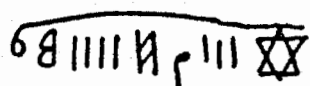


# BAHĀ'Ī STUDIES BULLETIN

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NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
ENGLAND  
U.K.

## BAHĀ'Ī STUDIES BULLETIN

This Bulletin has the full support of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahā'īs of the United Kingdom: though they are not responsible for any of the views expressed within it. The BSB is primarily designed to facilitate communication between those among us engaged in the academic study of the Bābī and Bahā'ī religions; particularly between Bahā'īs approaching this field from such scholarly perspectives as Religious Studies, History of Religions, Iranian Studies, or Islāmic Studies. It is hoped that at some stage in the future the Bulletin will be befittingly published rather than photostatically reproduced.

Articles published in this Bulletin are the perspectives of their authors *alone*. As with other Bahā'ī periodicals the content is obviously fallible; though hopefully intellectually and spiritually stimulating or challenging. Established Bahā'ī doctrine and the authoritative guidance of Bahā'ī institutions is respected though creative and scholarly individuality is neither inhibited nor censored. When printed here, translations of Bahā'ī sacred scripture--not authenticated at the Bahā'ī World Centre--are provisional. Manuscript / original scriptural texts (when printed) may or may not be textually sound.

A steady and sustained flow of scholarly contributions is vital to the success of this Bulletin: academic qualifications from western institutions of higher learning are not required of contributors. The nature and scope of contributions that would be welcome for inclusion in this Bulletin includes (for example):-

- \* Copies of manuscripts or of generally unavailable scriptural texts (or portions thereof) with or without comments about their importance/ dating/diffusion/text-critical status or linguistic style.
- \* Essays or short notes upon an aspect or aspects of Bahā'ī doctrine or history.
- \* Copies of letters written by or on behalf of the Universal House of Justice (or International Bahā'ī institutions) to individuals about or relating to aspects of Bahā'ī scholarship.
- \* Methodological essays or notes.
- \* Notices of books, papers or reviews of direct or indirect interest to Bahā'ī scholars working within such disciplines as are listed above (first paragraph).
- \* Reviews or review essays of Bahā'ī publications.
- \* Reports of Bahā'ī studies seminars or conferences.
- \* Reports of work in progress from people working within the field of Bābī-Bahā'ī studies.
- \* [Bio-]Bibliographical essays or notes.

All contributions to this Bulletin should be addressed to: Stephen Lambden (BSB Editor), 30 Victoria Square, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4DE, England, United Kingdom. Ideally, two copies of contributions should be clearly typed / word processed [ transliteration clearly indicated] and accompanied (if possible) by the ASCII / [ or a major DOS ] word processing file format [ either 3<sup>1/2</sup> or 5<sup>1/4</sup> acceptable ].

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

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A new editorial board and an overseas group of sub-editors has recently been formed for the BSB. From henceforth Dr Moojan Momen and Stephen Lambden will jointly act as main editors for the U.K. production ( address overleaf ) . The overseas sub-editors, primarily responsible for American and Canadian contributions, are : Dr. Juan Cole, Department of History, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1045.; Dr B. Todd Lawson, Department of Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies, University of Toronto, Toronto M5S 1A1 . It is planned that both the U.K. and the overseas editorial / sub-editorial boards will in future be further expanded.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

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At present the BSB is in a state of flux pending major reformatting and distribution arrangements: as a temporary measure the BSB will only be available from S. Lambden. The editors are particularly grateful to Richard Hollinger and Robert Stauffer for their sacrificial distribution work in past years.

Due to the current BSB format ( full [largely] lazer printed A4 size + thermal binding, etc. ) the price has increased slightly: a 50 page ( single) issue would cost £4 + postage = U.K. £0.66p /85p [1st Class] **Airmail** --> Europe £1.10 // --> **Zone 1** [e.g. Israel, USA. & Canada ] £3.00 // -> **Zone 2** [ e.g. Japan & Australasia ] £3.50. Postage rates for issues larger than 50 pp. will increase. If requested surface mail rates can be used: though considerably cheaper this rate takes in excess of 1 month. The price in pounds sterling will be attached to each single or larger issue of the BSB. Payment must precede the posting of the BSB. Subscribers will be regularly informed of their balance.

Due to the many publications titled similarly, a new title is sought for the BSB -- to be used from (the future) BSB 7:1. Unless a better suggestion[s] is forthcoming, the future title will be, **Phoenix: A Journal of Bābī-Bahā'ī Studies** ( reactions, positive & negative, invited). Offers of help with BSB distribution and printing are sought. The U.K. editors are currently seeking reasonably experienced Bahā'ī [desktop- ] publishers willing to take on the job of publication from finalized computer/word processor files : ideally capable of handling oriental languages and printing with modern academic transliteration norms e.g. flat macrons ( as in ā , ī , ū ), etc.

From time to time issues forming part of a **BAHĀ'Ī STUDIES BULLETIN MONOGRAPH** series will come out : including, for example, oriental Bābī / Bahā'ī MSS and specialized articles of such length as would not normally be suitable ( e.g. in excess of 50 pages ) for the BSB. In fact the first such thermally bound monograph, Moojan Momen's *The Works of Shaykh Ahmad al-Aḥsā'ī, A Bibliography...* ( 177 pp. [English language] ) is now available from Stephen Lambden : see the sheet at the end of this BSB.

Selected articles from past issues of the BSB may be available on request from the editors ( U.K. address). Copies of the BSB should not be made or distributed without the prior permission of the editors.

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BAHĀ'U'LLĀH'S "SŪRAH OF THE COMPANIONS": AN EARLY EDIRNE TABLET  
OF DECLARATION (c.1864) INTRODUCTION AND PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION  
JUAN R. I. COLE.

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## INTRODUCTION

How does a religion come into being? The question preoccupies historians of religion, but remains very difficult to answer if we look at most of the historical world-religions. Zoroaster, perhaps the first truly monotheistic prophet to found an organized religion in the axial age, remains shrouded in mystery, and the primary materials that would tell us when and where he preached have been destroyed by time, language shifts, Muslim persecution, and the white ants of Gujerat where the Parsi exiles settled. Mary Boyce thinks he lived 1200-1000 B.C.E., and Khurasān seems a likely venue, though none of this is settled. Moses (c. 13 B.C.E.?) remains obscured by myth (the Pentateuch stories of the escape of the Hebrews from Egypt are uncorroborated by the rather extensive hieroglyphic records at Luxor), Krishna (900 B.C.E.?) even more so (the *Bhagavad-Gita* does not form part of the critical edition of the *Mahabharata*, and is probably as late as 200 B.C.E.). The earliest records of Buddhism, the Pali texts, exist only in Pali translations or transmogrifications from the Sanskrit dating from around the time of Christ, that is, half a millennium after the Buddha's death. The puzzle of Jesus of Nazareth and the New Testament corpus has kept a scholarly industry going for two millennia, the only widely-accepted conclusion being that he almost certainly did not think he was the third person of the Trinity. Although Islām is often said to have been born in the light of history, only the Qur'ān remains as a sure documentary record of the Prophet's thinking during his lifetime, and the biographical, oral-report and chronicle materials for the Prophet's life are even more remote from Muhammad than are the New Testament materials from Jesus. The chronological ordering of the sūrahs or chapters of the Qur'ān, a key task for historical understanding, can only be attempted very provisionally, and Nöldeke's nineteenth-century attempt is still serviceable (a sign of lack of progress).

Although the Bahā'ī Faith is still relatively young and relatively small, it is arguably already a world-religion in its own right, because of its distinctiveness, its missionary zeal and ready acceptance of converts, and its world-wide diffusion. As E.G. Browne thought, it forms a perfect laboratory for the historian of religion, insofar as it is recent enough to afford the sort of glimpse into religion-formation that is much more difficult to gain with the older traditions. An immediate observation that comes to the mind of anyone familiar with the formation of the Bahā'ī Faith as a religion is that the process appears extremely complex. We begin with the millenarian and metaphysical speculations of the Shaykh īs (1792-1844), proceed to the brief, turbulent lifetime of the Bāb (1844-1850), go on to the dark and mysterious period of Middle Bābism (1850-1863), when Mīrzā Yahyā Nūrī 'Azal' was widely recognized as the preeminent Bābī leader, and arrive finally at the Edirne ('Adrianople') period, when the Bābī leadership resided in European Turkey (1864-1868).

The Edirne period (like many of the others) remains full of enigmas, and it was here that the Bahā'ī Faith as an organized movement (as opposed to an idea in the mind of Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī Nūrī 'Bahā'u'llāh') was actually born. For between 1863 and 1867 Middle Bābism was transformed into two rather different movements, the Bahā'ī Faith on the one hand, and Azalī Bābism on the other, with Bahā'u'llāh making claims to be the Promised One of the Bāb, and Azal rejecting them in favour of his own claims to be vicar (*vasī*) of the Bābī religion. Now, as for the promise that the formation of the Bahā'ī Faith might be much more illumined by the light of history even than Islām, so far this promissory note remains largely unredeemed. Although we now have at least three first-rate recent dissertations on Bābism, one of them published, relatively little academic scholarship has yet been devoted to the emergence of the Bahā'ī Faith itself. Both letters and chronicles exist that would shed light on the way in which the Bahā'ī Faith developed out of Middle Bābism, but most of the important chronicles remain in manuscript at the International Bahā'ī Archives in Haifa, Israel, for reasons I find it difficult to discern, these have not been made available to academic scholars. I will say more about why I think their

accessibility important below. Letters and memoirs in local Bahā'ī archives in Iran are inaccessible at the moment because of the persecution of the Bahā'ī Faith by the Islāmic Republic of Iran, and, indeed, the long-term survival of these priceless records remains in doubt.

Two major primary accounts of the Edirne period have been published in translation but not in the original, that of Muhammad 'Alī Salmānī and that of Mīrzā Javād Qazvīnī, but despite the insights each gives, neither is particularly useful for the intellectual history of the emergence of the Bahā'ī Faith. Salmānī was illiterate and had little idea what was in the letters of Bahā'u'llāh that he carried, and his memoirs signally lack dates for important events.<sup>1</sup> Qazvīnī was literate and in Edirne in 1867, at least, but his account of the period is highly abbreviated.<sup>2</sup> A further primary source to which authors presently have access is the manuscript account of Sayyid Mīhdī Dahajī. This companion of Bahā'u'llāh was in Baghdad from 1856, but appears to have stayed on there after Bahā'u'llāh left in 1863. It was not until 1866 or 1867 (1283) that he heard that Bahā'u'llāh had openly declared himself (*izhār-i zuhūr farmūdih and*).<sup>3</sup> His work is not therefore a primary source for the Edirne period. It is fervently to be hoped that the chronicles in MS in Haifa shed a great deal more light on this period than the material currently available. The European consular and missionary reports published by Momen, as one might expect, have little to

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad 'Alī Salmānī, *My Memories of Bahā'u'llāh*, trans. Marzieh Gail (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1982), pp. 42-58, 93-105; I have also consulted the Persian MS, courtesy of the Kalimat Press archives.

<sup>2</sup> Mīrzā Jawad, "Historical Epitome," trans. in E.G. Browne, ed., *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1919), pp. 21-29; the Arabic original is Mīrzā Javād Qazvīnī, "Risālah," MS, Cambridge University Library, Browne Or. F. 57, on microfilm here at the University of Michigan, British Manuscript Project.

<sup>3</sup> Sayyid Mīhdī Dahajī, "Risālih," University Library Cambridge, Browne Collection, Or. F. 57; for this point see p. 34.

say about the development of Bahā'u'llāh's ideas between 1864 and 1867, and are much better for fixing his relationship to the state and to the Europeans just before his exile to Akkā' in 1868. The documents in the Ottoman archives which Momen lists, however, look to be much more suggestive, and it is imperative that Bahā'īs with a knowledge of Ottoman Turkish get into the Istanbul repositories if we are to have a full historical account of the development of the Bahā'ī Faith."<sup>4</sup> While the Ottoman documents may often be hostile or misleading, used in conjunction with internal Bahā'ī sources, they could be most illuminating.

For the moment, then, we are thrown back on a different sort of source, but one in any case essential to the reconstruction of the unfolding self-conception of Bahā'u'llāh as the founder of a new religion. Letters from Bahā'u'llāh to Bābīs written between late 1863 and the final break with his half-brother Azal in 1867 have been published in great numbers, particularly in the fourth volume of the series *Writings of the Supreme Pen (Āthār-i qalam-i a'lā)* issued by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahā'īs of Iran before 1979.<sup>5</sup> Even these materials pose formidable problems for academic inquiry. Almost none of these published texts by Bahā'u'llāh has a colophon, and the manuscripts on which they are based are not identified. The published texts, moreover, are not critical editions (to date virtually no critical editions of Bahā'u'llāh's tablets have been prepared). All this means that most of these Edirne Bahā'ī texts cannot be precisely dated. A few dates can be gleaned from the works of Bahā'īs who for one reason or another have gained access to the biographical and chronicle primary sources in MS in Haifa, but these constitute only a handful of tablets. Āqā Ridā Qannād Shīrāzī in his biography of Bahā'u'llāh apparently mentions the *Tablet for Sayyāh (Lawh-i Sayyāh)* and the *Tablet of the Point (Lawh-i*

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<sup>4</sup> Moojan Momen, *The Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions, 1844-1944, Some Contemporary Western Accounts* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1981), pp. 185-200.

<sup>5</sup> Bahā'u'llāh, *Āthār-i qalam-i a'lā*, vol. 4 (Tehran: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, B.E. 125/1968).

*nuqṭih*) as having been revealed in 1280/1863-1864.<sup>6</sup>

Although Bahā'u'llāh declared himself to a handful of close relatives and friends in Baghdad on 21 April-2 May 1863, this declaration remained a closely guarded secret for a period of perhaps nine or ten months. Neither the *Tablet of Patience* (or of Job: *Lawh-i ṣabr*), written on 21 April, nor the subsequent tablets of Bahā'u'llāh revealed in Istanbul, give any explicit indication of Bahā'u'llāh's claim. Bahā'u'llāh did begin openly declaring himself to a few select individuals and their circles as early as winter, 1864, but for the next two or three years this declaration proceeded fairly clandestinely, and at least some of Bahā'u'llāh's writings in the period 1864-1867 avoid mentioning his claims.

We now have two contemporary academic versions of Middle Bābism and the emergence of the Bahā'ī Faith. The first in order of appearance is that of myself and Stephen Lambden, which accepts that Bahā'u'llāh experienced some sort of intimation of an independent mission to the Bābīs while imprisoned in the Siyāh Chāl in winter 1852-53. We therefore tend to read the writings of Bahā'u'llāh 1853-1863 in the light of a 'messianic secret,' which was gradually divulged to the Bābī community 1863-1867. I do not deny that publicly Bahā'u'llāh deferred to his half-brother Azal as the titular leader of the community in 1853-1863, or that a significant proportion of the Bābī community back in Iran accepted the primary leadership claims of Azal.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Āqā Ridā Qannād Shīrāzī, MS, cited in H.M. Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh, King of Glory* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1980), p. 220.

<sup>7</sup> Juan R. Cole, "Bahā'u'llāh and the Naqshbandi Sufis in Iraq, 1854-1856," in Juan R. Cole and Moojan Momen, eds., *From Iran East and West: Studies in Bābī and Bahā'ī History* (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1984), pp. 1-28; and the translations of some of Bahā'u'llāh's Baghdad-period works by S. Lambden in *Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin*. 2/3 (1983):107-12, 3/1(1984):4-67, 3/2 (1984):4-114.



A very different interpretation has recently been offered by Denis MacEoin.<sup>8</sup> He argues that in 1849-1850 the Bāb did in fact recognize Mīrzā Yahyā Nūrī 'Subh-i Azal,' then 19 years of age, as his vicar or *vaṣī*. He goes on to discuss several Bābīs who made unsuccessful competing claims in the 1850s, including Dhabīh (whom MacEoin identifies as Mīrzā Ismā'īl Kāshānī), Sayyid Baṣīr Hindī, Mīrzā Husayn Milanī, Muḥammad "Nabīl-i A'zam" Zarandī, and Mīrzā Asadu'llāh Khu'ī Dayyān (whom Azal ordered put to death). MacEoin turns finally to Mīrzā Husayn Alī Nūrī, Bahā'u'llāh, quoting surviving letters reproduced in Azalī polemical works that show Bahā'u'llāh speaking of Azal with great deference and veneration in the 1850s, praising works of his like the *Kitāb-i nūr* as 'extremely necessary for the people of the Bayān,' ascribing some sort of divinity to Azal, and claiming a much lesser station for himself in the 1850s.

Among the problematic texts in any discussion of Bahā'u'llāh's self-concept before 1863 is a passage in the *Kitāb-i Īqān* (1862, not 1858 as E.G. Browne mistakenly dated it, depending on a misreading of the Persian). Therein, Bahā'u'llāh says that he had intended to dwell in Kurdistan permanently when he left Baghdad in 1854. Such an intention, some argue, is incompatible with a belief that he was He whom God would make manifest. Bahā'u'llāh goes on to say that he returned only because there "came the summons bidding us return whence we came," from the source of command (*maṣḍar-i amr*). Browne and others have suggested that this phrase referred to Azal, and that it shows that Bahā'u'llāh still thought himself under Azal's authority at the time of that writing.<sup>9</sup>

The main issues in the debate over Bahā'u'llāh's evolving self-concept seem to me to be

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<sup>8</sup> Denis MacEoin, "Divisions and Authority Claims in Bābism (1850-1866)," *Studia Iranica* 18, 1 (1989):93-129.

<sup>9</sup> MacEoin, "Divisions," p. 117; Bahā'u'llāh, *Kitāb-i Īqān* (Cairo: Mawsu'at Publishers, 1900), pp. 210-11; trans. Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, *The Kitāb-i Īqān: The Book of Certitude* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 3rd edn., 1970), p. 251.

four. The first is whether the Bāb bestowed some sort of special recognition upon Azal in 1849-1850. The second is whether Azal's claims to leadership were more widely accepted than challenged in the 1850s. The third centers on Bahā'u'llāh's relationship to Azal in the 1850s, interrogating both his openly stated and his internal attitudes to his younger half-brother. The fourth has to do with the circumstances under which Bahā'u'llāh began openly declaring his own mission in 1863-64. The last of these issues forms a primary material has convinced me that Azal's leadership was very widely accepted in the 1850s, though also frequently challenged, and that many communities went over to Bahā'u'llāh from 1864 only after a real struggle with their consciences. The other three issues, I propose to investigate from the point of view of the accessible sources on Bahā'u'llāh's own thinking in this period. Academic scholars will share in certain premises in investigating these issues. First, we value primary accounts over secondary ones, and early accounts over later ones. Certainly, contemporary Azalī texts cannot be left out of the accounting, though they are unlikely to shed much light on Bahā'u'llāh's private thinking. Second, we will maintain that Bahā'u'llāh's self-concept changed over time (an idea that would be anathema to Bahā'īs of a fundamentalist cast), and that his relationship to Azal also changed over time (indeed, had its ups and downs). We further tend to hold that scripture, like any other document in a human language, must be read contextually and in terms of intent and audience and the instability of texts. Scholars will differ in the nuances of their argument. I believe that Bahā'u'llāh had, right from 1850, a conviction of his future importance as a Bābī leader, and I think that by the time of his stay in Sulaymaniyyah in 1855-56 he was convinced that he was a prophet. In short, I believe that he maintained for much of the Baghdad period a 'messianic secret.'

Laudatory statements of the Bāb about Azal survive in Azalī MSS, but none of them can be read as an outright transfer of authority to Azal or an appointment of him as something like an 'imām.' I do not myself consider this a terribly important issue, but want to signal that I do not by any means think it is by any means a settled one. As we shall see below,

even the question of who is being addressed in the persona of Azal remains problematic. As for Bahā'u'llāh's self-concept, here I must restate the primacy of Bahā'u'llāh's own later account of his thought, for autobiography must be weighted seriously in biography. It would be extraordinarily dangerous to entirely set aside the statements of the subject of a biography about his own life, except on the best possible contemporary evidence. The accounts of Bahā'u'llāh's close companions, eyewitnesses to the Baghdad and early Edirne periods, must also be weighted above descriptions emanating from those not in Bahā'u'llāh's circle or from second-generation writers not themselves eyewitnesses.

My survey is hampered by my lack of access to essential primary sources concerning Bahā'u'llāh's life, including the second half of Nabīl's *Narrative*, and the chronicles of *Āshchī* and *Qannād-i Shīrāzī*, which remain in manuscript at the International Bahā'ī Archives in Haifa. It is to be hoped that these and other, similar sources, will in the near future be made available on microfilm for the researches of academic scholars into the history of the Bahā'ī faith. Without them, our accounts can only be provisional.

Let me sketch out my position, and then come back to the evidence for it. I do not challenge the authenticity of the letters adduced in the Azalī sources, in which Bahā'u'llāh greatly lauds Azal during the 1850s, and deprecates himself. I believe that these letters manifest a way of thinking I will call esotericism, which is common in eschatological and persecuted religious movements. This way of thinking, for the Bābīs, was rooted in two considerations, 1) the security of their leadership, and 2) the primacy of the prophetic year 1280. We all know that the Nusayrīs and Druze and some other Shī'ī movements believe that the prophet Muhammad was merely a front for 'Alī, that the apparent supremacy of Muhammad over his younger cousin in the exoteric world hid the actual superiority of 'Alī over Muhammad in the esoteric (and true) world. Such esoteric (*bātinī*) thinking was typical of the Bābīs. Because to be named the leader of the Bābīs in the wake of the uprisings of the late 1840s, and especially after the 1852 failed assassination of the Shah, was

more or less a death warrant, Bahā'u'llāh had desired to avoid assuming that mantle immediately. Azal, young, passionate (and rather violent), had no compunctions about making such a claim to leadership, and Bahā'u'llāh was content to defer to him for the moment. This willingness to defer and wait derived in part, I believe, from Bahā'u'llāh's conviction that 1280 A.H. (1863-64) was the year when He Whom God shall make Manifest, the promised one of the Bāb, would appear. I think Bahā'u'llāh believed that in 1280, the true situation would become manifest, that the exoteric play (of Azal as the leader and Bahā'u'llāh as his lieutenant) would close and the esoteric truth (that Bahā'u'llāh was the Manifestation and Azal his lieutenant) would become apparent.

Now let me review the evidence that supports my point of view. First, let us consider the whole issue practically. Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī became a Bābī in 1844 because his prior involvement in Shaykhī circles in his homeland of Nūr had alerted Bābīs from a Shaykhī background (like Mullā Husayn) to his openness to esoteric ideas. At that time, Mīrzā Yahyā was only fourteen years old, and had been raised primarily by Bahā'u'llāh. The conclusion appears inescapable that Mīrzā Yahyā became a Bābī through the influence of his older brother. In Qājār Iran for an older brother who had initiated a boy, barely a teenager, into a mystical religious tradition, to turn around five years later and wholeheartedly recognize that younger sibling as his superior, begs comprehension.

Bahā'u'llāh himself denied that the Bāb ever appointed a legatee (vaṣī). He wrote in the Edirne-period *Tablet of the Lamp (Lawh-i Sirāj)*:

"Today the leaders of the Bayān have relied and continue to rely on the sorts of proof to which the most abject of the Muslims used to appeal to bolster their position, although they do not realize it. For instance, they cite the appointment of a legatee, which my previous Manifestation completely effaced from the Book. For everyone knows that no stations other than

letters and mirrors were revealed by the Pen of the All-Merciful in the Bayān. Nor did he [the Bāb] limit the number of mirrors, for in his prayers he says, "O God, in every moment do thou send invulnerable mirrors and clear crystals to speak of Thee."<sup>10</sup>

I know of no solid evidence that Bahā'u'llāh had in the 1850s ever referred to Azal as the 'legatee' of the Bāb, or that he had changed his mind about this issue. Bahā'u'llāh's own testimony is therefore that he did not believe that Azal was the legatee of the Bāb.

The mystery of the relationship of the Nūrī brothers to the Bāb and to one another goes back to the last year of the Bāb's life, 1849-1850. With his major disciples such as Mullā Husayn and Quddūs being killed at the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsī, the Bāb increasingly turned in his last year of life to a second tier of Bābī leaders. Prominent among these were Mullā 'Alī Turshīzī "'Azīm" and the Nūrī brothers. Bahā'ī sources suggest that the two brothers, Azal and Bahā'u'llāh, corresponded jointly with the Bāb and that the Shīrāzī prophet was solicitous of both of them:

"Ere the departure of Sayyāh from Tihran [in late January or February, 1850], Bahā'u'llāh entrusted him with an epistle, the text of which He had dictated to Mīrzā Yahyā, and sent it in his name. Shortly after, a reply, penned in the Bāb's own handwriting, in which He commits Mīrzā Yahyā to the care of Bahā'u'llāh and urges that attention be paid to his education and training was received. That communication the people of the Bayān have misconstrued as an evidence of the exaggerated claims which they have advanced in favour of their leader. Although the text of that reply is

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<sup>10</sup> Bahā'u'llāh, "Lawh-i Sirāj," in *Mā'idih-i Āsmānī*, ed. 'Abdu'l-Ḥamid Ishrāq Khāvarī, 9 vols. (Tehran: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1971-73), 7:40 ; my translation. Also cited by MacEoin, "Divisions," p. 94.

absolutely devoid of such pretensions, and does not, beyond the praise it bestows upon Bahā'u'llāh and the request it makes for the upbringing of Mīrzā Yahyā, contain any reference to his alleged position, yet his followers have idly imagined that that letter constitutes an assertion of the authority with which they have invested him." <sup>11</sup>

Note that in this passage, the subterfuge is alluded to of Bahā'u'llāh writing letters to the Bāb in Mīrzā Yahyā's name. This practice is further explained by 'Abdu'l-Bahā 'Abbas, Bahā'u'llāh's oldest son, who was only six years old in 1850 but was later in a good position to hear his father's account of the spring of 1850:

"Now since a great celebrity had been attained for Behā'u'llāh in Teherān, and the hearts of men were disposed towards him, he, together with Mullā 'Abdu'l-Karīm, considered it as expedient that, in face of the agitation amongst the doctors, the aggressiveness of the greater part of [the people of] Persia, and the irresistible power of the Amīr-Nizām, whereby both the Bāb and Behā'u'llāh were in great danger and liable to incur severe punishment, some measure should be adopted to direct the thoughts of men towards some absent person, by which means Behā'u'llāh would remain protected from the interference of all men. And since further, having regard to sundry considerations, they did not consider an outsider as suitable, they cast the lot of this augury to the name of Behā'u'llāh's brother Mīrzā Yahyā.

By the assistance and instruction of Behā'u'llāh, therefore, they made him notorious and famous on the tongues of friends and foes, and wrote letters,

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<sup>11</sup> Muhammad "Nabīl-i A'zam" Zarandī, *Matāli' al-anwār*, trans. Shoghi Effendi Rabbani as *The Dawnbreakers* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1970), p. 433. This source is late (1889) but is based directly on Bahā'u'llāh's own oral memoirs at this point, and therefore may be treated as primary.

ostensibly at his dictation, to the Bāb."<sup>12</sup>

This procedure, of the Nūrī brothers corresponding with the Bāb jointly, but under the young Mīrzā Yahyā's name, makes it very difficult to disentangle their relative statuses with the Bāb in 1850, but Bahā'u'llāh's own stance appears to be that where the Bāb addressed Azal he was actually addressing Bahā'u'llāh through Azal.

Bahā'u'llāh did not in 1850 and afterwards believe he was the legatee of the Bāb, since he did not believe that the Bāb had appointed one. The building up of nineteen-year-old Azal as the visible leader of the Bābī community was simply a practical matter, since the community did need some sort of figurehead, with the Bāb imprisoned and most of the *Letters of the Living* dead. Given his attitude in the *Tablet of the Lamp* quoted above, Bahā'u'llāh appears to have considered himself, Azal, and other charismatic Bābī leaders as Mirrors, with, exoterically and provisionally, Azal as *primus inter pares*--though Bahā'u'llāh may have considered Azal in a sense his own alter ego.

Bahā'u'llāh was apparently concerned to establish the primacy of the Nūrīs after the Bāb's execution. He attempted to deflate the exaggerated claims of Sayyid Baṣīr-i Hindī of Multan in 1851. Finally, Bahā'u'llāh "took pity on him and manifested upon that temple of servitude [Sayyid Baṣīr] the effulgences of divinity [ *tajalliyāt-i rubūbiyyat* ] from that glory of paradise [bahā' al-rizvān]."<sup>13</sup> The Mirrors or Bābī leaders of the 1850s conceived of themselves as sharing in a pleroma of divinity, as manifestations of the names of God,

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<sup>12</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahā 'Abbas, *Maqālih-i shakhsī sayyāh* [A Traveller's Narrative], ed. and trans. E.G. Browne, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), 1:79-80, 2:62-63.

<sup>13</sup> Anon., *Kitāb-i nuqtat al-kāf*, ed. E.G. Browne, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, 15 (London: Luzac & Co., 1910), p. 258.

and this passage shows that the author of the *Nuqṭat al-Kāf* accepted Bahā'u'llāh's membership in this pleroma. The passage also demonstrates that this pantheon of virtuosos or mirrors had a nominal head in the Nūrīs, and that when a Bābī leader overstepped his bounds in making claims to supremacy, the Nūrīs jointly acted to take him down a peg.

In June, 1851, the first minister, Amīr Nizām Taqī Khān (the Amīr-i Kabīr) put pressure on Bahā'u'llāh to leave the country, a datum which suggests that the state had to some extent infiltrated the Bābī networks and suspected Bahā'u'llāh's importance, but did not have enough proof of it to have him summarily executed.<sup>14</sup> Bahā'u'llāh left for Karbala, where he found the Bābī community following a Sayyid 'Uluww, who made claims to being the incarnation of God. Bahā'u'llāh challenged this man, just as he had earlier challenged Sayyid Baṣīr, forcing him to back down. Sometime in the period between August 1851 and March 1852 in Karbala, Bahā'u'llāh privately put forth claims to be the return of Imām Ḥusayn to his friend Shaykh Ḥasan Zunūzī, but swore him to secrecy.<sup>15</sup> At this point, the claim to Husayniyyat may have not made Bahā'u'llāh different from many of the other Bābī mirrors, since most of them claimed to be the spiritual return (*raj'ah*) of some Islāmic holy figure. But Zunūzī's account does show that Bahā'u'llāh already had some sort of pretensions to leadership within the Bābī community, despite his public deference to Azal.

While Bahā'u'llāh was in Karbala, the Young Turk leadership of the Bābīs in Tehran, including Azal and Turshīzī, plotted against the life of the Shāh. Since Bahā'u'llāh's

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<sup>14</sup> This is Bahā'u'llāh's own interpretation: see Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, IL: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1970), p. 82.

<sup>15</sup> Zarandī, *Matāli'*, trans., pp. 32, 587, 593-94. This late transcription of an oral interview is nevertheless a primary account, though obviously some sort of documentary evidence dating right from the 1850s would be preferable.



cousin, Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī I'timadu'd-Dawlah had in the meantime acceded to the chief ministership, and called Bahā'u'llāh back to Tehran, Bahā'u'llāh apparently had begun to hope for a rapprochement of the Bābīs with the state. He therefore roundly condemned the plot to 'Azīm in Tehran, but without effect. Despite his lack of involvement, Bahā'u'llāh was arrested and imprisoned in the Siyāh-Chāl in winter, 1852-53, where, he tells us, he had a powerful mystical experience that determined him to reform the Bābī community. This is the 'intimation' of traditional Bahā'ī historiography, and it may have given further content to his conviction that he was the return of Husayn.<sup>16</sup>

Bahā'u'llāh, not Azal, was banished and chose to go to Baghdad in the Ottoman Empire, where he would be near to the Shi'ite holy cities. Azal followed him there and adopted an extreme policy of seclusion. Bahā'u'llāh, although he respected his younger brother's writings, deferred to him in public, and saw him as part of the Bābī pleroma of the manifestation of divine names, was privately extremely unhappy with Azal's decision to leave Iran and go into seclusion in Baghdad. Azal for his part evinced the symptoms of a severe case of paranoia, which gradually paralysed his attempt to remain at the centre of the Bābī leadership. Mīrzā Mihdī Dahajī, who arrived in Baghdad in 1856, wrote,

"In those days Shaykh Sultān was living in Huwayza, 10 farsakhs from Baghdad. I once spent a week with Shaykh Sultān, and asked him about the incidents and adventures attendant upon his journey to Kurdistan to find Bahā'u'llāh. He wrote out a short account of that journey and gave it to me, then I read it in its entirety, but unfortunately did not procure from him a copy of it. This much, however, I still remember, that Bahā'u'llāh did not approve of Azal's practice of secluding himself and sitting in his house. Other

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<sup>16</sup> Zarandī, *Matāli'*, trans., pp. 595-602; Bahā'u'llāh, *Lawh-i mubārak khiṭāb bih Shaykh Muhammad Taqī* (Tehran: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 131 B.E. /1974) p. 17, trans. Shoghi Effendi, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1971) p. 22.

passages in that account by Shaykh Sultān mentioned that it was well-known that Bahā'u'llāh's journey to Kurdistan from Baghdad was undertaken to get away from Mīrzā Yahyā Azal."<sup>17</sup>

Obviously, the location of Shaykh Sultān's memoirs is a key task for any historian who wants to delve more profoundly into the relationship between Bahā'u'llāh and Azal in the 1850s.

Another of Bahā'u'llāh's companions, Mīrzā Jawād Qazvīnī, wrote, that in 1853-54

Bahā'u'llāh's efforts led to a general diffusion of the Word, and this religion became famous throughout all regions more than it had been at first. Thereby was the fire of envy kindled in the heart of Mīrzā Yahyā and his companions, so that after about a year, in order to extinguish this fire, His Holiness Bahā'u'llāh determined to leave Baghdad, and so set out suddenly, without the knowledge of any one, with a servant named Abū'l-Qāsim, for Sulaymaniyya in Kurdistan. This happened in A.H. 1271 / 1854 CE.), Bahā'u'llāh being then thirty-eight years of age.<sup>18</sup>

The evidence is therefore that Bahā'u'llāh and Azal began falling out in 1853-54, and that Bahā'u'llāh's response to the increasing frictions among his partisans and those of Azal in Baghdad and the shrine cities was to withdraw. One issue may have been Azal's continued attempts to have Nāṣiru'd-Dīn Shāh killed, which Bahā'u'llāh, with his more pacific bent, opposed. The argument that Bahā'u'llāh's assertion in the *Book of Certitude* that he had not intended to return from Kurdistan demonstrates that as of 1854 Bahā'u'llāh still had

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<sup>17</sup> Dahajī, "Risālih," p.48.

<sup>18</sup> Mīrzā Jawād, "Historical Epitome," p.7.

no concept of himself as a messianic figure will not hold water. Bahā'u'llāh was a human being, and was clearly very hurt, and that he acted so precipitously might have had little to do with the intellectual doctrines he had developed about his present and future role. Moreover, he may have intended to establish himself in Kurdistan, where the influential Babans would be more hospitable than his Ottoman hosts, and where potential converts existed among the many extremist-Shī'ī (*ghulāt* sects and Sufi orders in the area. The dating of the *Book of Certitude* also enters into the argument. If it was written in 1278/1862 (as it certainly was), then it was written not long before Bahā'u'llāh's Ridvān declaration of 1863.<sup>19</sup> Is it credible that, as late as 1862, Bahā'u'llāh still thought of himself as Azal's humble inferior, as nothing more than a subsidiary Bābī mirror or witness? Bahā'u'llāh said the *Book of Certitude* was 'revealed' (*munzar*), using the Islāmic technical term for revelation by a prophet. The partisans of Azal in Isfahān, at least, recognized the *Book of Certitude* as a direct challenge to Azal's authority, despite the fact that the original text contained some laudatory passages about Azal.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the assertion that Bahā'u'llāh's statement that he returned to Baghdad in 1856 because of a command from the *masdar-i amr* (source of command) means he obeyed Azal strikes me as unlikely to be true. In a parallel passage in the *Lawh-i Maryam*, Bahā'u'llāh referred to having obeyed 'God's predestination' in returning.<sup>21</sup> If Bahā'u'llāh left Baghdad in the first place to get away from Azal, as Shaykh Sultān maintained, why would he obey a summons Azal to return? Or did Azal send with Shaykh Sultān (Mīrzā Mūsā's son-in-law, not a minion of Azal's) an apology rather than a summons?

