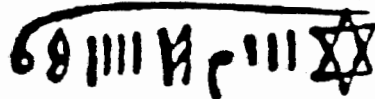


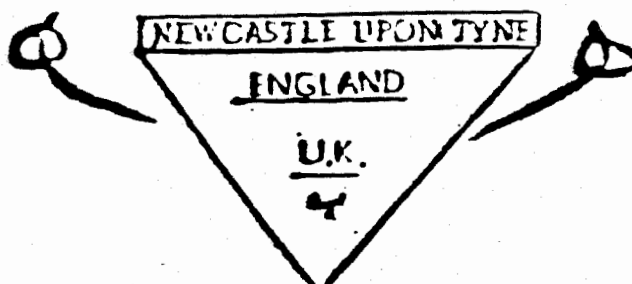
BAHÁ'Í STUDIES BULLETIN

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Suggestions for the improvement of the Bulletin will always be greatly appreciated.

EDITORIAL NOTE

May I first offer my sincere apologies for the very lengthy delay in the production of the Bulletin. This, in large measure, was due to the medical consequences of a serious traffic accident in which I was involved (in April 1987).I have several times made (somewhat premature) attempts to get the BSE going again but only now does this seem possible thanks to the considerable help of my wife Gillian and the aid and encouragement of various Bahá'í friends. I am extremely, nay eternally, grateful to those of my fellow Bahá'ís who were kind enough to help and pray for me: without them, nothing approaching the "resurrection" I have experienced, would have been possible. Many, many thanks.

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THE BABI UPHEAVALS 1848-1853: IN SEARCH OF A PARADIGM.

Before discussing the various interpretational paradigms, it would be as well to survey briefly the events to which we are referring.

Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad Shirazi (1819-1850) was a merchant of Shiraz who was loosely associated with the Shaykhi movement in that he had spent a few months attending the lectures of the Shaykhi leader Sayyid Kazim Rashti in Karbala. Then in 1844, a year with apocalyptic overtones [2], during a succession crisis in the Shaykhi movement caused by the death of Sayyid Kazim Rashti without the appointment of a new leader, Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad put forward a claim to leadership and took the title of the Bab. The exact nature of this initial claim is a matter for discussion and indeed we have suggested elsewhere that it may be that the claim was understood differently by different strata within and without the Babi movement [3]. Initially the Bab instructed his followers to keep to the Islamic laws and there was only minimal conflict with the religious and political authorities. In late 1847-early 1848, however, the Bab produced his book the Bayan in which he laid out the details of a new code of religious law abrogating the Islamic Shari'a. Then in the summer of 1848, three events occurred almost simultaneously which ended the comparatively peaceful co-existence between the Babis and the religious and secular authorities: the Bab at his trial in Tabriz openly put forward his claim to be the occulted Imam Mahdi of Shi'ism; the Babis met at the conference of Badasht and began to discuss the implementation of the new religious law; and one of the Babis, Mulla Husayn Bushru'i, raised a Black Standard at Mashhad in Khurasan [4] and began to march with a small band of followers towards the centre of the country.

There followed a series of violent upheavals. In the first, Mulla Husayn Bushru'i proceeded with the Black Standard until he was surrounded by troops at the religious shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi in Mazandaran. Here, he and Mulla Muhammad 'Ali Barfurushi, known as

2. The Islamic year 1260 (1844-5) was the one thousandth year of the Greater Occultation (Ghaybat-i Kubra) of the occulted Shi'i Twelfth Imam, the Imam Mahdi. There were indications in prophecy and a general expectation in the Shi'i world that the hidden Imam would return in this year. See Mrs Meer Hassan Ali Observations on the Mussulmans of India, 1832 (repr. 1974), p. 36; Abbas Amanat, "The early years of the Babi movement: background and development", D. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1981, pp. 75-90; Juan R.I. Cole and M. Momen, "Mafia, mob and Shiism in Iraq: the rebellion of Ottoman Karbala 1824-1843", Past and Present, No. 112, 1986, pp. 133-4, 139-140

3. "The trial of Mulla 'Ali Bastami: a combined Sunni-Shi'i fatwa against the Bab" Iran vol. 20, 1982, pp. 140-2

4. Regarding this see note 12

Suddus, led a band of under six hundred Babis [5] with no military training in defence of hurriedly erected fortifications for a period of six months (October 1848-May 1849). Their opponents were initially local militia but later government troops, to the eventual number of some 5-7,000, backed by artillery. But the Babis were not overcome by military defeat but rather were tricked into accepting an amnesty and then massacred.

The second upheaval into the small southern town of Nayriz where about one-third of the population became Babis following Sayyid Yahya Darabi, known as Vahid, the son of one of the leading ulama of that time, Sayyid Ja'far Kashfi. Vahid had gone to Tehran in 1849 hoping to join the Babis at Shaykh Tabarsi but his way was blocked by the besieging forces. After remaining for a period at the house of Mirza Husayn 'Ali, Baha'u'llah, he travelled south to Yazd. There he became embroiled in local disorders centring on a gang leader by the name of Muhammad 'Abdu'llah, who had been in a state of revolt against the governor for a number of years and who now proclaimed himself a Babi. Finding his position untenable there he came to Nayriz where his father-in-law was the prayer-leader (Imam-Jum'a) of the Chinar-Sukhtih quarter of the town. After converting most of the Chinar-Sukhtih quarter to the Babi movement, he was opposed by Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan, the governor of the town. Vahid withdrew to a fort outside Nayriz and Zaynu'l-'Abidin Khan sent to the provincial governor for troops to help quell the disturbance. Approximately five hundred men and an equal number of women faced some two thousand government troops supported by local militia and artillery (May-June 1850). Again the episode was concluded not by a military victory but by the offer of an amnesty followed by a massacre of the Babis when they surrendered.

The third episode occurred at Zanjan on the main road between Tehran and Tabriz. Here a local religious leader Mulla Muhammad 'Ali Zanjani, known as Hujjat, became a Babi and brought a large number of the town's population into the movement with him. Opposition from the other 'ulama in the town led to street battles and eventually troops were called in. Some 2-3,000 Babis were besieged by government troops numbering in total some 10,000 troops and at least 19 cannon for some eight months (May 1850 - January 1851).

There was then the abortive attempt on the life of the Shah by a small group of Tehran Babis which led to the arrest and execution of a large number of Babis (August - September 1852). This was followed by a further episode in Nayriz (October - November 1853) in which the remnants of the Babi community there took up defensive positions in the hills around Nayriz, where they were attacked by government troops. Yet again the episode ended as a result of treachery by the leaders of the government troops.

5. Regarding numbers of Babis in this and the subsequent episodes see M. Momen, "The social basis of the Babi upheavals in Iran (1848-53): a preliminary analysis", International Journal of Middle East Studies, vol. 15 (1983), pp. 161-170.

PARADIGMS FOR THE BABI UPHEAVALS

Having presented the main features of the episodes of the Babi upheavals, we will now move on to the major paradigms that have been suggested as frameworks within which to understand these events.

1. Political Revolt. Historically, perhaps the first paradigm to be suggested was the Iranian government's assertion that, although the claims of the Bab were couched in religious terms, these episodes had nothing much to do with religion but were expressions of political revolt or criminal activity. This is the picture depicted in the court histories such as the Nasikhū't-Tawarikh of Muhammad Taqi Sipihr. In the official Iranian government gazette, the Babis are described as having "turned their thoughts to sovereignty, thinking that they might be able to seize power and they set up a commotion so that under the pretext of summoning people to their false doctrine, they might rob and plunder. [6]" This was certainly the interpretation that the Iranian government gave to the foreign diplomatic missions in Iran and is reflected in their dispatches to their respective governments. Dolgorukov, the Russian minister, for example, in his dispatches states that the Babis "are promoting communism through the force of arms. [7]" The British Charge d'Affaires, Lt-Col. Farrant, states that "It is supposed their true object is not in any way relative to religion, but to create a revolutionary movement against the Government [8]."

Interestingly, this is still the official position of the Iranian government to this day with regard to the Baha'is. In trying to justify their depriving the Baha'is in Iran of fundamental human rights, the present Iranian government asserts that the Baha'i Faith is not a religious movement but a political party. Indeed, on the basis of some spurious memoirs of the Russian minister Dolgorukov [9], they assert that the movement was started by the Russians as a way of increasing their influence in Iran.

Much evidence can be produced against this paradigm. Firstly, a

6. Ruznamih Vaqa'i' Itifaqiyya, No. 82, 10 Dhu'l-Qa'da 1268

7. Dolgorukov quoted in M. Momen, The Babi and Baha'i Religions, 1844-1944; some contemporary Western accounts, 1981, p. 93

8. Farrant quoted in Momen, Babi and Baha'i religions, p. 92

9. These spurious memoirs were first published in Khurasan in 1322 Sh/1943. Despite the fact that a number of eminent Iranian historians have pronounced these memoirs to be completely fabricated (for example Prof 'Abbas Iqbal Ashtiyani in Yadgar, 5th year, No. 8-9, 1328 Sh, p.148; Mujtaba Minovi in Rahnama-yi Kitab, 6th year, No 1-2, 1342 Sh, p. 22), the Iranian government continues to use this material; see publications of Iranian government and embassies such as Baha'ism, its origins and its role, n.d., The Hague, pp. 4-6; What is Baha'ism, Rome, 1985, pp. 6-20.

study of the Bab's writings will demonstrate that there is little in them of political or even social import. They are almost exclusively concerned with religious issues: theology, eschatology, exegesis, religious law, etc. Secondly, there is no evidence that the Babi upheavals were part of a planned uprising or even that they had any political or social objectives. Although the Babis at Shaykh Tabarsi routed the government troops on several occasions, they did not press home their advantage nor utilize the opportunity to link up with other Babis or obtain territorial or strategical advantage. Thirdly, although the Bab's writings do contain a bare outline of plans for a Babi state, the Babis neither attempted to set this up nor did they declare this as their goal during the course of the upheavals. Fourthly the Bab is reported as having dissuaded Manuchihr Khan the powerful governor of Isfahan from giving his political support.

2. Defence and martyrdom. The Babi upheavals are seen in the standard Baha'i histories, such as Nabil's Narrative, as having been forced upon the Babis by an antagonistic clergy and a hostile government. In this paradigm, the Babis are considered to have been primarily interested in spreading the message of the Bab through peaceful means of debate and persuasion but the ulama rose against them and began to attack them. At first the opposition of the ulama was confined to instigating the imprisonment or expulsion of the Babis [10] but eventually, as the Babi movement continued to spread, this persecution became more and more violent culminating in the upheavals of 1848-53.

Intermingled with this theme of defensive action taken against implacable enemies is the notion that these events were in a sense inevitable both because they were foretold in prophecy and because of the Babi doctrine of "return" (raj'a). According to this doctrine, in each cycle there occurs a "return" of certain archetypal characters. Thus the disciples of the Bab are the "return" of the holy Imams and their companions, the "letters of affirmation", and there must also occur the "return" of the enemies of the Imams, the "letters of denial" [11]. And therefore inevitably there must also occur the re-enactment of the cosmic drama of Karbala. Thus the "martyrdom" of the Babis at Shaykh Tabarsi and elsewhere represents proof of the validity of the Bab's mission. In such a cosmic drama, the opponents become the very embodiments of evil while the Babi heroes become the exemplars of virtue. Events and persons are depicted in very black-and-white terms.

Those who would argue against this paradigm can point to the action

 10. For example the expulsion of Mulla Sadiq Khurasani and Qaddus from Kirman and the arrest of Mulla 'Ali Bastami in Iraq. See H.M. Balyuzi, The Dawn-Breakers: Nabil's Narrative, Wilmette, 1962, pp. 90-91, 180-181, 186-7; M. Momen, "The Trial of Mulla 'Ali Bastami: A combined Sunni-Shi'i fatwa against the Bab", Iran, vol. 20 (1982) pp. 113-143.

11. On the Bab's doctrine of "return", see Persian Bayan Wahid 1

of Mulla Husayn in raising the Black Standard in Khurasan [12]. This and the subsequent march towards the centre of the country by a band of armed men seems an obviously provocative and political action. Other examples of such militant actions scarcely compatible with a quietist stance include Vahid's linking up with the Yazdi rebel leader, Muhammad 'Abdu'llah and the manufacture of arms by the Qazvin Babis [13]. Finally of course there is the attempt on the life of the Shah in 1852.

3. Jihad. It has been argued by MacEoin that the correct paradigm for the Babi upheavals is to view these episodes as expressions of the Islamic concept of Holy War (ijihad). The Bab in his early works re-iterated the Islamic concept of ijihad [14] and it was popularly expected by the Shi'a that the occulted Twelfth Imam would, on his return, lead them in a victorious ijihad against all of the enemies of the Imam and against the unbelievers. There are a number of indications that some, at least, of the Babis did think of their actions in the context of ijihad. MacEoin quotes in particular the early Baha'i historian, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Zavara'i, who uses the term ijihad frequently in relation to his account of the Babi upheaval [15].

Those who question MacEoin's views on the usefulness of Babi ijihad as a paradigm point [16] to the fact that the passages in the Bab's writings that most clearly refer to an ordinance of ijihad relate to the early period of the Bab's writings from 1844 to 1848. During this period, the Bab was, in his writings, enjoining his followers to follow the Islamic code of law most carefully [17] and his words on ijihad are no more than a re-iteration of the Islamic law of ijihad. In fact, by making ijihad conditional on his orders for it and then not giving any

12. The significance of the raising of a Black Standard was two-fold: firstly, in Islamic history, the Umayyad Dynasty had been overthrown by the 'Abbasids through the raising of a Black Standard in Khurasan by Abu Muslim and his subsequent march towards Baghdad; secondly, there were many well known Traditions that stated that the Imam Mahdi when he came would raise a Black Standard in Khurasan and Shi'is were instructed that if they saw it they should rally to it "even if you have to crawl over the snow"; see Moojan Momen, Introduction to Sh'i Islam, New Haven and London, 1985, pp. 168.

