

## **FROM BABISM TO BAHĀ'ISM:**

### **PROBLEMS OF MILITANCY, QUIETISM, AND CONFLATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RELIGION**

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#### *THE INITIAL BAHĀ'Ī REACTION TO BĀBĪ MILITANCY*

In my article, 'The Bābī Concept of Holy War' (*Religion* **12**, 93–129), I demonstrated a number of ways in which the essentially millenarian movement of Babism exploited existing Islamic legislation relating to the waging of religious warfare (*jihād*) together with various chiliastic motifs to justify its militant opposition to the civil and ecclesiastical status quo of nineteenth-century Iran.<sup>1</sup> I indicated then that my analysis of the roots of Bābī militancy might 'also provide a basis for a later discussion of the dynamics of the transformation which took place from the 1860s from Babism to Baha'ism', and it is my intention in the present article to undertake that discussion.

Following the physical suppression of militant Babism and the violent deaths of its principal leaders (Sayyid °Alī Muhammad Shīrāzī, the Bāb; Mullā Muhammad Husayn Bushrū'ī; Mullā Muhammad °Alī Bārfurūshī; Mullā Muhammad °Alī Zanjānī; and Sayyid Yahyā Dārābī)<sup>2</sup> by 1850, the movement went underground, to re-emerge briefly in the autumn of 1852, when an attempt was made by a group of Bābī activists on the life of Nāsir al-Dīn Shah.<sup>3</sup> A wave of arrests, followed by a number of executions in the capital, weakened and demoralized the remaining adherents of what was now a scattered, disorganized, and virtually leaderless community. Babism as a political force was clearly spent, but the events of the past few years and, not least, the attempt on the Shah's life, left their mark on the Iranian consciousness. Nāsir al-Dīn and many members of his government continued to fear a renewal of Bābī plots to undermine the state. Increased European penetration and influence during the second half of the nineteenth century combined with internal instability to stimulate demands for political and social reform, and in this climate the authorities tended to think of the Bābīs as prime movers of

what they saw as revolutionary activity. Such fears were bred as much by ignorance of the true numbers and circumstances of the sect as by the memory of militant action on the part of its adherents.

In reality, the Bābīs had been forced to modify their position considerably. Following the arrests of 1852, a small but relatively influential group of Bābīs from Tehran had chosen to go into voluntary exile in Baghdad, where they began to attract other members of the sect afraid to continue their activities in Iran. Baghdad and the nearby Shī'ī shrine centres of Najaf and Karbalā' had long served as gathering-points for Iranian exiles, and now a small community of Bābīs congregated there to take advantage of the relative freedom offered in the region. Here in Baghdad, those who remained actively committed to the sect were compelled to reappraise their long-term aims in an attempt to salvage something out of the chaos bequeathed by militant action. Central to this reappraisal was the need to establish a viable principle of leadership and authority for the group. Babism had been marked from the beginning by a rather diffuse charismatic authority vested in more than one individual, and, after the deaths of the main bearers of that authority, a period of semi-anarchy had ensued, during which competing and conflicting claims to some kind of inspiration were advanced by large numbers of individuals.<sup>4</sup>

Although later Bāhā'ī sources have tended to play down or distort his role, there is adequate contemporary evidence that, in the early period of the Baghdad exile, a consensus of opinion favoured the leadership of a young man widely regarded as the 'successor' (*wasī*) of the Bāb—Mīrzā Yahyā Nūrī Subh-i Azal (c. 1830–1912).<sup>5</sup> In contrast to his rivals in this period, who were putting forward extreme theophanic claims similar to those advanced by the Bāb himself before his death, Subh-i Azal favoured a more routinized expression of divinely-inspired charismatic authority, and both he and his followers emphasized a conservative, retrenched Babism centred on the doctrines of the Persian *Bayān* and other later works.<sup>6</sup> Subh-i Azal seems to have remained faithful to the long-term goal of overthrowing the Qajar state by subversion,<sup>7</sup> an aim which took less radical political form when a number of Azalī Bābīs, such as Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, Shaykh Ahmad Rūhī Kirmānī, Mīrzā Jahāngīr Khān Shīrāzī, and others, became prominent in the late nineteenth-century movement for political reform in Iran.<sup>8</sup> Although the basic motivation for these Bābīs-cum-freethinkers seems to have been an originally religious desire to see the fall of the 'unjust' kingdom of the Qājārs and its replacement by a new order of things, the programmes they espoused and the political ideals they advocated were derived almost exclusively from European thinkers and expressed secular western views often obviously at variance with the essentially theocratic hopes of Babism.<sup>9</sup> In the end, Azalī Babism proved unable to develop a fresh synthesis capable of recreating the successes of the early movement, with Subh-i Azal himself abandoning any hope of direct action in favour of withdrawal from worldly affairs.

In contrast to the latter's routinizing conservatism, his older half-brother, Mīrzā Husayn °Alī Nūrī Bahā' Allāh (1817–1892),<sup>10</sup> offered a radical reinterpretation and reformation of Babism that succeeded in attracting much larger numbers, not only from the ranks of the old Bābīs, but increasingly from outside the movement. In Baghdad between 1853 and 1863, Husayn °Alī implicitly challenged the authority of Subh-i Azal by adopting the role of *de facto* leader of the exile group, involving himself actively in their affairs and in relations with the public, in contrast to Azal's personal policy of near-total seclusion. Born in Tehran in 1817, the son of a minister at the court of Fath °Alī Shāh, Husayn °Alī was not a typical Bābī. Although an early convert, his connections were with court circles in the capital rather than with the religious establishment and its fringes that provided the core of the Bābī leadership in the movement's early phase. As far as can be determined, neither he nor his family had any links with the Shaykhī school, from which the majority of the first Bābīs emerged. Like many of his class in nineteenth-century Iran, however, he was deeply religious, with leanings in the direction of popular Shi'ism tinged with esotericism and Sufi mysticism,<sup>11</sup> rather than towards the formal religion of the °ulama, much of which remained inaccessible to the untrained. The Babism taught by Husayn °Alī in the Baghdad period, as reflected in his early writings,<sup>12</sup> is a much watered-down, 'spiritualized' version of the later doctrines of the Bāb, with a strong emphasis on mystical and ethical themes, couched, with only a few exceptions, in an extremely simple and poetic form of Persian far removed from the obscure and convoluted style of the Bāb's writings.

There are indications that Husayn °Alī did not at first envisage for himself any role in the Bābī community beyond that of spiritual preceptor, and, indeed, he abandoned the group at one point to embark on the life of a Sufi *darvīsh* at the Khālidiyya monastery in Sulaymāniyya, with every intention, it seems, of dissociating himself from the movement permanently.<sup>13</sup> Persuaded to return to Baghdad in the spring of 1856, however, he began to devote himself to the reorganization of the sect, with himself as its real head, in whom more and more authority was vested. By the early 1860s, towards the end of his stay in Baghdad, he had firmly established his position within the community and begun to express his authority claims in increasingly messianic terms. Numerous passages of the Persian *Bayan* refer to the future 'divine manifestation' destined to succeed the Bāb as the latter had succeeded Muhammad, speaking of him eschatologically as 'he whom God shall make manifest' (*man yuzhiruhu 'llāh*), and indicating that he would appear in about one to two thousand years time.<sup>14</sup> Although he does not appear to have made a public declaration to that effect until 1866 (while in Edirne, in Turkey), there is evidence that Husayn °Alī already thought of himself as 'he whom God shall make manifest' before his departure from Baghdad. The appeal of a new messianic impulse encouraged a thoroughgoing reinterpretation of the Bayanic

prophecies, in order to demonstrate that the Bāb had, in fact, anticipated an extremely early appearance of this saviour figure,<sup>15</sup> and, before long, large numbers of Bābīs responded to the announcement of a new revelation. By the 1870s, Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī, now in exile in Palestine, had begun to effect even further-reaching changes in the character of Babism than he had ever attempted in Baghdad. His assumption of the status of a new divine manifestation and, as time passed, of God in the flesh,<sup>16</sup> gave him the authority to declare the Bābī religious and legal system abrogated by the laws and ordinances of Baha'ism, and it is from this period that he and his followers began to promulgate their movement as a religion independent of Islam.

By introducing new forms of millenarianism and prophetic charisma into the movement at this critical juncture, Bahā' Allāh succeeded in avoiding the 'premature' routinization of Babism that was offered by the policies of Subh-i Azal.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, the millenarianism preached in Palestine was of a radically different type to that which had characterized the earlier stages of Babism. In 1844/45, the first Bābīs had anticipated the imminent appearance of the Imām to lead the final uprising against injustice, only to be disappointed by the Bāb's failure to arrive in Karbalā' and the indefinite postponement of the day of judgement. Between 1847 and 1850, following the Bāb's announcement that he himself was the Qā'im, his followers took up arms to begin the last crusade or share in the messianic woes in the hope of hastening the final restitution of things, but again all came to nothing and the world was manifestly not redeemed.

Revolutionary millenarian movements react to such failure in a number of ways.<sup>18</sup> A typical response is the modification of certain doctrines, particularly those with a high specific prophetic content, partly to explain the non-advent of the millenium, partly to substitute for disappointed expectations more diffuse and flexible hopes. Although Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī spoke in terms of the fulfillment of the Bāb's prophecies regarding *man yuzhiruhu 'llāh* (which provided the primary, indispensable justification for his claims addressed to the Bābīs) and referred openly to the advent of the Day of Judgement, the promised messianic age of past prophets,<sup>19</sup> he avoided any suggestion that the millenium itself was at hand. On occasion, he would make reasonably specific prophecies relating to immediate events,<sup>20</sup> but more generally he preferred to speak of imminent tribulations or a 'great catastrophe',<sup>21</sup> followed at an unspecified future date by 'the most great peace' (*al-sulh al-akbar*) and a 'new world order'.<sup>22</sup> The Bābī dream of the immediate rule of the saints on earth was replaced by less urgent expectations capable of repeated deferment to an increasingly distant future.

Where millenarian expectancy had led to particularly violent action, and where this has met with repeated military defeat, it is common for a revolutionary movement to undergo a radical change in its attitudes to the world at large. Militancy is replaced by quietism, political radicalism gives way to

acceptance of the status quo (or, at least, a willingness to put up with it), and the wish to change 'the world' is transformed into an emphasis on spiritual change within the individual. It was precisely this kind of reaction that characterized the transition from early militant Shi'ism to the normative Imāmī position that eventually came to be identified as the Twelver sect. In the first two centuries of Islam, Shi'ī rejection of the political and religious establishment expressed itself in repeated risings against the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, led by or on behalf of various claimants to the Imamate.<sup>23</sup> The failure of such attempts to effect any lasting political change and the harm caused to the Shi'ī community at large both by reprisals and preventative measures forced a central party within the Shi'a to preach a quietist ethic.<sup>24</sup> The 'legitimist' Imams after Husayn emphasized the virtues of obedience to established authority and disclaimed for themselves any desire to obtain the outward leadership of the Islamic community, relinquishing at the same time the right to lead *jihād* or to organize an uprising in order to seize power. This did not, of course, amount to a wholesale abdication of the right of the Imām to rule. It was merely a renunciation of immediate military action while awaiting the time set by God for the appearance of an Imām as *al-qā'im bi'l-sayf* (the one rising up with the sword), who would initiate the final uprising against the rule of those who had usurped his authority. It was this latter justification that the Bāb and his followers had invoked in their call to arms against the Qājār state.

Bābī militancy having failed, Husayn cAlī chose to revert to the quietist stance of orthodox Shi'ism. It was clearly essential for the survival of the movement that both its leadership and rank and file be seen to renounce the use of force as a means towards religio-political change, and, indeed, to lay claim to a reformist rather than a revolutionist attitude towards the existing order. Although simple pragmatism may have provided the initial impulse in a quietist direction, the shift in policy had deeper roots and proved to be both permanent and far-reaching in its effects. A semi-pacifist, politically acquiescent posture was consonant with and, indeed, integral to the deradicalized and increasingly universalist form of Babism being taught by Husayn cAlī during the 1860s, and it seems to have owed its origin as much to factors in his personal background and inclinations as to immediate pressures on the Baghdad community of which he was head.

Husayn cAlī appears to have been ill at ease with the militant side of Islam from an early age. He himself writes that, as a child, he read an account by Mullā Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1111/1700) of the execution of the Jews of Banū Qurayza on the instructions of the prophet Muhammad;<sup>25</sup> the effect of this was to plunge him into a state of acute depression for some time, despite his recognition that 'what occurred had been the decree of God'.<sup>26</sup> How far this attitude influenced the nature and extent of his involvement with Babism during its militant phase, it is a little difficult to tell. Bahā'ī sources invariably

try to enhance his role at this period, implying or stating that he was a leading force behind many crucial events. But contemporary documents provide no evidence for this, and it is, indeed, unlikely that a non-cleric should at this point have had much say in matters of doctrine or general policy. There is evidence, albeit of a confused nature, that, in 1848, Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī sought to join the Bābī defenders at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsī,<sup>27</sup> and it is quite likely that he saw that episode—in distinction to those at Nayrīz and Zanjān—as an attempt to re-enact the sufferings of Karbalā', a view which, as I have indicated in my previous article (pp. 116–117), was held by most of those at the fort.

