

Biographies

Shoghi Effendi

Original English



Biographies

In the messages[pg 429] of the Guardian to India, the names of many prominent Bahá'ís are mentioned. The following three biographies are presented to show how members of established families from three dominant religions of India, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islám, were united through their recognition of Bahá'u'lláh.[pg 430]

Hand of the Cause of God Siyyid Muşţafá Rúmí

1845-1944

Siyyid Muşţafá Rumi was descended from a noble and staunchly religious Shi'i family of Karbil, in 'Iráq. As a young man, he settled with his father in Madras, India, to establish and manage the family business in trading rice. In 1876, he met Sulaymán Khán Ilyas, known as Jamál Effendi, who was sent by Bahá'u'lláh to India to teach the Faith.

In his own words, Siyyid Muşţafá was: "...then quite a young man and was just preparing to return to my native country, Karbilá and Baghdád, after having settled my dues in consequence of a heavy loss sustained in the rice business. Jamál Effendi's eloquent address, his silver voice and his flowery language frequently attracted large gatherings around him. This humble servant was one of his ardent admirers. I soon became so devotedly attached to him that I actually approached my father, Siyyid Muḥammad, celebrated as Roumie, for permission to accompany Jamál Effendi to Rampur. My father, who was a very learned Muslim divine and held in great reverence by the Muslim public, did not approve of the proposal and although he did not exactly know that the theme of Jamál Effendi's talk was the Bahá'í Revelation, yet he not only refused permission but even prohibited me from entering his house. I was determined, however, to accompany Jamál Effendi to Ramper and succeeded in doing so."

Siyyid Muşţafá accompanied Jamál Effendi throughout his travels in India, kneeled in reverence at the meetings, and listened to his discourses, although he had not yet accepted the Faith.

They met many prominent people including the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the Maharajas and rulers of various Indian States. It was in Calcutta that as a result of reading the Lawh-i-Ra'is¹ Siyyid Muşţafá's soul finally turned to the light of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

1. Tablet of Ra'is, revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in His early days of incarceration in 'Akká, addressed to 'Alí Páshá the Grand Vazir of Turkey.



ORIGINAL

He recorded:

“This was the time of Russo Turkish war of 1877, and so the main subjects discussed were the events of the war as they appeared in the newspaper reports. In the course of these discussions, Jamál [pg 431] Effendi as often as possible, directed the attention of his audience to various prophecies in the Holy Qur’án and the Tradition of the Prophet, regarding the signs of the appearance of the Promised Redeemer. His marvelous eloquence and his unique method of presenting the subject made a great impression on his audience.

“About this time Jinábí Hájí Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí Afnán and his assistant Agha Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd arrived from Hong Kong, China. They were enroute to Persia via Bombay. The unusual joy expressed by these friends on their sudden and unexpected meeting, the extraordinary warmth and affection manifested as they inquired about each other’s welfare, astonished all who were present at the gathering. The people then began to suspect that Jamál Effendi was a member of the new sect.

“On the following day ...Jamál Effendi requested me to chant the Tablet [Lawh-i-Ra’is] for his two honoured guests...After the chanting of the Holy Tablet was over, the revered guests and Jamál Effendi discussed between themselves the fulfilment of Bahá’u’lláh’s prophecies, His teachings for the upliftment of mankind, His noble ideals raising the standards of morality, and the majesty of His mission, all of which I listened to attentively as if spellbound. At the termination of the discussion, I confessed the truth of Bahá’u’lláh’s claim and decided to dedicate my life to the service of the Divine Cause... Jamál Effendi then in his supplication to the Sacred Threshold submitted my name, and a Holy Tablet was revealed in my behalf, the English translation of which is as follows:

He is the Glorious, the Most Glorious!

O Muṣṭafá!

There hath come before Us a letter from Jamál — him who hath soared in the atmosphere of the love of thy Lord, the All Possessing, the Most High. Thy name was mentioned in this letter; wherefore do We now make mention of thee through the power of truth, that thou mayest read and be of them that are thankful.

Say: O God of the world, Thou Who art manifest in the Most Great Name! I ask Thee by them who are the Essences of being, whom neither the hosts of the world have hindered from turning towards Thy face, nor the kings of the earth deterred from gazing upon Thy horizon, to write down for me with Thy Most Exalted Pen that which beseemeth Thy generosity, O Thou Who art the Possessor of all Names and the Creator of the heavens!

