

## The Baha'i Faith: Its History and Teachings

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### *Introduction*

When in the year 1844 A.D. a young man in the city of Shiraz in Persia announced that he had a divine mission, who would have dreamed that his golden-domed Shrine in Haifa would one day be visited by thousands of pilgrims from many lands? And who would have been so bold as to predict that Ali Muhammad was destined to be the initiator of a movement which would spread to all parts of the earth, and would claim the allegiance of millions of people? Perhaps the young prophet himself had a vision of a glorious future for his cause, but not many of his countrymen, and no one outside of Persia, shared his dreams. Yet Ali Muhammad, better known as the Bab,(1) is now revered round the world by all those who profess allegiance to the "Baha'i World Faith." This remarkable movement, which began when Ali Muhammad announced that he was the Bab (Gate), was continued and developed by another man from Persia known as Baha,(2) and later as Baha'u'llah. The followers of this Faith, known as Baha'is,(2) maintain that it is the true religion for all the people of the world for this age, and will unite all races and religions in one happy family.

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Baha'is have produced much attractive literature, in which they tell the story of the founding and growth of their Faith and expound its teachings. In this Introduction I wish to explain why I have undertaken to write a history of the Babi-Baha'i Movement, and I will describe some of the sources on which I have depended for my information. If the reader is not interested in this discussion, he may omit the rest of the Introduction, and begin to read Chapter I.

It was a fortunate day for oriental scholarship when young Edward Browne accidentally stumbled on a copy of a French book by the Comte de Gobineau. "One day some seven years ago," he wrote in 1890, "I was searching amongst the books in the University Library of Cambridge for fresh materials for an essay on the Sufi philosophy..... when my eye was caught by the title of Count Gobineau's *Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*.(3) I took down the book, glanced through it to discover whether or not it contained any account of the Sufis." It did, and Browne took the book home to read, and was much disappointed in what he learned from it of the Sufis. But when he began to read the account of the Babi(1) movement which constituted the major part of the volume, the effect was very different. He was at once captivated by Gobineau's story of the Bab(1) and his followers. "To anyone," Browne continues, "who has already read this masterpiece of historical composition, this most perfect presentation of accurate and critical research in the form of a narrative of thrilling and sustained interest, such as one may, indeed, hope to find in the drama *or* the romance, but can scarcely expect from, the historian, it is needless to describe the effect which it produced on me .... Count Gabineau's book, then, effected in a certain sense a complete revolution in my ideas and projects."(4)

As a result of reading this book, Edward Browne determined to go to Persia and meet some of the Babis (followers of the Bab) about whom Gobineau had written so brilliantly, in order to learn more about this Fascinating movement. He finally succeeded in 1887

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in finding a way to travel to this land, which today is known by its true name Iran,(5) the land in which the Bab had lived and died, associating intimately with people who were able to give him the information and the books which he so eagerly sought. After a year he returned to Cambridge University where he became Lectures in Persian, and. there he wrote and published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society two lengthy articles on *The Babis of Persia*.(6) He also wrote the book, *A Year Amongst the Persians*,(7) which is a mine of most interesting and valuable information. Thus began Browne's deep and sympathetic interest in the Babi movement, which continued to the end of his life, and which made him the outstanding authority on the movement among English scholars, if not among all western orientalist. Much of the history of this movement would have been irretrievably lost except for the painstaking and scholarly researches of Edward G. Browne.

However, Professor Browne did not undertake to write a formal history of the movement, though no one could have done this better than he. Instead, the results of his researches were recorded chiefly in his introductions to the books which he translated from Arabic and Persian into English, and in the copious footnotes and lengthy appendices full of most valuable information which he added to the translations, and in articles in the *J.R.A.S.* of which he contributed a number.(8) most of these writings are now out of print, or are unavailable to many readers. Hence, it is for the purpose of presenting in a concise and orderly fashion the facts which have been established by Browne and other trustworthy scholars that this book is being written.

When the Cambridge scholar arrived in Iran in 1887 he soon discovered that the situation was quite different from what he had thought it to be. As he says, (9) "My researches among the Babis....revealed to me the fact that since Count Gobineau composed his work great changes had taken place in their organization and attitude. I had expected to find Mirza(10) Yahya Subh-i-Azal ..... universally acknowledged by them as the

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Bab's successor and the sole head to whom they confessed allegiance. My surprise was great when I discovered that so far from this being the case, the majority of the Babis spoke only of Baha(2) as their chief and prophet; asserted that the Bah was merely his herald and forerunner...; and either entirely ignored or strangely disparaged Mirza Yahya. It took me some time fully to grasp this new and unexpected position of affairs..." These followers of Baha called themselves not Babis but Baha'is.(2)

Browne's admiration for Gobineau's hook rightly remained unabated, for the Comte de Gobineau had a unique opportunity to give a correct account of the beginnings of the Babi movement. He was in the French diplomatic service in Teheran(11) from 1855 to

185B, and again from 1861 to 1863, first as a secretary and later as minister. He came to Iran only five years after the Bab had been put to death in Tabriz, and he was therefore able to secure much first-hand information regarding him and his followers. Added to a thorough knowledge of Persian and Arabic, the Comte de Gobineau possessed a remarkable understanding of the character and beliefs of the Iranians in general and of the Babis in particular. His sympathetic interest in the Bab led him to view the whole movement in the most favourable light possible. Gobineau's book, as Browne says,(12) "though largely based on the Lisanu'l-Nulk's account of the Babi movement,(13) embodies also many statements derived from Babi sources....The work in question must ever remain a classic and indeed unapproached in the subject whereof it treats."

when Browne returned to England in 1888 he took with him a Babi book in manuscript entitled *Tarikh-i-Jadid* (The New History). This book, as he later discovered, was written in 1880 by Mirza Husayn of Hamadan with the assistance of several other Baha'i scholars. In the New History there were numerous references to an earlier work by Mirza Jani from which Mirza Husayn *had* derived much of his material. But when Browne made inquiries in Iran as to Mirza Jani's history he was unable to find a copy or to

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obtain any information whatever regarding this book. It seemed that it had entirely disappeared and been forgotten. So he set to work to translate the *New History* in preparation for publication. He was surprised and puzzled, however, by the failure of the book to give any account of Subh-i-Azal, who, according to Gobineau, was the universally recognised successor to the Bab, and on the other hand by the importance accorded to Baha, the half-brother of Subh-i-Azal. When he made inquiries of the Baha'is they either professed total ignorance of Subh-i-Azal, or made derogatory remarks about him.

Then a most fortunate discovery made by Professor Browne in 1892 threw light on the problem. In the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris he found a copy of the lost history written by Mirza Jani, entitled the *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf!* This manuscript was one of the Babi books brought back from Iran by the Comte de Gobineau and sold at auction after his death. Browne eagerly compared this book with the *New History*, and discovered that while the *New History* embodied a great deal of what Mirza Jani had written in his history, a considerable amount of the material in the older history had been either changed or omitted by the authors of the *New History*. For example, while Mirza Jani gave a full account of the appointment of Subh-i-Azal by the Bab as his successor, and a detailed explanation of the exalted position which he occupied, one of equality with the Bab, the author of the *New History* omitted all this, and portrayed Baha as the greater person.(14) Hence, when Browne published his translation of the *New History* in 1893,(15) he included in it as an Appendix the most important passages of *the Nuqtatu'l-Kaf* which had been omitted or altered in the *New*

*History*.(16) Why was this done? "The earliest, fullest and most interesting history of the Bab and his immediate disciples....was almost completely suppressed,"(17) wrote Browne,(18) "because it reflected the opinion which prevailed immediately after the

Bab's martyrdom that his successor was Mirza Yahya Subh-i-Azal, and thus came into conflict with the Baha'i contention which arose ten or fifteen year later, and a recension

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of it was prepared (known as 'the *New History!* ..) in which all references to Subh-i-Azal were eliminated or altered, and other features regarded as undesirable were suppressed or modified." For an explanation of the events which occasioned the suppression of Mirza Jani's history the reader is referred to Chapters V and VI.

Mirza Jani was uniquely fitted to be the historian of the Babi movement. He was a merchant in the town of Kashan, and once entertained the Bab for two days in his home. He traveled extensively with Mirza Yahya Subh-i-Azal and his brother Mirza Husayn Ali Baha. He knew intimately all the early Babi leaders. He was respected as a man of integrity, and he proved his devotion to the Babi Cause by dying for his faith in Teheran in 1852 (see Chapter V). In 1910 Browne published in full the Persian text of Mirza Jani's history, with most valuable introductions in both Persian and English.(19) No student of the Babi- Baha'i movement can ignore the *Nuqtat'ul-Kaf*, which is the one extant history of the Bab and his early followers written by a capable Babi historian soon after the death of the Bab.

The *New History* which was translated and published by Browne was never published by the Baha'is. It was soon suppressed, and very few Persian copies are now in existence. In its place yet another history was prepared in 1886 by the Baha'i leaders, entitled *A Traveller's Narrative*. The name of the author was not attached to the book, but it was later established that he was no other than Abbas Efendi, the eldest son of Baha.(21) Hence this may be considered an official Baha'i history of the movement. A copy was given to Browne by the author when he visited Baha in Acre (Akka) in 1890, after having visited Subh-i-Azal in Cyprus. Of this book Browne writes:(22) "The *Traveller's Narrative*....represents a further development of the tendency, to which I have already alluded, to glorify Baha'u'llah and his Neo-Babi doctrine at the expense of the Bab and the primitive Babi theology. In the *New History* it is still the Bab and his apostles, and the early martyrs of the cause, whose words and deeds

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form the subject matter of the work. In the *Traveller's Narrative* this is no longer the case; it is Baha'u'llah who is the hero....while the Bab has been reduced from his high station of 'Point'....to that of a mere precursor and harbinger of a more perfect dispensation."

