



AFNĀN

AFNĀN (“twigs” or “branches”), term used in the Baha’i faith (initially by Bahā’allāh) to designate certain lines of descent in the maternal family of the **Bāb**. The Bāb married **Ḳadija Begom**, his mother’s paternal cousin, and the **Afnān** are the siblings of his mother and his wife, together with all their descendants. The family members have no administrative functions or privileges and their designation is purely honorary. The following are brief notes on some of the most important of them:

1. **Ḳadija Begom** (1226-99/1811-82), wife of the Bāb and the first of the **Afnān** to become a believer in him. For many years she was isolated in her belief and under much pressure.
2. **Ḥājjī Sayyed ‘Alī, Ḳāl-e A’zam** (1212-66/1797-1850). He was responsible for the upbringing of the Bāb, whose father died early. He and **Ḳadija Begom** were the only two members of the **Afnān** to believe in the Bāb during his lifetime. He died as one of the “seven martyrs” of Tehran.
3. **Āqā Mīrzā Āqā, Nūr-al-dīn** (1258-1321/1842-1903), related to both the Bāb’s maternal and paternal family. He was the next **Afnān** to become a believer in the Bāb (through **Ḳadija Begom**). In 1296/1879, he moved to Port Said, where he set up a trading house. ‘Abd-al-Bahā’ made him responsible for the restoration of the house of the Bāb in Shiraz, and its custodianship was made hereditary in his family.
4. **Ḥājjī Sayyed Moḥammad, Ḳāl-e Akbar** (1210-93/1795-1876). He was persuaded by **Āqā Mīrzā Āqā** to go to Baghdad in 1278/1861 and meet Bahā’allāh, who wrote the *Ketāb-e īqān* in answer to his questions. After this he became a believer in the Bāb and Bahā’allāh.
5. **Ḥājjī Mīrzā Moḥammad ‘Alī** (1240-1313/1824-96), a successful and wealthy



merchant, whose trading activities took him as far as Bombay and Shanghai. In ‘Ešqābād (Ashkhabad) he purchased lands and endowments for the [Mašreq al-Aḍkār](#) there. 6. Ḥājjī Mīrzā Moḥammad Taqī, Wakīl-al-dawla, Wakīl-al-Ḥaqq (1246-1330/1830-1912), a successful merchant in Yazd for many years. He then moved to ‘Ešqābād where he devoted his wealth and energies to the building of the Mašreq al-Aḍkār there. He died in Haifa. 7. ‘Alī-Moḥammad Khan Mowaqqar-al-dawla (1282-1339/1865-1921), consul-general, Bombay, 1898; Foreign Ministry agent in Fārs, 1900; governor of Būšehr, 1911-1915; minister of public works, trade and agriculture, 1921. 8. Hasan Mowaqqar Balyuzi (1908-1980), chairman of the British National Spiritual Assembly (Maḥfel-e Rawḥānī-e Mellī), 1937-1960; appointed Hand of the Cause ([Ayādī-ye Amr Allāh](#)) by Shoghi Effendi, 1957; important Baha’i historian and author of several works, including translations of English literature into Persian.

Both the maternal and paternal families of the Bāb were Ḥosaynī Sayyeds of Shiraz. The paternal family (who are not regarded as Afnān) included the preeminent *mojtahed* and *marja’ al-taqlid* Mīrzā Ḥasan Šīrāzī (Mīrzā-ye Šīrāzī), whose father was a paternal cousin of the Bāb’s father. In Baha’i terminology, the use of the term Afnān is paralleled by the use of the term Aḡṣān to designate the descendents of Bahā’allāh.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Abu’l Qāsem Afnān’s book on the family of the Bāb (in preparation).

[Table 14](#). Genealogy of the Afnān Family