O Lord! I bear witness unto that which Thou didst Thyself witness [pg 432] before the creation of the heavens and the earth; and I confess to that which Thy tongue did itself confess ere the kingdoms of Thy Revelation and of Thy creation were made manifest: that Thou art God; no God is there but Thee. Thou hast from eternity been powerful to do what Thou hast willed, and unto everlasting Thou shalt remain as Thou hast been from time immemorial.

Lord! I have hearkened unto Thy call and turned my face towards Thy face. I ask Thee to draw me ever nearer unto Thy horizon; ordain then for me, O my God, that which shall profit me in every world of Thy worlds. Thou, verily, art the Almighty, the All Highest, the Exalted, the Great. We now make mention of him who hath been named Muṣṭafá that he may yield thanks unto God, the Lord of the Throne above and of the earth below, and that he may be of the steadfast. O Muṣṭafá! Heed thou the call that hath been raised from the direction of this Prison: "Verily, there is none other God but Him, the Almighty, the All Knowing". Blessed art thou for having turned towards Him, and for having attained to that whereby thy name shall live for as long as the Names of Thy Lord, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Bountiful, shall endure. Say: "O My God, and My Master! I ask Thee by Thine own Self to cause me to remain steadfast in Thy Cause. Thou, verily, art the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the Omniscient, the All-Informed."²

Siyyid Muṣṭafá accompanied Jamál Effendi to Rangoon and "after the establishment of the Cause," left for Mandalay early in 1879, at the instruction of Bahá'u'lláh. But his association with Jamál Effendi continued. Several years later, and after extensive travels in South East Asia, he returned to Burma, married into a prominent Burmese family and continued his services to the Faith.

He received several more Tablets from Bahá'u'lláh, in one of which the Pen of Glory addressed him as such:

O Muṣṭafá!

Upon thee be the peace of God, the Possessor of the earth and the Creator of the heavens. Our servant in attendance hath brought thy letter into the presence of this Wronged One, and read it out before Our face. We, verily, have heard it, and made reply thereto in these perspicuous verses — verses that shall draw thee nigh unto God, the Lord of the worlds.[pg 433]

This is a day on which, at every moment, the Crier crieth out: The Kingdom is God's, the Lord of the Day of Reckoning." This is a day on which every steadfast soul hath attained, every ear hath heard, and every eye hath witnessed that which hath shone forth in refulgent splendour above the horizon of the will of God, the Lord of the mighty throne. He, verily, hath desired naught but to sanctify His servants and to purify them from lust and wickedness, from evil and transgression. He, verily, is the most merciful of them that show mercy.

Shouldst thou hear the call raised from the Most Sublime Horizon, and quaff the choice wine of utterance from the bounteous cup of Him Who is the Lord of the Kingdom of Names, then say:

God, My God! I bear witness that Thou didst not create Thy servants save to recognize the Dayspring of Thy signs and the Dawning-place of Thy testimonies; that Thou didst not create their ears save to hearken unto the shrill voice of Thy Pen; that Thou didst not create their eyes save to behold the effulgences of the horizon of Thy Revelation; that Thou didst not create their hands save to take hold of Thy Book with a power deriving from Thy presence and a sovereignty vouchsafed by Thee; that Thou didst not create their hearts save to turn towards the Kaaba of

2. Translation authorized by the Universal House of Justice.

Thy knowledge, Thy glory, and Thy command; and that Thou didst not create their feet save to attain unto Thy Straight Path.

I ask Thee, by the faces that have been stained crimson by the blood spilled in Thy path; by the breasts that have been pierced by the shafts of Thine enemies for the exaltation of Thy Word; and by the souls that have neither been overawed by the ascendancy of the oppressors nor affrighted by the fearsome weapons of destruction arrayed against them by the infidels, but who, in Thy Name, have set themselves towards the Manifestation of Thy Self and who, in their eagerness to meet Thee, have circled around His pleasure, to assist me tinder all conditions to lay fast hold on the cord of Thy Cause, and to arise to serve Thee and to extol Thy Name amongst Thy servants.

O Lord! I am Thy servant and the son of Thy servant and Thy handmaiden. I find myself bewildered by the matchless tokens of Thy Revelation, by the wondrous evidences of Thy dawning forth, and by Thy signs and traces that have encompassed both Thy heaven and Thine earth. I beseech Thee to adorn my head with the crown of detachment, and to bedeck my temple with the robe of humility and lowliness before the revelation of Thy laws and Thy commandments³."

In another[pg 434] Tablet Bahá'u'lláh revealed:

He is the All Knowing, the All Informed!

O Muṣṭafá!

