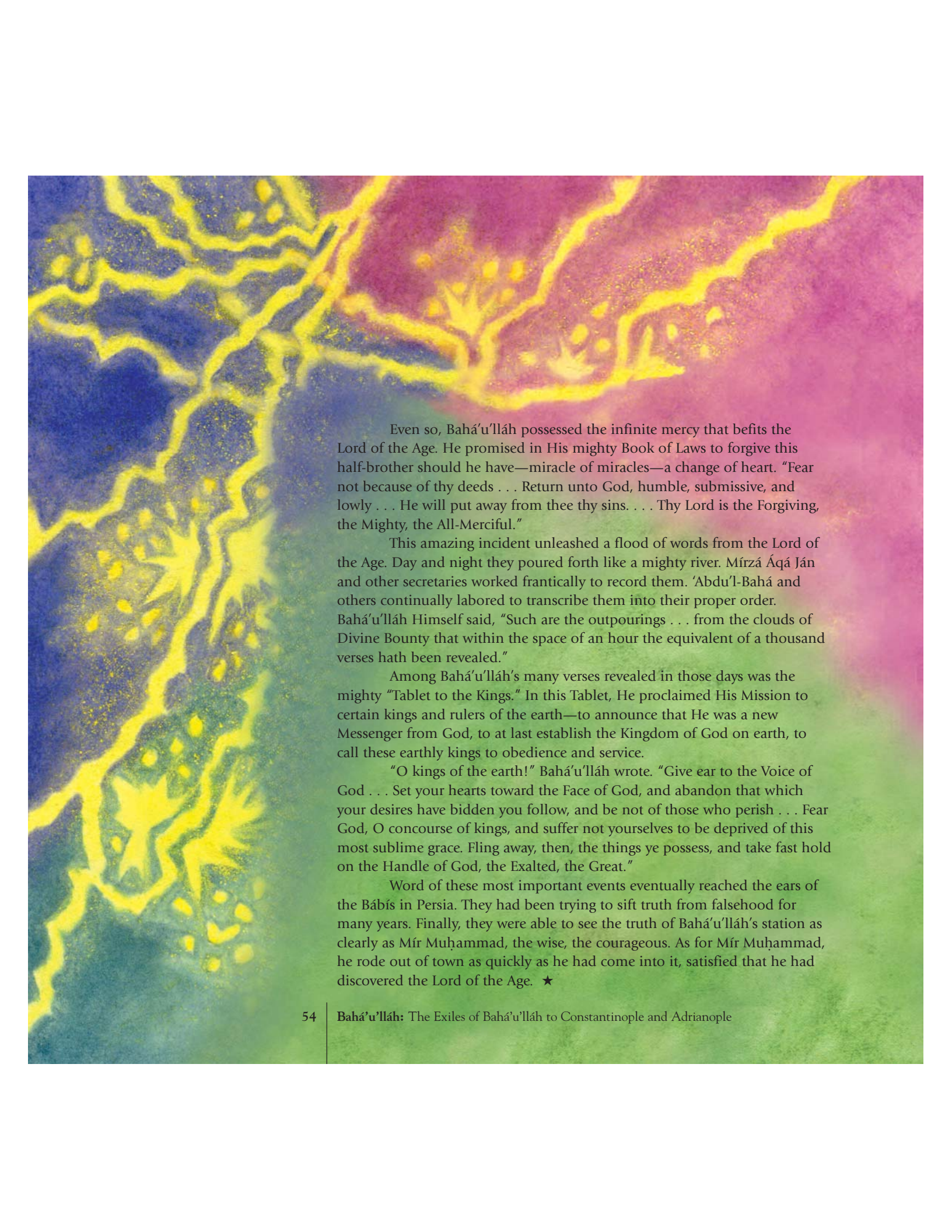
those who wished to pay their respects to a great one. Sometimes, Bahá'u'lláh, unfailingly kind, would stop speaking and beckon to the governor and his companions to come forward and join Him. But no one would step forward to walk side by side with Bahá'u'lláh.