Whatever his attitude towards the exploits of the Bābīs at the Shaykh Tabarsi shrine, it is evident that Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī was generally unhappy about the course of events after 1848 and that he viewed the uprisings in Nayrīz and Zanjān as contrary to the divine purpose. Writing in later years, he expresses his disapproval of Bābī militancy in explicit and unequivocal terms: 'the excesses of some at the beginning of the cause were like devastating, ruinous winds that cast down the saplings of trust and hope. On account of them, the state became opposed and the people disturbed, for they were ignorant of the divine will and decrees, and acted according to their own desires'.<sup>28</sup> In a letter written in Acre about 1890, he contrasts the violence of early Babism with the reformation instituted by him in Baghdad: 'All know that, previously, in every year there was strife and fighting: how many souls were slain on both sides! In one year at Tabarī (i.e. Shaykh Tabarsī), in the next at Zanjān, in the next at Nayrīz. After this wronged one went to Arab Iraq by permission of the king (i.e. Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh), we forbade all to engage in sedition or strife'.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, in a letter addressed to the French diplomat, Comte de Gobineau, during the early Acre period (about 1869), he draws much the same comparison: 'In the sixteen years since my arrival in Baghdad until now, no offense has been committed by anyone. Your excellency will have heard that, before those sixteen years, this sect did not endure oppression, but took revenge. I forbade all (to do so), so that they were put to death in every land, yet opposed no-one'.<sup>30</sup>

Initially, however, Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī, as the emerging centre of authority for the small Bābī community of Baghdad, was concerned less with the possibility of a recrudescence of the large-scale militancy that had characterized the period between 1848 and 1850, and more with outbreaks of violence and anti-social behaviour on a restricted level. On more than one occasion, trouble erupted between members of the Baghdad exile community and the population at large,<sup>31</sup> leading in at least one case to the deaths of Muslim opponents. According to his own testimony, while in prison in Tehran in 1852 following the attempt on the life of the Shāh, Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī had meditated on the causes of that event and determined to 'undertake, with the utmost vigour, the task of

regenerating this people'.<sup>32</sup> It may not be entirely irrelevant to remember in this connection Nūrī's extremely close family connections with the Shāh's court.<sup>33</sup>

In condemning the behaviour of the Bābīs in Baghdad (and, indeed, in Iran before that), Husayn °Alī had recourse to the classical Islamic strictures against *fasād* (corruption) and *fitna* (mischief or sedition),<sup>34</sup> terms which he uses to denote any behaviour likely to disturb the established order of society or to cause conflict with the state. In his well-known letter to Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh, written towards the end of his stay in Edirne (1863–1868), he states that 'in every land where a number of (the adherents of) this sect (*in tā'ifa*) resided, because of the injustice of some governors, the fires of strife and conflict were ignited. But after I arrived in Iraq, I forbade everyone to engage in corruption or contention'.<sup>35</sup> Later in the same letter, he insists that, while in Istanbul in 1863, 'I had no thought of (engaging in) corruption, nor did I at any time meet with the people of corruption'<sup>36</sup>—probably a reference to the reformers then resident at the Ottoman capital. In the *Lawh-i sirāj*, also written in Edirne, he writes: 'Corruption has never been and is not approved of; what happened previously was without the permission of God',<sup>37</sup> while, in the *Sūrat al-bayān*, written about the same time, he instructs his followers to 'avoid those affairs which lead to sedition'.<sup>38</sup>

Husayn °Alī did not, however, restrict himself to mere condemnation of sedition, but went beyond that to enjoin on his followers absolute obedience to established authority, ideally vested in the institution of monarchy.<sup>39</sup> In a letter to Hājī Mīrzā Ismā'īl Dhabīh Kāshānī, he writes: 'it is not permissible to speak concerning the affairs of the world or whatever is connected with it or with its outward leaders. God has given the outward kingdom to the monarchs: it is not permissible for anyone to commit an act contrary to the opinion of the heads of state'.<sup>40</sup> This same theme is pursued in his long letter to the Iranian cleric, Āqā Najafī: 'Every nation must have a high regard for the position of its sovereign, must be submissive unto him, must carry out his behests, and hold fast his authority. The sovereigns of the earth have been and are the manifestations of the power, the grandeur and the majesty of God'.<sup>41</sup> We are, quite clearly, moving very far away from the hopes and methods of early Babism. And, indeed, it is obvious that Husayn °Alī went beyond even the tradition of Shī'ī quietism in arguing, not that secular rulers, though usurpers of true authority, had to be tolerated, but that God Himself had given the government of the earth into their hands.

Husayn °Alī's insistence on quietism was underpinned by a renewed emphasis on the sacred qualities of martyrdom (*shahāda*). For the Shi'a, *shahāda* had long been elevated to the rank of a primary religious ideal, and the figure of the martyr loomed large in Shī'ī hagiography as the supreme embodiment of faith. The early Bābīs, especially those at Shaykh Tabarsī, had

drawn extensively on martyrdom motifs, identifying their sufferings with those of the Shi'ī Imāms and their companions. But the Bābī leaders had not been committed to an exclusive policy of passive self-sacrifice: Bushrū'ī, for example, had expressed a readiness to spread the truth by means of debate, the sword, or martyrdom,<sup>42</sup> and had promised his followers 'either victory or martyrdom'.<sup>43</sup> Bahā' Allāh, on the other hand, extolled martyrdom as a positive alternative to militant action. In a passage quoted from an earlier work in his letter to Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh, he writes: '*Fasād* has never been nor is it now loved by God; what was committed before this by a number of ignorant men (probably a reference to the attempt on the Shāh's life in 1852) was never approved of. In this day, it is better for you if you are killed in His good-pleasure than that you should kill'.<sup>44</sup> It is, he says, better to die a martyr than to expire of illness on one's bed,<sup>45</sup> and, in numerous passages, he extols the sacrifices of those who have given their lives in the path of God.<sup>46</sup> Several sections of his Arabic *Kalimāt maknūna*, written in Baghdad about 1858, elaborate on this theme: 'O Son of Being! Seek a martyr's death in My path, content with My pleasure and thankful for that which I ordain, that thou mayest repose with Me beneath the canopy of majesty behind the tabernacle of glory';<sup>47</sup> 'O Son of Man! By My beauty! To tinge thy hair with thy blood is greater in My sight than the creation of the universe and the light of both worlds. Strive then to attain this, O servant!'<sup>48</sup>

As time passed, however, he became concerned to replace the extreme Shi'ī obsession with *shahāda* for its own sake with a more constructive attitude. Martyrdom, he says, 'is a great matter, but it is as precious as red sulphur (*kibrīt-i ahmar*) and more rare: it has not been, nor is it, the lot of everyone'.<sup>49</sup> Following the martyrdom of his emissary to Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh, Mīrzā Badī' Khurāsānī,<sup>50</sup> in 1869, Husayn 'Alī cautioned the use of wisdom (*hikma*) in the propagation of the Bahā'ī message.<sup>51</sup> An element of reservation creeps into his writings on the subject: 'Although they (certain unnamed believers) have been martyred in the path of God, and although their martyrdom is acceptable, nevertheless, they exceeded the bounds of wisdom somewhat'.<sup>52</sup> In Bahā', Allāh's writings, *hikma* seems to operate as a codeword for *taqiyya*, the concealment of faith in times of danger permitted by Shi'ī law.<sup>53</sup> He writes, for example, that 'it is not permitted for anyone to confess to this cause before the faces of the unbelievers and opponents. He must conceal the beauty of the cause, lest the eyes of the untrustworthy fall on him'.<sup>54</sup> He commands his followers not to seek martyrdom,<sup>55</sup> and in one place even writes that it has actually been forbidden to give up one's life in this way.<sup>56</sup> Instead, he says, individuals are to dedicate their lives to faith in God and the task of spreading His word.<sup>57</sup> 'Martyrdom,' he says, 'is not limited to self-sacrifice and the shedding of one's blood, for a man may be accounted in the book of the King of Names as a martyr, though he be still alive';<sup>58</sup> or, again, 'whoso dies believing



confidently in God, his Lord, and knowing his own self, and turning towards Him, he has indeed died a martyr'.<sup>59</sup> If a choice has to be made between dying as a martyr and mentioning the truth 'with wisdom and utterance', the second is to be preferred.<sup>60</sup>

Nevertheless, it is evident that Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī did not at first envisage any very radical departure from Islamic or Bābī norms, merely to effect a practical reformation within the Bābī community by insisting on the illegitimacy of insurrection.<sup>61</sup> In 1873, some five years after his arrival in Acre, however, he began the task of replacing the Bābī *sharī'a* or holy law with a new Bahā'ī code contained in the *Kitāb al-aqdas* and subsequent writings. Whereas the *sharī'a* devised by the Bāb in the *Bayān* had been little more than an at times eccentric reworking of the Islamic system, Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī, while retaining numerous Islamic and Bābī elements and preserving their basic outlook, went much further in his break with tradition. Already strongly influenced by Christian ideas from an early period, and having been in contact with European missionaries in Edirne,<sup>62</sup> he seems to have come increasingly under the spell of western concepts then current in the Ottoman empire. His later writings, particularly those composed in Acre, show a growing concern with themes such as constitutional government, world peace, disarmament, collective security, a world legislature, an international language and script, free association between members of different religions and races, and so on—ideas which he grafted rather awkwardly onto existing Islamic theories, in common with a number of reformers of his period.<sup>63</sup>

Under influences such as these, Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī was unable to retain, even in a modified form, many of the harsher Bābī ordinances, including the law of holy war. In several short works written after the *Kitāb al-aqdas*, he stresses the significance of his abrogation of *jihād* and related regulations, which he holds to be ethically inappropriate to the new religion he was now preaching. Thus, for example, he writes in the 'Lawh-i bishārāt': 'O people of the world! The first glad tidings which has been granted in the Mother Book in this most great revelation for all the peoples of the earth is the abolition of the decree of holy war from the book'.<sup>64</sup> In this and other works, he specifically mentions the abrogation of holy war, the destruction of books, the ban on reading certain books, the confiscation of property, the shunning of non-believers, and the extermination of their communities.<sup>65</sup>

As a result of these prohibitions, Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī claimed to have transformed the war-like Bābīs into a peace-loving, pacifist community. 'Praise be to God,' he writes, 'for fifty years we have forbidden men to engage in strife, in mischief, or in fighting, and, by the grace of God and His mercy, this sect has turned from arms to peace-making'.<sup>66</sup> Again, he says, 'by the aid of God, the sharp swords of the Bābī sect have been put back within their sheaths through goodly words and virtuous deeds'.<sup>67</sup> In place of *jihād*, non-violent proselytizing

(*tablīgh*) was to be used to spread Baha'ism, this being interpreted as the true *jihād*: 'O peoples of the earth! Hasten to that in which the good-pleasure of God lies, and strive in the true war (*jāhidū haqq al-jihād*) in order to manifest His firm and mighty cause. We have decreed that *jihād* in the path of God be fought with the armies of wisdom and utterance, with goodly deeds and actions'.<sup>68</sup> Bahā' Allāh seized here on an existing theme in much later Islamic, particularly Sufi, literature—that of a stress on the 'greater *jihād*' against the self as superior to the 'lesser *jihād*' against unbelievers, especially insofar as proselytizing was dependent on the acquisition of moral qualities and the exercise of spiritual influence. Thus, Husayn 'Alī's son and successor 'Abbās Effendi 'Abd al-Bahā'<sup>69</sup> later writes that 'the cause of God in the Bahā'ī era is pure spirituality and has no connection whatever with the physical world. It is neither war nor conflict, neither disputation nor punishment. It does not involve struggling with the nations, now war with different peoples and tribes. Its army is the love of God, and its enjoyment the wine of the knowledge of God. Its warfare is the explication of the truth, and its *jihād* is with the evil-natured soul that impels to wrong-doing (*nafs-i ammāra*)'.<sup>70</sup>

'Abd al-Bahā' stressed even more than did his father the contrast between the Bābī and Bahā'ī communities and their teachings. In one passage, having referred to the Bahā'ī obligation to associate with all men in a spirit of love, he goes on to say that 'this is one of the religious duties of the Bahā'ī community, not of the Bayānīs (i.e. Bābīs). The aim of the latter is the opposite of this. For the Bahā'īs have as their sacred book the *Kitāb-i aqdas* (sic), which commands us thus, whereas the book of laws of the Bayānīs is the *Bayān*, which is a direct contrast to the *Kitāb-i aqdas* in these matters. The Bahā'īs, however, regard the *Kitāb-i aqdas* as abrogating the *Bayān*, and say that in the Qur'ān and the *Bayān* there is the decree of opposing other religions, whereas the *Kitāb-i aqdas* abrogates all these laws'.<sup>71</sup> In a letter apparently addressed to the Bahā'īs of either Baghdad or Shīrāz (*madīnat Allāh*), he puts forward the view that, in every religious dispensation, a particular teaching was given special emphasis. Thus, in the time of Moses, obedience and submission to God were stressed; in the days of Jesus, moral behaviour, friendship, harmony, and turning the other cheek; and, in the dispensation of Muhammad, the smashing of idols and the prohibition of the worship of false gods. In the days of the Bāb, he goes on, 'the decree of the *Bayān* was the striking of necks, the burning of books and papers, the destruction of shrines, and the universal slaughter of all save those who believed and were faithful'. By way of contrast, he says, the emphasis in the Bahā'ī dispensation is upon compassion, mercy, association with all peoples, trustworthiness towards all men, and the unification of mankind.<sup>72</sup>

The continued existence of the Azalī sect of Babism made the Bahā'īs all the more eager to dissociate themselves from their Bābī origins. Thus, in his letter to the Central Organization for a Durable Peace at the Hague, 'Abd al-Bahā'

writes that 'in Iran at present there is a sect made up of a few individuals who are called "Bābīs"; they claim allegiance to the Bāb, but are utterly uninformed of him. They possess secret teachings which are utterly opposed to those of Bahā'u'llāh. Now, in Iran, the people know this, but, when they come to Europe, they conceal their own teachings and utter the teachings of Bahā'u'llāh; since they know that his teachings are effective, they make them known in their own name. But their hidden teachings are taken from the book of the *Bayan*, which is by the Bāb. When you obtain the translation of the *Bayan* which has been made in Iran,<sup>73</sup> you will see the true fact that the teachings of Bahā'u'llāh are completely at odds with those of this sect'.<sup>74</sup>

‘Abd al-Bahā’ also took pains to re-establish the chronology of the Bahā’ī move towards pacifism and universalism, and to maintain that Bahā’ Allāh had taught these ideals from a date preceding even the inception of the Bahā’ī movement as such. Thus, for example, in a letter written in 1911 to Albert Smiley, founder-president of the Mohonk Lake Conference on Peace and Arbitration, he states that ‘Bahā’ Allāh founded the concept of international peace in Iran sixty years ago, that is, in the year 1851, and at this period he distributed many letters on this subject, initially in Iran and afterwards in other places’.<sup>75</sup> Leaving aside the point that the earliest recorded work of Bahā’ Allāh dates from 1853, it is worth noting that his early writings, such as the *Qasīda ‘izz warqā’ iyya*, *Mathnawī mubārak*, *Haft wādī*, *Chahār wādī*, *Jawāhir al-asrār*,<sup>76</sup> *Kalimāt maknūna*,<sup>77</sup> and *Kitāb-i iqān*,<sup>78</sup> are concerned exclusively with mystical, ethical, and theological subjects and make no reference to this topic. The letter continues with the curious statement that ‘this went on until the *Kitāb-i aqdas* was revealed nearly fifty years ago (i.e. in 1861)’, although ‘Abd al-Bahā’ would certainly have known that the book in question was written some ten or more years later.