Be thou thankful for that thou hast been remembered by this Wronged One, and that there hath been revealed for thee that which shall abide for as long as earth and heaven shall endure. Consider and call to mind the day on which Muḥammad the Messenger of God appeared with the signs of God, the Help in Peril, the Self Subsisting. Some among the people denied Him, others turned away from Him, yet others mocked Him, and still others rose up against him in such grievous fashion as to sentence Him to death without any clear proof from God, the Lord of all being. Verily, He said: "Fear God, O peoples of the earth! Bear ye witness unto His unity and oneness, and follow not your idle fancies and vain imaginings. Join not partners with God, O people, and worship not that which your own hands have fashioned! Better is this for you, if ye be of them that understand." The more strenuously He admonished them, the greater waxed their enmity and hatred. Thus doth the Pen of the Most High recount unto thee from this Glorious Abode. Be thou steadfast in the Cause, and proclaim this Name through which the traces of Jibt and Taghut have been obliterated. [Names of false deities worshipped in Arabia before the advent of Muḥammad.] The Glory of God be upon thee and upon all those who have quaffed the choice sealed wine from the hands of the bounty of My Name, the Self Subsisting."⁴

The Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, although a great burden on his heart, did not shake Siyyid Muṣṭafá's belief and he remained steadfast in the Covenant. He attained the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. for the first time in 1899 when he formed part of the group carrying the Sarcophagus for

3. Translation authorized by the Universal House of justice.

4. Translation authorized by the Universal House of Justice.

the remains of the Báb, which was donated by the Burmese Bahá'ís, to the Holy Land. This experience together with the abundance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's love, strengthened his allegiance to the Covenant.

Throughout the years 'Abdu'l-Bahá showered His love and guidance on Siyyid Muşţafá. He called him the "Exponent of the Faith" and assured him that although they were not able to communicate often, He remembered him continually in His prayers. In several Tablets the Master encouraged Siyyid Muşţafá to give his all in the Path [pg 435] of Bahá'u'lláh. Although due to fresh persecutions facing 'Abdu'l-Bahá no one except those with long standing permission were allowed to visit the Holy Land, the Master in a Tablet invited Siyyid Muşţafá and told him that this invitation was a "special bounty" and favour.

At the end of his sojourn in the Holy Land 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed these words to him:

"I am saddened at my separation from thee. God willing, we shall meet again some day.... I pray God that in this journey thou wilt raise throughout the lands of India so thrilling and melodious a call as to fill with ecstasy the people of understanding, and to cause their very veins and arteries to throb with rapture."⁵

At the start of World War I, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote Siyyid Muşţafá about the very dangerous situation in the Holy Land and informed him that for some time communication will be cut off, but he should continue his services and not be perturbed.

At the end of the War, the Master wrote again expressing His happiness at the steadfastness of the friends of the Indian subcontinent and encouraged Siyyid Muşţafá. to persevere in his services. The Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had a great effect on Siyyid Muşţafá. He gradually started to leave his business and devote more time to the Faith. At the behest of 'Abdu'l-Bahá he translated Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets which were sent to him by the Master, to refute the allegations of the Qadiyanis, who had started to oppose the Faith in India, specifically in Delhi, Punjab and Lahore.

Siyyid Muşţafá now wanted to give all his time to the service of the Faith and to leave for the Holy Land to serve his beloved Master. 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged him to stay in India and Burma as his presence was of utmost importance for the promotion and protection of the Faith. In a tablet to him 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:

"Praise be to God that the Cause of God is day by day becoming more exalted, and that the extent of my correspondence is becoming ever wider. Previously it was possible to correspond with all the friends, whereas now no more than a single letter can be written to each town; nay, to carry on a wider correspondence would be quite inconceivable. Yet because thou art an old and dearly cherished friend, this reply is being composed immediately upon receipt of thy letter, that thou mayest know how kindly 'Abdu'l-Bahá feeleth [pg 436] towards thee in his heart and soul."⁶

5. Translation authorized by the Universal House of Justice

6. Translation authorized by the Universal House of Justice

'Abdu'l-Bahá continued to shower his love and encouragement upon Siyyid Muşţafá even during His travels in Europe and America. If he was distressed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá assured him that with a friend like Him, he should never feel sad and despondent. If he felt tired and burdened with lack of finances. He told him that every one was a friend in happy and prosperous times, but those like him who tolerated all hardships and remained steadfast were the real and true lovers of Bahá'u'lláh. The Master meanwhile talked to well placed Bahá'ís to arrange some employment for Siyyid Muşţafá, so that he could earn some money and continue his services.

