BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE NAQSHBANDÍ SUFIS IN IRAQ, 1854–1856

by Juan Ricardo Cole

Many scholars have remarked upon the transformation of the nineteenth-century Bábí movement into the Bahá'í Faith, but few have attempted a close analysis of this process. The intellectual and social history of the Bábí religion in the decade of the 1850s remains largely unknown. This in spite of the fact that these years served as a crucial transition period between primitive Babism and the development from it of the Azalí and Bahá'í movements. Pioneering scholars like E. G. Browne had little or nothing to say about these years owing to the dearth of primary sources dating from this time available to them. As we shall see below, some of what Browne did say is wrong, and his views need to be revised in the light of new evidence.

During the past two decades, Bahá'ís in Iran published works of great interest by Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí of Núr, Bahá'u'lláh (1817–1892).[1] One of these is a poem in Arabic by the founder of the Bahá'í Faith entitled *Al-Qaṣídah al-Warqá'iyyah* (Ode of the dove), which he penned during his two-year sojourn (1854–1856) in Iraqi Kurdistan. The work synthesizes Bábí and Sufi themes, and it represents one of the earlier statements of Bahá'u'lláh's mystical theology. The following analysis aims at contributing to a better understanding of the earliest phase of the metamorphosis of Babism into the Bahá'í Faith.

Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí, Bahá'u'lláh, the son of Mírzá 'Abbás, was born in Tehran on November 12, 1817.[2] His father, known as Mírzá Buzurg-i Núrí, was a native of Núr in Mazandaran and a minister in the royal court. The young Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí received a private education which emphasized the Qur'án and Persian poetry and which aimed at preparing him for a career as a courtier. He refused, however, to follow his father into a court career. As the British scholar Denis MacEoin has pointed out, Bahá'u'lláh's sensitivity and pacific disposition manifested themselves in his distress as a youth on reading of the Muslim execution of the Banú Qurayẓah in the time of Muḥammad.[3]

In 1844, a young merchant in Shiraz named Sayyid 'Alí Muḥammad declared himself to be the Báb, a figure in Shí'ih Islam through whom the hidden Twelfth Imam spoke. The Báb's first disciple, Mullá Ḥusayn Bus͟hrú'í, visited Tehran later that year and sent Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí a messenger to inform him of the Báb's claims. This mission succeeded, and the young Mírzá entered the ranks of the Bábís. Why Mullá Ḥusayn, or perhaps even the Báb, singled out Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí for this special attention remains obscure. Perhaps the almost Tolstoyan figure of this young nobleman who rejected worldly ambitions and engaged in philanthropic activities posed an irresistable challenge for the new religious movement. The Bábí movement developed out of a school of Twelver Shiism known as Shaykhism, so called after its founder S͟hayk͟h Aḥmad al-Aḥsá'í (d. 1826), which contained millenarian emphases. Many prominent Bábís were converts from Shaykhism which came under the leadership of Sayyid Káẓim Ras͟htí, al-Aḥsá'í's successor, but this does not seem to have been the case with the Núrí family.

Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí quickly became a prominent figure in the Bábí movement, and increasingly played a low-key leadership role after the government's incarceration of the Báb in Azerbaijan in 1847. When the Báb declared himself the Qá'im, the messianic return of the Twelth Imám, Bahá'u'lláh organized a conference of Bábí leaders in the hamlet of Badas͟ht to publicize this claim and obtain a consensus about it.[4] There, the Bábí dis-

ciple and poetess, Ṭáhirah Qurratu'l-'Ayn, scandalized some of the faithful by casting aside her veil to symbolize the advent of a new dispensation. At this conference, Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí took as his Bábí title the divine name *Bahá'* (Splendor). In the late 1840s, fighting broke out between Bábís and Shí'ís in Mazandaran, Zanján and Nayríz. Bahá'u'lláh was not present when government troops besieged the shrine of Shaykh Ṭabarsí in Mazandaran, where hundreds of Bábís had gathered, because Shí'í adversaries imprisoned him in the town of Ámul. They at length released him, but they stripped him of at least some of his property.

The rapid spread of the Bábí movement with its millenarian overtones, and the opposition of the Iranian religious and governmental establishments it provoked, led to the temporary disruption of parts of Iran and the shedding of much blood—especially that of the Bábís, who as untrained civilians often ended up facing professional government fighting men. In a desperate bid to quell these disturbances, the Iranian government had the Báb shot in Tabriz on July 9, 1850. In revenge for this act a small splinter group of radical Bábís plotted the assassination of Náṣiru'd-Dín Sháh. A Bábí named Ṣádiq Tabrízí and two accomplices carried out the attack on August 15, 1852, but it went awry when Tabrízí's gun misfired. The would-be assassins were immediately arrested or dispatched, but this incident brought the entire Bábí community under suspicion. Many were brutally executed.

Bahá'u'lláh, recently returned from Najaf and Karbalá in Iraq, was in Afcha near Tehran when the attempted assassination occurred. He realized that he would fall under suspicion as Bábí leader and surrendered himself to the authorities. They imprisoned him for four months, but at length found him innocent of any involvement with the plot. They nevertheless informed him that he would be exiled.[5] While in prison a mystical experience convinced Bahá'u'lláh that he was destined to assume the leadership of the Bábí movement. He therefore chose to go into exile in Iraq, which was, though under Ottoman suzerainty, a major center of Shí'í pilgrimage from which

he could keep in touch with events in Iran with relative ease. The government released him from his four-month imprisonment in the dungeon Síyáh-Chál in December of 1852, and he set out for Iraq on January 12, 1853. The winter journey was a difficult one, and his party did not arrive in Baghdad until April 8.

A number of Bábís chose to follow Bahá'u'lláh into exile, including his half brother Mírzá Yaḥyá, Ṣubḥ-i Azal, whom the Báb had appointed the titular head of the Bábí community. When Yaḥya arrived later that year, the small Bábí community in Baghdad quickly became polarized, and a power struggle developed between Bahá'u'lláh and his younger brother. The death of the Báb, the government defeat of Bábí forces in Zanján, Mazandaran and Nayríz, and the persecutions of August–September 1852 in the wake of the assassination attempt—all this left the Bábís demoralized, divided and bereft of most of their leaders. Mírzá Yaḥyá tended to distance himself from the community, spending his time in disguise and dealing with affairs through proxies, including Bahá'u'lláh. There was widespread dissatisfaction with Yaḥyá's leadership, which apparently few took seriously. In the two years between the execution of the Báb and the persecutions in the summer of 1852, a great many claimants to the leadership of the Bábí movement emerged. Mírzá Yaḥyá at first refused to denounce these claims outright and so failed to stem the tide of schism.[6] As his position deteriorated he became more desperate, however, and around 1856 he had one such claimant, Mírzá Asadu'lláh Khú'í Dayyán assassinated.

Meanwhile, in the period 1853–1854, Bahá'u'lláh was apparently urging some reforms in view of the disasters of the previous four years, thus incurring the wrath of Bábís content with the status quo. Disheartened by the bickering among the Bábís in Iraq and wishing to avoid provoking yet another schism, he withdrew in the spring of 1854 to the mountainous wilderness of Sar Galu, around Sulaymaniyyah in Iraqi Kurdistan.[7] Bahá'u'lláh took with him to Sar Galu a single servant, Abú'l-Qásim Hamadání, whom thieves later murdered. In the wilderness, Bahá'u'lláh lived the life of an ascetic holy man, eschewing human society, until his reputation for piety caused

a local Sufi order to make contact with him. Shaykh Ismá'íl of the Naqshbandiyyah Khalidiyyah order successfully implored Bahá'u'lláh to come and reside in their *takyah* (seminary) in Sulaymaniyyah, at that time a mostly Kurdish town of about 6,000.