13. Fadil Mazandarani, Zuhur al-Haqq, vol. 3, n.p., n.d., p. 374

14. See passages quoted by MacEoin, "The Babi concept of Holy War" Religion, vol. 12 (1982), pp. 102-5.

15. MacEoin, "Babi concept of Holy War", p. 117.

16. See M. Afnan and W.S. Hatcher, "Western Baha'i Scholarship and Baha'i Origins", Religion, vol. 15, 1985, pp. 29-49

17. See MacEoin, "Early Shaykhi Reactions to the Bab and his Claims", Studies in Babi and Baha'i History, vol. 1 (ed. M. Momen), Los Angeles, 1982, p. 19.

such permission, the Bab was effectively preventing ijhad without appearing to contravene the Islamic provisions. And indeed during this initial period, when one might have thought, from the large number of references to it in the Bab's writings, ijhad would have broken out if it was going to, there were in fact very few episodes of violence. Paradoxically, during the second period of the Bab's writings, the period during which the Babi upheavals occurred, the actual occurrence of references to ijhad become very few and vague. In the whole of the Bab's Persian Bayan, the most authoritative and systematic of the Bab's writing of the later period, there is no specific injunction to wage ijhad. The fact that the Bab does not actually forbid ijhad can only be inferred on the basis on a number references to the actions of putative future Babi kings [18] - not a matter for immediate concern. Moreover, any statements that appear to allow ijhad must be set against other statements such as the following: "The killing of anyone is forbidden in the Bayan more strongly than any other matter and no other matter is more emphatically prohibited - to such an extent that if even the thought of killing someone should enter a person's heart, that person is outside the religion of God ... [19]". It is difficult to see how Holy War can be waged without people being killed.

4. Social Protest. Various writers have presented the Babi movement as an expression of social protest. In the pre-modern society of nineteenth century Iran, they argue, the only vehicle for an expression of social aspirations would be a religious movement. One of the first to argue along these lines was M. S. Ivanov, a Soviet orientalist. Taking a Marxist perspective, he criticises those who "saw in the Babi movement not a popular mass movement, born out of definite social conditions and directed against the ruling class, but only the birth

18. A statement that I made to this effect in my work, The Babi and Baha'i Religions 1844-1944 (Oxford, 1981, p. xxi) was peremptorily rebutted by MacEoin in his paper "From Babism to Baha'ism", (Religion, vol. 13, 1983, p. 242). However, I have seen nothing in my subsequent studies of the Persian Bayan to make me change my mind on the accuracy of this statement.

19. Persian Bayan 4:5. MacEoin has stated that this injunction only refers to the killing of believers ("Babi concept", p. 108). While it is true that later in the same chapter, there is a similar injunction in relation to believers, that later injunction is separated from this present passage by eight lines of closely written text and it could be argued that it represents a separate injunction. Certainly Browne has interpreted this passage to refer to all persons; in his abstract of the Persian Bayan, Browne summarizes this passage thus: "No one is to be slain for unbelief, for the slaying of a soul is outside the religion of God." (Cambridge University Library, Browne Manuscripts, Sup. 20 (9), p. 54

and development of a religious sect, or even of a new religion [20].²⁰ Ivanov therefore analyses the economic situation in Iran demonstrating the considerable imbalances that existed [21].²¹ He then goes on to analyse the historical texts for evidence of social aspirations among the Babis. He finds some support in a controversial early history, the Nuqtatu'l-Kaf. He quotes from a lengthy section of this work which appears to be a speech made by the Babi leader Mulla Muhammad 'Ali Barfurushi known as Quddus. This speech makes some radical social statements such as the idea that property is usurpation. Taking this together with Quddus's peasant background, Ivanov argues that effective leadership in the latter period was taken away from the imprisoned Bab and devolved upon such people as Quddus and that the Babi upheavals can be considered as a form of social protest by the peasant classes rising against feudalism and enslavement to foreign capital [22].²²

However, Ivanov's evidence is open to criticism. The evidence that he quotes from the Nuqtatu'l-Kaf is a contorted and confused passage which is difficult to interpret. It is not even clear whether it is meant to be the words of Quddus himself or, more likely, one of a number of similar digressions by the author. Ivanov's thesis is made even weaker by the fact that in at least one case, that of the village of Bihnamir, the peasants who joined the defendants at Shaykh Tabarsi from there did so under the leadership of the local landlord, Aqa Rasul Bihnamiri, and can scarcely be considered to have been "rising against feudalism" as Ivanov would have them [23].²³

5. Faction-fighting The present author would like to present here yet another paradigm through which the Babi upheavals can be seen. Throughout modern Iranian history, one of the most frequent causes of urban upheaval and disorder has been the tradition of faction-fighting that has arisen in most Iranian cities. This involves the dividing of towns into usually two quarters each of which would on any slight pretext (and particularly if the governor was weak) engage the other in street battles. The actual fighting itself would usually be initiated

 20. M.S. Ivanov, Babidski Vostanii i Irane (1848-52), Moscow, 1939; quoted in V. Minorsky's review of this work, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, vol. 11, 4 (1946) 878.

21. For a further consideration of these factors, see M. Momen, "The Social basis of the Babi upheavals in Iran (1848-53): a preliminary analysis", International Journal of Middle East Studies vol. 15 (1983) 158-9.

22. A similar line of argument is taken by Kurt Greussing, "The Babi movement in Iran 1844-1852: from merchant protest to peasant revolution", in Religion and Rural Revolt (ed. Janus M. Bak and Gerhard Benecke), Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, pp. 256-269.

23. For a more detailed criticism of this viewpoint, see Momen, "Social Basis of the Babi upheavals in Iran (1848-53): a preliminary analysis", International Journ. Middle East Studies, vol. 15 (1983), p. 177.

by gangs of street roughs known as lutis but it was not uncommon for large numbers of the population to join in. This mechanism was of course used to settle arguments and feuds and thus any dispute could result in street battles. The ulama were also not averse to using this mechanism when it suited their purposes. The ulama would use the lutis to enforce their legal edicts while the lutis in turn depended on the ulama to intercede for them when the government decided to restore order. The more influential ulama had around them a number of students (tullab) who not infrequently acted in a similar manner as the lutis particularly in order to enforce the ruling of their master [24].

The ulama did not hesitate to use this mechanism of faction-fighting in order to settle religious disputes. They had already used it with great effect against Sufi shaykhs in the 17th and early 18th century. They set the lutis and the mob against the Sufis causing the death of several prominent Sufi leaders. In this way they combatted the influence of the Sufi shaykhs who were at this time strongly challenging their hold over the masses. The ulama also used this method against the Akhbaris and Shaykhis [25].

Certainly some of the episodes during the Babi upheavals can be seen in the context of this paradigm. This is most clearly evident at Zanjan, where the Babi leader Hujjat had, even prior to becoming a Babi, been at odds with the rest of the ulama in Zanjan for he adhered to the minority Akhbari school. Thus even before the advent of Babism, the town was divided into factions supporting and opposing him and there had been faction-fighting. With the conversion of Hujjat to the Babi movement, his supporting faction also converted. The early stages of the Zanjan upheaval were very reminiscent of typical faction-fighting in Iranian cities. After a minor episode that acted as the triggering factor, the two factions took to the streets, each being led by the lutigari pahlavans (luti champions). It was only the later action of the other ulama in calling in troops that made this episode significantly different from other factional fights. A similar set of circumstances prevailed in Nayriz where the Babi leader, Vahid, controlled one of the town's quarters although in this case his main opponent was the governor of the town. At Yazd prior to his arrival in Nayriz, Vahid had clearly been caught up in factional disputes involving the luti leader Muhammad 'Abdu'llah. At Barfurush, prior to the upheaval at nearby Shaykh Tabarsi, long-standing factional disputation between two of the clerics of the town involved the Babi leader Quddus and was one of the factors leading to the subsequent

24. Thus for example, from time to time in almost every town the ulama would decree that the wineshops should be closed down and the tullab would proceed to demolish and loot the wineshops

25. Two schools that appeared in Shi'i Islam and gained the support of an appreciable minority of the ulama

26. See A. Amanat, "The Early Years of the Babi movement", Ph.D., Oxford University, 1981, pp. 87-8

upheaval [26]. At Mashhad, prior to Mulla Husayn's hoisting of the Black Standard, there were clashes between the Babis and the lutis supporting the ulama which were strongly reminiscent of typical factional disputation.

6. Other Paradigms. Nor does this exhaust the number of different paradigms through which the Babi upheavals were seen both in their own time and subsequently.

Many of the Iranian ulama were genuinely shocked by the claim of the Bab and for them the extirpation of the Babis was seen as a religious duty. From such a viewpoint, the explanation of the Babi upheavals is very simple. It was nothing more than the extirpation of a heresy in accordance with the dictates of the Shari'a.

The British and Russian diplomats based in Tehran sought to categorize the Babis in terms of paradigms with which they were familiar. They therefore described them as Socialists and Communists (1848 the year that the Babi upheavals began was also the 'Year of Revolutions' in Europe) [27].

Nikki Keddie of the University of California, Los Angeles, has advanced a further explanation of the Babi upheavals. Her thesis is that the impact of the West on pre-modern Asia produced such upheavals. She has drawn a comparison between the Babi upheavals and the Tai-Ping revolt in China [28].

WHAT IS HISTORICAL TRUTH?

Thus it can be seen that a number of plausible paradigms exist through which the Babi upheavals can be viewed. However these paradigms have some potentially conflicting implications. Were the Babis political rebels or engaged in Holy War or were they merely defending themselves heroically against overwhelming odds? Each paradigm has its advocates who assert their viewpoint to be the "truth"; they consider their case convincing and bring forward much evidence in favour of it. They also consider those holding to other paradigms as having either a limited or biased viewpoint, based on very selective use of quotations and evidence.

We are thus left with a number of paradigms each claiming to represent the "Truth" of the events. And so we must go back to the more fundamental question of the definition of the truth for these parties. It would appear that the "Truth" for the State (paradigm A) is that the interests and order of the State are paramount and

27. See M. Momen, The Babi and Baha'i Religions, pp. 15-10, 17, 44-5.

28. "Religion and Irreligion in early Iranian Nationalism", Comparative Studies in Society and History 4 (1964) 265-295.

therefore anything which disturbs or threatens to disturb this order must be rebellion and revolt.

The "Truth" for Baha'i historians (Paradigm B) is somewhat more difficult to define since there are many statements about truth in the Baha'i writings and therefore if we try to come to a definition, the question of selectivity will once again arise. But among the concepts of truth encompassed within the Baha'i writings is the idea that it includes whatever is conducive to unity, love and harmony: "...the quintessence of truth is this: we must all become united and harmonized in order to illumine this gloomy world, to abolish the foundations of hostility and animosity from among mankind. [29]" But for practical purposes, as MacEoin has stated, the Baha'i viewpoint on historical truth must include "the basic premise of the underlying validity of divine revelation as expressed in the Baha'i scriptures" [30].

For MacEoin, an academic whose viewpoint is formed mainly from logical positivism, truth is what is arrived at by following a particular methodological pathway. Anything that does not follow this pathway is relegated to "a tendency to rewrite... history" and is described as "entirely unscholarly" [31].

For Ivanov, a Marxist, truth or at least social and historical events can only meaningfully be analysed in relation to class struggle. Any other historical analysis is ignoring the major factor that motivates history, the historical dialectical forces, and is therefore shallow and delusory.

We will here concentrate on the second and third paradigms described above since the cases for and against these have been argued out at length and with clarity [32]. What I propose to do at this stage is to examine the structure of the argument advanced for and against these

29. Tablets of Abdul Baha Abbas, New York, 1930, p. 432. See also Paris Talks, London, 11th ed., 1969, p.121.

30. "Fundamentalism", p. 60

31. "Fundamentalism, pp. 64, 73.

32. The arguments and counter-arguments have been presented in a series of five papers in the Journal Religion. The following is a list of these - together with the abbreviation by which they will be referred to in the rest of this paper: MacEoin "The Babi Concept of Holy War", Religion, vol. 12 (1982) pp. 93-129 ("Holy War"). Afnan and Hatcher, "Western Islamic Scholarship and Baha'i Origins", Religion, vol. 15 (1985), pp. 29-57 ("Scholarship"). MacEoin, "Baha'i Fundamentalism and the Academic Study of the Babi Movement", Religion, vol. 16 (1986) pp. 57-89 ("Fundamentalism"). Afnan and Hatcher, "Note on MacEoin's 'Baha'i Fundamentalism'", Religion, vol. 16 (1986) pp. 187-192 ("Note"). MacEoin, "Afnan, Hatcher and an Old Bone", Religion, vol. 16 (1986) pp. 193-95 ("Old Bone").

two paradigms. What I hope will emerge clearly to the reader is that it is not just a case that the two sides to the argument have examined the same evidence and come to contradictory conclusions about it. The difference lies at a far deeper level. There is a fundamental incongruence between the way that the two sides even approach the question. There are four basic areas in which the two sides do not agree.

1. The facts that need explaining. Much of the disagreement stems from the fact that the two sides disagree as to what facts about the Babi upheavals need explaining. MacEoin points to a number of actions by the Babis, which were certain to provoke the Government and the 'ulama, and writings of the Bab, which appear to incite his followers to ijihad: the raising of the Black Standard in Khurasan; the manufacture and carrying of arms by some of the Babis; certain passages in the writings of the Bab which appear to endorse the waging of ijihad; and certain passages in early histories that appear to point towards a ijihad mentality [33]. These "facts", MacEoin feels, can only be explained in terms of his theory of ijihad. MacEoin's opponents, Hatcher and Afnan point to a different set of facts that require explanation: the Bab's refusal to call for a ijihad; the refusal of the Babis besieged at Shaykh Tabarsi to pursue their enemies when they had the advantage; the comparative lack of reference to ijihad in the Bab's later fully-developed doctrine and writings; [34].