Siyyid Muşţafá, despite his dire financial situation, obeyed the instructions of his beloved Master and undertook extensive travels in India which yielded fruitful results. On one occasion 'Abdu'l-Bahá cabled him 200 Rupees to cover the expenses of his travels. Meanwhile he continued his translations of the Bahá'í Writings into Urdu and Burmese and wrote articles on the Faith.

Siyyid Muşţafá, an erudite Muslim scholar, succeeded in teaching many of the Muslims of Mandalay and Rangoon under the direction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In addition, through his association with the headman of the village of Daidanaw, the whole population of the village accepted the Faith. With financial help from the Bahá'ís of Rangoon, he established a school in Daidanaw and called it the "School of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

In a Tablet addressed to him 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "As regards the Kunjangoon school, this school is extremely important, and hath been inaugurated in the name of this humble servant. It must be run with the utmost order and regularity, and all the friends in India must lend it their support."⁷

Siyyid Muşţafá was a great administrator as well as a great teacher and scholar. As soon as there were enough Bahá'ís in a centre he would organize them into groups and thus lay the foundation for local Assemblies which were formed at a later date.

The Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921 did not shake Siyyid Muşţafá's steadfastness. He became a staunch defender of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá against allegations of the Covenant breakers and transferred the devotion and love he felt for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Faith.[pg 437]

He revered and loved the Guardian and despite his advanced age tried to do everything in his power to bring joy to Shoghi Effendi's heart. As can be gleaned from the Guardian's letters to him, this love was reciprocated: "No words can adequately convey the gratitude I feel in my heart for your continued and inestimable services" "I will ever be reminded of your glorious and exemplary services to the Abhá Revelation," "You have, in the evening of your life, added fresh laurels to the crown of immortal glory which your many services Nave won for you and which the future generations will gratefully and joyfully remember," "You belong to the heroic age of our Beloved Faith an age to which you have richly contributed," "Future generations will glorify and extol your service rendered with such devotion, zeal and love. I feel extremely grateful to you, and am proud of your record of service," "My heart overflows with gratitude for all that you have achieved in His path," and, "You have set an inspiring and unforgettable example to the rising generation. The concourse on high is proud of and extols your splendid achievements. Be happy and confident."

7. Translation authorized by the Universal House of Justice

Several times during World War II, the Guardian sent cables enquiring about the safety of Siyyid Muṣṭafá. Finally the tragic news of his assassination in 1944, at the age of 99, reached the beloved Guardian. A fanatic mob had attacked the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds and martyred Siyyid Muṣṭafá and two other Bahá'ís.

Shoghi Effendi appointed him, posthumously, a Hand of the Cause of God, contributed the cost of erecting a monument on his resting place and called his tomb the "foremost Shrine in Burma." [pg 438]



Naraynrao Ranganath Vakíl

1866-1943

Naraynrao Vakíl was born in the year 1866, in a well-known and prominent Hindu family of Navsari, an important principality of Baroda, which later became known as the state of Gujarat. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the renowned Elphinston College of Bombay in 1908 and later graduated from the School of Law of Bombay University.

It was at Elphinston College in 1909, that Vakíl came in contact with a fellow student, M. R. Ṣhírází, who introduced him to the great Bahá'í teacher Mírzá Mahram. Although Vakíl had been raised as an Orthodox Hindu, he was so attracted to the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh as presented by Mírzá Mahram, that after a short while he declared his faith. He was the first Indian of the Hindu background to accept the Bahá'í Faith.

Almost immediately he started to teach the Faith to his friends and when confronted with difficult questions he brought them to Mírzá Mahram. In 1910, a large conference was held in Alláhabad which included an all India Religious Conference. Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rumi was to represent the Bahá'í Faith at the Conference, which had attracted thousands of people from across the country, but at the last moment he developed a sore throat and could not read his talk. Vakíl replaced him and his address strongly affected the crowd. This was the first of many conferences that Vakíl would attend to represent the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

In 1914, Vakíl had the privilege to be invited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to travel to the Holy Land. During this trip he kept a detailed diary of his meetings with the Master, Who spoke to him through a translator: "From India I have received many letters praising and commending you. Now I see with My own eyes that, praise be to God, those praises and commendations are not on]y fully manifest in you but...you are greater than the picture portrayed in the letters...From our first meeting you have become very dear to Me. Are the members of your caste investigating, searching, or are they satisfied with their old customs?...I hope that when you leave this Holy Spot you will become the cause of their guidance and, God willing, your very breath shall have a great effect on their hearts..."