The Bábís and the Naqshbandís represented two very different reformist trends in nineteenth-century Middle Eastern society. They had in common a desire to slough off centuries-old accretions to the pure faith. But while the Naqshbandís were content with some theological and ritual reforms of a strict Sunní type of Islam, the Bábís were convinced that nothing less than the messianic advent of the promised Mahdi in the person of the Báb could remedy the ills besetting mankind. The Naqshbandiyyah has often been depicted (sometimes rather romantically and unhistorically) as the most important forerunner of twentieth-century trends toward a greater stress on the strict observance of ritual law in Islam. The emphasis on a return to the sources, careful adherence to the dictates of the revealed law, and communal solidarity against non-Muslims which characterize such modernist movements as the Salafiyyah were present to some extent in Naqshbandí Sufism long before the modern period.

The original order, founded by Bahá'u'd-Dín Muḥammad Naqshband (1317–1389 A.D.) in Central Asia, does not concern us here so much as two later branches of it. The first of these crystallized around the Indian thinker Aḥmad Sirhindí (1564–1624 A.D.), and was known as the Mujaddidiyyah. The other derived from Abú'l-Bahá Ḍiyá'u'd-Dín Khálid Shahrizúrí (d. 1827) in Iraqi Kurdistan, and was called the Khálidiyyah.

Sirhindí, a member of India's urban, literate Muslim elite, reacted against the syncretism and religious laxness of the popular-class converts to Islam from Hinduism. He also attacked the newly syncretic atmosphere at Akbar's court and insisted on greater conformity with Islamic law.[8] He not only wrote polemics against Shiism and Hinduism, but he rejected the doctrine of existential monism (*waḥdat al-wujúd*) promulgated by the mystical school of Ibn 'Arabí. Some Indian Muslims used the idea of existential monism to come to agreement with the

Vedanta school of Hinduism. Sirhindí, following the medieval mystic 'Alá'u'd-Dawlah Simnání, claimed that the unity of the cosmos with God is not an objective fact with its locus in being, but a subjective experience with its locus in perception. He endeavored to replace the unity of being with the unity of perception (*waḥdat ash-shuhúd*).

The eighteenth-century Naqshbandí thinker Sháh Waliyu'lláh of Delhi also devoted himself to reform. While he did not oppose the doctrine of existential monism, he did advocate a closer study of oral traditions attributed to the Prophet. He argued for more freedom for Muslim jurisconsults to practice individual interpretation (*ijtihád*) in arriving at Islamic legal judgments, attacking blind imitation (*taqlíd*).[9]

Not all Naqshbandí ideas in India would please twentieth-century Muslim reformers of the Salafí school. Sirhindí grandiosely claimed to be the renewer of Islam for the second Muslim millenium. He further announced that he was the Qayyúm, the Perfect Man through whom God's grace was mediated to the believers. He also downplayed the importance of some past Sufi saints. This caused him to be disliked by Sufis of a less iconoclastic stripe.

The reformist or revivalist ideas of the Naqshbandís in India had a wide impact on the rest of the Muslim world.[10] In particular, Albert Hourani has insightfully demonstrated the influence that the Indian Mujaddidiyyah had on Shaykh Khálid Shahrizúrí of Iraqi Kurdistan.[11] Shaykh Khálid travelled to Syria as a young man, but soon returned to Kurdistan around the beginning of the nineteenth century. An Indian Sufi residing there, Mírzá Raḥímu'lláh "Darvísh Muḥammad," advised him to seek knowledge in India. Shaykh Khálid took the advice, and while in India he joined several Sufi orders, including the Naqshbandiyyah Mujaddidiyyah. In Delhi, he studied with Sháh Waliyu'lláh's son, 'Abdu'l-'Azíz Dihlawí. He travelled through Iran on his way back to Kurdistan, engaging in heated debates with Shí'ís which sometimes almost ended in violence.

In 1811–1812, Shaykh Khálid was teaching in Sulaymaniyyah. He became embroiled in disputes with other local Sufi leaders, some of whom were Qádirí shaykhs of the powerful

Barzinjí family. Aside from the rivalry between the Qádirí and the Naqshbandí orders, Hourani suggests two reasons for the hostility some showed to Shaykh Khálid. One may have been his uncompromising insistence on a strict application of the religious law in the face of popular practices among the Kurds. The other was the great following he gained and the extravagant claims he made to possessing mystical powers.[12] The struggle climaxed in 1820, when Shaykh Khálid fled to Damascus after losing a contest for power with a Qádirí leader. He lived in Damascus the last seven years of his life and died there of the plague in 1827.

Shaykh Khálid's influence lived on in Damascus, Sulaymaniyyah and Baghdad. The Naqshbandí Sufis in Kurdistan increasingly referred to themselves simply as the Khálidiyyah, and called Shaykh Khálid Mawláná (our lord). Members of several important families in Kurdistan became Khálidí Naqshbandís. The Sufi shaykhs in Kurdistan seem to have grown in power as the local civil institutions became increasingly disrupted. In 1842 Maḥmúd Pasha, the local dynastic chief of the Bábán family, submitted to the invading forces of Qájár Iran. In 1847, Iran gave up claims to Sulaymaniyyah and the district around it in favor of the Ottoman Turks. In 1850, the Turks deposed the last of the Bábán rulers, 'Abdu'lláh Pasha, preferring to rule Kurdistan more directly.[13] In the midst of this political instability, the Sufi orders may well have provided a primary means of social integration.[14]

The same paradoxical mixture of reformism and messianic claims which characterized such neo-orthodox Sufi movements as the Naqshbandís also typified Shaykhism and early Babism. Bábís, for instance, tended to attack blind tradition (*taqlíd*), as did Sháh Waliyu'lláh.[15] Denis MacEoin has shown that in its early years Babism acted as a call to return to a stricter practice of the Islamic law (*sharí'ah*) among Iran's Twelver Shí'ís.[16] This was, of course, before 1848–1850 when the Báb publicly claimed to be the Mahdi and revealed a new *sharí'ah*.[17] The Shaykhí-Babí tradition criticized many aspects of popular Sufism, and, like Sirhindí, rejected the doctrine of existential monism (*waḥdat al-wujúd*). Though Naqshbandís tended to

show hostility to Shí'ís, they often had a positive attitude toward the Twelve Imams, such that Bahá'u'lláh's often very Shí'í diction in this regard would not necessarily have offended them.[18]

The Khálidí Sufis knew Bahá'u'lláh, their guest, only as Darvísh Muḥammad-i Írání and believed him to be a recluse. Perhaps they thought his presence among them would bring some *barakah* (blessings). Gradually, however, Bahá'u'lláh's aristocratic bearing and culture began to betray him as something more than a mountain hermit. When the Sufis caught sight of his superb calligraphy one day, they became convinced that their guest was a man of refinement and learning. They asked him to comment on the texts they were studying in their group sessions.

