

Persecution and Development: The History of the Baha'i Community of Māhfurūzak in Mazandaran, Iran

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Abstract

The Baha'i Faith was introduced to the village of Mahfuruzak (near Sari in Mazandaran, Iran) when the village chief invited his nephew Mulla `Ali Jan to come to be the religious leader of the village in about 1871. Mulla `Ali Jan had already become a Baha'i while studying and now gradually started to spread the new religion among the people of the village. Eventually the whole village became Baha'is as did many from surrounding villages. Mulla `Ali and his wife `Alaviyyih Khanum also began the social and economic development of the village. The progress made attracted the enmity of the Muslim clerics of the area who sent false reports to the government, resulting in an attack on the village and the arrest and execution of Mulla `Ali Jan. Despite this, `Alaviyyih Khanum continued the development of the village as well as travelling to spread the Baha'i Faith. The traditional school that had been set up in the village was transformed into a modern school. Persecution of the Baha'i community resumed during and after the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

Keywords

Mahfuruzak
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Mahfuruzak is a village near Sari in Mazandaran. It is situated 10 kilometres south-west of Sari and 1 kilometre south of the road from Sari to `Aliyabad. Its population was 560 in 1951. Rice, cotton and sugar-cane were the main crops of this area. The women wove silk and linen. Although many of the Baha'i communities in Mazandaran date from the time of the Bab and the presence in Mazandaran of Quddus and many of the Letters of the Living, the Baha'i history of Mahfuruzak dates from the time of Baha'u'llah. No complete history has been written of the Baha'i community of the village but small amounts of information can be found in various sources.

The founder of the Baha'i community and its leading member for many years was Mulla `Ali Jan (1262/1846–82). He was born in the village of Rabkandih (10 kilometres south of Mahfuruzak) and was orphaned at the age of six. His mother's brother Aqa Mirza Aqa Jan, the *kad-khudā* (chief) of Mahfuruzak looked after him from that time on and paid for him to go to Barfurush and receive a religious education at the Madrasah Sulayman Khan in Sari and the Madrasah Mirza Zaki in Barfurush, where he achieved the rank of *mujtahid*. While he was in Barfurush, he was introduced to the Baha'i Faith by Ustad Muhammad Kulāhdūz and after meeting the Baha'i teachers (*muballighs*) Aqa Jamal Burujirdi and Aqa Sayyid Riḍā Shāhmīrzādī became a Baha'i in 1284 (1867). On completion of his studies, he went to

the village of Surkhrūd, but after a year, in 1288 (1871), his uncle summoned him to Mahfurzak and installed him as the religious leader of the village.

At first Mulla `Ali Jan concentrated on teaching the inhabitants of the village true Islam. It was the practice of the women in those regions to remain at home and not to wear any Islamic head-covering. He arranged that all of the adults of the village would come to the mosque in the evenings after their day's work, the women sitting with head-coverings behind the men and he would teach them the essential beliefs and practices of their religion. His efforts were so much appreciated that people from surrounding villages began to come also.

After a few years of this, he secretly introduced the Baha'i Faith to Sayyid Aqa Buzurg, who was his cousin (he had succeeded his father as *kad-khuda* of the village) and whom he judged to be the most ready to hear this. This man soon became a Baha'i and brought in his family. Mulla `Ali Jan married Sayyid Aqa Buzurg's sister `Alaviyyih Khanum (this had been her father's dying wish). After this, Mulla `Ali Jan began to refer to the fulfilment of prophecy in his preaching and eventually announced his adherence to the Baha'i Faith. The whole of the village converted, some immediately and some after a time, their numbers reaching 400.¹

Mulla `Ali Jan had established a reputation for piety and uprightness throughout the whole area in which Mahfurzak is situated and many from surrounding villages used to attend his sermons. Thus when he openly announced from the pulpit his adherence to the Baha'i Faith, this led to the establishment of Baha'i communities in near-by villages that lie just to the south of the road from Sari to `Aliyabad, in particular Būr-Khayl Aratih, Chalih-Zamin and Kafshgar-Kala.² In all he was responsible for the conversion of some 1,500 in the area.³