An absolute distinction between Babism and Baha'ism is made by Sayyid Mahdī Gulpāygānī, a nephew of the well-known Bahā’ī apologist, Mīrzā Abu ‘l-Fadl Gulpāygānī, in the section written by him of the *Kashf al-ghīṭā’ ‘an hiyal al-a’ dā*, an important Bahā’ī controversial work devoted to the views of the English scholar E.G. Browne. Stating that ‘Bābiyya’ and ‘Bahā’iyya’ are two distinct religions, he goes on to say that ‘the Bahā’ī *sharī‘a* is composed of laws, ordinances, decrees, customs, teachings, and ethical views which have been written down in the *Kitāb-i aqdas*. The legislator (*shārī‘*) and founder of this manifest religion is. . . Bahā’ Allāh. The Bābī beliefs are taken from the book of the *Bayān*, and the commandments, prohibitions, laws, orders, and decrees written in it. Their establisher is the Bāb. Both of these groups are as different from one another in their basic principles (*usūl*) and secondary ordinances (*furū‘*) as the Gospel from the Torah, or the Ka’ba from the idol-temple at Sumnath. The basis of the religion of the *Bayān*, in which the Azalīs, the cronies of Browne, believe, is the effacement and destruction of all books not written on

the Bābī faith, the demolition and ruination of all shrines, temples, holy places, and resting-places, the slaying of men, the legalization of shunning and unchastity, and, in fine, the wiping out of all who do not believe in the religion of the *Bayān*, and the obliteration of all traces of them.<sup>79</sup>

Abu 'l-Fadl Gulpāyḡānī himself makes a similar statement in his *Al-hujjaj al-bahīyya*: 'The unseemly actions of the Bābīs cannot be denied or excused, but to arrest Bahā'īs for them is oppression, for these unfortunates have no connection with the Bābīs, who took up arms, nor are they of the same religion or creed'.<sup>80</sup> Even in later Bahā'ī publications, exaggerated statements about Bābī doctrine can occasionally be found, although, as we shall see, they have, for the most part, been ousted by opinions just as exaggerated in the opposite sense. Thus, it is surprising to find a well-informed Bahā'ī writer like 'Abd al-Hamīd Ishrāq Khāvarī stating that 'the decree of *jihād* with the unbelievers, and insistence on treating them harshly, was revealed repeatedly, time and again, by the pen of the Bāb in the *Qayyūm al-asmā'*, and there is hardly a *sūra* in this blessed book which does not contain this decree'.<sup>81</sup>

#### *THE REINTERPRETATION OF BAHĀ'ISM IN THE WEST*

By the end of the nineteenth century, Baha'ism, encouraged by this partial rejection of its Bābī origins, had developed a sense of separate identity as a progressive movement within the Islamic world, and seemed set to come to terms with its status as a small minority group with its main body of adherents in Iran and its leadership in Palestine.<sup>82</sup> During the 1890s, however, a fortuitous combination of factors led to conversions in the United States and Europe, and the Bahā'ī leadership soon adopted a conscious policy of proze-lytization outside the Middle East. As new communities emerged and consolidated themselves in the West, a modified presentation of Bahā'ī history, law, and doctrine evolved to suit the tastes and preoccupations of a membership mentally and culturally divorced from the movement's Islamic background and character. The development of a deracinated, westernized Baha'ism, and its promulgation over an ever-expanding geographical area as a 'new world faith' must be studied elsewhere,<sup>83</sup> but one aspect of that development deserves closer examination here.

Neither the early western Bahā'ī communities nor the societies in which they lived and from which they obtained their adherents had inherited a distrust of Babism as a militant, possibly subversive religio-political movement. On the contrary, if Westerners had heard anything at all of the Bābīs, it was likely to have taken the form of a somewhat romanticized image of a band of inspired reformers systematically killed and persecuted by the forces of Islamic obscurantism and oriental despotism—an image fostered by Gobineau and numerous writers after him.<sup>84</sup> The heroism of the Bābī martyrs and the charismatic qualities of the Bāb, much idealized and, as it were,

'Christianized' in the transition to Europe and America, had evoked a sympathetic and admiring response among Westerners unable to place the aims and attitudes of the Bābīs in their proper context. In Iran, the failure of the Bābī attempt to overthrow the Qājār state had led to a largely negative reaction from the Shī'ī population to whom the execution of the Bāb and the deaths of his followers could only be evidence that he had not, after all, been the true Qā'im and Mahdī, whose uprising was destined to be met with success. To Christian observers, brought up in an entirely different tradition, such events, reminiscent as they seemed to be of the crucifixion and the persecution of the early Church, meant almost the opposite.<sup>85</sup> One early western writer, for example, speaks of how the Bahā'ī movement 'has the vital force of the early Christian faith shown in glad martyrdom, in loving union, in happy service. The blood of the martyrs of Shaykh Tabarsī, of Zanjān, of Yazd, has not been shed in vain'.<sup>86</sup>

There was, therefore, no need to play down for western converts the links between the Bābī and Bahā'ī movements. On the contrary, the appeal of the Bābīs as their own persecuted forebears was one of the strongest planks in the platform of the missionaries (including 'Abd al-Bahā' himself) who came from the Middle East to the West in the early decades of this century. Although the social progressivism of the Bahā'ī teachings continued to be stressed in Europe and North America, such ideas were necessarily less of a novelty there than in the Islamic world and were unlikely of themselves to win converts to Baha'ism as a religious creed. What early enquirers sought was a modern religious drama that could inspire faith in an age when the narrative roots of early Christianity were being called into question more and more intensely. The sense of a biblical past enacted afresh in modern times was, of course, focussed for most early western Bahā'īs in the benevolent, patriarchal figure of 'Abd al-Bahā', 'the Master', whom many, in spite of his advanced years, regarded as the return of Christ.<sup>87</sup> But the more distant figures of the Bāb and his followers continued to exercise their fascination for western converts as the trailblazers of a new age, whose blood was the seed of the Bahā'ī Church.<sup>88</sup>

Following the death of 'Abd al-Bahā' in 1921, the attention of the western Bahā'ī communities was shifted increasingly towards the age of the Bābī martyrs as the sacred time of the faith par excellence. Shoghi Effendi Rabbānī (1897–1957), the new Bahā'ī leader, although a grandson of 'Abd al-Bahā', was an administrative rather than a charismatic leader,<sup>89</sup> and he was clearly not willing to let himself serve as a focus for faith in the way his grandfather had been. At the same time, he was a brilliant systematizer who sought to clarify and regularize Bahā'ī doctrine in what became a life-long effort to reconstruct the movement as a new world religion, on a par with Christianity or Islam. In his numerous English writings,<sup>90</sup> he quietly reversed the earlier view of Babism and Baha'ism as distinct, even mutually incompatible religions,

conflating them instead into a single revelatory scheme.

This process of conflation, based as it was on the essential and irreducible position that the Bāb had been both an independent divine manifestation and the immediate prophetic herald of Bahā' Allāh,<sup>91</sup> was particularly pursued in two historical works. In 1932, Shoghi Effendi published an edited English translation of a Persian history of Babism by Mullā Muhammad Nabīl Zarandī (1831–92), originally written between 1888 and 1890. Given the English title of *The Dawn-Breakers*, and significantly sub-titled *Nabīl's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahā'ī Revelation*, this previously unpublished work<sup>92</sup> marked an important stage in the process of re-writing Bābī history to conform to Bahā'ī standards of doctrine and behaviour—something to which E.G. Browne had already drawn attention many years earlier, and which has remained a basic element in controversial works.<sup>93</sup> In its published form, Nabīl's Narrative proved an excellent solution to Shoghi Effendi's central problem in the task of conflating Babism and Baha'ism—how to continue the dissociation of the latter from matters such as holy war, sedition, or even overt political activity, while retaining the historical episodes of Shaykh Tabarsī, Zanjān, and Nayrīz as tales of thrilling heroism and unprovoked persecution.

The Bābīs are portrayed throughout this work as a band of peaceloving devotees, forced to take up arms in self-defence only after extreme provocation. Thus, for example, in the course of the Shaykh Tabarsī struggle, Mullā Husayn Bushrū'ī is recorded as sending a message to Prince Mahdī Qulī Mīrzā to the effect that 'we utterly disclaim any intention of subverting the foundations of the monarchy or of usurping the authority of Nāsiri'd-Dīn Shāh. Our cause concerns the revelation of the promised Qā'im and is primarily associated with the interests of the ecclesiastical order of this country'.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, Sayyid Yahyā Dārābī Vahīd, while besieged in his house in Yazd, is said to have announced to his followers that 'had I been authorized by Him (the Bāb) to wage holy warfare against this people, I would, alone and unaided, have annihilated their forces. I am, however, commanded to refrain from such an act'.<sup>95</sup> Again, Mullā Muhammad 'Alī Zanjānī Hujjat is reported to have constantly reminded his supporters in Zanjān 'that their action was of a purely defensive character, and that their sole purpose was to preserve inviolate the security of their women and children'.<sup>96</sup> Zarandī then attributes the following words to Zanjānī: 'We are commanded. . . not to wage holy war under any circumstances against the unbelievers, whatever be their attitude towards us'.<sup>97</sup>

Paradoxically, perhaps, a great proportion of Zarandī's narrative is devoted to detailed and dramatic accounts of the three major Bābī-state struggles, but nowhere is any hint given of Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī's disapproval of these as 'excesses'. Instead, they are 'thrilling episodes'<sup>98</sup> or 'memorable sieges',<sup>99</sup> characterized by 'heroism', 'unquenchable fervour', and 'enthusiasm',<sup>100</sup> the

exploits of 'pioneers who, by their life and death, have so greatly enriched the annals of God's immortal faith'.<sup>101</sup> Whereas 'Abd al-Bahā' had contrasted the Bābī decrees of 'the striking of necks, the burning of books and papers, the destruction of shrines, and the universal slaughter of all save those who believed and were faithful' with the Bahā'ī emphasis on the virtues of compassion, mercy, and universalism, Zarandī's account puts Bahā'ī sentiments into the mouths of his Bābī heroes and heroines. Thus, the leader of the Zanjān insurrection, Muhammad 'Alī Hujjat, is quoted as saying: 'I am bidden by Him (i.e. the Bāb) to instil into men's hearts the ennobling principles of charity and love, and to refrain from all unnecessary violence. My aim and that of my companions is, and ever will be, to serve our sovereign loyally and to be the well-wishers of his people'.<sup>102</sup>

The process of conflation reached its climax, however, with the publication in 1944 of Shoghi Effendi's own lengthy English history of what he calls 'the first century of the Baha'i Era', *God Passes By*,<sup>103</sup> together with a shorter version in Persian, the *Lawh-i qarn-i ahubbā-yi sharq*.<sup>104</sup> *God Passes By* is an altogether remarkable (if at times almost unreadable) work of historico-theological reconstruction and synthesis, in which Shoghi Effendi's personal vision of the Bahā'ī revelation as a unitary process beginning with the appearance of the Bāb in 1844 and proceeding through successive ages and epochs<sup>105</sup> to its future efflorescence in a Utopian 'Golden Age' is systematically worked out and rhetorically expressed. Although the Bāb is still clearly portrayed as an independent prophet with his own book and laws,<sup>106</sup> his main function in the narrative is to act as a herald of Bahā' allāh.<sup>107</sup> The distinctiveness of Babism is played down to the extent that it becomes merely a preliminary phase of the all-embracing 'Bahā'ī Faith': the 'Bābī Dispensation' represents nothing more than the first period of the 'Heroic Age' of the 'Bahā'ī Era', stretching from 1844 to 1921.<sup>108</sup> The sense of an abrupt and significant break between Babism and Baha'ism, which had been emphasized by Bahā' Allāh and 'Abd al-Bahā', is replaced by a view of the Bābī era as the first of four historical periods (1844–1853; 1853–1892; 1892–1921; 1921–1944) that make up the first Bahā'ī century and that 'are to be regarded not only as the component, the inseparable parts of one stupendous whole, but as progressive stages in a single evolutionary process'.<sup>109</sup> None of the Bāb's specific laws or teachings is anywhere referred to: the implication—perpetuated, as we shall see, in later Bahā'ī literature—is that they were fundamentally the same as those of Bahā' Allāh. Instead of a sharp division between Bābī and Bahā'ī doctrine, Shoghi Effendi speaks of an 'evolution in the scope of its (i.e. the Bahā'ī faith's) teachings, at first designedly rigid, complex and severe, subsequently recast, expanded, and liberalized under the succeeding Dispensation, later expounded, reaffirmed and amplified by an appointed Interpreter, and lastly systematized and universally applied to both individuals and institutions'.<sup>110</sup>

Having carried the process of conflation to such lengths, Shoghi Effendi was clearly obliged to transform the early Bābīs into proto-Bahā'īs, going so far as to recruit them as martyrs, not for Babism, but for the Bahā'ī cause: 'The torrents of blood that poured out during those crowded and calamitous years may be regarded as constituting the fertile seeds of that World Order which a swiftly succeeding and still greater Revelation was to proclaim and establish'.<sup>111</sup> The same theme is pursued in numerous other writings: 'In the blood of the unnumbered martyrs of Persia lay the seed of the Divinely-appointed Administration which, though transplanted from its native soil, is now budding out. . . into a new order, destined to overshadow all mankind'.<sup>112</sup> Since the Bābī 'Dawn-Breakers' are, in a sense, now Bahā'ī martyrs, all references to the Bābī doctrine of *jihād* are carefully omitted in Shoghi Effendi's works, and it is instead stated positively that the followers of the Bāb resorted to arms only in self-defence and that they were victims of unmerited aggression on the part of church and state. 'Though the Faith had,' he writes, 'from its inception, disclaimed any intention of usurping the rights and prerogatives of the state; though its exponents and disciples had sedulously avoided any act that might arouse the slightest suspicion of a desire to wage a holy war, or to evince an aggressive attitude, yet its enemies, deliberately ignoring the numerous evidences of the marked restraint exercised by the followers of a persecuted religion, proved themselves capable of inflicting atrocities as barbarous as those which will ever remain associated with the bloody episodes of Māzin-darān, Nayrīz and Zanjān.'<sup>113</sup> It is worth noting that, in this passage, not only does Shoghi Effendi personify an abstraction ('the Faith'), but he conveys a sense of cohesiveness and agreement on matters of policy that was, in fact, quite alien to the Bābī experience. More seriously, perhaps, he makes it quite impossible for himself at a later stage in his history to deal adequately or convincingly with the actual reformation effected by Husayn 'Alī in his reaction against Bābī militancy.