Bahá'í sources state that Khálidís were then studying Ibn 'Arabí's *Al-Futúḥát al-Makkiyyah* (Meccan victories) and that Bahá'u'lláh not only gave a commentary on some pages, but corrected certain of the great Andalusian mystic's views. It may well be that he objected to Ibn 'Arabí's ideas on existential monism. The Naqshbandí Sufis might have accepted any such reservations on this score, as this order often held that unity lies in experience or perception, not in being. In a treatise written three or four years later for Shaykh Muḥy'd-Dín, the magistrate (*qáḍí*) of Khaniqayn in northeastern Iraq, Bahá'u'lláh stated that in the seventh valley, wherein the seeker attains the extinction of the base ego (*faná'*), one transcends the stages of both *waḥdat al-wujúd* and *waḥdat ash-shuhúd*, of both existential and experiential monism.[19] This is evidence that Bahá'u'lláh knew of the Simnání-Sirhindí doctrine, and felt that it too was ultimately inadequate in describing the relationship between God and the realized devotee. In any case, Bahá'u'lláh's critique of existential monism from the Shaykhí-Bábí tradition was just one level on which Naqshbandí and Bábí reformism may have met and found each other congenial.

Shaykh Ismá'íl, then a leader of the Khalidiyyah order in Sulaymaniyyah, was impressed enough by Bahá'u'lláh's comments on Ibn 'Arabí's book to request that he compose an ode (*qaṣídah*) in the meter and rhyme of Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ's *Poem of the*

Way (*Naẓmu's-sulúk*).[20] Bahá'u'lláh complied with this request and produced a long poem of some 2000 verses. Of these, he chose out 127 which became known as *Al-Qaṣídah al-Warqá'iyyah*. Bahá'u'lláh may have discarded so many of the verses because they expressed too openly and forcefully the messianic feelings he had had since his imprisonment in the shah's dungeon. In any case, while Bahá'u'lláh's poem has many similarities to Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ's mystical opus, the millenarian emphases of Bábí doctrine clearly dominate it. The fusion of Sufi mysticism with Bábí theological and eschatological teachings constitutes one of the most fascinating features of this work.

Unfortunately, no scholarly edition of Bahá'u'lláh's *Qaṣídah* exists. It has been printed twice in Tehran, though (as the variants show) from two different manuscripts. No information about the manuscripts was provided by the editors. This writer has in his possession, in addition, a photocopy of yet another manuscript of the poem in the hand of the Bahá'u'lláh's amanuensis Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín. However, it has no colophon, and is probably rather late.[21] It does, however, seem to be superior to either of the printed versions. The variants between these versions of the poem are not so numerous or important as to prevent us from grasping with some certainity the main oulines of the work.[22]

The meter of the poem is an irregular catalectic *ṭawíl*. In some cases, Persian grammatical features are transferred into the Arabic. But another source of the irregularities may lie in the Bábí and Sufi disregard for the elaborate labyrinth of classical Arabic grammar, which they dismissed as a dry impediment to the spontaneous expression of mystical meaning. In his *The Four Valleys* (*Chahár vádí*), written only a few years later to 'Abdu'r-Raḥmán al-Kirkúkí, the head of the Qádiriyyah order in Sulaymaniyyah, Bahá'u'lláh related the story of a mystic who set out on a journey with a grammarian. When they came to the sea of grandeur, the mystic immediately plunged into the water whereas the grammarian grew confused and hesitated. When urged on by the mystic, the grammarian confessed that he could not bring himself to advance. "Then the knower cried, 'Forget what thou didst read in the books of Síbavayh

and Qawlavayh, of Ibn Ḥájib and Ibn Málik, and cross the water!' "[23] This sort of belief, combined with the Bábí mistrust of the high ulama and their intellectual tools, seems to have led Bahá'u'lláh to go well beyond the normal limits of poetic license.[24]

Al-Qaṣídah al-Warqá'iyyah is only the third or fourth earliest extant work by Bahá'u'lláh of any length or doctrinal importance, and it will prove relevant to discuss the first two pieces he wrote as a background to this poem. The first was also a poem, *Rashḥ-i 'Amá,* which he composed in the Siyáh-Chál dungeon in Tehran where he was imprisoned in the fall of 1852.[25] There, he underwent a series of very powerful mystical experiences. He wrote, much later:

> During the days I lay in the prison of Ṭihrán, though the galling weight of the chains and the stench-filled air allowed Me but little sleep, still in those infrequent moments of slumber I felt as if something flowed from the crown of My head over My breast, even as a mighty torrent that precipitateth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of My body would, as a result, be set afire. At such moments My tongue recited what no man could bear to hear.[26]

In the poem *Rashḥ-i 'Amá,* Bahá'u'lláh describes how his rapture (*jadhbah*) has caused the unknowable essence of God (*'amá*) to shower down its moisture. This is a complex play on words, utilizing Sufi technical terminology. The term *'amá* means in Arabic literally *cloud,* and its theological significance derives from an oral report attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad. Abú Razín al-'Uqaylí is said to have asked the Prophet: "Where was our Lord before He created the heavens and earth?" Muḥammad replied: "In a cloud, above which was air and below which was air."[27] By the time of 'Abdu'l-Karím al-Jílí (1365–1428 A.D.), the term had important philosophical and mystical associations for the school of Ibn 'Arabí. In his *Al-Insán al-Kámil* (The Perfect Man) al-Jílí describes *'amá* as the highest level of the divine essence which is beyond both absolute reality (*al-ḥaqq*) and createdness (*al-khalq*).[28] Al-Jílí's sys-

tem was a monist one in which the being of God was the only existence. This being or essence had created modes and absolutely real modes which correspond to the universe and God as conceived in dualistic systems. The highest of the real modes (*ḥaqqí*) was unicity (*aḥadiyyah*), wherein all divine names and attributes disappeared and were unmanifest. Nevertheless, the stage of unicity remains a penultimate one in which God still manifests himself (*tajallí, ẓuhúr*) as exaltation (*ta'allí*). The Cloud, or *'amá*, however, is absolute essence—neither reality nor createdness, neither exaltation nor denigration—wherein God is altogether hidden.

Thus, although Bahá'u'lláh rejected the existential monism of Sufis like al-Jílí, he did employ the term *'amá* to indicate the uttermost unknowable depths of God's essence. Since the word also means *cloud*, he referred to the sprinkling (*rashḥ*) of the Cloud of the divine essence which his own state of mystical ecstasy precipitated while he languished in the shah's Black Pit (line 1). This same rapture attracted the divine beloved's glance of bestowal and brought him into God's presence (line 4). This serves as a signal for the blowing of the trumpet that indicates the advent of the Resurrection Day (line 6), or the Day of God (line 9), brought by the promised one or "new beauty" in *Ṭá* (the Bábí designation for Tehran).

It seems clear that in this poem, as he lay in chains in the Black Pit, Bahá'u'lláh alluded to his premonition that he had a special role to play in reinvigorating the Bábí movement. This allusion was, however, more in the nature of a vague intimation than a forthright claim. That Bahá'u'lláh had an intimation in 1852 of his future leadership role is confirmed in his later writings. He wrote that it was in the fall of 1852, that he determined to reform the Bábí religion and instill a new vitality into this demoralized community.[29]

In this poem also, Bahá'u'lláh mentions for the first time his houri (*ḥúrí*), one of the angelic female figures said by the Qur'án to inhabit paradise.[30] He saw this figure in visions, and he later identified her as the conveyor to him of the divine revelation.[31] He apparently addressed *Al-Qaṣídah al-Warqá'iyyah* to her as well. Muslim mystics often addressed the divine as a female

beloved, following the conventions of love poetry, but this seems to be a rare instance where the principle of revelation itself is depicted as feminine. For Muḥammad the angel of revelation had been the male figure, Gabriel. Bahá'u'lláh's houri here recalls Dante's Beatrice.