2. The Data to be considered as evidence The second fundamental area of disagreement between the two sides relates to the question of what data is admissible as evidence. For example, the decision as to which passages in the writings of the Bab are relevant to the subject of ijihad and which are not is also a matter of judgement. One could, of course, say that any passage that includes the word ijihad is of relevance. But MacEoin has for example presented as being relevant to this subject a large number of passages relating to the actions of future Babi kings that do not contain the word ijihad. On the other hand he has chosen to interpret a passage that prohibits the killing of any person as referring to believers only and therefore not relevant [35]. Similarly, Hatcher and Afnan have chosen most of their quotations from Nabil's Narrative and have more or less ignored other sources for Babi history thus demonstrating selectivity, which MacEoin considers to be because Nabil's Narrative is an example of a Baha'i tendency "to bowdlerize and re-write the events of Babi history in a manner conformable to later Baha'i attitudes and expectations. [36]."

33. "Holy War", p. 103-6, 111-112, 115, 121; "Fundamentalism", p. 70

34. "Scholarship", p. 40-46.

35. An interpretation not supported by Prof. Browne - see note 19 above.

36. "Fundamentalism", p. 64.

These two areas of disagreement (failure to agree on the facts that need explaining and failure to agree on the data admissible as evidence) account for the mutual accusations that the other side has been selective in their use of the historical data and of the textual material. Hatcher and Afnan assert that MacEoin has been "highly selective in the material that he quotes from the Bab [37]." MacEoin reciprocates the allegation and charges that Hatcher and Afnan "have done serious damage to the textual evidence" [38]. And yet both parties in establishing their case have used quotations from the writings of the Bab and the relevant contemporary histories. Neither side has accused the other of actually forging or misquoting the passages that they have brought forward as evidence. The only accusation is that of having been selective and of having quoted out of context.

If the two sides are seeking to explain different facts and are willing to admit different items of data as evidence, it is not surprising that each views the others material as being selective. A moment's reflection will show that both sides have of course been selective in the materials that they present. Without turning their papers into lengthy books, neither side could possibly analyse all of the quotations from the writings of the Bab, from the writings of his disciples and enemies, and from the various histories written, that have relevance to the theme. Therefore both sides must select which quotations they will include and which quotations they will exclude. And one can be certain that the passages selected will be the ones that relate to those facts that the writer has chosen to explain and will, of course, tend to prove them. But the selection of those passages will be incomprehensible to the other side which is trying to prove a different point and thus appears to be selective and out of context.

3. What kinds of laws of causation will be accepted? The third area of fundamental disagreement between the two sides is over the question of what kinds of laws of causation will be acceptable, what processes are perceived to be at work in history. MacEoin, having reviewed the historical data, states that there is no indication that the Babis ever declared an offensive ijihad [39]. Both sides are agreed on this [40]. However, MacEoin then goes on to postulate that, nevertheless, ijihad played what might be called a psychological role in creating a mental paradigm for the actions of the Babis which he terms a "defensive ijihad" [41]. Hatcher and Afnan reject this "defensive ijihad" as a causative paradigm for the Babi upheavals. They claim that there is in effect nothing in this concept that is any different from their

37. Afnan and Hatcher, "Scholarship" p. 32

38. MacEoin, "Fundamentalism", p. 71.

39. "Holy War", pp. 120-121.

40. "Scholarship", pp. 32-3, 44.

41. "Scholarship", pp. 117, 120-121; "Fundamentalism", pp. 69-71.

original position: that the Babis were simply seeking to defend themselves against aggression.

At one point, Hatcher and Afnan described the fact that the Bab confirmed the law of ihad but rendered it ineffective by never issuing a call for it, as an intermediate stage between the Islamic injunction to wage ihad and Baha'u'llah's later prohibition of this [42]. MacEoin rejects this writing: "to make later events the effective cause of earlier ones may be acceptable theology, but it is very bad history" [43].

4. When has a theory explained the facts. Finally, the two sides disagree on the question of whether a given theory has explained the facts or not. Hatcher and Afnan do not accept that MacEoin has proved his thesis about ihad as a valid paradigm for considering the Babi upheavals [44]. While MacEoin dismisses the Hatcher and Afnan material as "apologetics" [45].

In summary then, the two sides disagree over the following four fundamental issues in the debate:

1. What are the facts that need explaining?
2. What data is admissible as evidence?
3. What laws of causation will be allowable as valid?
4. When can it be said that a given theory has explained the facts?

Although I have above used the word disagreement to describe the difference between the two sides, it would be more accurate to say that the two sides are talking at cross-purposes. They cannot agree about the picture that they are describing of the Babi upheavals because they are in fact looking at two different pictures. They cannot agree on the answers because they are not even agreed about the questions.

It is not therefore surprising that the discussion breaks down with a sense of exasperation on both sides and with mutual recriminations. MacEoin writes of Hatcher and Afnan's presentation as "entirely unscholarly", "tendentious", "absurd", "sweeping generalisations" and even "fatuous" [46]. Hatcher and Afnan protest that MacEoin has misrepresented their arguments and sought to "divert attention from

42. "Scholarship", p. 41

43. "Fundamentalism", p. 77

44. "Scholarship", pp. 31-34

45. "Fundamentalism", p. 77.

46. "Fundamentalism", pp. 73, 75, 76, 77.

substantive issues' [47].

Ultimately then it would appear that we are prisoners of these various paradigms. For by what criterion can we choose between the conflicting paradigms? What absolute external criterion can be found that would act as a standard and resolve the issue? For surely the choosing of such an external criterion would itself be subject to the internal biases of the chooser. And it is no use appealing to the facts (in this case the events of the upheavals and the writings of the Bab), for each paradigm does precisely that. Therefore if we choose to favour one paradigm over another, this is a reflection on the biases existing within ourselves and has no absolute significance.

Such a conclusion may indeed be painful to those academics who, brought up on the certainties of the western academic tradition of empiricism and logical positivism, feel that they ought to be possible to select between these different paradigms on the basis of a critical analysis of the empirical evidence. What approach works best? What approach gives the best insight? What approach explains more of the data? Part of the attraction of this approach is the fact that it appears to be a close approximation to the scientific method of approach. Since science has been so successful at uncovering the natural world, it is felt that historians will achieve equally good results by following a "scientific" methodology. But there a number of problems with this line of thinking:

1. The empiricist paradigm pictures the historian as surveying the facts of history and then picking out those facts that are relevant to the particular topic that he or she is writing about and from this exercise producing a thesis that best fits the facts or explains most of the facts. It is a necessary part of the empiricist tradition that the historian and the historical facts be kept separate from each other - i.e. Cartesian dualism, the notion that the same facts are available to all and are therefore "pure" in the sense that they are not contaminated by subjectivity or value judgements.

The problem arises over the question of whether there are any such things as "pure" historical facts. Some may argue along the lines that surely the fact that the Shaykh Tabarsi Episode occurred in 1848-1849 is a "pure historical fact" that all are agreed about. But this is to confuse a "historical fact" with a "chronicler's fact". The chronicler is concerned with establishing dates and places for events. The historian is concerned with interpreting the events in terms of causal explanations. Once one goes from the realm of the "chronicler's fact" into the realm of the "historian's fact" then it is doubtful whether there is any longer any such thing as a "pure historical fact". We have seen above how, from the vast range of material available, those writing in one paradigm will "see" one set of facts while others will "see" other facts. The question of the class status of the individual's involved will be a fact that a Marxist will consider

47. "Note", p. 188 and passim.

central to the issue. A non-Marxist may not even mention the matter let alone consider it of any importance. Indeed even in the case of non-Marxist historians, we may raise the question as to whether, had it not been for Marx, the interest of the present generation of historians for economic factors in history would exist - would these economic facts of history not have remained "unseen"?

Another example may illuminate the matter better. The present writer has written a paper on the social basis of the Babi upheavals [48]. In that paper, I devoted a section to the role of women in the Babi movement. I would maintain that, if this paper had been written thirty years ago by another historian, this section would not have been present in this paper. That putative historian of thirty years ago would have had access to the same materials as I had, but the influence of thirty years of the feminist movement on the mind of the present writer has meant that I "saw" these facts while our putative historian of thirty years ago would not have "seen" them even though he was looking at the same material. It is in this sense that there are no "pure historical facts" all facts are apprehended by a particular individual with a particular cultural and historical background and this background influences which facts he or she "sees" and which are not "seen" [49].

2. In the field of history, we unfortunately return to the nagging problems of the subjective nature of the subject that we are dealing with. By what criteria are we to judge what is the "best insight"? How are we even going to decide which facts need explaining? On what criteria are some data going to be regarded as admissible evidence and some as not admissible? What kinds of laws of causation will be acceptable? How do we determine whether a given theory has indeed explained the data? These questions can to a large extent be answered in the sciences, where there is a broad consensus on the question of methodology. But how can we proceed in history where there is no consensus on the above questions of methodology and where the facts are very pliable and will fit a number of different explanations as seen above.

3. In science we can set up hypotheses and then test them by controlled experiments. In history we have no ability to set up experiments. It is mainly data from such experiments that forms acceptable evidence in favour of one theory over another.

4. Science itself has come full circle and now acknowledges the fact

48. International Journal of Middle East Studies, vol. 15 (1983), pp. 157-183

49. Exactly the same process of paradigm shift has occurred in scientific history. After Copernicus, although all scientists were still looking at the same sky, all of a sudden they "saw" all sorts of things that had not been seen before. On this matter, see T. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago, 1962.

that the pursuit of a "pure truth" is illusory and that the truth obtained is relative to one's methodology. This conclusion that science has come to can in historical terms be restated as saying that the interpretation given and the conclusion arrived at depends on the paradigm used.

Although we tend to think of academic research in terms of the scholar pursuing a path to the truth but rather, it would appear that it is more accurate to think in terms of each person having an image of the truth that then determines which path he or she pursues.

SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS

Where then does all of this leave the history of the Babi upheavals? I would venture the following observations:

1. Firstly, it would appear that there is no sense in which there can be said to be a "true" or "correct" interpretation of the events of the Babi upheavals. Each paradigm reveals some aspects of the truth and conceals others. No paradigm or methodology has an exclusive or perhaps even a priority claim to "truth". Each should be examined for what truth it contains.

2. Secondly, it is all too easy for the historian to sit down and write sweeping generalisations such as "The Babis thought such-and-such" or "The ulama considered such-and-such" as though all of the Babis or the ulama acted as a unit and all had the same motivations and the same concerns. Whereas it is probable that this was far from being the case. Different individual Babis may have been acting within completely different paradigms - some may indeed have seen their actions as ijihad as MacEoin suggests while others may have been acting purely in self-defence and may have had no insurrectionary or aggressive intent as Hatcher and Afnan suggest. Indeed, the same individual may even have been working within different paradigms at different times.

3. Furthermore, individuals usually act in accordance with what appears to them the right thing to do at the time ("right" could of course be in terms of "morally right" or "financially beneficial" etc.). Explanations such as "the waging of ijihad" are rationalizations of these actions made to justify one's actions to others either before or after carrying them out. To an Iranian born and brought up in a tradition in which the highest emotional charge is given to the story of the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn, it may have felt right to express one's convictions in a manner leading to martyrdom and sacrifice. Alternatively, it may have felt right to implement the Qur'anic injunctions to ijihad. But it seems probable that, when they acted as they did, most Babis did not have in mind any elaborated logical reasons for their actions but rather they felt that it was the "right" thing to do, they were being true to their faith as they saw it. To try to superimpose rational schemata such as the ijihad theory or other paradigms onto this situation may be satisfying intellectually but is in fact a rather false and forced a posteriori procedure.

4. The most useful analysis of the Babi upheavals will take into account all of the above paradigms showing how each paradigm illuminates certain aspects of the events but also showing that no paradigm accounts for all the facts. Even apparently-conflicting paradigms can be useful for analysing the empirical data. But it must be realised that such an approach may become very complex and convoluted.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This is not of course a new debate. Ever since the nineteenth century, historians and philosophers of history have debated these issues. W.H. Walsh in his book An Introduction to the Philosophy of History [50] states: "The interpretations of one historian are indignantly repudiated by another and how to reconcile them is not apparent, since the disputes are not merely technical (over the correct interpretation of evidence), but rather depend on ultimate preconceptions which in this case are emphatically not universally shared (p. 97)."

In general, as a result of the above analysis, we can say that the scholar is left with one of two possible courses of action in attempting to analyse the material relating to a particular historical event.

1) He or she may try to follow all the threads of all of the different viewpoints available for analysing the event - to explain the event in terms of every available paradigm. But this may lead to a mind-boggling complex process and would require a book to be written about even the most trivial episode. Also the resulting loss of clarity will diminish the usefulness of the exercise.

2) Alternatively, the writer may commit themselves to one particular paradigm and write from just that viewpoint. Although this would inevitably give a certain narrowness of vision, at least the argument can be carried further and with greater clarity.

What we really appear to be saying is, at the most general level, that thought can never occur in an ideational vacuum. All human thought and activity is grounded in values. One cannot begin to think about a question without having a starting point for one's thought and a certain direction or pathway to follow in the process of thinking. But this starting point and pathway of thought to a large extent pre-determine the outcome of the process of thinking. Every individual, whether following a particular discipline of thought or not, has pre-set, pre-figured guiding images and unproven assumptions - a mythology if one follows the terminology of depth psychology. And so the writing of history inevitably brings into play an ideological component from the writer's mind. This component may or may not be a conscious position adopted by the writer. Indeed in most cases, the

adoption of a paradigm occurs at a pre-conceptual, pre-critical level. It is the starting point for the writing of a history. It is the direction from which the writer approaches the subject and thus prefigures everything that flows therefrom.