Shoghi Effendi is consistently explicit in his portrayal of the Bābīs as averse to acts of violence. Thus, he writes that they were victims of 'a systematic campaign' waged by the Iranian civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and goes on to describe how 'in remote and isolated centers the scattered disciples of a persecuted community were pitilessly struck down by the sword of their foes, while in centers where large numbers had congregated measures were taken in self-defense, which, misconstrued by a cunning and deceitful adversary, served in their turn to inflame still further the hostility of the authorities, and multiply the outrages perpetrated by the oppressor.'<sup>114</sup> According to this account, the Nayrīz insurrection 'was preceded by a . . . categorical repudiation, on the part of the Bābīs, of any intention of interfering with the civil jurisdiction of the realm, or of undermining the legitimate authority of its sovereign',<sup>115</sup> while those involved in the struggle are described as 'a handful of men, innocent,



law-abiding, peace-loving, yet high-spirited and indomitable' who were 'surprised, challenged, encompassed and assaulted by the superior force of a cruel and crafty enemy, an innumerable host of able-bodied men who, though well-trained, adequately equipped and continually reinforced, were impotent to coerce into submission, or subdue, the spirit of their adversaries.'<sup>116</sup> In speaking of the struggle at Zanjān, Shoghi Effendi similarly refers to 'the reiterated exhortations addressed by Hujjat to the besieged to refrain from aggression and acts of violence; his affirmation, as he recalled the tragedy of Māzindarān, that their victory consisted solely in sacrificing their all on the altar of the Cause of the Sāhibu'z-Zamān (i.e. the Bāb as Qā'im), and his declaration of the unalterable intention of his companions to serve their sovereign loyally and to be the well-wishers of his people'.<sup>117</sup>

The events of Shaykh Tabarsī, Nayrīz, and Zanjān are no longer interpreted, as they were by Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī, as 'devastating, ruinous winds that cast down the saplings of trust and hope'. On the contrary, the Tabarsī struggle is now 'a stirring episode, so glorious for the Faith',<sup>118</sup> immortalized by 'stirring exploits',<sup>119</sup> the Bābīs there are called 'heroic defenders',<sup>120</sup> 'heroes',<sup>121</sup> and 'God-intoxicated students',<sup>122</sup> whose 'fortitude. . . intrepidity, . . . discipline and resourcefulness' are contrasted with 'the turpitude, the cowardice, the disorderliness and the inconstancy of their opponents'.<sup>123</sup> Likewise, the Bābī insurgents at Nayrīz display 'superhuman heroism, . . . fortitude, courage, and renunciation',<sup>124</sup> and reference is made to the 'heroic exertions'<sup>125</sup> of those in Zanjān, led by 'one of the ablest and most formidable champions of the Faith'.<sup>126</sup>

Thus transmogrified and denatured by Shoghi Effendi's splendidly cosmetic prose, the Bābī 'upheavals' could be fitted more easily into a broad pattern of proclamation and persecution, in which the ideal of martyrdom served to link militant Bābīs with quietist Bahā'īs as if they had shared the same ideals and died in approximately identical circumstances. Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī, as we have seen, had come to express reservations about martyrdom and even to forbid his followers to seek it, but, by the time of Shoghi Effendi, the risk of violent death, even in Iran, had diminished considerably, and there was, therefore, less reluctance to stress again the spiritual significance of the martyr's death. Western Bahā'īs, in particular, had never had cause to give their lives for their faith, nor were they likely to have to do so. For them, therefore, the events of the Bābī past could serve as an ideal to which they could aspire in a rather abstract but religiously valuable sense.

The extent to which conflation has blurred important distinctions between the Bābī and Bahā'ī martyr ideals is, perhaps, most evident in the confusion exhibited in Bahā'ī writing as to the total numbers of martyrs, whether for each group separately or for both as a whole. What appears at first to be a purely numerical problem reveals deeper anomalies that stem from the

conflation process itself. In order to make this point clear, it will be useful to try to calculate roughly how many Bābī and Bahā'ī martyrs there have actually been—something which has not, curiously enough, been attempted seriously so far.

As far as can be estimated, the number of Bābīs killed during the main upheavals between 1848 and 1850 was very small. According to Bahā'ī sources, between 540 and 600 Bābīs in all were involved in the Shaykh Tabarsī episode, of whom about 300 were actually put to death or died from other causes in the course of the siege.<sup>127</sup> Estimates of the numbers involved in Nayrīz in 1850 vary considerably,<sup>128</sup> but a figure of almost 1,000 would seem to be realistic,<sup>129</sup> of whom rather less than 500 were killed.<sup>130</sup> According to Zarandī, a total of about 350 Bābīs died during or after the later Nayrīz disturbances of 1853.<sup>131</sup> Larger numbers were involved in Zanjān from 1850 to 1851, of whom between 1000 and 1800 were put to death.<sup>132</sup> The Tehran executions of 1852, following the attempt on Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh's life, and which Shoghi Effendi variously describes as 'a blood-bath of unprecedented severity',<sup>133</sup> 'a holocaust reminiscent of the direst tribulations undergone by the persecuted followers of any previous religion',<sup>134</sup> and 'the darkest, bloodiest and most tragic episode of the Heroic Age of the Bahā'ī Dispensation',<sup>135</sup> actually claimed the lives of only some 37 individuals.<sup>136</sup> The total number of Bābīs executed in the Iranian capital between 1847 and 1863, amounted, according to a recent Bahā'ī account, to no more than 62 named individuals.<sup>137</sup> Even when we add to the above numbers the figures for Bābīs killed in isolated incidents during this period (which cannot amount to more than a few dozen all told), we are left with a total of not much more than 3000 martyrs at the outside or, if we take the lower figure of 1000 for Zanjān, something just over 2000 in all. Since there were no further incidents on the scale of Shaykh Tabarsī, Zanjān, or Nayrīz, it is difficult to compute the number of Bahā'īs killed in Iran up to the present day in a number of small-scale outbreaks of violence. It would not, however, be far from the truth to speak of something under 300 altogether.<sup>138</sup>

While accurate figures for individual incidents are available in Bahā'ī publications, the general tendency is to speak of a single, rounded figure (usually 20,000), which is sometimes applied overall and sometimes only to the Bābī period, with very little consistency between references. Probably the earliest 'official' figure is that of 'more than four thousand', which was, according to 'Abd al-Bahā', the number of Bābīs killed during the years 1266 and 1267 (1850–1851), following the death of the Bāb.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, the same authority appears to have started speaking of 20,000 Bābī martyrs in all as early as 1871,<sup>140</sup> and, in his later writings and talks, he fluctuates between 'thousands',<sup>141</sup> 'twenty thousand',<sup>142</sup> 'more than 20,000',<sup>143</sup> and 'twenty or thirty thousand'<sup>144</sup> in all; 'ten thousand, possibly twenty thousand'<sup>145</sup> or 'over twenty thousand'<sup>146</sup> Bābīs alone; and 'twenty thousand Bahā'īs' killed just in the reign of Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh (1848–1896).<sup>147</sup> There are examples of similar

confusion in other Bahā'ī references of this period. Thus, Amīn Farīd talked in 1911 of 'hundreds' of Bābī martyrs,<sup>148</sup> while Diyā Allāh Baghdādī spoke in 1918 of '24,000 or more' Bābī and Bahā'ī martyrs together.<sup>149</sup>

It might have been expected that Shoghi Effendi would attempt to end this confusion, but he himself appears to have remained as uncertain about the subject as his predecessor. At the beginning of *God Passes By*, he refers to 'above ten thousand' martyrs during the first nine years of the Bābī period,<sup>150</sup> and at the end of the same book he speaks of 'a world community (i.e. the Bahā'ī community of 1944). . . consecrated by the sacrifice of no less than twenty thousand martyrs'.<sup>151</sup> The implication would seem to be that there were ten thousand Bābī martyrs and a further ten thousand Bahā'īs, but Shoghi Effendi himself contradicts this when he writes of 'twenty thousand of his (i.e. the Bāb's) followers' being put to death,<sup>152</sup> or, in the reverse sense, when he translates 'Abd al-Bahā's reference to 'thousands' who had 'shed streams of their sacred blood in this path' by the phrase 'ten thousand souls'.<sup>153</sup>

Following Shoghi Effendi, however, a broad consensus of Bahā'ī writing has favoured the round figure of 20,000, although no-one seems to be sure as to what it refers. Thus, we read of around 20,000 martyrs 'during the lifetimes of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh',<sup>154</sup> or 'in the Heroic Age of His (i.e. Bahā' Allāh's) Cause',<sup>155</sup> or for the 'Bahā'ī Faith',<sup>156</sup> or even during the pogrom of 1852!<sup>157</sup> In some cases, writers give an impression of even more inflated figures, or refer to specific higher (but never lower) totals: thus, 'tens of thousands'<sup>158</sup> as a whole, or nearly 'thirty thousand' during the later part of Bahā' Allāh's lifetime.<sup>159</sup>

I have thought it worthwhile to look at these figures in some detail, less for their intrinsic interest than for what they reveal in concrete terms about Bahā'ī historical thinking (and, of course, about similar thinking in other religions). As I have indicated, it is extremely easy to arrive at what seems to be a fairly accurate picture, not only of the number of Bābī and Bahā'ī martyrs, but also of the circumstances in which most of them met their deaths. Yet there is a remarkable discrepancy between the figures given in the more detailed Bahā'ī historical accounts and the inflated numbers stated in general references. Since the matter is clearly one of importance to Bahā'īs, one is forced to ask why no attempt has been made to resolve this contradiction or even to bring it into the open. The answer may, of course, be simple carelessness or an absence of concern for historical accuracy, but I suspect that it has more to do with the increasing tendency, to which I have already alluded, to place first the Bābī, and then the Bahā'ī, martyrs within a remote, idealized realm in which they can serve as undifferentiated but crucial figures in a wider historical myth. This is not, of course, very unusual in religious history, but the Bahā'ī case is interesting because of the number of shifts of emphasis it involves and because of the relative closeness and accessibility of firm empirical data from which the popular version must diverge.

Within the modern period, it is of interest to consider one further aspect of the Bahā'ī attitude to martyrdom within the context of current theories about religious communities competing in a 'market situation' for converts and favourable publicity.<sup>160</sup> Beginning with the 1955 persecutions in Iran and resuming with the current pogrom under the Islamic Republic there, the Bahā'ī authorities have come to stress not only the spiritual significance and potentialities of martyrdom, but also its power to generate publicity for the Bahā'ī cause, particularly at the governmental and inter-governmental levels. Writing in August 1955 to the American Bahā'īs, Shoghi Effendi, having described the recent persecutions in Iran and the appeals made to the United Nations to intervene there, goes on to say that 'seldom, if at any time since its inception, has such a widespread publicity been accorded the infant Faith of God, now at long last emerging from an obscurity which has so long and so grievously oppressed it. . . . To the intensification of such a publicity. . . the American Bahā'ī Community. . . must fully and decisively contribute'.<sup>161</sup> In the following year, referring again to the Iranian persecution, he speaks of the provision of funds for the hire of 'an expert publicity agent, in order to reinforce the publicity already being received in the public press'.<sup>162</sup> The same approach can be observed some thirty years later. In a letter written in January 1982, the Bahā'ī 'Universal House of Justice' notes that 'current persecution has resulted in bringing the name and character of our beloved Faith to the attention of the world as never before in its history. . . . The world's leading newspapers, followed by the local press, have presented sympathetic accounts of the Faith to millions of readers, while television and radio stations are increasingly making the persecutions in Iran the subject of their programmes',<sup>163</sup> while some months later, the same body states that 'the effect of these developments (i.e. the persecutions in Iran) is to offer such golden opportunities for teaching and further proclamation as can only lead, if vigorously and enthusiastically seized, to large scale conversion and an increasing prestige'.<sup>164</sup> That such methods have not, to the knowledge of the present writer, evoked protests within the Bahā'ī community, is an important indication of how far the goals of publicity and conversion have now taken precedence over earlier ideals.

#### 'ORIENTALISM' AND THE CONFLATION OF BABISM AND BAHĀ'ISM

Between the early Bābī ideal of an immediate *jihād* led by the Bāb as representative of the Imām, and current, largely western, Bahā'ī images of a continuum of martyrdom and persecution, there is a complex process of transformation of consciousness, the details of which are not always easy to trace. The central figure in the later stages of this process is unquestionably Shoghi Effendi, whose reconstruction of Bābī and Bābī history successfully disengaged events, personalities, and doctrines from their original contexts to recast them

in what has since become their definitive dramatic form for members of the religion. It would take at least another article to examine in any detail the methods used by Shoghi Effendi to formulate his vision of Bahā'ī history as part of his general construction of Baha'ism as a doctrinally coherent, centrally organized, and geographically diffuse 'world religion'. But for our present purposes, it will be of most value to look briefly at what may prove to have been the most essential feature of his work: his ability to see and interpret the material with which he deals from what may best be described as an 'orientalist' viewpoint.

In recent years, considerable controversy has raged around the concept of 'orientalism', principally as the result of an important critique of the orientalist vision and method developed by Jacques Waardenburg and Edward Said.<sup>165</sup> According to this critique, orientalism is an adjunct of the imperialist venture, whereby the West creates an intellectual Orient for itself, as part of the process of physically and mentally controlling the real East, and as a means towards understanding itself better by creating a psychologically useful image of 'the Other'. Said maintains that 'empirical data about the Orient or about any of its parts count for very little; what matters and is decisive is what I have been calling the Orientalist vision, a vision by no means confined to the professional scholar, but rather the common possession of all who have thought about the Orient in the West. . . . The Orientalist attitude. . . shares with magic and with mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system, in which objects are what they are *because* they are what they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can either dislodge or alter'.<sup>166</sup> This critique, which is elaborate and, it must be said, frequently exaggerated, has been eagerly adopted by some contemporary Muslim polemicists as a reductionist device for refuting what they interpret as western criticisms of their faith and culture. In all of this, it is often forgotten that, although the primary impulse for the orientalist vision came from the West, an important part of the process of creating an Orient of the mind was the way in which many Muslim thinkers borrowed western lenses, as it were, through which to see and interpret their own society. It is, indeed, a point worth noting that the critique of orientalism has itself been developed on modern western lines and is not derived from any set of traditional or contemporary Islamic approaches.