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<sup>19</sup> The date is discussed at length in Christopher Buck, "*Symbolic Quranic Exegesis in Bahā'u'llāh's Book of Certitude: The Exegetical Creation of the Bahā'ī Faith*," MA. Thesis University of Calgary, 1991, pp.30-37.

<sup>20</sup> Haydar 'Alī Isfahānī, *Bahjat al-sudūr* (Bombay: Deccan Printing Press, 1914), pp. 22-24.

<sup>21</sup> Buck, "Symbolic," p. 34n.

Rather, Bahā'u'llāh, having made his point by his withdrawal 1854-56, forced Azal and his partisans into a truce, and the Nūrī brothers again began conducting some leadership affairs jointly. The Kurdistan experience represented yet a further deepening of Bahā'u'llāh's self-understanding as the 'return of Husayn,' for his mystical poetry written in that period not only likens himself to Husayn, but also draws comparisons between his career and that of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>22</sup>

Evidence abounds that a pro-Bahā'u'llāh faction began forming in Iraq on his return from Kurdistan. Let us take, for instance, the memoirs of Nabīl-i Akbar Qā'inī, preserved in a treatise by his nephew Āqā Shaykh Muḥammad 'Alī Qā'inī. Late in 1858 Nabīl-i Akbar, who had become a Bābī in Najaf and had just finished training as a mujtahid or jurist with the Shī'ite leader Murtaḍā al-Ansārī, was taken by his friend Hasan Rashtī to visit the Bābī leadership in Baghdad. According to his memoirs, Nabīl-i Akbar asked on the way several times about Azal, but Hasan Rashtī seemed more interested in effusing about Bahā'u'llāh. Nabīl-i Akbar remembered being shocked by the way Bahā'u'llāh summarily ordered about the eminent believer Mullā Muḥammad Sādiq Khurasānī, and even intervened to protest this rudeness, but Mullā Muḥammad Sādiq indicated that he wanted no defense. Nabīl-i Akbar had a mystical experience while listening to Bahā'u'llāh's discourse, and likened the Bābī leadership at that time to the situation in early Islām from a Shi'ite point of view. In the early Islāmic caliphate, 'Umar wielded worldly power (*umūr-i zāhirī*), as Azal then did, while 'Alī remained in charge of explaining divine realities, as Bahā'u'llāh then was. Since Shi'ites thought 'Umar a usurper, the analogue speaks volumes about the views of Bahā'u'llāh's partisans in Baghdad circa 1859. In this period at Kazimain at the house of 'Abdu'l-Majīd Shīrāzī, Bahā'u'llāh spoke of the mysteries of metaphysics in the style of Greco-Islāmic philosophy. Nabīl-i Akbar then wrote Bahā'u'llāh through 'Abdu'l-Bahā', receiving an answer that began "I was a servant before the world was created" (*kuntu 'abdan qabla an yukhlaq*

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<sup>22</sup> See Cole, "Bahā'u'llāh and the Naqshbandi Sufis."

*al-wujūd*). Nabīl-i Akbar replied that he was convinced, asking what he should do. Bahā'u'llāh asked him to return to his home in Qā'in and exalt the word of God.<sup>23</sup>

Nabīl-i Akbar's memoirs are undated; nevertheless, the text just summarized comes from an eye-witness account quoted verbatim and it convinces me. In 1859, not only was Bahā'u'llāh not convinced that he was a lowly servant of Azal, the *vasī* of the Bāb, but rather he was privately claiming to be the Logos, created before the world began. Nabīl-i Akbar's account, moreover, is not alone. Another eyewitness, Dahajī, wrote that some Bābīs in Baghdad considered Azal the sun and Bahā'u'llāh the mirror, whereas others saw Bahā'u'llāh as the sun and Azal as the mirror. Not only had a pro-Bahā'u'llāh faction formed in Iraq in the late 1850s, but such sentiments had been adopted by some Bābīs even in Iran. As noted earlier, by 1862 or so, Mīrzā Haydar 'Alī Isfahānī in Isfahān was already so strong a partisan of Bahā'u'llāh that the hardline pro-Azal faction forced him to leave the city.<sup>24</sup>

The sort of sources by which Bahā'u'llāh's messianic secret may be discerned, a secret further concealed by the letters he wrote outwardly praising Azal and extolling his divinity, are just as worthy of consideration as the Azalī MSS. The accounts of Rajab 'Alī and 'Izziyyih Khānum are late, and the *Hasht bishisht* (Eight Paradises) of Āqā Khān Kirmānī and Shaykh Ahmad Rūhī (born in the early 1860s) is little better than a literary forgery, which the two young men cooked up in circa 1890 and tried to pass off on a rather gullible E.G. Browne as an early primary source by Javād Karbalā'ī. That any academic scholar would attempt to use such a source to place in doubt the autobiographical accounts of eyewitnesses like Bahā'u'llāh himself would cast grave doubt on the rigor of that

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<sup>23</sup> 'Azīzu'llāh Sulaymānī, *Masābīh-i hidāyat*, vol. 1 (Tehran: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 104 B.E. /1947), pp. 286-290.

<sup>24</sup> Dahajī, "Risālah," pp. 67-68; Isfahānī, *Bahjat al-sudūr*, p. 24.

individual's historical method.

I have insisted on the importance of nuance, allusion, and ambiguity. I would like to signal my conviction that a 'behaviourist' intellectual model, wherein what cannot be openly perceived is said not to exist, will ill serve us in the study of an esoteric movement like Bābīsm. One simply cannot argue that since Bahā'u'llāh's tablets of the 1850s do not explicitly make a messianic claim, therefore he possessed no messianic secret. The limitations of a positivist, behaviourist approach for the study of an esoteric, cabalistic movement like Bābīsm should be obvious, however. Let me demonstrate the point practically by looking at the Arabic *Tablet of Ahmad Yazdī*, dated by Taherzadeh as 1282 (27 May 1865-15 May 1866). Positivist and behaviourist methods, I believe, would yield the absurd conclusion that the Tablet of Ahmad gave no clear indication of a messianic claim on Bahā'u'llāh's part as late as 1865. Although Bahā'u'llāh speaks of the "news" (*nabā'*), which we may now understand as his own advent, and although he refers to himself with lofty adjectives, the tablet could have been read as a Bābī prayer. Bahā'u'llāh affirms the truth of the Bāb, and includes himself among those "obedient" to him ( *wa inna kullun li amrihi la-min al- 'āmilin* ), urges the Bābīs to follow the laws of the Bayān, which he calls the "Mother Book," and extols the Bāb as the "king of messengers" ( *sultān al-rusūl* ). At the end of the tablet Bahā'u'llāh sends greetings on those among the inhabitants of the 'City of God' (Baghdad) who had "believed in God and in Him, Whom God shall send forth on the Day of Resurrection." The use of the imperfect tense ( *yab'athuhu allāhu* ) would seem to indicate that the advent had not yet occurred as of that writing. Although the *Tablet of Ahmad* makes Bahā'u'llāh sound more as though he were claiming to be the vicar of the Bāb than a new Manifestation, these formal ambiguities appear not to have prevented Ahmad Yazdī from understanding that Bahā'u'llāh was making a messianic claim, at least according to the memoirs he recorded as an old man. The tablet actually reached him after he had already left Baghdad and come to Istanbul, and the Bābīs in Istanbul were well-informed as to the nature of Bahā'u'llāh's claims, which would have provided a social

context in the which the tablet was read less ambiguously as an assertion that he was He whom God shall make manifest. Certainly he says that is the message he took in 1865-66 to Azerbaijan, Tehran and Khurasan.<sup>25</sup> It may be that Bahā'u'llāh carefully crafted some early tablets so that a contextless reading of them by Bābīs not in the know would not raise a controversy. Apparently Dahajī in Baghdad either did not see Bahā'u'llāh's declaratory tablets, or read them 'thinly,' since he says he only learned of his open claims around 1866. I bring all this up to indicate the difficulties that the hermeneutics of Bahā'u'llāh's contextless tablets of any period face. In fact, the whole subject of how texts are read by their audience, and how authors employ ambiguity, which European historians have investigated at length, needs extensive investigation in the context of Islāmic and Iranian culture, and obviously has implications for the study of the Bābī and Bahā'ī movements.<sup>26</sup> The methodology of a 'thin' reading and a behaviourist slant, would clearly lead us badly astray.

Let us come, then, to Bahā'u'llāh's declaration to the Bābīs. As noted above, his oral declaration to a handful of followers in 1863 was not accompanied by any explicit textual declaration. Why? The answer to this question also bears on the question of why Bahā'u'llāh should have maintained a messianic secret at all. The answer is numerological, and has to do with Bābī and wider Muslim messianic speculation. After the wave of messianic expectations in 1260/1844, the next big millennial year among Muslim chiliasts

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<sup>25</sup> Ahmad Yazdī, "Memoirs recorded by the Local Spiritual Assembly of 'Ishqabad," summarized and partially quoted in 'Abdu'l-Hamid Ishrāq-Khāvarī, *Muhadarāt* (Tehran: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 130 B.E. /1973), p. 659. See also Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahā'u'llāh*, 4 vols. (Oxford: George Ronald, 1974-1987), 2:107-136.

<sup>26</sup> Leo Strauss, *Writing and the Art of Persecution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988 [1952]); Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973); Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Roger Chartier, *Cultural History: between practices and representations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988).

was 1280/1863-1864. In India and Egypt, no less than in Iran, millenarian fervour swept the Islāmic world in expectation of the advent of a messianic figure in 1280, and the uprising of Shaykh Ahmad al-Tib in Upper Egypt was almost certainly connected with this fervour (al-Tib had been taught a militant Indian Sufi who had escaped the British when the Mutiny failed).<sup>27</sup> Now, 1280 began on June 18, 1863. Bahā'u'llāh was waiting for that year, convinced that the secret could not be openly revealed till it came.

With a little contemplation, it becomes clear that the April-May Ridvān declaration in Baghdad was premature, and that this early date was forced on Bahā'u'llāh by the Ottoman decision to exile him. He had no choice but to inform a few hand-picked believers of his claims, even though the millennial year had not yet begun, because of the dangers and uncertainties attendant upon his further exile to Istanbul. These imponderables further prevented an all-out declaratory campaign early in 1280. Bahā'u'llāh did not yet know what his relationship would be with the sultān and his court, and had no desire to act precipitously in launching a millenarian movement from the Ottoman capital while under the strict surveillance of the Ottoman and Iranian authorities.

Only when the Ottomans bowed to Iranian pressure in exiling Bahā'u'llāh to the backwater of Rumelia (he may as well have been sent to Bulgaria) did the political situation clarify. Bahā'u'llāh now knew precisely where he stood with the Ottoman state (it was his enemy), and he was free to promulgate his movement. There is evidence that he also established contact with dissident constitutionalist forces such as the Young Ottomans, though the first few years in Edirne saw him preoccupied more with his religious proclamation than with formulating his political ideas on parliamentarism (which he would

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<sup>27</sup> For the importance of 1280, see O. Pearson, "Islāmic Reform and Revival in Nineteenth Century India: The Tariqah-i Muhammadiyyah," Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1979), pp. 211-212. For al-Tib see Gabriel Baer, *Studies in the Social History of Modern Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 99.



do from about 1868).<sup>28</sup> It was winter in Edirne, only five months of 1280 had passed, and he could devote the rest of the millennial year to pressing his claims. Bahā'u'llāh settled in the Murādīyyah Quarter of Edirne, first in a small house, then in a larger one opposite the Mawlavi sufi centre. He lived in the Murādīyyah quarter for about six months (circa mid-December 1863 through mid-June 1864). It was here that Bahā'u'llāh made his first open declaration, with Tablets such as the *Tablet for Sayyāh* (*Lawh-i Sayyāh*), the *Tablet of the Point* (*Lawh-i nuqṭih*), and, I will suggest, the *Sūrah of Blood* (*Sūrat al-damm*) and the *Tablet of the Companions* (*Sūrat al-ashāb*). In the *Sūrah of Blood*, written for Nabī-i A'zam Zarandī, Bahā'u'llāh makes explicit that he held back his secret until 1280: "O people, I bolted up the gates of paradise for twenty years, lest anything issue from My lips that might cause the fire of hatred to blaze forth in your breasts . . . O people, I verily am 'Alī [the Bāb], and this is but another Return after the first."<sup>29</sup> Here, Bahā'u'llāh is speaking with the voice of the Bāb, whose return he asserted to the Bābīs he was, and the reference to "twenty years" clearly refers to the period between 1260 and 1280. I think this passage also dates the *Sūrah of Blood* as having been written in 1280/early 1864, though this matter could be fairly easily settled, I suspect, by reference to the unpublished portion of Nabī's Narrative.

Another important tablet of this period was the *Tablet of the Companions*. Adib Taherzadeh has usefully pulled together the available basic texts dealing with the reception of the *Sūrat al-ashāb* back in Iran. It was written for Āqā Munīb (or Munīr) Kāshānī (d. 1868). Kāshānī, from a prominent merchant family of Kāshān, was nearly killed by his father for becoming a Bābī, but instead he expelled him from the household. Kāshānī went to Baghdad, and in 1858-59 Bahā'u'llāh sent him as a courier to Tehran, Qazvīn and

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<sup>28</sup> See Juan R.I. Cole, "Iranian Millenarianism and Democratic Thought in the Nineteenth Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, forthcoming 1992.

<sup>29</sup> Bahā'u'llāh, "Sūrat al-damm," *Āthār*, 4:7.

Tabrīz, to which he carried missives from Bahā'u'llāh and Azal. While still in Baghdad, Āqā Munīb was informed by Bahā'u'llāh of his claims (during Ridvān?), and accepted them. Kāshānī accompanied Bahā'u'llāh to Istanbul in 1863, holding a lamp before his howdah at times. Bahā'u'llāh sent him back to Iran from Istanbul some time between August and November, 1863. My own conclusion is that it was in the winter-spring of 1864, while at the Murādīyyah house, that Bahā'u'llāh sent Āqā Munīb Kāshānī the *Tablet of the Companions*. Kāshānī was then in Tehran, and Samandar says he was the first to make known Bahā'u'llāh's assertion that he was *He whom God shall make manifest* in that city. From there he took or sent the sūrah to Qazvīn, where it provoked immediate tumult, according to Kāzīm Samandar, an eye-witness (who is named in the sūrah, though apparently by another name ["'Alī?"]).<sup>30</sup>

Mīrzā Haydar 'Alī Isfahānī was also in Tehran when Kāshānī received the *Sūrah of the Companions*.

In Tihran I again met Jināb-i Munīr [Munīb]. Since he knew of my convictions and my love for the Ancient Beauty, he showed me a Tablet called the *Sūriy-i-Ashāb*, which had been revealed in his honour by Bahā'u'llāh. As I read this Tablet, I felt in every verse a fire of enthusiasm, and I could not control my feelings. So I turned to Jināb-i-Munīr and asked him whether Siyyid Muhammad had deceived Azal, or Azal had deceived Siyyid Muhammad, or whether the two of them had simply joined together in rebellion against Bahā'u'llāh. When Jināb-i-Munīr heard these words he embraced me and kissed me [on the mouth] and said, "The enemies of Bahā'u'llāh are united in one thing alone, and that is to join forces against

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<sup>30</sup> Kāzīm Samandar, *Tārīkh-i Samandar va Mulhāqat* (Tehran: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 131 B.E. /1974), p. 228; Taherzadeh, *Revelation*, 2: 65-106.

him."<sup>31</sup>

Isfahānī's account makes it clear that he read the *Sūrah of the Companions* as an open declaration that Bahā'u'llāh was *He whom God shall make manifest*, the promised one of the Bābīs.

Many of the phrasings in the *Sūrah of the Companions* resemble those of the *Sūrah of Blood*, and since the *Sūrah of Blood* contains internal evidence of having been written in 1280/1864, the *Sūrah of the Companions* may be dated to the same year. Moreover, Samandar's statement that it was the first open declaration of Bahā'u'llāh makes it likely that it came at the beginning of the 1280 declaration, along with the *Tablet of the Point* and the *Tablet of Sayyāh*. I admit that this is all circumstantial, but the circumstantial evidence strikes me as strong.

The *Sūrah of the companions* confirms that Āqā Munīb Kāshānī had prior knowledge of Bahā'u'llāh's assertion that he was the Bābī promised one: "thou becomest acquainted in the course of thy travels with that whereof no one else in all the worlds was informed." Bahā'u'llāh singles him out as the only "man of insight" who accompanied him on his trip to Istanbul, which provides supporting evidence to the idea that most of those Bābīs Bahā'u'llāh took with him were persons, such as Salmānī, who he feared would get up to some mischief if left alone in Baghdad. That Bahā'u'llāh did not bring with him more trusted and cultured companions, however, constituted a loss to historians, since the Salmānī type produced inadequate memoirs of the period. We find Bahā'u'llāh castigating partisans of Azal for clinging "to the same arguments as did the people of the Qur'ān in the past," a phrase parallel to the one quoted above in the *Tablet of the Lamp*.

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<sup>31</sup> Isfahānī, *Bahjat*, p. 51; trans. A.Q. Faizi, *Stories from the Delight of Hearts* (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1980), p. 14.

Bahā'u'llāh's early kerygma, as represented in this sūrah, consisted in the assertion that no one could claim to believe in the Bāb (or earlier prophets) who rejected Bahā'u'llāh, since Bahā'u'llāh was 1) the Return of the Bāb and 2) the proofs he put forth for his station resembled those of the previous prophets. He likens the Bābīs who reject him to the Muslims who rejected the Bāb, saying "This is, verily, He Whom ye have sought from the beginning that hath no beginning. This is the Visage toward which all faces turned" and "By God, He who appeared in the year 60 is manifest once more." He at one point declares, "O people of the Bayān, Ali (the Bāb) hath appeared in a new mantle. Verily, he was named Husayn in the realm of names, and Bahā' in the kingdom of eternity, and in the domain of the Unknowable Essence He was given this Name." The reference to the name Husayn can double as a prosaic one (Bahā'u'llāh was Husayn 'Alī), and as an allusion to his claim of Husayniyyah, being the return of the Imām Husayn. Bahā'u'llāh further adverts to his mystical experience in the Siyāh-Chāl, his "intimation" of future greatness, when he says, "O people, verily, I am that 'good' ye were promised in the year Nine." In what is probably a reference to Bahā'u'llāh's writings in the period 1853-1863, which spoke highly of Azal and deferred to him as Bābī leader, he wrote, "O people, see not discrepancies between the verses We have revealed, for these have all descended from One strong in power, from the realm of immortality, and differ according to various stations." Bahā'u'llāh's identification with the Bāb may have made it easier to insist that the laws of the Bayān remained in force at this point "He revealed to you divine laws and standards . . . beware lest ye differ concerning it." As noted above, a similar commitment to the laws of the Bayān is present in the 1865 *Tablet of Ahmad Yazdī*. Finally, Bahā'u'llāh here for the first time defended his having kept a 'messianic secret,' writing, "Whenever We have, at one time, concealed this Cause from you, and at another revealed it unto you, this hath been a mercy from Us upon you, and upon all the worlds. For some of the people are weak and feeble, such that they would be unable to witness the light of the sun by reason of the infirmity in their eyes." The gradualism in Bahā'u'llāh's self-revelation is explained by the need to prepare his audience over time for the shock of the 1280 declaration.

Bahā'u'llāh instructs Kāshānī to tell others of his declaration only with extreme caution. He does, however, suggest persons whom Kāshānī ought to approach, by addressing them in the letter. Several of these had met Bahā'u'llāh in Baghdad, but had not formed any particular allegiance to him, such as "Rahīm," who had written to Bahā'u'llāh from Tehran, or "Zamān," to whom Bahā'u'llāh had earlier sent letters containing hints of his station. ("O servant, read what We revealed to thee aforetime, and smell in its ink the fragrance of musk from the tresses of the divine Beloved.") It seems clear that Bahā'u'llāh is capitalizing on a network of acquaintance and correspondence, hoping to mobilize these Bābīs into a loyalty to him. One of those addressed, Ibn Nabīl, appears to be from a family that adopted Bābīsm and then reverted to Islām, and Bahā'u'llāh now reaches out to regain such fallen-away Bābīs for his cause. The new believers in Bahā'u'llāh are instructed to bear all persecution patiently (for now it would come, not only from Muslims, but from partisans of Azal, as well).

The *Sūrah of the Companions* contains some striking images and metaphors, and an explicit declaration of Bahā'u'llāh's mission. It is not, however, a doctrinal statement. Rather, it is an intensely personal, pastoral letter, intended to cultivate personal ties of loyalty. Detailed doctrinal works aimed at the Bābīs, such as the *Kitāb-i Badī'* would only come later. So that the nature of the document can be appreciated, I offer a provisional translation of the *Sūrah of the Companions* below. The text has been published in Volume 4 of *Āthār-i qalam-i a'lā* (pp. 1 - 22). I compared this text to an MS in the hand of Zaynu'l-Muqarrabīn kindly provided by the Bahā'ī World Centre, and found no variant readings. This version of the translation is slightly revised from the one I first carried out in 1981.

The study of the gradual growth in prophetic self-awareness in Bahā'u'llāh, and of the way in which he won over the Bābīs to himself in 1864-1867, can only proceed through the study of his own writings, and of those companions in close contact with him. The evidence

in Azalī texts must be collated with these Bahā'ī writings where they are primary, but they cannot supplant the testimony of Bahā'u'llāh himself, or that of those who knew him well. At the moment, we have in hand a large number of published primary documents from Bahā'u'llāh dating between 1853 and 1867, but we have available to us the Persian texts of very little substantive biographical or chronicle material relating to Bahā'u'llāh in these years. Further advances in the academic interpretation of Middle Bābīsm and the emergence from it of the Bahā'ī religion depend, not only on the study and annotation of Bahā'u'llāh's own works, but on the publication or microfilming of the chief manuscript accounts emanating from believers in Bahā'u'llāh's circle. The combing of the Bahā'ī prosopographical literature, as with Sulaymānī's *Masābīh-i hidāyat*, will also prove useful, as would the publication of later compilations of primary sources such as the relevant volumes of Fādīl Māzandarānī's *Tārīkh-i zuhūr al-haqq*. At the moment, academic Bahā'ī scholars are somewhat hobbled in any attempt to reply reconstruct Bahā'u'llāh's evolving self-image in this period by their lack of access to some of the requisite primary sources. Even my use of available material, however, suggests that Bahā'u'llāh's self-concept, while it may have changed and grown over time, is unlikely to have gone through a phase of obsequiousness toward Azal. Key to my interpretation is the idea of Bahā'u'llāh's 'messianic secret' in the 1850s, which I believe is ill-kept in the "Ode of the Nightingale" written in Sulaymaniyyah. Methodologically, I further wished to advocate a Geertzian "thick description" as opposed to a "thin description" of cultural symbols, and urge that the functional ambiguity built into Bābī and early Bahā'ī texts be taken fully into account. It would be an egregious error cavalierly to dismiss the rather heavy hints in some of Bahā'u'llāh's Baghdad-period works, as simply mystical excesses; yet in Persian culture a hint could cause a riot, an allusion lead to one's execution. In the *Sūrah of the Companions*, in any case, the veil of mystery is definitively ripped away, and we need worry neither about allusiveness nor about messianic secrets.

**BAHĀ'U'LLĀH'S SŪRAH OF THE COMPANIONS (SŪRAT AL-ASHĀB).**

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In the Name of God, the Glorious, the Most Glorious, the All-Glorious.

H.B. Give ear unto the divine summons from the precincts of the Throne, as We recite to thee the verses of God, the Help in Peril, the Hallowed, the Most Great. Mayhap thou wilt then turn unto thy Lord with all that is in thee and proclaim the sovereignty of this Cause between the heavens and the earth. Thus wilt thou attain such power in thyself that even if all who dwell on earth were to contend with thee with keen, finely honed sword blades, thou wouldst meet them without trepidation and find thyself altogether independent of them by virtue of My name, the Self-Sufficient, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Omnipotent.

Verily, thou art aware of what hath befallen Us, inasmuch as thou becamest acquainted in the course of thy travels with secrets unknown to others. For at the time when We emigrated unto God there was no man of insight with Us save thee. Thus didst thou pay heed, and camest to know what none of those pretenders knew. This is the choice wine for which God hath singled thee out, so quaff it within thyself in secret, lest the heedless become cognizant of it. Render thanks unto God, inasmuch as He hath made thee aware of what none of His creatures discovered, and hath taken thy hand in the Hand of Might and delivered thee out of the desert of negligence. There is no God but Him, and He is, verily, the Guardian of the Near Ones. By God, the Eternal Truth! The chalice of joy could contain nothing better than what We have ordained for thee. Therefore, drink from it and be steadfast in this Cause, and be not of the fearful. Then gaze with a seeing eye upon those who claim, 'Verily, we have believed in the verses of God, the Protector, the Mighty, the Powerful' But when these verses were revealed yet another time in His Name, the Exalted, the Omnipotent, the Most Great, behold, they fled from Him, showed pride toward Him and demonstrated a hypocrisy greater than that of any previous people.

Say: By God, We have endured what hath never been borne by the mountains, no by the heavens and all that is in them, nor by the earth and all that are upon it, nor even by those



who support the Throne of the Almighty. Say: Not the waves, nor the seas, nor the trees, nor all that hath been and will be, nor even the Hosts of the Invisible Lord among the concourse of the worlds can ever bear this burden. Behold, the Eyes of Grandeur are on the brink of tears, as are the eyes of those who attained everlasting life, and the denizens of the eternal paradise in their crimson chambers, then the inmates of the Ark of Glory beyond the depths wherein dwell the people of sanctity.

My beloved friend! Thou shalt find that the opposers have clung to the same arguments as did the people of the Qur'ān in the past, nay have stooped even lower. God is sufficient unto Me in this regard as a witness. Indeed, thou shalt hear from them what never was heard from any of the learned among the Muslims, nor from their ignorant ones, nor even from their street-sweepers in the markets. By God, this is a great iniquity!

Say: This is He Who appeared aforetime. All else besides Me hath been created by My decree, if ye be of them that see. Say: Do ye wax haughty toward Him by Whom your names were made manifest and your ranks exalted? In truth, this is a wrong that you have committed against God, the Help in Peril, the Glorious, the All-Knowing. Have you not seen the sovereignty and power, the grandeur and majesty, the authority and sublimity of God? Then may your vision grow dim, O concourse of the hateful!

Was it for any living thing to ask 'Wherefore?' or 'Whereby?' or to speak forth in Our Presence? Nay, by My Self, the Mighty, the Knowing! All heads have bowed before My glorious and beautiful Countenance, and all have humbly submitted to My powerful and invincible dominion.<sup>32</sup> Within the throat of this Youth there lie prisoned accents which, if revealed to mankind to an extent smaller than a needle's eye, would suffice to cause every

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<sup>32</sup> Here begins a passage translated by Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1969 [1938]), pp. 108-09.

mountain to crumble, the leaves of the trees to be discoloured and their fruits to fall; would compel every head to bow down in worship and every face to turn in adoration towards this omnipotent Ruler Who, at sundry times and in diverse manners, appeareth as a devouring flame, as a billowing ocean, as a radiant light, as the tree which, rooted in the soil of holiness, lifteth its branches and spreadeth out its limbs as far as an beyond the throne of deathless glory.<sup>33</sup> At yet other times, thou wilt find Him in the form of the Beloved, in this cloak that none in all the creation can recognize. Should any desire to recognize Him, they would swoon within their own spirits, all save those who approach their Lord with a sincere heart.

Thus doth the crier call out on My right hand, the speaker declare on My left hand, the caller shout aloud from behind Me and the Spirit from before Me, and the tongue of God proclaim from above my head. By God! This is, verily, He Whom ye have sought from the beginning that hath no beginning. This is the visage toward which all faces turned, though they might now be without understanding, and whoso rejecteth this manifest, refulgent, exalted and illumined Grace must inquire of his condition from his mother. Such a one will return to the lowest depths of hell. Do you think within yourselves that, if you deny these verses, your faith in any of the former Messengers of God, even in 'Alī (the Bāb), can be credited? Nay, by the Lord of the Worlds! Behold, you are given the lie by all the atoms, and beyond them by the tongues of power, might, glory and grandeur, and beyond all these by the tongue of God, the Omnipotent, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

O My beloved friend, grasp the hem of the veil with the fingers of might and barely lift it, so that none could perceive what thou hadst done. Shouldst thou hear the clamour of the hateful, remove thy fingertips and leave it as it was. Subsist behind a curtain of beauty with patience and perseverance. Then bring the fingers of power nigh and raise the veil of

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<sup>33</sup> Here ends the section translated by Shoghi Effendi.

contingent beings higher than before. If the howling of those who join partners with God begin, lay it down and retreat before the beasts of prey, seeking an impregnable shelter. Dwell with the dignity and tranquillity of God, then gird thy loins for the service of God and turn thy face unto Him with manifest authority. Detach thyself from all who are in the heavens and on earth, and from the likes of the idolaters. Then extend the fingers of might and power from the cloak that We bestowed upon thee before the creation of all things, when Adam was yet between water and clay. Rend asunder the illusions of the people by means of the Sovereignty whereby all veils were torn from all things. Demonstrate such wondrous integrity that it will efface the idle fancies of those who have turned away and the delusions of those who depend on false intimations without any warrant from Us, if thou art of them that act.

O friend, shatter the idols and sorrow not at that which befalleth thee, and fear not the demonic hosts. Say: O concourse of deniers, We do not fear you. You may perish, or swoon, or pass out of existence, but the Cause of God shall not be turned back. It hath, in truth, become manifest, in spite of you and in spite of them that join partners with God. Whenever We have, at one time, concealed this Cause from you, and at another revealed it unto you, this hath been a mercy from Us upon you, and upon all the worlds. For some of the people are weak and feeble, such that they would be unable to witness the light of the sun by reason of the infirmity in their eyes. Therefore have We treated them with gentle courtesy, lest they expire altogether. Say: It will not profit ye to turn to the right or the left, to answer or to ask, if ye be of them with certitude.

Say: Consider in yourselves when 'Alī (the Bāb) came in truth from the Egypt of Spirit with the verses of God, the Powerful, the unconstrained. Did any of the people of the Qur'ān profit from that which was with them? Nay, by thy Lord, the All-Merciful! In the same way, peruse the Bayān, if thou wilt. By My Life, nothing that they possessed availed them, neither anyone's question nor any soul's answer. Every man of perspicacious understanding knoweth this. Say: By God, that which was never manifested before hath

now appeared, and He enjoineeth upon you what you were commanded in the Book of God, the Omnipotent, the Mighty, the Omniscient. All that you have was created by My Word, did ye but know. Say: In this Day, no one can become rich save by making himself poor in the Presence of God. This is a sanctified and luminous station. Nor can anything gain mention save by forgetting itself, and becoming oblivious to all that is in the kingdom of the Cause and the world of creation, how much more so to all that was created between the heavens and the earth. Say: Have you not heard it said aforetime, that 'His evidence is His verses and His proof is His being.'? Then woe unto you, O concourse of the heedless.

Were the veil to be drawn from the face of this Cause even to so small an extent that none of the mystic knowers could reckon it, the call of the Concourse on High would be raised, the people of the domains of immortality would cry out, and the strains of the sacred melody would be heard from the sanctuary of grandeur. These would proclaim that this is naught but a glad-tiding to the world of creation. Is this aught else but the King, the Powerful, the Venerable, the Wondrous? Thus was the proof of God made perfect. But the people are in a drunken stupor induced by their negligence, such that they will never even be able to distinguish left from right. After God's self-manifestation, can aught else in the heavens or on earth avail anyone? Nay, by the Lord of the Worlds!

O My beloved friend, come thou and chant, lilt, drum and beat time in the realm of eternity, and then in the kingdom of the Unknowable Essence, paying no heed to anything save My radiant and resplendent Beauty. Thus have We bestowed upon thee something, a single letter of which could render wealthy all who are in the heavens and upon the earth, if they would but persevere in their love for their Lord, the Glorious, the Generous. May the Spirit be upon thee, and upon all those endued with knowledge.

Make mention of Me to Javād, even as the Pen of the Cause doth at this very moment busy itself with My mention, whereby the canopy of holiness was raised aloft, and the sun

came to rest upon the Throne of magnificent splendour. Give him to drink of the chalice We bestowed upon thee, that thereby his heart will be soothed, and he may be of the grateful. Say: We showed thee in thy sleep that whereby thy soul and spirit will find repose, if thou wouldst but perform it. Interpret thy vision as God interpreteth it, then traverse the path even as a cloud passeth overhead, and pay no heed to those who join partners with God. Shouldst thou find one whose heart is devoid of love for Me, flee from him and eschew his company, keeping at a great distance from him. Should thy soul contend with thee in this matter, then detach thyself from it and demonstrate an invincible certitude. Say: By God, the balance is naught but love for Me. This is a mercy upon the near ones, but a vengeance and a scourge upon those who join partners with God.

Then remind Rahīm of the glad-tidings of God, the Exalted, the Almighty, the All-Wise. Say: Thou didst attain the Presence of God, but failed to recognize Him, and wert of the heedless. Therefore beseech God to aid thee in knowing Him and to apprise thee of the Manifestation of His Essence, and to remove thee from the midst of those deluded ones. O Rahīm, do thou shun them and their like. Do not associate with them, nor with any among the hateful. Turn toward the horizon of Spirit with thy heart, and sever thyself from all attachment to this world. Thus do we teach thee what shall enable thee to dispense with all creatures. What thou didst send reached Us, and We accepted it as a mercy from Us upon thee, that thou mightest be among the thankful.

Speak unto Zamān of the verses of his Lord now being mentioned by the Spirit, that he might rejoice in his soul and might be among the pious, at a time when most of the people have departed from piety in such wise that they turn away from Him in Whom they believed. Thus doth the Spirit admonish them, lest they enter the ranks of His repudiators. Say: O servant, read what We revealed to thee aforetime, and inhale from its ink the fragrance of musk from the tresses of the divine Beloved, the Help in Peril, the All-Glorious. Then act according to what is written therein. By God, thereby were solaced the eyes of the

denizens of paradise and the inhabitants of the heaven of sanctity, did ye but know.

Then remember Us to 'Alī-Akbar, and announce unto him the good news now being proclaimed by the Spirit within this lofty, brilliant and lauded heart. Say: O servant, what We sent unto thee earlier was such that nothing created between the heavens and the earth equalleth in value even a letter of it. Commit it to memory, and read it at those times thou findest thyself free from all who are on the earth, that thou mightest be attracted to the lustrous and resplendent seat of holiness. We received the letter thou hadst previously dispatched, and God shall give thee as recompense the best of that which is with Him, for verily He is the Guardian of the beneficent. Know, then, that whatever He accepteth from His servants is as a grace to His creatures, and that He is Self-Sufficient above the worlds. Beware lest thou associate with those in whose hearts thou findest hatred for this Youth, nay, keep clear of them and their like, and avoid their company. Suffice thyself with God, thy Lord, and, verily, He shall render thee able to dispense with all else besides Him. There is no God but Him. The worlds of creation and of command are His, and all is with Him upon a Preserved Tablet.

Tell 'Alī in Qāf (Qazvīn) that which the Essence of Pre-existence commandeth thee, at a time when all who subsist in the depths of eternity circle round Him, as doth all that hath been or will be, if ye but knew. Say: O Servant, be steadfast in the Cause of God, and fear no one. Put thy trust in My refulgent, sanctified and luminous Beauty. If thy very essence should oppose thee in this, then detach thyself therefrom without pause.

Give Our regards to Hasan, that he might be gladdened by the droplets sprinkled in his name from this shimmering Ink, which is perfumed, wondrous, indelible, unific, eternal, and everlasting. Say: O servant, perform what thou wast commanded in the Guarded Tablet that We sent unto thee, and be not of the listless. Ascend in thy spirit unto the heights of sanctity, and let no man make thee apprehensive, rather, depend upon God, the Mighty, the

Powerful Say: By God, the Ascension hath recurred in its entirety, if ye did but see.