As E.H. Carr said in his Trevelyan lectures, What is History?: "Study the historian before you study [his] facts... When you read a work of history, always listen out for the buzzing [of bees in the bonnet]. If you detect none, either you are tone deaf or your historian is a dull dog [51]"

These different paradigms are due to the different mind-sets of their authors. It is impossible to say that one is the Truth and the others are false because there is no Absolute Truth to act as the criterion. The historian is like someone who is trying to walk across a narrow bridge. On the one side we are in danger of falling into the comfortable assumption that we have access to "pure facts" and can give objective judgements about them, on the other side we are in danger of coming to the nihilistic conclusion that all history is subjective and that therefore one can write whatever one wants and it is just as acceptable as anything else is because there are no objective or absolute criteria by which to judge these matters. Somehow we have to steer a course between these two sides of the narrow bridge without any firm guidance.

Such conclusions are uncomfortable for some who prefer firmer more certain conclusions but I would maintain that they are more in keeping with the realities of life. They mirror, in a way, a whole host of other areas of life where we are similarly uncertain and can come to no firm conclusions. For example, none of us can be sure with regard to ourselves how much of us is heredity and how much is the results of the conditioning of our upbringing. Nor can we be sure when we make a decision about something, how much it is our own free-will and how much the result of our conditioning and of unconscious forces acting on us. Are we dependent or independent of our environment? I would maintain that the problems of writing history fall into a similar category of things that we can never be sure of. The most that can be hoped for is to make this a conscious rather than an unconscious process.

POST-SCRIPT

It will not have escaped the reader that if the general thesis of this paper is correct, i.e. that all conceptualisation and writing of history is based on an ideational paradigm that pre-figures the structure of the discourse, then this paper is also written within a paradigm. Since I have urged that at the very least we can strive to make this a conscious rather than an unconscious process, I should make an attempt to analyse the structure of this paper. It is written in a structuralist, relativist mode or paradigm. Relativism has been much criticised by many academics as leading to conceptual anarchy, vacuousness and skepticism. I hope I have show that rather than these things, in the specific case under study, the Babi upheavals in Iran, by being sensitive to the variety paradigms through which the events can be viewed, a moderate degree of relativism can lead to a greater understanding of what occurred (in comparison to adopting a single paradigm).

A Brief Discussion of the Primal Will in the Bahá'í Writings.

Keven Brown.

Following Moojan Momen's introduction and beautiful translation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tafsír-i-Kuntu Kanzan Makhfíyyan (Commentary upon the Hadíth-i-Qudsí: "I was a Hidden Treasure and loved to be known. Therefore I created the Creation that I might be known."),¹ I would like to share some additional Tablets and comments in this area of study. In the Tafsír 'Abdu'l-Bahá has comprehensively dealt with the tradition of the "Hidden Treasure" by explaining the differing viewpoints of the Muslim mystics and philosophers, in particular the school of Ibn al-'Arabí, and presenting the Bahá'í viewpoint that the real meaning of knowledge in this holy tradition is the recognition of the station of the Manifestation of God in every age and that no access is possible in attaining to a knowledge of God's reality or existence. Referring to those mystics who believed that they could attain to a mystical union with the Absolute, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states: "They have desired with petty, divided minds to understand stages and stations that are concealed even from the Universal Mind."² It is in investigating what is meant by the "Universal Mind," alias the "Primal Will"--the metaphysical reality of the Manifestations of God--that we may come closer to the Bahá'í understanding of the oneness of existence (wahdat-i-wujúd).

As is exemplified by the Bahá'í ringstone symbol, Bahá'ís believe in three levels of existence. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has explained this in His chapter on the oneness of existence in Some Answered Questions: "The Prophets... believe that there is the world of God, the world of the Kingdom, and the world of Creation: three things."³ Despite this truth of the Prophets, 'Abdu'l-Bahá says in another Tablet: "The mystics, in general, believe that existence is limited to two conditions: one is God and the other Creation. They believe that God in the inner existence of things and Creation the appearance of things. As for the people

of Truth, existence hath three degrees: God and Command, which is the Primal Will, and Creation. The Primal Will, which is the world of Command, is the inner reality of things and all existing things are the manifestations of the Divine Will, not the manifestations of the Divine Reality and Identity. As to the station of the Godhead, it is independent and sanctified from the understanding and comprehension of created things, leave alone that it penetrateth and is absorbed by the realities of things. His Holiness, the Báb, may my life be a sacrifice unto Him, sayeth that the testimony of this verse: 'The Sea (of existence) is the same as it hath ever been from eternity and the accidents are (its) waves and apparitions,' is complete in the Primal Will, not in the Essence of God." ⁴

The Śūfīs of the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī and the philosophers who have followed in the path of Mullá Ṣadrá and other Muslim sages have believed fundamentally that God, the Absolute in its absoluteness, has become differentiated into the forms of the creatures, albeit through a series of mirage-like self-manifestations (tajallí). Ibn ʿArabī makes this point in his Fuṣṣṣ al-Hikam: "Everything you perceive is the Being of the Absolute as it appears through the archetypal essences of possible things." ⁵ In explaining in what manner the Śūfīs maintain the "oneness of God" with this apparent contradiction, ʿAbdu'l-Bahá says: "They believe that God has two aspects: one is the state of absolute sanctity and holiness to which nothing is comparable, and the other is the state of similarity and resemblance." ⁶ These two aspects of God, as understood by the mystics, correspond to the stages of Aḥadíyyat (primary oneness) and Wáhidíyyat (unity)--this second stage being that wherein the Divine Names and Attributes come into intelligible existence. It is this second stage wherein "God," as one of the Divine Names, is dependent upon creatures as the objects of knowledge. The Śūfīs agree with the Bahá'ís in this respect by maintaining that God in the station of Aḥadíyyat has no dependence upon the creatures; however, the difference resides in the fact

that whereas the Bahá'ís believe these two stages to be fundamentally different, the Šúfís believe them to be fundamentally the same. They believe that the "Essence" of God is the same as the "essence" of the creatures as a locus for God's self-manifestation, whereas the Bahá'ís believe that the Primal Will, not God, stands in this position.

The Báb in His Risáliy-i-Dhahabíyyih makes this distinction clear:

"They (Mullá Sadrá and the Šúfís) have been mistaken. They have taken the effulgence of the Essence upon the existences to be the very being of God. This is why they have erred when they say that the realities are fixed in the Essence. And this they have said to establish the knowledge of God. They say that the Reality of existence is simple to establish the causality of the Essence; and they speak of the relation between the Essence and the acts and attributes, and the unity of existence between the Creator and the created. But all of this, for the people of God, is naught but absolute association.... Even as God hath no need for another besides Himself, likewise He hath no need in His knowledge for the existence of objects of knowledge. In truth, the Essence hath no connection with anything. Verily, the cause of the contingent existences is one creation of God, and it is the Will. God created the Will from itself without a fire coming to it from the Divine Essence. All of the existences were created by the intermediary of this Will, and this Will always telleth of God's own Being and reflecteth nothing but Him. In the contingent existences, however, there is not a single sign which demonstrateth the essence of God, for the Reality of God alienateth all of the contingent existences from His knowledge and the Essence of God rendereth impossible comprehension by all the essences. In truth, the relation of the Will with God is like that of the House (the Ka'bih) with the Supreme Being. This relation is a relation of honor for the creature, but not for the Essence, for God is pure." ⁷

In another Tablet of the Báb, the Súriy-i-Tawhíd, this question is further elucidated:

"The third question thou didst pose is about the meaning of the

saying of the philosophers who say: 'From one naught can be created but one.' The essence of this saying is false when the cause referreth to the eternal and absolute essence of God. God hath no connection with anything and never does aught leave His Being. This quality of God (of not engendering and in not being engendered) is proven in all states. If the meaning of the cause is the First Remembrance, that is to say Him Whom God created Himself, then this saying becometh true. What is other than one cannot explain the action of the Essence to be unique. This is the religion of the pure Imáms.

It is in this way that God, in the Hadíth-i-Qudsí, summoned Jonas: 'O Jonas! Dost thou know the Will?' Jonas answered, 'No.' God said: 'The Will is the First Remembrance.' It is not possible that God create a thing from nothing except that thing be unique, for the first rank of the Remembrance is to demonstrate the unity of God. In the beginning of the degree of unity it is not possible to be other than one. Thus the saying of the philosophers that 'the cause of all the existences is the essence of God' is a falsehood. There is no connection between God and His creatures. It is not admissable that the essence of God be a place of change. To be so there must be a similitude between the cause and the effect. Therefore, the truth is this: The cause of things is the First Remembrance that God created from nothing. And He made in it the cause of all the creatures. As the Imám revealeth, upon Him be blessings, 'The cause of things is the Handiwork of God and this Handiwork hath no cause.'" ⁸

So far the terms "Universal Mind," the "First Remembrance," the "Will," the "Primal Will," and the "Command of God" have been used to designate that universal reality by which God causes the existence of all things. It has many synonyms in the Bahá'í Writings. In an epistle to Muhammad Sháh, the Báb declares: "I am the Primal Point from which have been generated all created things." ⁹ The term "Point," used in this sense, frequently occurs in the Persian Bayán. At the beginning of Vahíd III, Báb 12, the Báb confirms that the meaning of the word "Point" is the very being of the

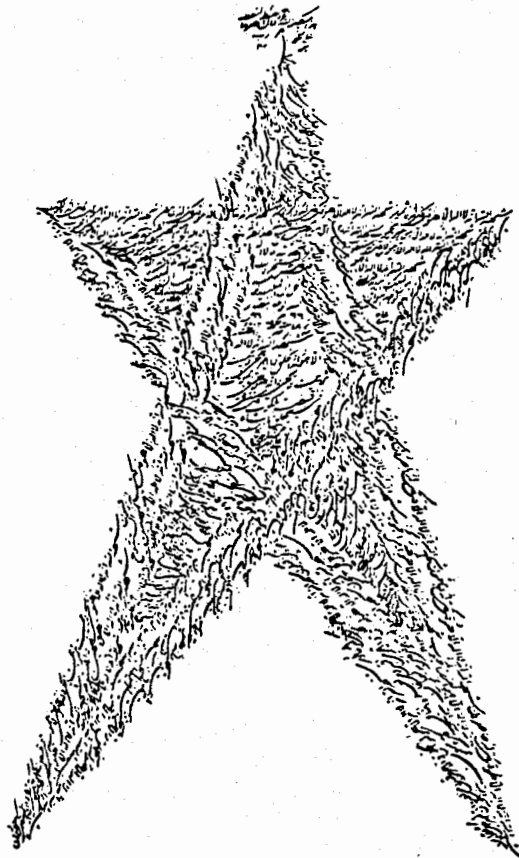
Primal Will (gharāḍ az dhikr-i-Nuqṭih, Kaynūniyyat-i-Mashīyyat Avvalīyyih ast). The term "Primal Will" is probably more common. Bahá'u'lláh uses it in the Kitāb-i-Iqān: "...by His wish, which is the Primal Will itself, all have stepped out of utter nothingness into the realm of being, the world of the visible."¹⁰ It is also referred to as "the Word of God, which is the Cause of the entire creation," and "the Command of God which pervadeth all created things."¹¹ In other words, these various designations all describe what 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in Some Answered Questions, calls "the universal reality," being "the first thing which emanated from God."¹² 'Abdu'l-Bahá goes on to explain that this "First Mind" or "First Will" precedes time but does not share the essential pre-existence of God, being "nothingness" in relation to God.

As in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Commentary upon the tradition of the "Hidden Treasure" it was shown that the Manifestation of God is the focal point of knowledge, similarly the Manifestation of God is the focal point for the perfect reflection of the Primal Will. "It is the Primal Will which appeareth resplendent in every Prophet and speaketh forth in every revealed Book."¹³

Notes

1. See Bahá'í Studies Bulletin, Vol. 3, no. 4.
2. Provisional translation, Makátib-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá, Vol. 2, p. 52.
3. Some Answered Questions, (1981 US ed.), p. 295.
4. Provisional translation, Makátib, Vol. 3, pp. 355-56.
5. Cited in Sufism and Taoism by T. Izutsu, p. 93.
6. Provisional translation, Makátib, Vol. 3, p. 357.
7. Provisional translation from Nicolas' French translation in Le Beyan Arabe, pp. 10-12.
8. *ibid.* pp. 26-27.
9. Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 12.
10. Kitāb-i-Iqān, p. 98.
11. Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 140-141.
12. Some Answered Questions, p. 203.
13. Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 126.

PART TWO



TABLET IN THE FORM OF A STAR
in the hand of the Báb.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE BAHÁ'Í STUDIES SEMINAR: DECEMBER 6-7 1986.

A group of Bahá'ís from the U.K. and elsewhere met over the weekend December 6-7th 1986 to present papers and to discuss various aspects of the academic approach to Bahá'í Studies. In the opening session the present state of Bahá'í scholarship was analysed and discussed. It was felt by participants that the Bahá'í International Community has yet to become adequately aware of and supportive towards academically oriented Bahá'í scholarship; especially important in view of the emergence of a more informed Bahá'í dialogue with academically trained intellectuals and religionists. An unbecoming anti-intellectualism (wholly incompatible with Bahá'í scriptural guidance) has, in some quarters, had adverse effects upon Bahá'í intellectuals. Greater and continued support needs to be given to those aspects of Bahá'í intellectualism capable of nurturing and perpetuating a truly scholarly and academic tradition. On an internal level many important tasks remain unfulfilled; including the interviewing of experienced living Bahá'ís with memories of persons and events which should be recorded for posterity.

