

ticular significance for any one of them, including Yahyá. All are equal and all are to turn toward the Promised One. That message is also evident in the Báb's discussion of the seven stations (in the case of the Persian Bayán, five stations<sup>31</sup>) of the unity of God which embrace all beings.<sup>32</sup> But the most crucial element is that all such titles and names are conditioned upon turning toward the Sun of Truth. Should that cease to be the case, all titles and names are removed from the person and return to the Manifestation.

*The Completion and Maturation of the Bayán*

Mírzá Mihdíy-i-Rashtí's second objection against Bahá'u'lláh concerns the completion and perfection of the Cause of the Bayán. According to the Báb, no new Manifestation ever appears before the completion of the previous dispensation. Mírzá Mihdí argues that it is impossible that the Bayán could attain completion in only nine years: that is too soon. Although he does not elaborate, he has apparently assumed that the completion of the Bayán should take some two thousand years, as implied by reference to the advent of the Promised One in "Mustagháth" (the Time of Invocation, or He Who is invoked).

Once again Bahá'u'lláh delivers His response to this argument with the voice of authority and majesty. He does not directly address the question of Mustagháth since it has not been explicitly posed by Mírzá Mihdí. His arguments, however, are sufficiently general to resolve that problem as well. We must keep in mind Bahá'u'lláh's two foundational answers to the question: first, the Báb has warned that no statement in the Bayán should withhold anyone from recognizing the Promised One; second, the meaning of the Bayán is only known to the Promised One Himself, so none can employ any argument based on the Bayán against Bahá'u'lláh. However, Bahá'u'lláh descends from the foundational discourse and responds to Mírzá Mihdí's argument about the completion of the Bayán as follows.

(a) The question of completion is itself an argument for Bahá'u'lláh's claim. In fact, nothing else is needed to confirm the truth of His authority. Bahá'u'lláh quotes various statements in the Bayán demonstrating that the promised completion of the Bayán took place in the year nine:

Thou hast made mention of the termination of the [Báb's] Dispensation. Harken unto the utterance of the Revealer of the Bayán, may the realities of all things be a sacrifice unto Him, who stateth explicitly, "Ere nine will have elapsed from the inception of this Cause, the realities of the created things will not be made manifest. All that thou hast as yet seen is but the stage from the moist germ until We clothed it with flesh. Be patient until thou beholdest a new creation. Say: Blessed, therefore, be God, the Most Excellent of Makers! I testify that the difference between the 'Qá'im' and the 'Qayyúm' is the number nine, which marketh the period when sanctified souls were consummated and established in their own stations. That is also the difference between 'A'ẓam' and 'Aẓím.'" And in another passage He saith, "Observe the difference between 'Qá'im' and 'Qayyúm,' then in the year nine ye shall attain unto all good." Concerning this He further saith: "This, verily, is the thing We promised thee, ere the moment We answered thy call. Wait thou until nine will have elapsed from the time of the Bayán. Then exclaim: 'Blessed, therefore, be God, the most excellent of Makers!'" O thou who claimest to have seeing eyes and to be an upholder of justice and fairness! Open thou thine eyes to behold how a new creation hath come into being since the year nine and say: "Blessed, therefore, be God, the Most Excellent of Creators." And again, "Hallowed be the Lord, the Most Excellent and the Most Wondrous of Creators." Observe how He hath referred to both the maturation of the people of the Bayán and the superiority of the next Revelation through His explicit and unambiguous reference to the difference between "Qá'im" and "Qayyúm" and "A'ẓam" and "Aẓím." And when the period was consummated and the appointed time ordained by God completed, the Beauty of Nine was revealed with manifest dominion.<sup>33</sup>

This passage contains many important points. First, in the words quoted from the Báb, the Báb affirms—as He does in many other places—that the attainment of the presence of God and of "all good" (both signifying the next revelation in the Báb's terminology) will take place in the year nine. Second, He emphasizes that the completion of the Bayán and of the essences of all beings will be realized in nine years after the revelation of the Báb. Third, He attests to the superiority of the Promised One's revelation over His own by defining Himself as *Qá'im* (Upright) and *Aẓím* (Great), while identifying the Promised

One as *Qayyúm* (Self-Subsistent) and *A'zam* (Most Great). Fourth, even the numerical difference between *A'zam* and *'Aẓím* (and also *Qayyúm* and *Qá'im*) is equal to nine. Fifth, the numerical value of the word *Bahá* is also nine.<sup>34</sup> Obviously, any objection against Bahá'u'lláh based on the question of completion demonstrates a complete misunderstanding of the Bayán.