Say to Ibn Nabīl from Us, if thou findest in his visage the radiance of grace: O servant, hesitate not in this Cause, and follow no one in so doing. Then look with fresh eyes at the proofs of the Messengers. By God, He who appeared in the year 60 is manifest once more. This is among His proofs that have filled the East and the West. Because thy father hesitated in this Cause, he failed to attain what he desired. God severed him from all that was with Him and returned him to dust with great sorrow solely in order to awaken you, but you failed to perceive it and remained heedless. God hath now, however, forgiven him his offenses and hath granted him remission of his misdeeds, for He, verily, pardoneth whoever He willeth, and chastiseth whoever He pleaseth. The decree is His alone: He doeth whatsoever He willeth and ordaineth whatsoever He desireth. Say: O servant, have mercy upon thyself; dispute not the verses of God, and be not of them that join partners with God. Say: By God, were We to draw aside the veil from the face of this Cause, ye would slash at your bodies with your own hands. However, We concealed the Cause with that which was predestined in the Tablets by the Pen of God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing. O My beloved friend, if thou failest to perceive in him the fragrance of love, sever thyself from him and pay him no heed. Turn unto the Countenance of thy Lord, the Glorious, the Wondrous.

Then magnify before the face of Ismā'īl the One Who murmureth from the fire upon the heights, to whose flames are attracted the hearts of the believers in divine unity. Say: O servant, strip thyself of all veils, then enter into the fire, for it shall be as light and mercy to thee, and to all the sincere. Then smash the idols of self and passion set up by those who disbelieved and joined partners with the Deity after having claimed within themselves faith in God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Compassionate. Say: By God, your own tongues revile you and your mortal frames declare themselves innocent of you, O concourse of the heedless! O servant, teach the Cause of thy Lord and let nothing dismay thee. Fare not upon

the paths of the deluded.

Say: O people of the Bayān, 'Alī (the Bāb) hath appeared in a new mantle. Verily, he was named Husayn in the realm of names, and Bahā' in the kingdom of eternity, and in the domain of the Unknowable Essence He was given this Name, which hath taken the form of this Youth. Blessed be God, the Best of Creators. O concourse of mankind, the manifestation of divine potency hath appeared in the most great Countenance, with an adornment that hath dazzled the hearts of all endued with intelligence and insight. Say: O concourse of idolaters, by what proof can ye escape. By God, there is no refuge for anyone save in severing himself from all that he possesseth and cleaving unto this glittering, most luminous Cord. Indeed, He is the Most Great Sign and the Beauty of God among you, and He is the concealed Mystery, but He is the wrath of God upon them that attribute partners to Him. Verily, His wrath is bitterer and more calamitous, for by Him God chastiseth those who have denied the divine verses and decree. Then flee unto God, your Lord, and set not other gods up beside Him. Verily, with Me is sanctuary. Say: If We wished, we would bring into being another creation, for We are over all things Mighty and Powerful. All things are in the grasp of Our potency, and this is recognized by the people of knowledge and thought.

O people, think upon these verses. By virtue of what saying did ye hitherto believe in 'Alī (the Bāb)? Then consider carefully, O concourse of asses! Say: In this Day, naught shall avail ye but to believe in Him in Whom you believed aforetime, and in the Tablets and Scriptures that He revealed. O Munīb, report to that servant what this celebrated Pen hath related to thee, that he may be steadfast within himself in such wise that he will not be deterred by the aversion of those who turned away, nor hindered by anyone who hath committed a wrong toward God and disbelieved.

Then mention on Our behalf the friend who journeyed unto God, attained His Presence, heard His melodies and was of the people of vision. Say: Blessed are thine eyes and ears! It



is incumbent upon thee to realize their full value, inasmuch as they have heard and seen what the eyes of those who advanced toward God never witnessed. Then the latter turned their backs and turned away from Him that dawned from the sacred horizon with this radiant, sanctified and most pure Beauty. O servant, be not distressed when the clamour of the idolaters groweth raucous, for if thou allowest thyself to be disturbed thereby thou dost risk joining the people of hell.

Say: The Most Great Trump hath appeared, and hath spoken forth with the truth, sounding, and raising its voice to the utmost between the heavens and the earth, proclaiming, 'With Me is sanctuary!' O people, invent not lies against God, your Creator, and deny Him not after He hath lifted the veil and manifested Himself. Beware lest ye busy yourselves with this world and allow anything to prevent you from attaining this fathomless and overflowing Ocean. Verily, they that believed in God and His verses ascended unto God, and they have inherited gardens and rivers, but they that disbelieved and set up other gods beside God, they are consumed in the fires of the inferno. Beyond this, the wrath of God will take hold of them and make them like unto enclosed fields of chaff. Thus did God decree for them retribution for their sins. Woe unto them, and unto whoso disbelieveth and acteth with perfidy. And blessed is he who acquiesceth to the good-pleasure of his Lord, and who, when the divine verses are recited to him, believeth and giveth thanks.

Then convey unto 'Abd al-Rahīm that of which We have made mention in this Tablet, that mayhap he will draw nigh in his essence unto the sacred Shore, and be of the thoughtful, who contemplate the Cause of God and obey the ordinances and admonitions revealed by Him. Say: O servant, cast away whatever hindereth thee from arriving at the haven of grandeur. Verily, that is better for thee than all that hath been created and foreordained. Lift up thy voice between the heavens and the earth, that thou mayest be of them that struggle in the way of God, and gain the victory. Say: Verily, We have created the heavens and the earth for the sake of Our Cause. By God, then, this is Our Cause, which

hath appeared with the truth, and which hath been recognized only by those endowed with sagacity and the ability to reflect. Thus have We inspired thee and informed thee, that thou mightest follow what thou has been commanded in this Tablet, and be of the discerning.

Finally, tell Hā', as the last of the names, what the Dove of Holiness sayeth, and perhaps he will be enraptured by her melodies. We have mentioned him last so that he might ascend unto the Lote-Tree of the farthest limit and seek its shade. Say: The Lote-Tree hath spread its branches over all who are in the heavens and on earth, and blessed is the one who resideth in its vicinity.

The sun hath risen over the sacred horizon, and the Concourse on High hath been illumined by its radiance. The scent of musk hath diffused from the knolls of sanctity, perfuming the temples of pre-existence. Happy is he who adorneth himself with these fragrances! The luminary of the Cause hath risen in the midst of the sky, and hath taken the form of a full moon, brilliant in its whiteness. O concourse of the Near Ones, seek to be illumined by its splendour! Say: The Throne hath been established behind the pavilion of majesty, and about it circle chaste maidens of beauty bearing flagons brimming with the water of life. Blessed is the person who attaineth to sprinkled droplets thereof. Say: The Maiden of Eternity hath uncovered Beauty itself with a gut-wrenching gaze. Blessed is the one who is struck by her glance! Say: The voice of God hath been heard from the sanctuary of eternity, and the hearts of the mystic knowers have been enthralled by its melodies.

O My Name, hearken unto that which is revealed to thee from the Holy Land by the songs of thy Lord, and stand in fear of no one, rather, put thy trust in God, Who will preserve thee from the evil ones and the harm they wreak. Take heed lest thou forbid thyself that for which thou wast created, and be not of them that deny the verses of God after their revelation. In this Day, nothing can be of any benefit to anyone until he attaineth My love, and to this bear witness the people of the Sacred Canopy and the tongues of them that

subsist beyond it. Verily, those who turned away from the brilliancy of this Countenance, God will blacken their own faces in hellfire, until they are as the feathers of the raven. He will chastise them with the burning flames of remoteness. Say: Verily, He it is Who created the heavens and the earth, and established the Throne upon the water. Then He suspended the water from the sky, that ye might recognize the handiwork of God, Who perfected the creation of all things. Meditate thereon, and on the blessings that have been foreordained in the earth.

Say: O people, verily, I am that 'good' ye were promised in the year Nine, concerning Whom God covenanted with all the atoms. Blessed is the soul that fulfilleth his covenant. The canopy of pre-existence hath been raised. O people of the Bayān, keep not yourselves therefrom, but rather dwell in its court. By God, the Lote-Tree of Bahā' hath borne fruit in this paradise that hath manifested itself in four- and three-sided patterns. O people of the Ark of Eternity, draw nigh thereunto, and enjoy its harvest. Say: O people, do you deny the verses of God and yet continue to recite what was revealed aforetime? Woe unto you, inasmuch as Satan hath made your works seem beautiful to your base selves. Thus do We share with you the verses of the Cause, that you might rise from the dust of negligence and be nourished by that which descended from the clouds of sanctity, and the waters that rain down from them. Thus doth the Pen of the Cause counsel every soul among the perceptive.

The vessels of immortality have come to rest upon the Crimson Sea, and happy is the one who cleaveth to their sacred cords, that he might attain everlasting life by virtue of their imperishability. By God, this sea hath dazzled the eyes of contingent beings and its waters are plied by the Ark of Holiness that was constructed by the Noah of the spirit for this Youth, in Whose name the helm of the ark is taken, and in Whose Name it is spun. Say: The seas of eternity have billowed within this Most Great Ocean, and no one hath attained to its shore, how much less to its whirling depths, save those who cleaved to the sacred ships

that ply it. Board them, then, in my name.

The burning bush hath been raised up on the Sinai of immortality, and the nightingale that sang before the world was made warbleth upon its branches with the best of melodies. Give ear, O temples of the All-Praised, that ye may hear them. The river of paradise hath streamed out from this celestial fountain that flowed from the sacred spring of Kawthar, through these lips from which the waters of eternity descend. Blessed is he upon whom they overflow. Say: This is the Self of God, that is seated upon the Throne, and God hath sanctified His robe from the touch of the idolaters.

O My beloved friend, nourish every soul with the tender, imperishable bounties of the divine Unity that descend from this heaven, which hath been raised up with truth. Take heed lest thou transgress the bounds of the people, and do thou give to every soul according to its capacity. He whose sense of taste hath suffered an alteration will never be able to distinguish between the sweet and bitter, except if he should recover from his illness. Thus, We created souls in various conditions. They that have not cleansed their ears shall never delight in the songs of holiness. Thus do We share with thee the purport of every decree. Break thou the seal on the flask of the All-Merciful in My Name, the All-Bountiful, and pass about the wine of life that was pressed by the Fingers of the All-Praised. Mayhap the people of the contingent world will be warmed by its heat and be illumined by its gleaming light. In this manner have We revealed the verses, and have changed them from one condition to another. We send them forth as We please, that in their dispatch thou mayest witness the power of thy Lord, and mayest prostrate thyself humbly before Him. Say: By God, the Eternal Truth, glory lieth not in revealing verses and the like. Rather, glory lieth in My Manifestation between the heavens and the earth, among the divers peoples of the world, if ye have eyes to see.

If thou findest those whose names We have mentioned in this Tablet fragrant and

encompassed by the spirit, then waft upon them the diffusing scent of God, the Exalted, the Mighty, the Guardian. If not, stop up the mouth of the perfume bottle, lest they that join partners with God discover its aroma, and seal it with the mark of holiness or with a crimson gem from this Yemen. Beware lest thou spread the divine Writings among the idolaters, nay, abandon them, be patient and sorrow not. By God, this is a Cause at which all who are in the heavens and on earth are thunderstruck, the skin of the haughty hath crawled with fright, the lands of the pharaohs have been split, towering peaks have been levelled, every nursing mother hath forsaken her newborn, every pregnant woman hath laid down her fetus and a drunken stupor hath enveloped the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, all save those upon whom God bestowed a heart able to bear afflictions.

Bear the Book of God with a power and a might deriving from Us. Shrink not from bearing it, and feel no apprehension at its weight, for He will, verily, protect thee in truth and will guard thee from all trials and calamities. When any tribulation touches those endued with knowledge, it only increases their detachment in God, and their yearning for that station which God hath sanctified from the vicissitudes of time. If thou findest thyself alone between the heavens and the earth, then be pleased therewith, and with the One who created them, and be not overwhelmed by trials and distress. Turn away from those who have disbelieved, and draw night unto God. Verily, that is better for thee than possession of the heavens and the earth, and of all that was created, whether hidden or manifest. Purify thy hem from the tumult of the created world, and quaff from the crimson chalice proffered by the hand of this most Glorious Youth, that thy soul may be rendered free of this world and the vanities and palaces that are therein. Say: O people, focus not upon discrepancies among the verses We have revealed, for these have all descended from One strong in power, from the realm of immortality, and differ according to various stations, if ye be o the discerning. Thus do We bestow upon thee a portion of the mysteries of the Cause, lest thy feet stumble upon this exalted and manifest path. Conceal not the Cause of thy Lord to the extent that the divine fire is extinguished in all else besides it, nor openly proclaim it in such

wise that harm befalleth thee. Follow a clear path between these two.

Know, then, that this Beauty hath been sore tried among those persons in such wise that He desireth to withdraw from them, or soar into the heavens of holiness in the primal homeland. By God, I have fallen at every moment beneath the talons of the malicious and the hateful, and I shall never find for Myself any helper save God, Who created Me and all else besides, and sent Me forth with the sovereignty of His Cause to land and sea, and to the inhabitants of the cities. Say: We related not even an intimation of Our vision to the believers in the Unknowable Essence. Behold, they could not bear it, and cast Us into this pit, in the depths of darkness. Thus do We relate to thee the mysteries of the Cause that were shrouded and concealed. Know that among those present were some who turned away from God, their Lord, and disbelieved in His signs, and some who believed in their Lord and attained safety and salvation. The former disguised themselves, when they ventured out from behind their wine jugs, in the gowns of women, after which they turned away from this most manifest, and yet most hidden, Beauty. Say: O people, fear God and dispute not with the Manifestation of His Self, rather, turn unto Him with splendid humility. The invisible God hath become manifest and the Symbol of the hidden God hath appeared from this sanctuary. O people, render thanks unto God, Who created you from gushing water and made known unto you the paths of holiness. For He revealed to you divine laws and standards, that you might follow the way of guidance for the sake of this Fount that hath appeared with the truth. Beware lest ye differ concerning it, nor should you doubt that you will attain the Presence of your Lord. Draw nigh unto Him in your hearts, for that is, verily, better for you than all that hath been made manifest and all that hath remained concealed.

This is the Sūrah of the Companions, which We have revealed with the truth, and We have sent it to thee that thou mayest recite it to those in whose faces thou discoverest the radiance of the All-Merciful. When they hear the verses of God, they soar unto the Lote-Tree of the farthest limit in this sanctified and united Court.

If thou seest Nasr, relate to him, even after the last-mentioned person, that which hath at this time been revealed from the kingdom of exaltation, that he might remember within himself, and be of them that were secure and guided. Say: O Nasr, aid thy Lord to the extent thou art able for the sake of this Victory that hath been manifested in the form of this Youth. Blessed by God, Who created and proportioned all things. Be steadfast in the Cause of thy Lord God in such wise that nothing in the heavens or on earth could prevent thee from being among those that made a covenant and fulfilled it.

Say: O people, do you dispute the Spirit concerning what He witnessed and saw, and the melodies of God that He heard in the most holy, pure and glorious Realm? Verily, He is so steadfast that the entire creation will never deter Him, nor will all who are in the heavens and on earth ever be more in his eyes than a handful of dust. Were He but to speak forth the least intimation, it would be sweeter than all that hath been revealed in the kingdom of the Cause and the world of creation. This is known only by those who possess understanding. Verily, He hath mounted the Throne and seated Himself thereon. This is a difficult thing indeed for those who join partners with God, and for him who hath disbelieved and transgressed, then turned away and provoked great misery. Say: O concourse of the hateful, die in your rancour! For the sun hath dawned forth, spreading the rays of God from the zenith of the mid-morning sky, and all have been illumined thereby, save the despicable ones that have gone astray and become blind. Thus do We relate to thee some of the stories of God, O possessors of intellect Verily, a glance at Him is better than all that is in the Concourse on High, and than the kingdoms of this world and the next. Blessed is the one that hath attained the presence of the Throne, hath gazed upon the Countenance of the Most High, and hath heard in the songs of holiness the most great verses of his Lord. O Nasr, hearken unto what is revealed to thee from the farthest divine realm, and take heed lest thou fear any man. Turn unto the Visage of thy Lord, and be of them who profited from the remembrance of God. Have patience when the heavens are cleft asunder, the earth of desire is split and the lamentations of them that turned away and were

lost fill the air. He whose heart is not purified from all that can be described by any name will never reflect within himself this brilliant and most limpid Beauty.

Purify the mirrors of your souls, O people of the earth, then ascend unto the station that God hath rendered, from behind Himself, only two bow-lengths away, or less. Verily, He declareth at all times that which the Spirit revealed within His pure and sinless breast. Say: He speaketh not out of his own base desire, rather, He proclaimeth the most great verses of His Lord, with which he is inspired by One Powerful in His commands. Say: Verily, He hath at this time risen above the most exalted horizon, and He is, in truth, the Primal Beauty (the Bāb) clothed in another mantle By Him have the standards of the Cause been raised aloft in the kingdom of names, and the pavilion of glory hath been erected in the realm of the Unknowable Essence. Say: O people, return unto Him, for He is the end of all things. By God, He is the heaven of refuge at the Lote-Tree of Holiness when the effulgence of the light becometh manifest from this shining and most glorious Beauty. Thus, His sharp gaze swerved not from the most manifest, and yet most hidden, Sovereignty of His Lord that He witnessed with his own eyes.

Say: Were He to uncover the veil from the face of but one of His words, the earth would be rent and the heavens of the Most High would be cloven. He, however, treated His servants with gentle courtesy, lest their hearts be distinguished from one another, and they return unto the seat of wrath in the deepest Pit. Be afraid of no one, and remind the people of the verses of thy Lord, for this is His triumph in the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Thus doth He aid thee with this mention, and to Him doth the commemoration return. Thus have We caused to flow forth from every letter of this Tablet nineteen rivers. Happy is he that thirsteth and seeketh to drink.

When We completed this Tablet, the most great verses of God began to descend once again from the realm of immortality, that every reasoning and gracious man might take



admonishment therefrom. Let Us mention in this Tablet some of the beloved of God to whom We have not heretofore referred, that the grace of God might encompass every atom and every possessor of refinement and prudence. Then remind those, over whose names the Pen of the Cause hath not moved, if thou findest them bearing in mind the Remembrance (the Bāb) of their Lord. Otherwise, leave them to themselves and shun every one that turneth away in suspicion. Say: O people, delight in these days wherein God hath come in the shadows of the Spirit, and the Countenance hath dawned forth from behind the veil.

Share with Muhammad-'Alī, whose name you mentioned in your letter, that which the Pen of Fate doth remind him in the realm of the divine decree, in the presence of his Lord, the Mighty, the Bestower. Thus might he ascend within himself unto the heights of sanctity through this Ascension that hath manifested itself in the form of this Youth, and be of them that obeyed and repented. O servant, detach thyself from all that thy passions desire, then cleave to the most great Cord within thyself, which is, verily, better for thee than the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. This saying can be comprehended only by the steadfast believers and those endued with insight. Give praise in the name of thy Lord, and let the ecstasy and rapture of love wash over thee, inasmuch as We have poured out for thee the Wine of Life in wondrous and sanctified goblets. We have, verily, rendered those letters chalices containing the most marvellous attributes, and We give such of Our servants as We desire to drink from the Cup of our verses. Say: From Us this grace appeared and to Us shall it return on the Resurrection Day. A drop thereof bestoweth life upon the forms of all beings. Thus hath Our mercy preceded all things, and encompassed every atom, from the heights of paradise down to the lowliest speck of earth. Verily, they that failed to attain holy droplets from this Cup are more contemptible in the sight of God than common flies, for they disbelieved in the bounty of God and disputed His verses after their revelation, and followed every lying infidel.

Say: O people, do you call upon those to whom God hath given no authority, and yet

abandon the Lord of lords? How miserable are the guardians ye have adopted for yourselves instead of God! Ye shall be chastised by the divine wrath, for He is, verily, Powerful in fixing blame and severe in inflicting punishment. Among the idolaters is one who was there, and who was displeased that We gave unto Ourselves one of the Names. Thus did he commit a wrong toward God, Who created and fashioned him. The injustice wreaked by them that join partners with God is naught but perdition. Say: O people, all the Names refer to their kingdom, which refers to My Cause, which was created by My Word. All know this who have believed in the Day of Reckoning. The sun hath dawned from the horizon of the glory of its Lord, the heavens of pride are sundered, the earth of malice is furrowed with chasms, and the mountain of stillness moveth like unto the clouds. Thus have we informed thee of every announcement, that thou mayest remember within thyself and remind the people of that with which We have inspired thee. Mayhap they will purify their souls from every malady, and recover their health.

O people of the earth, strive for victory in these days, and let not the numbers of the idolaters frighten you. Thus doth the Pen of Grandeur counsel you on behalf of the Glorious, the Enticing One. Know that triumph can never be attained by unsheathing your swords, but rather depends upon purifying your souls. O concourse of companions, should anyone sever himself from all who are in the heavens and on earth, and arise to fulfil the divine plan, God will, through him, render victorious the sincere among His loved ones, and will pull down the standards of the idolaters from all parties. by God, the true victory is your detachment from all else besides God and your steadfastness in My love in this Day, when the feet of the eloquent have stumbled and a pack of jackals hath issued from the thickets of hypocrisy. These disbelieved and turned away, doubting that they could attain the Presence of their Lord, even after He manifested Himself from the sacred horizon with scriptures and the Book

Say: O concourse of holiness, unsheathe the swords of wisdom from the scabbards of utterance, and thereby aid your Lord, the All-Merciful. Beware lest ye wreak corruption in the land after its reformation, and fear God, to Whom all affairs return in the beginning and the end. Should the idolaters creep up on you, drive them away with Our Word, not with your blades, and contravene not what ye were commanded in the Book Be steadfast, O people, in following the path, and allow fire and rapture to consume you in this Cause and upon this foundation. If you fail to pursue this path with perseverance, God will send another people that will be firm in His Cause and will commemorate Him with distraction, yearning and ecstasy. Nothing in the heavens or on earth will deter them. Upon these the angels and the Spirit will pronounce blessings, as will the Concourse of Holiness, and those who were within the pavilion of nearness behind the veil. Is there anything that doth not mention their names and thereby draw nigh unto God? Say: By God, their names are tolled by the bell, crowed by the cockerel of paradise, and sung by the rebec. Thus are the words of thy Lord completed in veracity and justice. Nothing can alter the words of thy Lord, but none can comprehend this truth save the souls endued with excellence and immortality.

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## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ح - ب اسمع نداء الله عن جهة العرش بآيات مهين ممتد عظيم لعل تقلب  
بملكك الى مولاك وتصح سلطان الامر بين السموات والارضين وتكون قادراً  
بنفسك بحيث لو سجد لك كل من على الارض باسياف شاحذ حديد  
انك تقابلهم ولن تخاف منهم وتستغنى عنهم باسمي الغنى القادر المقدر القدير  
وانك انت تعلم ما ورد علينا بما اطلعت في سفرك بما لا اطلع احد  
من العالمين لان لم يكن عندنا حين الذي هاجبنا الى الله المهين العزيز  
القدير من ذي بصر الا انت لذا اتفقت وعرفت ما لا عرفه احد من  
هؤلاء المدعين وهذا من خمر الذي اتحصك الله بها فاشرب في نفسك  
سراً لتلا يطلع بها احد من هؤلاء الغافلين ثم اشكر الله بما عرفك  
بالاعرفه احد من الخلائق جميعين واخذ يدك بايدي القدرة ونجاك عن بر  
العتلة وانه ما من اليه الا بو وانه لولي المقربين تاسبه الحق لم يكن كاس السرور  
احسن عما قدرنا هالك اذا فاشرب عنها ثم استقم على الامر ولا تكن من الخائفين

ثم انظر لظرف الطرف الى الذين يدعون باننا امننا بايات الله المهيمن لعيسى بن مريم  
فاذا نزلت مرة اخرى باسمه على المقدر العظيم اذا فروا عنه ثم شكروا عليه  
وكانوا اشد نقاشا عن امم لقبل ان انت من العارفين قل تالله اني قد حملنا  
ملا حمله ابحمال ولا السموات وما فيها ولا الارض وما عليها ولا حول عرش عظيم  
قل تالله لن تطيقه الامواج ولا الانجار ولا الاشجار ولا الاثمار ولا ما كان  
ولا ما يكون ولا حسود الغيب من ملا العالين قل تالله اذا قد سلكي عيون  
العظمة ثم عيون اهل البقاء ثم اهل حبة الخلد في غرفات الحجر ثم اهل سفائن  
الكبرياء خلف بحج المقدمين ان يا حبيب سوف تجد استدلال المبرزين  
بما استدلو به اولوا الفرقان من قبل بل ادنى من ذلك وكفى الله على عباده  
لشديد وخبير سوف تسمع منهم ما لا تسمع عن علماء الفرقان ولا من جهلائهم  
ولا من الذين يكتفون الاسواق تالله اني ان هذا الظلم عظيم قل تالله ان  
هذا هو الذي ظهر من قبل وان ما دوني قد خلق بامر ان تتم من الشاهدين  
قل بل تتكبرون بالذي به ظهرت اسمائكم وعلت رببتكم تالله هذا نعي منكم  
على الله المهيمن لعيسى بن مريم امارتكم سلطنة الله وقدرته ثم عظمت الله وكبريائه  
ثم سطوة الله واجلاله عمت ابصاركم يا ملا المغلطين هل كان من ذى روح

ليقول لم اوبم او ينطق بين يدينا لا فو نفسى لعسيز العليم ذلت كل الرقاب  
 لوجهى لعسيز بعيس وخصت كل الاعناق لسلطانى لعسيز بعيس وخصت كل  
 الاعناق لسلطانى لعسيز المنيع قد كثر فى هذا العلام من بحن لو يطهر قتل  
 من سم الابره لتندك ابحبال وتصفر الاوراق وتسقط الاثمار من الاشجار وتسخر  
 الاذقان وتتوجه الوجوه لهذا الملك الذى تجده على هكل النار فى هيئة النور  
 ومرة تشهد على هيئة الامواج فى هذا لبحس المواج ومرة تشهد كالشجرة التى  
 اصلها ثابت فى ارض الكبرياء وارتفعت اعصانها ثم افانها الى مقام الذى  
 صعدت عن وراء عرش عظيم ومرة تشهد على هكل المحبوب فى هذا القميص الذى لن  
 يعرفه احد من المخلوق جمعين ولو يريدون عرفانه اذا ينصتقون فى ارواحهم  
 الامن اتى ربه بقلب سليم وكذا لك نيا دى المنا د عن يمينى ثم ينطق القاطن عن  
 شمالي ثم يصح الصائح عن ورائى والروح عن امامى وتكلم لسان الله عن فوق  
 راسى بان تالله ان هذا هو المقصود من اول الذى لا اول له وان هذا  
 لوجه الذى اليه توجهت كل الوجوه ولو هم حينئذ لا يكونن من الشعيرين  
 تالله الحق من ينكر هذا الفضل الظاهر الباهر المتعالى المنير فينبغى له بان يسئل  
 من امه حاله فنوف يرجع الى اسفل بحميم قل هل تحسبون فى انفسكم بانكم لو تكفروا

بهذه الآيات حل يصدق عليكم الايمان باحد من رسل الله وبعلى من قبل الانبياء  
 العالمين تالله الحق اذا يكذبكم كل الذرات ومن ورائها لسان القدرة ثم  
 لسان القوة ثم لسان العشرة ثم لسان العظمة ثم لسان الله المقدر العزيز الحكيم  
 ان يا حبيب خذ ذيل التراب انا مل القدرة ثم ارفعه اقل عما يحصى ان سمعت  
 ضوضاء المغنين خذ انا ملك ودع على ما كان وكن في ستر جميل ثم اصبر و  
 اصبر ثم قرب اصابع القوة ثم اكشف به حجبات المكنات ازيد عما كشفتها من  
 قبل وان ارتفع عوى المشركين ضعها ثم انهزم عن السباع وكن في حط ممنوع ثم  
 اسكن بوقار الله وسكينته ثم اشد وظهر كخدمته الله ثم توجه اليه سلطان  
 مبين ثم اتطع عن كل من في السموات والارض وعن مثل سؤالات المشركين  
 ثم اخرج انا مل القدرة والقوة عن حبيب الذي اعطيناك قبل خلق كل شيء -  
 حين الذي كان الادم بين الماء والطين ثم اخرج سجات القوم سلطان الذي  
 به نشقت كل الاستمار والاجاب عن كل شيء وكن على استقامته بدع ليعجو  
 بذلك اشارات المعرضين وسجات الذينم اتكأوا عليها من دون امر من لدنا  
 ان انت من العالمين ان يا خليل كسر الاصنام ولا تخزن عمائر وعليك و  
 لا تخف من جنود الشياطين قل يا ملأ المنكرين انا ما نحاف منكم انتم ان تموتوا

او تضعفوا او تنعدموالمن يريد امر الله وقت دخل بالحق رغماً لا انظلم ونفس المشركين  
 وكل ما سترنا الامر عنكم مرة وكشفنا مرة هذا من فضلنا عليكم وعلى العالمين  
 لان الناس بعضهم في رنوة وضعف لن يستطيعن ان يشهدن انوار الشمس لرمه  
 الذي كان في عيونهم لذا دارينا معهم لئلا يكونن من الهالكين قل تالله لن نفعكم  
 اليمين ولا الشمال ولا اجواب ولا السؤال ان اتم من المؤمنين قل شكروا  
 في انفسكم حين الذي اتى على بالحق عن مصر الروح بايات الله العزيز القدير هل  
 احد من اهل العسرة فان ما عندهم لا فور تبتك الرحمن كذلك فانظر في لبيان  
 ان انت من الناظرين فوعمرى ما نفعهم شئ عما عندهم لا سوال احد ولا جواب  
 نفس ويعرف ذلك كل ذي ذكار بصير قل تالله قد ظهر ما لا ظن من قبل و  
 يا مكرم بما امرتم به في كتاب الله القادر العزيز العليم وكلما عندكم قد خلق تقولي  
 ان انتم من العارفين قل اليوم لن لغني احد الا بان نقترب من يدي الله هذا المقام  
 المقدس المنير ولن يذكري شئ الا بان ينسئ نفسه وما في ملكوت الامر وان خلق  
 ما خلق بين السموات والارضين قل اما سمعتم من قبل بان دليله آياته ووجود  
 اثباته فويل لكم يا معشر العاقلين تالله الحق لو كشف الحجاب عن وجه الامرات  
 عما يحويه احد من العارفين ليرفع نذار اهل ملا الا حلى ثم ضياع اهل ميادين لتقا



ثم لحن العرس عن كمن الكلبه ما بان ما هذا بشر في الملك ان هذا الاسطان  
 مقدر عن زبدع كذلك تمت حجة الله ولكن الناس في سكر من العفلة  
 بحيث لن يعرفوا الشمال عن اليمين هل بعد ظهور الله ينفع احد شي عما  
 في السموات والارض لا فورب العالمين انت يا حبيب غن ورن و  
 كف ودف في جبروت البقاء ثم في ملكوت العما ولا تلتفت الي شي  
 الا جمالي المشرق المنير كذلك القيناك ما يستغنى بحرف منه كل من في الدنيا  
 والارضين لو استقيمت على حبه موليهم العزيز الكريم والروح عليك وعلى العارفين  
 ثم ذكر احواد بما يذكره حينئذ قلم الامر من ذكر الذي به ارتفع جبار القدس واستقر  
 الشمس على عرش مجد عظيم ثم اشرب من كأس التي اعطيناك ليظمن بها قلبه  
 ويكون من الشاكرين قل انا اريناك في المنام ما يظمن به نفسك وروحك ان  
 انت من العالمين عبر رؤياك بما عبر الله ثم عبر عن الصراط كمر السحاب و  
 لا تلتفت الى احد من المشركين من لن تجد في قلبه حتى فرسه عنه وتجنب منه  
 وكن في بعد عظيم وان يخالفك في ذلك نفسك فانقطع عنها وكن  
 في ايقان منبع قل تالله لم يكن لميسر ان الاجبي وان هذا الرحمة على المصيرين  
 ونعمة وسياط على المشركين ثم ذكر الرحيم بشارات ابد العلي المقدر الحكيم

قل انك قد حضرت بين يدي الله وما عرفت وكنت من الغافلين اذا فاسل الله  
 بان يؤيدك على عرفانه ويعترفك منظر ذاته ويخرجك عن مولانا المتوسمين نت  
 يا رحيم تجنب عن مثل مولانا ولا تجانس معهم ولا مع احد من المغفلين توجه الي  
 اتق الروح بقلبك ثم انقطع عن العالمين كذلك علمناك ما ينبغيك عن الخلق  
 اجمعين وقد حضر بين يدينا ما ارسلته وقبلنا رحمة من لدنا عليك لتكون  
 من الشاكرين ثم ذكر الزمان بما يذكر الروح حينئذ من آيات ربه ليسر في نفسه  
 ويكون من المتقين حين الذي يخبر عن اكثر الناس عن ميادين التقى بحيث  
 يعرضون عن الذي آمنوا به وكذلك يذكرهم الروح لئلا يكون من المعرضين قل يا  
 عبد فاقرب ما نزلنا عليك من قبل ثم استنشق عن مداود روح المسك من  
 عذار الله المهيمن العزيز ثم اعمل بما فيه تامله به قررت عيون اهل حبه الفردوس ثم  
 اهل حبه القدس ان اتم من العارفين ثم ذكر الذي سمي بالكبير بعد علي ثم بشر  
 بما يبشر الروح في هذا الصدر الممرد والمنير بحمد قل يا عبد قد ارسلنا اليك  
 من قبل بالايعادل بحرف منه ما خلق بين السموات والارضين فاخطه ثم اقرأ  
 في ايمان التي تجذبك فارحاً عن كل من في الارض ليخذبك الي مقر القدس  
 متفعدته منير وقد حضر بين يدينا ما ارسلته من قبل فوف بجزائك الله باحسن

ما عنده وانه مبولي المحسن ثم اعلم بان الله ما يقبل من عباده هذا من فضله على  
 بريته وانه لغنى عن العالمين اياك ان لا تعاشر مع الذين تسجد في قلوبهم ضمن  
 من هذا العلام ثم تجتنب عن مثل هؤلاء ولا تكن من المعاشرين فاكف بالله  
 ربك فانه يغنيك عما سواه انه ما من الا اله الا هو له الخلق والامر كل عندة في  
 لوح خطي ثم ذكر العلى في القاف بما امرك ذات القدم في حين الذي يطون  
 في حوله كل من في بحج البقا وكل ما كان وما يكون ان تتم من العارفين قل  
 يا عبد فاستقم لا مر الله ولا تحف من احد فتوكل على جمالي المشرق المقدس المنير  
 وان يخالفك في ذلك ذاك فانتفع عنها ولا تكن من الصابرين ثم ذكر  
 الحسن من لدا ليفرح بما شرح باسمه هذا المداد المسكية البديعة المنسبة الاحدية  
 الابدية القدسية البديع اللبيح قل يا عبد فاعل بما امرت به في لوح المحفوظ الذي  
 ارسلناه اليك ولا تكن من الساكتين عرج بروحك الى معارج القدس ولا  
 من احد فتوكل على الله عز القدير قل فانه الحق قد رجع المعراج باسره  
 لو اتم من الناظرين ثم ذكر ابن تشبيل من عندنا ان تسجد في وجهه نظرة لتعظيم  
 قل يا عبد لا توقف في هذا الامر ولا تتبع احدا في ذلك ثم انظر بطرف  
 البدر في حج المرسلين تامد الحق فطهر الذي طهر في سنة الستين هذه من

تدملت الخافقين وان ايكت لما توقف في ذلك الامر لئلا يفتخر بها اراد  
واقطعه الله عما عنده ورجعه الى التراب بحسرة عظيمه وما فعل الله ذلك الا لتبينكم  
واتم ما استعشتم في ذلك وكنتم من العاقلين ولكن الله غفر عنه صبراً  
وكفر عنه سيئاته وانه يغفر من شاء ويعذب من شاء ان يحكم الامر عنده  
يفعل ما يشاء ويحكم ما يريد قل يا عبد فارحم على نفسك ولا تجادل بايات الله  
ولا تكن من المشركين قل تالله لو كشف الغطاء عن وجه الامر لقطعوا ابدانكم لكن  
سرنا الامر بما قدر في الألواح من تسلم الله المقدر العليم وانك يا حبيب  
ان لن تجد منه رويح احب فانقطع عنه ولا تلتفت اليه وتوجه الي وجهه بكتب  
العزيز البديع ثم كتب في وجه سمعيل الذي تدندن حول النار ببوات التي تتخذ  
عنها قلوب الموحدين قل يا عبد عرف نفسك عن كل ايجات ثم ادخل في النار  
وانها نور ورحمة لك وللخاصين ثم كثر اصنام النفس والهوى من الذينهم  
كفروا واشركوا بعد الذي يدعون في انفسهم الايمان بالله المقدر العزيز الرحيم  
قل تالله ان لسانكم ليعضكم واركناكم تبرمناكم يا معشر العاقلين قل يا عبد  
بلغ امر مولاك ولا تحزن عن شيء ولا تسلك سبل المتوهمين قل يا ملاهيمان  
تالله قد ظهر على في قميص اخري وانه قد سمي في ملكوت الاسما بحسين في حبه