The following papers were presented over the weekend:

Moojan Momen, Religions East and West and the Bahá'í teaching of the 'Oneness of Religion.'

The Bábí Upheavals of 1848-1852: An Analysis of Paradigms
[reproduced in this Bulletin pp.4-21].

Philip Smith, Bahá'í Organization and the Early Years of the British Bahá'í Community.

Stephen Lambden, The Sinaitic Mysteries: Some notes on Moses-Sinai Motifs in Bábí and Bahá'í Scripture. (cf. SBBH. Vol.5.).

As a result of this seminar a letter expressing the views of the participants about the importance of academic Bahá'í scholarship was addressed to the Universal House of Justice. Regretably it could not be forwarded until 22 October 1988 and a reply was received dated 19th December 1988:

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

19 December 1988

Mr. Stephen Lambden
30 Victoria Square
Jesmond
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4DE
United Kingdom

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice referred to the Research Department your letter of 22 October 1988 in which you submitted a list of questions in connection with your studies for your doctorate as well as Bahá'í activities. We are now directed to send you the enclosed copy of the memorandum prepared in response. The attachments to this memorandum are being carried by hand of a returning pilgrim who will no doubt contact you for instructions as to their delivery.

With reference to the letter which you had prepared on 22 December 1986 and been unable to forward, the House of Justice appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to study your submission on the Development of Bahá'í Studies at the Academic Level and a copy of its findings submitted to the House of Justice is also enclosed.

The House of Justice is delighted to have this evidence of your return to health and wishes you well in your scholastic endeavours. We are to assure you of its prayers on your behalf in the Holy Shrines that divine confirmations may descend upon all your efforts in the path of service to His Cause.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,



For Department of the Secretariat

Enclosures (2)

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 19 November 1988

From: Ad Hoc Committee

Re: Submission on the Development of Bahá'í Studies at the Academic Level

As requested by the Universal House of Justice, we provide the following comments on the recommendations for the development of Bahá'í studies contained in the letter prepared at the time of the Bahá'í Studies Conference in Newcastle upon Tyne in December 1986 and submitted by Mr. Stephen Lambden in October 1988.

The letter draws attention to the need to encourage Bahá'í studies at the academic level, to create a group of Bahá'ís who are professionally trained in their own and other religions and who are therefore able to communicate effectively with academics and experts in other religions. It further explains that this need is currently unmet due, in part, to the fact that individuals are discouraged from entering the field of religious studies because of the lack of adequate funds to support them during their training period and the scarcity of later employment opportunities, and to the fact that Bahá'í studies is not, as yet, a recognized field of academic study.

The letter submits, for the consideration of the Universal House of Justice, two suggestions for action that could be taken to alleviate the situation, namely:

1. the creation of a small number of post-graduate and post-doctoral fellowships in Bahá'í studies which could be tenable at a university anywhere in the world
2. the establishment of an international centre for Bahá'í studies to act as a focal point for the development of Bahá'í studies.

Before addressing the specific recommendations we feel it is useful to make some preliminary comments about the nature, scope and purpose of Bahá'í scholarship.

The development of Bahá'í scholarship is a matter of continuing interest to the Institutions of the Faith. One of the objectives of the Six Year Plan is to foster appreciation of the Faith "in scholarly and academic circles by developing Bahá'í scholarship". Bahá'í scholarship clearly has a vital role to play in the consolidation of the Bahá'í community and in enhancing its ability to respond to opportunities that arise from the emergence of the Faith into the arena of public attention.

In the Bahá'í context, scholarship is linked to the promotion and protection of the Faith, and with service to humanity, a service that is expressed directly through the extension of knowledge and the study of subjects that conduce to human well-being, and indirectly, through the gradual transformation of scholarly disciplines by their increasing contact with the light of the Divine teachings.

Bahá'í scholars are called upon not only to develop a high level of competence in their own chosen fields, but also to become scholars of the Faith and its teachings. Writing on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, his secretary stated:

If the Bahá'ís want to be really effective in teaching the Cause they need to be much better informed and able to discuss intelligently, intellectually, the present condition of the world and its problems. We need Bahá'í scholars, not only people far, far more deeply aware of what our teachings really are, but also well-read and well-educated people, capable of correlating our teachings to the current thoughts of the leaders of society.

We Bahá'ís should, in other words, arm our minds with knowledge in order to better demonstrate to, especially, the educated classes, the truths enshrined in our Faith....

This concept of scholarship, which allies spiritual knowledge and qualities with secular knowledge, and the desire and ability of the believer to relate the teachings to current thought, is reiterated in the following extract from a letter dated 21 October 1943 to an individual. It states:

The Cause needs more Bahá'í scholars, people who not only are devoted to it and believe in it and are anxious to tell others about it, but also who have a deep grasp of the Teachings and their significance, and who can correlate its beliefs with the current thoughts and problems of the people of the world.

The potential scope of Bahá'í scholarship is exceedingly broad. The Universal House of Justice in a letter dated 8 May 1985 addressed to the Bahá'í Youth of the World, for example, challenged "today's youth" to aspire toward excellence. It called upon them to:

...move towards the front ranks of the professions, trades, arts, and crafts which are necessary to the further progress of humankind...

While the definition of Bahá'í scholarship implicit in the extracts cited above in no way devalues academic learning, it is evident that an academic education constitutes but one important avenue toward the acquisition of scholarly knowledge and expertise. It is obviously not the only means of achieving this end. Further, though the pursuit of religious studies at the academic level is a useful and praiseworthy endeavour, which will doubtless contribute significantly to the advancement of one field of Bahá'í studies, the Universal House of Justice envisages that the development of the Faith will require believers with expertise in a broad range of specialities. For example, in addressing the Bahá'í youth in June 1966, the House of Justice wrote:

The Bahá'í community will need men and women of many skills and qualifications; for, as it grows in size the sphere of its activities in the life of society will increase and diversify. Let Bahá'í youth, therefore, consider the best ways in which they can use and develop their native abilities for the service of mankind and the Cause of God, whether this be as farmers, teachers, doctors, artisans, musicians, or any one of the multitude of livelihoods that are open to them.

The need articulated above by the Universal House of Justice inevitably has implications for the development of Bahá'í studies and underlines the importance of fostering scholarly activity in many different subject areas.

With regard to the suggestion about the creation of a small number of fellowships to enable individuals to pursue advanced academic degrees in Bahá'í studies (with an emphasis on religious studies), there are undoubtedly difficulties to be encountered by Bahá'ís entering this field and sacrifices to be made in this worthy form of Bahá'í service. At the same time, it is the view of the Committee that, at this particular stage in its unfoldment, the Bahá'í community stands in need of so many different kinds of expertise that it would be premature for the Institutions to single out this one area of Bahá'í studies for special funding. On the other hand, it would be appropriate for the individual believers in need to approach their National or Local Spiritual Assembly for assistance in locating funds to finance their studies.

As to the recommendation about the establishment of an international centre for Bahá'í studies to serve as a focal point for the development of Bahá'í studies: in the past, when such proposals have been made, the Universal House of Justice has expressed the preference for a more decentralized approach. The House of Justice has favoured the establishment of a number of separate organizing bodies, e.g., Associations for Bahá'í Studies, in different parts of the world, rather than having one world-wide Association. It does, however, acknowledge the desirability of there being "one international coordinating centre" with which the separate Associations could affiliate, and in a letter dated 1 January 1984 written on its behalf to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, it is stated that the House of Justice feels that this centre "should certainly be in Canada".

In light of the foregoing guidance and recognizing the differing stages of development of Bahá'í studies in the world-wide Bahá'í community, it would seem wise to continue, for the present, with the more decentralized approach to the organization of Bahá'í scholarship (in the broadest application of this term), rather than to attempt to crystallize such activities. This would allow for the natural evolution of the national and regional Associations and would help to preserve a degree of diversity so necessary at this early stage in the development of Bahá'í studies.

It is suggested, therefore, that the British friends interested in Bahá'í studies (religious studies) endeavour to work with the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Canada, in its capacity as an "international coordinating centre", seeking consultation and assistance with some of the needs they identify. Such collaboration could well hasten the further development of this aspect of the Association's functioning. Another group to which the friends could turn for possible collaboration is the recently established Association for Bahá'í Studies in Ireland.

In the long term, it is possible that, following the establishment of the Centre for the Study of the Texts, the Universal House of Justice might consider assigning the functions of stimulating and coordinating Bahá'í scholarship to this Institution.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE BAHÁ'Í STUDIES SEMINAR . JUNE 23rd-25th 1989.

Over the weekend of June 23rd-25th, more than 30 friends met at the Bahá'í Centre in Newcastle-on-Tyne for a Bahá'í Studies Seminar. Six presentations were made on a variety of areas related to the scripture, administration, and history of the Faith, and the practices of the Bahá'í community:

'Some Facts and a Credibility Gap: a Cause Within a Cause' by Keith Mellard (on the involvement of women in the administration of the British Bahá'í community).

'Liberalism and Fundamentalism: Towards an Understanding of the Dichotomy' by Moojan Momen.

'The Concept of "Manifestation" in the Bahá'í Writings and in the Gospel' by Kházeh Fananapazir and Sína Fazel.

'Some Aspects of Resurrection and the Resurrection of Jesus' by Stephen Lambden.

'What Was a Bahá'í?: Concerns of British Bahá'ís 1920-57' by Philip Smith.

'A Law Student's Reflections on International Law and Human Rights' by Payam Akhavan.

A letter from the Universal House of Justice in response to proposals made at a previous Seminar was read, and all those attending joined in wide-ranging discussion on many aspects of Bahá'í scholarship.

On the Saturday evening of the seminar weekend a brief synopsis of the important contribution of E.G.Browne to Bábí-Bahá'í studies was presented by Moojan Momen. Among other things it was pointed out that early in 1889 EGB was involved in studying and translating parts of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas at his parents' residence in Newcastle upon Tyne. The north of England has had small numbers of Bahá'ís for at least 50 years. The British Bahá'í Journal of 1940, for example, reported " signs of great activity" in Newcastle, mentioned that the Theosophical Society had been twice addressed by a Miss D.Jacobs of 9 Alexandra Place (Newcastle), and that there were Bahá'í study classes going on at the time. A Local Spiritual Assembly has been in existence in Newcastle more or less continually since the early 1950's.

It was during this same Saturday evening, June 24th 1989, that Dr Moojan Momen reviewed the life of EGB at the Civic Centre of Newcastle upon Tyne (for a few details see the article reproduced on p. 34 of this Bulletin).

Two letters and Memorandum of the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice to Hari Docherty in reply to questions relating to the role of the 'Letter of the Living' and leading Bábí Táhírih.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

10 January 1988

Mr. Hari Docherty
27 Kilnknowe Place
Galashiels
Selkirkshire TD1 1RH
United Kingdom

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice referred to the Research Department your letter of 1 December 1987 concerning a letter in which you understood that Shoghi Effendi had stated that women's suffrage was not part of Táhírih's concept. We are now directed to send you the enclosed copy of a memorandum prepared by that Department in response.

The House of Justice hopes that a study of this comprehensive memorandum will enhance your understanding of the exalted station of Táhírih and the extent of her influence on the emancipation of women and the ultimate achievement of peace.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Ethna Archibald

For Department of the Secretariat

Enclosure

M E M O R A N D U M

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 10 January 1988

From: The Research Department

TÁHIRIH

The Research Department has studied the questions raised by Mr. Hari Docherty in his letter of 1 December 1987 to the Universal House of Justice. Mr. Docherty refers to a letter of the Guardian which states that woman's suffrage was not part of the concept of Táhírih. He requests a copy of this letter and expresses the view that the association of woman's suffrage with Táhírih appears to originate with a book about her life by a Western woman, the idea later being picked up and given credence in "God Passes By". Mr. Docherty also expresses concern that many Bahá'í women put Táhírih before the Greatest Holy Leaf. We provide the following comment.

1. Letter about Táhírih

While the Research Department has been unable to locate a letter in which Shoghi Effendi stated that "women's suffrage was not part of her [Táhírih's] concept", the following extract from a letter dated 5 November 1949 written on behalf of the Guardian to a group of believers involved in arranging radio broadcasts in Latin America, may well be the one that Mr. Docherty had in mind. The relevant section of this letter states:

He feels that the projected radio broadcasts are of the utmost importance as they afford you an opportunity of bringing to many listeners a sense of the greatness of the Cause. In this connection he has some advice to give you: You should stick carefully to facts and beware of putting any interpretations of facts into it. Your best sources are Nabil's Narrative and Martha Root's book on Táhírih, as far as she is concerned, and, of course the general literature of our Faith. The Guardian advises you not to introduce into a series for public consumption anything obscure or mystical. By all means avoid the scene in the Presence of Bahá'u'lláh between Táhírih and Quddús. Her separation from her husband and children, her teaching in Baghdád, her imprisonment and death, and her poems, make a beautiful and moving tale. He would not call her the first suffragette, for this certainly was strictly speaking no part of her concept.

It is interesting to note that it is not correct to regard Táhírih as "the first suffragette". Indeed, the term "suffragette", meaning one who militantly agitates for the extension of the right to vote to women, would appear to be a misnomer when applied to Táhírih. A review of the outstanding accomplishments of her life of service to the Cause, contained in "God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 72-77, clearly indicates that the direct advocacy of suffrage for her sex was "strictly speaking no part of her concept".