The Persian text of this book, as well as the English translation with some 320 pages of Introduction and Notes, was published by Browne in 1891,(23) and these volumes are indeed a mine of information. In his Introduction Browne calls attention to the following peculiarities of the *Traveller's Narrative*: (24) (1) The secondary importance accorded to the Bab and his early followers. The sufferings of the first disciples are passed over lightly, and the deaths of the Seven Martyrs and the massacre of 1852 are largely unnoticed. (2) The belittling of Subh-i-Azal, who is depicted as a person of no

consequence. "No opportunity is lost of disparaging both his courage and his judgement."  
(3) Extraordinary temperateness toward the Shah of Iran, and deprecation of the opposition of the early Babis to the government of Iran.

Unfortunately, it is the *Traveller's Narrative*, in which the history and doctrines as recorded by the Bab in his extant writings and also by Mirza Jani and Gobineau have been radically revised to conform to the later Baha'i pronouncements, that has been followed as authentic history by the authors of many of the more recent books and articles which have professed to tell the true story of the rise of the Baha'i Faith. Thus, by neglecting intentionally or through ignorance the primary sources, they have to a considerable extent misrepresented the true history of the movement. As Browne wrote in 1910:(25) "... the more the Baha'i doctrine spreads, especially outside of Persia, and most of all in Europe and America, the more the true history of the original Babi Movement is obscured and distorted."(26)

The reader will note that in the early chapters of this book has based his statements largely

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on the writings of the Bab and Gobineau and Mirza Jani, as interpreted by Professor Browne, and has refrained from quoting the less-reliable versions of later writers.

The valuable work done by other eminent Western scholars should not be overlooked, and mention should be made of M.A.L.M. Nicolas who translated the *Arabic and Persian Bayans* of the Bab into French (1905), and M. Alexander Toumansky of St. Petersburg who translated the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* of Baha'u'llah into Russian and published it with a lengthy introduction (1899), and Baron Victor Rosen who translated and published other writing of Baha'u'llah. The author has not made use of these writings, except as they have been quoted by Browne in his articles and books. Nor has he been able to benefit from the researches of the German scholars.

While engaged in the task of rewriting a book which was published many years ago,(27) the author was most fortunate in becoming acquainted through correspondence with another scholar who was uniquely qualified to supply new historical material and to throw fresh light on many of the doctrines and the events of the Babi-Baha'i movement. Mr. Jelal Azal, a relative of many of the persons whose stories are related in this book, occupied a government position in Palestine for a number of years, and was thus in close touch with happenings in Haifa and Akka. He also had a very good knowledge of the Persian, Arabic, Turkish and English languages, and so was able to read and translate the original writings of the Bab and Subh-i-Azal and Baha'u'llah and their followers with greater ease and accuracy than was possible for any of the European scholars. Mr. Azal most generously made available to the author the results of his scholarly research, having supplied more than 1100 pages of most valuable Notes in English, with facsimiles of documents in the handwriting of some of the founders of the movement. These pages have been numbered, and xeroxed copies have been deposited in the Library of Princeton University. It is hoped that this material may be published and made available in

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full for the use of scholars. Mr. Azal also kindly agreed to read and correct the manuscript of this book. This he did with the greatest care, and many of his suggestions have been incorporated in the text and the footnotes. It was a cause of deep sorrow to the author to learn that only a few weeks after he sent his comments on the final chapter of the book, this gracious and gifted scholar died of a heart attack in Famagusta, Cyprus, where he resided, on April 5, 1971. My debt to him is great indeed.

In writing the history of the Baha'i movement in the West, the author has had the very able assistance of Mr. J. Anthony Siström, who has supplied a great deal of most valuable material which he has discovered in libraries, or else has received from his Baha'i friends. He is also indebted to Mr. Will Orick for permitting him to use material from his personal files, and for supplying him with much information derived from his long and intimate acquaintance with the Baha'i Cause, and to Dr. T. Cuyler Young of Princeton University and the Rev. Cady H. Allen for reading and correcting the manuscript, and to Dr. William N. Wysham for correcting the proofs. To these friends, and to all others who have assisted in answering questions and providing data for this book, the author would express his sincere thanks.

And he wishes to express sincere appreciation also to Fleming H. Revell Company for permission to make use of much material from his early book *Bahaism: Its Origin, History, and Teachings* (Revell 1932), and to the Cambridge University Press for the use of invaluable material in the books written by Professor Edward G. Browne, and to the Royal Asiatic Society for the use of Professor Browne's lengthy articles in the *Journal of the Society*, and also for permission to incorporate as Appendix I of this book the translation of *Al-Kitab Al-Aqdas* by Dr. E. E. Elder. He is also indebted to the Baha'i Publishing Trust, to Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., to George Allen and Unwin, and to Award Books for material from their publications. In every case the source is indicated in a footnote.

William Miller

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**NOTES**

1. The *a* in *Bab* and *Babi'* is pronounced as in *bar n*, and the *i* in *Babi* is like *ee* in *see*.
1. The first *a* in *Baha* has the sound of *a* in *bat*, and the second that of *a* in *barn*.
2. The *i* in *Baha'i*, which is a three-syllable word, is pronounced like *ee* in *see*, and the stress is on the last syllable.

3. First published in 1865 in Paris.
  4. *A Traveller's Narrative*, E. G. Browne, Cambridge 1891, Int. pp. X, XI.
  5. Iran, meaning the "Land of the Aryans," is pronounced *ee-rahn*, with a light stress on the last syllable.
  6. *J.B.A.S.*, 1889, pp. 485-526 and 881-1009.
  7. *A Year Amongst the Persians*, Edward G. Browne, London, 1893.
  8. *J.R.A.S.*, 1892, pp. 259-322. and 433-499 and 637- 710; 1897, pp. 761-826.
  9. *A Traveller's Narrative*, Int. pp. XV, XVI.
  10. *Mirza* is a title formerly used in Iran equivalent to *Mr.*
  11. *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1944), Vol. 10, p. 459.
  12. *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 174, 203.
  13. In *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 174-188, Browne has given a summary of the contents of this Persian history, the *Nasikhu 'Tawzrikh* (Superseded of Histories), written by a gifted Muslim historian about 1852 A.D.', which records rather fully the story of the Babi movement from 1844 to 1852.
  14. *The New History of the Bab*, pp. 374-382, *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, Int. in English, pp. XXXVI, XXXVII.
  15. *The New History of the Bab*, translated by E. G. Browne, Cambridge, 1893.
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16. *Ibid.*, pp.327-396.
17. Only two complete copies of the *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf* in manuscript are known to be in existence today, one being that discovered by Browne in the Bibliotheque Nationale (Suppl. Pers. 1071), from which he printed the Persian text, and the other in the Library of Princeton University. See English Int. to *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf* pp. XIII, *New History* Int., pp. XXIX, XXX, and *Notes of Dr. Sa'eed*, pp. 5, 6 (also in the Princeton Library).
18. *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion*, by E. G. Browne, Cambridge 1918, Int. p. XXIII, *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, English Int., p. XXXIV.
19. *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, by Hajji Mirza Jani of Kashan, edited by E. G. Browne, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial XV, London 1910.
20. *Efendi* was a Turkish title equivalent to *Mr.*
21. *New History*, Int. p. XIV, *Azal's Notes*, p. 258.
22. *New History*, Int. p. XXXI.
23. *Traveller's Narrative*, written to illustrate the Episode of the Bab, edited and translated with notes by E. G. Browne, Vol. II, Cambridge 1891. For date of this book see p. 67 of T.N., Note 1.
24. *A Traveller's Narrative*, Int. pp. XLV-XLVI.
25. *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, English Int., p. XXXV.
26. The last book written by Professor Browne on the Babi movement was his *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion*, Cambridge 1918, which, like his earlier books, contains most valuable historical documents.
27. *Bahaism, Its Origin, History and Teachings*, by William McElwee Miller, Fleming H. Revell, New York MCNXXXI.

## 1. The Islamic Background

It is as impossible for one to understand the Baha'i Faith without a knowledge of Islam as it would be to understand Christianity without a knowledge of the Old Testament. The Baha'i religion is an offshoot of Shi'ite Islam, and though modern Baha'is may emphasize the universal aspects of their faith and strive to disassociate themselves from the past, nevertheless the foundations of their system rest on the soil of Iran, which is saturated with Islamic conceptions. It is of course impossible for us here to give a full account of the rise of Islam and the development of the doctrines and practices and civilization of the Muslims, and the reader is referred to the excellent books on Islam which are now available. However, to assist those who may not have the time or inclination for such a study to understand better the ideas and attitudes which will be met in the teachings and actions of the Bab and those who followed him, a very brief account of the interesting historical background of the Babi movement will be supplied. In the year 570 A.D. there was born in the city of Mecca in Arabia a baby who was named Muhammad, who was destined to change the religious and political

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and cultural aspects of a large part of the world. Living among people who worshipped idols, but who knew of a Supreme Deity whom they called Allah (The God), Muhammad became acquainted with some Jews and Christians who did not worship images. It was probably, in part at least, as a result of his contacts with them that a strong conviction came to Muhammad when he was forty years of age that he had been appointed by Allah as a prophet, and thereafter till his death in 632 A.D. he was sure that revelations from Allah were brought down to him from heaven by the angel Gabriel. These divine messages were spoken by Muhammad, were written down by those who heard them (it is generally supposed that Muhammad was illiterate), and were later collected in a book called the Qur'an (Koran).