"Do not look at your own weakness, but look to the confirmations [pg 439] of God...You are a tree planted by the hand of Providence and watered by the vernal rains of Divine bounty...You will

bear luscious fruits from which all the people of India will benefit...Bahá'u'lláh has crowned you with a crown of jewels. You will awaken multitudes.”

During this pilgrimage Vakíl supplicated ‘Abdu'l-Bahá to visit India. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá replied that He would send Vakíl instead, with special spiritual powers. He should show people that he was a Bahá'í, through his conduct. “People must see that you are different from others. Do not become too engaged in your work; devote some of your time to business and some to the Cause.”

On his return to India Vakíl married the girl to whom he had been betrothed since childhood, according to Hindu custom, and started his law practice. He, meanwhile, devoted much of his time to the work of the Cause and made it a habit to always set aside some of his earnings for the promotion of the Faith.

After the ascension of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, Vakíl was drowned in sorrow and despondency. The loving and consistent communications of the Guardian were his sole source of strength. Although he suffered from poor health, the never ending prayers and concern of the Guardian helped to restore his well being and uplift his soul, to be able to render great services to the advancement of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. He had the bounty to be called “Family” by the beloved Guardian. In him the Guardian had a loyal and able friend whom he could trust with many difficult missions.

The Executive Committee of the Bahá'ís of India was elected in 1922 and Vakíl was appointed as its auditor. This Committee was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India at the instruction of the Guardian and Vakíl was elected its Chairman. He occupied this post, except for one year, until his passing.

Many of the letters of Shoghi Effendi to India are addressed to Vakíl and they illustrate the Guardian's constant concern for his health. In 1929, the Guardian welcomed Vakíl and his family, which now included his two daughters, to the Holy Land. On this trip, the love and affection of the Greatest Holy Leaf, and a dream at the Mansion of Bahjí, led Mrs. Vakíl finally to embrace the Faith.

He returned with a revived sense of mission, continued to serve his beloved Guardian and attracted a great number of prominent Hindu personalities to the Cause of God. In 1943, the Bahá'í community of India suffered the loss of its most prominent and dedicated native son, who had been compared by Shoghi Effendi to the martyrs[pg 440] in the path of Bahá'u'lláh



Professor Pritam Singh

1881-1959

Pritam Singh,[pg 441] whose name meant “Lion of the Beloved”, was born on 16 November 1881, in a highly cultured and wealthy Sikh family of Sialkot, Punjab, now a part of Pakistan. His father, Sardar Sahib Chatter Singh, was a judge of the High Court of Lahore and a prominent businessman.

Pritam Singh finished his primary studies in his hometown and obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in History, Economics and Political Science from the University of Lahore in 1904, and his postgraduate degree with honours from the University of Calcutta in 1907. It was in this year that he met Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqani, who, at the behest of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had established his residence in Lahore to teach the Faith. Pritam Singh was so entranced with the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, that he decided to devote most of his time to the promotion of his new-found Cause.

Pritam Singh was fluent in several Indian languages and wrote many articles and books explaining the tenets of the Faith. At the instruction of the Guardian he translated “Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era” into Indian languages.

The letters of the Guardian to him show how Pritam Singh’s services were valued: “I deeply appreciate your outstanding and constant services to our beloved Faith, admire the spirit that animates you, and sympathize with you in your cares and difficulties. I will pray for their removal from the depth of my heart. Rest assured and persevere in your historic and unforgettable services.”

Pritam Singh’s incessant activities in promoting the Faith, particularly among the Sikh community, incited the ire of the priests and caused the opposition of the fanatics, who, at one time, severely beat him and forbade him to talk about the Faith in the Sikh Temples.

He was not dissuaded and in 1927 resigned his post as a lecturer in the University to devote all his time to the service of the Cause. He accompanied international Bahá’í teachers such as Martha Root and Keith Ransom Kehler throughout India, acting as their guide and translator and assisting them in teaching the Faith.

He started a Bahá’í weekly magazine at his own expense, the first Bahá’í periodical in India which was well received by the intellectual society. His articles appeared in publications such as the “World Order,” “Kawkab-i-Hind” and “Payambar.” In 1932 he was appointed by the Guardian as an editor of the “Bahá’í World,” representing India and Burma.