While Tāhīrih cannot be regarded as the "first suffragette", she is described by the Guardian as the "first woman suffrage martyr" in "God Passes By", p. 75. From the context, it appears that though Tāhīrih was not actively and directly involved in advocating woman's suffrage, by proclaiming the advent of the New Day with its values of peace and unity, by transcending cultural constraints, by active involvement in the dramatic Conference at Badasht, she was participating in the initiation of a process that was to bring about a revolutionary transformation in human society, a transformation which, given further impetus by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, would, among other things, lead to the emancipation of women and include the right of women to vote and to participate in social decision-making. Her martyrdom served to underline the importance of the new Revelation and to stimulate interest in the situation of women.

2. Woman's suffrage

Mr. Docherty hazards the guess that the connection between Tāhīrih and woman's suffrage may have been introduced into the Faith by a Western woman and then amplified by Shoghi Effendi in "God Passes By". While it is possible that a Western author helped to popularize the contribution of Tāhīrih to the cause of women, as mentioned in (1.) above, the link between Tāhīrih and woman's suffrage derives from her espousal of spiritual values which initiated a process of fundamental social change.

With regard to the concept of woman's suffrage, it is the view of the Research Department that woman's suffrage must be considered within the framework of the practice of the principle of the equality of men and women. The principle of equality is clearly articulated in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (See the Compilation on Women.) Furthermore, there are numerous Tablets dealing with this subject which were revealed by the Master prior to His travels in the West.

With regard to the rights of women, 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated:

Women have equal rights with men upon earth; in religion and society they are a very important element.

The Master characterized woman's suffrage as one of these "rights". For example, He indicated:

At the time of elections the right to vote is the inalienable right of women...

'Abdu'l-Bahá also makes woman's suffrage a prerequisite to the attainment of universal peace. He stated:

Another fact of equal importance in bringing about international peace is woman's suffrage. That is to say, when perfect equality shall be established between men and women, peace may be realized for the simple reason that womankind in general will never favor warfare. Women will not be willing to allow those whom they have so tenderly cared for to go to the battlefield. When they shall have a vote, they will oppose any cause of warfare.

The Universal House of Justice in its Peace Statement reaffirmed the importance of the full emancipation of women to the achievement of peace.

3. The station of Tāhīrih

Mr. Docherty expresses concern that some of the friends give greater importance to Tāhīrih than to the Greatest Holy Leaf. In "God Passes By", p. 33, Tāhīrih is described as "the noblest of her sex in that [Bābī] Dispensation".

In "Messages to the Bahá'í World" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 74, the Guardian describes the Greatest Holy Leaf as "ranking as foremost among the members of her sex in the Bahá'í Dispensation". And, in "God Passes By", he states that she is:

...comparable in rank to those immortal heroines such as Sarah, Ásíyih, the Virgin Mary, Fátímih and Tāhīrih, each of whom has outshone every member of her sex in previous Dispensations.

Thus Tāhīrih and the Greatest Holy Leaf are each described as being pre-eminent in her particular Dispensation. It is therefore apparent that both are worthy of the high regard of the believers.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

16 March 1988

Mr. Hari Docherty
27 Kilnknowe Place
Galashiels
Selkirkshire TD1 1RH
United Kingdom

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your letter of 12 February 1988, in which you clarify the points raised in your letter of 1 December 1987, a copy of which is enclosed as you have requested, has been received by the Universal House of Justice and referred to the Research Department. The House of Justice warmly commends your insistence on accuracy in presenting any aspect of the teachings or history of the Faith, and applauds your obvious commitment to the cause of the advancement of women.

In sending for your study the enclosed copy of the further memorandum, and its attachments, on the topic of Tāhīrih, prepared by the Research Department, the House of Justice trusts that the issues that remained unanswered earlier will be satisfactorily addressed.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Arthur Archibald

For Department of the Secretariat

Enclosures - 2

M E M O R A N D U M

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 16 March 1988

From: The Research Department

ṬĀHIRIH

The Research Department has considered the issues raised by Mr. Hari Docherty in his letter dated 12 February 1988 to the Universal House of Justice. Mr. Docherty explains that Dr. Dennis MacEoin stated in a talk he gave some years ago at a Summer School, that Ṭāhirih's association with women's suffrage originated with a book by a Western woman, and that, while the words of Ṭāhirih to the effect that: "You can kill me as soon as you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women", may have the right ring in English, they were not credible within the context of 19th century Persian culture. We provide the following comment.

1. Ṭāhirih and Woman's Suffrage

The Research Department has not been able to locate conclusive evidence which supports the idea that Ṭāhirih's association with woman's suffrage originated with a book by a Western woman. It is our view, as was stated in our memorandum of 10 January 1988, that Ṭāhirih, by proclaiming the advent of the New Day with its values of peace and unity, by transcending cultural constraints, by active involvement in the dramatic Conference at Badasht, was participating in the initiation of a process that was to bring about a revolutionary transformation in human society, a transformation which, given further impetus by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, would, among other things, lead to the emancipation of women. The link between Ṭāhirih and woman's suffrage derives, then, in the first instance, from her espousal of spiritual values which initiated a process of fundamental social change.

In "God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), Shoghi Effendi stresses the impact of Ṭāhirih's life in the West. He wrote:

...the fame of this immortal woman was noised abroad, and traveling with remarkable swiftness as far as the capitals of Western Europe, aroused the enthusiastic admiration and evoked the ardent praise of men and women of divers nationalities, callings and cultures....

Western authors, inspired by the "wondrous story of her life", no doubt helped to popularize the contribution of Ṭāhirih to the cause of women. The tributes to Ṭāhirih from some of these writers are recorded in "God Passes By", on pp. 76-77.

2. Words of Tāhirih

With regard to the authenticity of the words of Tāhirih to the effect that: "You can kill me as soon as you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women", Mr. Docherty draws attention to an extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in Martha Root's book, "Tāhirih the Pure", rev. ed. (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1981), p. 98, which cites these same words. He requests a copy of this Tablet.

We enclose extracts from a talk delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at a meeting of the Women's Freedom League in London in January 1913. The extracts are published in "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), pp. 154-56. The words of Tāhirih are cited on page 155. The transcript of the complete talk is not available in the Bahá'í International Archives.

It is interesting to note that "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" by J.E. Esslemont was first published in 1923. It is, therefore, likely that when Shoghi Effendi was writing "God Passes By" in 1944, he was well aware of the existence of the Master's talk and he may well have drawn on it for his description of Tāhirih's death.

Martha Root quotes from the same talk of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in "Tāhirih the Pure". In the 1981 revision of Miss Root's book the wording of the Master's talk has been very slightly modified, and therefore does not accord exactly with the wording in "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era".

Extracts from a talk of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, cited in "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), pp. 154-56

Equality of Men and Women.

One of the social principles to which Bahá'u'lláh attaches great importance is that women should be regarded as the equals of men and should enjoy equal rights and privileges, equal education, and equal opportunities.

The great means on which He relies for bringing about the emancipation of women is universal education. Girls are to receive as good an education as boys. In fact, the education of girls is even more important than that of boys, for in time these girls will become mothers, and, as mothers, they will be the first teachers of the next generation. Children are like green and tender branches; if the early training is right they grow straight, and if it is wrong they grow crooked; and to the end of their lives they are affected by the training of their earliest years. How important, then, that girls should be well and wisely educated!

During His Western tours, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had frequent occasion to explain the Bahá'í teaching on this subject. At a meeting of the Women's Freedom League in London in January 1913, He said:--

Humanity is like a bird with its two wings -- the one is male, the other female. Unless both wings are strong and impelled by some common force, the bird cannot fly heavenwards. According to the spirit of this age, women must advance and fulfill their mission in all departments of life, becoming equal to men. They must be on the same level as men and enjoy equal rights. This is my earnest prayer and it is one of the fundamental principles of Bahá'u'lláh.

Some scientists have declared that the brains of men weigh more than those of women, and claim this as a proof of man's superiority. Yet when we look around us we see people with small heads, whose brains must weigh little, who show the greatest intelligence and great powers of understanding; and others with big heads, whose brains must be heavy, and yet they are witless. Therefore the avoirdupois of the brain is no true measure of intelligence or superiority.

When men bring forward as a second proof of their superiority the assertion that women have not achieved as much as men, they use poor arguments which leave history out of consideration. If they kept themselves more fully informed historically, they would know that great women have lived and achieved great things in the past, and that there are many living and achieving great things today.

Here 'Abdu'l-Bahá described the achievements of Zenobia and other great women of the past, concluding with an eloquent tribute to the fearless Mary Magdalene, whose faith remained firm while that of the apostles was shaken. He continued:--

Amongst the women of our own time is Qurratu'l-'Ayn, the daughter of a Muḥammadan priest. At the time of the appearance of the Báb she showed such tremendous courage and power that all who heard her were astonished. She threw aside her veil despite the immemorial custom of the women of Persia, and although it was considered impolite to speak with men, this heroic woman carried on controversies with the most learned men, and in every meeting she vanquished them. The Persian Government took her prisoner; she was stoned in the streets, anathematized, exiled from town to town, threatened with death, but she never failed in her determination to work for the freedom of her sisters. She bore persecution and suffering with the greatest heroism; even in prison she gained converts. To a Minister of Persia, in whose house she was imprisoned, she said: "You can kill me as soon as you like but you cannot stop the emancipation of women." At last the end of her tragic life came; she was carried into a garden and strangled. She put on, however, her choicest robes as if she were going to join a bridal party. With such magnanimity and courage she gave her life, startling and thrilling all who saw her. She was a truly great heroine. Today in Persia, among the Bahá'ís, there are women who also show unflinching courage, and who are endowed with great poetic insight. They are most eloquent, and speak before large gatherings of people.

Women must go on advancing; they must extend their knowledge of science, literature, history, for the perfection of humanity. Erelong they will receive their rights. Men will see women in earnest, bearing themselves with dignity, improving the civil and political life, opposed to warfare, demanding suffrage and equal opportunities. I expect to see you advance in all phases of life; then will your brows be crowned with the diadem of eternal glory.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

30 March 1987

Mr. Rob Stauffer
818 N. 30th
Renton, WA 98056
U. S. A.

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your letter of 16 December 1986 was referred by the Universal House of Justice to the Research Department, which has prepared responses to your first and third questions. A copy of the Department's memorandum is enclosed. In reply to your second question, we are instructed by the House of Justice to convey the following comments.

No reply has been found to the letter written by the Spiritual Assembly of Seattle to the Guardian in the 1930s, to which you refer. It would seem, however, from the general tenor of the many letters written by the beloved Guardian on the matter of deprivation of voting rights, that, in principle at least, there are no exceptions to the guidance given in the letter quoted on pp. 51-52 of "Messages to Canada", namely:

"...before anyone is deprived of their voting rights, they should be consulted with and lovingly admonished at first, given repeated warnings if they do not mend their immoral ways, or whatever other extremely serious misdemeanor they are committing, and finally, after these repeated warnings, be deprived of their voting rights."

There are, however, many different ways in which this is applied, depending upon the nature of the offence and the situation in each case.

For example, when there is an isolated, but serious offence, such as that of a Bahá'í woman who indulges in one act of immorality as a result of which she gives birth to a child out of wedlock, this is no grounds for the removal of administrative rights. But the Assembly, when it learns of the situation should certainly arrange for the believer to be met and consulted with, to assist her in her difficulties, to ascertain her attitude to the situation. If she has no regret for the offence and indicates that she feels free to repeat it in future, she will need to be educated in the teachings, counselled and, if she does not change her attitude, to be warned that a continuation of such actions would cause forfeiture of her administrative rights. If, however, she is contrite and is determined to lead a moral life henceforth there would be no question of sanctions. The same course would be followed with the man involved, if he were a Bahá'í.

Mr. Rob Stauffer
U. S. A.

30 March 1987
Page 2

Another example would involve, not a single offence, but a continuing course of behaviour, such as flagrant and continuing violation of the law prohibiting the drinking of alcohol, or of involvement in political activities. In such situations the Assembly should explain the law to the believer, urge him to obey it, encourage and assist him and warn him if necessary. If the response is favourable there would, again, be no need to deprive him of his administrative rights but, if the believer is obdurate or continues in his course of misbehaviour, he should, according to the circumstances of each case, be warned and warned again, with increasing severity and, if this produces no amelioration, he would have to lose his administrative rights.

A third example involves the taking of a definite step which violates a clear law with which the believer is familiar. Offences against the Bahá'í law of marriage mostly fall in this category. For example, if a believer enters into the married state (e.g. by having a civil wedding) without having a Bahá'í wedding, he must be instructed to immediately rectify the fault. This can often be achieved by having a Bahá'í ceremony without delay; however, there may well be obstacles to the marriage, such as a parent's refusal to give consent. If this consent is not forthcoming, enabling a Bahá'í ceremony to be held, the only solution is to have a divorce, and, pending this, the offender would have to be deprived of his administrative rights. This is not the place to go into all the complications that can arise in connection with breach of Bahá'í marriage law, but this example will suffice to illustrate the point that in such cases the deprivation of rights, while not being automatic, usually follows the offence more swiftly than in other kinds of offence.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,



For Department of the Secretariat

Enclosure - 1

M E M O R A N D U M

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 30 March 1987

From: The Research Department

QUESTIONS FROM MR. ROB STAUFFER

Mr. Rob Stauffer has raised several questions in a letter dated 16 December 1986. These questions have been referred to the Research Department for study. We offer the following information.

1. Mání

We have not been able to identify any reference to Mání in the letters written by or on behalf of the beloved Guardian.

2. The Magi

The Research Department has identified two references to the Magi in Tablets written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In one Tablet the Master expresses His hope that the recipient will be like that heavenly star which guided the Magi to Christ. He states in the other that the Magi looked with the eye of truth and were able to discover the star which was an evidence of the birth of Christ. They were thus led to the Son of Truth.