After receiving his commission Muhammad began to tell the people of Mecca that Allah alone is God, and that he who created all things will one day raise the dead to life, and will reward with the pleasures of Paradise those who worship him and do good deeds, and will punish with the fires of Hell those who do not. A few relatives and friends believed on the new prophet, but most of the Meccans ignored or rejected him. When Muhammad was asked to show a sign or to perform a miracle to prove that he was indeed a prophet, his reply was that the verses of the Koran were his signs, and he challenged others to produce the like of them. When he later fiercely denounced the idols and the idolaters, the Meccans began to persecute him and his followers. Finally, after thirteen years of persistent but rather fruitless effort, Muhammad resolved to go north to the city of Madina, where there were people who had promised to help him. Accordingly, in the year 622 A.D., he and the little band of faithful believers came to Madina and

henceforth made this their home. This migration, which is called the Hegira (*hijra*), marks the beginning of the Muslim era, and from it all events are dated. On reaching Madina, Muhammad found himself much better situated than he had been in Mecca. When his party, which was growing rapidly, gained supremacy

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over the other factions in the city, Muhammad the prophet and preacher became also the ruler of Madina, with a body of armed men at his back. Having failed to win the allegiance of the idolaters of Mecca by his verses and preaching, he now undertook to convince them by the sword. Seven months after his arrival at Madina he began to attack the caravans of the people of Mecca in which most of their wealth was invested. At first he met with little success, but in 624 A.D. he succeeded in capturing a large caravan, killing many of its guards, and dividing the booty among his followers. This led to other battles, and finally not only the people of Mecca but also most of the tribes of Arabia, both Jewish and pagan, were defeated and submitted to Muhammad. Those who submitted to him as their political and religious ruler, and to Allah who had sent him, were known as Muslims (*Muslim* in the Arabic language means "one who submits"). Those who refused to become Muslims were in some instances forced to pay taxes, and in others were put to the sword. Thus the system established by Muhammad which was called Islam ("submission") was not so much a church as a church-state, or theocracy. Muhammad was both Prophet and King. From the beginning religion and politics have in Islam been one, at least in theory.

This remarkable ruler of Arabia had heard that God had given divinely inspired books to some of the great prophets of old, in which he had made known to men the laws, both civil and religious, which he had ordained for their life on earth, and by the keeping of which they would merit divine favor and win for themselves entrance to Paradise. Therefore, in the Koran, in accordance with the supposed pattern of the books of previous prophets, along with some inspiring ascriptions of praise to Allah, we find regulations for marriage and divorce, the conduct of war with the infidels, the division of booty, and other civil matters interwoven with instructions as to worship, fasting, clean and unclean foods, the care of orphans and the poor, and various other moral matters. Muhammad believed that Allah had authorized him to regulate all phases of the life of believers.

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The Prophet of Arabia probably took Moses as his model of what a prophet should be and say and do, for he knew more of him than he did of Jesus. He told the Arabs that as Abraham and Moses and Jesus and other prophets had been sent to various peoples, so he had been sent to them. However, his mission was not for the Arabs alone, it was for all mankind. So he called upon all men, Jews, Christians and heathen, to acknowledge and obey him. He thought that Jesus had predicted his coming,(1) just as previous prophets had predicted the coming of Jesus. He made no claims of divinity for himself, saying that he was only a man like other men,(2) and he warmly rejected the claims of the Christians

that Jesus is Son of God. He spoke of himself as the Seal of the Prophets,(3) thus implying that he was the last and the greatest in the prophetic line. Muhammad made no definite provision as to his successor, one to which all of his followers agreed. On his death ten years after moving to Madina the majority of the believers united in choosing Abu Bakr as Caliph (meaning “vicar” or “successor”), and he ruled the church-state of Islam in Muhammad’s place. Abu Bakr was succeeded in turn by ’Umar, ’Uthman and Ali, these four being known as the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, who were all chosen in the same manner. The last three were assassinated by other Muslims. To the democratic Arabs it seemed altogether proper that their chief should be thus appointed by the people. They held that the voice of the people was the voice of God. It was during the reigns of these first four Caliphs that the armies of the Arabs poured forth from their barren deserts, overthrew the forces of Persia and Byzantium, and conquered Mesopotamia, Syria, the Iranian Plateau and Egypt for Islam. It was their belief that Muslims must rule the whole world. However, there soon developed in Islam a party the members of which held a theory of the succession totally different from that held by the ruling party. To them it seemed as impossible for the successor of the Prophet to be elected by the people as it would have been for the Prophet himself to be thus chosen.

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They contended that as a prophet must be chosen by God, not by the people, so must the prophet’s successor be appointed by God and named specifically by the prophet. This party was called *Shi’it’e* (meaning “separatist”). Though there came to be many divisions among Shi’ites, they all held firmly to the principle that the successor of Muhammad, whom they called not Caliph but *Imam* (meaning “leader”), “must be a descendant of the Prophet, and must be nominated explicitly by his predecessor, i.e., by the Prophet in the case of the first Imam, and in other cases by the preceding Imam....the Imam was none the less Imam though recognized only by a small minority, and to recognize and yield allegiance to the rightful Imam was the supreme duty of the believer.”(4) The Shi’ites held that the first Imam, or vicegerent of their Prophet, was Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad (Muhammad left no son to be his heir). They asserted that Muhammad on his return journey from his last pilgrimage to Mecca publicly appointed Ali to succeed him, saying to all the people, “Let whoever owns me as his master own also Ali as his Master.”(5) They therefore looked upon Abu Bakr, ’Umar and ’Uthman as usurpers, and as enemies of God and his chosen Imam. Thus the Muslim world was from early times divided between the Shi’ites and their opponents the Sunnites. This division has remained till the present day, but the bitterness between the two parties is in many places less than it once was. Though the Shi’ites have always been in the minority in the Muslim world, and were often divided among themselves as to who was the rightful Imam of the age, they have often shown the most passionate devotion to their beliefs and to their leaders. Much Muslim blood has been shed over the question of the succession. The people of Iran were especially susceptible to Shi’ite influences. They generally despised the Arabs by whom they had been conquered, and in espousing the cause of Ali and his descendants they found an opportunity for expressing their national spirit and maintaining something of their independence. The

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Iranians, unlike the democratic Arabs, were imbued with the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and had even considered their rulers to be divine beings. They were therefore quite ready, after their defeat by the Arabs, to give the Imams the place in their affection which their own kings had previously occupied, and to look upon them as supernatural beings, free from all sin and imperfection, and endowed with miraculous powers, who ought by divine right to rule over them in both temporal and spiritual affairs. The Shi'ites never succeeded in gaining temporal authority for any of their Imams (with the exception of Ali, who became the fourth Caliph), but they always longed to do so, chafing under what they considered the unrighteous rule of worldly Caliphs chosen by men.

It is estimated that 98% of the people of Iran are Muslims, the great majority of whom belong to that sect of the Shi'ites which acknowledges twelve Imams. This sect. became the official religion of Iran after the Safavid conquest early in the 16th century, and is so today. The followers of this form of Islam affirm that Ali and ten of his descendants who one after another succeeded him suffered violent deaths at the hands of the Sunnites, and are counted as holy martyrs. They believe, however, that the twelfth Imam, Muhammad son of Hasan al-Askari, called by them the "Imam Mahdi," the "Lord of the Age," the "Proof of God," "He Who Shall Arise of the Family of Muhammad (*Qaim-i-AL-i-Muhammad*)," and the "Remnant of God (*Baqiyyatullah*)," who as a child, immediately after the death of his father disappeared from the view of men in Iraq in the year 873 A.D. (260 A.H.), (6) is still alive, and will again appear on earth. "For in every age," they say, "there must be an Imam immune to sin." For a period of seventy years after his disappearance, the Twelfth Imam communicated his will to men through four *Babs* (meaning "gates"), whose title, strictly speaking, is Special Vicegerent (*Naib-i-Khas*), and who in succession acted as the channels of grace to mankind. When the fourth Bab died no one succeeded him, and thereafter Shi'ites were cut off from direct communication with "The Lord

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of the Age," now absent, or hidden, but living, and could only long and pray for his return as Mahdi or Qaim. This they have done for more than a thousand years. "O Allah, hasten his joy, and cause us to behold his victory, and make us his helpers and his followers!" prays a Shi'ite divine of the fourteenth century A.D.,(7) and pious Shi'ites make the same prayer today. They look for the appearance of the Hidden Imam as earnestly as ever the Jews did for their promised Messiah.

Books of popular Shi'ite theology(8) contain the most minute descriptions of the coming of the *Mahdi* (The Guided One), as the Hidden Imam is often called. Only God knows the time of his appearing, but some of the Shi'ites seem to know everything else about it! His coming will be preceded by wars, confusion, eclipses of sun and moon, a terrible increase of infidelity and corruption of morals. Men will cease saying the prayers, and will lie, take interest and bribes, build for themselves strong houses, and take counsel with

women. Women will enter business, will sing in public, and will ride astride. Muslims will become the most abject of peoples. *Dajjal* will appear riding on an ass, and will entice many people after him and destroy them. Then will appear the Mahdi.' At once his 313 faithful followers, who like him have been hidden for more than a thousand years, will hasten from the ends of the earth to his side. All true believers will join him with drawn swords, and win for him the sovereignty of which he has been wrongfully deprived these many centuries. His armies will sweep over the whole earth, killing all who refuse to submit to their Lord. All former prophets and Imams will return to earth to aid the Mahdi. He will bring to an end all oppression, and will fill the earth with justice. Only Shi'ites will then be found on the earth, and at last the religion and government of all mankind will become one. Following a long reign of these true believers, all will die, and then will come the Resurrection and the Last Judgment. For many people of education these predictions would be interpreted allegorically, or might be rejected as

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nonsense. But most Shi'ites in Iran a century ago took all these details very literally. The swords which till recent times were hanging in numerous shops and homes in readiness for the coming of "The Lord of the Age" proved how real these hopes were to many people, and how central a place in their expectations was occupied by the dream of the conquest of unbelievers and the establishment of a universal Shi'ite theocracy in all lands.