Pritam Singh travelled throughout India, visiting universities and colleges and attending conferences where he could bring the Faith to the attention of the educated circles. He was known to many of the Vice Chancellors and university professors and so could reach the

intellectual strata of the Indian society quite easily and naturally. Shoghi Effendi encouraged Pritam Singh to continue to bring the message of Bahá'u'lláh to the educated people of India.

Pritam Singh's way of life greatly displeased his wealthy and religious family and his father disowned him. In an article in "The Bahá'í World" Vol. XIII, it is recorded that: "His family was embarrassed that with all his brilliant career and bright future, should leave not only his comfortable way of life, but also his hereditary religion. Therefore, they started to place [him] under economic and other pressures. However, when their persuasions flavoured with the promise of a large fortune to be bequeathed to him by his father, failed, they even begged Professor Pritam Singh to remain a Bahá'í if he wanted to, but at least for the sake of the reputation of the family, to give up his public lectures and teaching tours." Pritam Singh did not succumb to the pressures.

Ishfandiyyar Bakhtiyari, a close friend and associate of Pritam Singh recalled: "After the partition of the country into India and Pakistan, some well known individuals who had occupied important positions in Pakistan came over to India. Among them were admirers of Pritam Singh who held him in high regard and came to meet him. One of these was Lala Ishwardas, an ex-judge of the Lahore High Court who had left a lot of property behind in Pakistan and had been given suitable compensation from the Government of India. He lived in a palatial residence in Delhi with his two sons, one of whom was an Ambassador and the other a highly placed government official.

"One day this gentleman came to the Bahá'í Centre where Pritam Singh and I shared a room, and invited Pritam Singh to his house... He returned and told me 'Do you know what Lalaji told me? He said "What is this life that you are leading there along with an Irani in the corner of an office? Anyone can enter your room at anytime and there is no privacy." Then he said as he had a large and commodious house and many servants, he would be glad to give me comfortable accommodation in his house and free board for the rest of [pg 443] my life, if I would only give up the Bahá'í Faith."... I told him do you expect me to undo what I have achieved in a whole lifetime? I am very happy where I am. This corner of an office is very dear to me and I shall not exchange it for a big palace."

Khudadad Ḥakímiyan recalls how the younger generation of Bahá'ís in India lovingly called him "Pritam Kaka," Uncle Pritam, and how, by his simplicity, his kindness and his loving and helpful nature, he had endeared himself to everyone to such an extent that even enemies of the Bahá'í Faith showed regard for him. At one time, after the partition of Punjab, when Hindus and Sikhs on one side, and the Muslims on the other, were mercilessly massacring each other, some Muslim neighbours saved his life at the risk of their own by taking him inside their family quarters.

For the last few years of his life, Pritam Singh pioneered to Amritsar where there were no other Bahá'ís. He worked as a proofreader in a printing press and gave all his spare time to the promotion of the Faith. He lived alone in a humble garage, without any means of comfort, and refused to leave his pioneering post despite his old age and declining health.

A representative of the National Spiritual Assembly who had gone to visit him reported:

“He wore a white turban, white shirt, white pants and white canvas shoes. He looked worn out; his cheeks were hollow, his eyes had sunk in their sockets. He smiled and embraced me and expressed his joy and gratitude that I had gone to see him. Then he said: ‘The call may come any moment now. I am eager to attain the presence of Bahá’u’lláh to submit my reports to Him. God alone knows how I have tried to serve His Glorious Cause! I am but a humble servant and rely on the mercy of the Manifestation of God.’”

This was just a fortnight before Pritam Singh passed peacefully to the Abhá Kingdom, in his sleep, on August 25, 21. He was buried according to Bahá’í rites.

The Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land, sent the following cable to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of India:

“GRIEVE LOSS OUTSTANDING INDIAN BELIEVER PRITAM SINGH DISTINGUISHED TEACHER ADMINISTRATOR FAITH MUCH LOVED PRAISED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN. HIS DEVOTED UNTIRING SERVICES SO LONG PERIOD SO MANY FIELDS UNFORGETTABLE.[pg 444] PRAYING SHRINES RICH REWARD.”

The many articles and books written by Pritam Singh about the Faith include, “Herald of the East,” “The Place of Báb in Bahá’ísm,” “The Prophet of this Age,” “Bahá’u’lláh,” “The Rise of the Bahá’í Faith in Írán,” “The Second Coming of Shri Krishna” and “The Two Bridges, Zoroastrianism and Bahá’í Faith.”

Sources: Parts of this article are adapted from Immortals by Dipchand Khianra, Bahá’í Publishing Trust of India, 18. THE BAHÁ’Í WORLD VOL. XIII.