Mulla `Ali Jan was also responsible for the introduction of the Baha'i Faith to more distant villages. Ivil is a small remote village situated in the jungle-covered mountains of Mazandaran in the Chahar-Dangih area of Hizārjarīb (12 kilometres east of Kiyāsar, 90 kilometres south-east of Sari, 45 kilometres west of Damghan; population 500 in 1951). Mulla Husayn `Ali (1831–1911), who was from a clerical family in this village, had attended the Madrasah Sulayman Khan in Sari and been a fellow student and roommate of Mulla `Ali Jan. He had returned to his village and established himself as a cleric and he became famous as a *rawdih-khān* (reciter of the sufferings of the Imams) on account of his good voice, even performing in front of Nasiru'd-Din Shah and earning the title Bulbul adh-Dhākīrīn (the nightingale of the reciters). When he heard that his friend Mulla `Ali Jan had become a Baha'i, Mulla Husayn `Ali set off for Mahfurzak hoping to change his friend's mind but what he heard set him thinking. A short time later, Mulla `Ali Jan visited the village, completing the conversion of Mulla Husayn `Ali and bringing copies of the Baha'i scriptures with him. Mulla Husayn `Ali first converted his wife Zībā'iyih and family as well as his sister Umm Layli.⁴ Gradually, about half of the villagers became Baha'is and this process was assisted by a return visit from Mulla `Ali Jan.⁵ Close to Ivil is Kalkinār (5 kilometres south-east of Ivil; pop. 1,200 in 1951). Shaykh Hasan Kalkinārī (d. c.1300/1882) went for studies to the shrine cities of Iraq, where he met Baha'u'llah and became a Babi. He wrote to his two sisters, Āminih and Şanam, that the True One had appeared and that they should make

enquiries from Mulla Husayn `Ali Ivili or Mulla `Ali Jan Mahfuruzaki. These two women set off for Ivil accompanied by the latter's husband Mirza Gul. Mulla Husayn `Ali was, however, cautious and did not reveal to them the full truth. Consequently they travelled to Mahfuruzak and were converted by Mulla `Ali Jan. They returned and told their family of this, showing them Shaykh Hasan's letter. Some fifty people became Baha'is.⁶ Mulla `Ali Jan was even partly responsible for the establishment of the Baha'i community in the town of Sari itself. Among the first converts of this town was Shaykh Hadi Afrāpulī (d. 1316/1898), one of the clerics of the town who had been a fellow student of Mulla `Ali Jan. When news of Mulla `Ali Jan's conversion spread, Shaykh Hadi volunteered to go to Mahfuruzak and investigate. This trip resulted in his conversion.⁷

Social and Economic Development

Mulla `Ali Jan and `Alavaiyyih Khanum began to try to develop the social and spiritual life of the village. Apart from organizing prayers and religious classes, they set up two schools, one for boys and one for girls; they organized a buying and selling co-operative so that the people of the village could obtain better prices for the agricultural and other items that they produced; they arranged for some of the people to learn crafts so as to make the village more self-sufficient; and they also purchased cotton which the people of the village would clean and card and sell direct to Russian and Armenian merchants who exported it to Russia. Haji Mirza Haydar `Ali Isfahani spent several months in this area and records that:

In Mazandaran, in particular outside the cities, the houses have no enclosure or wall around them. The women do not cover themselves and the men do not wear clean and tidy clothes. They know no work or craft except planting rice, tending animals and gathering firewood. The late [Mulla `Ali Jan] had established a number of practices: that their houses should have walls and doors; that the women cover themselves; that each person should have a way of earning a living in addition to farming; that in every house, an area be set aside for prayer and worship of God and this area be carpeted and kept clean; that only after completing their morning devotions, should they put on their working clothes for farming; that in the evening they should again put on clean clothes and either individually or together go to their prayer area and say some prayers and recite scripture. After their dinner, they would gather together in the evenings and have talks on the Baha'i teachings. Each night, the place and speaker who would teach them would have previously been arranged. Rude and coarse language was forbidden ... The people of the village were so well trained and educated that, although they were well-known to be Baha'is, and all of the clerics of the area were their enemies, yet no one could find or attach any fault or blame to any of their actions.⁸

From this it can be seen that Mulla `Ali Jan helped the villagers to develop with regard to their morals and spiritual well-being, their education and literacy, their health and hygiene, their agricultural practices and their wealth and prosperity. He had also tried to avoid criticism from the clerics of the area by adopting stricter Islamic standards than was customary among the villages of Mazandaran.⁹

One of the most important initiatives of Mulla `Ali Jan was to teach the children of the village. Mulla `Ali Jan had taught his own wife and the three children of his wife's brother so that they could write the Baha'i scriptures in a good hand, could read them and understand and explain them. Then they established a school (*maktab*) for both boys and girls in the village. The following account from Fadil Mazandarani surveys these and other changes:

He [Mulla `Ali Jan] educated and guided all in the principles and practices of the Baha'i Faith and in elevated morals and the highest standards of behaviour such that the Baha'i in this village [Mahfuruzak], with respect to their cleanliness, their behaviour and their clothing, both men and women, and with regard to the degree of unity and mutual assistance that they achieved, and in the development of their agriculture and farming practices, they surpassed the people of the other villages and the village flourished and its people became wealthy. He established schools (*maktabs*) for the education of both boys and girls. He instructed that they should build their houses high, and in a dignified and decorous style. In each house, they had a clean room specially for worship and every morning and evening, they would engage in worship and prayer and in the recital of tablets and verses. They would hold gatherings and spiritual feasts in their homes with the utmost order, good behaviour and reverence.

They did not have recourse to the gatherings of the clerics and or to the courts of governors or influential people for resolving disputes and litigation [as was the custom]. They occupied themselves with agriculture, the cultivation of cotton and trade in a co-operative manner. And by selling their cotton directly to Russian, Armenian and Iranian merchants they became wealthy and no one from among them remained poor. On account of the continuous exhortations, advice and warnings that Mulla `Ali Jan gave, no dishonesty occurred in their dealings and trade. All of the affairs of the village proceeded on the basis of order, success and prosperity.

It was not long before a number of the men and women, in particular his own wife `Alaviyyih Khanum, acquired knowledge and capacity and could compose well and in an excellent script, with eloquence, correctness of grammar, intelligence and an awareness of the different religions.¹⁰

In addition it appears that Mulla `Ali Jan had changed the customary building of the houses of the village from wood and straw with no walls around the property to buildings of sun-baked brick and mud surrounded by walls.¹¹ There is also an account of how Mulla `Ali Jan dealt with some troublesome members of the community:

... And in this way, they [the Baha'is of Mahfuruzak] became known among the people for their uprightness, good conduct, friendliness, hard work, and fair dealing and became wealthy and propertied and powerful. But some became envious and, since greed, waywardness and selfishness exists in people, they cheated with regard to the cotton. They hid bad cotton in with the good cotton. And so despite the fact that he would advise and exhort them and would talk of the benefits and advisability of truthfulness and trustworthiness and the harm and loss ... of acting otherwise; despite all this, some would

cheat. And he, with his astuteness knew this and charged some trustworthy and fair person ... to secretly assess the matter and let him know. And so two or three times it occurred that he found out that someone was cheating and that it would become a source of disgrace for all and so he sent and bought the cotton with his own money. He ordered that all of it be taken out into the countryside and there, without the knowledge of the original owner and without anyone finding out who had adulterated the cotton, he had the cotton burned and then had it announced that it was adulterated cotton. I do not know the amount he paid in this way but it must have been 300 or 400 *tumans*, and he was not a wealthy man.

This selfless and prudent action had the following results: first, it caused the cheater to be dismayed and to regret his actions; second, it taught people to be forbearing and forgiving of the sins of others and not to defame and disgrace others; third, it showed them piety and temperance; fourth, it demonstrated and made clear that betrayal is like dry firewood and fit only for the fire; fifth, it showed that faith, certitude and detachment must be demonstrated by deeds and actions; sixth, it made people understand that a human being sacrifices personal benefit for the common good; seventh, it was the cause of confidence, gratitude and astonishment among the buyers; and eighth, it was a cause of the approval of the people and their confidence in the spiritual and moral qualities of the Baha'is and shone a light onto a broad and open pathway to salvation and eternal life.¹²

Persecution of the Baha'i Community

Eventually word got out to the clerics in the surrounding area that these developments were occurring in this Baha'i village. They wrote to the government accusing Mulla `Ali Jan of heresy and also of various innovations in customary practice including the fact that he had abandoned the practice of building the walls of the houses in the village with wood and straw and had begun to build with sun-baked bricks. A first investigator was sent from Tehran and he reported back that the accusations were baseless. But the clerics continued to send letters to Tehran and eventually a second investigator, the Amir Divan, was sent. The clerics and enemies of the Baha'is made sure this time to surround him and bribe him so that he would report back the way they wanted.