The Shi'ite doctrine of the Imamate is closely related to their beliefs about the Prophets. They hold that among and above the 124,000 sinless prophets whom God sent to guide men, there were certain Great Prophets, generally thought to be Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, who in succession were God's representatives on earth. Each one of these was the Prophet for the whole world for a long period of time, bringing a book of laws from God for all mankind, and foretelling the Prophet who was to follow. Though Muhammad was the last of the Prophets, he was followed by the Imams, who were equal to him in rank, and differed only in that they did not bring new laws to replace those of the Koran. There is a popular belief that the first thing created by God was the "Light of Muhammad," which abode in Adam and the Great Prophets who followed him, and which was seen in its perfection in Muhammad and in the Imams who are one with him.

Among the Shi'ites there have been various sects the members of which have not contented themselves with considering the Prophets and Imams as supernatural and sinless beings with miraculous powers, but have exalted them yet more highly, saying that they were emanations of Deity and manifestations of God. These sects (known as *ghulat*), which were rejected by the Twelvers as heretical, were usually characterized by certain cardinal doctrines, chiefly Metempsychosis (*tanasukh*), Incarnation (*hulul*), and Return (*rij'at*) of individuals or types in successive cycles. From time to time in the history of Iran we find individuals putting forward the claim that they were the "return" of some previous prophet or imam, and were divine manifestations. (9)

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One of these individuals who claimed to be God was al-Nuqanna', "The Veiled Prophet of Khorasan," known to English readers through Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. He taught that the Deity had been manifested in all the prophets from Adam down, and had finally come to him. He was successful in gathering about him a great number of people who worshipped him and fought for him, till he and his followers miserably perished in 779 A.D. A half-century later Babak made the same claim, and kept Iran in turmoil for twenty years, during which time he is said to have killed nearly a half-million people. At last he was captured and executed in 838 A.D. As Professor Browne remarks, "these doctrines (of Incarnation, Return, etc.) appear to be endemic in Persia, and always ready to become epidemic under suitable stimulus."(10)

One of the more recent of these heretical sects to appear in Iran, one that was rejected and hated by the Twelvers, was that of the Shaykhis,(11) the followers of Shaykh(12) Ahmad al-Ahsa'i, who died in 1826 A.D. The chief doctrines of this sect were the following: (1) Ali and the eleven Imams who followed him were divine beings; (2) there must always exist among men on earth some person who is in direct supernatural communication with the Hidden Imam, and acts as the channel of grace between him and the Shi'ites; and (3) there is no bodily Resurrection. Shaykh Ahmad was during his lifetime considered by his disciples to be the channel of grace between believers and the Bidden Imam, as was also his successor Sayyid(13) Kazim of Resht. Both of these men were sometimes given the title *Bab* (Gate), by which the first four intermediaries had been known. These Shaykhi teachers led their disciples to expect in the near future the appearance of the Hidden Imam himself. Some traditions said that he would return after a thousand years, and, according to the Muslim calendar, the time was at hand. Thus Shi'ites of all sects were impatiently awaiting his manifestation.

When Sayyid Kazim died in 1843, his disciples were in doubt for some time as to whom they should turn for guidance. Soon two rival claimants for the leadership

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appeared, and the Shaykhi brotherhood was torn in two. One faction followed Hajji(14) Karim Khan of Kirman, and continued to go by the name "Shaykhi." The other faction, which was the stronger, followed Sayyid Ali Muhammad of Shiraz, who adopted the title *Bab*. Hence his followers became known as Babis.(15)

Having described briefly the beliefs and hopes of many of the people of Iran in the first half of the 19th century, we are now prepared to proceed with the story of Sayyid Ali Muhammad the Bab, and the remarkable movement of which he was the central figure.

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## NOTES

1. From ancient times Muslims have pointed to the promise of the Paraclete, the Comforter (John 14: 16), as a prediction of Muhammad.
  2. Koran XVIII:110.
  3. Ibid., KXXIII:40.
  4. *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, E. G. Browne, English Int., p. XX.
  5. *Al-Babu 'l-Hadi Ashar*, William M. Miller, London, 1928, p. 75.
  6. "A. H." indicates year after the Hegira (622 A.D.) .
  7. *A'L-Babu'l-Hadi Ashar*, p. 81.
  8. *Aqa 'idu 'sh-Shi 'a*, pp. 73-88.
  9. Alfred Guillaume writes in *Islam* (p. 123): The philosophy of the Isma'ilis "is fundamentally neo-Platonistic, and on an emanation basis they build a theory of a chain of manifestations of the world intellect beginning with Adam, each adding to the instruction and achievements of his predecessor." This Isma'ili doctrine was taken over by the Bab and his followers.
  10. *A Literary History of Persia*, E. G. Browne, p. 311.
  11. *Nuqtat'ul-Kaf*, English Int., p. XXI.
  12. *Shaykh* (meaning elder) is a title used in Iran for one learned in Islamic studies.
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13. *Sayyid* (meaning lord) is a title used in Iran for a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.
14. Hajji is a title given to one who makes the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca.
15. The followers of the Bab usually referred to themselves as “The People of the *Bayan*,” the *Bayan* being the book of the Bab , as the *Koran* was the book of Muhammad.

## 2. Manifestation of the Bab

Sayyid Ali, Muhammad, better known to the world as the Bah, was born in Shiraz in the province of Pars in the southern part of Iran on October 9, 1820 (or possibly on October 20, 1819).(1) He was a descendant of the family of Muhammad the Prophet of Islam. His father, who was a cloth merchant in Shiraz, died when his son was quite young, and the child was left to the care of his maternal uncle, Hajji Mirza Sayyid Ali, who raised him. It is said that he was quiet and modest, and that as he grew older he became studious and pious. When he was about seventeen years of age he was sent to Bushire, the port on the Persian Gulf, to help with his uncle's business. There he earned his living by trade, and spent his spare time in his studies.

After several years the young man, disinclined to continue his Commercial pursuits, and becoming increasingly interested in matters of religion, left Bushire for Shiraz. After a short stay there he made a pilgrimage to the shrines of the Shi'ite Imams near Baghdad in Iraq, and remained for perhaps a year. While in Karbala, the site of the tomb of the Imam Husayn, grandson of Muhammad, who was martyred there in 680 A.D., Sayyid Ali Muhammad became acquainted with

Hajji Sayyid Kazim of Resht, the head of the Shaykhi movement, and was profoundly influenced by Kazim's lectures which he eagerly attended. He, in turn, by his gentleness and devotion, won the esteem and affection of his teacher and his fellow students. From Karbala Sayyid Ali Muhammad returned to Shiraz, and there he was married in 1842 A.D.

It is not possible to trace in detail the changes that took place in the mind and heart of Sayyid Ali Muhammad during these years. He had probably become disgusted by what he had seen and experienced of Islam as it was then practiced in Iran and Iraq. The lectures of Hajji Sayyid Kazim had centered his attention on the Imams, probably on the Hidden Imam in particular, who would surely come soon as the long- expected Mahdi to right the wrongs of the world. Long meditation and much prayer brought to him the conviction that he himself had been chosen by God for a special mission to men. Accordingly, on May 23, 1844, when he was twenty-four years of age, in his native city of Shiraz, he made the historic declaration which marked the beginning of the Babi-Baha'i movement.

For what mission did this young man think he had been divinely appointed, and what rank among the servants of God did he at this time claim for himself? without having a correct answer to these questions it is not possible to understand aright the significance of the events of the years that followed. The doctrine of the person and rank and mission of the Bab will be discussed more fully in Chapter IV. Here it will suffice to say that there have been at least three contradictory theories regarding the initial claims of the Bab.

The first theory is that Sayyid Ali Muhammad thought of himself as a Bab, or Gate, not in the Shi'ite sense of being a vicegerent of the Hidden Imam, and the intermediary between him and believers, but rather in being the forerunner of a much greater person for whom he would prepare the way, as John the Baptist did for Jesus Christ. Many Baha'is have said that the Bab thought his mission to be that of

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preparing people for the coming of Baha'u'llah, a major Manifestation of God, who would soon appear. As we will see later, this interpretation is not in harmony with the Bab's own statements, or with the facts of history.

The second theory is that Sayyid Ali Muhammad at the time of his declaration considered himself to be the successor to Hajji Sayyid Kazim, the deceased head of the Shaykhis, and to be like him a Bab, or Gate, to the knowledge of the Hidden Imam. It was therefore in the traditional Shi'ite understanding of the term that he gave himself the title "Bab." However, according to this theory, the Bab soon became convinced that he was himself the Hidden Imam who had appeared, and his followers quickly accepted him as such, and were prepared to fight for the "Lord of the Age," as loyal Shi'ites were expected to do whenever the Mahdi should appear. Then, several years later, when the Bab was in prison, he began (so it is said) to make the claim that he was not merely the Hidden Imam come to fill the world with justice, but was a major Manifestation of God, bringing in a new epoch in God's dealing with men, and taking the place of Muhammad the Prophet of Islam, as Muhammad was thought by Muslims to have taken the place of Jesus as the revealer of God to the world.