البقار بالبهار وفي لاهوت العناء مجبذ الاسم الذي ظهر على ميكل العلام قبارك  
 احسن الخالقين قل يا معشر البشر تالله الحق قد طهف منظر القدر في هذا المنظر الاكبر  
 بطراز الذي تخيرت عنه افدة كل ذي ذكاء ونظر قل يا ملا المشركين باي جهة  
 تفرون بالله لم يكن لاحد مقر الا بان يقطع عما عنده وتمتلك بهذا الجبل الذي  
 الانور قل تالله انه لا اله الا الله العظيم وحده لا شريك له وان له قهرا  
 على المشركين وان قهره ادهى وامر قل به يعذب الله الذين كذبوا بايات الله  
 ثم بالقدر قل ففروا الى الله ربكم ولا تشركوا به وان الى المستقر قل انما لوزيد نشأ  
 خلقا حسدا وانما كنا على كل شئ لقادر مقتدر كل شئ في قبضة قدرتنا ويعرف  
 ذلك كل ذي علم ونسك قل يا قوم ان تكفروا بهذه الآيات فباي حديث  
 آمنتم بعلى من قبل فقبسوا يا ملا احمر قل لن يغنيكم اليوم شئ الا بان تؤمنوا بالله  
 آمنتم به من قبل ثم بما نزل من عنده من الألواح والزر فائق يا منيب على ذلك  
 العبد ما القى عليك هذا القلم المشتمر ليعتصم في نفسه بحيث لا يسهه اعراض كل معرض  
 ولا منع الذي بنى على الله ثم كفر ثم ذكر من عندنا بحبيب الذي سافر الى الله وحضر  
 بين يديه وسمع نعماته وكان من اهل النظر قل طوبى لعيناك ولاذناك ان تعرف  
 مقدار بما سمعا ورأيا ما لارأت عيون الذين قبلوا الى الله ثم ادبر وعرضوا

اشرق عن مشرق القدس بهذا الجمال المشرق المقدس الاظهر وانك انت يا  
 عبداً لا تحسبن حين الذي يرتفع زماجير المشركين اياك ان لا تضطرب ولا  
 تكمن من اهل الفرز قل تالله قد ظنهم صور الاكبر في هذا التاقور الذي نطق بحق  
 ثم نقر ونطق باعلى الصوت بين السموات والارض بان الى المستقر وياقوم انهم تروا  
 على الله بارئكم ولا تجاهدوا بعد الذي كشف النقاب ثم ظهر اياكم ان لا تستغلوا  
 بالدنيا ولا يمنعكم شئ عن الورد في هذا الطظام اللهي الا عمر ان الذين هم  
 آمنوا بالله وآياته اولئك صعدوا الى الله وتوارثون جنات ونهر والذين هم  
 كفروا واشركوا اولئك يصلون في نار وسقر ومن وراء ذلك ياخذهم الله  
 بهم من عنده ويعلمهم كمشيم محظر كذلك قدر الله ذنوبهم جزاء ذنوبهم فويل لهم  
 ولمن لمكر وغدر ونعيم لمن رضى برضاه ربه واذا تلى عليه آيات ربه آمن وشكر  
 ثم ذكر الرحيم بعد العبد بما اذكرناه في اللوح لعل يتقرب بذاته الى شاطئ القدس  
 ويكون من اصحاب الفكر الذين يتدبرون في امر الله ويتبعون ما نزل من عنده  
 من حكم ونذر قل يا عبد فائق كل ما يمنعك عن الورد في حرم الكبر بما  
 وان هذا خير لك عن كل ما خلق وقدر وكن صانعاً بين السموات والارض  
 تكون من الذين هم جاهدوا في سبل الله ثم نصر قل انا خلقنا السموات والارض

يا من اتانا الله ان هذا الامر ما قد ظهر بالحق ولا يعرفه الا كل ذي فطن وعبر كذلك المناسك  
 واليقين انك تشبع بما امرت في اللوح وتكون من اصحاب النظر ثم ذكر الهاء في  
 آخر الاسماء بما تنطق حماته القدس لعل يستجيب من نعماتها وانا اذكرنا في الآياتها  
 ليصعد الى سدرة المنتهى ويتنزل في ظلالها قل تامله قد غشت السدرة كل من في  
 السموات والارض فطوبى لمن سكن في جوارها قل قد اشرفت الشمس عن فوق القدس  
 واستضاء منها اهل الا اعلى فطوبى لمن اصاب بضياها قل قد تصوتت من تلال القدس  
 عرف المسك واستعمرت منها يماكل القدم فنهينا لمن تعطر من نفاحتها وقد لاح  
 قمر الامر في وسط السماء وظهر على هيئة البدر ابرهه البيضاء وانتم يا ايها القرب فاجتنبوا  
 سببها قل قد استقر العرش خلف جناب العظمة وفي حوله يدورن قانسرات الجمال  
 بكأوس الحيوان فطوبى لمن فاز برشحاتها قل قد كشف الجمال حورية الخلد بلحاظ فاكنت  
 احشا فطوبى لمن يرى بلحاظها قل قد ظهر صوت الله عن كمن البقار واستجذبت افئدة  
 العارفين من نباتها قل اين اسمي ان اسمع يا يحيى اليك عن شطر القدس من  
 نعمات ربك ولا تحف من احد فتوكل على الله ربك انه يحفظك عن  
 الشياطين وايدائها اياك لا تمنع نفسك عما خلقت ولا تكن من  
 الذين كفروا بايات الله بعد انزالها قل اليوم لا ينفع احد اشي الا

بعد حتى وبذلك يشهد اهل سوادق القدس والسن التي كانت عن وراها  
 ان الذين هم اعرضوا عن لمع الوجه اولئك يسبح الله ووجههم كخافية العراب  
 ويتذبحهم نار البعد ولها بها قل انه لهو الذي خلق السموات والارض ثم استقر العرش  
 على الماء ثم علق الماء على الهواء لتعرفوا صنع الله الذي تقن خلق كل شي وتفكروا  
 فيه وما قدر في الارض من الالهة قل يا قوم ان هذا نجر الذي وعدم  
 في التسبح وبه اخذ الله العهد عن كل الذرات فطوى لنفس وقت بميثاقها  
 قل قد ارتفعت خيام القدم وانتم يا ملاهيمان لا تحرموا انفسكم عنها ثم سكنوا  
 في فناءها تامة قد اثمرت سدره البها في هذا الرضوان الذي طهر على ميل  
 التربع في هيئة التثليث وانتم يا اهل سفن البقاء تقرّبوا بها ثم تنعموا من اثمارها  
 قل يا قوم انكفرون بآيات الله وتقرّون ما نزل من قبلها فويل لكم وبما ترون  
 الشيطان لانفسكم اعمالكم كذلك نلقى عليكم من آيات الامر لعل تقومون عن  
 تراب العقلة وترقرن بما نزل من عمام القدس وما يطر من مياهها كذلك ينضح  
 قلم الامر كل نفس من اذكيائها قل قد استقرت سفن البقاء على بحر الحراء فطوى  
 لمن تمسك بحبال القدس منها ليكون باقيا بقاءها قل تامة ان هذا لبحر  
 بهر على المكنات وفيه تسرى سفينة القدس التي صنعها نوح الروح لهذا السلام



الذي باسمه ميك زمام الفلك ثم اهتز زارها قل قد تموجت بحور القدم  
في هذا الجبهه الاعظم وما فاز احد بها حلها فكيف الى عنبراتها الا الذي نفخهم  
تمسكوا بما جرت عليها من سفائن القدس ثم اركبوا باسمي الرحمن على منكبها  
قل قد ارتفعت سدره الروح على سينا البقا، وتغن بلبل لهدم باحسن الانحان  
على افنانها اذا فاصمتموا يا هياكل السجان لاستماعها قد جرى تسبيل من  
هذا التسليم الذي نفخهم من كوثر القدس عن هذا الفهم الذي منه ينزل مياه القدم  
فطوبى لمن يطبخ عليه من طغائنا قل هذا نفس الله قد استوى على العرش و قدس قبه  
عن مس المشركين ردانها انك يا حبيب فارزق كل نفس من نعمه الطيره الا حده  
الصمديه التي تنزل عن هذا السماء التي ارتفعت بالحق اياك ان لا تجاوز  
عن حدود الناس فاعط كل نفس على مقدارها ان الذي بدلت ذائقه لمن يعرف  
علاوة اكلو عن المر الابان سيره وانه كذلك خلقنا النفوس اطواراً فطوبى لمن  
يعرف اطوارها والذين ما طهرت اذانهم لن يلمت ذوا من نعمات القدس وكذلك  
نلقى عليك من كل حكم انبائها وانك كسر ختم اناء الرحمن باسمي المنان ثم ادر خمر  
البحيوان التي انصرت من انامل اسجان لعل اهل الامكان يصطلون من حرارتها  
ويستضيئون من انوارها ولعانها كذلك نزلنا الآيات وصرفناها من شأن النبي

شأن ونصر فيما كيف نشأ على تصريف اخرى لتشهد قدرة ربك وتخرجن يدي  
 على الذقن قل تالله الحق لم يكن لغنسه في تنزيل الآيات وامثالها بل لغنسه في  
 تلويح بين السموات والارض وبين هؤلاء من امم المختلفة ان اتم من اصحاب  
 العين وانك ان وجدت هؤلاء الذين اذكرنا اسمائهم في اللوح على روح و  
 ریحان هبت عليهم ما تصوع من ریحان الله العلي القادر المؤمن والاف استحکم  
 رأس انار الریحان لتلاييد المشركون عرفه ثم اختتمه بجام القدس وبقين من هذا ليهين  
 اياك ان لا تنشر انار الله بين يدي المشركين ثم اعرض عنهم ثم اصطبر ولا تحزن  
 تالله هذا امر يصعق عنه كل من في السموات والارض وتطفر جلود المستكبرين وتمشق  
 اراضي الفراغه ومنف شوامخ القفن وتدع كل مرضعة عما ارضعت وتضع كل ذات  
 حمل حملها وياخذت سكان السموات والارض الامن اتي الله بقلب ممتحن وانك  
 فاحمل كتاب الله بقوة من عندنا و قدرة من لدنا ولا تخف في حمله ولا تجزع عن  
 ثقله وانه يحفظك بالحق ويحرسك عن كل بلاء وفتن ما يمس العارفين من بلاء  
 الا وقد يراد به انقطاعهم الى الله واشتياقهم الى مقام الذي قدسه الله عن سب  
 الزمن وان تجد نفسك وحيداً بين السموات والارض اذا فاض عنها وعن الذي  
 خلقها ولا تكن في حزن وحن تغرب عن الذين كفروا ثم تقرب الى الله وان

هذا تخير لك عن ملك السموات والارض وعمما خلق في السر والعلن طهر ذلك  
 عن عجاج الملك ثم اشرب عن كأس الكرماء عن عندهم الامه ليعيل نفسك فارغاً  
 عن الدنيا وما فيها من الرخايف والقدن قل يا قوم لا تشهدوا الا احتلاً  
 فيما نزل من لدنا لان الآيات كلها نزلت من شديد القوى عن جبروت لبقا  
 ويختلف باختلاف المقامات ان انتم من اهل الفطن كذلك نلقى عليكم  
 من اسرار الامر لئلا نزل اقد اعلم عن هذا الصراط المرتفع المعلن انك  
 لا تستر امر ربك على مقام الذي تخمد نار الله فيما سويه ولا تبهر شبان الذي منك  
 الضراء فاتبع بين ذلك سبيلاً مستبين ثم اعلم بان هذا اجمال قد تبلى  
 بين هؤلاء بحيث يريد ان يعزل نفسه عنهم او يطير الى معارج القدس في اهل  
 الوطن تالله قد وقعت في كل حين تحت مخاليب اولى الغل والبعضا ولن  
 اجد نفسي ناصراً الا الله الذي خلقني وكل شئ وارسلني سلطان الامر على اشر  
 والبحر وعلى اهل المدن قل انما قصصنا عرفنا من الرويا لاهل العما اذا ما  
 حلوا با ووقعونا في الحب في هذا البخ الظلم كذلك نلقى عليك من اسرار الامر  
 عما سترو خزن ثم اعلم بان الذين هم كانوا في هناك منهم من اعرض عن الله  
 وكفر بايات الله ومنهم من آمن بربه وكان ممن نجى ومن ان الذين هم

هذا خير لك عن ملك السموات والارض و عما خلق في السور والعلن طهر ذلك  
 عن عجاج الملك ثم اشرب عن كأس الكرماء عن عندهم الامير ليعجل نفسك فارغاً  
 عن الدنيا وما فيها من الرخايف والقدن قل يا قوم لا تشهدوا الاحتلا  
 فيما نزل من لدنا لان الآيات كلها نزلت من شديد القوي عن حيرت البقا  
 ويختلف باختلاف المقامات ان انتم من اهل الفطن كذلك نلتقى عليكم  
 من اسرار الامر لئلا نزل اقدالم عن هذا الصراط المرتفع للعلن انك  
 لا تستر امر ربك على مقام الذي تمدنا الله فيما سويه ولا تجهر بشان الذي منك  
 الصرا فاتب بين ذلك سبيلاً مستبين ثم اعلم بان هذا الجبال قد اتلى  
 بين هؤلاء بحيث يريد ان يعزل نفسه عنهم او يطير الى معارج القدس في اهل  
 الوطن تامة قد وقعت في كل حين تحت مخالب اولي الغل والبعضا ولن  
 اجد نفسي ناصراً الا الله الذي خلقني وكل شي وارسلني سلطان الامر على اشر  
 والبحر وعلى اهل المدن قل انما قصصنا عرفنا من الرويا لاهل العما اذا ما  
 حملوها و اوقونا في الحب في هذا الجح انظما كذلك نلتقى عليكم من اسرار الامر  
 عما ترو عنهم ثم اعلم بان الذين هم كانوا في هناك منهم من اعرض عن الله  
 وكفربايات الله ومنهم من آمن بربه وكان ممن نجي وامن ان الذين هم

كانوا ان يسروا ووجههم في جلايب النساء خوفاً من نفسهم اذا حسروا عن  
 خلف الدنان ثم اعترضوا على هذا الجمال الاظهر الاكمن قل يا قوم خافوا عن الله  
 ولا تجادلوا بمذهبهم نفسهم ثم توجهوا اليه بنجوع حسن تالله قد طهر الله المكنون  
 عن هذا الخزن وقد برز رفر الله المستور عن هذا المكنن يا قوم فاشكروا الله الذي  
 خلقكم من بارداً فحق وعرفكم سبل القدس بما انزل عليكم الشرائع والسنن لتتبعوا  
 سبل الهدى في هذا السبيل الذي طهر باسحق اياكم ان لا تختلوا فيه ولا تكونن  
 في مرتبه عن لقاء ربكم ثم تقربوا اليه بقلوبكم وان هذا خير لكم عما ظهر وطمس تلك  
 سورة الاحصاء قد نزلت لها باسحق وارسلناها اليك لتقربها على الذين تجدد في  
 ووجههم نصره الرحمن واذا سمعوا آيات الله يطيرن الى سدة المني في هذا الغناء  
 المقدس المرتين وان رايت كلمة النصر ذكره في منتهى المنتهى بما نزل حينئذ  
 من جبروت العلى ليدكر في نفسه ويكون من الذي آمن وعهدى قل يا نصر فاصبر  
 ربك بما استطعت في هذا النصر الذي طهر على ميل السلام فبارك الله الذي  
 خلق فسوى ان استقم في امر الله ربك بحيث لا يمنعك شيء عما في السموات  
 والارض لتكون من الذي عهدتم وفي قل يا قوم امارون الروح عما شهد  
 ورأى او فيما سمع من نعمات الله في جبروت المقدس الاظهر الابن تالله آ

استقام على شان لن يمنع كل الوري ولم يكن كل من في السموات والارض عنده  
 الا لكف من الشرى قل انه لو ينطق بحرف ليكون اعلى مما نزل في حيرت الامر  
 واخلق ولا يعلم ذلك الا اولي النبي قل انه قد استقر على العرش ثم استوى  
 وبدا صعب على المشركين وعلى الذي كفر وطمع ثم اعرض واشقى قل يا ملأ المغلين  
 موتوا باضغانكم فقد اشترت الشمس بانوار الله في وسط الصفي واستضا بها كل  
 من في السموات والارض الا كل دني ضل وعمى كذلك نقص عليكم من قصص  
 الحق يا اصحاب الحجى قل ان نظرة اليه خير عما في ملا الاعلى وعن تلك الآخرة  
 والاولى فطوبى لمن حضر بين يدي العرش ونظر الى منظر الاحلى وسمع عن كمن القديس  
 من آيات ربه الكبرى ان يا نصر فاستمع لما يوحى اليك من حيرت القصوى  
 اياك ان لا تحف من احد فتوجه الى وجه ربك وكن من الذي نفعه الذكرى  
 ان صطبر حين الذي تنظر سما الامر وتنشق ارض الارادة ويرفع ضجيج كل من عرض  
 فغوى قل تالله من لم يكن قلبه مطهرا عن كل ما يذكر عليه اسم شئ لن ينطق فيه  
 هذا الجبال الدرى الاصفى قد سوا مرايا انفسكم يا ملأ الارض ثم اصعدوا الى مقام  
 الذي جعل الله عن خلفه ذكر القوسين واوداني قل انه لينطق في كل حين بما نطق  
 الروح في صدره المرد الا انكى قل تالله انه ما ينطق عن الهوى بل ينطق بما يلمه

شديد الأمر من آيات ربه الكبرى قل أنه حينئذ بالافق الأعلى وأنه بحال اللاهوت  
 في قميص الاخسرى فبجان نفسه الأعلى وبه ففت اعلام الأمر في ملكوت الاسماء  
 ونسبت خيام المجد في جبروت العماقل ما يقوم فارحوا اليه وان اليه المنسبتاته  
 انه بجنة الماوى عند سدة القدس عند ظهور تجلى الانوار من هذا الجبال الذي  
 الابنى كذلك ما زاغ بصر الحديده عما شهد ورأى من سلطان ربه الاظهر الاخفى  
 قل انه لو كشف القناع عن وجه كلمه من عنده لتنتش الارض وتضطرب سموات  
 العلى ولكن يدارى مع عباده لتلا تميز صدورهم ويرجعوا الى مقر القهر في  
 حاوية السفلى انك لا تخف من احد ذكر الناس آيات ربك وبه انصره  
 في ملكوت السموات والارض وكذلك يؤيدك بالذكر وان اليه يرجع الذكر  
 وكذلك فخرنا في كل حرف من هذا اللوح تسعة عشر ألفاً من خطا واستحق  
 واذا تمننا اللوح نزل من جبروت البقا من آيات ربك الكبرى تارة اخرى  
 ليتذكر بها كل عقل مستطاب ولتذكر في اللوح ذكر بعض من جبار الله الذي  
 ما ذكرناه من قبل ليكون فضل الله بالغة على كل الذرات وعلى كل ذى فضل  
 ولباب اذا ذكر الذين ماتوا فتم الامر على اسمهم ان تجدهم متذكراً  
 بذكرهم والا دعهم بانفسهم ثم اعرض عن كل معرض مرتاب قل يا مؤلاي

فابشروا في تلك الأيام التي فيها أتى الله في ظل من الروح واشرق الوجه  
 عن خلف النقاب ثم ذكر محمدًا قبل على الذي كان اسمه في كتابك بما ذكره  
 قلم القضا في حبروت الامصار بين يدي ربه العزيز الوهاب ليصعد في نفسه  
 الى معارج القدس في هذا المعراج الذي ظهر على بيك السلام ويكون ممن خضع  
 وانا بقل يا عبد فانقطع عن كل ما تهوى به هوياك ثم تمسك بعروة العظم  
 في نفسك وان هذا خير لك عن ملكوت السموات والارض ولا يعقل  
 ذلك الا كل مؤمن ثابت ولا يعقلها الا اولي الابواب قل سبح باسم ربك  
 وكن في جذب ووليه عما استقيناك خمر الحوان في كأوس قدس عجاب انا  
 جعلنا تلك الحروفات كأوسا لبدائع الصفات نسقي منها خمر الآيات ما شاء  
 من عبادنا قل مناظر العنقل واليسنا يرح في يوم الاياب بقطرة منها يسي  
 بها كل الموجودات وكذلك سبقت رحمتنا كل شيء واحاطت الذرات من على  
 الفردوس الى ان نسي الى نقطة التراب ان الذين ما فازوا برشحات القدس  
 من بذه الكأس اولئك احقر خلقا عند الله عن خلق الذباب لانهم كفروا  
 بنعمة الله وجادلوا بآياته بعد انزالها وتجوكل مشرك كذاب قل يا قوم  
 اتدعون الذين ما جعل الله لهم سلطانا وتذرون رب الارباب فبئس ما تتخذتم



لأنفسكم اولياء من دون الله ف سوف يعذّبكم الله بقهر من عنده وانه لقولى  
 فى الاحذ وشد يد فى العقاب ومن المشركين من كان هناك ومارضى باننا  
 نسمى نفسنا باسم من الاسماء وكذلك بعنى على الله الذى خلقه وسواه وما  
 بعنى المشركين الا فى تباب قل يا قوم ان الاسماء كلها يرجع الى ملكوتها  
 التى يرجع الى امرى الذى خلق بقولى ويعرف ذلك كل نفس آمنت  
 بيوم الحساب قل قد اشرفت الشمس عن افق المجد وبها انفطرت سما لكبر  
 ونشفت ارض الغل ومر جبل السكون كمر السحاب كذلك القينا عليك  
 من كل نبال لتذكر فى نفسك وتذكر الناس بما الهناك لعل تطهرون  
 النفوس عن الامراض ثم تطاب قل يا ايها الارض فابتغوا النصر فى تلك  
 الايام ولا تخافنكم كثرة المشركين كذلك يعظكم قلم العنبر من لدن عزيز  
 جذاب ثم اعلوا بان النصر لم يكن فى اسراج السيف بل فى تطهير نفوسكم  
 يا معشر الاصحاب تالله لو تنقطع نفس عن كل من فى السموات والارض وتقوم  
 على ما اراد الله لينصر الله بها المخلصين من حبهائه وينعدم رايات المشركين من  
 كل الاجزاب قل تالله ان النصر هو انقطاعكم عما سوى الله واستقامتكم على  
 حبه فى يوم الذى تنزل فيه اقدام البلغاء ويخرج عن ايكلة التفاح شرذمة من

الذباب الذين كفروا واعرضوا وكانوا في مرتبة عن لقاء ربهم بعد الذي ظهر  
 عن افق القدس بصحائف وكتاب قل يا ايها القدس ان اخرجوا سيف الحكمة  
 عن عمد لبيان ثم انصروا به ربكم الرحمن اياكم ان لا تفسدوا في الارض بعد صلواتها  
 خافوا عن الله الذي ليسه يرحح الامور في المبدء والمآب ان يرحفوا عليكم لم يشركوا  
 شرودهم بكلمة من عندنا لا بسيفوكم ولا تحشوا عما امرتم به في الكتاب ان استقيموا  
 يا قوم على الصراط وكونوا على الامر في هذا الركن بنا وانبجذاب قل انتم ان  
 لن تستقيموا على الصراط فوفى سبحانه قوماً يستقيمون على الامر ويذكرنه بوليه  
 وشوق وانبجذاب ولا يمنعم شيئا عما في السموات والارض اولئك يصلون  
 عليهم الملكة والروح ثم اهل طأ القدس ثم الذينم كانوا في سرادق القرب  
 عن خلف الحجاب وان من شيئا الا يذكرن اسمائهم ويستقربن بها الى الله  
 قل تالله باسمائهم تصح التافوس وتدلح ديك الفردوس وتغن

الرباب اذا تمت كلمات ربك صدقا و

عدلاً ولا تبدل الكلمات ربك ولن يفقه

ذلك الا كل نفس باقية

مستطاب .

## SOME NOTES ON BAHĀ'U'LLĀH'S GRADUALLY EVOLVING CLAIMS OF THE ADRIANOPOLE / EDIRNE PERIOD.

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Stephen Lambden

From the Bahā'ī theological perspective Bahā'u'llāh, as the "Divine Universal Manifestation" (*al-mazhar al-kullī al-illāhī*)<sup>1</sup>, has, from an eternity of eternities in his pre-existent Reality, been a Messenger of God "endowed with constancy" (Qur'ān 46:35). During his temporal ministry (1852-1892 C.E.) the transcendent station he claimed became gradually and only imperfectly realized by his earthly contemporaries. He often communicated his claims in a highly mystical language; frequently in allusive terms rooted in past Semitic scripture. The numerous Arabic and Persian Tablets (*alwāh*: in excess of 15,000 extant) he revealed, span a 40 year period (1852-1892 C.E.) and contain multifaceted claims which have been understood (and sometimes misunderstood) in many different ways.<sup>2</sup> Bahā'ī theophanology, in other words, has numerous facets: some expressive of a "high theophanology", others suggestive of humanity or "servitude" -- not mutually exclusive in the light of the Bahā'ī doctrine of the Manifestation of God (*mazhar-i illāhī*). It is the *alwāh* themselves which must constitute the primary source for the understanding of the progressive unfolding of Bahā'u'llāh's claims.<sup>3</sup> A proportion of them contain autobiographical statements sometimes dwelling upon the nature and history of his claims.

The nature of the gradually evolving claims of Bahā'u'llāh has, to date, hardly been researched at all. Few of the thousands of his revelations have been read through or

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<sup>1</sup> See Shoghi Effendi, *Centennial Tablet* (*Lawh-i Qarn* np. nd. Naw Rūz 101 Badī'): 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Khazeh Fananapazir, *A Tablet of Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī Bahā'u'llāh to Jamāl-i Burūjirdī: A Full Provisional Translation* in BSB 5:1-2 (January 1991), pp.4-12.

<sup>3</sup> I fully support the observations made above by Juan Cole, and draw attention to a few relevant scriptural passages noted some years ago in the course of researching my [uncompleted] doctoral thesis *Some Aspects of Isrā'īliyyāt and the Emergence of the Bābī-Bahā'ī Interpretation of the Bible*. Selected material derived from an unpublished paper, *After the Qā'im: the gradually unfolding claims of Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī Bahā'u'llāh*, is also included.

convincingly dated by scholars anxious to clarify the so-called early "messianic secret"<sup>4</sup> of his claims. That there was such a "messianic secret" is directly or indirectly stated in a number of primary "revelatory" (*alwāh*) sources. Only a small proportion of Bahā'u'llāh's Tablets of the Iraq and of the early Edirne periods have been published; a mere handful read by scholars interested in clarifying the nature of the evolution towards explicit apotheosis or Bahā'u'llāh's claim to (subordinate) Divinity.

Throughout his ministry (1852-1892) Bahā'u'llāh expressed his claims in a multitude of ways and in accordance with the varying "capacity" of his diverse questioners. One cannot always thoroughly trace a merely straightforward evolution of Bahā'u'llāh's claims from (to simplify) "servitude" to "Divinity". In some early (pre-1866) Tablets, "late" claims tending to apotheosis seem to be expressed or presupposed. Then, in certain late (post-1866) Tablets, diverse expressions of the "early" claim to "servitude" are also present.

In attempting to understand Bahā'u'llāh's revelations their dating and *Sitz im Leben* should, as far as is possible, be taken into account. Something of the Islamo-Bābī theological 'universe of discourse' also should be borne in mind -- such as the 'extravagant' claims of certain Sufis. It would be wise to bear in mind that the perspective and standpoint of the contemporary reader of the *alwāh*, to a greater or lesser extent, colours the picture. From the theological point of view, also, it should not be forgotten that certain of Bahā'u'llāh's claims are clarified, and authoritatively interpreted for Bahā'īs, by Abdu'l-Bahā' and Shoghi Effendi.

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<sup>4</sup> The term "messianic secret" is of fairly recent origin -- deriving from the title of the 1901 classic work of the German New Testament scholar Wilhelm Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis* Eng. Trans., 'The Messianic Secret'. It sums up the fact that "Jesus is frequently portrayed in the Gospels, especially in Mark, as trying to maintain an element of secrecy about himself and his work." (C.M. Tuckett art., *Messianic Secret* in R.J. Coggins & J.L. Houlden Eds., *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* [SCM Press London 1990] pp.445-6.) Attempts to work out a coherent Christology have been bedeviled by the disparate nature of New Testament presentations/assessments of Jesus' person and claims. As "revolutionaries" aiming to create a "new heaven and a new earth" the Manifestations of God choose, at times, to maintain a "messianic secret" lest their purpose and life, as well as the lives of their followers, be threatened or terminated. Muḥammad was at first reluctant to preach. The Bāb, on occasion, seems to have practised *taqiyya*. Bahā'u'llāh kept silent about his claims for fear of creating disunity and in the light of the limited spiritual capacity of his contemporaries.

Both the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh have explicitly confirmed a "messianic secret" or the gradually evolving nature of their claims. Relative to the Bāb, the classic expression of this occurs in the Persian *Dalā'il-i Sab'a* , where at one point we read:

"Consider the grace of the Promised One in so extending His mercy to the people of Islām that He might bring them salvation, how He whose station is that of the first of all created things and the manifestation of the verse 'Verily, I am God,' revealed Himself as the Bāb of the Qā'im of the family of Muḥammad, and in His first book commanded observance of the laws of the Qur'ān so that men might not be disturbed by a new Book and a new Cause."<sup>5</sup>

In the first major work of the Bāb, the *Qayyūm al-asmā'* ( mid. 1844 ) a wide variety of claims are stated or presupposed, including "servitude" and "divinity". After his pilgrimage to Mecca the matter becomes even more complex in the light of episodes of outward 'dissimulation' ( *taqiyya* ?). In his post-1848 writings, claims to Divinity, Lordship and the like are very frequent.

In certain of his Tablets Bahā'u'llāh has fully affirmed the Bāb's gradual unfolding of his claims. This, often in the light of the progressively unfolding expression of his own move from claiming servitude, or no station at all, to claiming Prophethood and ultimately (subordinate) Divinity.

During the early to mid-1850's a good many Bābīs made exalted claims for themselves and directly or indirectly challenged the by-no-means universally acknowledged leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā.<sup>6</sup> Bahā'u'llāh however, right up until the end of the Iraq period,

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<sup>5</sup> *Dalā'il-i Sab'a* p.29 ( np. nd. [Azalī Edition] ) trans. Denis MacEoin, *Early Shaykhī Reactions to the Bāb and his Claims* p.18 in M. Momen (Ed.), *Studies in Bābī & Bahā'ī History* Vol.1 ( Los Angeles: Kalimat Press 1982 ).

<sup>6</sup> For some details see Denis MacEoin, *Divisions and Authority Claims in Bābism (1850-1866)* in *Studia Iranica* 18(1989):93-129.

supported his half-brother and spoke of himself as a leading Bābī. He, to quote Shoghi Effendi, "... appeared in the guise of ... one of the foremost disciples of the Bāb ..."<sup>7</sup>

In a number of his writings of the Iraq period Bahā'u'llāh speaks of himself as naught but a servant of God and was viewed by some Bābīs as the "return" of the Imām Husayn. His early, semi-secret claim to Husayniyya would not necessarily have been viewed as extraordinary, in the light of the plethora of divine and exalted ranks claimed by leading Bābīs (e.g. Quddūs). The Bāb himself had accorded "divinity" or exalted stations upon a veritable pleroma of true believers. Many leading Bābīs were reckoned to be the "return" of the various Imāms or "people of the House".

At one point in the early *Tablet of All Food (Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'ām*, late 1853 -> early 1854 C.E. ) Bahā'u'llāh states: "... I have claimed naught but servitude to God, the True One ..."<sup>8</sup> Similar statements are to be found in many other pre-1866 Tablets of Bahā'u'llāh, including the *Sūrat al-Kifāya (c.1855?)*, *Lawh-i Madīnat al-Tawhīd (c.1857?)*, *Ṣahīfa-yi Shattīyya (c.1858?)* and in other untitled letters. In one untitled letter of Bahā'u'llāh we read: "Say: O People! This is the servant of God. And He is naught save the like of anyone among you."<sup>9</sup>

Such clear declarations of servitude did not, however, eclipse Bahā'u'llāh's claiming, when appropriate, divine inspiration and speaking of himself in very exalted terms. It was one thing to claim "Divinity" and "Godhood" -- after the fashion of a good many God-intoxicated Sufis -- and another to explicitly claim independent Prophethood or to be the promised one of the Bayān, *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*, capable of abrogating the Bayān and inaugurating a new religious dispensation. The Bābī and later Bahā'ī barber and poet, Ustad Muhammad 'Alī Salmānī, who visited Baghdad in 1862 observed that

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<sup>7</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (BPT, Wilmette Illinois 1987): 128.

<sup>8</sup> See S. Lambden, *A Tablet of Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī Bahā'u'llāh of the Early Iraq Period: The Tablet of All Food*, BSB 3:1 ( June 1984 pp.4-67) p.36

<sup>9</sup> This untitled letter, almost certainly dating from the Iraq period is contained in INBA Xerox Coll. Vol.32 (pp.39-42) p.41.

Bahā'u'llāh "... would say whatever the Manifestation of God [independent Prophet] would say, but in all he uttered there was no "I am He! ...".<sup>10</sup>

In order to explain and legitimate his own years of acting as a leading Bābī ( mid. 1840's --> early 1860's ) but now claiming exalted Prophethood or Divinity, there exists an important passage in Bahā'u'llāh's *Sūra of the Commencement ['Opening'] (Sūrat al-Fath)*, which is probably to be dated around the early Adrianople period (?). Towards the beginning of this Arabic Tablet addressed to Fath al-A'zam, Bahā'u'llāh claims to be the Remembrance ( *al-dhikr* ) and states that he divulges nothing save what is in accordance with the recipients' capacity. God lies behind and determines, through His command, the nature of Bahā'u'llāh's claims in direct accordance with a determined measure, "... lest the inmost hearts of such as believe in the unity of God be shattered". Referring to the earlier Bābī situation, Bahā'u'llāh continues:

"So recollect, O people! the moment when there came unto you the Revealer of the Bayān ( *munzil al-bayān* [the Bāb] ) with wondrous, holy verses. He then said, 'I am the Gate of Knowledge ( *bāb al-'ilm* ) and whosoever is convinced of the truth of My Claim ( *haqqī* ) in addition to that ( *fūq dhalika* : surpassing that station ), hath assuredly invented lies about Me and acquireth great sin within himself'. Then [ later ] He said, 'I am the Qā'im, the True One ( *al-qā'im al-haqq* ) whose manifestation you were promised in mighty, noble Scrolls. This, verily, is assuredly [the Reality of] Muhammad, the Messenger of God ( *rasūl allāh* ), just as thou hast heard and witnessed in the tablets of God ( *alwāh allāh* ), the King, the Ruler'. He [subsequently] said, 'I am the Primordial Point ( *nuqtat al-awwaliyya* )'. And when the beings of a number of predisposed souls were refined, thereupon the veils were torn asunder and there rose up from the Dawning-Place of Holiness [ the Bāb's

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<sup>10</sup> See 'Ustād Muḥammad 'Alī-yi Salmānī (tr. M. Gail), *My Memories of Bahā'u'llāh* ( Los Angeles: Kalimat Press 1982 ) p. 15.

claim], 'I verily am God, no God is there except Me, thy Lord and the Lord of all the worlds'. And [He said], 'I, verily, from the beginning which hath no beginning, was a Divinity (*illāh<sup>an</sup>*), One, Single, Unique...I [the divine, primordial Bāb], verily, sent the prophets (*al-nabiyyīn*) and the Messengers (*al-mursalīn*) from an eternity of eternities ...'

