

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets]

[Personal information has been **redacted**.]

Thursday 3 Tir 1361 [24 June 1982]

Her name is Bahaiyeh Momtazi (Mehdizadeh) and she is the mother of martyr Ehsanollah Mehdizadeh, one of the three martyrs of the Baha'i Faith who were executed in Shiraz in the month of Urdibehesht [April/May] of last year. She is a grey-haired lioness who has worked in Khalili Hospital in Shiraz for a long time and now is being fired or purged only for being a Baha'i. Last week, during her working hours in the hospital, she had an encounter with Mr. Dast-ghaib, son of Mr. Sayyid¹ Abdul-Hussain Dast-ghaib, former Friday prayer leader of Shiraz, who was killed by his opponents in a bomb explosion accident. Following is her own narration:

“A pasdar [guard] called me and said, “Come here lady, they want to see you”. I said, “Who wants to see me?” He said, “Sir”. I said, “Who is Sir?” He said, “Mr. Dast-ghaib.” I went. They took me to a room and closed the door; three guards were pointing their guns towards me. I said hello to the man, [but] he did not answer. A while later he said, “I hope that you are a Moslem.” I said, “I apologize sir, [but] I am a Baha'i.” He said, “What are you saying?” “I said I am a Baha'i.” He asked, “Do you work here?” I said yes. He said, “How many years?” I said, “Around 18 years, or even more.” He said, “You have taken and eaten from the Public Treasury for 18 years or even more?” I said, “No sir, when I started working here, there was no Public Treasury, now it has become the Public Treasury.” He said, “If you say one bad word [against the Baha'i Faith], I will keep you at your job with good pay and good benefits.” I said, “My job is not the only thing I have lost, I have lost many things.” He said, “What negative [thing] have you seen from this Revolution?” I said, “Ask me what good have I seen?” He said, “What are you saying?” I said, “I am saying ask me what good I have seen.” He said, “What was the bad?” I said, “My home and belongings were looted and burned at the beginning of the Revolution. After the Revolution, my son was imprisoned for eleven months and then executed. Now I have been purged and my job is being taken away from me. Now you tell me, which one was good?” He shouted, “What are you saying? If you just say one bad word [curse] about the Bab, I will punish the person who executed your son. I will provide you with twice as much value of your previous house and belongings, and order them to give you a very good salary and benefits.” I said, “Sir, I have lost what was the most precious and the most valuable thing. Job is nothing, to hell [with you] that you've taken it away from me; I will not curse.” He said, “You must [curse].” I said, “Sir, if you don't mind, and you won't be disturbed, I'd like to say something.” He said, “Go ahead.” I said, “Sir, you are telling me to curse Ali. Wouldn't it bother you if I cursed Ali?” He shouted, “What are you saying? Who said anything about cursing Ali?” I said, “His Holiness the Great Messenger [Mohammad] says, ‘I am the City of Knowledge and Ali is its Gate’ [Arabic verse]. You are telling me to curse Ali, and I will not.” Again, he yelled and said, “I'll send you to Adel-Abad (prison in Shiraz).” I said, “I am ready.” He said, “Going to Adel-Abad and execution go together.” I said, “I am ready. I am not more precious than my son.” He said, “If you say, ‘I bear witness that there is no God but God’ [Arabic verse], I will return you to your job.” I said, “‘God testifieth that there is none other God but Him’ [first sentence of the Baha'i obligatory prayer]”

He said, "What are you saying?" I said, "They are both the same; there's no difference." He shouted, "Get out, get out!" I said, "I obey, goodbye with your permission"; and I went out the door."

The day after that, the man went to the hospital again. It happened to be Mrs. Mehdizadeh's day of rest. He asked where that Baha'i woman had gone; he heard that she was purged and was gone.

She also talked about her being purged and explained, "Before all this, one day I was summoned to the university's employment office (the hospital is affiliated with the University of Shiraz). There, the person in charge asked, "Are you the perverse sect?" I said, "I don't know what you're talking about. I have not heard this term yet. Say it again." He said, "I'm saying is your religion the perverse sect?" I said, "No; we believe in the holy universal Baha'i Faith." He said, "What are you saying?" I said, "This is what I am saying." He said, "Say, 'I bear witness that there is no God but God' [Arabic verse]; so that I won't order you to be purged." I said, "What I told you is sufficient." He said, "You are illiterate, how can you believe in this religion?" I said, "Sir, why would religion need literacy? Only one portion of Iranians is literate and three portions of them are illiterate, does that mean that they have no religion?" He said, "You have to work for free until you get the order; you will receive no pay." I said, "No problem."

She has not received the order yet. Although she knows there won't be any salary, she continues to go to work. The interesting thing is that she says, "I am in awe of the strength that God had given me [that day], that I had no problem and was completely calm standing in front of three armed guards and the man. But after I left the hospital and went to a friend's house, I was a mess."

[Handwritten note at top of the page]

Letter from Mrs. Bahaiyeh Mehdizadeh, mother of Mr. Ehsanollah Mehdizadeh (Martyr of Shiraz)

ⁱ An honorific denoting people accepted as descendants of the Islamic prophet, Mohammad