Differing from these two interpretations, the third theory is that Sayyid Ali Muhammad from the time of his declaration in 1844 believed himself to be a major Manifestation of Deity, and in his earliest writings made this claim for himself. Those who hold this theory believe that though he took for himself the Shi'ite terms and titles, such as Bah, Reminder, Proof of God, etc., he used these terms with a different connotation. It was because of this that he was usually misunderstood by his contemporaries, and also by many who later became students of his movement. It is of course possible that the Bab was not always consistent in his thinking and in his pronouncements. However, it is the opinion of this author that the third theory is closest to the truth, and that while Sayyid Ali Muhammad may at times have given the

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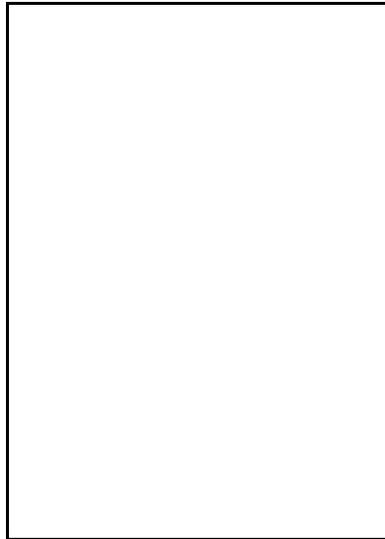
impression that he was a Bab in the traditional sense, or was the Hidden Imam who had returned after 1000 years, his real intent from the first was that he was the Gate of God, a Manifestation of God to men, greater than any which had preceded him. With this interpretation as the key to the understanding of the Babi movement, we will proceed with the story of Sayyid Ali Muhammad, leaving the consideration of the evidence for the validity of this interpretation to Chapter IV.

The first person to hear and attest the claim of the Bab was Mulla(2) Muhammad Husayn of Bushruieh,(3) a small town in eastern Iran. Mulla Husayn was a man of learning and influence and great force of character. He had been one of the followers of Hajji Sayyid Kazim, and in Karbala had become acquainted with the young student from Shiraz. About five months after the death of his master he came to Shiraz and called on his fellow student. To his great surprise, Sayyid Ali Muhammad quietly informed him of his mission, and by reading to him portions of his writings, and answering questions about difficult points of theology, convinced his guest that he was the possessor of supernatural knowledge.

The book from which the young claimant read was *Kit'ab-i-Awal* (First Book), also called the *Commentary on Sur'atu'l-Yusuf*, the *Best of Stories*, and other names. This book had been previously written by the Bab in Shiraz in the Arabic language. In it the author refers to himself as the "Bab," the "Reminder of God," the "Solace of the Eyes" (*Qurrat'l-Ayn*), the "Letter BA" and the "Point." He calls upon the monarchs of the world to convey his message to the peoples of the East and of the West. He informs the people of the earth that "whoever has obeyed the Reminder of God has in truth obeyed God." The author maintains the Koranic prescriptions, and appears to use the term "Bab" in the traditional Shi'ite sense. However, between the lines can be read higher claims, namely those of divine authority and an independent and universal mission.(4)

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Seyyid-Ali-Mohammad  
Dit le Bab  
By A.L.M. Nicholas, Paris, 1911

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After several days of doubt and indecision, **Mulla Husayn** enthusiastically professed faith in the Bab, and became the first to believe in him, and the Bab conferred on him the title "**Babu' l-Bab**" (Gate of the Gate). Gradually others believed, till there were eighteen disciples. The last of these was **Mulla Muhammad Ali of Barfurush, a city near the Caspian Sea**, to whom the Bab gave the title "**Quddus**" (Holy). (5) These **eighteen** were called by the Bab "**Letters of the Living.**" The meaning of this and other terms will be explained in Chapter IV.

The new disciples, who became known as "Babis," went forth to other cities and began to proclaim with the greatest boldness and zeal the advent of the Bab. Although Sayyid Ali Muhammad had not yet proclaimed in full the nature of his mission, it seems that the Letters of the Living understood clearly that he claimed to be the bringer of a new revelation, to be a new Manifestation of God. They read to the people the writings which the Bab had composed, and pointed to them as a proof of his divine mission, as the Muslims have always pointed to the verses of the Koran as the all-sufficient proof of the mission of Muhammad. Thus a great stir began to be made all over Iran, some people showing great eagerness to believe the good news, and others treating the Bab's apostles with disrespect and even blows.

While his followers were thus engaged, the Bah with one of the Letters set out near the end of the year 1844 for Mecca, where, according to one tradition, the Mahdi would make his appearance, and there he proclaimed himself to a few of the pilgrims. It is said that: he also addressed an Epistle, in which he declared his mission, to the Sharif of Mecca, who ignored it. Then he started back toward Shiraz, and early in the year 1845 reached Bushire.

While he tarried there, one of his zealous disciples, **Mulla Sadig** by name, in giving the call to prayer in a mosque in Shiraz, openly added the formula, "**I testify that Ali Muhammad is the Gate of God.**"(6) This innovation incensed many people, and several of the Babis who were held responsible for it were, at the order of

the governor, seized, severely beaten, and expelled from the city. Also horsemen were sent to Bushire to arrest the Bab and bring him to Shiraz. After his arrival in September, 1845, he was examined by the governor, who, fearing further trouble, kept him under observation.

To understand the attitude of the government officials toward Sayyid Ali Muhammad and the movement which his claim had inspired, it is necessary to remember that the putting forward of a claim to be the Mahdi has always in the history of Islam been connected with a political uprising. In arresting the Bab the authorities were only doing their duty in trying to forestall a probable upheaval. But in this attempt they were unsuccessful. The fire had already been kindled, and was spreading rapidly throughout the land. The people had long been in expectation of the coming of a deliverer. The government of the country under the Qajar Dynasty was corrupt and inefficient. The popular religion was full of superstition, and had failed to bring moral and spiritual renewal to the people of Iran. The

Muslim clergy were often both ignorant and evil men. The rich oppressed the poor, whose lot was pitiable. The time was indeed ripe for a revolution. And now, just 1000 years after the disappearance of the Twelfth Imam, the rightful ruler who at his return would bring in the new order, the cry was raised far and near that the Lord of the Age had come!(7) Bold and eloquent: apostles were going all over Iran proclaiming his advent, and multitudes were eager to believe on him. It is not surprising that the government became alarmed, and took drastic measures to nip the movement in the bud.

Sometime after the arrival of the Bab in Shiraz, the religious authorities also became greatly disturbed at the course of events. It is said that they brought pressure on the maternal uncle of the Bab to force his nephew to make a formal denial of his claims. The Bab, accordingly, went to one of the mosques in Shiraz, and to the great joy of the clergy read a statement, which they took to be a complete denial. **However, at a later time the Bab explained**

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**in writing that. what he meant in his denial of Babhood was that he was *not* a Bab in the traditional Shi'ite sense of the term, and he did not claim to be a Gate to the knowledge of the Hidden Imam. (8) Later he made it clear that his claim was to be a Gate of God, that is, a major Manifestation.**

In the early summer of the year 1846 cholera broke out in Shiraz, and in the confusion caused by this calamity the Bab managed to escape, and near the end of the summer of 1846 made his way to Isfahan. There he was received by Manuchehr Khan(9) the governor of the city, who showed him great kindness and afforded him hospitality and protection. In Isfahan he married a second wife, who lived sixty-six years after the death of her husband. The governor was a Christian and a native of Georgia in the Caucasus, whose native land had been conquered by the Qajars, and who had no love for the rulers of Iran. His motive for befriending the Bab may have been to embarrass the Qajar government as well as the Muslim Mullas. It is said that he offered the Bab a strong army with which to march against the Shah, should he desire to do so.(10) **This offer was declined, for the Bab apparently had no desire to fight. However, when his followers later began to use their swords, according to their account in self defence, he did not forbid them to do so.** (11) While in Isfahan the Bab met and talked with some of the leading Muslim clergy of the city. When asked by what sign or miracle he could establish the truth of his claim, he replied, "By verses, for without pause of pen I can in the space of three hours write a thousand sentences on any subject that I please." He was asked to write a commentary on a portion of the Koran, and when he did so it is said that, his hearers admitted that such power must be of God, being beyond the capacity of man.(12) About this time Mulla Husayn of Bushruieh, the Bab's First Letter and most zealous apostle, was in Teheran busily engaged in preaching the good news of the appearing of the Mahdi and inviting people to believe on him. He made a considerable stir in the capital, and it is said that he even tried to

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influence the King, Muhammad Shah Qajar, and his Prime Minister, Hajji Mirza Aqasi, but without success.(13) finally Mulla Husayn was ordered to leave Teheran.

In the early part of 1847 Manuchehr Khan died, and the governor who succeeded him, wishing to demonstrate his loyalty to the Shah, sent the Bab in the care of an escort of armed horsemen to Teheran. When the party reached Kashan a respectable merchant by the name of Mirza Jani bribed the guards to allow the Bab to atop in his house for two days. Mirza Jani later wrote the earliest and best history of the Babi movement., and in 1852 died as a martyr to the Babi cause. It is said that at a village near Teheran a number of believers came to meet the Bab, but the Shah did not permit the prisoner to enter the capital.

Instead, he was sent off to Maku, a strong fortress on the northwest frontier of Iran, some 500 miles distant from Teheran. It was hoped that if the Bab were kept out of light, the excitement which was being stirred up in his name would die down of itself.

On the long horseback journey across Iran, and later while he was in prison, the Bab conducted him- self with such mildness and patience that he won the hearts of more than one of his guards. The Babi historian is careful to explain that the Bab of his own free will suffered himself to be thus treated, far he was “fully able to effect his escape had he so pleased.” “Such a one is able to do what he wills, for his will is identical with God’s will.”(14) The Bab remained at Maku for. nine months (from the summer of 1847 to the spring of 1848). There he was treated kindly, and was allowed to communicate to a certain extent with his friends, many of whom came from distant places to visit him. As is evident from the *Bayan*, it was in Maku that the Bab declared he was the “Qa’im.”(15) He was then transferred to the Castle of Chihriq near Lake Rezaieh (Urumia), where he remained for two years and several months till his execution in 1850. Here his imprisonment was much more rigorous than it had been at Maku.