Then gaze upon Me [Bahā'u'llāh], the Soul of God (*nafs allāh*)...By God, O people! I [Bahā'u'llāh] did not desire any Cause (*amr<sup>an</sup>*) for Myself and followed all the Manifestations of old. I supported the Cause of God on all levels (*fī kullī sha'n*) during the days when faces were concealed out of fear of the oppressors. I humbled Myself before every soul in the Bayān [all Bābīs] and lowered the wing of submission (*jannāh al-taslīm*) before every worthy believer."<sup>11</sup>

This passage begins by echoing the words of the Bāb quoted above from the *Dalā'il-i Sab'a*. Bahā'u'llāh then seems to state that he had no desire to take over leadership of the Bābī community (cf. *Kitāb-i Īqān* trans. Shoghi Effendi [BPT: London 1961]: 159-161) but was faithful to the past Messengers of God, the ongoing religion of God. He remained a Bābī in all respects, even when such Bābīs as his own half-brother, Mīrzā Yahyā, were cowering in isolated *taqiyya*. Before his upright fellow religionists he manifested an humble submissiveness. He clearly states how he cared for, taught and elevated Ṣubḥ-i Azal. Paragraphs such as this are scattered throughout Bahā'u'llāh's early -- and some later -- writings.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Translated from an unpublished, [unnumbered] manuscript, mostly containing Tablets of Bahā'u'llāh of the Adrianople/ Edirne period originating in the Iran National Bahā'ī archives dated 1294 A.H. / 1877-8 C.E. pp.77-8.

<sup>12</sup> Another example dating from the Adrianople period, is the following passage from the *Lawḥ-i Khalīl* published in Ishrāq Khāvarī's *Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī* (BPT: Tehran 127 Badī° Vol.8:171ff.) and dating from the Adrianople period: "... in the beginning of the year 60 [1260 A.H./1844 CE. ]. He [the Bāb] was manifested, at the beginning of His appearance, in the garment of Gatehood (*bi-qamīs al-bābiyya*) ... then He replaced it with the garment of Sanctity (*bi-qamīs al-wilāya*) ... [later] ... he revealed himself unto them with the name of Lordship (*bi-ism al-rubūbiyya*) and cried out, "I verily, I am God, no God is there except Him ..." Following these lines are paragraphs in which Bahā'u'llāh dwells on the nature of the diverse claims of the Manifestation of God, with a view to legitimating and clarifying aspects of his own evolving claims. Shoghi Effendi has translated a portion of this Tablet, printed in



Bahā'u'llāh's claim to servitude along with hints of far greater claims persisted right up until the end of the Iraq period. Such poetic compositions as the *Rashh-i 'Amā'* and *al-Qasīda al-Warqā'iyya* contain allusions to Bahā'u'llāh's future assumption of leadership and independent Prophethood. It was not, however, until the latter part of the Iraq period extending well into the Adrianople/Edirne period (roughly between 1861 and 1866) that Bahā'u'llāh more clearly intimated his most elevated claims -- in for example his *Halih ... Yā Bishārat* (c. 1862-3) and *Lawh-i Mallāh al-Quds* (1863) then more openly (though still initially semi-secretly) in major Tablets of the next decade. Different Bābī and other communities became aware of Bahā'u'llāh's elevated claims at varying post-Bahgdad times.

### THE RIDWĀN DECLARATION

Bahā'u'llāh made known certain of his claims to a small and select group of Bābīs who visited him during the period of his sojourn in the garden of Najīb Paṣhā on the Tigris bank near Baghdad; the subsequently styled "Garden of Ridwān [Paradise]". Here he encamped for a twelve-day period between April 22nd and May 3rd 1863, immediately before moving on to Constantinople. The exact nature of his claims during this period are obscure. Was it to be "Him Whom God shall make manifest" (*man yuzhiruhu'llāh*), the expected Bābī messiah and inaugurator of the "greater resurrection"? Obscure also is the 'Ridwān reaction' of Mīrzā Yahyā (if he was present and heard them?) to Bahā'u'llāh's claims as well as the identity of those to whom the claims were intimated / openly communicated. A little light is, however, shed upon them in various primary scriptural sources (*alwāh*) of this period and subsequent years.

In one of the letters/Tablets of Bahā'u'llāh-Khādimu'llāh of the West Galilean ['Akkā'] period (1868-1892; the text which I sum up is dated 14th Muharram 1304 A.H./1886-7 C.E.) Bahā'u'llāh mentions that he gave utterance to three "words" during the twelve days of the

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on the nature of the diverse claims of the Manifestation of God, with a view to legitimating and clarifying aspects of his own evolving claims. Shoghi Effendi has translated a portion of this Tablet, printed in *Gleanings*... XXXIII [= MA 8:172-3]. On Bahā'u'llāh's early relationship with Yahyā see, for some further details, S. Lambden, *A Tablet of .. Bahā'u'llāh of the Early Iraq Period: The Tablet of All Food*, BSB 3:1.

Ridwān period. He states, in other words, that he -:

- [1] abrogated the Islāmo-Bābī law of (the permissibility) of offensive "holy War" (jihād) advocating a pacifist attitude to the propagation of Bābism;
  - [2] asserted that no independent Messenger or Manifestation of God would appear (presumably after him ) for at least a millennium ( 1,000 [ presumably solar] years ); and
  - [3] claimed that through his declarative utterance creation had been renewed (or the like).<sup>13</sup>
- Each of these three "words" or teachings finds explicit mention in Bahā'u'llāh's later writings and imply his assumption of independent Prophethood and hence leadership of the Bābī community. It is not the case however, that all the Bābīs who visited Bahā'u'llāh in the Najabiyya Garden before his departure to Constantinople, became aware that he claimed independent Prophethood. It took at least another 5-10 years for this to become known among a majority of the Bābī communities of Iran and Iraq.

Apart from *Sūrat Allāh*<sup>14</sup>, in which Bahā'u'llāh openly ranks himself among the exalted Prophets, it is the *Sūrat al-Sabr*, written on April 22nd 1863 (= the first day of the Ridwān period) which contains some paragraphs of great interest in connection with the transition in his claims of this period. Though this epistle contains something of a futurist eschatology as well a claim to servitude on the part of Bahā'u'llāh, we read at one point:

***"O Bahā' of the Spirit! Do not conceal thyself in these veils. Manifest thyself through the power of God then break the seal of "I am the Spirit" which hath, for an eternity of eternities, been sealed with the seal of preservation. This to the end that the perfumed breezes of this primordial "I am" might blow upon all created things, perchance contingent reality might be enlivened***

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<sup>13</sup> I summarize here the Persian text of the Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh-Khādīmu'llāh published in INBA Xerox Coll. Vol. 44: 225. See also Taherzadeh *The Revelation of Bahā'u'llāh* Vol. I ( Oxford: George Ronald 1974) : 278-80 , summing up part of a Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh-Khādīmu'llāh to Āqā Muhammad Ridā.

<sup>14</sup> This work is an Arabic epistle of the very late Iraq period ( ? early--> mid 1863 ? ) addressed to an as yet unidentified Bābī named 'Alī after Nabīl (= Muḥammad 'Alī ). In it Bahā'u'llāh refers to his desire to quit Iraq, dwells on his sufferings, underlines his Divine status and power of revelation. Among other things, he also refers to his withdrawal to Sulaymaniyya (1854-6). In terms of his power of revelation he includes himself among the great Messengers; mentioning Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and the Bāb. Addressing the Bābīs he considers rejection of him tantamount to rejection of all the Messengers of God.

*through the Breath of the All-Merciful and rise up for the sake of the Cause ( amr, command ) on the Day in which the Spirit appeareth from the direction of the Dawn." <sup>15</sup>*

Other passages of interest cannot be discussed in detail here, neither can the implications of the various *alwāh* written in celebration of the Ridwān period be commented upon.<sup>16</sup> It must suffice to note that between April 22nd and May 2nd 1863 Bahā'u'llāh orally and in writing indicated his assumption of exalted Prophethood and absolute leadership of the Bābī community. In subsequent years Bahā'īs came to view the year 1863 as the year of Bahā'u'llāh's "declaration" of his prophetic mission; a year prophetically intimated in the Bible, the Qur'ān and Bābī scripture. His more widespread, open and explicit "declaration" however came in 1866, following his "final rupture" with his hostile half-brother Mīrzā Yahyā.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ayyām-i Tis'a* (Rep. Los Angeles: Kalimat Press 1981) pp. 300-301.

<sup>16</sup> Bahā'u'llāh wrote a number of *alwāh* in celebration and commemoration of the Ridwān period. See for example, *Ayyām-i Tis'a* 346f; 306f.

## THE CYPRUS EXILES

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Moojan Momen

Bahā'u'llāh made an open declaration in Edirne in about 1866 of his claim to be the messianic figure "He Whom God shall make manifest" prophesied by the Bāb. Bahā'u'llāh's half-brother, Mīrzā Yahyā, who had been widely considered the leader of the Bābīs, rejected this claim and so a split occurred in the Bābī community. Eventually, this split was resolved in favour of Bahā'u'llāh as some 90% of Bābīs became followers of Bahā'u'llāh. This article is mainly concerned with the fate of Mīrzā Yahyā, the unsuccessful rival of Bahā'u'llāh.

After the events that led to the split between Bahā'u'llāh and Mīrzā Yahyā, two of Mīrzā Yahyā's leading supporters, Sayyid Muḥammad Isfahānī and Āqā Jān Big-i Kaj-Kulāh went to Istanbul. According to Bahā'ī histories, while there they began to stir up trouble with the Ottoman authorities against the Bahā'īs<sup>1</sup>. At about the same time, a number of Bahā'u'llāh's supporters also went to live in Istanbul. One group was Mīrzā 'Alī Sayyāh, Miṣḥkīn-Qalam, and Āqā Jamshīd Gurjī. It appears that they had found it difficult to earn a living in Edirne and thought that with Miṣḥkīn-Qalam's talent for calligraphy, they would fare better in Istanbul<sup>2</sup>. A while later, Bahā'u'llāh instructed Darvīsh Sidq-'Alī, Āqā Muḥammad-Bāqir Mahallātī (Qahvihchī) and Ustād Muḥammad-'Alī Salmānī to proceed to Istanbul in order to sell some horses that had been sent to Bahā'u'llāh<sup>3</sup>. Āqā 'Abdu'l-Ghaffār Isfahānī had also been sent to Istanbul<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Hasan Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh: the King of Glory*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1980, p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> Ustād Muḥammad-'Alī Salmānī, *My Memories of Bahā'u'llāh* (trans. M. Gail), Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1982, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Salmānī, *Memories*, pp. 58-9. Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh*, pp. 250-2.

<sup>4</sup> Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh*, p. 252.

In about early 1868, these seven Bahā'īs in Istanbul were arrested together with the two followers of Mīrzā Yahyā who were also in Istanbul<sup>5</sup>. A short time later, Bahā'u'llāh and his companions were arrested in Edirne and precipitously sent to Gallipoli, not knowing their ultimate destination.

All of those who were arrested in Edirne with Bahā'u'llāh were eventually sent to 'Akkā with him but a different fate awaited the seven followers of Bahā'u'llāh arrested in Istanbul. Only one of them was sent with the rest of the exiles to 'Akkā, Darvīsh Sidq-'Alī. Two of them were sent back to Iran, Ustād Muhammad-'Alī Salmānī and Āqā Jamshīd. The other four were condemned to imprisonment in Cyprus along with Azal and his family. The two followers of Mīrzā Yahyā that were also arrested in Istanbul were sent to 'Akkā.

In 31 August 1868, the Austrian Lloyd liner carrying Bahā'u'llāh and his companions reached Haifa. As the exiles were disembarking, Āqā 'Abdu'l-Ghaffār, one of the four condemned to go on to Cyprus threw himself into the sea. He was rescued and resuscitated but the officials would not alter the sentence and he was taken on to Cyprus.

The exiles arriving in at Famagusta in Cyprus on 5 September 1868 were:

Followers of Bahā'u'llāh:

1. Āqā 'Abdu'l-Ghaffār Isfahānī
2. Mīrzā 'Alī Sayyāh
3. Mishkīn-Qalam
4. Āqā Muḥammad-Bāqir Mahallātī (Qahvihchī)

Mīrzā Yahyā and family:

1. Mīrzā Yahyā, Subh-i Azal
2. Fātima, wife

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<sup>5</sup> Regarding the circumstances of these arrests, see Salmānī, *Memories*, pp. 58-65; Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh*, pp. 248, 250-2.

3. Ruqiyya, wife
4. Ahmad, son
5. Ridvān-‘Alī, son
6. ‘Abdu’l-‘Alī, son
7. Rafī‘a, daughter
8. Bahjat Raf‘at, daughter
9. Tal‘at, daughter
10. Fātima, daughter<sup>6</sup>

Two servants also accompanied the exiles, one named Ruqiyya was a servant of Shaykh ‘Alī Sayyāh, the other was Mishkīn-Qalam’s.

The exiles, after interrogation by the police, were allocated houses in Famagusta. It is not clear from the records and accounts whether the family of Shaykh ‘Alī Sayyāh, one of the followers of Bahā’u’llāh, accompanied them on their arrival or joined them later (probably the latter as one account gives the total number of the exiles as 14 persons and two servants<sup>7</sup>).

Āqā ‘Abdu’l-Ghaffār escaped from Cyprus on 29 September 1870 and went to ‘Akkā. He lived in the Khān-i Afranj and in order to conceal his identity he changed his name to Āqā ‘Abdu’llāh. After the passing of Bahā’u’llāh, he moved to Damascus where he died.

Mīrzā ‘Alī Sayyāh died in Famagusta on 4 August 1871. His widow, Fātima, married Mishkīn Qalam.

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<sup>6</sup> List in Browne’s diary of trip to Cyprus and ‘Akkā, Browne manuscripts, Cambridge University Library, Sup. 21 (8), p. 20; as amended in E.G. Browne, *A Traveller’s Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Bāb*, Cambridge: University Press, 1891, vol. 2, 376-389.

<sup>7</sup> Browne, *Traveller’s Narrative*, p. 381.

Mishkīn-Qalam moved from Famagusta to Nicosia in 1879, and to Larnaca in 1885. He was employed by Mr Cobham, Commissioner at Larnaca, as Persian secretary. His departure from Cyprus is noted in a letter from Cobham, dated 18 September 1886: "The Persian heresiarch and calligraphist Mushkīn Kalam left Cyprus for St. Jean d'Acre on the night of Tuesday September 14-15, renouncing his pittances and the protection of the Island Government. He found an unwonted opportunity in a Syrian vessel going directly to Acre..."<sup>8</sup>. It appears that some members of Mishkīn-Qalam's family remained in Cyprus, at least for a time, since a list of pilgrims to 'Akkā shows the arrival of Mishkīn-Qalam's son, 'Alī-Akbar, from Cyprus on 29 March 1888 for a stay of 116 days.<sup>9</sup>

Āqā Muḥammad-Bāqir Mahallātī died on 22 November 1872 (in Famagusta?).

During his time in Cyprus, Mishkīn Qalam had succeeded in converting a Turkish Cypriot by the name of Na'im Effendi. He came to 'Akkā twice. He achieved a high position in later life and his sons were also prominent in Cyprus and Turkey in government and the military. It is not clear what happened to this family. The descendants of Na'im Effendi have been traced by the present-day Cyprus Bahā'ī community and do not appear to know anything about the Bahā'ī Faith.

#### The Family of Mīrzā Yahyā

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Mīrzā Yahyā is reputed to have been an uxorious man. His own son Ridvān-'Alī reports him to have had eleven or twelve wives<sup>10</sup> while another source gives fourteen

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<sup>8</sup> Browne, *Traveller's Narrative*, p. 388

<sup>9</sup> Manuscript list of pilgrims that came to 'Akkā in 1304-5, copy in Afnān library; original in Haifa. It would also appear that Mishkīn-Qalam's wife (the widow of Shaykh 'Alī Sayyāh) stayed on in Cyprus; see Browne *Traveller's Narrative*, p. 387, last few lines of the table on this page.

<sup>10</sup> Browne, "Personal Reminiscences of the Bábi Insurrection at Zanján in 1850, written by Āqā 'Abdu'l-Aḥad-i-Zanjání", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (1897, pp. 761-827) p. 767.

wives<sup>11</sup>. The following table is the best that the present author has managed thus far by way of a reconstruction of Mīrzā Yahyā's wives and their children.

The sources for this list are abbreviated as follows:

T - Browne, *Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 384-6;

P - Browne, "Personal Reminiscences", pp. 766-7;

M - Browne, *Materials*, p. 314, 321-2;

J - Notes of Jalal Azal at Princeton University Library, pp. 560-572.

C - Browne's notebook for his journey to Cyprus and 'Akkā in 1890, University of Cambridge, Browne Manuscripts, Sup. 21 (8), p. 20;

S - the genealogical table compiled by Shoghi Effendi and published in *Bahā'ī World*, vol. 5: 1932-4, New York: Bahā'ī Publishing Committee, 1936, between pp. 204 and 205;

K - Malik-Khusravī, *Iqlīm-i Nūr*, pp. 202-205; and

I - Information obtained during my trip to Cyprus.

1. Wife: Fāṭima<sup>12</sup>, daughter of Mīrzā Muḥammad, the younger full brother of Mīrzā Buzurg Nūrī and thus Mīrzā Yahyā's cousin. Married in Iran in about 1850. She was arrested when Government troops attacked Takur. Mīrzā Yahyā left her behind with the children when he fled to Baghdad. Resided in Takur (T,M,J,K)

Children:

i. Muḥammad Hadi, b. 1848, Tihiran; d. 1896, Tihiran (T,P,M, J,S,K)

- had descendants living in Iran, among whom:

a. Mahdī (S)

b. Diyā'u'llāh (S)

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<sup>11</sup> Muḥammad 'Alī Malik-Khusravī, *Iqlīm-i Nūr*, Tihiran: Mu'assisih Matbu'at Amri, 115 B.E./1958 p. 202-5.

<sup>12</sup> Also called Hājjīyya by Sayyid Mahdī Dihajī in his *risāla*, Browne Manuscripts, Cambridge University Library, Mss no. F.57, p. 94 and in Malik-Khusravī, *op cit*, p. 202; but in other accounts her sister Ruqīyya, see below, is called Hājjīyya.



- ii. Muhammad Maḥdī, died young (J)
2. Wife: Narjis. Married in Iran. Left behind when Mīrzā Yahyā fled (J)
- iii. son (J)
3. Wife: Maryam, known as Qanita<sup>13</sup>. Married in Iran. Left behind in Baghdad in the care of Mīrzā Ja'far Narāqī when Mīrzā Yahyā moved on to Istanbul. They returned to Iran in 1286/1869-70 (J,K)
- iv. Mīrzā Nūru'llāh, b. 1848 - a physician who lived at Raṣht. Visited Cyprus on at least three occasions, once being in 1878 (T,P,M,J,S). He had many wives and children, among whom:
- a. 'Abdu'l-'Alī (S)
- b. Ahmad (Rūhu'llah), visited Cyprus in 1896 (P,S)
- aa. 'Inayat, 'Inayatu'llāh, b. c. 1889 (P,S)
- bb. 'Atiyyih (S)
- c. Maryam (S)
- d. 'Alīyyih (S)
- One of these two daughters was called Khānum Gul and married Mutarjim Humayūn<sup>14</sup> (S,K)
- aa. Hūshang (S)
- bb. Manūchihr (S)
- cc. Fakhrū'z-Zamān (S)
4. Wife: Fātima (Mulk-i-Jahān, Malakih Khānum) of Shīrāz, the sister of Mirza Bāqir. Married in Iran. Followed her husband to Baghdad, Edirne and Famagusta. d. 1868 in Famagusta. (T,M,J,C,K)
- v. Ahmad Bahhāj. b. 1853. m. 'Ulaviyya (or Fātima). Moved to Istanbul in

<sup>13</sup> Sayyid Maḥdī Dihajī, in his *risāla* (Browne Manuscripts, Cambridge University Library, Mss no. F.57, pp. 94, 189), states that she was from Isfahān. Malik-Khusravi states that she was from Kirmanshah (*op.cit.*, p. 203).

<sup>14</sup> Shoghi Effendi's genealogical chart (*Bahá'í World*, vol. 5: 1932-4, between pp. 204 and 205), however, seems to have Khānum-Gul as a daughter of Mīrzā Yahyā himself.

1884. His wife and two daughters adopted Protestantism in Istanbul. He moved to Haifa in 1921. d. 1933 and is buried in Bahā'ī cemetery in Haifa. (For further details on him see below). (T,P,M,J,C,S,K)

Daughters:

a. 'Ādila ('Ādila Sultan, Āyatu'llāh) b. Cyprus, 1880, moved to Istanbul - then moved to France and later became a missionary in Algeria. d. Switzerland - no issue (P,M,J,S)

b. 'Alā'iyya (Grace) - married a German and went to live in Federal Republic of Germany - one son, one daughter (J,S)

vi. 'Abdu'l-'Alī, (known as 'Alī Effendi) b. 1857-8. Was a cloth merchant.

m. 'Ismat, daughter of Sayyid Muhammad. Lived on in Famagusta. Died 1956. (T,P,M,J,C,S,I,K)

Children:

a. Wahida - a spinster, died of cancer of the breast (J,I)

b. Nayyira - was taken to Haifa by her uncle Aḥmad but later returned to Cyprus - a spinster (had been engaged to a pilot who was killed in the war; is said to have gone mad after this) (J,I)

c. Jalal Azal (Çelal Ezel) - went to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahā' and through him was employed in the Palestine civil service. Some time after 1948, he returned to Cyprus and was employed at a radio monitoring station in Cyprus - m. 'Ismat, daughter of Badī'u'llāh, son of Bahā'u'llāh. d. 5 April 1971. No children. (For further details of him see below.) (J,S)

d. 'Alīma - married a Turk, Fadil Urfzadih (Fazel Örfzade).

Is said to be still alive (J,I) Children:

- aa. Süle Örfi (Shulay Urfī) married Mr. Hakki Suha, a prominent newspaper owner and later in charge of a television station. He died in 1987. She herself is a prominent person in Nicosia, works in the Australian High Commission and the U.N. High Commission for Refugees. Have several children (I)
- bb. Dr. Ezel Örfzade (Urfi). Has English wife and is now living in Canada and is a radiologist. Returned to Cyprus for a time in 1970 (I)

e. Tali'a - married but died without issue (J)

f. The list of Ridvān-'Alī contains several other names. I am not sure if these are the same as the above or may have been children who did not survive to adulthood: 'Āzima Sultān, Satwatu'llāh, together with a daughter who died when 14 days old (P)

vii. Ridvān-'Alī, b. 1863. Went to Istanbul to join his brother Ahmad. Visited 'Abdu'l-Bahā' in Haifa in about 1894. Adopted Christianity, took the name Constantine the Persian and married a Greek woman. Lived for a time in Larnaca where he was employed by Mr Cobham the British Commissioner - died without issue in about 1917 (T,P,M,J,C,S,K)

viii. Muhammad (Mehmed, Bayānu'llāh, Walī-Muhammad, Jamālu'llāh), b. 1867. Described in 1912 as "not quite right in the head<sup>15</sup>." Went to Istanbul for a time to join his brother Ahmad. Came to Haifa in

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<sup>15</sup> E.G. Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918, p. 314.

the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahā, but proved troublesome and so was sent to Iran, where he was put into the care of his half-brother Mīrzā Nūru'llāh. m. an Iranian woman and died without issue (T,P,M,J,S,K<sup>16</sup>)

5. Wife: Ruqīyya, known as Ḥajjiyya, was sister of Fāṭima, Mīrzā Yahyā's first wife (see above) and thus also cousin of Mīrzā Yahyā. Married in Baghdad. d. Cyprus.

(T,M,J,C,K)

ix. Raf'at (Bahjat Raf'at, Bahjat al-Quds, Raf'atu'llāh) b. 1861-2. died a spinster (T,P,J,C)

x. Fu'ād (Fu'ādu'llāh). b. 1868-9. d. unmarried, Famagusta, 1888 (T,P,J,K)

xi. 'Abdu'l-Wahīd (also known as 'Abdu'l-Jalīl, Muhammad Jamīl, 'Abdu'r-Rashīd and is also probably identical with the Vahīd on some lists). b. 1871-2. m. Hamīda, daughter of Mīrzā Mustafā (Mīrzā Ismā'il Sabbāgh). He died without issue and his wife returned to Iran with her father and remarried (T,P,J,S,K)

xii. Maryam, b. 1873 - moved to Tihiran in A.H. 1315 (1897), married her cousin in Iran and left several children, among whom: (T,J,S,K)

a. 'Alīyyih (S)

b. Maymanat (S)

xiii. Taqīu'd-Dīn, also called Diya'u'd-Din, b. 1876-8. He died unmarried but in his will, he recognised an illegitimate son (from an affair with a Turkish Cypriot married woman, the wife of 'Alī Ruhi): (T,P,M,J,S,K,I)

a. Riza Ezel, to whom he left a plot of land near Mīrzā Yahyā's grave. Riza Ezel worked in the Customs department and is currently the caretaker of Mīrzā Yahyā's grave and lives in a nearby house (I)

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<sup>16</sup> Malik-Khusravī incorrectly makes him the son of Badri-Jān

aa. Ruhi Ezel, the son of Riza is in the Police force in Cyprus (I)

xiv. Muhtaram, this may be the same as Raf'at above (S,K)

6. Wife: Fātima, the second wife of the Bāb, the sister of Mullā Rajab-'Alī Isfahānī; married in Baghdad in about 1854-6 (while Bahā'u'llāh was wandering in the hills of Sulaymāniyyih) for about a month before divorcing her and giving her in marriage to Sayyid Muhammad Isfahānī<sup>17</sup>.

7. Wife: Badrī-Jān (Badr-i-Jahan), the sister of Mīrzā Nasru'llāh and Mīrzā Ridā-Qulī Tafrīshī; married in Baghdad but she had refused to live with him after a time and was exiled to 'Akkā with Bahā'u'llāh. She was sent to Cyprus by her brother but still refused to live with Mīrzā Yahyā and went to live in Nicosia instead. In 1886, she moved to Izmir and then to Istanbul where her daughters married. In 1888, she returned to Cyprus and died there after Azal (J)

xv. Safiyya (Rafiyya), b. 1861; exiled to Cyprus with her father, then moved to Istanbul with her mother in 1886. Married Mirza Āqā Khān Kirmānī. But after two years left him and returned to Cyprus. Returned to Istanbul in about 1889. Died without issue (T,J,C,K<sup>18</sup>)

xvi. Tal'at or Tal'atu'llāh, b. 1864; exiled to Cyprus with her father, then moved to Istanbul with her mother in 1886. Married Shaykh 'Alī Rūhī. Left her husband in 1888 and returned to Cyprus. Returned to Istanbul in about 1889. She later remarried to Mīrzā Mahdī of Isfahān and died in childbirth (T,J,C,K)

Children from her first husband:

a. Muhammad Zīyā'u'llāh (Nūru'd-Dīn, Kalimu'd-Dīn,

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<sup>17</sup> Hasan M. Balyuzi, *Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith*, London: George Ronald, 1970, p. 35n.

<sup>18</sup> Malik-Khusravī incorrectly has her as the daughter of Fātima Mulk-i-Jahān.

‘Izamu’*d-Dīn*), died before 1896. (P)

b. Fādila (Fādila Sultān). d. unmarried. (P,J)

c. ‘Alīyya. Married to Tām ibn ‘Abdu’s-Salam, no issue<sup>19</sup> (J)

d. The list of Ridvān-‘Alī also contains the name Abadiyya

Sultān - this may be the last-named above (P)

8. Wife: Daughter of an Arab, married in Baghdad (K)

xvii. Mīrzā Rivānu’llāh (K)

9. Wife: Daughter of Mullā ‘Abdu’l-Ghanī or, by some accounts, Mullā ‘Abdu’l-Fattāh (K)

10. Wife: Daughter of Mīrzā Haydar-Qulī Namad-sāb; she was half-sister of Khānum-Jān, a cousin of Mīrzā Yahyā (was possibly named Fātima) (K)

11. Wife: the wife of Mullā Muḥammad Mu’allim Nūrī, who was martyred at Shaykh Tabarsī (K)

12. Wife: Ruqīyya, daughter of A’raj Isfahānī (K)

13. Wife: Nisā Khānum Tihirānī (K)

14. Wife: Qanita, described as Ahl-i Balada and a companion of Ṭāhirih when she was in Nūr (K)

15. Wife: Sāhib-Jān Isfahānī (K)

xviii. Mīrzā Rūḥu’llāh (K)

16. Wife: Wife of Shaykh ‘Alī Zanjānī. Nabīl Zarandī reports that he heard from Āqā

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<sup>19</sup> *Zuhūr al-Haqq*, vol. 6, p. 906-7

Yaḥyā, the son of Muḥammad Ḥasan-i Fatā, a leading Azalī of Qazvīn, that when he went to Cyprus he heard the following from Shaykh ‘Alī Kaffash Zanjānī<sup>20</sup>: His wife was taken into service in Mīrzā Yaḥyā’s household in Cyprus. Later she said to him that Mīrzā Yaḥyā wanted her and so her husband consented to this. A while later, she was turned out of Mīrzā Yaḥyā’s house pregnant. Mīrzā Yaḥyā and his eldest son Aḥmad accused each other of being the father. The matter eventually went before the local court (*saray*). Āqā Yaḥyā wanted to check this story that he had heard and therefore he asked Mīrzā Yaḥyā about it. The latter asserted that it was his son, Aḥmad, who had made the woman pregnant and on account of this he had withdrawn him from the position of being his heir and had made Mīrzā Yaḥyā Dawlatābādī his heir.<sup>21</sup>

17. Wife: Mīrzā Yaḥyā married the wife of the martyr Mīrzā ‘Abdu’l-Wahhāb Shīrazī in Baghdad.<sup>22</sup>

There are a number of other children mentioned in some of the sources whom I have not been able to place exactly:

- xix. Hibatu’llāh or Jazbatu’llāh. b. 1860; a daughter who was in Istanbul in 1896 - this may be another name for Safiyya (see above) (P)
- xx. Mashīyyatu’llāh; a daughter who died in 1875, then aged 8 (P)
- xxi. Maryam Sultān; b. 1876, married in Istanbul in 1895 (P)
- xxii. Fātima; d. 29 August 1871 (T,C)
- xxiii. Rūḥu’llāh (S)

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<sup>20</sup> Presumably the same as Shaykh ‘Alī Bakhsh Zanjānī met by Browne in Cyprus. See "Personal Reminiscences of the Bābī Insurrection at Zanjān in 1850", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 29 (1897) 761.

<sup>21</sup> *Zuhūr al-Ḥaqq*, vol. 6, p. 541n-2n.

<sup>22</sup> *Zuhūr al-Ḥaqq*, vol. 6, p. 1010

xxiv. Hamīdih (S)

xxv. ‘Alīyyih (S,I)

a. Muḥammad Riṣḥat (Re ṣat). A carpenter in Famagusta.

Married a Turkish Cypriot woman named Munevver,

d. 1986 (I)

aa. Ismet Ezel, works for the Famagusta lycee and is a part-time newspaper reporter (I)

There is another grand-daughter (?great-grand-daughter) of Azal whose name is Sirin Birinci and who lives in Nicosia (I)

The number of Mīrzā Yahyā’s wives led to some unusual domestic arrangements. An English observer describes a daily ritual that was to be observed in Famagusta:

He had two wives, each of whom had a separate house, and every day, at four in the afternoon, the first wife took him to the door of the second wife’s house and handed him over. After twenty-four hours had passed, and punctually at 4 p.m., the second wife took Subh-i-Ezel back and handed him over to the safe-keeping of the first wife.<sup>23</sup>

After some years in Cyprus, Mīrzā Yahyā was joined by three of his followers from Zanjān: Āqā ‘Abdu’l-Aḥad<sup>24</sup>, Ustā Mahmūd and Shaykh ‘Alī Bakhsh.

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<sup>23</sup> Rupert Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus*, London: Methuen, 1936, p. 89. I am grateful to Mr Tacgey Debes for this reference.

<sup>24</sup> He was the author of the account of the Zanjān upheaval which E.G. Browne published: "Personal reminiscences of the Bābī Insurrection at Zanjān in 1850" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 29, 1897, pp. 761-827. Sayyid Miḥdī Dihajī reports that this man was the brother of Āqā Naqd-‘Alī Abā Baṣīr, the blind Bahā’ī who was martyred in about 1867; *Risāla* of Sayyid Miḥdī Dihajī, University of Cambridge Library, Browne mss, F57, p. 286. While it is certainly true that Āqā ‘Abdu’l-Aḥad had a brother called Naqd-‘Alī as he states in his reminiscences (p. 780), the account does not seem to indicate that this brother was blind as Abā Baṣīr had been since childhood.



Mīrzā Yaḥyā remained a recluse in Famagusta - there are no reports of him going to the mosque or to coffee-shops. The inhabitants of Famagusta appear to have regarded him as a Muslim holy man and Mīrzā Yaḥyā went along with this. When people called to greet him on Muslim feasts like Bayram (it being customary to visit a holy man on such occasions), he accepted this. There was no attempt to teach the local people the Bābī or Azalī religious beliefs.

Although freed from the conditions of his exile in 1881 after the British occupation of Cyprus, Mīrzā Yaḥyā preferred to remain in Famagusta as a pensioner of the British government. Mīrzā Yaḥyā died on 29 April 1912 at the age of about 80. According to the account by his son, Ridvān-‘Alī, who had by this time become a Christian and taken the name Constantine the Persian, no "witnesses to the Bayān" (i.e. Bābīs) could be found to carry out the funeral ceremony and so it was carried out by the Imām-Jum‘a of Famagusta and other Muslim clerics.<sup>25</sup>

All of Mīrzā Yaḥyā’s family in Cyprus maintained an outward appearance of being Muslims. The people of Famagusta used to call them sun-worshippers because of their custom of leaving the city at sunrise to go to Mīrzā Yaḥyā’s grave to pray. Mīrzā Yaḥyā’s descendants at the present time appear to know little about their family history or religious past can for all practical purposes be regarded as Turks and Muslims. Riza Ezel, the caretaker of Mīrzā Yaḥyā’s grave at present, told us that his grand-father was a Muslim holy man. Since Jalal Azal’s death, his widow ‘Ismat put an annual notice in the newspapers on the anniversary of his death inviting people to a Mevlid recital and Qur’ān reading in his memory (this being the traditional Turkish Muslim custom)<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 312

<sup>26</sup> The information in the last two paragraphs was obtained during my trip to Cyprus in October and November 1989. I am most grateful to Mr Mustafa Salman and Mr Erol Olkar, two Bahá’ls of Famagusta whose families have been closely associated with Mīrzā Yaḥyā’s descendants. I am also grateful to Mr Tacgey Debes for much information conveyed to me in correspondence since my visit.

## The Grave of Mīrzā Yahyā

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The grave of Mīrzā Yahyā was originally about a mile from the old walled city of Famagusta but the modern city has now encompassed it. The grave is situated inside a small simple flat-roofed shrine building about 7 metres by 5 metres with a small portico at the front. I was unable to ascertain the date of the building. Inside the building, there is a single bare-walled room with a low grave in the centre. There at two chairs at one end of the grave and at the other end of the grave there were placed three books:

- a Qur'ān;
- a hand-written volume consisting of a number of *ziyaratnamih*s (tablets of visitation) for Mīrzā Yahyā, Tāhirih, 'Azīm, and other material;
- a printed book of poems called *Sham'-i Jam'* by Fathu'llah Qudsi (pen-name Fu'ād, of Kirmān), presented by Jalīl Karīmī (?) in 1366 (A.D. 1987).

At the same end of the room there are a number of items on the wall:

- on the right as viewed a plaque in English which reads: "The holy tomb of Subh-i-Azal Mirror of God 1831 - 1912. The text on the wall has been written by the Bab, "The Primal Point" - Great and Glorious is His Dignity - nominating Subh-i-Azal as His Successor in the Bābī Religion. "
- in the centre a portrait of Mīrzā Yahyā. I was informed that it was painted by Dr. Philotheos Mughapghap, a well-known citizen of Famagusta<sup>27</sup>, but that it is not a good likeness.

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<sup>27</sup> Presumably the same person as in Browne, *Materials*, p. 314.

- on the left is the text referred to above of the nomination in Arabic. This also records the information that Mīrzā Yahyā was born in 1247 and died at 7 in the morning on Saturday 12 Jamadi al-Awwal 1330.

