

A brief biography of 'Azizu'llah Sulaymani

-Translated by Adel Shafipour and edited by Robert Stauffer from 'Azizu'llah Sulaymani's biography written by his son, Koumarth Sulaymani, Payam-i Baha'i magazine, No. 99.

'Azízu'lláh Sulaymani was born into a prominent Baha'i family on November 10, 1901 in the village of Kelateh Yazd-Abad next to Sabzevar, in Khurasan. His maternal grandfather was Shatir-Rida, who had traveled to Baghdad and there owned a bakery that provided bread for Baha'u'llah's house. Shatir-Rida was titled Khabbazu'llah or Khabbaz-Ahadih by Baha'u'llah.

'Azízu'lláh's father was a farmer named Sulayman who became a Baha'i at the young age. He had married Shatir-Rida's daughter and later had relocated his family from Ardakan to Jovayn, then to Sabzevar, and finally to Nishabur.

When 'Azízu'lláh Sulaymani was 5 or 6 years old, his family moved to Ishqabad, Turkmenistan, which at the time was one of the most active Baha'i communities where the first Baha'i House of Worship was raised. It was there that the young 'Azizu'llah attended a Baha'i school receiving tuition from eminent Baha'is such as Shaykh Muhammad-'Ali Qa'ini and attended his classes on Durusu'd-Diyanat [Religious Training].

By 14, 'Azízu'lláh decided to leave school in favor of moving to remote town and working in order to aid his family. Later, however, with his brother's help, he returned to Ishqabad. By 18, 'Azízu'lláh owned a publishing and bookbinding shop and emerged from financial constraints with considerable capital. Soon he married, but his wife passed away 3 years later from tuberculosis.

During this time 'Azízu'lláh continued his education. He studied under the tutelage of several knowledgeable Baha'i teachers such as Aqa Siyyid Mihdi Gulpaygani, Mirza Munir Nabilzadiah, Shaykh Hiydar Mu'alim, Shaykh Muhammad-'Ali Qa'ini, Siyyid Abbas Alavi and Sabit Maragh'ih.

After 'Abdu'l-Baha's passing in 1921, when 'Azizu'llah was 20, he traveled to Iran as an itinerant teacher for nearly a year. In his next journey to Iran he accompanied the famed Siyyid Abbas Alavi. They traveled taught in many places for some 19 months.

While in Tehran, he completed an intensive course on the Faith under the instruction of Fadil Shirazi, along with Arabic language and Islamic studies. After this, he returned to Ishqabad where the impact of the October Revolution was evident. He taught in the Baha'i school at that city, but soon he found himself out of the job since the government closed the school. He married for second time, and then moved to Iran.

‘Azízu’lláh found work in Sepah Bank, but found the environment in contrast to Baha’i ethics and therefore left that position. He opened a trading shop with two other Baha’i friends. Shortly after that, the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran hired him to teach and manage an institution of advanced training in Baha’i topics and teacher training, which he conducted for three years.

After that, he always worked and was on the payroll and service to the NSA of Iran, and through this institution’s instructions, he traveled to many cities.

In 1955, ‘Azízu’lláh had the honor of meeting Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Baha’i Faith, who advised him to expand his service and travel to many parts of Iran. By 1961, with the NSA’s approval, he reestablished himself and his family in Tehran, where along with other distinguished scholars, such as, Ishraq-Khavari, Ahmad Yazdani, Siyyid Abbas Alavi, Fadil Tehrani, ‘Ali-Akbar Furutan and others, they founded the Institute for Teacher Training. He also taught at Advanced Institute for Baha’i Studies with Dr. Davoudi, Badiu’llah Farid, and Dr. Muhammad Afnan among others. This Institute was formed in fulfillment of the one of the goals of the Five Year Plan.

‘Azízu’lláh Sulaymani passed away on 24 October 1985 in the city of Gunbad-Kavus, in Mazandaran.

Books and Publications

1. *Mantiq Sulaymani* [Sulaymani Logic]

This book is on ancient Greek logic. It includes 79 lessons and a conclusion in 219 pages. It was published in Tehran in 1957.

2. *Rashabat Hikmat* [Sprinklings of Wisdom]

Published in 1969, this series consist of two volumes in five sections. These monographs describe details of ancient metaphysics (wisdom) and philosophy. Many elements of Baha’i theology are explored in these volumes.

3. *Lughat-Namih* [Arabic and Persian Dictionary]

A small Arabic and Persian dictionary containing many difficult words found in Baha’u’llah’s Lawh Sultan [Tablet to the King of Persia]. This dictionary along with the Tablet was published in 1974 and reprinted in 1984 in India.

4. *A brief Introduction about Baha’i Faith*

This small booklet introduces the Baha’i Faith from its historical aspects, social and spiritual teachings. It was published in Tehran.

5. *Bitter and Sweet Moments* [An Autobiography]

The autobiography traces his life up to 1955 and some additional materials extend it to 1965.

6. *Poems*

Sulaymani had composed poems which are few and remain unpublished. These are in author's hand and shared with his close friends.

7. *Masabih Hidayat* [The Lights of Guidance]

Consisting of 10 volumes, they contain biographies of 99 prominent Baha'is. His Sulaymani's younger days when he traveled throughout Iran, he recorded and collected many documents, manuscripts, and accounts that he heard from early believers. Gradually, he produced these volumes and published them over time. Of the 99 people he wrote about, 98 of them are men, and one of them is a woman, Qudsiah Khanum Ashraf. These 10 volumes make up a total of 5671 pages, in an easy to read style. They are indispensable research in the formative years of the Baha'i Faith. Volumes of 1 through 4 were published twice in Iran, but the other volumes were published once, except volume 10 which had never been published in print (and published electronically for the first time on H-Baha'i). While the biographies appear in order that Sulaymani collected information, when someone had received a Tablet or had composed poetry, he ensured these facts were mentioned.