When, in early 1883, this report reached Kamran Mirza Na'ib as-Saltanih, the son of Nasir ad-Din Shah who was governor of Tehran and Mazandaran, he sent an exaggerated report to his father to the effect that Mulla `Ali Jan, a 'Babi', was building a fort in Mazandaran and gathering people and it would not be long before there was another Babi uprising like Shaykh Tabarsi. As the Shah was leaving for Mashhad, he instructed Kamran Mirza to investigate the matter further. Just at this time, Kamran Mirza had initiated a campaign against the Baha'is of Tehran and the leading clerics of Tehran had issued severe *fatwās* ordering the death of all Baha'is. And so Kamran Mirza sent a new deputy governor Mirza Ibrahim Khan Nuri Saham ud-Dawlih to Mazandaran with orders to kill every Baha'i in the province. On arrival in Sari, Nuri asked Aqa Vali the *kalantar* (mayor) of the town for a list of Baha'is. The latter gave him a long list of Baha'is both in the town and in the villages around Mahfuruzak. One of those present when this list was presented was Mirza Mahdi Kārpardāz, who was a Baha'i. He insisted

that the *kalantar* had only made such a long list in order to settle private scores and to increase his own importance and that it was worthless.¹³ Eventually the governor tore up the list, pretended to be satisfied with what he had heard about the Baha'is and went off to Ashraf (Bihshahr) in the far east of the province. But secretly, he sent Muzaffar Mirza Divan Big, Muhammad Husayn Khan Vazir the son of Mirza Masih, Mirza 'Isa Khan and Aqa Vali Kalantar against Mahfuruzak, supported by 400 soldiers. At first 'Ali Khan Tufangchibashi Nuri was sent into Mahfuruzak pretending to be a travelling Baha'i in order to identify the leading Baha'is, locate where they hid their Baha'i scriptures and gather evidence. Once he had done this, he gave a signal and 400 soldiers led by Rustam Khan attacked Mahfuruzak at dawn on 29 April 1883. The whole village was looted and much destruction wrought. Even trees were burned. Most of the population fled into the jungle but Mulla 'Ali, Aqa Sayid Buzurg his brother-in-law, two other brothers-in-law and four other Baha'is were arrested and taken off to Sari, together with the Baha'i scriptures that had been found. Some others were arrested along the way. In the evening of that day, the governor sent Aqa Vali the above-mentioned *kalantar* of Sari to Mahfuruzak to search for guns. He found none but arrested 'Alaviyyih Khanum and five other women Baha'is and some children, as well as looting and sacking many Baha'i homes.

On the third day of their arrival in Sari, 'Alaviyyih Khanum was brought before Saham ud-Dawlih and questioned. She boldly made a comparison between her position and that of the family of the prophet Muhammad who had also been made captive and brought before the governor of Iraq (after Karbala) and then she asked what crime the children had committed that they had been arrested and brought to Sari. This shamed the governor into letting the women and children return to Mahfuruzak. The male prisoners were brought before Aqa Shaykh Ja'far Turabi, the leading cleric of Sari, but he refused to decree their death. Saham ud-Dawlih sent a report to Kamran Mirza in Tehran who in turn showed this to the Shah. Orders were sent for the prisoners to be transferred to Tehran.

After some 26 days, Mulla 'Ali Jan and the other prisoners were sent to Tehran. So frightened were the authorities of a 'Babi uprising', that a special officer Hamid Khan Sardar was sent from Tehran with weapons from the arsenal to take charge of conveying the prisoners; a guard of 400 soldiers from Sari preceded the prisoners; and 400 cavalry of Larijan under Mirza Ahmad Khan (son of 'Abbās-Qulī Khan Larijani who had been one of the commanders at Shaykh Tabarsi) followed them. After part of the journey, Hamid Khan gained confidence and sent the 400 infantry home. The prisoners arrived on 13 June 1883. Mulla 'Ali Jan was offered freedom and honours if he recanted but he refused. Nasiru'd-Din Shah was away on a trip to Khurasan at this time and so a telegram was sent to him in Damghan. He sent instructions that Mulla 'Ali Jan's fate should be decided by Haji Mulla 'Ali Kani, the senior cleric in Tehran. The latter decreed Mulla 'Ali Jan's death and he was publically executed on 23 Sha'bān 1300/29 June 1883 in the Pāy-Qapūq Square. For two days following the execution, two Baha'i women of Tehran, Susan Baji and Āminih the sister of Haji Akhund, went to the place where the body had been thrown and gave money to the guards so that they would prevent stones being thrown at and other insults being delivered to the

body. Then on the third day, they, together with the wife and mother-in-law of Aqa Shir `Ali Kashi, bribed the guards to allow the body to be removed for burial. The other Baha'is remained in prison and were whipped 50 lashes each week. They were only released after two years in prison, although one of them, Ustad Nuru'llah Salmani, had already died in prison.¹⁴