3. The Five-Pointed Star as a Symbol of the Faith

As Mr. Stauffer is no doubt aware, a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual and published in "Bahá'í News" 228 (February 1950) on page 4 states:

Strictly speaking the 5-pointed star is the symbol of our Faith, as used by the Báb and explained by Him.

A reference to the use by the Báb of the five-pointed star is made on page 69 of "God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974). However, the Research Department has not been able to identify the explanation to which Shoghi Effendi referred as the works of the Báb held at the World Centre are not as yet properly indexed.

4. Joseph Smith and the Mormons

In addition to the extracts regarding Joseph Smith and the Mormons published on pages 379 and 380 of "Lights of Guidance: A Bahá'í Reference File", comp. Helen Hornby (New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1983), we share the following quotations from letters written on the Guardian's behalf to individual believers:

Joseph Smith is nowhere mentioned in the Teachings. Some, however, of the Mormon doctrines are very close in spirit to our own beliefs, and the Mormons should prove a group well worth teaching the Faith to.

(28 September 1941)

Memorandum to the Universal House of Justice
30 March 1987

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As there is nothing specific about Joseph Smith in the Teachings, the Guardian has no statement to make on his position or about the accuracy of any statements in "The Book of Mormon" regarding American history or its peoples. This is a matter for historians to pass upon.

(31 May 1946)

Mr. Stauffer may wish to take note of the final sentence in the extract above. In his letters, Shoghi Effendi often advised friends who asked similar questions to refer to experts or authoritative books on that subject. Three extracts from such letters written on the Guardian's behalf are enclosed herewith.

Regarding the Magi, the Bahá'í World Centre Library has recommended the article in the "New Catholic Encyclopedia", vol. 9 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1967), pp. 60-5, as a good theological treatment of the subject. Other sources which provide interesting information are:

- "The New Encyclopædia Britannica", 15th ed., s.v. "Magi", vol. 7, p. 671; and s.v. "Zoroastrianism and Parsiism", vol. 29, p. 1079.
- "The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church", 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 858.
- "The Maryknoll Catholic Dictionary" (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965), pp. 349-50.
- "The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church", 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 620-1.

These sources--particularly the "New Catholic Encyclopedia"--also provide information on Mání and Manichaeism, as does an article by Daniel Keith Conner, 'Mani and Manichaeism: A Study in Religious Failure', "World Order", vol. 11, no. 2 (Winter 1976-77), pp. 36-45.

For further information on Joseph Smith and Mormonism, the Research Department suggests Mr. Stauffer consult:

- William P. Collins, 'The Bahá'í Faith and Mormonism: A Preliminary Survey', "World Order", vol. 15, nos. 1 & 2 (Fall 1980/Winter 1981), pp. 33-45;
- William P. Collins, 'The Bahá'í Faith and Mormonism: Further Reflections', "World Order", vol. 17, no. 3 (Spring 1983), pp. 25-33;

and the sources cited therein.

Enclosure

"As regards Confucianism; the Teachings contain no data on this subject, and the Guardian would therefore advise that you refer to authoritative books regarding the history and teachings of this Faith."

(From a letter dated 8 April 1939 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)

"Concerning your questions numbered 1, 2, 3, 6, about the Church and Christianity; as no detailed information is given in the Bahá'í teachings on these matters, the Guardian cannot answer you - this is for historians to prove and clarify."

(From a letter dated 1 April 1946 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)

"We Bahá'ís do not believe in Genesis literally. We know this world was not created in seven days, or six, or eight, but evolved gradually over a period of millions of years, as science has proved. As to where the idea of a seven-day week originated it is certainly very ancient and you should refer to scholars for an answer.

"The Guardian suggests, if you want to be referred to works of reference regarding the early Christian Church, that you ask some university, or large library, to give you the names of suitable books to read."

(From a letter dated 28 October 1949 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

17 June 1987

Miss Rouha Rose
20156 Marine View Drive, S.W.
Seattle, Washington 98166
U.S.A.

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice read with keen interest your letter of 30 March 1987 reporting the efforts being exerted by Bahá'ís in your area to study the Bahá'í literature on peace. We have been asked to convey its reply to your questions.

The House of Justice has noted that as a result of the dissemination of "The Promise of World Peace", a Senator has agreed to submit a "proposed" resolution in the Washington State Legislature and that, as you say, the "whole situation here with state resolutions and the need for citizens to write in support of them is getting out of hand". While the Bahá'í community should welcome any spontaneous actions on the part of legislators to respond to the urgent call issued in the Peace Statement, the friends should be very wise in determining their actions under such circumstances. They should consult their Spiritual Assemblies, Local and, if necessary, National, for this is an area of activities in which personal judgment is not sufficient.

It is not advisable for Bahá'í institutions or individuals to initiate actions designed to prod government leaders to urge their governments or the leaders of other governments to convene the world conference called for by Bahá'u'lláh and echoed in "The Promise of World Peace". Two points should be borne in mind in this regard: 1) Because of the political gravity of the decisions implied by this call and the differing political attitudes which it evokes, such actions on the part of the Bahá'í community would embroil the friends in partisan politics. There is quite a difference between identifying, as does the Peace Statement, the need for a convocation of world leaders and initiating the political processes towards its realization. 2) In the writings of the Faith (e.g., the closing passages of "The Promised Day Is Come"), it is clear that the establishment of the Lesser Peace, of which the conference of leaders will be a related event, will come about independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or action.

Miss Rouha Rose

17 June 1987

Page Two

The following reply was written on behalf of the beloved Guardian in a letter dated 14 March 1939 to an individual believer:

...Your view that the Lesser Peace will come about through the political efforts of the states and nations of the world, and independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or effort, and the Most Great Peace established through the instrumentality of the believers, and by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í super state - your view on this subject is quite correct and in full accord with the pronouncements of the Guardian as embodied in the "Unfoldment of World Civilization".

It is clear, then, that the friends must respect the prerogatives of political leaders in this matter and allow them the latitude to exercise the initiative that only they can effectively take towards the establishment of the Lesser Peace. The fact that Bahá'í institutions will not be directly involved in the eventual convocation of the world leaders and in effecting the political unity of nations does not mean that the Bahá'ís are standing aside and waiting for the Lesser Peace to come before they do something about the peace of humanity. Indeed, by promoting the principles of the Faith, which are indispensable to the maintenance of peace, by living the Teachings, and by fashioning the instruments of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, which we are told by the beloved Guardian is the pattern for future society, the Bahá'ís are constantly engaged in laying the foundation for world peace, the Most Great Peace being their ultimate goal. The Bahá'ís should do whatever they can within the context of their Bahá'í teaching and consolidation plans and also through their professional and other regular activities to promulgate universal peace.

Concerning your specific questions, the details of your current activities to promote peace should be taken up with your National Spiritual Assembly and its guidance followed. The grassroots effort of the Bahá'ís should prepare the ground for the transition from the present system of national sovereignty to a system of world government. This it can do by concentrating on wide and continual dissemination of the Peace Statement whose contents should be known by the generality of humanity, on engaging people from all walks of life in discussions on peace, and on instilling and encouraging a sense of personal commitment to the prerequisites of peace. In a word, what is needed now is a world-wide consciousness of not only the requirements but also the possibility, and inevitability, of peace. Therefore, our immediate and inescapable task as Bahá'ís is to imbue the populations with such hope.

The language of any proposed resolution and related details should, of course, be left to the legislators concerned. The House of Justice has no objection if the language used in such resolutions is drawn from or based upon the Peace Statement, and it is not necessary that any credit be given to the Faith for any ideas which may be attributable to the Statement.

Miss Rouha Rose

17 June 1987
Page Three

The House of Justice greatly appreciates the spirit of urgency and involvement conveyed by your letter. It assures you of its ardent prayers at the Holy Shrines that you and all the other friends engaged in peace activities may be guided and confirmed by the Blessed Beauty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Baharíah Káimí (Mrs)

For Department of the Secretariat

P.S. Your letter of 1 June was received while this reply to your previous letter was being written.

cc: National Assembly of the United States

SOME EXTRACTS FROM THE BULLETIN OF THE ASSOCIATION OF BAHÁ'Í STUDIES NO. 31
JUNE 1989/RAHMAT BE 146 : 34 Copernicus St., Ottawa, ON, Canada K1N 7K4.

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION
 CONFERENCE

The Bahá'í Seminar at the American Academy of Religion will hold a session at the American Academy of Religion Conference in Anaheim, CA, 18-21 November 1989. The session will consist of summaries and discussion of four papers that will be circulated in advance. These are: "Eden: Then and Now," Paula A. Drewek, Macomb Community College; "Cross and Prison Cell: Symbols of Sacrifice in Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith," Dann J. May, North Texas State University; "A Bahá'í Theology of Pluralism as a Basis for Bahá'í-Christian Dialogue," Christopher Buck, University of Calgary; and "An Early Bahá'í-Christian Dialogue in Iran," Susan Stiles, University of Arizona. Copies of these papers and further information about this session (which is open to observers) can be obtained from Robert H. Stockman, 38 Hancock Street, Somerville, MA, USA 02144.

FIRST CONFERENCE OF WORLD
 RELIGIOUS FUTURISTS

The First Conference of World Religious Futurists will be held 16-20 July 1989 in Washington, DC, in conjunction with the World Future Society Assembly. The Association for Bahá'í Studies Science and Technology Seminar has arranged for a paper, "The Ethical Applications of Computer Resources to Aid in Solving World Problems," to be given by Dr. Marion Finley of Montreal, Canada, on behalf of the Bahá'í Community.

ARCHIVES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Historians may be interested to learn that the archives relating to the late Ottoman period from 1800 are being opened to bona fide researchers. However, most of the documents have not yet been classified or catalogued. We thank Edward Rappaport of Maryland for providing us with this information.

BAHA'I LIBRARIANS' MEETING

The next meeting of Bahá'í librarians will be held at the Dallas Bahá'í Centre, 4235 W. Northwest Highway, 27 June 1989 from 2:00 to 4:00pm. This coincides with the annual meeting of the American Library Association. William Collins, Director of the World Centre Library, will speak about the work of the World Centre Library and the possibilities of service there.

There are now fifty-one librarians in nine countries in this group of Bahá'í librarians. They hope to establish a mailing list in the near future. For further information about the group, please contact Ralph Wagner, 802 Stadium Drive, Macomb, IL, USA 61455.

PERSIAN INSTITUTE FOR BAHÁ'Í
 STUDIES

The Persian Institute for Bahá'í Studies (P.O. Box 8464, Dundas, ON, L9H 6M2) has recently produced the second edition of *Nafahá't-i-faql* (booklet and tape). It hopes to publish in the near future:

- * The original text of *The Crisis and Victories*;
- * The Persian translation by R. Khoshbin and P. Samandari of W. Hatcher and D. Martin's *The Bahá'í Faith: Emerging Global Religion*;
- * The Persian translation by Minu Sabet of W. Hatcher's "Concept of Spirituality."

ASSOCIATION FOR
 BAHÁ'Í STUDIES
 PUBLICATIONS

The Journal of Bahá'í Studies

Members and subscribers should have already received copies of issues 1, 2, and 3 of volume 1 of *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*. Issue 4 should be published before the end of June. We apologize for the lateness of this issue. The Journal will continue to be sent free to members.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

In July 1987 B. Todd Lawson submitted his doctoral thesis 'The Qur'an Commentary of Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad, the Bab' to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Canada. The abstract and table of contents of this very competent thesis are reproduced below:

'The Bábí religion had, during its brief life, a tremendous impact on Iranian society. Its founder, Sayyid 'Alí Muhammad, the Bab (1819-1850) wrote a great many works of several kinds. Of his major writings, the two earliest are partial commentaries on the Qur'an. The following study examines these two remarkably different commentaries in an attempt to appreciate the Bab's attitude towards the Qur'an, Islam, and himself. The earliest work, the Tafsir sûrat al-baqara, was written before the Bab had publicized a claim to messiahship. In the Tafsir sûrat Yûsuf, written only a short time later, this claim is made explicit. The radical difference in the style of the two commentaries, which may be seen as a reflection of a development in the Bab's perception of himself, is analyzed. ¹

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Having been awarded his doctorate Todd Lawson has also published what seems to be a summary essay (which apparently had its origin as a paper presented at a conference held at the University of Calgary in April 1985 called 'The History of the Interpretation of the Qur'án') entitled, 'Interpretation as Revelation: The Qur'án Commentary of Sayyid ^cAlí Muhammad Shirazí, the Báb (1819-1852) and published in Andrew Rippin (Ed), Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'án (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1988), pp.223-253. An important essay of Dr. Lawson (now a lecturer in Islamics at the University of Toronto, Canada) is also published in Studies in Honour of the late Hasan M. Balyuzi (SBBH. Vol.5. see below).

Peter Smith and Moojan Momen, The Bahá'í Faith 1957-1988: A Survey of Contemporary Developments in [the periodical] Religion Vol.19 (1989), pp.63-91.

Abbas Amanat, Resurrection and Renewal. The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844-1850 (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London) 1989. ISBN. 0-8014-2098-9.

