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 Philsophies 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.¹

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 recurruring 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

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 Sufeeism 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 advocation of plurality of wives and the possession of goods in common" (pp. 159-60). It is clear from his book that Piggot 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.²

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 = Tāhirih]" 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 (1982-93). 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'espirit 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,

² For instance, see Browne's article in the tenth edition of the *Britannica* (in which he refers to Garnett's article): "... the title Báb was ... assumed by Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad; but, though still generally thus styled by non-Bábís, 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. "

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*. 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 Bábís" 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 "Shí'ite sects"), written by Professor A. Müller of the University of Konigsberg. 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 Bábism still lives in secrecy, and the universal sympathy felt for the martyr Báb among generously minded Persians may still give it a future."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Browne, E.G. *Babism*, Encyclopaedia Britannica vol. XXVI. 10th ed. London and Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1902. (pp. 38-9)
- Garnett, Richard, *Bâbi or Bâby*, Encyclopaedia Britannica vol. III. 9th ed. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875. (pp. 180-1)
- Gamett. Richard. In: *Dictionary of National Biography*. Ed. Sir S. Lee. 2nd Supplement. Vol. 2. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1912. (pp. 79-82)
- Goldsmid, FJ. *Persia* (Section II, *History*). Encyclopaedia Britannica vol. XVIII. 9th ed. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875. (p. 651)
- Müller, A. *Sunnites* (Section, Shl'ites). **Encyclopaedia Britannica** vol. XXII. 9th ed. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875. (pp. 665-6)
- Piggot, J. *Persia -Ancient and Modern*. London: Henry S. King & Co., 1874. (pp. 99-100, 104-6, 109-110, 159-61)

³ Neither of which have been noted by Bahā'ī scholars.

THE

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA

DICTIONARY

OF

ARTS, SCIENCES, AND GENERAL LITERATURE

NINTH EDITION

VOLUME III

EDINBURGH: ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
MDCCCLXXV

[All Rights reserved.]

BABI, or Baby, the appellation of a remarkable modern sect in Persia, is derived from the title (bab, 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, Hassau and Hosein. The cause of this heterodoxy is, no doubt, to be sought in ethnological distinctions, the Arvan 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. Babism 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 Bab, 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 Bab, 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 Bab'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). Balfou-

roushi, 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 Bab 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 Bab 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. 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 Babis 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 Babism are contained in an Arabic treatise, entitled Biyan (the Exposition), written by the Bab 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 Bab 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 indement; 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 Bab. 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 Bâbism 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 Bâbism to this date are Count Gobinean, formerly French attaché at Teheran, in his work, Les Réligions

of 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 Babis 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.)

PERSIA 651

Lady Sheil has written a graphic account of the death of Sa'id 1848-1851. Muhammad 'Alí. 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 Bab by a volley. When Persethe smoke had cleared away Bab had disappeared from sight. It had so cution happened that none of the balls had touched him, and, prompted by an impulse to preserve his life, he rushed from the spot. Had Bab possessed sufficient presence of mind to have fled to the bazar... he would in all probability Babis. 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. Bab possessed a mild and benignant counterpart was accounted and dimited him decounter the statement of t nance, his manners were composed and dignified, his eloquence was impressive, and he wrote rapidly and well."

Later on she wrote-"This year (1850) seven Babis were executed at Tehran 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 or pardon, on the condition of reciting the kalama (or Muhammadan creed) . . . It was rejected, and these visionaries died stedfast Muhammadan creed). It was rejected, and these visionaries died stedfast in their faith. . . In Kanjan the insurrection, or the religious movement, as the Babis termed it, broke out with violence. This city is only 200 miles from the Babis termed it, broke out with violence. This city is only 200 miles from Tehran, 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 Tehran. It was their readiness to meet death that made the Babis so formidable to their assailants. From street to street, from house to house, from cellar to cellar, they fought without flinching. All were killed to their pasts even thing a few who were afterwards revoneted by the troops at their posts, excepting a few who were afterwards on yoneted 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 Bab; and, in order that others might be implicated in these executions, he hit upon the device of assigning a 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 artillers, the infantry, the camel-artillers, and the cavalry, each had a victim.³ . . But the result of all this slaughter was, as might have been expected, to create a feeling of symmathy for the Babis, whose have been expected, to create a feeling of sympathy for the Babis, 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 fiesh of one follower of the Bab, he was urged by the chief magistrate of Tehran to curse the Bab and live. He would not renounce the Bab; 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 Babism by fire and sword is a consummation hardly to be set within the range of

human probability.