Eventually, Bahá'u'lláh returned home. When He did, He wrote the Tablet that sealed the fate of His half-brother, that source of perversion, as He called him then. In it, He recounted the events of that day and fixed a new time for the interview. He gave it to Nabíl to take to one of the believers who owned a shop where Siyyid Muḥammad often came. Before the Tablet was delivered into his hand, however, Nabíl was to extract a promise. Siyyid Muḥammad must deliver a sealed message from Mírzá Yaḥyá. The message must state that if he failed to appear at the meeting place a second time, he would profess, in writing, that all his claims were false. Thus he would put an end to his foolish hopes and endless plotting.

Siyyid Muḥammad promised to deliver the message the following day. Nabíl, obedient and watchful, waited patiently in the shop for three days, but no one ever appeared with the written promise from Mírzá Yaḥyá. So, the Tablet from Bahá'u'lláh was never delivered. Twenty-three years later, Nabíl still possessed it, "as fresh as the day on which . . . the seal of the Ancient Beauty had . . . adorned it." It was a testimony to the utter failure of Mírzá Yaḥyá.

On that day, he was cast from the circle of the Bahá'í Faith and forever separated from Bahá'u'lláh, the Lord of the Age. The abyss that separated Bahá'u'lláh from Mírzá Yaḥyá was at last clearly visible to everyone. Bahá'u'lláh could, at will, blaze with such might and unearthly power that masses of people would stop helplessly in their tracks and fall silent. They would follow blindly in His wake, enchanted by the music of His words. By contrast, Mírzá Yaḥyá, could only hide in his house and scratch out his lies, then scuttle to safety at the first hint of trouble. Siyyid Muḥammad professed to be Mírzá Yaḥyá's first lieutenant in his ill-fated quest for leadership. Yet, even he would laugh at Mírzá Yaḥyá and ridicule him in public when he offered his nonsensical answers to difficult questions.

Over many years, Bahá'u'lláh had showered Mírzá Yaḥyá with infinite kindness and given him unnumbered second chances. There was no change of heart. Bahá'u'lláh once said to him, "No spot is left on my body that hath not been touched by the spears of thy machinations. . . . Thou hast perpetrated against thy Brother what no man hath perpetrated against another. . . ."



Even so, Bahá'u'lláh possessed the infinite mercy that befits the Lord of the Age. He promised in His mighty Book of Laws to forgive this half-brother should he have—miracle of miracles—a change of heart. “Fear not because of thy deeds . . . Return unto God, humble, submissive, and lowly . . . He will put away from thee thy sins. . . . Thy Lord is the Forgiving, the Mighty, the All-Merciful.”

This amazing incident unleashed a flood of words from the Lord of the Age. Day and night they poured forth like a mighty river. Mírzá Áqá Ján and other secretaries worked frantically to record them. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and others continually labored to transcribe them into their proper order. Bahá'u'lláh Himself said, “Such are the outpourings . . . from the clouds of Divine Bounty that within the space of an hour the equivalent of a thousand verses hath been revealed.”

Among Bahá'u'lláh's many verses revealed in those days was the mighty “Tablet to the Kings.” In this Tablet, He proclaimed His Mission to certain kings and rulers of the earth—to announce that He was a new Messenger from God, to at last establish the Kingdom of God on earth, to call these earthly kings to obedience and service.

“O kings of the earth!” Bahá'u'lláh wrote. “Give ear to the Voice of God . . . Set your hearts toward the Face of God, and abandon that which your desires have bidden you follow, and be not of those who perish . . . Fear God, O concourse of kings, and suffer not yourselves to be deprived of this most sublime grace. Fling away, then, the things ye possess, and take fast hold on the Handle of God, the Exalted, the Great.”

Word of these most important events eventually reached the ears of the Bábís in Persia. They had been trying to sift truth from falsehood for many years. Finally, they were able to see the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's station as clearly as Mír Muḥammad, the wise, the courageous. As for Mír Muḥammad, he rode out of town as quickly as he had come into it, satisfied that he had discovered the Lord of the Age. ★