`Alaviyyih Khānum, however, continued the work that she and her husband had started in the village and went on herself to become a noted travelling Baha'i teacher. She was given the name Ḥāmīdih at her birth in about 1272/1855–6 but was called `Alaviyyih on account of her descent from the Imam `Ali. Far from allowing the death of her husband and shortly afterwards in 1885 of both of her children to deter her, `Alaviyyih Khanum, at the age of 28, took her husband's place as a leader of the Baha'i community and of the village and continued with the reforms that they had made, concentrating especially on children's education. She was at the centre of a circle of women which formed the heart of the community and which included her mother Khurshid Khanum, sisters Zaynab Khatun and Shahrbanu and her sister-in-law Khadijih Khanum. From about 1886, `Alaviyyih also began to travel, at first within Mazandaran, but `Abdu'l-Baha, who gave her the title Amatu'l-Bahā (the maid-servant of Baha), encouraged her to travel further afield and in 1901, she undertook a trip to Khurasan and Ashkhabad. In 1903, while travelling between Khurasan and Yazd, she narrowly escaped death at the hands of a mob who had learned of the persecutions that were going on in Yazd at that time and that they had in their caravan a number of Baha'is.¹⁵ She went on from there to Abadih and also lived in Tehran for a time. In 1910, she was in Rasht for a time. Everywhere that she went, her main concerns were to propagate the Baha'i Faith and to advance the social position of women in the Baha'i community. Accompanying her on her travels was her nephew Mirza `Ali Muhammad.¹⁶ She died in 1921 and the enemies of the Baha'i Faith tried to make difficulties about carrying out the funeral. A local Baha'i notable, Sardār Jalīl (Luṭf-`Ali Khan Kulbādī or Gulbādī, d. 1348/1930 or 1352/1933) arrived and used his influence to settle the situation. In fact Gulbadi purchased ownership of Mahfuruzak to spare the Baha'is of the village from harassment by owners who were unfriendly towards the Baha'i Faith.¹⁷

Later History

After the passing of Baha'u'llah, Jamal Burujirdi came to Mahfuruzak hoping to attract the people of the village to the side of Mirza Muhammad `Ali, who was in rebellion against `Abdu'l-Baha. `Alaviyyih Khanum told him of a dream that she had had of Baha'u'llah coming to Mahfuruzak. When Burujirdi tried to interpret this dream to refer to his own coming to the village, `Alaviyyih Khanum was so disgusted she threw him out of her house.¹⁸

In about February 1912 during the upheavals following the Constitutional Revolution and after the killings of five Baha'is in Sari and one in Bur-Khayl Aratih, a mob seized Aqa Mir Safar, a respected Baha'i of Mahfuruzak, and took him to Aratih where the local supporters of the former shah Muhammad `Ali had their headquarters. They took him before their leader, Asadullah Khan Pahlavan Savadkuhi, who had only a few days before beaten several Baha'is severely and had proclaimed that all the Baha'is should be killed. As soon as Aqa Mir Safar arrived there he was set upon by

a bloodthirsty crowd that had gathered around the ring-leader and beaten until almost dead. A message was sent to his relatives that they could retrieve his half-dead body on payment of a ransom. As his relatives were carrying him away in a litter, however, some in the mob started to say: 'Whoever goes and kills him will earn themselves a place in paradise and will have done a service to Islam.' Whereupon a group set out after him and one of them shot him dead.¹⁹