(b) Bahá'u'lláh argues that the completion of the Bayán is solely dependent on the will of God. It is completed the moment God decrees it to be completed. The completion of all things, Bahá'u'lláh states, is dependent on the assertion and approval of the Point of Truth.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, He asks the reader to reflect on the meaning of the completion of the Bayán. What is it that should become completed? Is it the revealed words of the Bayán? But they are already complete and perfect. Is it the completion of the believers themselves? But the longer the period of the dispensation, the less complete is the faith of the believers. Is it the observance of laws and rituals? But ritualistic acts have normally veiled people from recognizing the Manifestation of God. In short, completion is related to the essence of beings and that is simply contingent on the divine will.<sup>36</sup>

(c) Bahá'u'lláh refers to various statements of the Báb according to which the Promised One possesses unconditional authority to elevate all beings to the station of the Prophet, which is the highest stage of human completion and perfection, by the mere utterance of His unconditional command. For example, He quotes the Báb's statement that were He to make everyone on earth a Prophet, all would be accounted as Prophets in the sight of God.<sup>37</sup>

(d) Furthermore, Bahá'u'lláh gives a philosophical and mystical analysis of the idea of completion. Completion is simply and solely dependent on the will of God because creation is a continuous process. God does not create a being which then continues to exist on its own. On the contrary, everything is at every moment coming into existence and ceasing to exist. Bahá'u'lláh describes this as the continuous reflection of the different names of God, including the names of Life-Giver and Life-Taker. If nothing in the realm of creation is characterized by continuous existence, and everything is always created anew, then



perfection or completion is only a matter of the divine act of creation. It is the will of God to bring into existence any being at any moment in any form He desires. Completion is indeed exclusively a matter of the utterance and command of the Manifestation of God.<sup>38</sup>

(e) Another argument Bahá'u'lláh offers is the Báb's testimony that in His (the Báb's) revelation the period of fifty thousand years—the duration of the Day of Judgment—has been consummated in one hour. Bahá'u'lláh affirms that this is true because it was the will of God to complete fifty thousand years in one hour. The same principle applies to the period of completion of the Bayán and the supposed two thousand years of "Mustagháth."<sup>39</sup> In this regard, the only point emphasized by the Bayán is that the Promised One can appear at any time, and that the date of His revelation is not bound by anything except His own will. For instance, Bahá'u'lláh refers to the Báb's statement that none knows the time of the revelation except God; whenever it appears, all must acknowledge the Point of Truth and render thanks unto God.<sup>40</sup>

(f) An important argument Bahá'u'lláh presents is related to the short time in which the Cause of John the Baptist was completed. Bahá'u'lláh reminds His reader that John is described by the Qur'án as an independent Prophet who was preparing the people for the advent of Jesus. John brought new laws and practices, including fasting and baptism, but his Cause was completed in an extremely short time. Furthermore, Bahá'u'lláh points out the striking similarity between the statements of John the Baptist and the Báb, both of whom were heralds of an imminent Manifestation. John said: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."<sup>41</sup> And the Báb, referring to the advent of the Promised One, said: "Verily the rising of the Sun to its zenith is at hand, and ye are still sleeping!"<sup>42</sup>