The building is immediately surrounded by some twelve cypress trees and it is set in a field of some 10 acres. But the city is encroaching on it and a few years ago Mehmed Reşat sold one large lot on the edge of this area which is already being built upon. The caretaker of the grave and shrine is a grandson of Mīrzā Yahyā, Riza Ezel but the overall control rests with Mrs Şule Örfi.

#### Ahmad Bahhāj and Jalal Azal

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Ahmad Bahhāj was the eldest of Mīrzā Yahyā's children to accompany him to Cyprus. In 1884, he moved to Istanbul where he worked in a bank. He was joined there by his wife and two daughters. At some stage, his wife and daughters became Protestant Christians in Istanbul. In about 1899, Ahmad's employment at the bank ceased for some reason and by 1912, we find him impoverished and working as a railway porter in Famagusta. His wife and daughters appear to have remained in Istanbul. Then in 1921, learning of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's presence in Palestine from his nephew Jalal and remembering 'Abdu'l-Bahā's kindness to him as a young boy in Baghdad and Edirne, he came to Haifa<sup>28</sup>. He appears to have become a Bahā'ī and remained in Haifa as a rather reclusive figure until his death in 1933. He is buried in the Bahā'ī cemetery in Haifa.

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<sup>28</sup> Based on statements made by Ahmad to Lady Blomfield in 1922; Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, Wilmette: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1967, pp. 237-8. See also Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh, King of Glory*, p. 232n

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In about 1915, during the First World War, Jalal Azal, the son of 'Abdu'l-'Alī and grandson of Mīrzā Yahyā, volunteered for service to the British Government and was sent as personal assistant, chief censor and head interpreter to Lt-Col Bidwell who was in charge of a Turkish prisoner-of-war camp in Madras in India. When one of the internees, Murad Bey of Baghdad, heard of his relationship to 'Abdu'l-Bahā, he praised 'Abdu'l-Bahā greatly and urged Jalal in the strongest terms to see out 'Abdu'l-Bahā's guidance and assistance in his moral and material education. On his return to Cyprus, Jalal Azal wrote in 1920 to 'Abdu'l-Bahā, asking for permission to visit him. He was also responsible for bringing about Ahmad Bahhaj's journey to Haifa. 'Abdu'l-Bahā managed to get for Jalal Azal a good position in the Palestine Civil Service. He was Land Settlement Officer in the Land Court in the Haifa-'Akkā area. Jalal Azal remained therefore in Palestine. It is difficult to know whether he regarded himself as a Bahā'ī at this time but almost certainly he was regarded by others as a Bahā'ī and he was in communication with the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahā'īs of the United States, for example.

After some years however, he appears to have become disaffected. This was also perhaps connected with his marriage to 'Ismat, the daughter of Badī'u'llāh, the son of Bahā'u'llāh and brother of Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī. At some time, presumably in 1948 at the end of the British Mandate, he returned with his wife to Famagusta. He took up employment in the radio monitoring station at Cyrenia run by the American intelligence services.

Some time in the 1950s or 1960s, Jalal Azal changed to active attempts to advance the Azalī case and to attack the Bahā'ī Faith. This may have been precipitated by the arrival in Famagusta of Bahā'ī "pioneers" and the conversion of a number of local people well-known to Jalal Azal. There was a concerted effort by a number of people including Jalal Azal, his wife 'Ismat, and her sister Qamar Mūsā Bahā'ī (d. 10 November 1970), who had

married Mūsā Bahā'ī, the son of Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī, to unite all three generations of the internal opponents of the Bahā'ī Faith, the "Covenant-Breakers"<sup>29</sup>. By three generations is meant:

First generation: Followers of Mīrzā Yahyā in his opposition to Bahā'u'llāh.

Second generation: Followers of Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī in his opposition to 'Abdu'l-Bahā.

Third generation: Opponents of Shoghi Effendi, both from within the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahā and others such as Ahmad Sohrab who rejected Shoghi Effendi's authority.

This in itself was a remarkable event full of bizarre contradictions. In theory, the second generation accepting as it does Bahā'u'llāh should have had nothing to do with the first generation followers of Mīrzā Yahyā. Similarly, the third generation, accounting themselves loyal followers of 'Abdu'l-Bahā should have had nothing to do with the second generation who are based on opposition to 'Abdu'l-Bahā (let alone supporting the first generation)<sup>30</sup>.

Jalal Azal was of course the Azalī link in this scheme. His wife and her sister Qamar Musa Bahā'ī were representatives of the second generation and in close contact with the other members of the second generation. The second generation had already put themselves in close contact with the third generation. After the marriage of several of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's grand-children with the descendants of Sayyid 'Alī Afnān (who had vacillated for some time between 'Abdu'l-Bahā and Mīrzā Muhammad-'Alī), almost all of the descendants

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<sup>29</sup> Evidence for this plan comes in Peter Berger, "From Sect to Church: a sociological interpretation of the Baha'i movement", Ph. D. Thesis, New School for Social Research, New York, 1954, p. 140, n. 4; Azal's Notes, Princeton University Library, *see supra*.

<sup>30</sup> I was informed by the Cyprus Bahā'īs that in fact 'Ismat, although married to Jalal Azal, had no time for Mīrzā Yahyā's claims and openly derided these even in front of her husband.

of 'Abdu'l-Bahā threw in their lot with the followers of Mīrzā Muhammad-'Alī. Riyād, Shoghi Effendi's brother, visited Jalal Azal in Cyprus on at least four occasions during which they exchanged information and material. Jalal Azal and his wife visited her relatives in Damascus. Yvonne, a daughter of 'Izzu'd-Dīn Wudūd, as well as Mīrzā Jalāl, the grandson of Mīrzā Mūsā Kalīm, both second generation opponents, collaborated with Ahmad Sohrab, the New History Society and the Caravan of East and West, third generation opponents<sup>31</sup>.

Part of this combined plotting was a court case raised by Qamar Bahā'ī, Jalal the grandson of Mīrzā Mūsā and others in about 1950-1, challenging Shoghi Effendi's right to carry out major construction work around the shrine of Bahā'u'llāh. One of their key witnesses, Nayyir Afnān, died shortly before the case was due to open, and it all came to nothing. One of the culminations of this plotting was a grand meeting that was held in Famagusta in the late 1950s. Representatives of all three generations were present including: Jalal Azal, 'Ismat and other representatives of the second generation opponents and Ahmad Sohrab. One of the aims of this conference was to build a mausoleum over the grave of Mīrzā Yahyā. To this end, an amount of money was collected but it "disappeared" and nothing came of the project.

Jalal Azal provided information to Dr Imani from Beirut who was researching a book attacking the Bahā'ī Faith. Later in America, Dr Imani was in contact with Rev William Miller. Imani put Miller in touch with Jalal Azal. Between March 1967 and February 1971, the latter provided Miller with a great deal of material with which to attack the Bahā'ī Faith in his book, *The Baha'i Faith: its history and teachings*<sup>32</sup>. Miller also arranged for the material that Jalal Azal had sent him to be deposited in Princeton University Library.

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<sup>31</sup> One of the main episodes in this planned attack was a court case over access to the shrine of Bahā'u'llāh. This case was brought by Qamar Bahā'ī, who was a second generation opponent and the star witness was to have been Nayyir Afnan, who was married to Shoghi Effendi's sister and was a third generation opponent. But the death of the latter in 1952 aborted the plan.

<sup>32</sup> South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1974.

Jalal Azal died on 5 April 1971 of a cerebral stroke, exacerbated by his tendency to excessive alcohol consumption. His wife remained in Famagusta and used to commemorate his death by an annual announcement in the newspaper.

### Comparison and Analysis

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In 1972, Eric Cohen published a sociological analysis of the followers of Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī in 'Akkā<sup>33</sup>. These were the Bahā'īs who, after the passing of Bahā'u'llāh in 1892, had turned away from 'Abdu'l-Bahā's leadership and attached themselves to his half-brother, Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī. Cohen found that from an initial position of strength within the Bahā'ī community of 'Akkā, they had gradually declined into stagnation, inactivity and insignificance as compared to the main-line Bahā'ī community which had continuously extended its activities and influence in the Haifa-'Akkā area.

Cohen was unable to find a suitable name in the existing sociological literature to describe this group. He rejected the application of the term "sect" to them because "though outwardly resembling a sect, [they had] sunk into a kind of ossification." Cohen proposes the term "residual religious community" to describe them. In his paper, Cohen defines this as a community "either a remnant of a sect which was side-tracked by its rivals, or a once important religious organisation, such as a church or denomination, which has gradually been reduced to relative insignificance<sup>34</sup>." He gives the remnants of the followers of Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī in 'Akkā as an example of a sect that has been side-tracked by its rivals, and the Samaritans as an example of a church that has been reduced to insignificance.

I was very struck by the parallels between the group in 'Akkā described by Cohen and the remnants of the Azalīs in Cyprus. My brief enquiries during the few days that I was able

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<sup>33</sup> "The Baha'i community of Acre" *Folklore Research Center Studies*, vol. 3 (1972) pp. 119-141.

<sup>34</sup> Cohen, "Baha'i community", p. 140.



to spend in Cyprus can scarcely be compared to Cohen's research over a much more extended period. Therefore my findings are hardly adequate for anything more than a preliminary comparison. But within these limits, there are grounds for comparing the two groups.

Both groups can be described as having been side-tracked by a more successful rival. As Cohen has described, the faction of Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī (hereinafter called "the 'Akkā group") began as a very serious challenge to 'Abdu'l-Bahā's leadership. Most of the leading Bahā'īs of 'Akkā supported the challenge as did almost all of Bahā'u'llāh's family. Similarly, Mīrzā Yahyā's challenge to Bahā'u'llāh's leadership was at first very serious. Mīrzā Yahyā was widely regarded as the successor of the Bāb and so his rejection of Bahā'u'llāh's claim was a serious blow. Thus initially both groups began as very considerable challenge to their rival.

Despite this initially strong position, both groups saw their position rapidly eroded as their rivals gained the initiative and won the allegiance of the majority of the community. Within a decade of the split, both groups had been comprehensively defeated and reduced to insignificance. Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī, was at first able to recruit most of the influential Bahā'īs of 'Akkā and several important figures in Iran. His flagging fortunes were then shored up again in 1900 when Ibrahim Kheiralla, the key Bahā'ī teacher in America, defected to his side. During the 1930s and 1940s, a number of members of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's family disobeyed Shoghi Effendi and were expelled from the Bahā'ī community. These effectively became incorporated into the 'Akkā group. But even these events were not sufficient to reverse the steady decline in his position. A similar course of events occurred with Mīrzā Yahyā. Over 90% of the Bābīs of Iran gave their allegiance to Bahā'u'llāh within a short period of his putting forward his claim. Browne, visiting Iran in 1888 was hard pressed to find any Azalīs at all. Mīrzā Yahyā's position in Cyprus became increasingly isolated and marginal. Even of his sons, one became a Christian and another later joined 'Abdu'l-Bahā in Haifa.

Another feature described by Cohen is the fact that these "residual religious communities" become inward-turning and defensive; they do not try to spread their beliefs. Part of their problem arises from their indefinite status with the authorities. Cohen describes how the main body of Bahā'īs remain outward-looking, innovative and expansionist (seeking new converts); they actively encourage the spread and universalisation of their religion. With them the religion is constantly growing and developing. The 'Akkā group became, by contrast, inward-turning, conservative and defensive, struggling to protect its interests and right to exist. It deplored the recruitment of various nationalities (especially Americans) to run the world centre in Haifa and the changes made in the religion as it adapted itself to these new cultures. It made no attempts to reach the non-Bahā'ī world. Most of the literature produced by the group consisted of apologetics for its position vis-a-vis its rival. While the main body of Bahā'īs was recognised by the Israeli government as a separate religious community, the status of the 'Akkā group is undefined. Similarly the Azalīs, especially in Cyprus, became an inward-turning and defensive group. It represented the conservative faction who did not like the changes that Bahā'u'llāh introduced. It tried to become in effect an ossification of the structures of the earliest period of the religion, except that it could not really be that since it had neither the numbers nor the enthusiasm nor were the circumstances the same. It made no attempt to convert the local population or any other group. Its literature has mainly been polemics against Bahā'u'llāh. Its status as a group is indefinite in Turkish Cyprus.

Cohen states that part of the conservative and traditional aspect of the 'Akkā group is that it remains in effect Muslim. The members of the group attend mosque and receive religious services (for births, marriages, death, etc) from the official Muslim establishment of 'Akkā. They remain socially identified with traditional Muslim family and social norms. This feature of outward blending with the established religious norm is also a feature of the Azalīs in Cyprus. They are to all intents Turkish Muslims. They go to the mosque and receive religious services from the official Muslim establishment. 'Ismat organised Mevlid recitations and Qur'ān readings on the anniversaries of Jalal Azal's death.

Cohen also makes the point that the 'Akkā group is threatened by extinction within one or two generations through intermarriage and assimilation into the Muslim population of 'Akkā. He does not make it a part of his definition of a "residual religious group" as those groups that were substantial churches or denominations such as the Samaritans are more able to preserve a distinct identity and maintain their social boundaries. The Cyprus Azalīs are also in danger of extinction. They are already extensively intermarried with the local Turkish Cypriot population. It is difficult to see how they can maintain a separate identity for more than one or two more generations.

Cohen makes the point that although the 'Akkā group is small and threatened with extinction, it is also internally divided due to an ossified accumulation of the conflicts of the past. My sources for the Cyprus Azalīs was not sufficiently informed to be able to tell me of any internal divisions. Jalal Azal however refuted the commonly-held position that Mīrzā Hādī Dawlatābādī was the appointed successor to Mīrzā Yahyā as the leader of the Azalīs<sup>35</sup> - thus indicating the existence of split among the Azalīs.

Cohen refers to the fact that the 'Akkā group having been comprehensively defeated on all issue (especially to do with authority over the Bahā'ī shrines) has acknowledged defeat and ceased active opposition. The last serious attempt at active opposition was the 1952 court case<sup>36</sup>. Similarly, the Azalīs have long since ceased any active opposition. The short foray into activity by Jalal Azal in the 1960s was something of an anachronism. Indeed it is difficult to see it as a serious attempt to revive the Azalī position. Had he been serious in attempting to do this, he would scarcely have co-operated so enthusiastically with Rev. Miller, whose only interest was in combatting both Mīrzā Yahyā's and Bahā'u'llāh's positions.

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<sup>35</sup> Jalal Azal's Notes, pp. 557, 791-2; this is alluded to in Miller, *The Bahā'ī Faith*, p. 107, 114, n.53.

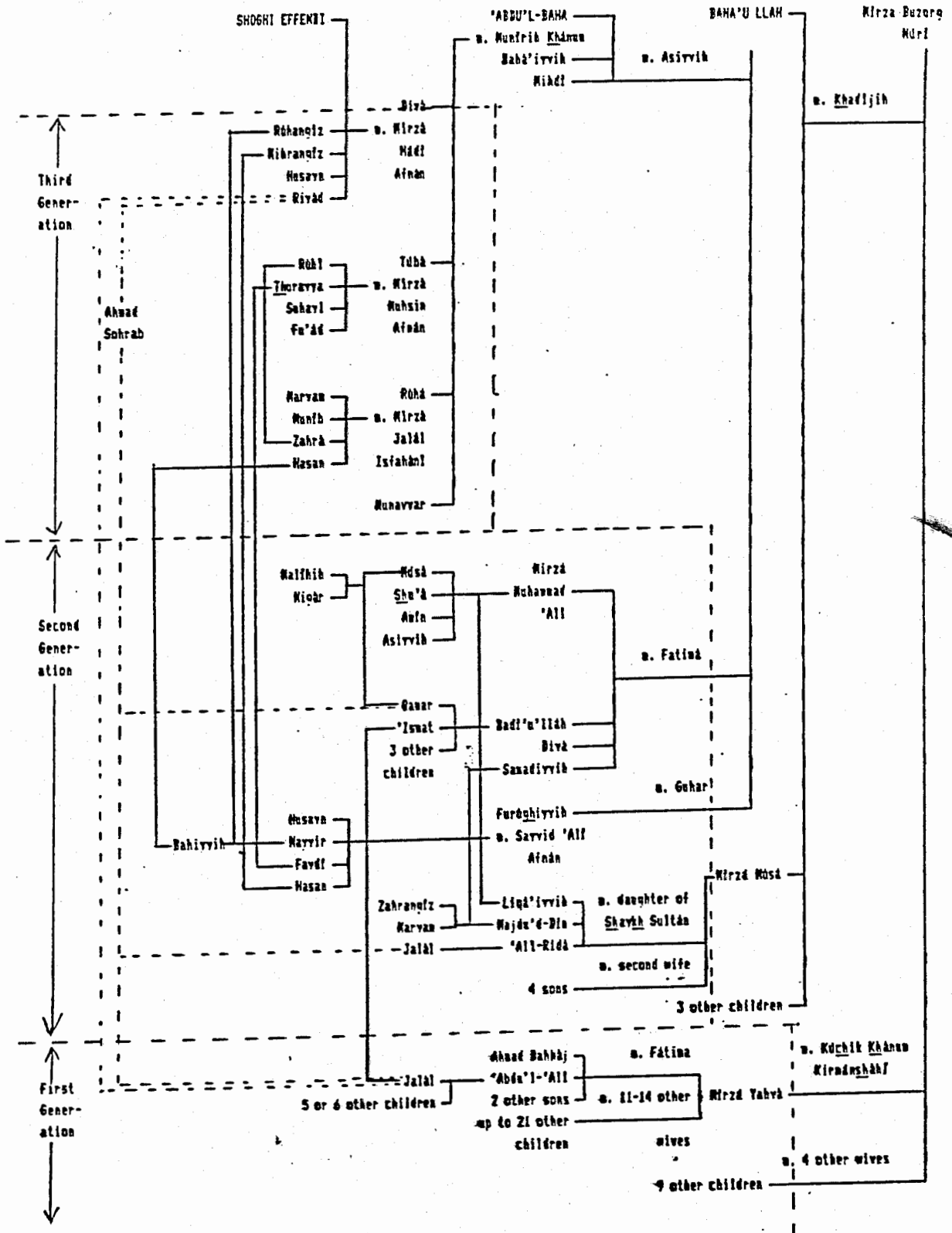
<sup>36</sup> See note 30 above.

There is one final comparison to be made between the two groups although this is a matter of historical accident and not a point in Cohen's definition. Both groups acquired land outside the city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Several of the 'Akkā group now find themselves wealthy since the city has grown out and their land is now prime development land. Similarly with the Cyprus Azalīs, they have been able to benefit from properties and land acquired in the past which has now greatly increased in value.

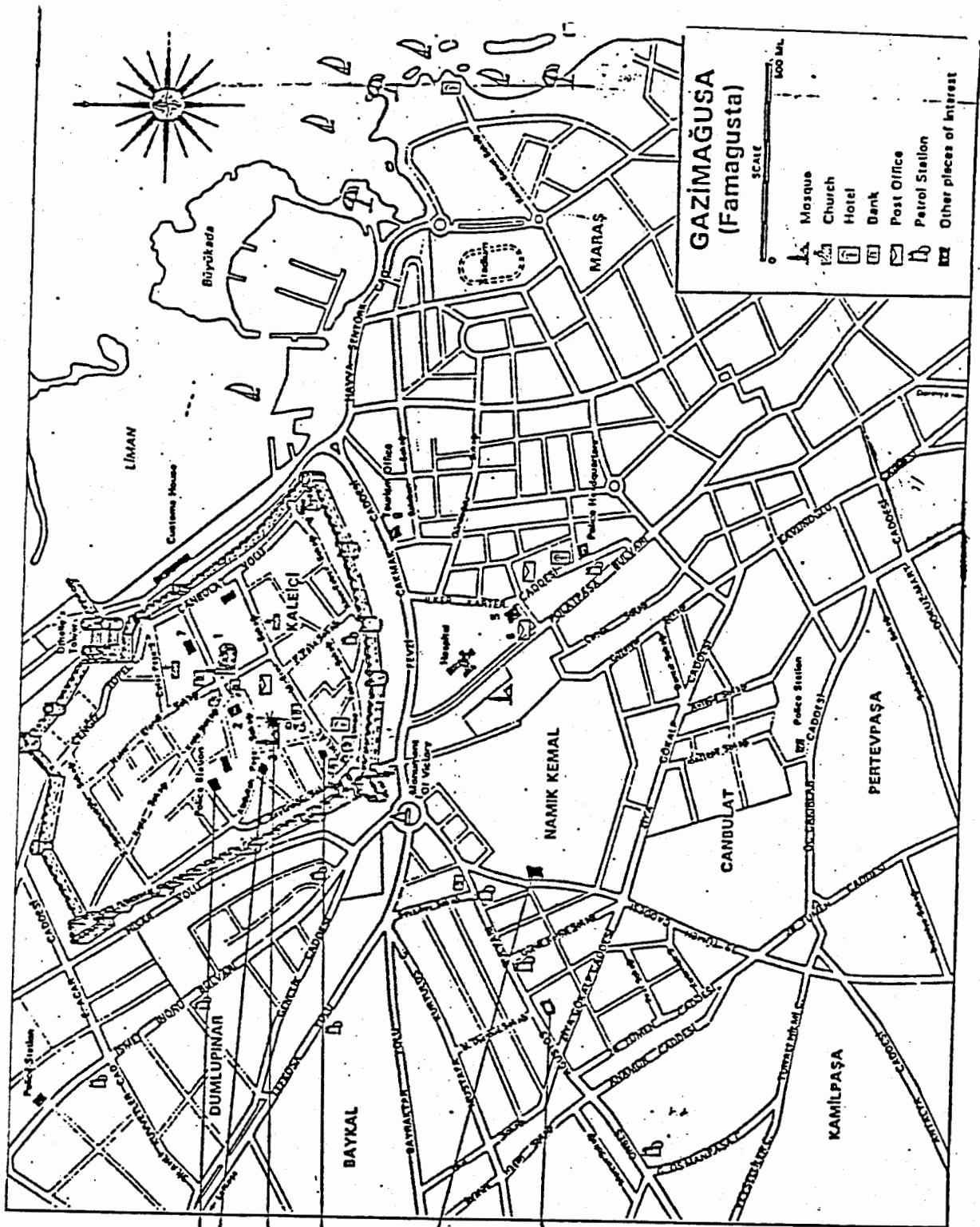
It would appear therefore that the Azalī community of Cyprus provides a further example of Erik Cohen's characterisation of a "residual religious community".

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CHART SHOWING INTER-RELATIONS OF THREE GENERATIONS OF "COVENANT-BREAKERS"



**AZALI AND OTHER SITES OF INTEREST IN FAMAGUSTA, CYPRUS.**



Sites of Houses of  
Mīrzā Yahyā  
(no longer extant)

Jalal Azal's  
House.

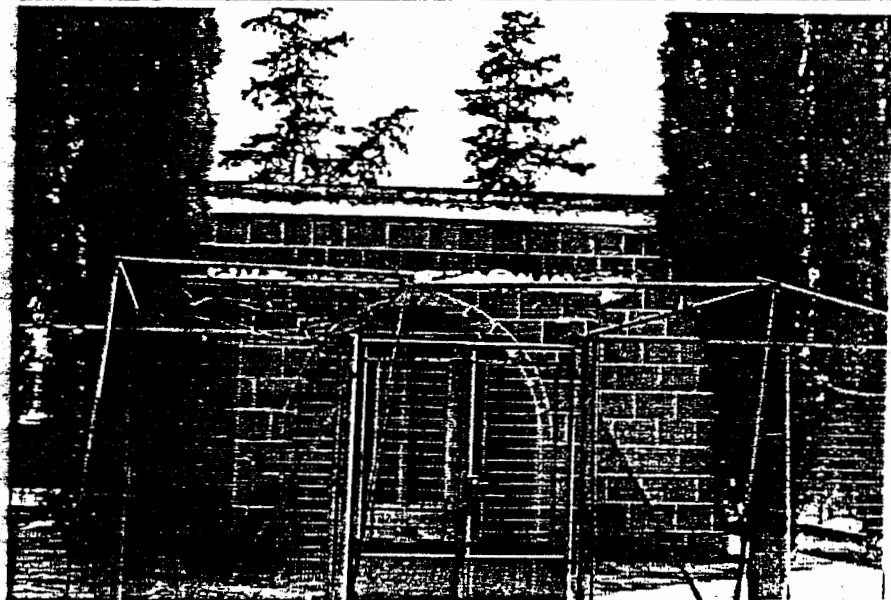
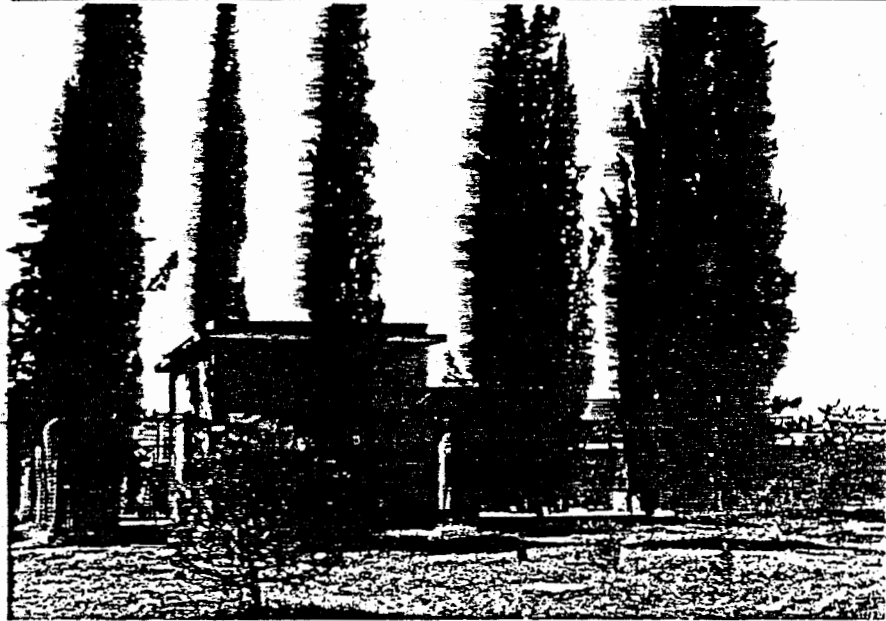
Mīrzā Yahyā's  
House (extant)

British Cemetery:  
grave of Olive  
McKinley (Knight of  
Bahā'u'llāh).

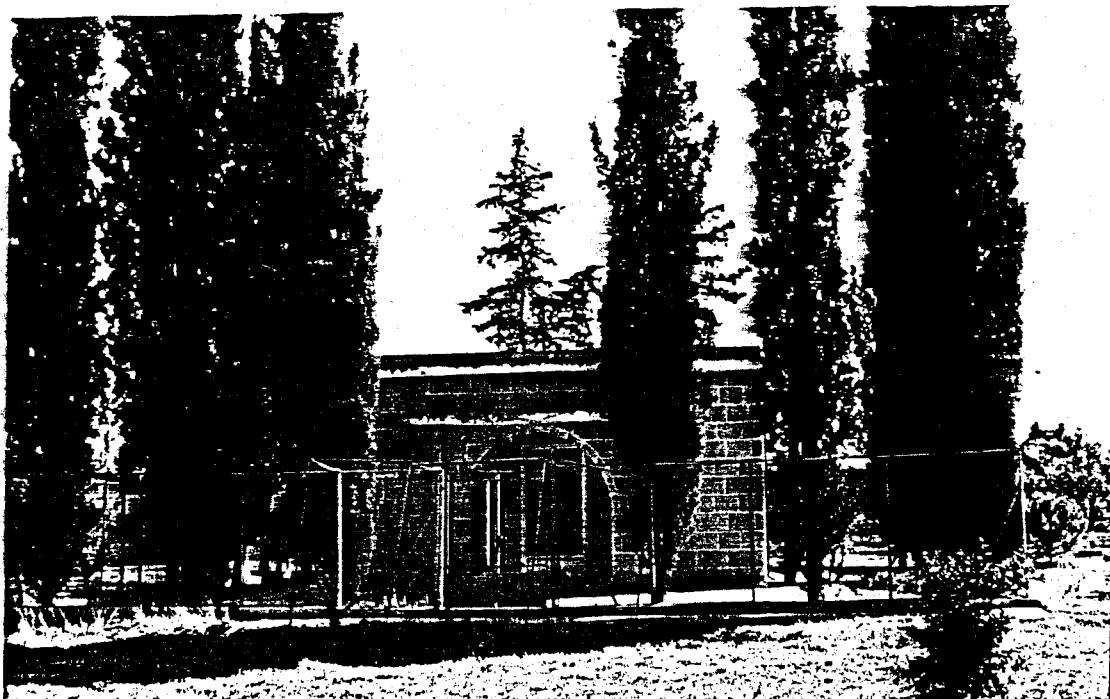
Shrine and Grave of  
Mīrzā Yahyā

VIEWS OF THE EXTERIOR OF THE SHRINE OF MĪRZĀ YAḤYĀ

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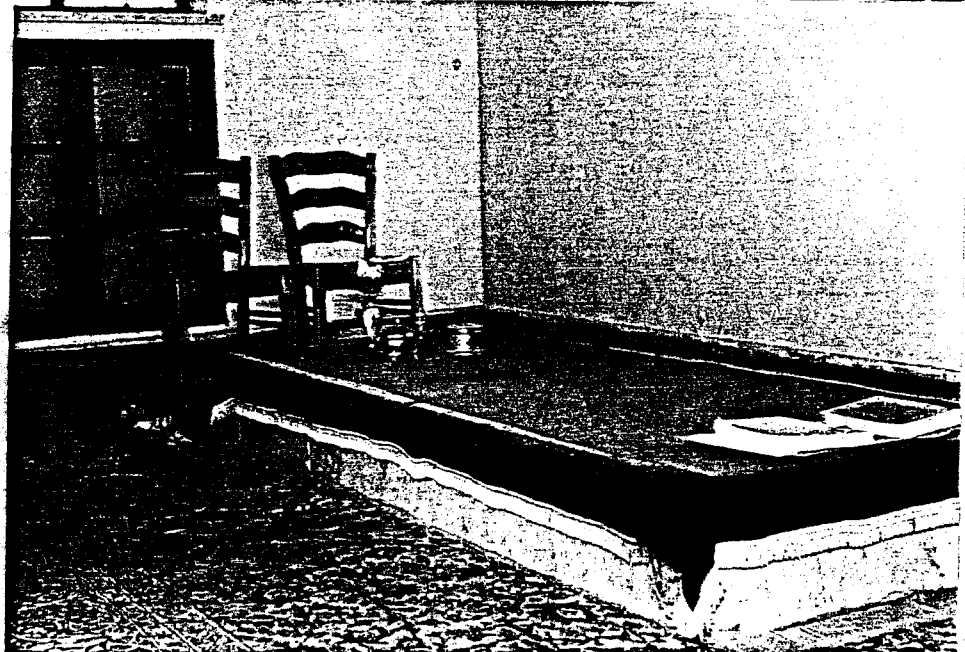
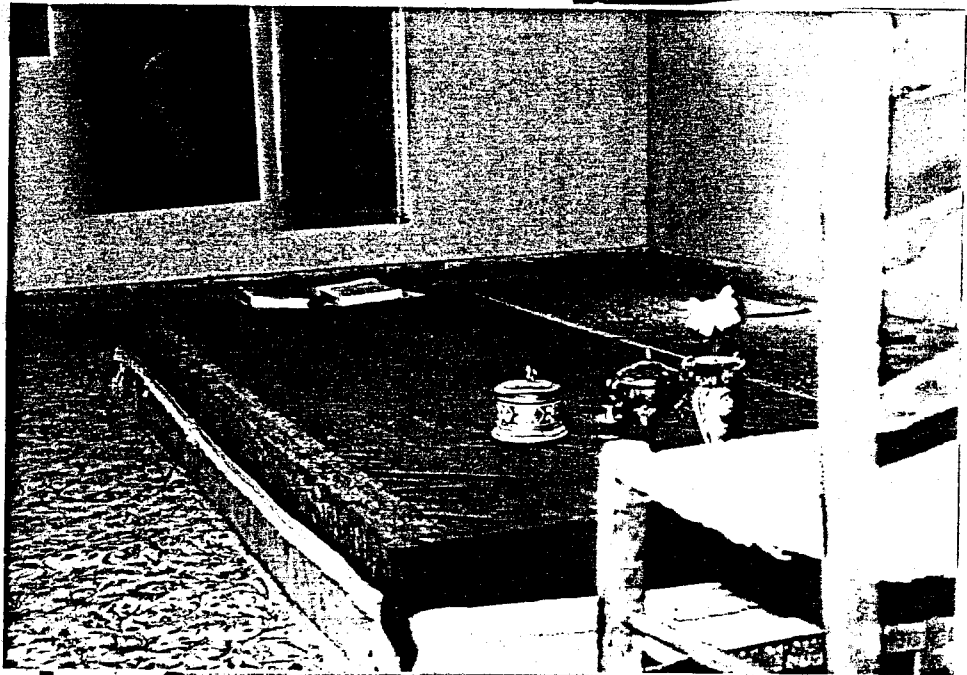


CARETAKER OF THE SHRINE OF MĪRZĀ YAHYĀ, MR. RIDA EZEL STANDING AT THE DOORWAY OF THE SHRINE.



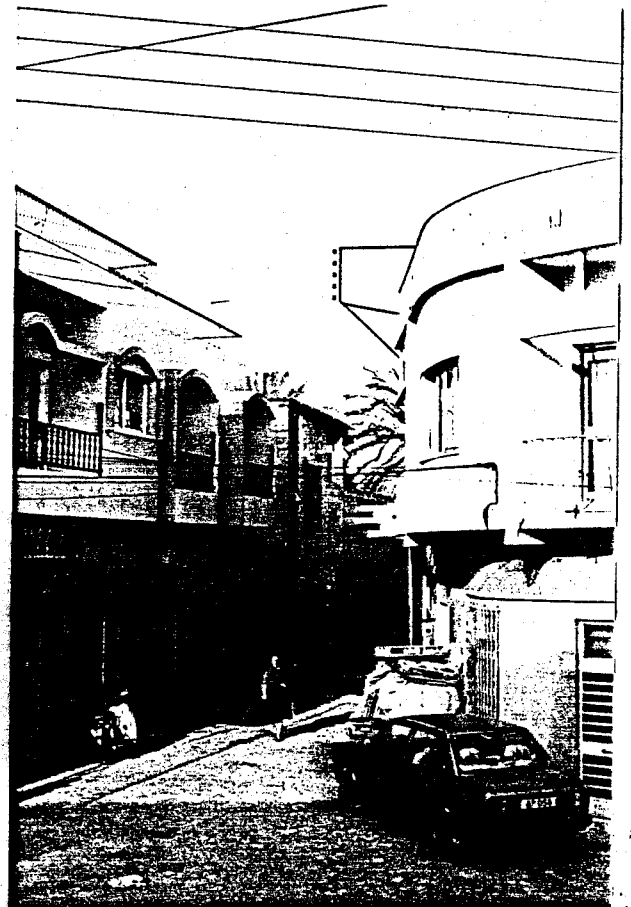
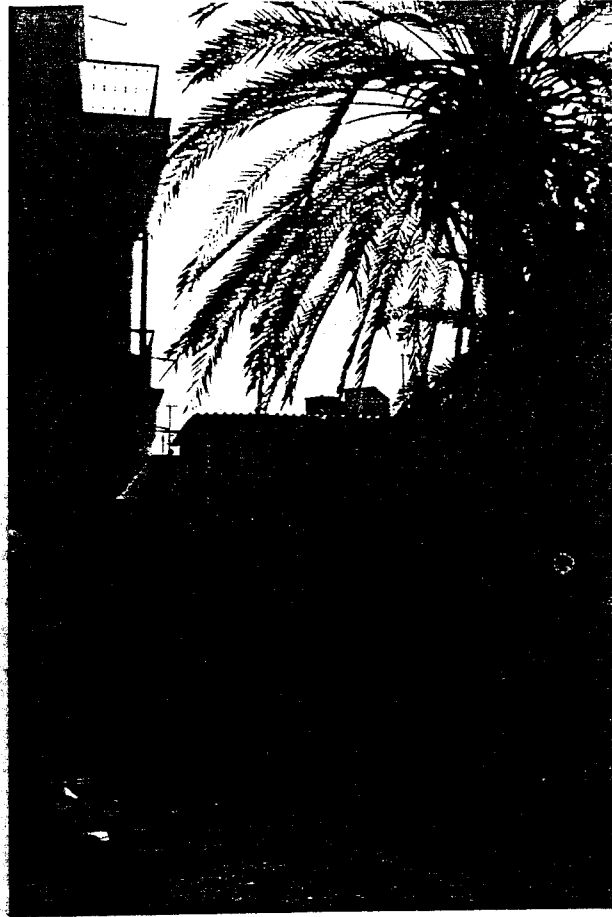


VIEWS OF THE INTERIOR OF THE SHRINE OF MĪRZĀ YAHYĀ



VIEWS OF THE HOUSE OF  
MIRZĀ YAHYĀ IN  
FAMAGUSTA.