During the time of `Abdu'l-Baha, a local spiritual assembly was set up in the village and began to administer the affairs of the village. Following on from the traditional *maktab* set up by Mulla `Ali, a modern school was established in the village in 1923 by the local assembly with Aqa `Ali Muhammad, the above-mentioned nephew of `Alaviyyih Khanum, acting as the headmaster (*mudir*). It was set up at first in the grounds of the house of Mulla `Ali and `Alaviyyih Khanum and then moved to another location. The school started with about 20 pupils but grew after children from nearby villages, such as Aratih (5 kilometres away), also attended this school, walking there every day. Aqa Vajīthu'llah Khan Mu'addab Yazdi was asked to come from the school at `Arab Khayl and be the teacher in Mahfuruzak. When he was forced to leave after three years due to illness, he was replaced, after an interval, by a former student of the school Mirza Qasim Iqani. The latter taught for six years and then left which led to the school being closed and the children of the village going without schooling for a time. However from about 1943, Qudsiyyih `Alaviyyān (1918–95), a grand-niece of `Alaviyyih Khanum, undertook to travel from Sari where she was working as a teacher to Mahfuruzak every weekend from Thursday evening to Saturday morning and full-time during the summer holidays in order to make up some of the loss of education for the children of the village. In 1955, when as a result of the Falsafi episode of persecution of the Baha'is, she lost her job, `Alaviyyan moved to the village and began teaching full-time so that all of the children of the village became literate. She also extended her range of activities to include social work, looking after the sick, guiding the youth, and helping the poor. The Baha'i summer schools for the area were held at the house of Mulla `Ali and `Alaviyyān was the supervisor and director of this also.²⁰

After the Islamic Revolution, on 6 June 1983, following a televised speech by Khomeini attacking the Baha'is, a mob began to chase the children, throwing stones at them and chanting 'Bahā'ī, Bahā'ī, Jāsūs-i Imrīkā'ī' (Baha'i, Baha'i, American spy). Then on 16 June, they burned down the house of Mulla `Ali and some five other Baha'i-owned compounds, looting whatever could be carried off and destroying stocks of grain in the process. They announced by loud-speaker that whoever among the Baha'is failed to come to the mosque that night, to renounce the Baha'i Faith and become a Muslim, would be killed or driven out of the village. In the event a number of the leading Baha'is of the village were arrested and imprisoned and the other Baha'is subjected to continuing harassment.²¹

The grandson of Aqa Sayyid Buzurg (`Alaviyyih Khanum's brother), Mr Buzurg `Alaviyan, was born in Mahfuruzak and grew to become a very successful engineer. His firm built numerous important public works projects in Iran and he was highly respected for his integrity and competence. He was executed as a Baha'i in Tehran in June 1981 (1 Tir 1360).²²

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Moojan Momen has published numerous books and papers, including *The Bābi and Bahā'ī Religions, 1844–1944: Some Contemporary Western Accounts* (George Ronald, 1981), *Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (Yale University Press, 1985) and *Understanding Religion* (previously *The Phenomenon of Religion*, Oneworld, 2000).

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Endnotes

1. Hājī Mirza Hāydar `Alī Iṣfahānī, Manuscript biography of Mirzā Abu'l-Faḍl Gulpaygānī (in private collection), 256.
2. There are two villages called Kafshgar-Kala around `Aliyabad. One is situated 8 kilometres north-east of `Aliyabad between Mahfuruzak and Bur-Khayl. The Baha'i Faith was established in this village by Mulla `Ali Jan and other Baha'is from Mahfuruzak. The other is a large village and is sometimes called Kafshgar-Kala Buzurg, situated 2 kilometres west of `Aliyabad, where there was also a Baha'i community.
3. Isfahani, Gulpaygani 271; ZH 6:979.
4. `Alī Aḥmadī, 'Nufūdh va intishār-i Diyanāt Bahā'ī dar Rustā-yi Īvil' (typescript, 1995, in private hands), ch. 2, pp. 17–22.
5. Ahmadi ('Rūstā-yi Īvil', ch. 2, p. 23) writes 'more than half of the village', while Shaqāyiq Īqānī states that 25 out of 60 families were Baha'is, 'Tārīkhchih Madāris Bahā'ī dar Māzandarān' (Thesis, Mu'assisih Ma`ārif `ālī, Iran, 158 BE/1380 AQS/2001) 93.
6. Asadu'llāh Fāḍil Māzandarānī, *Asrār al-āthār* (5 vols. Tehran, Mu'assisih Millī Maṭbū`āt Amrī, 124–9 BE/1967–72) 4:47; Iqani, Madaris 148–9.
7. On the day of the execution of the Mulla `Ali Jan, Shaykh Hadī hurried to Mulla `Ali Jan's home to comfort his family and was declared an infidel by the clerics of the town on account of this, Mazandarani, *Asrar* 4:97–8.
8. Haji Mirza Haydar `Ali Isfahani, *Bihjat uṣ-Ṣudūr*, Hofheim: Bahā'ī-Verlag, 2002, 208.
9. Asadu'llāh Fāḍil Māzandarānī, *Zuhūru'l-Hāqq* (vols. 5 and 6, manuscript in private collection; vol. 8, parts one and two, Tehran: Mu'assisih Millī Maṭbū`āt Amrī, 131–2 BE, hereinafter ZH) 6:980; Isfahani, *Bihjat* 208; Hāj Āqā Muḥammad `Alāqihband Yazdī, 'Tārīkh Mashrūṭiyat' (issued as vol. 2 of the photocopied series of documents from the Iranian National Bahā'ī Archives) 90.
10. ZH 6:980; see also Isfahani, *Bihjat* 208.
11. `Alāqihband, Tarikh 90; Isfahani, *Bihjat* 208.
12. Isfahani, Gulpaygani 274–5.
13. ZH 5:336; `Azīzu'llāh Sulaymānī, *Maṣābīḥ Hidāyat*, 9 vols., Tehran: Mu'assisih Millī Maṭbū`āt Amrī, 104–32 BE/1947–76, 4:516; Ismā`īl Mahjūrī, *Tārīkh Māzandarān*, vol. 2, Sārī: Āthār, 1345/1966, 197.
14. The main source for the life and execution of Mulla `Ali Jan is the account by his widow `Alaviyyih Khanum Mähfuruzakī, dated 16 November 1913, 'Jināb-i Mullā `Ali Jān Mähfurūzakī', *Andalīb* vol. 8, no. 31 (Summer 1989) 55–8; see also Sulaymānī, *Maṣābīḥ* 4:499–537, 9:601; ZH 5:335–45, 6:979–82; Zhālih Riḍā'ī, 'Mähfurūzak, Mähfurūzan: Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i mashāhīr rustā-yi Mähfurūzak', thesis, Mu'assisih Ma`ārif `Āli, Iran, 158 BE/1380 AQS/2001, ii–iii, 7–58; Ismā`īl Mahjūrī, *Tārīkh Māzandarān*, vol. 2, Sārī: Āthār, 1345/1966,