In his second major extant work, *Lawḥ Kull aṭ-Ṭa'am* (The tablet of all food), Bahá'u'lláh explored a series of metaphysical realms. This piece is a commentary on the quranic verse: "All food was lawful to the children of Israel save that which Israel forbade himself before the Torah was revealed" (3:93). Mírzá Kamálu'd-Dín Naráqí, a Bábí who had met the Báb in Kashan, requested this commentary from Bahá'u'lláh sometime in 1853, when he was in Baghdad. Naráqí had previously sought a commentary on the verse from Mírzá Yaḥyá, Ṣubḥ-i Azal, but was so disappointed in the reply that he turned to Bahá'u'lláh for a more satisfactory answer.

This episode may have been part of a pattern wherein the rank and file were increasingly demonstrating discontent with Mírzá Yaḥyá's leadership. Bahá'u'lláh's mystical intensity and charismatic personality made him the obvious alternative, much to the chagrin of his younger half brother, whose own extreme secretiveness, caution and conspiratorial methods were to blame for the disaffection of a number of his followers. After Bahá'u'lláh's intimation while in prison of his messianic call, he may have been tempted to assert his own claims to leadership. However, he seems to have been fearful of provoking a major schism. In the event, he postponed a public proclamation of his claims to be the spiritual "return" of the Báb until 1864 in Edirne, though he made his claims known to a small group of close disciples in April 1863 in Baghdad.[32]

In the Tablet of All Food, Bahá'u'lláh writes a figurative exegesis explaining the mystical significance of the word *food* in the above-mentioned Qur'án verse.[33] He says that it first of all refers to the throne of *háhút*. This term indicates a station (*maqám*) of divine oneness inaccessible to human understanding. He says that the esoteric and exoteric aspects of this station are identical. *Háhút* is formed according to the same Syriac pattern as more familiar words such as *násút* (humanity), and it proba-

bly derives from the letter *Há*, which stands for *huwiyyah*, or God's self-identity. In the next station, *láhút* (divinity), the phrase "He is He, there is none other than He" applies. This refers to God's unity and uniqueness, and only the most purified and holy of worshippers can understand this station. In the next lowest station, *jabarút* (the realm of divine dominion), the phrase "Thou art He and He is thou" obtains. On this plane prophets may use theopathic language, identifying themselves with God on the level of His attributes. Then comes the station of *malakút* (the realm of divine power), which is inhabited by those of God's servants who have detached themselves from the riches of the material world. At the lowest level subsists the station of *násút* (humanity). Bahá'u'lláh describes the universe as a hierarchy of stations. The lowest is that of pure humanity, but human beings can attain or comprehend higher stations by acquiring certain attributes. God reserves the higher stations to saints and prophets, while the highest, *háhút*, remains impenetrable to all but God. This sort of schema often characterized Sufi works.[34]

Bahá'u'lláh's stations thus differed from al-Jílí's graduations in the divine essence, since Bahá'u'lláh rejected existential monism. He looked upon the stations below *háhút* as levels of God's creation, but not as manifestations of the divine essence itself. In fact, the Shaykhí-Bábí tradition opposed Sufi theories of the unity of being from the time of the founder of the movement himself. Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsá'í composed a spirited attack on this idea as developed by the school of al-Jílí entitled *'Ayn al-Yaqín* (The eye of certainty).[35] Bahá'u'lláh himself often wrote that even the devoutest mystics and the prophets were unable to behold God or apprehend His essence.[36]

In turning to Bahá'u'lláh's *Al-Qaṣídah al-Warqá'iyyah*, we find that his theological and metaphysical ideas, his millenialism, and his vision of the celestial maiden, the houri, have all deeply affected the content and even the structure of the poem. Like Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ's *Naẓmu's-Sulúk*, Bahá'u'lláh's ode consists of both a dialogue and a soliloquy. But in the former, Ibnu'l-Fariḍ plays down the elements of dialogue, especially once the mystic claims to have attained union with his beloved. In Bahá'u'lláh's

work, the dialogue continues throughout, and this partially reflects a theological position. Since Bahá'u'lláh's theology ruled out the sort of essential union between the mystic and God in which Sufis such as Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ and Ibn 'Arabí believed, his poem retains a more dialogical structure.

Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ's *Poem of the Way* falls into three sections. In the first, the poet delivers an encomium on his divine beloved, with much boasting of how he has suffered for her, and complaints against his calumniators who have slandered him to her. In the second, she replies briefly to the effect that he has mistaken his own self-love for passion for her, and that he must sacrifice his very life to follow her path. In the very long third section, which comprises the bulk of the poem, he states his willingness to die for her and even his unworthiness to obtain union with her at such a paltry price. He depicts himself as so entirely one with his beloved that when she speaks it is he who talks. He says he prays, only to find that it is to himself that he has been praying. While Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ makes it clear that he does not constantly enjoy a state of blissful union, Bahá'u'lláh's poem never really attains this peak at all. God remains utterly transcendent; the most that can be accomplished is to arrive in the presence of God (*liqá'u'lláh*), which is the presence of His attributes rather than His wholly unknowable essence.

This Bábí ode has five parts. It begins with Bahá'u'lláh's lauding of the divine beloved (lines 1–16), whom he describes as a celestial feminine being whose beauty transcends beauty itself. An apostrophe to her follows (lines 17–36), in which he speaks of his love, complains bitterly of his separation from her, and pleads for union. In her first reply (lines 37–61), she rebukes him for his presumption, stresses her exaltation, accuses him of mistaking limited attributes for her unlimited essence, and calls on him to seek martyrdom in her path. In his second apostrophe to her (lines 62–97), Bahá'u'lláh defends himself from her charges. He states that he longs to suffer all the trials she enumerated and complains at length of the tribulations he has already undergone for her. He claims to have reached a point where his inmost self was annihilated and he attained her presence. In her final reply, which ends the poem

(lines 98–127), she urges him to go beyond the limited truth he has found. She accuses him of equating his own fancies with reality and calls on him at last to rend the veils obscuring his vision.

Much of this echoes themes in Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ's ode, but these similarities should not obscure the real differences of outlook and even of theology between them. Aside from the fact that Bahá'u'lláh never claims to have achieved more than a glimpse of the beloved, something which Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ claims in the first part of his poem and goes far beyond in the third, there is a millenialist stress in the former author wholly absent in the latter. Bahá'u'lláh feels tortured, not simply by his remoteness from his beloved, but also because of his messianic secret. Moreover, his divine beloved is not merely a mystic vision, but is an eschatological figure announcing the apocalypse.

Al-Qaṣídah al-Warqá'iyyah begins by describing the way a scintillating countenance, whose splendor eclipsed all suns, entranced the author. From her, the perfume of God's transcendent essence (*'amá*) diffused and her loftiness exalted exaltation itself. She thus intermediates between the unapproachable divine essence and the world of humanity. But more, she heralds the Resurrection Day, sounding the trump which the Qur'án foretold would signal the advent of the Day of God (line 4). The author then launches into a more conventional lament over his remoteness from his divine beloved. All eyes which have ever wept have been the poet's own weeping for her attainment. She has met his supplications with brutal rebuke, however, and when he raises his arms toward her, she replies with a sword.