Viewed from this angle, Shoghi Effendi's achievement begins to make a great deal of sense. He himself was ideally situated to act the part of an eastern orientalist, living as he did in a sort of intermediate realm between East and West. An Iranian by birth, he never set foot in his native country and lived for most of his life in Palestine, as the head of a small community composed almost equally of Persian and western Bahā'īs. Fluent in Persian and Arabic, he received a western education in Haifa, Beirut, and Oxford, where he acquired

a felicitous command of English coupled with a predilection for orotund prose.<sup>167</sup> Following his accession to the position of Guardian of the Bahā'ī faith in 1921, he 'refused to wear a turban and the long oriental robes the Master (i.e. <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Bahā', his grandfather) had always worn; he refused to go to the mosque on Friday, a usual practice of <sup>c</sup>Abdu'l-Bahā; he refused to spend hours with visiting Muslim priests, who were wont to pass the time of day with the Master. . . .'<sup>168</sup> In 1937, he married Mary Maxwell, the daughter of two well-known Canadian Bahā'īs, an act he regarded as symbolic of the 'union of East and West'.<sup>169</sup>

When we turn to his English writings, it is striking to observe how far Shoghi Effendi had disengaged himself from the Iranian and Islamic backgrounds of Babism and Baha'ism. He writes as if himself a Westerner, viewing the Orient from outside and using racial and religious stereotypes that owe a great deal to nineteenth-century European concepts of Iran and Islam. Thus, for example, he describes the Iranian people as 'the most decadent race in the civilized world, grossly ignorant, savage, cruel, steeped in prejudice, servile in their submission to an almost deified hierarchy, recalling in their abjectness the Israelites of Egypt in the days of Moses, in their fanaticism the Jews in the days of Jesus, and in their perversity the idolators of Arabia in the days of Muhammad'.<sup>170</sup> Elsewhere, he writes: 'All observers agree in representing Persia as a feeble and backward nation divided against itself by corrupt practices and ferocious bigotries. Inefficiency and wretchedness, the fruit of moral decay, filled the land. From the highest to the lowest there appeared neither the capacity to carry out methods of reform nor even the will seriously to institute them. National conceit preached a grandiose self-content. A pall of immobility lay over all things, and a general paralysis of mind made any development impossible'.<sup>171</sup>

The Iranian government is described as 'bolstered up by a flock of idle, parasitical princelings and governors, corrupt, incompetent, tenaciously holding to their ill-gotten privileges, and utterly subservient to a notoriously degraded clerical order',<sup>172</sup> while Sultān <sup>c</sup>Abd al-<sup>c</sup>Azīz and Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh are dismissed as 'two Oriental despots'.<sup>173</sup> Shoghi Effendi's portrayal of contemporary Islam is similarly stereotyped, reminiscent as it is of much late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century western writing devoted to the need for reform in the Islamic world. He speaks of 'arrogant, fanatical, perfidious, and retrograde clericals',<sup>174</sup> of their 'fanatical outcries, their clamorous invocations, their noisy demonstrations'<sup>175</sup> and their theological colleges 'with their medieval learning',<sup>176</sup> and of 'innumerable tomes of theological commentaries, super-commentaries, glosses and notes, unreadable, unprofitable, the product of misdirected ingenuity and toil, and pronounced by one of the most enlightened Islamic thinkers in modern times as works obscuring sound knowledge, breeding maggots, and fit for fire',<sup>177</sup> while he

writes more than once with undisguised approval of the decline in the authority and influence of Islam in the modern period.<sup>178</sup>

What distinguishes Shoghi Effendi's image of Iran and Islam from the condemnatory references of his predecessors, is that he draws so heavily, not on first-hand experience, but on secondary opinions drawn exclusively from the works of western writers. In his introduction to *The Dawn-Breakers*, for example, he draws his readers' attention to 'books of European travellers like Lord Curzon, Sir J. Malcolm, and others',<sup>179</sup> without even pointing out the gap of almost eighty years that separates Malcolm's *History of Persia* from Curzon's *Persia and the Persian Question*. He himself makes use of quotations from works such as these, not only in his footnotes to Nabil's Narrative, but in the text of *God Passes By*, where they are often not even attributed. What is, perhaps, more significant in the present context is that, when, in *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi quotes western sources with reference to Babism, he almost never has recourse to the works of the few scholars, such as Browne and Nicolas, who were relatively well informed on the subject, but makes use instead of comments by writers such as Curzon or Gobineau, or even Ernest Renan, Jules Bois, or numerous other literary figures, none of whom had any real knowledge of the subject or its background at all.<sup>180</sup> The passages quoted are invariably approbatory and are generally couched in enthusiastic and hyperbolic language. Most importantly, these quotations together provide a consensus that is wholly western in inspiration, through which Babism is reinterpreted and represented in a manner palatable to the modern Bahā'ī audience for whom Shoghi Effendi was writing.

The influence of Shoghi Effendi's orientalist vision of the Bābī-Bahā'ī movement on later Bahā'ī writing in the West has been profound and enduring. It is his conflation of the two sects into a unitary 'Bahā'ī Faith' that holds true for present-day adherents, rather than 'Abd al-Bahā's or Gulpāyghānī's emphasis on their mutual distinctiveness, and it is a second-hand western image of Babism that prevails, rather than one grounded in a realistic presentation of contemporary Iranian and Shī'ī history. Since the Bābī scriptures—with the exception of a few texts noted below—have never been made available to Bahā'īs, even in Iran, and since knowledge of Bābī history tends to be limited to the contents of Nabil's Narrative, *God Passes By*, and various derivative works, references to the 'teachings of the Bāb' in Bahā'ī literature have been more notable for their vague idealism than for their correspondence to textual and historical realities. It is not insignificant that George Towshend, an influential contemporary of Shoghi Effendi's, adopts his technique of using a poorly-informed secondary source as the basis for his version of Bābī doctrine: 'The teaching (of the Bāb) was in itself such as no lover of God or of mankind could object to. 'Babism,' wrote Lord Curzon in his *Persia and the Persian Question* (pp. 501–2), 'may be defined as a creed of charity and almost of

common humanity. Brotherly love, kindness to children, courtesy combined with dignity, sociability, hospitality, freedom from bigotry, friendliness even to Christians, are included in its tenets.' . . . The teaching of the Bāb, like his character, was beautiful and attractive.'<sup>181</sup> Curzon, writing in 1892, was obviously referring here to the tenets of Baha'ism, which he, like many other European writers of the period, continued to refer to as 'Babism'.

Misrepresentations of this kind can, of course, for the most part be laid at the door of simple ignorance of the facts combined with a certain degree of wishful thinking. But there is evidence that, apart from Shoghi Effendi's own efforts in this direction, some conscious manipulation of the data has occurred. In his introduction to his *Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions*, Moojan Momen writes that 'it would be interesting to be able to come to an understanding of the Bāb's attitude towards the upheavals caused by his followers. It would seem that the Bāb neither strongly advocated nor discouraged the warlike activities of his supporters', and continues in a footnote that 'a passing reference to *jihād* (religious warfare) in the sixth chapter of the seventh *vāhid* of the Persian *Bayān* indicates that the Bāb was not opposed to this concept, although it was later forbidden by Bahā'u'llāh'.<sup>182</sup> From other references, however, it is clear that Momen is familiar with the Bāb's earlier *Qayyūm al-asmā'*, which contains numerous references to *jihād*,<sup>183</sup> and, in view of his extensive scholarly work in this area, it must be presumed that he is also aware of the general contents of the *Bayān* and other late works of the Bāb, in which a severe attitude towards unbelievers is unequivocally expressed. Again, he writes that 'the present incomplete state of knowledge concerning the teachings of the Bāb precludes any attempt to give an outline of his doctrines beyond what is given below',<sup>184</sup> and some pages later he summarizes what he calls 'the teachings given by the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh, and expounded by 'Abdu'l-Bahā and Shoghi Effendi'.<sup>185</sup> These latter, however, are all Bahā'ī teachings, only a few of which are also taught by the Bāb. None of the distinctive teachings of the Bāb mentioned by 'Abd al-Bahā' are even hinted at. In view of the accessibility of original texts of the major writings of the Bāb, one has to ask why Momen refers to 'the present incomplete state of knowledge' concerning them. It cannot be denied that much work remains to be done in this area, but it is far from true to suggest that no general account can be given of Bābī doctrine. This misrepresentation of the true facts is doubly misleading in that, elsewhere in his book Momen is at pains to 'correct' what he regards as the errors of early western writers on the subject.

It is of even greater interest to examine a publication entitled *Selections from the Writings of the Bāb*, translated by Habib Taherzadeh and published under the auspices of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa in 1976.<sup>186</sup> Significantly referred to in the preface as 'a precious addition to the volume of Bahā'ī literature in the English language',<sup>187</sup> this compilation contains excerpts from



the *Qayyūm al-asmā'*, *Bayān-i Fārsī*, *Dalā'il-i sab'a*, *Kitāb al-asmā'*, and other short works of the Bāb. While several sections are of undoubted interest, it is extraordinary to observe that not a single passage has been translated that deals with any of what had earlier been regarded by Bahā'īs as the most distinctive laws and teachings of Babism. Indeed, to anyone who has read the Bāb's works at any length, the compilation seems remarkably unrepresentative, composed as it is of brief passages of a general ethical and theological nature, and leaving out some of the most exciting and significant sections of the writings used. The sense of conflation is reinforced by the use of an English style closely modelled on that of Shoghi Effendi in his translations of the works of Bahā' Allāh.

Over seventy years ago, E.G. Browne wrote that 'the more the Bahā'ī doctrine spreads, especially outside Persia, and most of all in Europe and America, the more the true history and nature of the original Bābī movement is obscured and distorted'.<sup>188</sup> As time passes and the Bahā'ī version of Babism is presented with increasing confidence in a growing body of literature, while historical image and self image become more and more mutually reinforcing, it would seem that Browne's pessimism was not misplaced. At the same time, the undoubted concern of modern Bahā'īs with the 'historicity' of their faith and the eagerness they express for more detailed information regarding its origins, must lead, in the long run, to some sort of confrontation with precisely the kind of uncomfortable data that efforts have previously been made to suppress. If that should happen, it may be expected that we will witness yet another twist in the complex spiral whereby Baha'ism has sought to come to terms with its own immediate antecedents and the problems created by the need to conflate early Babism with itself.

## NOTES

- 1 Since that article appeared, the following relevant studies have been written or published: Mangol Bayat *Mysticism and Dissent: Socioreligious Thought in Qajar Iran* (Syracuse University Press, 1982)—see ch. 4, 'The Politicization of Dissent in Shia Thought: Babism'; Abbas Amanat 'The Early Years of the Babi Movement: Background and Development', Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1981; Peter Smith 'Millennialism in the Babi and Baha'i Religions', in Roy Wallis (ed.) *Millennialism and Charisma* (Queen's University, Belfast, 1982), pp. 231–83; Moojan Momen 'The Trial of Mullā 'Alī Bastāmī: A Combined Sunni-Shī'ī Fatwā against the Bāb', *Iran XX* (1982): 113–43; Denis MacEoin 'Early Shaykhī Reactions to the Bāb and his Claims', in M. Momen (ed.) *Studies in Bābī and Bahā'ī History* vol. 1 (Los Angeles, 1983).
- 2 On the Bāb, Bushrū'ī, and Bārfurūshī, see articles under these headings by D. MacEoin in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (forthcoming).
- 3 On events connected with this incident, see Mullā Muhammad Nabil Zarandī *The Dawn-Breakers: Nabīl's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahā'ī Revelation* ed. and trans. by Shoghi Effendi (Wilmette, 1932), chapter XXVI; E.G. Browne 'The Attempt on the Shāh's Life and the Massacre of Teherān' in idem ed. and trans. *A Traveller's*

- Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Bāb* (by <sup>c</sup>Abbās Effendi <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Bahā'), 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1891), vol. 2, pp. 323–34; H.M. Balyuzi *Bahā'u'llāh, the King of Glory* (Oxford, 1980), chs. 15, 17; M. Momen *The Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions, 1844–1944* (Oxford, 1981), ch. 7; Mīrzā Muhammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk Sipihr *Nāsikh al-tawārikh: salātin-i Qājār* 4 vols. in 2 (Tehran, 1344 Sh./1965), vol. 4, pp. 33–42.
- 4 See Hājī Mīrzā Jānī Kāshānī *Kitāb-i Nuqtatu'l-Kāf* ed. E.G. Browne (Leyden and London, 1910), pp. 252–61; E.G. Browne trans. and ed. *The New History of Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammed the Bāb* by Mīrzā Husayn Hamadānī (Cambridge, 1893), pp. 384–95; Mīrzā Yahyā Subh-i Azal *Mustayqiz* ([Tehran], n.d.), p. 28; (Sayyid Ahmad Rūhī Kirmānī and Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī) *Hasht Bihisht* ([Tehran], n.d.), pp. 302–303.
- 5 On whom see E.G. Browne *Traveller's Narrative*, vol. 2, pp. xv–xxvi, 349–89; idem *New History*, pp. xviii–xxiv, 374–82; Kāshānī *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, pp. 238–44; Mahdī Bāmdād *Tārīkh-i rijāl-i Irān*, 6 vols. (Tehran, 1347–1351 Sh./1968–1973), vol. 4, pp. 436–37.
- 6 See D. MacEoin 'Azalī Babism' in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (forthcoming).
- 7 This is apparent from his attitude towards the 1852 plot on Nāsir al-Dīn's life (see Balyuzi *Bahā'u'llāh*, p. 90), his own attempt to organize an assassination of the same ruler (Shoghi Effendi *God Passes By* [Wilmette, 1944], p. 124), and the hopes of some of his associates regarding the future 'Bābī king' referred to in the Persian *Bayān* (Balyuzi *Bahā'u'llāh*, p. 158).
- 8 On the role of the Azalīs in the constitutional movement, see D. MacEoin 'Religious Heterodoxy in Nineteenth-Century Iranian Politics: Some Aspects of the Role of Shaykhism, Babism, and Baha'ism', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 15 : 3 (1983); Bayat *Mysticism and Dissent*, pp. 180–81, 182–83.
- 9 The shift from religious to secular ideals was a common feature of late nineteenth-century Iranian thought (see *ibid.*, ch. 5).
- 10 The only full-length biographies of Mīrzā Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī to date are two emphatically hagiographical works: M.A. Faydī *Hayāt-i Hadrat-i Bahā' Allāh* (Tehran, 1969) and the more recent study by Balyuzi referred to above (*Bahā'u'llāh*). Details may also be found in Shoghi Effendi *God Passes By*, pp. 89–233; Mīrzā Muhammad Jawād Qazvīnī 'An Epitome of Bābī and Bahā'ī History to A.D. 1898' in E.G. Browne ed. *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion* (Cambridge, 1918), pp. 3–64; Mīrzā Husayn Avāra *Al-kawākib al-durriyya fī ta'rikh zuhūr al-bābiyya wa 'l-bahā'iyya* 2 vols. (Cairo, 1342/1923), vol. 2; Ustād Muhammad <sup>c</sup>Alī Salmānī *My Memories of Bahā'u'llāh* ed. and trans. Marzieh Gail (Los Angeles, 1982)—on the elimination of 'objectionable' passages from this edition by the Bahā'ī 'Universal House of Justice' and their prohibition of the publication of the Persian text, see letters in *Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin* 1 : 4 (Newcastle, March 1983), pp. 88–90; Momen *Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions* pp. 177–240; A. Bausani 'Bahā' Allāh' in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd. ed. More critical accounts appear in W.M. Miller *The Bahā'ī Faith: Its History and Teachings* (South Pasadena, Calif., 1974), pp. 94–137; H. Roemer *Die Bābī-Behā'ī: Die jüngste mohammedanische Sekte* (Potsdam, 1912), pp. 73–144. Two important Azalī accounts of his rise to influence in Baghdad and later are Kirmānī and Kirmānī *Hasht Bihisht*, pp. 301–304; (<sup>c</sup>Izziyya Khānum) *Tanbīh al-nā'imīn* ([Tehran], n.d.).
- 11 Following the revival of the Ni<sup>c</sup>mat Allāhī order in the late eighteenth century, many members of the Iranian ruling class became devotees: see W.R. Royce 'Mīr Ma<sup>c</sup>sūm <sup>c</sup>Alī Shāh and the Ni<sup>c</sup>mat Allāhī Revival 1776–77 to 1796–97', Ph.D.