Related to the argument of completion is the further objection of Mírzá Mihdí that although the signs of the beginning of the Qá'im's ministry have been fulfilled (even if the people did not recognize them), the signs concerning its later period remain unfulfilled; therefore, he argues, the age of the Qá'im's Cause is not yet completed. Bahá'u'lláh again demonstrates His majesty through His response,

showing that what is assumed to be an objection to His own revelation is actually a proof of its truth. Just as the signs of the beginning of the Qá'im's appearance were fulfilled but people did not recognize them, the other signs have also been fulfilled even though Mírzá Mihdí and others like him have not understood them. Both those signs are equivocal and both need to be interpreted by the Promised One, who alone is capable of understanding their real meanings. Additionally Bahá'u'lláh makes a most interesting point. He reminds His reader that actually the most important sign, frequently mentioned in the holy traditions, regarding the later times of the Qá'im's revelation is none other than the return of Imám Ḥusayn! This was indeed fulfilled through Bahá'u'lláh's own being; His own name is Ḥusayn and He is the return of the Imám as well.<sup>43</sup>

The meaning of *Mustagháth* is explained in various writings of Bahá'u'lláh, one of which discusses the Báb's Tablet of Nineteen Temples. In this tablet, the Báb had created nineteen "Temples," each consisting of eleven lines symbolizing the word *Huva* (He), a reference to God. Different lines are different manifestations and elaborations of the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet, their points, and the numbers one through nine. The Báb derives from each line a particular name of God. Each Temple concludes with the name of God derived from the eleventh line. The nineteen Temples are organized in a hierarchical manner, with the names of God in each Temple numerically higher than the names in the preceding ones. The name that appears at the end of the nineteenth Temple, which is the supreme name of God in the realm of numbers, is *Huva'l-Mustagháth*. This name, the Báb says, represents the word *Mustagháth* (from which it is derived).<sup>44</sup> Bahá'u'lláh explains that the Primal Point created this structure in order to tell the people of the Bayán that the time of *Mus-tagháth* is realized through nineteen years.<sup>45</sup>

### *Yahyá's Names and His Fall*

The other major objection of Mírzá Mihdí-i-Rashtí concerns the attribution of lofty titles to Yahyá Azal, particularly the titles of "Mirror" and "Fruit." Additionally, Mírzá Mihdí claims the station of vice-



of divine creation implies that inheritance itself is a symbol of divine spiritual creation and the Word of God. Bahá'u'lláh is the Inheritance, the Remnant, and the Gift of God to humanity as well as the One who, according to the eternal Covenant, inherits the Báb's authority as the Manifestation of God. According to the writings of the Báb, the Manifestation is the Lord and possessor of all things in heaven and on earth. Similarly, in mystical interpretations of the concept of inheritance, it is only the Manifestation of God who inherits all beings, and Who is Himself the divine Inheritance and Remnant.

The complex symbolism of the inheritance mathematics can be understood by paying attention to the last part of the Báb's statement in the Arabic Bayán in which He refers to "Him Whom God shall make manifest in the Day of Resurrection shedding the splendours of God's Revelation upon all letters through the number of Há'." Here the Báb relates the inheritance law to the Nineteen Temples, which He has named His second proof (after the revelation of verses). He has stated that all spiritual truth is hidden in these temples, which end with the name of the Promised One as *Huva'l-Mustaghíth*.<sup>18</sup> Bahá'u'lláh has said that these refer to the maturation and completion of all beings in nineteen years and the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh at Ridván. The interesting point is that the inheritance numbers correspond exactly to the numbers of the fifth temple (the number of Há').<sup>19</sup> The Báb says that it was the fifth temple that God created first and that the law of inheritance contains within itself all the secrets of divine mysteries.<sup>20</sup> We can see that the inheritance numbers signify the exalted station of Bahá'u'lláh as the Most Great Name, who is symbolized by nine and appears publicly in the year nineteen.<sup>21</sup>

We can see that in the Báb's inheritance formulation everything refers to the Promised One. And the very concept of inheritance itself refers to the Remnant of God and the return of the Báb, as the supreme gift of God to humanity. According to the Báb, since the Manifestation of God is the supreme purpose of creation, whoever is deprived of the recognition of the Manifestation is deprived of the divine inheritance. It is in this symbolic context that, for the Báb, inheritance as a symbolic category applies only to believers.