The poet now addresses her, pledging to sacrifice himself up entirely for the sake of attaining her presence and pleading with her not to publish abroad the scandal of his obsessive love for her (line 17). He extols her as the one through whose theophany (*ẓuhúr*) all creatures came into existence and through whom the poet himself was resurrected. He calls on her to end his long exile, and laments in hyperbole of the fierceness of the flames of longing which have consumed his heart and the volume of tears he has shed (line 26).

Not only does she fail to requite his love, but calumniators surround him and their gloating vanity nearly destroys him. He complains that he no longer has any support and that they have humiliated him to the lowest degradation (lines 28–33). These comments, while a stock element in such poetry, are also autobiographical. The sort of personal attacks on his integrity and sincerity which he deplores in this poem at least in part precipitated his dramatic withdrawal from the Bábí community in Baghdad. The charges of unbelief (*kufr*) against him, which he adds to his indignities, reflect the Muslim attacks on Babism and possibly the attacks on him by the partisans of Azal.

The houri replies to his plaint with cold haughtiness. She bids him be silent, reminding him that he is by no means the most eminent of her suitors, and that none of them yet has succeeded in uniting himself with her. The Shí'í background of the writer is apparent in his choice of metaphor when she tells him that he is just another Ḥusayn or 'Alí and would have no more luck with her than they (line 38). She boasts that Moses swooned thunderstruck at her gaze, which also leveled Sinai (cf. Qur'án 7:143). The announcement of her Cause (*amr*) brought about the resurrection of all souls and the revivification of dusty bones (line 47). In her address, she stresses the themes of the absolute transcendence of the godhead and the appearance of an apocalyptic theophany which brings about a spiritual resurrection. The idea that the resurrection would be a spiritual rather than a physical event once again goes back to the teachings of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsá'í.[37]

His divine beloved now berates Bahá'u'lláh, charging him with giving his heart to another counterfeit lover. She asserts that he has desired her relationships, names and attributes, having thus attempted to delineate her "self" (*nafs*). But she rejects all such attributes as a limitation of her illimitable essence and, indeed, as a sin on his part (line 54). In keeping with the idea that God transcends all attributes and that the human heart and mind cannot attain him, she accuses the poet of an attachment to these mere attributes. Like many Shí'í theologians, Bahá'u'lláh followed in the Mutazilite tradition of nominalism which denied independent reality to God's essential attributes.[38] The

beloved bids him shed his blood for her sake before she will accept his pledge of faithfulness (line 58), implying that only by dying to the self and attaining *faná* could he go beyond a concentration on phenomenal qualities. This reply resembles in some ways that of the beloved in Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ's poem. She also accuses her suitor of having betrayed her and urges him totally to annihilate his ego, thus attaining *faná*. But Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ's "sin" is described as a reluctance to die to himself altogether, whereas Bahá'u'llah's "fault" lies in thinking that his beloved could be imagined.

Bahá'u'lláh now defends himself against his houri's charges of infidelity. He expresses his longing to be sacrificed up for her, to suffer every oppression and indignity. He identifies his plight with that of holy figures and prophets of the past (lines 72–74), including the nonquranic prophet Isaiah, a reference which betokens familiarity with the Bible. Nor does he confine the list to male figures; he compares his sorrows to those of Eve and Mary as well. He buttresses his mystical claim that all adversity has overflowed from his own tribulations by a clearly autobiographical reference wherein he speaks of the scars of manacles as still visible on his neck and legs (line 81). These were a result of the months he spent in chains in the shah's dungeon.

He then proceeds to the real climax of the poem in which he says that his spirit has departed, his heart has melted, and his inner self (*sirr*) has boiled away from the severity of his trials. Without these vital faculties he existed, bewildered at his continued survival. Having reached this state of self-effacement he ascended to the utmost solitude, attaining at last the essence of her presence in his inmost soul. He defiantly asserts that he did indeed see her as she really was. If it was true, as she charged, that he ascribed attributes to her, this was only because he saw them appear from her (line 89).

Bahá'u'lláh fixes the time of this mystical experience of the presence of God and his dying to the self as during his imprisonment in the Siyáh-Chál in Tehran. His language deliberately evokes the mystical experiences of the Prophet Muḥammad. He says, for instance, that he ascended (*'arajtu*) to meet God, thus echoing the ascent (*mi'ráj*) of Muḥammad from Jerusalem to the

highest heavens. He says that it does not matter that he is now banished (probably meaning his exile from Iran to Iraq), for he attained to the most exalted light on the day God gave him his prophetic mission (*bi'thah*). He claims to have spiritually replicated Muḥammad's miraculous journey to Jerusalem, and says that his *hijrah*, or emigration, was in Tehran (lines 87–92). In retrospect it seems clear that Bahá'u'lláh is here discussing the experiences which ultimately led him to proclaim himself a manifestation of God. Such parallels to Muḥammad's own mystical experiences abounded in Sufi works. But, given that many Bábí leaders were making extravagant claims in the 1850s, Baha'u'lláh's use of such terminology may indeed indicate his view of his own station.

The ode's denouement comes in the divine beloved's second reply. Therein she once again disputes his protestations, urging him to forget all that which he has known and worshipped. Monotheism and polytheism are all the same to her, she says (line 99), indicating that both theologies are predicated upon the attribution to God by human beings of qualities like unity or plurality, whereas God's essence remains sanctified above all attributes. She condescendingly admits that his description of his vision of her was true, but dismisses it as a truth for youths (*fityah*) or for her subjects (*ra'iyyatí*). She asserts that she continues to be purified above all description. She urges him to forsake attributes and reminds him that in her eyes human beings often misperceive even the attributes they do see, mistaking tyranny for justice and foolishness for wisdom. She reiterates her accusation that he is worshipping his own fancy (*wahm*) and warns that in preferring his own handiwork he must lose hers. He has turned away from her face, she charges, and yet mistakenly thought he was advancing toward her.

The last few lines of the ode suddenly forsake this chastising tone and emphasize rather the poet's awesome potentialities. If only he could, without giving any indication, rend the veils of "nearness," she hints that he would become privy to a world-shattering secret. She implies that if he grasped that he was not as near to her as he thought, he would be able to transcend his current understanding and come to witness the sanctity that ex-

isted within himself. She anxiously cautions him to keep secret what he would thus have uncovered, since its mere revelation could annihilate the universe in the twinkling of an eye (lines 118–124). This seems to refer to Bahá'u'lláh's private intimation of direct inspiration from God.

The piece ends with a series of beatitudes, spoken by the figure of the divine beloved. She calls blessed those who have persevered and attained her presence, her lovers who have shed their blood in her path (one recalls here the thousands of Bábís who died 1848–1852), and the sincere ones who have hastened to the shadow of her divinity.

This poem sheds much light on the development of Bahá'u'lláh's religious ideas. It, taken together with his earlier works, conclusively demonstrates that he had intimations of his mission as a reformer of the Bábí movement at a very early date. This is important because there is still some controversy over Bahá'u'lláh's relationship to Mírzá Yaḥyá in this period. Followers of the latter, called Azalís, later charged that Bahá'u'lláh did not consider making a claim of his own to being the Báb's successor until the early 1860s, in the face of the growing number of such claimants.[39]

There is also some controversy about the circumstances of Bahá'u'lláh's return to Baghdad from Sulaymaniyyah. By early 1856, news of the death of Abú'l-Qásim Hamadání had reached Baghdad. Since Hamadání had disappeared about the same time as his master, his death in the environs of Sar Galu gave the small Bábí community a clue to the whereabouts of Bahá'u'lláh himself. By this time also, reports had started to come back about a mysterious ascetic known as Darvísh Muḥammad-i Írání who frequented that area. The Bábís correctly concluded that he must be Bahá'u'lláh.

