

### **“Stories about Bahà’i Funds” by Gloria Faizi (Page 22):**

The Guardian had given his approval for the purchase of a piece of land for the House of Worship of India on the outskirts of Delhi which was composed of one large plot and four much smaller ones, amounting to a total of about 22 and a half acres. This was in 1953 when there were not many Baha’is in that part of the world and the sum of 140 thousand Rupees (about 20 thousand dollars) which was needed for the purchase of the five plots was a considerable amount of money. The NSA of India allotted a portion of this sum to each area under its jurisdiction, and the members set out to visit the friends in different places, explain to them the importance of the Temple and encourage them to contribute towards the purchase of the land. Two of the members of the Assembly arrived one day at the modest restaurant of Ardeshir Rustampúri in Hyderabad. Ardeshir had left his native village in Iran when he was only 10 years old, to seek his fortune in India. Besides the clothes he wore at the time, he had the equivalent of \$1.00 in his pocket and a few pieces of dry bread. He arrived in Bombay after a difficult journey and as he was a Zoroastrian himself, he found a job in the restaurant of a Zoroastrian from Iran. He worked hard and saved all the money he earned, dreaming of the day when he could have a restaurant of his own. Many years later, he finally managed to open a modest restaurant in Hyderabad, where he also learned about the Bahà’i Faith.

Ardeshir lost his heart to Baha’u’llah and longed to serve Him with an ardor/enthusiasm as fervent/warm as he had felt when he yearned for a business of his own.

So this was the man at whose place the two members of the National Assembly found themselves in Hyderabad. From them Ardeshir came to know about the land that was to be bought for the temple and the amount of money needed. Then he asked his guests to wait for him while he went to attend an urgent matter. When he came back he placed before them his entire capital – in cash. He had drawn from his bank all the money he had saved in his life, plus whatever cash he had in his pocket which he had not yet counted. The total amount was 120 thousand and 169 Rupees.

The two visitors were astounded by this extraordinary response to their appeal. Their discreet inquiries revealed that Ardeshir had not kept a single Rupee for himself! They begged him to at least keep 169 Rupees for immediate needs and asked him: How will you manage your business? He replied: “That money was

given to me by Baha'u'llah and I have been keeping it in trust. I am happy that I have given all back to Him now”!

His magnanimous gift was paid for the total cost of the first and by far the largest of the five plots of lands for the Temple. Ardishir had seen the opportunity of a lifetime and had seized it without the least hesitation!