^{3 &}quot;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).

SHI'ITES.] SUNNITES 665

Finally, in the year 1848 there broke out a violent Bábi reaction against the wretched condition of state and church moveat a moment when a new succession to the throne had (as is ment. wont) involved great part of the land in anarchy (comp. vol. As early as 1837 a young enthusiast, 'Alí xviii. p. 651). (son of) Mohammed, imbued with pantheistic and communistic ideas,4 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 Bab aldin ("portal of the faith"), and his followers are known Bab was a man of profound sincerity and as Bábis. 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 Bab'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 Bab (18th July 1849). Apparently suppressed, the movement proved that it was not extinct in an attempt to assassinate the shah in 1852. A new proscription followed; but there is no doubt that Babism still lives in secrecy, and the universal sympathy

XXII. — 84

666

felt for the martyr Bab among generously minded Persians may still give it a future.1

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

⁴ 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 Babek 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).

¹ See on Bab and Babism, Mirza Kazem Beg, in Journ. Asiatique, ser. 6, vols. vii. viii. 3 Gobinean, op. cit., where there is a translation of Bab's new Koran; Von Kremer, op. cit., p. 202 sq.

THE

NEW VOLUMES

OF THE

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA

CONSTITUTING

IN COMBINATION WITH THE EXISTING VOLUMES OF THE NINTH EDITION

THE TENTH EDITION

OF THAT WORK, AND ALSO SUPPLYING

A NEW, DISTINCTIVE, AND INDEPENDENT

LIBRARY OF REFERENCE

DEALING WITH RECENT EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

THE SECOND OF THE NEW VOLUMES, BEING

VOLUME XXVI

OF THE COMPLETE WORK

PUBLISHED BY

ADAM & CHARLES.
BLACK, EDINBURGH
& LONDON . . .

'THE TIMES'. . . PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE, LONDON

MCMII

Bábiism is the religion founded in Persia in A.D. 1844-45 by Mirza Ali Muhammad of Shiraz, 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 Sayvid Kázim of Rasht, the leader of the Shaykhis, 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 Imam and his faithful This intermediary they called "the perfect followers. Shi'ite," and his prototype is to be found in the four successive Bábs or "gates" through whom alone the twelfth Imam, during the period of his "minor occultation" (Ghaylat-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-Babis, he soon assumed the higher title of Nugta ("Point"), and the title Báb.

thus left vacant, was conferred on his ardent disciple, Mulla Husavn of Bushrawayh.

The history of the Bábí movement down to the execution of the Bab at Tabriz (8th July 1850) and the great persecution which followed the attempt of three or four Babis to assassinate the late Shah, Nasiru'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 Encyclopadia Britannica, s.v. "Babi or Baby." "Persia: Modern History," and "Sunnites 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 Igán. one of the most important polemical works of the Babis, composed in 1858-59, he still implicitly recognized the supremacy of Subh-i-Ezel. In 1863, however, Baha declared himself to be "He whom God shall manifest" (Man Yuz-hiruhu'lláh, with prophecies of whose advent

the works of the Bab are filled), and called on all the Babis to recognize his claim. The majority responded, but Subh-i-Ezel and some of his faithful adherents refused. Since that date the Babis have been divided into two sects, Ezelis and Baha'is, 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 Babis were, at the instance of the Persian Government, removed from Baghdad to Constantinople, whence they were shortly afterwards transferred to Adrianople. In 1868 Baha 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 Muhammad 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 19²=361 ("the number of all things"). In general, the Báb's doctrines most closely resembled those of the Isma'ilís 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

Shah 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 Bab's contemporary, Haji Mirza Jani of Kashan, 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 Bab, a Persian work composed by Baha's son, 'ABBA'S EFENDI, edited, translated and annotated by E. G. BROWNE (Cambridge, 1891). More recent works are:—BROWNE. The New History of the Bib. Cambridge, 1893; and "Catalogue and Description of the 27 Babi Manuscripts," Journal of R. Asiat. Soc., July and October 1892.— Andreas. Die Babi'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. "Manuscrits Babys"; and other important articles in Russian by the same scholar, and by Captain A. G. Toumansky, in the Zapiski vostochnava otdyėleniya 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 Kitab-i-Aqdas (the most important of Baha's works), &c. (St. Petersburg, 1899).—Of the works composed in English for the American converts the most important is entitled Beha'u'llah (The Glory of God), by Ibrahim Khayru'llah, assisted by Howard MacNutt (Chicago, 1900).

(E. G. B.)