During the latter's absence, Mírzá Yaḥyá had continued the failed militant policies of the late 1840s and early 1850s. He sent Mírzá Áqá Ján, a Bábí, to Mazandaran with the mission of making yet another attempt on the life of Náṣiru'd-Dín Sháh and he had about him ruffians who made their living by robbing rich pilgrims to Karbala.[40] Bahá'u'lláh's brother, Áqá Kalím, was distressed at the situation of the Bábí community in Bagh-

dad, and felt it imperative that Bahá'u'lláh return from his self-imposed exile. He therefore sent his Arab father-in-law, Shaykh Sulṭán, to find Bahá'u'lláh and to bring him back.

By this time, even Mírzá Yaḥyá wanted his half brother to return, though why this was so remains obscure. He was at the time faced with several defections and rival claimants to leadership, and perhaps he felt Bahá'u'lláh might be persuaded to lend some of his own prestige to his sagging leadership by supporting him. Shaykh Sulṭán, therefore, carried letters to Bahá'u'lláh from several of his family members, including Yaḥyá, pleading with him to return. Bahá'u'lláh, fearing that the Bábí community was about to fall apart altogether, agreed to return with Shaykh Sulṭán to Baghdad. They arrived 12 Rajab 1272/19 March 1856.[41]

In 1862, Bahá'u'lláh himself alluded to the Sulaymaniyyah episode. He says that not long after his exile to Baghdad, he retired to the wilderness for two years, where he dwelt, for the most part, in solitude. He adds:

> We knew not, however, that the mesh of divine destiny exceeds the vastest of mortal conceptions, and the dart of His decree transcends the boldest of human designs. None can escape the snares He sets . . . Our withdrawal contemplated no return and our separation hoped for no reunion. The one object of our retirement was to avoid becoming a subject of discord among the faithful . . . And yet, each person schemed after his own desire, and pursued his own idle fancy, until the hour when, from the [source of command (*maṣdar-i amr)*], there came the summons bidding us return whence we came. Surrendering our will to His, we submitted to His injunction.[42]

Later Azalís like Áqá Khán Kirmání insisted that Bahá'u'lláh returned from Sulaymaniyyah in 1856 at the command of Mírzá Yaḥyá, and that he considered himself under the latter's authority at that time.[43] Since a close reading of *Al-Qaṣídah al-Warqá'iyyah* shows that Bahá'u'lláh was already convinced of his reformist mission while in Sulaymaniyyah, it is unlikely that he felt any particular duty to obey his younger half brother. It is more likely that he was responding to his full brother Áqá

Kalím's apprehensions about the community. Bahá'u'lláh himself seems to have seen Shaykh Sulṭan's mission as part of the "mesh of divine destiny"—a sign that God wanted him to return. Since E. G. Browne accepted the (late) Azalí version of these events, his evaluation of the relationship between Bahá'u'llah and Mírzá Yaḥyá needs to be revised in the light of this new evidence.

Bahá'u'lláh continued to be respected and revered by many of the Sufis in Kurdistan after his return to Baghdad, and he corresponded with some of them. An oral tradition reached Balyuzi that even connected Bahá'u'lláh (Darvísh Muḥammad, or Íshán) with Shaykh Khálid himself, though this is chronologically impossible.[44] Some memory of him thus seems to survive even today.

Bahá'u'lláh's ability to adapt Bábí ideas and motifs to Sufi conventions is not remarkable in view of the profound influence Sufi works had on Persian culture and literature in spite of the Shí'í suspicion of Sufi orders.[45] Aristocratic Iranians such as Bahá'u'lláh were brought up on Sufi classics, like Rúmí's *Mathnaví* and 'Aṭṭár's *Manṭiq aṭ- Ṭayr* (The speech of the birds).[46] Moreover, Sufism experienced a revival in the early nineteenth century in Iran, owing especially to the efforts of Shí'í Ni'matu'lláhís.[47] Sufism enjoyed great favor in the courtly circles of Muḥammad Sháh (r. 1834–1848), of which Bahá'u'lláh's family formed a part.[48] Bahá'u'lláh was thus able to employ these conventions while giving them a new flavor with the millenialist and transcendentalist emphases of Bábí theology.

More important, by expressing Bábí ideas in Sufi context, Bahá'u'lláh was able to work out his growing conviction that only a new concentration on internal spirituality could reinvigorate Babism. Bahá'u'lláh's time among the Khálidiyyah coincided with this development of the structure and diction of a new ideology. He replaced the disastrous militancy of the Bábís to which leaders like Mírzá Yaḥyá were still committed with an emphasis on internal personal transformation similar to Sufi ethics and mysticism. Through his largely Persian writings in this vein, he slowly began building his own following among Bábís back in Iran.

After his exile to Edirne in Rumelia in late 1863, and ten years after his withdrawal to Sulaymaniyyah, he began sending letters to Iran announcing that he was the spiritual return (*raj'ah*) of the Báb. In 1867 he broke decisively with Azal. In the following years the vast majority of all Bábís gave their allegiance to Bahá'u'lláh, becoming Bahá'ís. Bahá'u'lláh's exile to Edirne and then, to Palestine in 1868, impelled him to begin addressing the social issues and reformist themes which were then of great concern to the economically more developed Mediterranean peoples of the Ottoman Empire.[49] These social concerns—such as constitutionalism, the arms race, and the plight of the lower classes—supplemented but did not altogether replace the mystical themes of Bahá'u'lláh's earlier works produced in Iraq. The religion founded by Bahá'u'lláh had its genesis in the latter country in the 1850s, and the Sufi emphases of that early period left an indelible mark upon his writings.

NOTES

1. See especially, volume IV of 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Ishráq-Khávarí's anthology, *Má'idahy-i ásmání* (Tehran: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1963–4, nine vols.) and Bahá'u'lláh, *Áthár-i qalam-i a'lá*, III (Tehran: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 129 B.E./1972–73) for works composed in the 1850s and early 1860s.

2. The most important primary source for the life of Bahá'u'lláh is the history by Muḥammad-i Zarandí, Nabíl-i A'ẓam the original of which has never been published. An autograph manuscript exists at the International Bahá'í Archives in Haifa. From this a partial translation was made: *The Dawnbreakers*, trans. Shoghi Effendi (New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1932). Bahá'u'lláh's son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás, wrote a history which was edited and translated by E. G. Browne as *A Traveller's Narrative* (Cambridge: University Press, 1891). Popular but still useful secondary sources include Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh* (Oxford: George Ronald, 2 vols., 1974–76) and the more scholarly work by H. M. Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1981).

3. See Denis MacEoin, "The Concept of Jihád in the Bábí and Bahá'í Movements," unpublished ms., 1979, pp. 36–37, where he cites a passage in Ishráq-Khávarí, ed., *Má'idahy-i ásmání*, VII, p. 136.

4. Mírzá Ḥusayn Hamadání, *The Táríkh-i-Jadíd*, trans. E. G. Browne (Cambridge: University Press, 1893) pp. 241–244. For the background of these events see Abbas Amanat's social-history analysis, "The Early Years of the Bábí Movement: Background Development", Ph.D. Diss. (Oxford 1981); and Denis M. MacEoin, "From Shaykhism to Babism: A Study in Charismatic Renewal in Shí'í Islam", Ph.D. Diss. (Cambridge 1979).