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## THE PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN PERSIAN TEXT OF A TALK BY 'ABDU'L-BAHĀ

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JOHN WALBRIDGE

On 2 May 1912 'Abdu'l-Bahā spent the morning receiving groups of visitors at the Plaza Hotel in Chicago. The previous day He had laid the cornerstone of the Mashriq al-Adhkār in Wilmette. His faithful chronicler Mīrzā Mahmūd Zarqānī recorded in his diary:

5 Jumādā I (2 May). In the morning until noon groups of visitors were received, at first in His room and then when they became numerous in the reception room (bīrūnī).

*Badā'ī' al-Āthār*, 1:64.

He goes on to quote excerpts from several talks that 'Abdu'l-Bahā gave that morning. Allan Ward mentions that He spoke to groups that morning in a large parlour that held about 150 people. Later that day He spoke to a meeting of the Federated Women's Clubs and attended a reception given by the Bahā'ī women.

*Star of the West* 3:4 (17 May 1912) gives the English text of one of the talks given that morning, "translated by Dr. Ameen U. Fareed and taken stenographically by Mrs. Marzieh Moss." It is given in the same form in "Wisdom Talks of Abdul-Baha: Given at Chicago, Ill., April 30th to May 5th, 1912," p. 11, a collection of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's talks distributed with *Star of the West*. A more polished text appears in *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 78-79. However, no text of this talk is to be found in *Khitābāt-i 'Abdu'l-Bahā* nor is it quoted by Zarqānī.

In fact, the Persian text of this talk exists among the uncatalogued Persian manuscripts in the National Bahā'ī Archives in Wilmette. It is written on the back of a sheet of Plaza Hotel guest stationery with the printed date "191-." The writer is not identified, nor is there any indication as to how this single sheet reached the Archives. However, there can be little doubt that the writer was a member of the audience when the talk was given. Apart from

the hotel stationary, there is the handwriting. It begins as a neat, small script but toward the end becomes a large scrawl. Obviously the writer had been unable to keep up with the speaker. However, the text seems complete.

As for the text itself, it is a typical example of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's extemporaneous talks in America. He begins by remarking on an everyday subject--in this case the weather-- and uses it as an analogy to make an irenic theological point, comparing that morning's fog to the veils of religious imitation and fancy that cause disunity and prevent the people from recognizing the Manifestation of God.

The translation given here is literal and is based on the Persian text.

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**BLESSED WORDS IN THE PLAZA HOTEL, 2 May 1912, CHICAGO.**

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You are most welcome. This morning I rose and saw the city wrapped in a mist that would not clear. On the days when I see no clouds or mist in the morning, I am very happy because for the moment there is no mist and the air is clear. Just as these clouds and mist conceal the sun, so too do the senses and blind imitation conceal the Sun of Reality. Behold how this sun shines and how clear and lovely is the air, how beholding it is a source of joy. But clouds and mist prevent man from beholding the sun.

This sun is the Sun of Reality, and the clouds that prevent its manifestation are the blind imitations. When these clouds encompass us and the Sun of Reality is hidden, each sect turns in its own direction. One says that the sun is here and another that it is there. One worships this point, and another that point. Each group chooses one point to worship, but the truth is that the Sun is exalted above all of them. Therefore, the various points and directions that the people worship become the cause of disagreement.

In short, the clouds of imaginings and the mist of imitation encompass all. If all these clouds and mist were to vanish and all were to see the Sun of Reality, no disagreements would remain and all would be united. But because of all the clouds and mist, it is quite impossible to see the Sun. Thus we must strive to remove these clouds as an obstacle so that the Sun of Reality will shine. All will be united and agreed, and disagreement will be entirely removed. The human world will become bright, and oneness and universal peace will encompass all. All will partake in the effulgence of the Sun because the Sun of Reality is one and the effulgence of the Sun is one. All partake of the effulgence of one Sun, are reared by

one Sun. It nourishes all and is not reserved for some one person. However, the clouds hinder the manifestation of the Sun of Reality and are the cause of disagreement and conflict.

Thus we must, heart and soul, strive to submit ourselves humbly to the Abhā Kingdom so that the eye of true vision may be opened in everyone, and every mind and perception may behold the lights of the Sun of Reality. God gave the mind to perceive the effulgences of the Sun of Reality. The eye was given to behold the lights. You must strive--nay, these clouds must be entirely removed--so that what the prophets have commanded will be established in reality. It is certain that if the souls were to refer to their minds and perception, they would perceive the reality and comprehend the divine effulgences, and behold the Sun of Reality shining and blazing with its brightest illumination.

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بسیار خوش بود. امروز صبح در خلاصه دیدم شهر را بر گرفته صفا گوشت از دست که برینج ابرو در نیت جمع خوش مراد  
 نیرا وقتی بر نیت هوا با صفات. اینطور که این ابرو در آفتاب با اینها کند. بنیسم احاد و تقالید شمس حقیقت را اینها می کند  
 لا عظم که این آفتاب بر قدر روشن است و هوا در لطیف و خوش منظر و شاد همه اش عقده سب سرد است. اما ابرو در دست  
 که از این آفتاب همه آفتاب محروم میگردد. اینک آفتاب شمس حقیقت است و اینها که مانع از نور آفتاب تقالید است و چون این آفتاب  
 و آفتاب حقیقت نهان شود هر فرقه ای بسوی تو جمع نماید. یکی بگوید آفتاب اینهاست و دیگر بگوید اینهاست. یکی از این نطق را بر دست  
 و دیگر از آن نطق را هر طریقی که نطق را اختیار کرده می رسند. و حال آنکه آفتاب متعین از اقل است لهذا حکمت اینک نطق  
 و جهات مختلفه را عقل ستایش نمایند. بسبب اختلاف فرقه ها. علامه ابرو در دست عقیده بر او اقامه کرده اگر این ابرو در دست  
 شود که شمس حقیقت را بر اینند هیچ عقده نمی ماند. شمس متعین میگردد. تا ما وجود ابرو در دست اینها است مستحق بود  
 پس ما باید بگوئیم تا این ابرو را از شمس مانع نمایند تا شمس حقیقت اشراق کند که شمس و معنی گوید و اختلاف بطل  
 از زمان برداشته شود. عالم آن در روشن شود و معنی عمور که را احاطه کند. از فعل آفتاب که بر او نصب بر  
 زیرا شمس حقیقت است و فیض آفتاب یک جمع از فعل آفتاب بر زمینند زیرا آفتاب تربیت شده که از ابرو در دست  
 شخصی یکی ندارد ولی ابرو مانع از نور آفتاب حقیقت است و بسبب اختلاف و توابع لهذا تا ما بر کمان دلی بگوئیم نفع در این  
 ملکوت الهی نمانیم تا دیده بصیرت که باز شود بلکه عقده و ادراک و نور شمس حقیقت نماند. همان خدا عقل  
 حکمت بلکه ادراک فیوضات شمس حقیقت کند چشم او را بر شمس ابرو با هر گوشه بلکه انرا بر او بگوید  
 لا شمس فوق انهم انما نر موهبه نام و محقق گردد نفس است اگر نفوس که موهبه  
 در ادراک روح جمع کنند حقیقت ادراک مانع فیوضات ابرو عالم کند  
 و شمس حقیقت در نهایت اشراق مانع و مانع گردد

## نطق مبارك در هتل يلز ۲ مه ۱۹۱۲ شيكاگو

بسیار خوش آمدید - امروز صبح بر خواستم - دیدم شهر را هر گرفته، صفا نگذاشته. هر روز صبح که می بینم ابر وهر نیست خیلی خوشم می آید زیرا وقتی هر نیست هوا با صفاست. همینطور که این ابر وهر آفتاب را پنهانی می کند همینقسم احساسات و تقالید شمس حقیقت را پنهانی می کند. ملاحظه کنید این آفتاب چه قدر روشن است و هوا چه قدر لطیف و خوش منظر، و مشاهده اش چه قدر سبب سرور است. اما ابر وهر سبب می شود که انسان از مشاهده آفتاب محروم میگردد. این آفتاب شمس حقیقت است و ابرهائی که مانع ظهور این آفتابست تقالید است، و چون این ابر احاطه کند و آفتاب حقیقت پنهان شود همه فرقه ئی بسمتی توجه نماید. یکی می گوید آفتاب اینجاست، دیگری میگوید آنجاست. یکی این نقطه را می پرستد و دیگری آن نقطه را، هر طبقه ئی نقطه ئی را اختیار کرده می پرستد، و حال آنکه آفتاب مقدس از کل است. لهذا بجهت اینکه نقاط و جهات مختلفه را خلق ستایش می نمایند سبب اختلاف می شود. خلاصه ابر اوها (م) وهر تقالید کل را احاطه کرده. اگر این ابر وهر زائل شود کل شمس حقیقت را می بینند. هیچ اختلافی نمی ماند، کل متحد میگرددند. اما با وجود ابر وهر مشاهده آفتاب مستحیل و محالی. پس ما باید بکوشیم تا این ابرها زائل شود، مانعی نماند تا شمس حقیقت اشراق کند، کل متحد و متفق شوند، و اختلاف بکلی از میان برداشته شود، عالم انسانی روشن شود، وحدت و صلح عمومی کل را احاطه کند، از فیض آفتاب کل بهره و نصیب برند زیرا شمس حقیقت یکی است و فیض آفتاب يك. جمیع از فیض يك آفتاب بهره مندند، از يك آفتاب تربیت شده اند. کل را رزق میدهد تخصیصی بکسی



ندارد، ولی ابرها مانع ظهور آفتاب حقیقت است و سبب اختلاف و نزاع. لهذا باید بجان و دل بکوشیم تضرع و زاری بملکوت ابهی نمائیم تا دیده بصیرت کل باز شود، هر عقل و ادراک انوار شمس حقیقت را مشاهده نماید. خدا عقل داده بجهت آنکه ادراک فیوضات شمس حقیقت کند. چشم داده برای مشاهده انوار. باید کوشید بلکه این ابرها بکلی زائل شود، آنچه انبیا فرمودند ثابت و محقق گردد. یقین است اگر نفوس بعقل و ادراک رجوع کند، حقیقت را ادراک نماید، فیوضات إلهی إحاطه کند، و شمس حقیقت در نهایت اشراق طالع و تابان بگردد.

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## THE FIRST WESTERN LANGUAGE ENCYCLOPAEDIA ARTICLE ON THE BĀBĪ RELIGION.

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SEENA FAZEL

*Encyclopaedia Britannica* articles on the Bābī-Bahā'ī religions reflect an interesting historical progression of how these faiths have been represented to the world. The first article on the Bābī religion was written by Richard Garnett in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia* printed in 1875. This article, which has hitherto not been mentioned by historians of the Bābī-Bahā'ī religions, appears to be the first ever English language description of the Bābī religion in a Western Encyclopaedia. This paper will briefly review its features and sketch a biographical account of its author. The full text is found as an appendix to this article.

The principal sources of information for the article are Gobineau's *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie centrale* and an article by Kazem-Beg. He also mentions other minor materials including "incidental notices" in the travels of Vámbéry, Polak, Piggott, and Lady Sheil.<sup>1</sup>

The article starts with an explanation of the religious milieu of nineteenth century Persia and the factors that caused the rise of this "remarkable modern sect". The Bābī religion is set in the context of the historical conflicts between Persians and Arabs. He describes the Persian people as "the least Mahometan of all Mahometan countries". The cause of this heterodoxy, Garnett explains, is due to "the Aryan Persians never having been able to thoroughly accommodate themselves to the creed of their Semitic conquerors." In the past Sufism was the major channel for this discontent and the Bābī movement is a simply recent manifestation - "an individual symptom" of this constantly recurring theme - "the essential incompatibility between the religious conceptions of Aryan and Semitic races."

The Bāb is then described in a sympathetic manner. The "charm of his manner and the eloquence of

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<sup>1</sup> The Piggot (not Piggott as Garnett refers to him) reference may be of interest to Bābī historians as it has not been chronicled before. His book *Persia - Ancient and Modern* was published in 1874, and has a number of descriptions of the Bāb and the Bābī religion. Most of these are inaccurate and derogatory. The Bāb is, for instance, described as "a fanatic of a very advanced type" (p. 99), and His religion is summarised "as Sufecism and Mormonism combined. It resembles the former creed in its doctrines respecting natural objects being a portion of the Deity, and the latter in its advocacy of plurality of wives and the possession of goods in common" (pp. 159-60). It is clear from his book that Piggott never travelled to Persia, and based his information on the second-hand accounts of others such as Lady Sheil. I was unable to gather any biographical information about him apart from his fellowship of the Society of Antiquities, the Geological Society, and the Royal Geographical Society. He published one other book in 1870, "Notes on the history and distribution of gold, silver and tin in Great Britain".

his discourse" and His impressive "patience and dignity" are mentioned. Garnett distinguishes two phases in the Bāb's life - the period when he was "universally known" as the Bāb and the later time when he declared Himself to be the "*Nokteh* or Point". This concept of the development of the Bāb's claims may have influenced Browne's article in the tenth and eleventh edition of the same encyclopaedia where he also writes about these two separate claims of the Bāb.<sup>2</sup>

Three of the "Letters of the Living" or chief disciples of the Bāb are singled out for praise. "Mollah Hussein Boushrevieh [ Mullā Husayn ]" is depicted as "a man of great erudition and energy of character". "Mohammed Ali Balfouroushi [ Quddūs ]" is said to have "acquired a high reputation for sanctity". Emphasis is placed on the "gifted" "Gourred-Oul-Ayn [ Qurrat al-Ayn = Tāhīrih]" whose life and actions "mark an epoch in Oriental life."

The religious teachings of the Bāb are separated into theology and ethics. The theology, Garnett writes, is Sufi in orientation and "essentially a system of Pantheism, with additions from Gnostic, Cabbalistic, and even Buddhistic sources." The treatment of women is considered to "manifest(s) an important advance upon all previous Oriental systems". Garnett also describes the very moral character of Bābī teaching and criticises Watson for his inaccurate generalisations about the "misconduct of particular members of the sect."

Richard Garnett (1835-1906) was not an orientalist. In 1875 he was assistant keeper of printed books at the British Museum, and was later promoted as head keeper. His main distinction was his involvement in editing the general catalogue of the British Museum and his appointment as the president of the Librarian Association of the United Kingdom (1882-93). He had eclectic tastes which were reflected in the range and versatility of his writing. Eight books of his own poetry were published including the well received "William Shakespeare, Pedagogue and Poacher" ( 1904) which was reviewed as exhibiting "a dramatic jeu d'esprit in blank verse". He wrote biographies of Milton, Carlyle, Emerson, Gibbon, and Blake among others. Original research on German and Italian literature completed his literary feats. The reason why he wrote on the Bābī religion in the *Britannica* is less clear. Sir Sidney Lee, in a biographical notice published in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, describes Garnett as having "cherished a genuine and somewhat mystical sense of religion" but it is probable that his ability to be "a tasteful, discriminating, and well-informed compiler", added to his command of other European languages,

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, see Browne's article in the tenth edition of the *Britannica* (in which he refers to Garnett's article): "... the title Bāb was ... assumed by Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad; but, though still generally thus styled by non-Bābīs, he soon assumed the higher title of *Nuqta* ("Point"), and the title Bāb, thus left vacant, was conferred on his ardent disciple, Mullā Husayn of Bushrawayh. "

made him a candidate for the article in the *Encyclopaedia*.

There are two other references to the Bābī religion in the 1875 edition of the *Britannica*.<sup>3</sup> In the section on Persia (Section II, History), Major-General Sir Frederic J. Goldsmid wrote briefly on the Bābī religion in the context of the history of the reign Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh. He interpreted the "insurrection of the Bābīs" as one of four chief events in the reign of this Shah. He then quotes from Lady Sheil and Watson, and implies that Bābīs successfully assassinated the Shāh. Another section on the Bābīs appears under Sunnites (section on "Shī'ite sects"), written by Professor A. Müller of the University of Königsberg. Kazem-Beg and Gobineau are his sources and these references are admixed with his unusual interpretations of the Bābī religion. He refers to Bābīs as "bold communists" and describes Bābī theology as "infused with pantheistic and communistic ideas". He ends by making a cautious prophecy about the future of the movement: ". . . there is no doubt that Bābism still lives in secrecy, and the universal sympathy felt for the martyr Bāb among generously minded Persians may still give it a future."

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<sup>3</sup> Neither of which have been noted by Bahā'ī scholars.

THE  
ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA

A  
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OF  
ARTS, SCIENCES, AND GENERAL LITERATURE

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BĀBI, or BĀBY, the appellation of a remarkable modern sect in Persia, is derived from the title (*bāb*, *i.e.*, gate) assumed by its founder, Seyed Mohammed Ali, born at Shiraz about 1824, according to Count Gobineau, but ten years earlier according to Kasem Beg. Persia, as is well known, is the least strictly Mahometan of all Mahometan countries, the prophet himself occupying an almost secondary place in the popular estimation to his successor Ali, and the latter's sons, Hassan and Hosein. The cause of this heterodoxy is, no doubt, to be sought in ethnological distinctions, the Aryan Persians never having been able to thoroughly accommodate themselves to the creed of their Semitic conquerors. Their dissatisfaction has found vent partly in the universal homage paid to Ali, and the rejection of the Sunna or great mass of orthodox Mahometan tradition, partly in violent occasional outbreaks, most characteristically of all in the mystical philosophy and poetry of the Sufis, which, under the guise of a profound respect for the externals of Mahometanism, dissolves its rigid Monotheism into Pantheism. Bābism is essentially one of the innumerable schools of Sufism, directed into a more practical channel by its founder's keen perception of the evils of his times. His first appearance in public took place about 1843, when, on his return from a pilgrimage to Mecca and after a prolonged course of meditation in the ruined mosque of Kufa, the scene of Ali's murder, he presented himself in his native city with a journal of his pilgrimage and a new commentary on the Koran. He speedily became engaged in controversy with the mollahs or regular clergy, who, exasperated by the freedom of his strictures on their lives as well as their doctrines, obtained an official decree forbidding him to preach in public, and confining him to his house. The Bāb, by which title he was now universally known, complied in appearance, but continued to instruct his disciples in private; his doctrines rapidly assumed more logical consistency, and his pretensions augmented in an equal ratio. He now laid aside the title of Bāb, declaring himself to be the *Nokteh* or Point, *i.e.*, not merely the recipient of a new divine revelation, but the focus to which all preceding dispensations converged. There was little in such a pretension to shock Oriental habits of thought; while the simplicity and elevation of the ethical part of the Bāb's system, united to the charm of his manner and the eloquence of his discourse, rapidly gained fresh proselytes. The most remarkable of these was the Mollah Hussein Boushrevieh, a man of great erudition and energy of character, who, having come all the way from Khorassan to hear him, became his convert, and undertook the dissemination of his religion throughout the empire. Two other apostles were speedily added, the appearance of one of whom may almost be said to mark an epoch in Oriental life. It is rare indeed to find a woman enacting any distinguished part in the East, least of all that of a public teacher. Such, however, was the part assumed by the gifted Zerryn

Taj (*Crown of Gold*), better known by the appellation of Gourred-Oul-Ayn (*Consolation of the Eyes*), bestowed in admiration of her surpassing loveliness. The third missionary was Mohammed Ali Balfouroushi, a religious man, who had already acquired a high reputation for sanctity. - The new religion made rapid progress, and the endeavours of the authorities to repress it eventually produced a civil war. Hussein constructed a fort in the province of Mazanderan, where he defeated several expeditions despatched against him, but at length fell mortally wounded in the moment of victory, and his followers, reduced to surrender by famine, were mostly put to death (1849). Balfouroushi, with a number of his principal adherents, perished in the city of Zendian after an obstinate defence (May 1850). Ere this event had taken place, the Government had proceeded to the execution of the Bâb himself, who had now been confined for some time in the fortress of Cherigh, where he is said to have greatly impressed his gaolers by his patience and dignity. He was removed to Tabriz, and all attempts to induce him to retract having failed, he was suspended from the summit of a wall by the armpits in view of the people, along with one of his disciples; the object of this public exposure being to leave no doubt of the reality of his death. A company of soldiers discharged their muskets at the martyrs; but although the disciple was killed on the spot, the bullets merely cut the cords by which the Bâb himself was suspended, and he fell to the ground unhurt. With more presence of mind on his part, this apparently miraculous deliverance might have provoked a popular insurrection in his favour; but, bewildered by the fall, instead of invoking the people, he took refuge in a guard-house, where he was promptly despatched. His death was far from discouraging his followers, who recognised as his successor Mirza Yahya, a youth of noble birth. Yahya established himself at Baghdad, where he is or was recently still residing. No new event of importance occurred until 1852, when an attempt of several Bâbis to assassinate the Shah led to a ferocious persecution, in which the beautiful Gourred-Oul-Ayn perished with many others. In the opinion of M. Gobineau, this persecution has rather tended to encourage than to repress the sect, which is believed to be widely diffused in Persia at this moment, under the mask of conformity to the established creed. It can only be regarded as an individual symptom of a constantly recurring phenomenon—the essential incompatibility between the religious conceptions of Aryan

and Semitic races. The doctrines of Bábism are contained in an Arabic treatise, entitled *Biyân* (the Exposition), written by the Báb himself. It is essentially a system of Pantheism, with additions from Gnostic, Cabbalistic, and even Buddhistic sources. All individual existence is regarded as an emanation from the Supreme Deity, by whom it will ultimately be reabsorbed. Great importance is attached to the number seven, being that of the attributes supposed to be displayed in the act of creation, and to the number nineteen, which mystically expresses the name of the Deity himself, and is, moreover, the sum of the prophets among whom the latest incarnation of the divine nature is conceived to be distributed in the present dispensation. Of these the Báb is chief, but the other eighteen are regarded as no less participators in the divine nature. This sacred college cannot become extinct until the last judgment; the death of any of its members being immediately followed by a reincarnation, as in the case of the Grand Lama. The prophetic character of Moses, Christ, and Mahomet is acknowledged, but they are considered as mere precursors of the Báb. The morality of the sect is pure and cheerful, and it manifests an important advance upon all previous Oriental systems in its treatment of woman. Polygamy and concubinage are forbidden, the veil is disused, and the equality of the sexes so thoroughly recognised that one at least of the nineteen sovereign prophets must always be a female. The other chief precepts of Bábism inculcate hospitality, charity, and generous living, tempered by abstinence from intoxicating liquors and drugs. Asceticism is entirely discountenanced, and mendicancy, being regarded as a form of it, is strictly prohibited.

Our principal authorities on Bábism to this date are Count Gobineau, formerly French *attaché* at Teheran, in his work, *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie centrale* (Paris, 1865), and an article by Kasem Beg in the *Journal Asiatique* for 1866. These materials have been condensed into a valuable essay, by F. Pillon, in *L'Année Philosophique* for 1869. See also the *History of Persia under the Kajar Dynasty*, by R. G. Watson (whose accusations of immorality against the Bábis seem to be founded solely on the misconduct of particular members of the sect); Ethé, *Essays und Studien* (Berlin, 1872); and incidental notices in the travels of Vambéry, Polak, Piggott, and Lady Sheil. (R. G.)



Lady Sheil has written a graphic account of the death of Sa'id 1848-1851. Muhammad 'Ali. After repeated arrests and warnings to no purpose the spread of his doctrines had become so rapid among all classes that it was thought necessary to remove him by the severest punishment of the law. He was conveyed to Tabriz, and brought out in the great square for execution.

"A company of soldiers was ordered to despatch Báb by a volley. When the smoke had cleared away Báb had disappeared from sight. It had so happened that none of the balls had touched him, and, prompted by an impulse to preserve his life, he rushed from the spot. Had Báb possessed sufficient presence of mind to have fled to the bazar . . . he would in all probability have succeeded in effecting his escape. A miracle palpable to all Tabriz would have been performed, and a new creed would have been established. But he turned in the opposite direction, and hid himself in the guard-room, where he was immediately discovered, brought out, and shot. His body was thrown into the ditch of the town, where it was devoured by the half-wild dogs which abound outside a Persian city. Báb possessed a mild and benignant countenance, his manners were composed and dignified, his eloquence was impressive, and he wrote rapidly and well."

Persecution of the Bábis.

Later on she wrote—

"This year (1850) seven Bábis were executed at Tehrán for an alleged conspiracy against the life of the prime minister. Their fate excited general sympathy, for every one knew that no criminal act had been committed, and suspected the accusation to be a pretence. . . . Previously to decapitation they received an offer of pardon, on the condition of reciting the *kalama* (or Muhammadan creed) . . . It was rejected, and these visionaries died steadfast in their faith. . . . In Zanjan the insurrection, or the religious movement, as the Bábis termed it, broke out with violence. This city is only 200 miles from Tehrán, midway to Tabriz. At its head was a mulla of repute and renown, who, with his associates, retired into an angle of the city, which they strengthened as best they could. For several months they defended themselves with unconquerable resolution against a large force in infantry and guns, sent against them from Tehrán. It was their readiness to meet death that made the Bábis so formidable to their assailants. From street to street, from house to house, from cellar to cellar, they fought without flinching. All were killed at their posts, excepting a few who were afterwards martyred by the troops in cold blood."

In the summer of 1852 his majesty was attacked, while riding in the vicinity of Tehran, by four men, one of whom fired a pistol and slightly wounded him. This man was killed, and two others were captured by the royal attendants; the fourth jumped down a well. The existence of a conspiracy was then discovered, in which some forty persons were implicated; and ten of the conspirators (one a young woman) were put to death,—some under cruel torture. A short reign of terror then ensued which is well illustrated in the following extract from Watson's *History*.

"The prime minister . . . was fearful of drawing down upon himself and his family the vengeance of the followers of the Báb; and, in order that others might be implicated in these executions, he hit upon the device of assigning a criminal to each department of the state; the several ministers of the Shah being thus compelled to act as executioners. The minister for foreign affairs, the minister of finance, the son of the prime minister, the adjutant-general of the army, and the master of the mint, each fired the first shot, or made the first cut with a sabre, at the culprits assigned to their several departments, respectively. The artillery, the infantry, the camel-artillery, and the cavalry, each had a victim.<sup>3</sup> . . . But the result of all this slaughter was, as might have been expected, to create a feeling of sympathy for the Bábis, whose crime was lost sight of in the punishment which had overtaken them. They met their fate with the utmost firmness, and none of them cared to accept the life which was offered to them on the simple condition of reciting the Muslim creed. While the lighted candles were burning the flesh of one follower of the Báb, he was urged by the chief magistrate of Tehran to curse the Báb and live. He would not renounce the Báb; but he cursed the magistrate who tempted him to do so, he cursed the Shah, and even cursed the prophet Muhammad, his spirit rising superior to the agony of his torture."

The movement, however, was not only felt in Tehran and Zanjan but also in Mazandaran, Fárs, Karman, and Tabriz; and, in spite of the fearful punishments with which the professors of the doctrine have been visited, the complete extinction of Bábism by fire and sword is a consummation hardly to be set within the range of human probability.

<sup>3</sup> "Even the Shah's admirable French physician, the late lamented Dr Cloquet, was invited to show his loyalty by following the example of the rest of the court. He excused himself, and pleasantly said that he killed too many men professionally to permit him to increase their number by any voluntary homicide on his part" (Lady Sheil).

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Finally, in the year 1848 there broke out a violent Bábí reaction against the wretched condition of state and church <sup>move-</sup> at a moment when a new succession to the throne had (as is <sup>ment.</sup> wont) involved great part of the land in anarchy (comp. vol. xviii. p. 651). As early as 1837 a young enthusiast, 'Alí (son of) Mohammed, imbued with pantheistic and communistic ideas,<sup>4</sup> had begun a peaceable but zealous propaganda. Consistently enough with ultra-Shi'ite principles, he deemed himself inspired by the spirit of God, and claimed to be the Mahdí, the twelfth imám, issued from his obscurity to lead the world to salvation. He took the title of Báb al-din ("portal of the faith"), and his followers are known as Bábís. Báb was a man of profound sincerity and averse to violent measures; he avoided all open polemic against the Government, which in turn at first tolerated him in its jealousy of the clergy. In 1844 the too great zeal of his follower Mollah Hosain occasioned Báb's imprisonment; but Hosain and his emissaries continued the propaganda and made many converts in all provinces. When the troubles of 1848 broke out Hosain raised open rebellion in Mazenderán. Terrible conflicts ensued, made only more bitter by the execution of Báb (18th July 1849). Apparently suppressed, the movement proved that it was not extinct in an attempt to assassinate the sháh in 1852. A new proscription followed; but there is no doubt that Bábism still lives in secrecy, and the universal sympathy

<sup>4</sup> The fusion of these two tendencies is in Persia as old as Mazdak (vol. xviii. p. 611). Communistic risings constantly took place in various parts of Persia under the caliphs, and that of Bábek endangered the empire for twenty years (till 837 A.D.). The communists were afterwards absorbed in the Ishmaelites (see vol. xvi. p. 593 sq.), whose power was extinguished by the Mongols (1256).

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felt for the martyr Báb among generously minded Persians may still give it a future.<sup>1</sup>

Less dangerous than these bold communists are the Ishmaelites, direct descendants of the old Ismá'iliya.

<sup>1</sup> See on Báb and Bábism, Mirza Kazem Beg, in *Journ. Asiatique*, ser. 6, vols. vii. viii. > Gobineau, *op. cit.*, where there is a translation of Báb's new Koran; Von Kremer, *op. cit.*, p. 202 sq.

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MCMII

**Bábism** is the religion founded in Persia in A.D. 1844-45 by Mirzá 'Ali Muhammad of Shiráz, a young Sayyid who was at that time not twenty-five years of age. Before his "manifestation" (*zuhúr*), of which he gives in the Persian *Bayán* a date corresponding to 23rd May 1844, he was a disciple of Sayyid Kázim of Rasht, the leader of the Shaykhís, a sect of extreme Shi'ites characterized by the doctrine (called by them *Rukn-i-rábi*, "the fourth support") that at all times there must exist an intermediary between the twelfth Imám and his faithful followers. This intermediary they called "the perfect Shi'ite," and his prototype is to be found in the four successive *Bábs* or "gates" through whom alone the twelfth Imám, during the period of his "minor occultation" (*Ghaybat-i-sughrá*, A.D. 874-940), held communication with his partisans. It was in this sense, and not, as has been often asserted, in the sense of "Gate of God" or "Gate of Religion," that the title *Báb* was understood and assumed by Mirzá 'Ali Muhammad; but, though still generally thus styled by non-Bábis, he soon assumed the higher title of *Nuqta* ("Point"), and the title *Báb*.

thus left vacant, was conferred on his ardent disciple, Mullá Husayn of Bushrawayh.

The history of the Bábí movement down to the execution of the Báb at Tabriz (8th July 1850) and the great persecution which followed the attempt of three or four Bábis to assassinate the late Shah, Násiru'd-Din, in the summer of 1852, is best told by Gobineau, and is summarized in vols. iii., xviii., and xxii. of the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. "Bábi or Bábí," "Persia: Modern History," and "Sunrites and Shi'ites." The Báb was succeeded on his death by Mirzá Yahyá of Núr (at that time only about twenty years of age), who escaped to Baghdad, and, under the title of *Subh-i-Ezel* ("the Morning of Eternity"), became the pontiff of the sect. He lived, however, in great seclusion, leaving the direction of affairs almost entirely in the hands of his elder half-brother (born 12th November 1817), Mirzá Husayn 'Ali, entitled *Bahá'u'lláh* ("the Splendour of God"), who thus gradually became the most conspicuous and most influential member of the sect, though in the *Iqán*, one of the most important polemical works of the Bábis, composed in 1858-59, he still implicitly recognized the supremacy of *Subh-i-Ezel*. In 1863, however, Bahá declared himself to be "He whom God shall manifest" (*Man Juz-hiruhu'lláh*, with prophecies of whose advent

the works of the Báb are filled), and called on all the Bábís to recognize his claim. The majority responded, but *Subh-i-Ezel* and some of his faithful adherents refused. Since that date the Bábís have been divided into two sects, Ezelís and Bahá'ís, of which the former have steadily lost and the latter gained ground, so that at the present day there are probably from half a million to a million of the latter, and at most only a hundred or two of the former. In 1863 the Bábís were, at the instance of the Persian Government, removed from Baghdad to Constantinople, whence they were shortly afterwards transferred to Adrianople. In 1868 Bahá and his followers were exiled to Acre in Syria, and *Subh-i-Ezel* with his few adherents to Famagusta in Cyprus, where he still lived in 1901. Bahá died at Acre on 16th May 1892, and was succeeded by his son 'Abbás Efendi, whose claims, however, were contested by another son named Muhamínad 'Alí. The followers of the latter do not appear to be numerous, but in Acre itself they are said to have succeeded in retaining the custody of Bahá's tomb. Full particulars of this latest schism are still lacking. During the last five or six years the doctrine of Bahá has been preached with considerable success by a certain Ibráhím Khayru'lláh in the United States, where there are now some 3000 American converts.

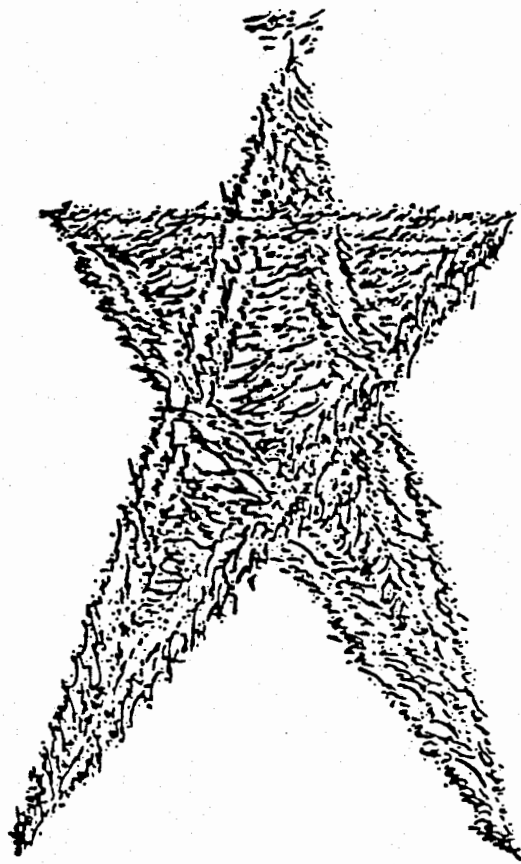
The tenets of the older Bábís (now represented by the Ezelís) included, besides a belief in the divine mission of the Báb and the plenary inspiration of all his numerous writings, a denial of the finality of any revelation, and of the resurrection of the body. Great importance was attached to the mystical values of letters and numbers, especially the numbers 18 and 19 ("the number of the unity") and  $19^2=361$  ("the number of all things"). In general, the Báb's doctrines most closely resembled those of the Isma'ílís and Hurúfís. In the hands of Bahá the aims of the sect became much more practical and ethical, and the wilder pantheistic tendencies and metaphysical hair-splittings of the early Bábís almost disappeared. The intelligence, integrity and morality of the present Bábís (whose numbers appear to be rapidly increasing) are high, but their efforts to improve the social position of woman have been much exaggerated. They were in no way concerned (as was at the time falsely alleged) in the assassination of Násiru'd-Dín

Sháh in May 1896. Since the persecution at Yezd in May 1891 they have been comparatively unmolested.