196–8 (this source gives the day of the initial attack on the village as 15 May 1883 and the date of the execution as 28 June 1883); `Alī Asghar Bahā`ī, 'Istintāqiyiyih-yi Tīhrān', undated manuscript in private collection, 110–22 (this source gives 14 May as the day of the attack; it states that only seven Baha'is were sent from Sari to Tehran, gives the date of their arrival in Tehran as 14 June, implies a much smaller escort and gives the date of the execution of Mulla `Ali Jan as being 28 June); Malik-Khusravī, Muḥammad `Alī, *Tarīkh-i Shuhadā-yi Amr*, 3 vols, Tehran: Mu`assisih Millī Matbū`āt Amrī, 130 BE, 3:384–426; Isfahani, Gulpaygani 256–61, 267–9. Badī`ullāh īmānī ('Masjūnūn-i Māzandarān dar Ahd-i Abhā', *Payām-i Bahā`ī*, 307, June 2005, 40–4), states that one of the prisoners, Āqā Zakariyā, was not even a Baha'i and protested this throughout the period of his imprisonment to no avail. ZH (ZH 5:335–45) states that there were ten prisoners, four of whom were not Baha'is but were arrested because they were in the area working in the fields; one of these became a Baha'i during his imprisonment.

15. Moojan Momen, *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, 1844–1944: Some Contemporary Western Accounts*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1980, 396.
16. ZH 6:982–4, 8b:814–7; Rida'i, Mahfuruzak 89–135; Isfahani, Gulpaygani, 267–77; A`zam `Alaviyān, *Bargī az Daftar-i Zindigī-yi Buzurg*, Montreal: privately published, 1991, 60–3 (account by Badī`ullāh Imani); Malik-Khusravi, *Tarikh Shuhada*, 3:410–22; Furūgh Arbāb, *Akhtarān-i Tabān*, vol. 1, 3rd printing, Delhi, 1999, 141–5.
17. ZH 6: 988–9, 8b: 808–9.
18. Rida'i, Mahfuruzak 102.
19. ZH 8b:806–8; Mahjuri, *Tarikh Mazandaran* 2:278.
20. Badī`ullāh Imani, 'Ammih Qudsī', *Payām-i Bahā`ī*, 340, March 2005, 42–8; Īqānī, 'Madāris, 116–19.
21. Imani, 'Ammih Qudsī' 43.
22. `Alaviyan, *Bargī az Daftar* esp. 6–20.