

[TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets [.].]

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Interview with another person saved from Baháism-6 Marriages arranged by the agents of the Bahá'í administration agents

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An interview with another survivor of Baháism-6 Marriages arranged by the agents of the Bahá'í administration

61. In the ten years since you have officially become a Muslim, have you invited anyone from Baháism to Islam?

*Yes, my father. My father became a Muslim in 77 [1998], but due to the pressure from the Bahá'í administration and his family members, he is forced to hide his heartfelt beliefs. Why? Because he spent all his energy during his youth for the Bahá'í administration. My brother also turned to Islam and he is still a Muslim. He is also married to a Muslim, and he has children. He is living a quiet life and does not encounter the Bahá'í administration. His livelihood is provided by my mother and the rest of my Bahá'í family; this is a scheme they use to bring him back.

62. Have there been others—other than your family members—who have turned back from Baháism?

*Yes, many; but they might not like their names to be mentioned, therefore, I am refraining.

63. Have you given talks refuting the claims of this sect?

*Yes, I have given talks in Hamidán [Hamedan] and Mashhad [Mashhad].

64. How did you and Mrs. Raúfí (your former wife) meet?

*I didn't meet Mrs. Raúfí [*sic*]; the Bahá'í administration introduced us. They used my uncle's wife to connect us, without my knowing that it was planned. I had intended to marry a Muslim girl.

65. Meaning your marriage was arranged by the administration? Are all Bahá'í marriages planned by the administration?

*Yes, our marriage was arranged by the administration, just like many other Bahá'í marriages.

66. What is their objective in doing so?

*Not to let people scatter and turn away. My own brother, Bihnám [Behnam], who has become a Muslim, intended to marry a Muslim girl. They were very much in love—as was I—but the administration would choose a Bahá'í girl for us and would surreptitiously put them on our path. At the same time, we were threatened by our family that if we did not marry so and so, we would have to leave the household. This is why we had to give in to these marriages. Later, we found out that these were all schemes of the administration. What I thought was planned by my uncle's wife turned out to be the plan of the administration. They [undefined] would get in touch with the administration in Sanandaj and ask, "Do you have a female who would want to marry a Muslim?" And the response would be, "Yes, in Hamadán." Then they would continue, "And we have here a person by the name of Bihzád Jahángírí [Behzad Jahangiri], so let us plan something to get them together." In brief, the aim of the administration is to restrict Bahá'ís, especially those who have more of a critical mind and tend to question and criticize, or want to break away from the barriers of the administration.

67. You have not commented about your marriage.

*I said to them that I did not want this girl. She also said the same. But they said, "This is not a choice." Therefore, we were forced to live together for sometime.

68. How did they arrange for you to meet each other?

*Through my father. When one is pressured by family to do something, one becomes stubborn and will give in [*sic*], and will think "whatever", "do as you wish". I gave in and my wife did too. She said "I will not allow this to happen, but if it happens, then I will divorce." I was thinking the same. They said "You should marry so and so;" I said, "I do not care who I marry anymore! If you don't allow me to marry the person I want, I will do as you wish." From the get go I had problems with my wife. We wanted to call off the engagement, but the administration did not allow it. We had not been legally married yet, so we could call it off, but somehow we were not granted permission. Through threats, beatings, and throwing me out of the home, they forced us to marry.

69. What percentage of Bahá'í marriages are arranged by the administration?

*I would say about 30% of Bahá'í marriages are arranged by the administration. There are not Bahá'ís many, so naturally they have contact with Muslims, especially the youth, and so the behaviour of the Muslims have an impact on them. Many Bahá'í youth do not like to marry those who have had relationships with many others. This is an innate Iranian bias [*sic*] [meaning "tradition/pride"?], more so for Muslims. The youth especially would rather marry Muslims who wear the Ĥijáb [Hijab], or at least not have relationships with youth who are like themselves [*sic*], but they are not given the freedom and are forced to marry someone else.

70. Our readers may wonder as to how is it that you and your wife—with whom you successfully turned to Islam—separated? One would assume that this move would result in a stronger relationship between you! However, as it turned out, after all this you separated. If you find this question too private, you do not have to answer it, and if there is anything else you want to add, please go ahead.

*Our marriage was arranged by the administration; therefore, our lives were forced on us by the pressures of the Bahaist political sect of. But when we broke away from the restrictions imposed on us by sectarianism and we had a chance to choose freely, we made a mutual decision to separate so that there would be no residue of the Bahá'í administration in our lives, and to continue our lives away from the ominous effects of the Bahá'í administration that had so embittered our lives.

71. What were the other reasons for your separation?

*There is no other reason, just the bad influence of the administration and bad memories from that period.

72. What is the Bahá'í population? And how are they spread?

*Many are in Tīhrán [Tehran]. Of course, the population is not many compared to the general population of the capital, but in comparison to their own numbers, the majority is in Tīhrán. I think perhaps more than half of the Bahá'í population is in Tīhrán.

73. What is your guess as to their numbers?

*100,000—if that—in all of Iran. Perhaps 50,000 in Tīhrán, especially in Fardís [Fardis], Karaj, which has become like a Bahá'í village.

74. Does this number include Bahá'ís outside Iran?

*Outside Iran, at the most there are 20,000. There are more Bahá'ís in Fardís, Karaj, than in Tīhrán. Many of them are also in Shíráz [Shiraz] and Işfahán [Isfahan]. There are also many in Tabríz [Tabriz] and some in Yazd. Not too many in Mashhad [Mashhad]. Not many in Zábul [Zabol], Ahváz [Ahvaz], Bandar-i-'Abbás [Bandar-i-Abbas] either. There are no Bahá'ís in Qum. There are many in . Sanandaj, compared to other cities, does not have many Bahá'ís. Kirmánsháh [Kermanshah] is similar to Sanandaj. Also, you would not find many Bahá'ís in Sunni populated areas and/or where people are more religious and traditional.