An important contribution to Bábí-Bahá'í scholarship some detailed reviews of this volume will appear in future Bulletins, Its table of contents reads as follows:

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STUDIES IN BĀBĪ AND BAHĀ'Ī HISTORY
VOLUME FOUR

MUSIC,
DEVOTIONS,
AND
MASHRIQU'L-ADHKĀR

R. JACKSON ARMSTRONG-INGRAM, PH.D.

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STUDIES IN THE
BĀBĪ AND BAHĀ'Ī RELIGIONS
(formerly Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History)

VOLUME FIVE

STUDIES IN HONOR OF
THE LATE HASAN M. BALYUZI

Edited by
MOOJAN MOMEN



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An international biannual report of books, pamphlets and magazines of interest to Bahá'í

Number 9

SPRING 1989Publications during
the year 1988

Achieving Peace by the Year 2000: A Twelve Point Proposal. John Huddleston. An integration of the principles of the peace statement into a series of international objectives to provide a route to the achievement of the Lesser Peace. SC. (Oneworld)

Bahá'í Focus on Development. Moojan Momen. A clear insight into the nature of development, an issue central to Bahá'í international activity. The Bahá'í contribution to development is shown to be a unique system of consultation. 96 pages, illustrated. SC, ISBN 0-900125-99-3. (UK BPT)

The Bahá'í Religion: A Short Introduction to its History and Teachings. Peter Smith. A straight-forward account of the rise of the Bahá'í Faith. A sociologist examines the tenets of the religion and the beliefs and practices of the Bahá'ís. Includes a lengthy appendix of materials selected from the Bahá'í scriptures and from the writings of Shoghi Effendi. 110 pages, 3 charts. 17.8 x 11.1cm/7 x 4 3/8 in. SC, ISBN 0-85398-277-5. (GR)

Black Pearls: Servants in the Households of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Abu'l-Qasim Afnan. Stories of the black believers who served the families of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh from the earliest days of the Faith, pieced together from the oral traditions of the Afnan family and from written records. HC, ISBN 0-933770-52-9. (Kalimat)

Blessings Beyond Measure: Recollections of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. Ali M. Yazdi. 'Abdu'l-Bahá as seen through the eyes of Ali Yazdi, as well as letters from the youthful Shoghi Effendi to 'my dearest Ali'. (USA BPT)

A Concordance to the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Compiled by Lee Nelson. Contains more than 160,000 references to all the significant words in ten books of Bahá'u'lláh and 22 compilations. With a guide on how to use the Concordance plus a foreword by Hooper Dunbar. (USA BPT)

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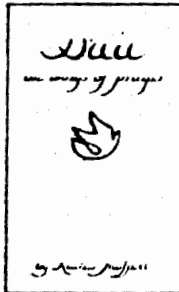
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ENCYCLOPÆDIA IRANICA

EDITED BY

EHSAN YARSHATER

This magnificent Encyclopædia the first three volumes of which are now completed and in print (Vol.1.1985;Vol.2.1987;Vol.3.1989) already contains a good many entries (some 40 or so ;many more to follow) of direct and central interest to persons working within the field of Bábí and Bahá'í studies. There are likewise scores of often pioneering articles which throw new light on the diverse and many faceted field of Bábí-Bahá'í studies. Most Baha'is working in academic disciplines in the West will, without doubt, recognize it as an indispensable and up to date reference tool. Part of its introductory essay by the renowned polymath Ehsan Yarshater is reproduced below as well as the note on its Persian and Arabic transliteration system (see further future Bulletins) and a selected list of articles of special interest.

INTRODUCTION

The *Encyclopaedia Iranica* is designed as a research tool responding to the needs of scholars, specialists, and students in Iranian studies and related fields. It aims at filling an important gap in the range of available reference sources which deal with the history and culture of the Middle East. Drawing on the expertise of an international body of scholars, it seeks to provide accurate and up-to-date presentations on topics of archeological, geographic, ethnographic, historical, artistic, literary, religious, linguistic, philosophical, scientific, and folkloric interest. Hence entry forms are well diversified beyond basic categories of biography and toponymy. The time span covered by the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* extends from pre-history to the present; however, biographies of living persons are excluded. Special emphasis has been placed on careful documentation of entries. Bibliographical references, if not given in the body of the article, are cited at its end.

In format, the *Encyclopaedia* is composed of articles arranged alphabetically. It will appear in successive fascicles of 112 pages each, to be bound later in volumes.

Scope. The *Encyclopaedia's* scope includes Iranian culture in a broad context and the reciprocal influences between Iran and its neighbors. By applying the perspective of the cultural continent of the Middle East, of which Iran has been a contributing part, it attempts to avoid the fault common to most reference works on Iran—that of concentration merely on the Iranian state. The *Encyclopaedia's* coverage encompasses the surrounding areas and their cultural relations with Iran, thus achieving the amplitude suggested by the name encyclopaedia. The following subjects are particularly stressed: Near Eastern, Indian, and Greco-Roman relations with Iran; the Indo-Muslim culture of the subcontinent; Caucasian and Central Asian civilizations; Shi'ite studies; and Iranian ethnography and folklore. Special attention is also paid to the history of the sciences and to such relatively neglected aspects of Iranian art history as calligraphy and music. A distinctive feature of the *Encyclopaedia* is its inclusion of entries under book titles: significant works each receive a separate article containing a description and critical evaluation of its content.

A major problem in the compiling of a well balanced body of articles on all aspects of Iranian life and culture is the lack of any precedent. In numerous instances, to provide a scholarly discussion of a given subject, research was initiated by this project, and many articles represent the first comprehensive and documented treatment of their titles. In such a situation it is inevitable that an occasional imbalance or gap may result from the paucity of ordered data and the absence of previous research. However, in the course of nearly seven years spent in preparation of the *Encyclopaedia*, such inadequacies have been reduced to a minimum.

TRANSLITERATION OF LANGUAGES

Transliteration. The major transcription problem in Iranian studies results from the difficulty of coordinating the representation of Persian and Arabic words. The system which has found fairly wide acceptance and is used with some variations by the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the Library of Congress, and the *Cambridge History of Iran* does not entirely suit the rendering of Persian. On the

other hand, a scheme designed for Persian does not fit Arabic. Yet so many Arabic words, titles, and phrases are intimately involved in Persian usage that the employment of two systems would be unfeasible and would lead only to chaos. Unfortunately, no amount of ingenuity can devise a scheme ideal for rendering both Persian and Arabic. Any proposed system is bound to prove unsatisfactory in some respect and to offend a cherished habit or usage.

The *Encyclopaedia's* approach to the problem seeks to balance the difficulties of transliteration and those of pronunciation; it aims at an accurate rendering with compact and simple forms. In order not to add to the proliferation of systems, the *Encyclopaedia* has worked out one in conjunction with the Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum and the Persian Heritage Series, after adequate consultation with a number of leading scholars. In this scheme (charted below, p. 4), digraphs have been discarded, and each phoneme is represented by a single letter. The two "anomalies" in the resulting system are *k̄* used for the voiceless glottal plosive (traditionally "kh") and *ḡ* for the voiced glottal plosive or affricate ("gh"). Although perhaps jarring at first sight, these renderings are not without precedent in the transliterations used by orientalists.

However, several concessions have been made in order to accommodate current usage and to avoid confusion. Thus the macron indicating vowel length has been retained in *ī* and *ū*, and the Arabic definite article has been written as *al-* even when the *-l* precedes a *samsi* letter. Compound proper names are indicated as a unit by means of hyphens. When the first element of a name is 'Abd-, Abū-, or Ebn-, the second element is capitalized; when the first element is another word than these three, the second element is in lower case. For example, 'Abd-al-Ḥayy, Abu'l-Faẓl, Nāṣer-al-dīn, Neẓām-al-molk.

Persian and Arabic

The system employed here aims to achieve simplicity and accuracy. It has been jointly adopted by the Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, The Persian Heritage Series, The Persian Studies Series, and the Modern Persian Literature Series.

Some common personal titles and frequently cited place names are given in anglicized form; all other terms are transliterated. For further discussion of the transliteration system, see the Introduction, p.1.

| CONSONANT | | | CONSONANT | | | VOWEL | |
|-----------|---------|--------|-----------|--------|------|---------|--------|
| | Persian | Arabic | Persian | Arabic | | Persian | Arabic |
| ا | ā | أ | z̄ | ḏ | ا | ā | |
| ب | b | ب | ṭ | | ب | ā | |
| پ | p | پ | z | | و | ū | |
| ت | t | ت | ḡ | | ی | ī | |
| ث | ṭ̄ | ث | f | | اَ | a | |
| ج | j | ج | q | | اِ | e | |
| چ | č | چ | k | | اِو | a, e | a |
| ح | h | ح | g | | اِوِ | aw, ow | aw |
| خ | k̄ | خ | l | | اِی | ay, ey | ay |
| د | d | د | m | | | | |
| ذ | ḏ, z̄ | ذ | n | | | | |
| ر | r | ر | v | w | | | |
| ز | z | ز | h | | | | |
| ژ | z̄ | ژ | y | | | | |
| س | s | س | | | | | |
| ش | š | ش | | | | | |
| ص | ṣ | ص | | | | | |

The letter *z̄* is represented as *h*.

When Abū or the Arabic preposition *fi* is followed by the article *al-*, the macron is omitted and the vowel letter remains unchanged, i.e., Abu'l-, *fi'l-*.

Volume I. ĀB - ANĀHĪD Routledge & Kegan PaulLondon, Boston and Henley
1985.

- ^cAbbas b.Reza-Qolī Khan Nūrī [= Mīrzā Buzūrg, father of Bahá'u'lláh]
P.P.Soucek p.84.
- ^cAbd al-Bahá'..... A.Bausani+ D.MacEoin.....pp.102-104.
- ^cAbd al-Rezā Khan Ebrāhīmī, Haji Sarkar Āqā [5th Kirmanī Shaykhī head]
D.MacEoin..... p.161.
- Abu'l Faẓl..Golpāyegānī..... M.Momen..... p.289.
- Abu'l-Qasem Khan Ebrāhīmī, Haji Sarkar Āqā [4th Kirmani Shaykhi head]
D.MacEoin.....pp.363-4.
- Adīb Tālaqānī, Haji Mirza Hasan [Hand of Cause & Apostle of Bahá'u'lláh]
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- Afnān..... M.Momen.....pp.567-9.
- Ahsā'ī, Shaykh Ahmad b.Zayn-Al-Dīn .. D.MacEoin.....pp.674-9.
- ^cAlī Akbar Šahmīrzādī, Haji Mollā [Hand of Cause & Apostle of Bahá'u'lláh]
M.Momen.....p.857.
- ^cAlī Bestamī, Mollā [4th Letter of the Living].....
D.MacEoin.....p.860.
- Amīn, Hajī [x2 Trustees of Huqúq Alláh] M.Momen.....pp.939-9.

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- Aqdās..... A.Bausani.....pp.191-2.
- Ardakānī, Hājjī Abu'l-Hasan [Hand of Cause & Apostle of Bahá'u'lláh]
D.MacEoin.....p.371.

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- Āyadī E Amr Allāh..... D.MacEoin.....pp.129-30.
- Āyatī, ^cAbd al-Hosayn ['Covenant Breaker'] I.Afshar.....p.133.
- Azali Babism..... D.MacEoin.....pp.179-81.
- Bāb, Sayyid ^cAli Mohammad Sirazi..... D.MacEoin.....pp.278-84.
- Babism..... D.MacEoin.....pp.309-15.
- Babi Executions & Uprisings..... D.MacEoin.....pp.315-17.
- Badast..... M.Momen.....p.364.
- Badī' [Calendar]..... D.MacEoin.....p.376.
- Badī' Āqā Bozorg..... M.Momen.....pp.376-7.
- Bahā' Allāh, Mīrzā Hosayn ^cAlī Nūrī..... J.Cole.....pp.422-9.
- Bahai Faith or Baháism [i]..... J.Cole.....pp.438-46.
- Bahai Calendar & Festivals [ii]..... A.Bausani.....pp.446-7.
- Bahai and Babi Schisms [iii]..... D.MacEoin.....pp.447-9.
- The Bahai Communities [iv]..... P.Smith.....pp.449-54.
- The Bahai Community of Iran [v]..... V.Rafati.....pp.454-60.
- The Bahai Community of Ashkhabad (Esqabad) [vi] V.Rafati.....pp.460-1.
- Bahai Persecutions [vii]..... D.MacEoin.....pp.461-4.
- Bahai Shrines [viii]..... J. Walbridge.....pp.464-5.
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| Baragānī, Molla Mohammad-Taqī | D.MacEoin..... | p.740. |
| Bayān..... | D.MacEoin..... | pp.878-882. |



Mircea Eliade [et al] Ed., The Encyclopedia of Religion, 16 Vols
(Macmillan Publishing Company. New York)
1987 . ISBN 0-02-909480-1 (set).

This important reference work was the subject of a learned series of review articles in the English (U.K.) periodical Religious Studies Vol.24 (1988) pp.3-64 (see especially, Julian Baldick, 'Islam and the Religions of Iran in the Encyclopedia of Religion', pp.47-56) and other international periodicals of various kinds. It contains four articles of interest to students of the Bābī and Bahā'ī religions:

Babis, [by the late] Alessandro Bausani, Volume 2. pp.32-34.

Bahais, Alessandro Bausani , Volume 2. pp.40-42.

Qurrat Al-^cAyn [= Tāhīrih], Annemarie Schimmel, Volume 12. pp.179-180.

A rather poor article with quite a few errors of fact and an inadequate bibliography.

Shaykhiyah [= Shaykhism], Steven Scholl, Volume 13. pp.230-233.

Cyril Glasse, The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, Stacey International, London, 1989. ISBN. 0-905743-52-0. £35. 472pp.

A useful though somewhat idiosyncratic single-volume encyclopaedia encompassing the beliefs, practises, history and culture of the Islamic world.. which gives considerable coverage to Sufi and Shī'ī ('orthodox' as well as 'heterodox') aspects of Islām. There are tolerably accurate entries of central interest including:

Bāb (p.61); Bābīs (p.61); Bahā'is (p.62; some serious errors); Shaykhis (pp.363 364).

Peter Smith, 'Bābism and the Bahā'ī Faith' Chapter within the volume An Illustrated Survey of the World's Living Religions. Macdonald Orbis Book, Macdonald & Co.Ltd. 1987. pp.173-6+186 [sic.defective binding in the edition seen]. ISBN.0-356-140628. U.K.£19.95p.