- dissertation, Princeton University, 1979 (U.M. 7920434), p. 173. There is no direct evidence of Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī's involvement with the Ni<sup>c</sup>mat Allāhī order as such, but later evidence of his connection with Sufism in some form is abundant (cf. J.R. Cole 'Babism and Naqshbandī Sufism in Iraq 1854–1856: a qaṣīdah by Mirzā Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī Bahā'u'llāh', unpublished paper presented at Baha'i Studies Seminar, Lancaster University, 1981, especially p. 27). On the Sufism and popular Shi'ism of this period, see Amanat 'Early Years', pp. 56–99.
- 12 Bahā' Allāh's main works from the Baghdad period include the *Kitāb-i iqān* (Cairo, 1933)—trans. Ali Kuli Khan as *The Book of Assurance (the Book of Ighan)* (New York, n.d.) and Shoghi Effendi as *The Kitāb-i Iqan, the Book of Certitude* (Wilmette, Ill., 1931); *Haft wādī* and *Chahār wādī*, both in Bahā' Allāh *Āthār-i qalam-i a' lā* vol. 3 (Tehran, 129 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1973–74), pp. 92–137, 140–57—trans. <sup>c</sup>Alī Qulī Khān and Marzieh Gail as *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys* (Wilmette, 1945); *Jawāhir al-asrār* in *Āthār*, vol. 3, pp. 4–88; *Qasīda 'izz warqā' iyya* in *ibid*, pp. 196–215 and in <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Hamīd Ishrāq Khāvarī ed. *Mā'ida-yi āsmānī*, 9 vols. (Tehran, 128–129 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1972–74), vol. 4, pp. 197–209; and *Kalimāt-i maknūna* (Tehran, n.d.)—trans. Shoghi Effendi as *The Hidden Words of Bahā'u'llāh* (Wilmette, 1925; rev. ed. 1932). For details of the numerous other short works of this period, see <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Hamīd Ishrāq Khāvarī *Ganj-i shāyagān* (Tehran, 123 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1967–68), pp. 7–68 and Adib Taherzadeh *The Revelation of Bahā'u'llāh* vol. 1 (Oxford, 1974). See also <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Hamīd Ishrāq Khāvarī *Qāmūs-i Iqān* 4 vols. (Tehran, 126–127 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1970–72), a commentary on the *Kitāb-i iqān*.
- 13 Balyuzi *Bahā'u'llāh*, pp. 115–22. Bahā' Allāh himself writes with reference to his absence in Sulaymāniyya: 'I swear by God that in my departure there was no thought of return and in my journeying no hope of reunion' (*Kitāb-i iqān*, p. 194; cf. Shoghi Effendi *Book of Certitude*, p. 160). According to Zarandī, he stated to one of his followers that 'but for my recognition of the fact that the blessed Cause of the Primal Point [i.e. the Bāb] was on the verge of being obliterated, and all the sacred blood poured out in the path of God would have been shed in vain, I would in no wise have consented to return to the people of the Bayān, and would have abandoned them to the worship of the idols their imaginations had fashioned' (cited Shoghi Effendi *God Passes By*, p. 126).
- 14 See Browne *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, pp. xxix–xxx; Sayyid <sup>c</sup>Alī Muhammad Shīrāzī, the Bāb *Bayān-i Fārsī* ([Tehran], n.d.) 2 : 16, pp. 61, 62; *ibid* 2 : 17, p. 71; Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir Najafī *Bahā'iyyān* (Tehran, 1399/1979), pp. 287–306.
- 15 See, for example, Bahā' Allāh *Lawh-i mubārak khitāb bi-Shaykh Muhammad Mujtahid Isfahānī* (Cairo, 1920; reprinted Tehran, 1962), pp. 112–14—trans. Shoghi Effendi as *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (Wilmette, 1941), pp. 151–54. As an example of later Bahā'ī apologetic on this subject, see Taherzadeh *Revelation*, vol. 1, pp. 294–314.
- 16 The precise nature of Bahā' Allāh's claims is difficult to establish. The official modern Bahā'ī doctrine rejects any notion of incarnationism and stresses instead his status as a locus of divine manifestation (*mazhar ilāhī*), comparable to a mirror with respect to the sun (see Shoghi Effendi *The World Order of Bahā'u'llāh* rev. ed. [Wilmette, 1969], pp. 112–114). Nevertheless, it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that he himself made much more radical claims than this in parts of his later writings. The following statements are, I think, explicit enough to serve as examples: 'he who speaks in the most great prison (i.e. Acre) is the Creator of all things and the one who brought all names into being' (letter in Bahā' Allāh *Āthār-i qalam-i a' lā* vol. 2 [Tehran, n.d., being a repaginated reprint of a collection of writings originally preceded by the *Kitāb al-aqdas*, first printed Bombay, 1314/1896], p. 177); 'verily, I

- am God' (letter in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā'ida*, vol. 7, p. 208); 'the essence of the pre-existent (*dhāt al-ḡidam*) has appeared' (letter to Hājī Muhammad Ibrāhīm Khalīl Qazvīnī in *ibid*, vol. 8, p. 113); 'he has been born who begets not nor is begotten' ('Lawh-i milād-i ism-i a<sup>c</sup>zam' in *ibid*, vol. 4, p. 344, referring to Qur'an *sūra* 112); 'the educator of all beings and their Creator has appeared in the garment of humanity, but you were not pleased with that until he was imprisoned in this prison' ('Sūrat al-hajj' in Bahā' Allāh *Āthār-i qalam-i a<sup>c</sup>lā*, vol. 4 [Tehran, 133 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1976-77], p. 203). See also *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā'ida*, vol. 8, pp. 123, 155, 162; 'Lawh-i Jamāl' in Bahā' Allāh *Alwāh-i Hadrat-i Bahā' Allāh. . . shāmil-i. . . Iqtidārāt* ([Bombay], 1893; reprinted Tehran, n.d.; hereinafter referred to as *Iqtidārāt*), p. 219; 'Sūrat al-ashāb' in *Āthār*, vol. 4, pp. 6, 7; letter in *ibid*, vol. 2, p. 194; letter in Bahā' Allāh *Alwāh-i mubāraka-yi Hadrat-i Bahā' Allāh. . . shāmil-i Ishrāqāt* (Tehran, n.d.; hereinafter referred to as *Ishrāqāt*), p. 195. Note also headings of letters in Bahā' Allāh *Āthār-i qalam-i a<sup>c</sup>lā* vol. 5 (Tehran, 131 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1975-76), p. 181; *ibid*, vol. 6 (Tehran, 132 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1976-77), pp. 256-70. An important discussion with textual references, which argues against a claim to divinity, is J.R. Richards *The Religion of the Bahā'īs* (London, 1932), ch. VII.
- 17 This point is discussed at length by Peter Berger in 'Motif messianique et processus social dans le Bahanisme', *Archives de Sociologie des Religions*, 4 (1957): 93-107. For wider discussions, see Peter Smith 'Motif research: Peter Berger and the Bahā'ī faith', *Religion* 8 : 2 (1978), pp. 210-234; *idem* 'Bābī and Bahā'ī Millenarianism'.
  - 18 For examples, see Guenter Lewy *Religion and Revolution* (New York, 1974), pp. 264-74.
  - 19 This theme is pursued in many of his writings. For examples, see Shoghi Effendi *The Advent of Divine Justice* rev. ed. (Wilmette, 1963), pp. 64-68; Bahā' Allāh *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahā'u'llāh* trans. Shoghi Effendi (London, 1949), pp. 5-17, 27-46.
  - 20 For examples, see Mirzā Asad Allāh Fādil Māzandarānī (ed.) *Amr wa Khalq* vol. 4 (Tehran, 1975), pp. 417-60; J.E. Esslemont *Bahā'u'llah and the New Era* (London, 1923), pp. 202-08.
  - 21 See Shoghi Effendi *Advent*, pp. 68-69; *idem*, *The Promised Day is Come* (Wilmette, 1961), pp. 1-3; Bahā' Allāh *Gleanings*, pp. 39-40, 118, 213, 215-16, 341-42.
  - 22 See Shoghi Effendi *World Order*, pp. 40-45, 163-69, 202-06; *idem*, *Promised Day*, pp. 4, 122, 127-29; Bahā' Allāh and 'Abd al-Bahā' in Māzandarānī *Amr wa khalq*, vol. 4, pp. 460-68.
  - 23 Most notable are the risings of al-Hasayn ibn 'Alī in 60/680, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr from 61/680 to 64/684, al-Mukhtār ibn Abī 'Ubayda al-Thaqafī (on behalf of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya) from 66/686 to 67/687, Zayd ibn Zayn al-'Ābidīn in 122/740, his son Yahyā from 122/740 to 125/743, and Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya with his brother Ibrāhīm in 145/762 and 146/763. For details, see S.H.M. Jafri *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (London and New York, 1979), pp. 174-221, 198-99, 228-29, 265-67, 275-76; J. Wellhausen *Die religiös-politischen Oppositionsparteien im alten Islam* (Berlin, 1901).
  - 24 See D.M. MacEoin 'Aspects of Militancy and Quietism in Imāmī Sh<sup>c</sup>ism', paper delivered to the annual conference of the British Society for Middle East Studies, Lancaster, 1982.
  - 25 On relations between Muhammad and the Jewish clans of Medina in general, see W.M. Watt *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford, 1956), chapter VI, and on the execution of the Banū Qurayza, see *ibid*, pp. 214-16.
  - 26 Passage in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā'ida*, vol. 7, p. 136; cf. Bahā' Allāh *Ishrāqāt*, p.34
  - 27 Zarandī writes that he visited the fort shortly after Bushrū'ī's arrival there in

- October 1848, approved of the arrangements that had been made, returned to his home in Tehran, and tried without success to go back to Shaykh Tabarsī in December, only to be arrested en route at Āmul (*Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 347–49, 368–76). ‘Abd al-Bahā’, however, writes only of the second expedition and the arrest at Āmul, and indicates that this took place in September 1848, thereby seeming to rule out an earlier visit (letter in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā’ida*, vol. 5, pp. 169–171).
- 28 Letter to Zayn al-Muqarrribīn in *ibid*, vol. 8, p. 46.
  - 29 Letter in *Ishrāqāt*, pp. 44–45.
  - 30 Letter in Gobineau Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg: text and translation by D. MacEoin in *Bahā’ī Studies Bulletin* 1: 4 (Newcastle, March, 1983), pp. 46, 50.
  - 31 For examples, see Balyuzi *Bahā’u’llāh*, pp. 125, 128, 135–36; Shoghi Effendi *God Passes By*, p. 125.
  - 32 *Lawh-i. . . Shaykh Muhammad Taqī*, p. 16; trans. Shoghi Effendi *Son of the Wolf*, p. 21.
  - 33 On these connections, see Balyuzi *Bahā’u’llāh*, ch. 2.
  - 34 On these and related terms, see Bernard Lewis ‘Islamic Concepts of Revolution’ in P.J. Vatikiotis (ed.) *Revolution in the Middle East* (London, 1972), pp. 30–40; L. Gardet ‘Fitna’ in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* 2nd. ed.; A.J. Wensinck *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition* reprinted (Leyden, 1971), under ‘Fitna’; Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muhammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī *Al-sahīh* (Istanbul, 1315/1897–98; reprinted 1401/1981), vol. 8, ‘Kitāb-al fitan’, pp. 86–104.
  - 35 Letter to Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh (‘Lawh-i Sultān’) in *Kitāb-i mubīn* ([Bombay], 1308/1890–91), p. 98.
  - 36 *Ibid*, p. 102.
  - 37 ‘Lawh-i sirāj’ in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā’ida*, vol. 7, p. 80.
  - 38 ‘Sūrat al-bayān’ in *Āthār*, vol. 4, p. 119.
  - 39 On this topic generally, see MacEoin ‘Religious Heterodoxy in Nineteenth-Century Iranian Politics’. On Bahā’ Allāh’s view of monarchy, see Shoghi Effendi *Promised Day*, pp. 73–76.
  - 40 ‘Lawh-i Dhabih’ in *Iqtidārāt*, p. 324; cf. the rather free translation of Shoghi Effendi in *Gleanings*, p. 240.
  - 41 *Lawh-i. . . Shaykh Muhammad Taqī*, p. 66; trans. Shoghi Effendi *Son of the Wolf*, p. 89.
  - 42 MacEoin ‘Bābī Concept of Holy War’, p. 116.
  - 43 *Ibid*, p. 117.
  - 44 *Kitāb-i mubīn*, p. 101.
  - 45 Letter to Hājī Aqā Bābā in *Āthār*, vol. 5, p. 131.
  - 46 See, for example, ‘Al-lawh al-aqdas’ in *Kitāb-i mubīn*, p. 172 (trans. Habib Taherzadeh *Tablets of Bahā’u’llāh revealed after the Kitāb-i-Aqdas* (Haifa, 1978), p. 17); ‘Lawh al-burhān’ in Bahā’ Allāh *Majmū‘a-yi alwāh-i mubāraka* (Cairo, 1920), pp. 57–59 (trans. Taherzadeh *Tablets*, pp. 209–10—using existing translation by Shoghi Effendi); *Lawh-i. . . Shaykh Muhammad Taqī*, pp. 52–57 (trans. Shoghi Effendi *Son of the Wolf*, pp. 72–77); *Īqān*, pp. 174–77, 182–84 (trans. Shoghi Effendi *Book of Certitude*, pp. 143–46, 150–51).
  - 47 *Kalimāt-i mahnūna*, Arabic section, no. 45, p. 14 (trans. Shoghi Effendi *Hidden Words*, p. 14).
  - 48 *Kalimāt-i mahnūna*, Arabic section, no. 47, pp. 14–15 (trans. Shoghi Effendi *Hidden Words*, pp. 14–15). See also nos. 46; 48; 49; 50; 51; 71, pp. 14, 15–16, 23 (trans. pp. 14–15, 21).
  - 49 Letter in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā’ida*, vol. 4, p. 348.
  - 50 On this incident, see Balyuzi *Bahā’u’llāh*, ch. 33.