During the previous four years since his declaration in Shiraz, Sayyid Ali Muhammad had continued to

speak of himself as “Bab,” but he had been preparing his followers to accept the higher station which he now openly claimed for himself in declaring that the was the Qa’im.(16) As we will see in Chapter IV, in doing so he intended something different from and greater than what was meant in the Shi’ite usage of that term. The Bab spent much time while he was in prison in Maku and Chihrig in writing the books which were to guide his followers after he was taken away from them. He was a most prolific writer. Professor Browne published a list of some twenty-five volumes composed by the Bab,(17) but it is known that he wrote scores of other books, most of which have been lost.(18)

During the early part of his Chihriq imprisonment (summer of 1848) the Bab was summoned to Tabriz by Nasiru'd-Din Mirza, who was Crown Prince and Governor of the province of Azarbaijan, and was soon to become Shah of Iran. There he was examined by the Prince and the Mullas as to his claims. The accounts that have been given of this trial are contradictory, the Babi historians representing the Bab in the most favorable light, and the Shi'ite historians in the most unfavorable.(19) The account given by Browne, which has been generally accepted as correct, is based largely on the *Rawzatu's-Safa*, *Qisasu'l-Ulema* and *Nasikhu 't-Tawarikh*,(20) all written by Shi'ites.

According to these accounts, the Bab admitted that the writings which were being circulated in his name were his. When asked what he meant by the title "Bab" which he had assumed, he replied that it meant the same as in the tradition attributed to Muhammad, who said, "I am the City of Knowledge, and Ali is its Gate." The Bab also said, "I am that person for whose appearance you have waited a thousand years, namely, the Mahdi." When he was asked to give his name and age, the names of his parents, and his birth- place he did so, only to be reminded that this information did not agree with the names of the Mahdi and his parents, or with his age, which was one thousand years. The Mullas then asked him questions about jurisprudence and other sciences which he was unable to answer, in addition to many foolish questions, to

make him look ridiculous. The assembly then broke up, and the Shaykhu'l-Islam Hajji Mirza Ali Asghar took the Bab to his own house, where he had the bastinado inflicted on him.

Of this trial Browne writes:(21) "That the whole examination was a farce throughout, that the sentence was a foregone conclusion, that no serious attempt to apprehend the nature and evidence of the Bab's claim and doctrine was made, and that from first to last a systematic course of brow-beating, irony and mockery was pursued appear to me to be facts proved no less by the Muhammadan than by the Babi accounts of these inquisitorial proceedings."

In his book *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion* Browne published facsimilies and translations of several documents which have an important bearing on the significance of the trial of the Bab in Tabriz.(22) The first of these is a letter written by the Crown Prince to his father Muhammad Shah in Teheran, informing him of what had happened. His account of the trial is similar to that given above, and ends as follows: "When the discussion was concluded, His Reverence the Shaykhu'l-Islam was summoned, who had the Bab beaten and inflicted on him an exemplary chastisement, so that he apologized, recanted, and repented of and asked pardon for his errors, giving a sealed undertaking that henceforth he would not commit such faults. Now he is in prison and bonds awaiting the decision of His Most Sacred, Royal and Imperial Majesty." It was not long after this that Muhammad Shah died.

A second document, unsigned and undated, is, to quote Browne, "apparently in the Bab's handwriting and consists of a complete recantation of any superhuman claim which he

may have advanced or have appeared to advance. There is nothing to show to whom it is addressed, or whether it is the recantation referred to in the last paragraph of the preceding document or another.” However, Dr. Sa’eed Khan of Teheran wrote concerning this statement: “The original document is kept safely in the Majlis [Parliament

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in Teheran]. It was addressed, as the contents well groves, to the Crown Prince Nasserad-Din Mirza, afterwards Shah.” Dr. Sa’eed here refers to the original of this document, which bears no seal, and not to the “sealed undertaking” referred in the report of the Crown Prince.

The authenticity of the writing, signature or seal attached to a document may be verified only by submitting the document to examination by experts. Specimens of the Bab’s writing are extant with which the writing in this document might be compared, but as yet, so far as is known, this has never been done. However, presuming that the document is in the hand- writing of the Bab, we will quote the last part of it as translated by Browne,(23) and attempt to understand its meaning and purpose:

”Never have I desired aught contrary to the Will of God, and, if words contrary to His good pleasure have flowed from my pen, my object was not disobedience, and in any case I repent and ask forgiveness of Him. This servant has absolutely no knowledge connected with any [superhuman] claim. I ask forgiveness of God my Lord and I repent unto Him of [the idea] that there should be ascribed to me any [Divine] Mission. As for certain prayers and words which have flowed from my tongue, these do not imply any such Mission (*amr*), and any [apparent] claim to any special vicegerency for His Holiness the Proof of God (on whom be Peace.) is a purely baseless claim, such as this servant has never put forward, nay, nor any claim like u0to it. There- fore it is thus hoped from the clemency of His Imperial Majesty and Your Excellency, that they will exalt the head of him who continually prays for them by the favours and graces of their clement and compassionate court. Farewell.”

Since the terms “His Imperial Majesty” and “Your Excellency” appear in the document, it is clear that it was addressed, as Dr. Sa’eed Khan said, to the Shah and the Crown Prince.

The word *amr* which Browne translated “mission” means “a command, a matter, a thing.” It is therefore

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possible to change Browne’s translation “any [Divine] Mission” to “any matter.” Also, “any such Mission” may be translated “any matter at all.” According to Mr. Azal,(24) the alternative translation is the correct one in this context.

”The Proof of God” is a title from the Hidden Imam. As translated by Browne the Bab says, “any [apparent] claim to any specific vicegerency title for His Holiness the Proof of God.....is a purely baseless claim such as this servant has never put forward, nay, nor any

claim like unto it.” Mr. Azal states(25) that the correct translation is, “any pretension to special vicegerency for His Holiness the Proof of God is a purely baseless pretension, and this servant has not set up any such pretension, nor any other pretension.”

Assuming that this document was written by the Bab, the question is, what was it that he denied? If the claim of the Bab was, as has been generally thought, to be a Gate to, or the vicegerent of, the Hidden Imam, or to be the Imam come again, it is evident that the Bab does is this statement deny such a claim, and apparently makes a complete recantation. But if it is true, as was maintained in the early part of this chapter, that the Bab did not claim to be a Bab or an Imam in the traditional Shi’ite sense, but intentionally used the Shi’ite terms with a different meaning, then this apparent “recantation” is only a rejection of a position which he had never claimed for himself. His claim, as we have seen, was higher, He claimed to be the Gate of God, a major Manifestation.

However, if the Bab thought himself to be in truth the Gate of God, why did he say, “this servant has not set up any such pretension, *or any other pretension* “? And if he claimed to be a new Manifestation, the founder of a new world religion which would take the place of Islam, why did he not follow the example of his ancestor Muhammad, who from the beginning of his mission declared himself to be the Apostle of God, and state with unmistakable clarity who he was? Of course, if he had done so he would have been quickly condemned to death as a false prophet, because Muslims believe

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that no true prophet will ever come to take the place of Muhammad, the “Seal of the Prophets.” So perhaps the Bab hoped that by using the popular terms which were acceptable to the Shi’ites, he might win their allegiance, and prepare them for the later acceptance of his higher claims. If this was his purpose, it seems that among the people it met with some success. But the political and religious authorities were as unwilling to welcome an Imam as they were to accept a new Prophet or Manifestation in place of Muhammad. And so the Bab, whatever his claim might have been, was rejected.

During the trial proceedings the question arose as to whether or not the Bab was of sound mind. He, therefore, “requested that a physician might be allowed to feel his pulse, and certify to his perfect sanity.”(26) This was done, as we will recount later.

A third document which was translated and published by Browne is addressed to the Bab, and contains the *fatwa*, or sentence of the Muslim doctors of the law, It is formally sealed by two of them. The second seal is that of the Shaykhu’l-Islam who had the Bab beaten in his house. It reads as follows:

”Sayyid Ali Muhammad-i-Shirazi:

”In the Imperial Banquet-hall and August Assembly of His Highness the Crown Prince of the underlining Empire [of Persia] (may God aid, support and strengthen him.) and of a number of learned doctors, thou didst admit certain matters each one of which separately implied thy apostasy and justified thy death. The(27) repentance of an incorrigible apostate is not accepted, and the only thing which has caused the postponement of thy

execution is a doubt as to thy sanity of mind. Should this doubt be removed, the sentence of an incorrigible apostate would without hesitation be executed upon thee.”

Sealed by: Abu’l-Qasim al-Hasani al-Husayni  
Ali Asghar al-Hasani al-Husayni

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Professor Browne also published(28) a letter written by Dr. Cormick, “an English physician long resident in Tabriz, where he was highly respected,” to the Rev. Benjamin Labaree of the Presbyterian Mission in Rezaieh, Iran. As far as is known, this is the only extant record of the impression made by the Bab “on a cultivated and impartial Western mind.”

”You ask me for some particulars of my interview with the founder of the sect known as Babis. Nothing of any importance transpired in this interview, as the Bab was aware of my having been sent with two other Persian doctors to see whether or not he was of sane mind or merely a madman, to decide the question whether to put him to death or not. With this knowledge he was loth to answer any questions put to him. To all inquiries he merely regarded us with a mild look, chanting in a low melodious voice some hymns, I suppose.....He only once deigned to answer me, on my saying that I was not a Musulman and was willing to know something about his religion, as I might perhaps be inclined to adopt it. He regarded me very intently on my saying this, and replied that he had no doubt of all Europeans coming over to his religion. Our report to the Shah at that time was of a nature to spare his life..... On our report he merely got the bastinado, in which operation a *farrash*, whether intentionally or not, struck him across the face with the stick destined for his feet, which produced a great wound and swelling of the face. On being asked whether a Persian surgeon should be brought to treat him, he expressed a desire that I should be sent for, and I accordingly treated him for a few days, but in the interviews consequent on this I could never get him to have a confidential chat with me, as some Government people were always present, he being a prisoner.

