



DĀRĀBĪ SAYYED YAḤYĀ

DĀRĀBĪ, SAYYED YAḤYĀ (b. Yazd, ca. 1226/1811, d. Neyrīz, 1266/1850), Babi leader usually known as Waḥīd (unique), a title given him by the Bāb. The eldest son of Sayyed Jaʿfar Kašfi Eṣṭah-bānātī, he received a Muslim religious education and, like his father, was associated with the Qajar court (see [DĀRĀBĪ, JAʿFAR](#); Sepehr, p. 121; Eʿteżād-al-Salṭana, p. 74).

In 1261/1846 Waḥīd was asked by Moḥammad Shah (1250-64/1834-48) and Ḥājī Mīrzā Āqāsī (q.v.) to investigate the claims being put forth by the Bāb (Nicolas, p. 233; Nabīl, pp. 171-72). He arrived in Shiraz in May, and, after three interviews, during the last of which the Bāb wrote his commentary on the koranic sura 108 (al-Kawṭar), he became a follower (Māzandarānī, pp. 465, 471-72; MacEoin, p. 71; Nabīl, pp. 174-76; Browne, pp. 111-13, 209). Two short essays in which Waḥīd described this encounter have been published (Māzandarānī, pp. 471-77; MacEoin, p. 117). Subsequently Waḥīd traveled extensively to preach [Babism](#), visiting Borūjerd to tell his father of the new faith; Isfahan; Ardestān; Tehran, where he stayed with Mīrzā Ḥosayn-ʿAlī Bahāʾ-Allāh (q.v.); Khorasan; Qazvīn, where he remained some months with his sister; Shiraz; and Yazd (Māzandarānī, pp. 465-70). In the winter of 1264/1847-48 he again visited the Bāb, who had been moved to Mākū (Māzandarānī, p. 468).

In 1265/1849, when news of the fighting between followers of the Bāb and government troops at the shrine of Shaikh Ṭabarsī in Māzandarān (see [BABISM](#)) reached him in Tehran, Waḥīd was determined to go there, but he learned from Bahāʾ-Allāh that the road was blocked by government troops.



Instead he set off to the south, visiting Qom, Kāšān, Isfahan, and Yazd. There is contradictory evidence in the sources about the dates of his final stay in Yazd (Momen, pp. 108-09 and n.), where he succeeded in converting a number of important 'olamā' and notables in the town and surrounding area. His activities were opposed, however, by some 'olamā', as well as by the acting governor, Āqā Khan Īravānī (Nabīl, pp. 466-75).

Waḥīd eventually left Yazd and went to Bavānāt and Eṣṭahbānāt, at each place effecting a number of conversions. In late May 1850 he arrived in Neyrīz (Nīrīz), where his father-in-law was imam of the Čenār-sūkta quarter. Many of the inhabitants of Neyrīz are reported to have come to Eṣṭahbānāt to welcome him to Neyrīz (Nabīl, p. 476). Soon after his arrival in the latter city, however, his preaching of Babism in the Čenār-sūkta mosque aroused opposition. The governor, Ḥājī Zayn-al-Ābedīn Khan, recruited 1,000 local militia to prevent him and his followers from carrying on their activities. As a result the town became divided, the governor and his forces occupying the *bāzār* quarter and Waḥīd and the Babis the Čenār-sūkta quarter and later the nearby fort of Kṽāja. A dawn raid by the Babis routed the governor's forces, and further defeats caused him to withdraw to the village of Qoṭra. He then sent to Shiraz for reinforcements. Mīrzā Fażl-Allāh Naṣīr-al-Molk, acting on behalf of Fīrūz Mīrzā Noṣrat-al-Dawla, governor of Fārs, sent three regiments of infantry, together with cavalry and artillery. These forces were also defeated, in a pitched battle that lasted eight hours (Momen, pp. 109-10; Nabīl, pp. 481-88; Fasā'ī, I, pp. 304-05; tr. Busse, pp. 290-94).

In the end Zayn-al-Ābedīn was forced to resort to a ruse. He sent to Waḥīd a Qur'ān on which he had supposedly sworn to guarantee safe passage for him and his men. When they emerged from the fort, however, they were set upon and killed or captured. Waḥīd himself was captured and put to death on 18 Ša'bān 1266/6 June 1850 (E'tezād-al-Salṭana, pp. 77-78; Nabīl, pp. 488-95; Momen, pp. 110-11; Fasā'ī, I, p. 304; tr. Busse, p. 294). His head and those of some of his followers were sent to Shiraz (Momen, p. 111).



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(MOOJAN MOMEN)