- 51 See letter in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā'ida*, vol. 1, p. 69; letter in *ibid*, vol. 8, p. 98.
- 52 Letter to Āqā Mīrzā Āqā Afnān, in *ibid*, vol. 8, p. 129.
- 53 See Mīrzā Asad Allāh Fādil Māzandarānī *Asrār al-āthār*, vol. 2 (Tehran, 124 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1968–69), pp. 169–172: ‘in the writings of Bahā’ Allāh, instead of *taqīyya*, *hikma* . . . is repeatedly mentioned and stressed’. Bahā’ Allāh’s attitude is contradicted by the later Bahā’ī view, developed by Shoghi Effendi, that *taqīyya* is prohibited (see <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Hamid Ishrāq Khāvarī ed. *Ganjīna-yi hudūd wa ahkām* 3rd. ed. [Tehran, 128 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1972–73], pp. 456–59). Modern Bahā’ī practice in Communist and Islamic countries, however, generally corresponds to the earlier ruling. A critical account of the Bahā’ī use of *taqīyya* is given by S.G. Wilson in *Bahā'ism and its Claims* (New York, 1915), pp. 197–205.
- 54 Bahā’ Allāh, quoted Māzandarānī *Asrār*, vol. 2, p. 171.
- 55 Letter to Jamāl-i Burūjirdī in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā'ida*, vol. 4, p. 213.
- 56 Letter to Ibn Asdaq in *ibid*, pp. 123–24.
- 57 *Ibid*, p. 124.
- 58 Letters to Ibn Asdaq in *ibid*, p. 213.
- 59 Letter in *ibid*, p. 124.
- 60 Letter in *ibid*, vol. 1, p. 69.
- 61 This would seem to be the essential thrust of his condemnation of the use of the sword towards the end of the Baghdad period: see Taherzadeh *The Revelation of Bahā'u'llāh*, vol. 1, p. 278.
- 62 Although it is difficult to trace the origins of this Christian influence, it can be seen very clearly in the copious use of Biblical quotations in writings of the Baghdad period, such as the *Jawāhir al-asrār* (see note 12) and *Kitāb-i iqān*. There is evidence of frequent contact between the Bābī exile community and Christian missionaries in Eđirne and Palestine (see Momen *Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions*, pp. 187–97, 205–07, 209–19). Husayn <sup>c</sup>Alī’s son, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Bahā’, is described by one missionary as having ‘a minute and accurate knowledge of the Old and New Testaments’ (*ibid*, p. 211). Postgraduate research into Christian influence on Baha’ism is currently being carried out at Newcastle University.
- 63 On these and related topics, see Bahā’ Allāh ‘Lawh-i bishārāt’ in *Majmū'a*, pp. 116–124 (trans. Taherzadeh *Tablets*, pp. 21–29); *idem* ‘Lawh-i tarāzāt’ in *Ishrāqāt*, pp. 147–60 (trans. Taherzadeh *Tablets*, pp. 33–44); *idem* ‘Lawh-i tajalliyāt’ in *Ishrāqāt*, pp. 198–205 (trans. Taherzadeh *Tablets*, pp. 47–54); *idem* *Lawh-i Maqsūd* (Cairo, 1339/1920; trans. Taherzadeh *Tablets*, pp. 159–78). The combination of western secular ideas with Islamic perspectives and language in the thought of late nineteenth-century Iranian reformers is commented on by Bayat in *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 133. The most basic problem in the Bāhā’ī case is the failure to realize the possible tensions between western liberalism on the one hand and the insistence on the absolute, divine authority of the prophet and his successors on the other. Smith has noted the effects of this tension among early western Bahā’īs (see ‘American Bahā’ī Community’, pp. 179–94). The problem remains critical, if often unsuspected, in the modern western Bahā’ī community.
- 64 ‘Lawh-i bishārāt’ in *Majmū'a*, pp. 116–17 (cf. trans. by Taherzadeh *Tablets*, p. 21). See also ‘Lawh-i sirāj’ in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā'ida*, vol. 7, p. 79; ‘. . . this servant has abrogated the decree of killing, which had become well known among this sect’; letter to Mīrzā <sup>c</sup>Alī Ashraf Lāhijānī <sup>c</sup>Andalīb in *Iqtidarāt*, p. 28; ‘this revelation is that of the most great mercy and the mightiest grace, in that the decree of *jihād* has been wiped out from the book and forbidden, and association with all religions in a spirit of love and fellowship has been made obligatory’; ‘Sūrat al-haykal’ in *Kitāb-i*

- mubīn*, p. 25; *Ishrāqāt*, pp. 177; *Āthār*, vol. 2, pp. 15, 109; *ibid*, vol. 4, p. 218.
- 65 See 'Lawh-i bishārāt' in *Majmū'a*, pp. 123–24 (trans. Taherzadeh *Tablets*, p. 28); letter in Mīrzā Asad Allāh Fādil Māzandarānī (ed.) *Amr wa khalq*, vol. 3 (Tehran, 128 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1971–72), p. 221; 'Lawh-i dunyā' in *Majmū'a*, pp. 294–95 (trans. Taherzadeh *Tablets*, p. 91).
- 66 Letter in *Ishrāqāt*, p. 12; cf. *ibid*, pp. 34, 44. At the same time, he expressed reservations about continuing tendencies towards *fasād* within the Bahā'ī community: 'I am astonished that some of the friends have regarded and still regard *fasād* as probity, despite the fact that, day and night, they have been forbidden (to engage in) *fasād*, disputation, or contention' (letter to Samandar in *Majmū'a yi alwāh-i mubāraka-yi Hadrat-i Bahā' Allāh* [Tehran, 132 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1976–77, offset from ms. in hand of 'Alī Ashraf Lāhijānī], p. 73).
- 67 'Lawh-i dunyā' in *Majmū'a*, p. 287.
- 68 *Lawh-i*. . . *Shaykh Muhammad Taqī*, p. 18 (see also trans. by Shoghi Effendi, *Son of the Wolf*, p. 24); c.f. 'Sūrat al-ashāb' in *Āthār*, vol. 4, p. 21; letter in *ibid*, vol. 5, p. 9. On the use of 'wisdom', see *idem* 'Lawh-i Sultān' in *Kitāb-i mubīn*, pp. 99–101 (quoting a passage from an unspecified earlier text); letter in *ibid*, p. 298; letter in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā'ida*, vol. 4, pp. 351–53; letter to 'Alī Ashraf Lāhijānī in *Āthār*, vol. 2, p. 26.
- 69 On whom see A. Bausani and D. MacEoin 'Abd al-Bahā' in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.
- 70 *Makātīb 'Abd al-Bahā'* vol. 2 (Cairo, 1330/1912), p. 206. The use of military metaphors such as 'crusade', 'campaign', 'army', 'vanguard', 'warriors', and 'cohorts' is common in the writing of 'Abd al-Bahā' and his successor, Shoghi Effendi. For examples, see 'Abd al-Bahā', *Makātīb 'Abd al-Bahā'*, vol. 1, (Cairo, 1328/1918; reprinted with index, Tehran, n.d.), pp. 263; *ibid*, vol. 2, pp. 243, 262; *idem*, *Tablets of the Divine Plan* (Wilmette, 1959), pp. 11, 17, 37; *idem*, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahā* trans. Marzieh Gail (Haifa, 1978), pp. 260, 264; Shoghi Effendi *Messages to the Bahā'ī World 1950-1957* (Wilmette, 1958), pp. 37–38, 44, 101–102; *idem*, *Citadel of Faith: Messages to America, 1947-1957* (Wilmette, 1965), pp. 117, 120, 149.
- 71 Passage in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Ganjīna*, pp. 271–72.
- 72 Letter in *Makātīb*, vol. 2, p. 266.
- 73 No such translation is known to have existed, unless the reference is to Nicolas' French version. 'Abd al-Bahā' at the same time forbade the Iranian Bahā'īs to publish the text of the *Bayān* until the laws of the *Aqdas* had been promulgated, in case it caused confusion (passage in *Ishrāq Khāvarī Mā'ida*, vol. 2, pp. 16–17). As will be noted later, however, the subsequent conflation of Babism with Baha'ism has meant that the integral text of the *Bayān* is likely to cause embarrassment to modern Bahā'īs, with the result that they have instead published short selected passages, from which ritual and legislative matter has been excluded.
- 74 *Lawh-i Lāha* (n.p. [Tehran?], pp. 39–41; trans. as 'Tablet to the Hague' in Bahā' Allāh and 'Abd al-Bahā' *Bahā'ī Revelation* rev. ed. (London, 1970), p. 217 (also published separately, London, n.d., p. 10).
- 75 Letter in *Makātīb*, vol. 2, p. 228 (also printed in the Persian section of *Star of the West* 2 : 10 [September, 1911], pp. 3–4).
- 76 All these are published in *Āthār*, vol. 3: see note 12.
- 77 See note 12. An attractive illuminated edition of this work was published several years ago in Frankfurt, Germany (n.d.).
- 78 See note 12.
- 79 Mīrzā Abu 'l-Fadl Gulpāygānī and Sayyid Mahdī Gulpāygānī *Kashf al-ghitā' 'an*

*hiyal al-a<sup>c</sup> dā'* (Ashkhabad, n.d.), p. 166.

- 80 *The Baha'i Proofs* trans. Eshtael-ebn-Kalenter (New York, 1902), pp. 77–78; cf. p. 63.
- 81 *Ganjīna*, p. 272.
- 82 The Bahā'ī community of Iran was never very large. By the 1880s, it numbered about 100,000 adherents (between 1.25 and 2.0 percent of the population), and between the 1910s and 1950s the figure was between 100,000 and 200,000, representing a decline in population percentage (to between 0.5 and 1.1 percent). Current numbers are estimated at between 300,000 and 350,000 (0.9 and 1.0 percent of the population). For details, see Peter Smith 'A Note on Babi and Baha'i Numbers in Iran' in *Baha'i Studies Bulletin 1 : 4* (March, 1983), pp. 3–7.
- 83 On the early growth of Baha'ism in the United States, see Smith 'American Bahā'ī Community' (and bibliography, pp. 310–20). For discussions of wider developments, see *idem* 'A Sociological Study of the Babi and Baha'i Religions', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Lancaster, 1983; V.E. Johnson 'An Historical Analysis of Critical Transformations in the Evolution of the Bahā'ī World Faith', Ph.D. dissertation, Baylor University, Texas, 1974; Peter Berger 'From Sect to Church: A Sociological Interpretation of the Baha'i Movement', Ph.D. dissertation, New School for Social Research, New York, 1954; A. Hampson 'The Growth and Spread of the Baha'i Faith', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1980.
- 84 On early European accounts of Babism, see Momen *Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions*, pp. 3–65.
- 85 This theme is particularly clear in some later Bahā'ī writing, in which a direct and sometimes detailed comparison is made between Christ and the Bāb. See Shoghi Effendi *God Passes By*, pp. 56–57; W. Sears *Thief in the Night* new ed. (London, 1964), pp. 87–89.
- 86 Mrs Alexander Whyte, pilgrimage account in Shoghi Effendi ed. *The Bahā'ī World* vol. IV (New York, 1933), quoted Balyuzi 'Abdu'l-Bahā' (London, 1971), p. 359.
- 87 See Smith 'American Bahā'ī Community', pp. 100–103.
- 88 An excellent example of the romanticizing of Bābī history by early Bahā'īs may be found in Laura Clifford Barney's drama, *God's Heroes* (London and Philadelphia, 1910).
- 89 For details, see the hagiographical biographies by his widow Ruhyyih Rabbani (*The Priceless Pearl*, London, 1969) and Dhikr Allāh Khādīm (*Bi-yād-i mahbūb*, Tehran, 131 *badī'*/1975–76). See also Marcus Bach *Shoghi Effendi: An Appreciation* (New York, 1958).
- 90 His more important treatises in this context include 'The Dispensation of Bahā'u'llāh', in *World Order*, pp. 97–157 (also published separately); *The Promised Day is Come*; 'The Faith of Bahā'u'llāh', in *Guidance for Today and Tomorrow* (London, 1953). A full bibliography is contained in Ugo Giachery *Shoghi Effendi* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 199–205.
- 91 See Shoghi Effendi *World Order*, pp. 123–28.
- 92 The original text is preserved in a unique autograph manuscript at the Bahā'ī World Centre Archives in Haifa; no edition of it has ever been published, a fact of no small importance since Shoghi Effendi is reputed to have made major editorial revisions in his translation. One Iranian Bahā'ī writer who appears to have seen the original maintains that the changes are so great as to make the translation virtually an original work by Shoghi Effendi (Dr Dā'ūdī, quoted Najafī, *Bahā'īyān*, p. 412, f.n. 107).
- 93 See Muhīt Tabātabā'ī 'Kitābī bī nām bā nāmī tāza', *Gawhar* nos. 11–12