”He was very thankful for my attentions to him. He was a very mild and delicate-looking man, rather small in stature and very fair for a Persian, with a melodious soft voice, which struck me much. Being a Sayyid, he was dressed in the habits of that sect..... In fact his whole look and deportment went far to dispose one

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in his favour. Of his doctrine I heard nothing from his own lips, although the idea was that there existed in his religion a certain approach to Christianity. He was seen by some Armenian carpenters who were sent to make some repairs in his prison, reading the Bible, and he took no pains to conceal it:, but on the contrary told them of it. Most assuredly the Musalman fanaticism does not exist in his religion, as applied to Christians, nor is there that restraint of females that now exists.”

And so the Bab, after this humiliating and painful experience in Tabriz, having received the *fatwa* of the religious authorities, was sent back to his prison in Chihriq to await the

decision of the government in Teheran. There he remained for about two more years, engaged in writing his books and epistles, setting forth his claims, and making laws for his Theocratic Society.

## **NOTES**

1. For important dates in the life of the Bab, refer to *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 221, 249-253, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 613, 854.
1. 2 *A Mulla is* a cleric of the religion of Islam.
2. Mirza Jani in *New History*, pp. 33-39.
3. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 530, 531, 831, 832, 835.
4. *New History*, pp. 39, 40, 399.
5. *Azal's Notes*, p. 839.
6. A Muslim historian in *O'.B.A.S.*, July, 1927, p. 451.
7. There is a Shi'ite tradition that the Twelfth Imam disappeared immediately after he succeeded his father in 260 A.H. It was in 1260 A.H. that Sayyid Ali Muhammad put forth his claim to be the Bab.
8. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 729, 733, 747, 832, 841. See Appendix II, #34.

9. *Khan* was formerly used in Iran as a title equivalent to Sir.
10. *New History* p. 211.
11. In the *Bayan* slaying is forbidden – *J.R.A.S.*, October 1889, pp. 927, 928.
12. *New History*, p. 209, *Bayan* quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 218, 219.
13. *Nasikhu 'Tawarikh*, quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 176.
14. *New History*, pp. 226, 227.
15. Mr. Azal is of the opinion that the *Bayan* and the *Seven Proofs* written by the Bab indicate that his declaration to be the Qa'im was made before he left Maku for Chihriq.
16. *New History*, p. 241, *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 290-295.
17. *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 335-347.
18. Browne in *J.R.A.S.*, July 1892, p. 452, *Materials*, pp. 198-208.
19. *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 277-290, *New History*, pp. 285-290.
20. *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 277.
21. *Ibid.*, 290.
22. *Materials*, pp. 247-260.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 256-258
24. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 847-850.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 848.
26. Mirza Jani, in *New History*, pp. 285, 354.
27. *Koran* (Rodwell's translation) III:84: "As for those who become infidels, after having believed, and then increase their infidelity – their repentance shall never be accepted."
28. *Materials*, pp. 260-262.

### 3. Babi Uprising And the Execution of the Bab

While the Bab was in prison in Maku and later in Chihriq his fiery missionaries were busy travelling about Iran calling upon the Shi'ites to accept him as their long-expected Mahdi. Toward the end of the year 1847 Mulla Husayn of Bushruieh, the First Letter of the Living, went eastward to the province of Khurasan, meeting everywhere with great success. In Nishapur, the city of Umar Khayyam, several members of the Muslim clergy believed, and it seemed for a time that the whole city might follow their example. But when he reached Meshed, the shrine city of the Imam Reza, the eighth in succession after Muhammad, whose tomb is visited annually by hundreds of thousands of Shi'ite pilgrims, the Mullahs rose against him and had him arrested. However, he managed to escape, and seeing that he was in peril he gathered a number of his converts about him, and proceeded westward in the direction of Teheran. Others joined him along the way, and his band became quite formidable. Before long a fight occurred with the Muslims in which the Babis were worsted, and they fell back on Shahrud and later proceeded toward the northern province of Mazanderan.(1)

In the meantime a number of Babi leaders had gathered in a place called Badasht near Shahrud.

Among them were Mulla Muhammad Ali of Barfurush, Quzratu'1-Ayn and Mirza Husayn Ali of Nur, the first two being among the Letters of the Living.(2) Qurratu'1-Ayn was the only woman included among the Letters.(3) She was learned and eloquent, and on becoming a disciple of the Bab (whom she had never seen) she gave herself unreservedly to the advancement of his cause. She travelled widely about the country, proclaiming boldly the advent of the Bab. By so doing she incurred the anger of her husband and her uncle (who was the father of her husband) in Gazvin, both of whom were influential Mullahs. Her uncle publicly denounced the Bab, and in consequence of this act was shortly afterward murdered in the mosque in the winter of 1847 by a Babi.(4) Qurratu'1-Ayn was then divorced by her husband,(5) after which it became advisable for her to flee from Qazvin to Teheran. From there she went to Khurasan, where she joined some of the Babi leaders. At that time it was contrary to Iranian custom for women to appear in public in company with men. Hence her freedom of travelling about the country with the Babi chiefs scandalized many people, and there was probably some ground for criticism of her disregard of convention. It appears that some of the Babis considered this period a time of freedom, for they thought they had been released from the restrictions of Islam, and the new laws to be given by the Bab had not yet been revealed or made known to them. The Babi historian Mirza Jani, stating his own opinion and probably that of other Babis also, says that the Bab is master of all men and women, and has the authority to interchange husbands and wives at will, "and hath given his servant and his handmaid to one another," probably indicating that he thought the Bab himself had united Qurratu'1-Ayn with Mulla Muhammad Ali of Barfurush with whom she was on intimate terms. Since she was a divorcee such a union would have been permitted by Muslim law. "And

this is assuredly sanctioned by the Holy Law,” continues Mirza Jani, “for our Master hath certainly as much authority as every other master hath over his slaves and handmaidens.”(6)

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At Badasht in the spring of 1848, while the Bab was still in Maku, there was held a conference of the Babi chiefs. In this gathering, according to Mirza Jani,(7) the abrogation of the laws of the previous Islamic dispensation was announced, thus indicating that these Babis considered the Bab to be not the Twelfth Imam who had returned but a new Prophet in place of Muhammad. Also it was stated that laws would be necessary only till the time when men have understood the true nature of the new dispensation. It is said(8) that Qurratu’l-Ayn at Badasht delivered a wonderfully eloquent and impressive address which moved her hearers to tears, in which she stressed the universal character of the Bab’s Manifestation, which had abrogated the previous dispensation, and the need for the emancipation of Iranian women. Many other people beside the Babis had crowded about to listen, and on hearing her appeal joined the Babi company. However, things were said and done at Badasht which caused even some of the Babis to stumble, and they took their departure. Those who remained seemed to have been intoxicated by the new teachings, and their conduct brought down on them the wrath of the people of the village. On being attacked by them the Babis dispersed peaceably, to meet again in Mazanderan.(9)

It was at Badasht that Mirza Husayn Ali received the title “Baha” (Splendor), given him according to Avareh the historian by Qurratu’l-Ayn,(10) or possibly by the other Babi leaders. It was not bestowed by the Bab, the sole grantor of titles. After the conference Qurratu’l-Ayn met the young Mirza Yahya (Subh-i-Azal), brother of Baha, who had not been at Badasht, and took him with her to Nur.(11)

It seems that Mirza Jani felt it necessary to defend the good name of the Babi cause against the criticism evoked by the Badasht conference, so he wrote:(12) “When people say a company [of Babis] went to Badasht and conducted themselves in an unseemly fashion, you may know that they were persons of no mean quality, but the elect of the world, that they did a great work, and that when men heap curses and

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censures on them it is because of their own benighted condition.”

The Babis moved into Mazanderan with the full intention of getting control of that province. The time was propitious, for on September 4, 1848 Muhammad Shah had died,(13) and the new king Nasiru’d-Din Shah had not yet ascended the throne, so there was no one prepared to oppose their designs. More than three hundred strong, they entered Barfurush armed. Thus provoking strife, they were soon attacked by the Muslims, and several of them were killed. Then the Babis began to fight. Mulla Husayn, the first to believe on the Bab, “notwithstanding his slender and fragile frame and trembling hand,” attacked the man who had killed the first Babi and “sliced him in two like a fresh

cucumber.” Then six other Muslims were killed. “One child was killed accidentally with its father, a dervish, whom they [the Babis] slew because he purposely gave them a misleading answer to a question which they had put to him as to their road.”(14) One of the Babis who was taken by the townfolk was buried alive by them in a well. After a pitched battle of several days duration in Barfurush, the Babis were allowed to retire.

Later in another skirmish the Babis came off victorious, after which they moved to a shrine in the forest called Shaykh Tabarsi. Here they strongly entrenched themselves, hoping to make this position their base for the conquest of Mazanderan. Many people had now joined them, and their numbers reached two thousand.(15) They carried on an active campaign of preaching from their fort, telling the people that the Bab was shortly to become master of the whole world, and bidding them accept him at once. Crowds assembled about the fort, some of whom entered and united with the Babis. Gobineau, relying probably too much on information given him by the Muslim historian Lisani’ 1-Mulk, says (16) that within the fort the Babis divided the world among themselves, apportioning to various ones the wealth of India, China and Europe. He says also that the Babis looked upon Mulla Husayn as God, and prostrated themselves in his presence;

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that he, in turn, told his principal officers that they were the “return” of various Imams, and assured them that if they were killed they would after forty days come back to the earth again; also that the Bab from his prison sent them frequent letters of encouragement; and that the fighters reached such a pitch of frenzy that they asserted that the Bab had predicted that after their conquest of Mazanderan they would march on Teheran, capture it, and slay ten thousand Muslims. We will consider in Chapter IV the extent to which these dreams which were attributed to the Babis conformed to the teaching and purposes of their Master.