5. Kazem Kazemzadeh and Firuz Kazemzadeh, "Bahá'u'lláh's Prison Sentence: The Official Account," *World Order*, 13 (Winter, 1978–79) pp. 11–13.

6. Hamadání, *Táríkh-i-Jadíd*, pp. 384–396.

7. For Bábí resistance to Bahá'u'lláh's reforms, see *Hasht Bihisht*, quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, II, pp. 356–357. For Algar's faulty chronology of this period, see Hamid Algar, *Mírzá Malkum Khán: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1973), p. 58, where he wrongly says Bahá'u'lláh went to Kurdistan in 1859.

8. See Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindí, *Intikháb-i maktúbát*, ed. and intro. Fazlur Rahman (Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1968) and Badru'-d-Dín Sirhindí, *Ḥaḍarát al-quds* (Lahore: Panjab Awqaf Department, 1971). For analysis see Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in North India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Agra: University Press, 1965) pp. 202–313 and K. A. Nizami, "Naqshbandi Influence on Mughal Rulers and Politics," *Islamic Culture*, 39 (1965) pp. 41–52.

9. See Sháh Waliyu'lláh ad-Dihlawí, *Hujjatu'lláh al-bálighah* (Lahore: Al-Maktabah as-Salafiyyah, 1979, 2 vols.), I:154–161 and Muhammad Daud Rahbar, "Shah Walí Ulláh and Ijtihad," *Muslim World*, 48 (1955) 346–358.

10. E.g., John Voll, "Muḥammad Ḥayyá al-Sindí and Muḥammad ibn 'Abdu'l-Wahháb: An Analysis of an Intellectual Group in Eighteenth Century Medina," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 38 (1975), pp. 32–39.

11. Albert Hourani, "Shaykh Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order," *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition: Essays presented to R. Walzer* (Colombia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972) pp. 89–103. See also, 'Abdu'r-Razzáq al-Biṭár, *Ḥilyat al-bashar fí táríkh al-qarn ath-thálith 'ashar* (Damascus: Majma' al-Lughah al-' Arabiyyah bi Dimashq, 1961) I: 570–587 and 'Abdu'l-Majíd al-Khání, *al-Hadá'iq al-wardiyyah fí haqá'iq ujalá' an-Naqshbandiyyah* (Cairo: Dár aṭ- Ṭibá'ah al-'Ámirah, 1308/1890, pp. 223 ff.

12. Hourani, "Shaykh Khálid," p. 96; al-Bíṭár, *Ḥilyat al-bas͟har,* I:580.

13. V. Minorsky, "Sulaimáníya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed. (London: Luzac and Co., 1934) 3:537.

14. Hourani, "Shaykh Khálid," p. 99. See Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh,* p. 124n for Bahá'u'lláh's relations with 'Abdu'lláh Pasha Bábán in Baghdad. Balyuzi's identification of a Sayyid Dá'údí with the K͟hálidí Naqs͟hbandí Dá'úd al-Baghdádí is tenuous. For al-Bag͟hdádí, see 'Umar Riḍá Kaḥḥálah, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifín* (Damascus: Taraqqí Press, 1957), 4:136–137.

15. See e.g., Bahá'u'lláh, *Haft vádí, Át͟hár-i qalam-i a'lá,* III, p. 96; Eng. trans. by Ali Kuli Khan and Marzieh Gail, *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971) p. 5.

16. See Denis MacEoin, "From Shaykhism to Babism," chapters 5 and 6.

17. For the major motifs in the Bábí-Bahá'í movement, see Peter Smith, "Motif Research: Peter Berger and the Bahá'í Faith," *Religion,* 8 (1979) pp. 210–34.

18. Hamid Algar, "Some Notes on the Naqshbandi Ṭaríqat in Bosnia," *Die Welt des Islams,* N.S. vol. XIII (1971) p. 194.

19. Bahá'u'lláh, *Haft vádí, Át͟hár,* III, p. 133; *Seven Valleys,* p. 39.

20. 'Umar ibn 'Alí Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ (1181–1235 A.D.) was an Egyptian mystic who spent some twenty years in the Ḥijáz. For his classic "Naẓm as-Sulúk," see A. J. Arberry, ed., *The Mystical Poems of Ibn al-Fáriḍ* (London: E. Walker, 1952); and A. J. Arberry, trans., *The Poem of the Way* (London: E. Walker, 1952); for Ibnu'l-Fárid's thought, see R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge at the University Press, 1921); Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ḥilmí, *Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ wa'l-ḥubb al-iláhí* (Cairo: Dár al-Ma'-Arif, 1971); and Issa J. Boullata, "Verbal Arabesque and Mystical Union: A Study of Ibn al-Fáriḍ's 'Al-Tá'iyya al-Kubrá'," *Arab Studies Quarterly,* 3 (Spring 1981) 152–69.

21. For this episode, see Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh,* p. 118. *Al-Qaṣídah al-Warqá'iyyah* was first published in vol. IV of Is͟hráq-K͟hávarí's *Má'idahy-i ásmání*. A more complete version is in Bahá'u'lláh, *Át͟hár-i qalam-i a'lá,* III, 196–215. The Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín ms. was kindly provided to the author by the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Center, Haifa.

22. The meter of this *qaṣídah* is an irregular catalectic *ṭawíl*. For

instance, the first line in all versions begins with the hemistich "Ajdhabatní bawáriqu anwári ṭal'atin," which does not scan. That most of the lines are regular seems to indicate that the author was taking great liberties, rather than that he was entirely without a feel for Arabic meter. Some irregularities may derive from textual corruption, an issue which only a scientific edition of the poem could settle.

The rhyme scheme, as in Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ's work, is one wherein the final syllable of each line is *tá*, with *kasrah*, preceded by *fatḥah*. However, Bahá'u'lláh sometimes maintains this rhyme by making properly masculine adjectives or verbs feminine. He also creates some forms of verbs which have no lexicographical reality. In some cases, Persian grammatical features are transferred into the Arabic. For instance, where a definite noun followed by a definite adjective would be used by an Arab, Bahá'u'lláh tends to make the noun indefinite. This has the effect of putting the noun and its modifier in a construct state (*iḍáfah*), and in fact the Persian *iḍáfah* performs both adjectival and construct functions. When Arabic phrases are used by Persians in their own language, this is a common transformation.

23. Bahá'u'lláh, *Chahár vádí, Áthár*, III, p. 143–44; trans. Khan and Gail, *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys*, p. 48. I have benefitted from John Walbridge's study of *The Four Valleys*.

24. For the Báb's strictures against philosophy, logic and the principles of jurisprudence, see Sèyyed Ali Mohammed dit le Bâb, *Le Béyan Persan*, trans. A. L. M. Nicolas (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1911, 2 vols.) I, p. 131 (IV:10). These prohibitions were later abrogated by Bahá'u'lláh.

25. For the "Rashḥ-i 'amá," see Ishráq-Khávarí, *Ma'idahy-i ásmání*, IV, pp. 184–86.

26. Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawḥ-i mubárak khiṭáb bih Shaykh Muḥammad Taqíy-i Mujtahid-i Iṣfahání ma'rúf bih Najafí* (Tehran: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 131 B.E./1974–75) p. 17; trans. by Shoghi Effendi Rabbání as, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1962) p. 22.