- (1353/1974), pp. 952–61; *idem* 'Tārīkh-i qadīm wa jadīd', *Gawhar* nos. 5–6 (1354/1975), pp. 343–48, 426–31; Browne *New History*, pp. vii–xxxii; *idem*, *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, pp. xxxiv–xlvi; Najafī *Bahā'iyān*, pp. 359–415; Richards *Religion of the Bahā'īs*, pp. 12–14; Miller *The Bahā'ī Faith*, pp. xii–xv.
- 94 *Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 363–65.
- 95 *Ibid*, p. 469.
- 96 *Ibid*, p. 546.
- 97 *Ibid*. For further examples, see *ibid*, pp. xxxiv, 213, 330, 396, 472, 488, 553, 554–55, 565–66.
- 98 *Ibid*, p. 529.
- 99 *Ibid*, p. 414.
- 100 *Ibid*, pp. xxxiv, 413.
- 101 *Ibid*, p. 413.
- 102 *Ibid*, p. 553.
- 103 See note 7; reference to p. xiii.
- 104 New ed. Tehran, 123 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1967–68. See also the commentary on this by 'Abd al-Hamīd Ishrāq Khāvarī, *Rahīq-i makhtūm*, 2 vols. (Tehran, 130–131 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1974–76).
- 105 Shoghi Effendi's obsession with dividing and sub-dividing historical periods in order to imbue selected years or decades with cosmic significance reached remarkable lengths. For examples, see *God Passes By*, pp. xiii–xiv, xiv–xvii, 3, 223, 325; *Citadel of Faith*, pp. 4–6, 32–33, 67, 107; *Messages to the Bahā'ī World*, pp. 18–19, 58, 60–61, 76, 82, 85, 129. This technique is paralleled by the use of repeated references to significant anniversaries, a method of locating events that has also been much used during and after the Islamic revolution in Iran. This concern is best interpreted in the light of Mircea Eliade's comments on sacred time in *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York, 1959), ch. II.
- 106 *God Passes By*, pp. 56–59; cf. *World Order*, pp. 123–28.
- 107 See *God Passes by*, pp. 27–31.
- 108 See *ibid*, pp. xi, xiii–xiv, 3; cf. *idem*, *Citadel of Faith*, pp. 4–5.
- 109 *God Passes By*, p. xv; cf. *ibid*, p. xvi: 'viewing these periods of Bahā'ī (*sic*) history as the constituents of a single entity, we note that chain of events proclaiming successfully (*sic*) the rise of a Forerunner, the Mission of One Whose advent that Forerunner had promised, the establishment of a Covenant generated through the direct authority of the Promised One Himself, and lastly the birth of a System which is the child sprung from both the Author of the Covenant and its appointed Center'. The Bābī/Bahā'ī movement is consistently referred to in terms of a single phenomenon as 'the Faith' (e.g. *ibid*, pp. xvi, xvii, 37, 42, 44, 46). ('These and other similar incidents connected with the epic story of the Zanjān upheaval. . . combine to invest it with a sombre glory unsurpassed by any episode of a like nature in the records of the Heroic Age of the Faith of Bahā'u'llāh'), 47 ('. . . these were the chief features of the tragedy of the Seven Martyrs of Tehrān, a tragedy which stands out as one of the grimmest scenes witnessed in the course of the early unfoldment of the Faith of Bahā'u'llāh'), 221, 376, 378. It would be possible to develop a useful critique of Shoghi Effendi's method in terms of Popper's theory of historicism.
- 110 *Ibid*, p. xvii.
- 111 *Ibid*, p. 79; cf. p. 38.
- 112 Shoghi Effendi *World Order*, p. 52; cf. *ibid*, pp. 156, 173. See also *idem*, *Promised Day*, pp. 5–6; *idem*, *Citadel of Faith*, pp. 93, 100; *idem*, *Messages to the Bahā'ī World*, pp. 34, 39, 88 ('persecution. . . for over a century'), 91.

- 113 Shoghi Effendi *God Passes By*, p. 63.
- 114 *Ibid*, p. 37.
- 115 *Ibid*, p. 43.
- 116 *Ibid*, p. 42.
- 117 *Ibid*, p. 44. See also *ibid*, pp. 38 ('to resist and defend themselves against the onslaughts of malicious and unreasoning assailants'), 51 ('the repressive measures taken against the followers of the Bāb', '. . . their persecuted Faith'), 62 ('maligned and hounded from the moment it [the Faith of the Bāb] was born', 'cruel blows', 'a sorely persecuted Faith'), 66 ('a sorely-tried Faith'; 'the Bāb's persecuted followers').
- 118 *Ibid*, p. 42.
- 119 *Ibid*, p. 68.
- 120 *Ibid*.
- 121 *Ibid*, p. 38.
- 122 *Ibid*.
- 123 *Ibid*, p. 39.
- 124 *Ibid*, p. 43.
- 125 *Ibid*, p. 44.
- 126 *Ibid*.
- 127 For a detailed discussion of the problem of the numbers involved at Shaykh Tabarsī, see M. Momen 'The Social Basis of the Bābī Upheavals (1848–1853): A Preliminary Analysis', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 15 (1983), pp. 161–66. Muhammad <sup>c</sup>Alī Malik Khusrawī gives the names of 367 individuals (*Tārīkh-i shuhadā-yi amr*, 3 vols. [Tehran, 130 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1974–75], vol. 2, pp. 316–17), fifty-three of whom he names as survivors (*baqiyyat al-sayf*: see *ibid*, vol. 1, pp. 416–49). Zarandī names only 173 martyrs (*Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 414–26).
- 128 See Momen, 'Social Basis', pp. 166–69.
- 129 See *ibid*, p. 168; Muhammad Shafī<sup>c</sup> Rawhānī Nayrīzī *Lama'āt al-anwār*, 2 vols. (Tehran, 130–132 *badī*<sup>c</sup>/1974–77), vol. 1, pp. 63, 72.
- 130 *Ibid*, vol. 1, pp. 73, 95, 96. This figure is made up of some 60 killed in an engagement in mid-Rajab 1266 (early June 1850), 350 put to death on the capture of the fort of Khāja on 18 Sha<sup>c</sup> bān/29 June, and 50 afterwards.
- 131 *Dawn-Breakers*, p. 644; see also Momen 'Social Basis', pp. 167–69.
- 132 Zarandī gives both 1,000 and 1,800 (*Dawn-Breakers*, p. 580).
- 133 *Citadel of Faith*, p. 100.
- 134 *Messages to the Bahā'ī World*, p. 34.
- 135 *Ibid*, p. 39.
- 136 See Malik Khusrawī *Tārīkh-i shuhadā*, vol. 3, pp. 6–8, 129–332. See also Momen 'Social Basis', p. 171–72. The notion that the executions of 1852 amounted to a 'holocaust' seems to have originated with a number of European accounts, including that of Gobineau, which exaggerated the affair out of all proportion (see *ibid*, pp. 171–72 and notes 55, 56); for further details, see *idem*, *Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions*, pp. 128–45.
- 137 *Tārīkh-i shuhadā*, vol. 3, pp. 6–9.
- 138 The following figures provide a rough guide; five in Tabrīz, Zanjān, and Tehran in 1867; four in Najafābād in 1864; two in Isfahān in 1879; seven in Sidith in 1890; one in Ashkhabad in 1889; seven in Yazd in 1891; five in Turbat-i Haydarī in 1896; two in Isfahān and about 100 in Yazd in 1903; eight in Jahrum in 1926. For details, see Momen, *Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions*, pp. 251–54, 268–69, 274–77, 284–88, 296–300, 301–304, 376–85, 385–98, 405–06, 465–72. There were also seven martyrs in

- Hurmuzak in 1955 (see Muhammad Labīb *The Seven Martyrs of Hurmuzak*, trans. M. Momen [Oxford, 1981] and some 100 between 1979 and 1982 (see Roger Cooper *The Bahā'īs of Iran*, Minority Rights Group Report No. 51 [London, 1982] and G. Nash *Iran's Secret Pogrom* [Sudbury, 1982]). For further details on earlier persecutions, see Hājj Muhammad Tāhir Mālmīrī *Tārīkh-i shuhadā-yi Yazd* (Cairo, 1342/1923–24); Sayyid Muhammad Tabīb Manshādī *Sharh-i shahādāt-i shuhadā-yi Manshād* (Tehran, 127 *badī*°/1971–72); Qazwini 'Epitome of Bābī History', pp. 35–43; E.G. Browne 'Persecutions of Bābis in 1888–1891 at Yazd' in *Materials*, pp. 291–308; A.L.M. Nicolas *Massacres de Babis en Perse* (Paris, 1936); Miller *Bahā'ī Faith*, pp. 214, 230. °Abd al-Bahā' gives the high figure of 'almost two hundred' for the martyrs of Yazd in 1903 (letter in *Makātīb*, vol. 1, p. 427).
- 139 *Traveller's Narrative*, vol. 1, p. 60; vol. 2, p. 47.
- 140 Letter from Dr T. Chaplin to *The Times*, 5 October, 1971, quoted Momen *Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions*, pp. 210–12. Chaplin refers to the killing of 20,000 individuals before the Baghdad exile; he later states that °Abd al-Bahā' 'gave us the information here detailed' in the course of an interview in Acre.
- 141 'Alwāh-i wasāyā' in °Abd al-Hamīd Ishrāq Khāvarī ed. *Ayyām-i Tis'* a 5th. printing (Tehran, 129 *badī*°/1973–74), p. 457; trans. Shoghi Effendi as 'The Will and Testament of °Abdu'l-Bahā', in Anon. comp. *The Covenant of Baha'u'llāh* (London, 1963), p. 90 (but see later on the inaccuracy of the translation of this passage). Cf. *idem*, letter in *Makātīb*, vol. 1, p. 385.
- 142 Address to Fourth Unitarian Church, Brooklyn, 16 June, 1912, in *Star of the West* III:10 (8 September, 1912), p. 31.
- 143 Address to the Theosophical Society, Liverpool, 14 December, 1912, in *ibid*, III:17 (19 January, 1913), p. 4.
- 144 Letter to 'Aqā Bihruz' in London, in Ishrāq Khāvarī *Mā'ida*, vol. 5, p. 45.
- 145 Address at the Brotherhood Church, Jersey City, 19 May, 1912, in *Star of the West* III : 9 (20 August, 1912), p. 9. Cf. letter in *Makātīb*, vol. 1, p. 344 ('ten or twenty thousand').
- 146 Address to the New York Peace Society, 13 May, 1912, in *Star of the West* III : 8 (1 August, 1912), p. 15.
- 147 Address to the Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn, 16 June, 1912, in *ibid*, III:10 (8 September, 1912), p. 23.
- 148 Address at Los Angeles, in *ibid*, II:13 (4 November, 1911), p. 8.
- 149 Address to the Tenth Annual Convention of the Bahā'ī Temple Unity, in *ibid*, IX:5 (5 June, 1918), p. 69.
- 150 *God Passes By*, p. xiv.
- 151 *Ibid*, p. 402.
- 152 'The Faith of Bahā'u'llāh' in *Guidance*, p. 5.
- 153 See note 141.
- 154 National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahā'īs of the U.K., *Bahā'ī* (London, n.d.), p. 10.
- 155 Marzieh Gail, Introduction to Bahā' Allāh *Son of the Wolf*, p. iii.
- 156 Anon., foreword to Bahā' Allāh and °Abd al-Bahā' *Bahā'ī Revelation*, p. xiv.
- 157 Nash *Iran's Secret Pogrom*, pp. 22; cf. p. 42 ('the most vicious pogrom of all—the 1852 massacre of Bābis'), but cf. also pp. 133, 144.
- 158 *Ibid*, p. 18.
- 159 Balyuzi, °Abdu'l-Bahā, p. 45.
- 160 See Peter Berger *The Sacred Canopy* (New York, Anchor Books, 1969), p. 138; Bryan

- Wilson *Contemporary Transformations of Religion* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 86–90.
- 161 *Citadel of Faith*, pp. 139–40.
- 162 *Ibid.*, p. 144. See also *Messages to the Bahā'ī World*, pp. 89, 97.
- 163 Letter to 'The Bahā'īs of the World', 26 January, 1982 (mimeographed copy), p. 2.
- 164 *Idem*, letter dated 'Ridvān (12–21 April), 1982' (mimeographed copy). See also *idem*, letter to 'The Bahā'īs of the World', March 1981 (mimeograph copy); National Proclamation Committee of the Bahā'īs of the U.K., 'Campaign Bulletin No. 1' (mimeograph copy, n.d.), p. 2; National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahā'īs of the U.K. *Bahā'ī Monthly News Service*, 2 : 7 (February, 1981), p. 5.
- 165 See Jacques Waardenburg *L'Islam dans le miroir de l'Occident* (The Hague, 1963); Edward Said *Orientalism* (New York, 1978). See also Bryan Turner 'Accounting for the Orient' in D. MacEoin and A. Al-Shahi eds. *Islam in the Modern World* (London, 1983); Ernest Gellner 'In defence of Orientalism' in *Sociology* 14 (1980), pp. 295–300; Ghislaine Alleaume 'L'Orientalisme dans le miroir de la littérature Arabe' in *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle East Studies* 9 : 1 (1982), pp. 5–13; Clement Dodd 'The Critique of Orientalism' in *ibid* 6 : 2 (1979), pp. 85–95.
- 166 Said *Orientalism*, pp. 69–70.
- 167 See Rabbani *Priceless Pearl*, pp. 9, 14–15, 17, 25–26, 30, 34–38.
- 168 *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.
- 169 *Ibid.*, p. 152.
- 170 *God Passes By*, p. 4. The passage seems to be based on a sentence of A.L.M. Nicolas in his introduction to his translation of the Persian *Bayān: Le Bēyān Persan* 4 vols. (Paris, 1911–14), vol. 1, p. iv. See also *God Passes by*, pp. 84, 197 ('a country "firmly stereotyped in the immemorial traditions of the East"'—the unsourced quotation is from George Curzon *Persia and the Persian Question*, 2 vols. [London, 1892]. vol. 1, p. 391). This dismissive stereotyping is still apparent in some western Bahā'ī writing about Iran (e.g. 'barely civilized countries, such as Iran', Nash *Iran's Secret Pogrom*, p. 39).
- 171 Introduction to Zarandī *Dawn-Breakers*, p. xxiv. This introduction as a whole is a sustained example of Shoghi Effendi's orientalist approach. It has been claimed that it was actually penned by the Irish Bahā'ī writer George Townshend (letter from the Universal House of Justice, *Bahā'ī Monthly News Service*, London, 3:3, p. 2, referring to Townshend as Shoghi Effendi's 'English correspondent'). Shoghi Effendi himself, thanks his English correspondent 'for his help in the preparation of the Introduction' (*Dawn-Breakers*, p. lxi), which implies that he himself took a greater hand in finalizing its text than the House of Justice suggests.
- 172 *God Passes By*, p. 4.
- 173 *Ibid.*, p. 185.
- 174 *Promised Day*, p. 95.
- 175 *Ibid.*, p. 96.
- 176 *Ibid.*
- 177 *Ibid.* This passage is based on E.G. Browne *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1924), pp. 377, 416.
- 178 See *Promised Day*, pp. 93–102; cf. *World Order*, pp. 172–80.
- 179 p. xxiv.
- 180 *God Passes By*, pp. 46, 55–56, 65–66, 76, 80–81, 203–04.
- 181 *The Promise of All Ages* (London, n.d.), pp. 136, 138. The quotation from Curzon is, in fact, from volume one. For an example of similar confusion, see Ruhiiyyih Rabbani *Prescription for Living* rev. ed (London, 1960), pp. 150, 154.
- 182 *Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions*, p. xxi.

- 183 Momen 'The Trial of Mullā °Alī Bastāmī', p. 118.  
184 *Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions*, p. xxi.  
185 *Ibid*, pp. xxiii–xxv.  
186 A volume containing the original texts was published shortly afterwards in Iran: *Muntakhabāt-i āyāt az āthār-i Hadrat-i Nuqta-yi Ūlā* (Tehran, 134 badī°/1978–79).  
187 *Selections from the Writings of the Bāb* (Haifa, 1976), p. v.  
188 *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, p. xxxv.

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