LITERATURE.—The literature of the sect is very voluminous, but mostly in manuscript. The most valuable public collections in Europe are at St Petersburg, London (British Museum), and Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale), where two or three very rare MSS. collected by Gobineau, including the precious history of the Báb's contemporary, Háji Mirzá Jání of Káshán, are preserved. For the bibliography up to 1889, see vol. ii. pp. 173-211 of the *Traveller's Narrative, written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb*, a Persian work composed by Bahá's son, 'ABBÁS EFENDÍ, edited, translated and annotated by E. G. BROWNE (Cambridge, 1891). More recent works are:—BROWNE. *The New History of the Báb*. Cambridge, 1893; and "Catalogue and Description of the 27 Bábí Manuscripts," *Journal of R. Asiat. Soc.*, July and October 1892.—ANDREAS. *Die Bábí's in Persien*. 1896.—BARON VICTOR ROSEN. *Collections Scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues Orientales*, vol. i. (1877), pp. 179-212; vol. iii. (1886), pp. 1-51; vol. vi. (1891), pp. 141-255. "Manuscripts Bábí's"; and other important articles in Russian by the same scholar, and by Captain A. G. TOUMANSKY, in the *Zapiski vostochnava otdyeleniya Imperatorskava Russkava Archeologicheskava Obshchestva* (St Petersburg, 1890-1900, vols. iv.-xii.).—Also an excellent edition by TOUMANSKY, with Russian translation, notes and introduction, of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (the most important of Bahá's works), &c. (St. Petersburg, 1899).—Of the works composed in English for the American converts the most important is entitled *Behá'u'lláh (The Glory of God)*, by Ibráhim Khayru'lláh, assisted by Howard MacNutt (Chicago, 1900).

(E. G. B.)

## PART TWO



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

## SERVICE OF WOMEN ON THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

As a part of its own deepening, the Committee for the Promotion of the Equality of Men and Women is involved in the preparation of working papers on issues relevant to its interest and purpose. We share this paper, bearing in mind the following quotation from the beloved Guardian.

*"I feel that regarding such interpretations (of verses from the Scriptures) no one has the right to impose his view or opinion and require his listeners to believe in his particular interpretation of the sacred and prophetic writings. I have no objection to your interpretations and inferences so long as they are represented as your own personal observations and reflections. It would be unnecessary and confusing to state authoritatively and officially a dogmatic Bahá'í interpretation to be universally accepted and taught to believers. Such matters I feel should be left to the personal judgement and insight of the individual teachers...."*

*[Shoghi Effendi 6 April 1928 to an individual believer]*

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The following is a copy of a letter from the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand dated 31 May 1988.

We have been informed of a paper presented at a recent New Zealand Bahá'í Studies conference which raises the possibility that the ineligibility of women for membership on the Universal House of Justice may be a temporary provision subject to change through a process of progressive unfoldment of the divine purpose. We present the following points as a means of increasing the friends' understanding of this established provision of the Order of Bahá'u'lláh that membership of the Universal House of Justice is confined to men.

The system of Bahá'í Administration is "indissolubly bound with the essential verities of the Faith" as set forth in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. A unique feature of this system is the appointment of authorized interpreters, in the persons of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, to provide authoritative statements on the intent of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. Writing in the "Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh", Shoghi Effendi stated that 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian "share...the right and obligation to interpret the Bahá'í teachings". In relation to his own function as interpreter, he further stated that "the Guardian has been specifically endowed with such power as he may need to reveal the purport and disclose the implications of the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá". The significance of this important provision is that the religion of God is safeguarded and protected against schism and its essential unity is preserved.

The function of the divinely appointed interpreters is evident in the progressive disclosure and clarification of the details of the Bahá'í teachings concerning the membership of the Universal House of Justice. Bahá'u'lláh in His Writings ordained both the Universal House of Justice and Local Houses of Justice. However, in many of His laws He refers simply to "the House of Justice" and its members as "Men of Justice", leaving open for later clarification to which level or levels of the whole institution each law would apply. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant and the unerring Interpreter of His Word, not only provided for the establishment of National Spiritual Assemblies, to be designated at some future time as Secondary Houses of Justice, but He also outlined the means by which the Universal House of Justice was to be elected. In His Will and Testament the Master wrote:

And now, concerning the House of Justice which God hath ordained as the source of all



good and freed from all error, it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers... By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries a secondary House of Justice must be instituted, and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the Universal one... (p. 14)

And in one of His Tablets He had already written:

At whatever time all the beloved of God in each country appoint their delegates, and these in turn elect their representatives, and these representatives elect a body, that body shall be regarded as the Supreme House of Justice.

In the following passage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá referred to membership of the "House of Justice" being restricted to men, without a specific designation of the level or levels of the institution to which this provision applied:

The House of Justice, however, according to the explicit text of the Law of God, is confined to men; this for a wisdom of the Lord God's which will ere long be made manifest as clearly as the sun at high noon.

*("Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" [rev. ed.]. (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), p.80)*

Later the Master clarified that it was only the Universal House of Justice whose membership was confined to men. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote:

According to the ordinances of the Faith of God, women are the equals of men in all rights save only that of membership on the Universal House of Justice, for, as hath been stated in the text of the Book, both the head and the members of the House of Justice are men. However, in all other bodies, such as the Temple Construction Committee, the Teaching Committee, the Spiritual Assembly, and in charitable and scientific associations, women share equally in all rights with men.

*(from a newly-translated Tablet)*

Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written on his behalf to an individual believer, provided the following authoritative elaboration of this theme:

As regards your question concerning the membership of the Universal House of Justice; there is a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá in which He definitely states that the membership of the Universal House is confined to men, and that the wisdom of it will be fully revealed and appreciated in the future. In the local, as well as the National Houses of Justice, however, women have the full right of membership. It is, therefore, only to the International House that they cannot be elected....

*(20 July 1936)*

'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself, it should also be noted, had, as attested by the above-cited extracts from His Tablets, affirmed that the ineligibility of women for election to the Universal House of Justice had been set out "in the text of the Book" and "in the explicit text of the Law of God". In other words, this provision was established by none other than Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

Further, in response to a number of questions about eligibility for membership and procedures for election of the Universal House of Justice, the Guardian's secretary writing on his behalf distinguished between those questions which could be answered by reference to the "explicitly revealed" Text and those which could not. Membership of the Universal House of Justice fits into the former category. The letter stated:

The membership of the Universal House of Justice is confined to men. Fixing the number of members, the procedures for election and the term of membership will be known later, as these are not explicitly revealed in the Holy Text.

*(27 May 1940)*

Hence, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian progressively have revealed, in accordance with divine inspiration, the meaning and implications of Bahá'u'lláh's seminal teachings. Their interpretations are fundamental statements of truth which cannot be varied through legislation by the Universal House of Justice.

The progressive clarification of the details of the laws concerning membership of the Houses of Justice has been accompanied by a gradual implementation of their provisions. For example, based on the Texts available to the believers at the time, membership of Local Houses of Justice was initially confined to men. When the Master began to elaborate on the differences between the levels of this Institution He clarified that the exclusion of women applied only to the Universal House of Justice. Thereafter, women became eligible for service as members of Local and National Spiritual Assemblies. Women in the West, who already enjoyed the benefits of education and opportunities for social involvement, participated in this form of service much sooner, than, for instance, their Bahá'í sisters in Iran, who were accorded this right only in 1954, "removing thereby the

last remaining obstacle to the enjoyment of complete equality of rights in the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Persian Bahá'í Community'. It is important to note that the timing of the introduction of the provisions called for by the interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian in relation to the Local and National Spiritual Assemblies, rather than constituting a response to some external condition or pressure, was dictated by the principle of progressive implementation of the laws, as enjoined by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Concerning the implementation of the laws, Bahá'u'lláh wrote in one of His Tablets:

Indeed the laws of God are like unto the ocean and the children of men as fish, did they but know it. However, in observing them one must exercise tact and wisdom...One must guide mankind to the ocean of true understanding in a spirit of love and tolerance.

As mentioned earlier, the law regarding the membership of the Universal House of Justice embedded in the Text and has been merely restated by the divinely appointed interpreters. It is therefore neither amenable to change nor subject to speculation about some possible future condition.

With regard to the status of women, the important point for Bahá'ís to remember is that in face of the categorical pronouncements in Bahá'í Scripture establishing the equality of men and women, the ineligibility of women for membership of the Universal House of Justice does not constitute evidence of the superiority of men over women. It must also be borne in mind that women are not excluded from any other International institution of the Faith. They are found among the ranks of the Hands of the Cause. They serve as members of the International Teaching Centre and as Continental Counsellors. And, there is nothing in the Text to preclude the participation of women in such future international bodies as the Supreme Tribunal.

Though at the present time, it may be difficult for the believers to appreciate the reason for the circumscription of membership on the Universal House of Justice to men, we call upon the friends to remain assured by the Master's promise that clarity will be achieved in due course. The friends, both women and men, must accept this with faith that the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh will aid them and the institutions of His World Order to see the realization of every principle ordained by His unerring Pen, including the equality of men and women, as expounded in the Writings of the Cause.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE  
BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

17 June 1987

Mr. Robert H. Stockman  
38 Hancock Street  
Somerville, MA 02144  
U.S.A.

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your letter of 29 March 1987 concerning the treatment of Covenant-breakers in the writing of Bahá'í history was received by the Universal House of Justice, and we have been asked to convey its reply.

Bahá'í historians have the obligation to present the truth in their works on the Faith and they should not distort history by avoiding treatment of Covenant-breakers when this is called for. Even so, as Bahá'ís they will want to exercise great care in determining what may be necessary for them to read from the writings of Covenant-breakers to satisfy the requirements of their research.

To read the writings of Covenant-breakers is not forbidden to the believers and does not constitute in itself an act of Covenant-breaking. Indeed, some of the Bahá'ís have the unpleasant duty to read such literature as part of their responsibilities for protecting the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. However, the friends are warned in the strongest terms against reading such literature because Covenant-breaking is a spiritual poison and the calumnies and distortions of the truth which the Covenant-breakers give out are such that they can undermine the faith of the believer and plant the seeds of doubt unless he is forearmed with an unshakeable belief in Bahá'u'lláh and His Covenant and a knowledge of the true facts. This is a factor that any Bahá'í doing research into the history of the Faith must bear in mind, and he must himself decide, whenever he comes upon such documents, whether he feels justified in reading them for the purposes of his research.

In a letter dated 30 May 1972 to an individual believer, who had raised questions similar to yours, the House of Justice wrote:

We have received your letter...concerning your request that, in connection with your studies and vocation, you be permitted to study books written by Covenant-breakers of the past.

If you consider that reading such books is necessary for the purposes of your study and future work, you should have no feeling of guilt in reading them.

Mr. Robert H. Stockman

17 June 1987  
Page 2

The House of Justice appreciates the efforts being made by serious scholars to present the history of the Faith in its various aspects and will pray at the Holy Shrines that your part in such efforts may be confirmed by the Blessed Beauty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

*Baharíel Káimí (Mrs)*

For Department of the Secretariat

## THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

12 December 1989

Seena Fazel  
 Flat 1L  
 13 Spottiswoode Road  
 Edinburgh EH9 1BH  
 United Kingdom

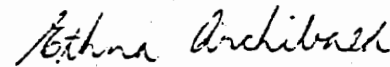
Dear Bahá'í Friend,

In response to your letter of 8 November 1989 in which you ask about the use of the terms "Bahá'í Faith", "Bahá'í Movement" and "Bahá'í Cause", the Universal House of Justice directs us to convey the following.

When the word "Faith" is capitalized, it means a religious system of belief. In this context to say "Bahá'í Cause" is acceptable, but the preferred term is "Bahá'í Faith", as it was so often used by Shoghi Effendi himself. The term "Bahá'í Movement" was used at an earlier stage in the development of the Faith but, as the Administrative Order developed and its activities on a world-wide scale became more and more apparent, the beloved Guardian pointed out that we should cease using this term to describe the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh (see "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh", p. 196).

It is hoped that this explanation removes your concern. In this connection, it would be helpful if you were to study the use of the term "faith" in the Bahá'í Writings. For example, 'Abdu'l-Bahá defines it as "conscious knowledge", which is very far from "blind faith".

With loving Bahá'í greetings,



For Department of the Secretariat

## THE GREAT WORLD RELIGIONS & NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MISCELLANY.<sup>1</sup>

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In future issues of the BSB selected miscellaneous and recent publications of possible interest to Bahā'is working within the Bābī-Bahā'ī, Religious studies and related academic disciplines, will be listed ( and occasionally briefly reviewed ). The editors would henceforth, greatly appreciate potential entries under the various headings (see below). Books for possible review will be gratefully received.

### INDIAN/HINDU-BUDDHIST ZOROASTRIAN & FAR EASTERN RELIGIONS

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Stephan Schuhmacherand, Gert Woerner and Christiane Willers Eds., *The Rider Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion* ( Copyright 1986 Otto-Wilhelm-Barth Verlag, a division of Scherz Verlag, Bern and Munich Translation 1989 Rider Books ) Rider Books: London, etc. 1989 468pp. £19.95 (HB) ISBN 0-7126-1192-4.

"The contributors:

Buddhism and Taoism: Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber (University of Vienna) Tibetan Buddhism: Franz-Karl Ehrhard (University of Hamburg) Hinduism: Kurt Friedrichs (President of the German Vedanta Society) Zen: Michael Diener, Japanologist, Tokyo. Translators: Michael H. Kohn, Karen Ready, Werner Wünsche"

" This is a unique and invaluable reference book containing over 4,000 entries and more than 100 illustrations in line and tone. It covers comprehensively the teachers, traditions and terminology of the major religions and philosophies of the Far East, Buddhism, Taoism, Zen and Hinduism. The Rider Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion is designed for students, meditators, scholars and browsers alike. It covers the lives and essential teachings of important mystics, thinkers and philosophers; the various spiritual practices and disciplines to be encountered among devotees; basic texts and scriptures, schools of thought, sects and main branches within each faith; the underlying mythology of Eastern religious thought and important terms and concepts likely to be found in reading and practice chakra, karma, nirvana, tantra, yin-yang-and many more. There is a pronunciation guide and bibliography and the entries are clearly signalled as to which religion and country they come from." (Jacket Note).

Farhang Mehr, *The Zoroastrian Tradition An Introduction to the Ancient Wisdom of Zarathustra* Element Books Limited , Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset, 1991 ISBN 1-85230-254-2 139pp. £8.99

"Dr. Farhang Mehr was born in Tehran, Iran. There, under the Shah, he was president of Pahlavi University, Deputy Prime Minister, Governor of Iran in OPEC. He is a founder of the World Zoroastrian Organization and of the Ancient Iranian Culture Society. He was also president of Zoroastrian Anjuman in Tehran for twelve years. Dr. Mehr is a professor at Boston University.."(Book jacket).

This volume contains some material of interest but should be used with considerable caution.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated all reviews are by the editor (SL).

**SEMITIC/JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN-ISLAMIC AND RELATED RELIGIONS**

\*\*\*\*\*

**JUDAISM & CHRISTIANITY**

Alfred J. Kolatch *The Jewish Book of Why* (Jonathan David Publishers Inc. New York: 1981 324 pp. (HB)  
ISBN 0-8246-0256-0 £11.50

"Why is the mirror in a house of mourning covered or turned around to face the wall? · Why does the bridegroom break a glass at a Jewish wedding ceremony? Why do Israelis eat donuts on the holiday of Chanuka? · Why do Jews eat gefilte fish? · Why does Jewish law forbid hunting? · Why do some Jews cast crumbs into the water on the first day of Rosh Hashana? · Why may circumcisions be held on the Sabbath? · Why do some brides walk around the groom at wedding ceremonies? In *The Jewish Book of Why* Rabbi Alfred J. Kolatch treats these and hundreds of other important questions about Jewish life and practice. The answers are concise, straightforward, and unbiased. Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform views are presented objectively, in a manner designed to explain the how and why of various practices. In sixteen chapters practically every symbol, custom, and practice relating to the public and personal life of the Jew is described and explained. Without judging the merits of the rituals, traditions, and observances under discussion, the author presents, in a straightforward fashion, the origin, evolution, and significance of each. *The Jewish Book of Why*, the result of several years of intensive research, makes an important contribution towards dispelling many of the prevalent misunderstandings and misconceptions that surround Jewish observance. Jews and non-Jews alike will find this volume enlightening." (Book jacket).

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A book of considerable interest -- and sometimes amusement -- for those interested in the history of Jewish religious ideas and practises. It contains much information on issues one might have always wanted to know (?) but not necessarily have known where to look or who exactly to ask for enlightenment.

Paul Badham Ed., *A John Hick Reader* Macmillan 1990 ISBN 0-333-8729-X (HC) ISBN 0-333-8730-3 (Pbk)  
200pp. PBk. £9.99

This volume edited by Badham, Reader in Theology and Religious Studies St David's University College, Lampeter, University of Wales, contains a useful selection of articles by the increasingly renowned, John Hick, the Danforth Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at Claremont Graduate School, California and the author of numerous works in the field of religious studies / the philosophy of religion -- he is the General Editor of Macmillan's Library of Philosophy and Religion series.

With respect to Contents an acknowledgements section reads:-

"The individual chapters of this reader are drawn from a variety of sources. Each chapter represents one of the major aspects of John Hick's thought. Grateful thanks are due to the various editors and publishers of the journals and books where these pieces first saw the light of day.

Chapter 2, 'Religion as Fact-asserting', was derived from two articles which appeared in the journals *Theology Today* (April 1961) and *Theology* (March 1968). The complete article was first published in *God and the Universe of Faiths* (London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1973; reissued with a new preface, 1988).

Chapter 3, 'Religious Faith as Experiencing-as', was first published in *Talk of God*, ed. G. N.A. Vesey for the Royal Institute of Philosophy (London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1969).

Chapter 4, 'Rational Theistic Belief without Proofs', first appeared in John Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God* (London: Macmillan; New York: Herder and Herder, 1971).

Chapter 5, 'Theology and Verification', first appeared in *Theology Today* (April 1960), and was republished in John Hick, *The Existence of God* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), and in John Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, 2nd edn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966; London: Macmillan, 1967; reissued with a new preface, 1988).

Chapter 6, 'An Irenaean Theodicy', was published in Stephen T. Davis (ed.), *Encountering Evil* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981).

Chapter 7, 'Jesus and the World Religions', was initially published in John Hick (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), and republished in his *God Has Many Names* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

Chapter 8, 'Eschatological Verification Reconsidered', first appeared in *Religious Studies*, XIII (1977), and was republished in John Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism* (London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1985).

Chapter 9, 'Present and Future Life', was the 1977 Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality, delivered at Harvard University and first printed in the *Harvard Theological Review*, LXXI, nos 1-2 Jan-Apr 1978). It was republished in *Problems of Religious Pluralism*.

Chapter 10, 'A Philosophy of Religious Pluralism', was first published in *The World's Religious Traditions: Essays in Honour of Wilfrid Cantwell Smith*, ed. Frank Whaling (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), and was reprinted in *Problems of Religious Pluralism*.

Chapter 11, 'On Grading Religions', was first published in *Religious Studies*, XVII (1982), and was reprinted in *Problems of Religious Pluralism*.



Gavin D'Costa, Ed. *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions (FAITH MEETS FAITH SERIES)* ORBIS BOOKS Maryknoll, New York 1990 218 pp. PBk ISBN 0-88344-686-3 £12.95.

### Contents I. THE TRINITY AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

1. Rowan Williams, Trinity and Pluralism : 3-15
2. Gavin D'Costa, Christ, the Trinity and Religious Plurality :16-29
3. Christoph Schwöbel, Particularity, Universality, and the Religions Toward a Christian Theology of Religions :30-46.

### II. CHRIST AND THE RELIGIONS

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### III. HERMENEUTICS, EPISTEMOLOGY, AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

9. J. A. Dinoia, O.P., Pluralist Theology of Religions, Pluralistic or Non-pluralistic? :119-134
10. Lesslie Newbigin, Religion for the Marketplace :135-148
11. Jürgen Moltmann, Is "Pluralistic Theology" Useful for the Dialogue of World Religions? : 149-156
12. Paul J. Griffiths, The Uniqueness of Christian Doctrine Defended:158-173
13. John Milbank, The End of Dialogue :174-191
14. Kenneth Surin, A "Politics of Speech" Religious Pluralism in the age of the McDonald's Hamburger :192-212

*"Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered* is an act of living tradition responding to the radical challenge of contemporary appreciation for the richness of other religious traditions. Gavin D'Costa has masterfully brought together the contributions of fourteen outstanding scholars who challenge the sometimes superficial argument that all religious traditions, without qualification, can be characterized as "equal."

To further the debate surrounding what constitutes a viable Christian theology of religions *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered* turns pluralism's assumption of a common religious essence on its head. A "lazy pluralism," this book shows, does not really advance our understanding of religious plurality. It is more useful, as well as more faithful to the core of Christian tradition and to the data of unbiased academic historical studies, to affirm a radical uniqueness in the core and structure of Christian origins, significance, and role in world history, and to appreciate the unique genius of other traditions." ( Jacket Cover).

A collection of somewhat 'conservative' Christian reactions to the recently published volume edited by John Hick & Paul F. Knitter, *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (SCM Press 1987). Gavin D'Costa is Professor of Theology at the West London Institute of Higher Education and lectures at the Institute of Education, London University. He is author of *Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions*, and *John Hick's Theology of Religions: A Critical Evaluation*.

This volume makes useful reading as it gives a fair idea of the kind of modern Christian reactions to the

Bahā'ī concept of the "Oneness of Religion", "progressive revelation" and the theology of religious pluralism presupposed -- but yet to be academically worked out. Something of the possible intellectual Christian (negative) reaction to aspects of the Bahā'ī 'universe of discourse' is herein registered.

### ISLĀMIC STUDIES

\*\*\*\*\*

W. Montgomery Watt, *Early Islam, Collected articles* Edinburgh University Press 1990

ISBN 0748601708. HB. £25 207pp.

An important collection of essays by a leading Islamicist, originally publishers in a variety of academic periodicals and other sources. The contents are:-

#### Part A. Muhammad and the Qur'an

The Condemnation of the Jews of Banū Qurayza : 1-12

The Reliability of Ibn Ishāq's Sources : 13-23

The Dating of the Qur'an : 24-33

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God's Caliph: Qur'ānic Interpretations and Umayyad Claims: 57-63

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*Testimonies and Reflections ESSAYS OF LOUIS MASSIGNON* [Translated from the French] Selected and introduced By HERBERT MASON University of Notre Dame Press Notre Dame, Indiana 1989 ISBN 0-268-01733-6. 178pp.

"Louis Massignon (1883-1962) was one of France's leading students of the Islamic world. He was a

distinguished professor of that most privileged of French academic institutions, the Collège de France, founder of the Institut des Études Islamiques, and director of studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in the religious sciences section. In addition to being for a time professor of Arabic at the new Egyptian University of Cairo, he was founder and guiding spirit of numerous journals and groups of scholarly researchers. His contribution to the field of Islamic studies was enormous and continues to be felt through the work of his many students in Europe, America, and the Muslim countries. His membership in all the major foreign academies of science attested to his achievements during his lifetime.

He also had a distinguished military and diplomatic career, highlighted by frontline service as an infantry officer in World War I, by his work with T. E. Lawrence on the Sykes-Picot Commission for Palestine, and by his wide-ranging contacts as French Cultural Ambassador to the Near East.

A tireless traveler, he was also a husband, father, a Catholic convert regarded, on the contrary, as a convert to Islam by many Muslim friends and colleagues, a Franciscan tertiary, and, finally, a Catholic priest of the Melkite Rite." (From the introduction p.xiii).

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"All of the essays included here were drawn from two collections: Louis Massignon, *Opera Minora*, 3 vols., ed. Y. Moubarac (Beirut, 1962-63); Louis Massignon, *Parole donnée*, ed. V. Monteil (Paris, 1962). Three of the essays were translated previously from papers given by the author at the Eranos Conferences, Ascona, Switzerland, and published by Princeton University Press: "The Idea of the Spirit in Islam," "Nature in Islamic Thought," and "Time in Islamic Thought," trans. Ralph Manheim, *Eranos Yearbooks*, vols. 3 (1957) and 6 (1968). "The Notion of 'Real Elite' in Sociology and in History" appeared in *The History of Religions, Essays in Methodology* (University of Chicago Press, 1959), edited by Mircea Eliade and J. M. Kitagawa. Three essays were written originally in English by Louis Massignon: "Gandhian Outlook and Techniques," "The

Transfer of Suffering through Compassion," and "Meditation of a Passerby on His Visit to the Sacred Woods of Ise." The remaining twelve essays were translated specifically for this volume: "Salman Pak and the Spiritual Beginnings of Iranian Islam" by Katherine O'Brien; "The Three Prayers of Abraham" by Allan Cutler; and the others by the editor with special assistance from Danielle Chouet-Bertola. The final manuscript was typed by Edna Newmark. The copy editor was Ann Rice. The volume was made possible through the continuing interest and generous support of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan and Mr. Paul Mellon." (Acknowledgements xi).

Dan Cohn-Sherbok [ Director, Centre for the Study of Religion and Society The University of Kent, Canterbury] Ed., *Islam in a World of Diverse Faiths* Macmillan academic and professional Ltd Houndmills, Basingstoke, London ISBN 0-333-52612-0 218 pp.

"Rabbi Dr Dan Cohn-Sherbok teaches Jewish theology at the University of Kent at Canterbury where he is the Director of the Centre for the Study of Religion and Society. His recent publications include Holocaust Theology, and Issues in Contemporary Judaism."

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Fuad I. Khuri, *Imams and Emirs State, Religion and Sects in Islam* Saqi Books ISBN 0-86356-348-1 1990 (Hb) ISBN 0-86356-037-7 (Pbk) £10.99

"Fuad I. Khuri is a distinguished Lebanese writer and academic. Among his many teaching appointments, he has been Visiting Professor at the Universities of Chicago and Oregon, and Professor of Social Anthropology at the American University of Beirut. Khuri has written widely on the contemporary Arab world, covering topics such as social and cultural change, tribal and peasant societies, and religious organization in Islam." (Dust jacket).

"*Imams and Emirs* is a comparative study of Islamic sects in the contemporary Arab world. It focuses on the Sunni, the Shi'a, the Alawis, the Druzes, the Ibadis, the Zaidis and the Yazidis - and the Christian Maronites, who have been added to the group because they share the same distinguishing features. These include geographical isolation, territorial exclusiveness, intensity of rituals and duality of religious organization. The book's unique contribution is to examine not only dogma, but also the ecological, historical and structural variables that differentiate a religion from a sect, and a sect from a religious Community or minority. This is the first time that Islamic religious communities have been placed on a single comparative scale. The book

focuses on religious ideology and ulama organization. Ideology refers to the genesis and formation of the religious community; organization to the recruitment, training and roles of the ulama (imams) in society. Whereas Sunni ideology and organization are adapted to the sovereignty of centralized authority (the state, the government), those of other sects are adapted to the sovereignty of the religious community. This explains why Sunni ideology tends to be conformist, while that of other sects is rebellious. Many Islamic sects began as rebellious groups and subsequently developed into stable, routinized systems. Conflict and contradiction among Muslims centre around two poles: the ulama who derive their authority from religious dogma, and the emirs or sultans who base their authority on power and coercion. In Sunni Islam, for instance, the ulama's role is subsidiary to that of the power elites, but among the Shi'a it is the ulama themselves who form the power elites. After reviewing the ideological and organizational characteristics of individual sects, Khuri addresses the issue of religious change under the heading 'Brethren or Citizens'. Here, he deals with the interplay between religions, state and nationalism and discusses the contradictions between modern state structures and the Islamic umma. Already he argues, some religious concepts are taking on nationalistic meanings." (Dust Jacket).

Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Publications on the Near East, Univ. of Washington No. 2) Seattle & London: University of Washington Press 1986 xviii+ 183pp. [\$25].

Written by an architectural historian this volume covers the period 1838-1908 and contain some superb illustrations.

### SHĪ'Ī ISLĀM & IRANICA

Imam Zain al-Abidin's *al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah* trans. Sayyid Ahmad Muhani Ed. Laleh Bakhtiar and Dr. Ziya' Sa'adi Islamic Propagation Organizaton 1984 x+600 pp.

The Arabic text with a facing English translation, of this important collection of 54 prayers of the 4th Shī'ī Imām.

Muḥammad Ridā al-Muzaffar [1904->] *The Faith of Shī'a Islam* The Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. First published in 1982 Reprinted in 1989. PBk. ISBN O--9506986--2--8  
89 pp.£4.95

"This work was translated by a group at Dār al-Tablīgh al-Islāmī in Qumm. The translators would like to extend their sincere thanks to Ayatullāh al-'Uzmā Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Shari'atmadārī for the facilities and encouragement which he provided, and without which this translation would not have materialised. Their thanks also go to other members of Dar al-Tabligh al-Islami for their assistance in the understanding of obscure passages and for help at all stages.." (Cover Note).

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, *The Lantern of the Path* Element Books in Association with Zahra Publications, Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset 1989. 143 pp. ISBN 1-85230-060-0 £6.95.

This slim volume consists of 93 brief sections of largely religious and ethical discourse attributed to the sixth Shi'i Imam. The English translation was initiated by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri, carried forward, reviewed and edited by other Muslims, and completed by the latter's daughter Muna H. Bilgrami. Muhammad Baqir Majlisi and Hurr al-Amili apparently doubted its attribution to Imām Ja'far reckoning it too Sufistic and 'gnostic'. Traditions contained within it are cited as 'authentic' by Bahā'u'llāh in various of his writings and

Tablets. In for example, the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, the following hadith is quoted in illustration of the true meaning of "Divinity and Godhood"-- it occurs at the beginning of the book under review :

" The Imam Sadiq hath said: "Servitude is a substance the essence of which is Divinity" (tr. Shoghi Effendi [ BPT Wilmette, Illinois 1971 p.111 ]).

In the Haeri-Bilgrami translation this hadith is rendered, "Bondage ('ubudiyah) is an essence, the inner nature of which is lordship (rububiyah).. " (p.xx).

Farhad Daftary, *The Isma'ilis: Their history and doctrines* Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd. ISBN 9999000401 1990 804 pp. £21.95 First published 1990 by arrangement with Cambridge University Press, Cambridge -- the [U.K.] CUP printing is better quality but around three times as expensive. This important volume has a foreward by Professor Wilfred Madelung and covers all major phases of Ismā'īlī history.

#### RELIGIOUS STUDIES MISCELLANY & NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

\*\*\*\*\*

John H. Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* CUP £10.95

"An excellent introduction to another leading question -- what is the historical relation between science and religion? ..Brooke challenges many of the conventional and simplistic views that pervade this topic. Instead, he stresses the richness and complexity of the interface between science and religion by surveying an impressive range of examples spanning the 17th to 20th centuries. This well-crafted book also contains an extensive and useful bibliographical essay."

From a review by Richard Cantor in *New Scientist* (12th October 1991 p.57 ).

#### BĀBISM & THE BAHĀ'Ī FAITH

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#### 1844 -> 1985 DESIDERATA

In future issues of the BSB space will be given to material supplementary to the William P. Collins, *Bibliography of English-Language Works on the Bābī and Bahā'ī Faiths 1844-1985* (George Ronald Oxford 1990 ). Many Bahā'ī scholars are aware of quantities of desiderata -- English language items missing -- from this important volume. While it should not be deduced that a call is going out for every occurrence of 'the Bāb or Bahā'u'llāh'/ Bābī or Bahā'ī [or archaic transliterations ]', in every conceivable non-academic source, academically useful desiderata would be gratefully received. The Collins bibliography itself will be reviewed in the next issue of the BSB.

Morten Bergsmo (Ed.), *Studying the Writings of Shoghi Effendi* ( George Ronald: Oxford ) 1991 PBk only £6.95

Basically a Bahā'ī 'deepening' aid providing answers to some 2000 questions derived from various major writings of Shoghi Effendi e.g. *God Passes By*, *The World Order of Bahā'u'llāh*, *The Promised Day Is Come*, *Messages to the Bahā'ī World*, *Citadel of Faith*. etc. The contributors to this book are mostly young

Bahá'ís ( average age 24 years ) -: Payam Akhavan, Dwight Allen, Morten Bergsmo, Carina Bischoff, Amelia Danesh, John Danesh, Helen Danesh-Meyer, Seena Fazel, Gerard Kay, Kishan Manocha, Kasra Mottahedeh, Negar Mottahedeh, Shahriar Razavi, Hamid Samandari and Oyvind Thiis. Includes an essay by David Hoffman, *Shoghi Effendi, Expounder of the Word of God*. Foreword by Peter Khan.

*The Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, A Compilation* ( Los Angeles: Kalimat Press ) 1991 \$11.95

"In honor of the one-hundredth anniversary the passing of the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, this new compilation brings together some of the most important passages in Baha'i literature concerning the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, including prayers and quotations from Bahá'í scripture, commentary, discourses, and personal recollections. A useful reference for centennial programs, as well as annual community observances."

*THE JOURNAL OF BAHÁ'Í STUDIES*. Vol. 3 No.1 Association for Bahá'í Studies-1990.  
ISSN 0838-0430

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*The passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, A Compilation* ( Los Angeles: Kalimat Press ) 1991 ISBN 0-933770-82-0 (HB)

"Letters, messages, eulogies, photographs, and eyewitness accounts tell of the moment-to-moment events and experiences of the last days, the passing, the funeral, and the memorial services of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Brings the present-day reader into contact with those momentous and historic times. Featured is the moving testimonial written and compiled by Shoghi Effendi and Lady Blomfield, and originally published in 1922."

Christopher Buck, *Commentary on Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i Íqán* Studies in the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions Volume Six ( Kalimat Press forthcoming)

"This is an analysis of Bahá'u'lláh's commentary on the Qur'án found in the Book of Certitude (Kitáb-i Íqán), written in Baghdad in 1862. Includes descriptions of the circumstances of the writing of the Íqán, analysis of quranic exegesis, as well as a discussion of theological issues concerning revelation. Prepublication price: \$24.95, cloth · ISBN 0-933770-78-2 Illustrations · Available November 1991

Marzieh Gail, *Arches of the Years* (Oxford: George Ronald ) 1991 339pp. ISBN 0-85398-326-7 (PBk) £9.95.

" MARZIEH GAIL is well-known for her historical works *Persia and the Victorians*, *Avignon in Flower*, *The Sheltering Branch* and *Life in the Renaissance*, and for her essays and anecdotes published in *Dawn over Mount Hira* and *Other People, Other Places*. Her translations from Persian and Arabic include *The Seven Valleys* by Baha'u'llah (with Ali-Kuli Khan) and 'Abdul-Bahá's *The Secret of Divine Civilization*...The daughter of the first Persian-American Bahá'í marriage (which was applauded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a symbol of the unity taught by the Bahá'í Faith), Marzieh Gail has never ceased to cast a perceptive and humorous eye over the dilemmas that inevitably arise between modes of life and thought so different from each other. She is an interpreter of East to West and vice versa. This is the sixth book of her own writing of particular interest to Bahá'ís."

"Continuing the vivid story of Ali-Kuli Khán's diplomatic career, Marzieh Gail takes her readers on the family's travels from Tehran to Washington to San Francisco, Paris, Istanbul and Tiflis and back to Persia. This is more than a sequel to *Summon Up Remembrance* - a new factor enters the picture in the form of Marzieh herself, who as a child accompanied her parents to their various posts. *Arches of the Years* is as much her story as it is her father's and mother's..Here are new insights into 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to America and the early days of the Bahá'í Faith there, with an attractive portrait of Phoebe Hearst an unusual perspective on the Versailles Conference of 1919 and of President Woodrow Wilson, and vignettes of other characters from the early days of this century, and, as always, the perennially fascinating pictures of Persia and the last princes of the Qajar dynasty. The author's memories of Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, and her final tribute to him, are among the most sensitively drawn passages in a lifetime of distinguished writing." ( From the Jacket Cover).

B. Hoff Conow, *The Baha'i Teachings A Resurgent Model of the Universe* (Oxford: George Ronald ) 1990 172pp. ISBN 0-85398-297-X (Pbk) £6.95.

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**PERSIAN & ARABIC PUBLICATIONS**

H.M. Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh, Shams-i-Haqqat* (Oxford: George Ronald ) 1991 (HB) US\$65.00, £30.00 ISBM 0-85398-320-8

The Persian translation by Minu Sabet of Hasan Balyuzi's English language *Bahá'u'lláh, King of Glory* (Oxford : GR ) 1980

Riaz Ghadimi, *Jamál-i Abbá: Hadrat-i Bahá'u'lláh / The Life History of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh* (University of Toronto Press 1991) 199 pp. £11.95

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