27. See the entry for *'amá* in Abú'l-Faḍl ibn Manẓúr, *Lisán al-'Arab*, XV (Beirut: Dár Beirut, 1956) p. 99. For this *ḥadíth* see A. J. Wensinck, et. al., *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, vol. IV, 1962), entry for *'amá*, where it is noted that the tradition is reported by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Martin Lings seems to be in error when he says this word means "blindness" or "secrecy": see his *A Moslem Saint of the Twentieth Century* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1961) p. 153, note 1.

28. 'Abdu'l-Karím al-Jílí, *al-Insán al-Kámil* (Cairo: n.p., n.d., 2 vols.) I:35. See also H. Ritter, "'Abdu'l-Karím Kuṭbu'd-Dín b. Ibráhím al-Djílí," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, rev. ed. (London: Luzac and Co., 1971).

29. Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawḥ-i mubárak khiṭab bih Shaykh Muḥammad Taqí*, p. 16; *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 21.

30. Qur'án 44:54; 52:20.

31. See Bahá'u'lláh's "*Lawḥ al-ḥúriyyah*" in *Áthár-i qalam-i a'lá*, volume IV (Tehran: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 125 B.E./1968–69) pp. 379–91.

32. Algar (*Mírzá Malkum Khán*, pp. 58–59) depended on a late travel diary for his faulty chronology of Bahá'u'lláh's departure from Baghdad. All Bábí sources agree that Bahá'u'lláh was ordered banished from Baghdad by the Ottoman government in spring 1279/1863, and that he left the city in Dhú'l-Qa'dah 1279/May 1863. See, for instance, the "Historical Epitome" by Mírzá Javád Qazvíní in E. G. Browne, comp., *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion* (Cambridge: University Press, 1918) p. 15. Qazvíní was in Baghdad at the time of the banishment. The strongest evidence for Bahá'u'lláh's date of departure is the foreign consular reports, which confirm the Bábí dates. See Moojan Momen, ed., *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religons: Some Contemporary Western Accounts, 1844–1944* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1981) p. 183.

Moreover, Algar's assertion that the authorities may have expelled Bahá'u'lláh and Mírzá Malkum Khán at the same time because there was some link between the two suffers from weak logic and a total lack of evidence. Simultaneity does not prove causal connection. Algar seems to have attempted here to buttress an old canard in Muslim writing about the Bahá'í Faith—that it had links with Freemasonry. This is wholly untrue. In fact, Bahá'u'lláh was banished from Baghdad to Istanbul in 1863 because the Iranian government, at the instigation of Shí'í ulama, put pressure on the Ottoman government to remove Bahá'u'lláh further from Iran. In Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh still had access to Iranian pilgrims and to the Shí'í shrine cities. Shí'í clerics like 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn Ṭihrání were alarmed at his growing influence.

As for Bahá'u'lláh's open declaration of his mission in Edirne, see his "Súrat ad-Damm," *Áthár-i qalam-i a'lá*, IV, pp. 1–15.

33. "Lawḥ kull aṭ-ṭa'-am" in Ishráq-Khávarí, *Má'idah-yi ásmání*, IV, pp. 269–70.

34. For the terms *jabarút* and *malakút*, see 'Ali al-Jurjání, at-Ta'rífát (Cairo: al-Khayriyyah Press, 1306/1888) p. 119.

35. Aḥmad al-Aḥsá'í, *'Ayn al-yaqín*, UCLA Special Collections, Shaykhí Collection, 1053/C, Box 1, ms. 3. The Báb condemned the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujúd* as polytheism (*shirk*) in his *Ṣaḥífahy-i 'adliyyah*, see MacEoin, "The Concept of Jihád," note 103.

36. See the "Lawḥ-i Salmán" in Bahá'u'lláh, *Majmú'ahy-i maṭbú'ahy-i alváḥ-i mubárakah* (Cairo: Sa'adah Press, 1920) pp. 128–60.

37. Henry Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: from Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran*, trans. Nancy Pearson (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977) pp. 180–88, 197–210.

38. Bahá'u'lláh, "Lawḥ madínat at-tawḥíd," in Ishráq-Khávarí, ed., *Má'idahy-i ásmání*, IV, p. 321.

39. *Hasht Bihisht* in Browne, ed., *A Traveller's Narrative*, II, p. 358.

40. Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 121. This information about Mírzá Yaḥyá is from Bahá'í manuscript sources and so may be biased. However, since Mírzá Áqá Ján later became a Bahá'í, that Bahá'í sources admit to his part in an assassination scheme is strong evidence for the reliability of this particular piece of information.

41. Ibid., p. 122, citing Shaykh Sulṭán's memoirs in ms.

42. Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i íqán* (Cairo: Mawsú'át Publishers, 1900) pp. 210–11; trans. by Shoghi Effendi Rabbání as, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán: The Book of Certitude* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 3rd ed., 1970) p. 251.

43. *Hasht Bihisht* in Browne, ed., *A Traveller's Narrative*, II, p. 357; cf. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's account in *A Traveller's Narrative*, I, pp. 82–83.

44. Balyuzi, p. 118.

45. See M. Molé, "Les Kubrawiya entre sunnisme et shiism aux huitième et neuvième siècless de l'hégire," *Revue des etudes islamiques* (1961) pp. 61–142; Alessandro Bausani, "Religion under the Mongols," *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 5: The Saljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), pp. 545–49; Kámil Muṣṭafá Shaybí, *Aṣ-Ṣilah bayn at-taṣawwuf wa't-tashayyu'* (Cairo: Dár al-Ma'arif, 1969); S. H. Nasr, "Le shi'isme et le soufisme: leurs relations principelles et historiques," in *Le Shi'isme Imamite* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970) pp. 215–33; and A. H. Zarrinkoob, "Persian Sufism in its Historical Perspective," *Iranian Studies*, 3 (1970) pp. 141–210. Zarrinkoob notes, interestingly

enough, that the Dhahabí poet Sayyid Quṭb Nayrízí (d. 1759 ca.) wrote Arabic poetry much influenced by Ibnu'l-Fáriḍ. The Dhahabiyyah was a Shí'í Sufi order. Zarrinkoob, pp. 166–67.

46. Bahá'u'lláh, in fact, later wrote a work in the tradition of *Manṭiq aṭ-ṭayr*, entitled *Haft vádí* (*The Seven Valleys*).

47. See William Ronald Royce, "Mír Ma'ṣúm 'Alí Sháh and the Ni'mat Alláhí Revival 1776-77 to 1796-97," Unpublished Ph.D. Diss., Princeton, 1979.

48. See Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785–1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969) pp. 103ff. As a youth, Bahá'-u'lláh was exposed to the Sufi preaching and literature of the Ni'matu'lláhí order at the Qáján court, though there is no evidence that he ever considered himself a Sufi. See Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 22–25.

49. Cf. Nikki Keddie, "Is there a Middle East?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 3 (July 1973) p. 267. For Bahá'í reformist thought in the late 1860s and early 1870s, see Bahá'u'lláh, *Súrat al-mulúk* in *Alváḥ-i názilah khiṭáb bih mulúk va ru'asáy-i arḍ* (Tehran: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 124 B.E./1967 A.D) pp. 3–90; and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *ar-Risálah al-Madaniyyah* (Cairo: Kurdistan Scientific Press, 1329/1911), trans. by Marzieh Gail as *The Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1956).