Whether or not these reports from within the Shaykh Tabarsi fort were accurate, it is evident that to these zealots the hope of the establishment of the Babi world rule was very real. Moreover, since in their besieged fortress they generously shared their possessions with one another, it was rumoured outside that the Babis practiced community of goods and also of women.(17) It is, therefore, not surprising that this strange and aggressive movement was feared both by the rulers and also by the Muslim populace.

A small government force sent against the Babis, which had occupied one of the surrounding villages, was defeated by them in a night attack, the village was sacked, and one hundred and thirty soldiers and villagers were massacred.(18) Then a large force under the command of Prince Nahdi-Quli Mirza was sent from Teheran by the new Prime Minister with strict orders to destroy the Babis. The Prince wrote a letter to Mulla Muhammad Ali (Quddus) asking what he was fighting for. Quddus replied:(19) “As for thee, O Prince, let not the world and the presumption of youth lure thee. Know that Nasiru’ d-Din Shah is a false king, and his helpers shall be chastised in God’s fire. We are the king of truth, who seek after the good pleasure of God.”

The royal forces under the command of the Prince drew near the fort, but before they were able to attack it, the Babi leaders, choosing a time when the

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enemy were off their guard because of a severe snowstorm, fell upon them with a picked force of three hundred men. The Babis fought with such fury that they dispersed the whole army, and several of the princes and many of the soldiers were killed. The Babis lost but three men. Later the Babis made a night attack on their enemies. The plan of battle in such attacks was this:(20) “Mulla Husayn, followed by several other mounted men, would ride in advance while the rest of his companions followed on foot – they would put on felt caps, gird their swords to their belts, and, with bare feet and arms uncovered to the elbow, rush upon the very center of the hostile army with cries of ‘Ya Sahibu’z-Zaman’.’ [O Lord of the Age – another title for the Mahdi] . Then, with swords not worth more than five Krans which they had wrought for themselves within the castle, they would cut down men whose gear had cost a thousand Tumans [10,000 krans].”

This time also their attack met with complete success, and the royal army was again routed. But the Babis suffered an irreparable loss, for their commander was killed. Mulla Husayn, entitled Babu’ l-Bab, the first to believe on the Bab, and the strongest of the Babi leaders, was mortally wounded just in the hour of victory. He died in his saddle as his horse entered the gate of the fort (January 2, 1849).(21) It is said(22) that he before his death commanded his officers to be firm in their faith, and promised them that he would return to earth again in fourteen days. He bade his intimate friends to bury him secretly, fearing that the Muslims might find and mutilate his body, and it is said that he was buried near the shrine in the fort. After his death his brother Mirza Muhammad Hasan, a youth of eighteen, by the appointment of Quddus succeeded to his title and command.(23)

The royal forces under the command of the Prince drew near the fort. But before they were able to attack it, the Babi leaders, choosing a time when the death of Mulla Husayn was the beginning of the end for the defenders of Shaykh Tabarsi. Not only was their leader gone, but provisions began to run low, and the Babis were reduced to eating horse flesh and grass. Some of them deserted to the enemy,

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who, on hearing of the famine within the fort, began to attack more vigorously. The royal army had two cannons with which they battered down the Babi defences and set fire to all the sheds and wooden structures within the walls, forcing the besieged to dig tunnels in which to hide. But in spite of their reduced strength the Babis fought furiously to the last, realizing that they had little hope for mercy from enemies whom they had defied for nearly nine months. Finally, a new commander was sent by the Shah with fresh orders to destroy the Babis immediately. The survivors in the fort had nothing whatever to eat, and the royal troops were trying to scale the walls. But “the defenders of the castle, hungry and barefoot as they were, hurled themselves upon the enemy, sword in hand, and displayed that day a courage and heroism which the world had never seen before..... So fiercely did they drive back that mighty host that many, even of the bravest and boldest, were unable to escape from their hands.”(24)

The commander of the Shah's troops then sent a message to the Babis, asking on what terms they would surrender. Mulla Muhammad Ali replied that they would stop fighting if guaranteed their lives and permission to leave Mazanderan. Thereupon the officers of the royal army swore on the Koran that they would allow them to pass safely out of the province. Then two hundred and thirty men, the sole survivors of the two thousand people who had at first gathered in the fort, dragged themselves out, and walked to the royal camp. There they were given food to eat. When Mulla Muhammad Ali was questioned as to why he had raised this insurrection, he laid the blame on Mulla Husayn, and it is said that he even cursed Mulla Husayn.(25) The next day the Babis were ordered to lay down their arms, which they did with great reluctance, fearing treachery. Their fears were well grounded, for no sooner had they disarmed than their enemies massacred them with great cruelty, and their bodies were left to the wild beasts.(26) Then the royal troops, overjoyed by their victory, moved off to Barfurush, taking with them Mulla Muhammad Ali and several other Babi leaders. There in his native town

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Quddus was executed by the hand of one of the Muslim clergy, and it was said that his body was cut in small pieces and cast to the winds (Nay 22, 1849).(27) The other chiefs also were killed there. In this tragic conflict most of the eighteen Letters of the Living perished. Thus after nine months of fighting the first and most brilliant attempt of the Babis to establish their rule came to an end. According to the Muslim historian Lisanu' 1-Nulk, 500 of the Shah's soldiers and 1500 Babis lost their lives in this fratricidal conflict.(28)

Some time before the fall of Shaykh Tabarsi, Mulla Muhammad Ali called for assistance. Among those who tried to join him in the fort were Mirza Yahya (Subh-i-Azal) and his older brother Mirza Husayn Ali (Baha) and Mirza Jani of Kashan,(29) but before they reached the Babi headquarters they were all arrested by the local authorities. After being reviled and shamefully treated by the populace, they were brought before the Mullas, who inflicted the legal castigation on the others, but Mirza Yahya and Mirza Jani were not beaten. Later "God delivered them."(30) But soon, according to Mirza Jani,(31) Mirza Husayn Ali (Baha) "fell under suspicion, and it was said that he not improbably harboured designs of setting up a standard [on his own account], and so creating further disturbances in those regions. Therefore, the notables of the district [the local officials].....considered it expedient to send him to the capital." How different the later history of the Babi movement would have been had these three men been able to reach Shaykh Tabarsi, as they wished to do, and perished with Mulla Husayn and Mulla Muhammad Ali and the rest of the garrison!

One year after this defeat another serious Babi uprising took place in the city of Zanjan, which is situated between Teheran and Tabriz in Northwest Iran. (32) The moving spirit in this conflict was Mulla Muhammad Ali of Zanjan entitled the "Proof," who, on examining a writing of the Bab which was brought to his notice while the latter was still

in Shiraz, had immediately recognized him as the promised Mahdi, and had proclaimed him so effectively in the mosque in

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Zanjan that three thousand people believed. The Babi community there then became so strong and bold that the government authorities began to fear for the consequences. For some time nothing happened to produce a riot, but at last one of the Babis drew a knife on a Muslim. This led to blows, and soon the whole city was in turmoil. The Babis, drawing their swords and shouting "O Lord of the Age.", assembled in the center of the city. There they built strong defences, and prepared to stand a siege. On May 13, 1850 the Muslims attacked them, but were unable to dislodge them.

Then the Shah sent regiment after regiment of royal troops till at last thirty thousand were said to have camped around Zanjan. The Babis defended themselves with the same frenzied courage which had characterized the garrison of Shaykh Tabarsi. One man would sometimes put to flight a whole mob of the enemy. The women also armed themselves, and fought as furiously as the men. Both the Babis and the Muslims vied with one another in the savagery of their warfare, giving no quarter to prisoners, and mutilating the bodies of the slain. The fighting dragged on for months, and did not end till late in the year 1850, six months after the execution of the Bab. When their leader Mulla Muhammad Ali died of a bullet wound on December 30, 1850, the Babis who remained alive sued for peace. As at Shaykh Tabarsi, the commander of the royal armies promised the Babis their lives if they would surrender. However, when they did so they were all put to the sword.

Sometime during the year 1850, before the execution of the Bab,(33) the Babis meditated an uprising in Teheran itself. One of them revealed the plot, and the government officials, terrified by the thought of what might occur if the Babis should actually take up arms in the capital, frantically arrested all members of the movement who could be found. Thirty-eight men were captured, and all were offered their release provided they would renounce the Bab. Thirty-one of them agreed to do so, but seven refused, affirming that they rejoiced to offer their lives as a sacrifice in the way of their beloved Master. One of the seven

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was the Bab's own maternal uncle, Mirza Sayyid Ali. When led out to be killed in the public square in Teheran, they were again urged to deny their faith in the Bab, and so save their lives, but all remained firm. "This drop of blood – this poor life – is naught," cried one of them; "were I possessed of the lordship of the world, and had a thousand lives, I would freely cast them before the feet of his friends!" All met their death with fearless courage and joy.(34)

After recounting the details of this event, the Babi historian proceeds to point out the special value of the testimony given by the Seven Martyrs. He says (35) they were men

who had enjoyed the respect and consideration of all; they represented all the more important classes in Iran – divines, dervishes, merchants, shop-keepers, and government officials; they died fearlessly, willingly, almost eagerly, declining to purchase life by that mere lip-denial which, under the name of *taqia* (concealment) is recognized by the Shi'ites as a perfectly justifiable subterfuge in case of peril; they were not driven to despair of mercy as were those who died at Shaykh Tabarsi; and they sealed their faith with their blood in the public square of the capital of Iran. Whatever one may think of the Babi movement, he cannot but feel sympathy and admiration for men so courageous and so devoted to their Master.(36)

During the same year (1850) serious Babi uprisings, which we need not describe in detail, occurred at Yazd and Niriz in central Iran,(37) the moving spirit of which was Sayyid Yahya of Darab, who with 150 other Babis lost his life.(38) Suffice it to say that the Shah, who was young and had recently come to the throne, and his Prime Minister Mirza Taqi Khan, were deeply concerned over the condition of the kingdom, for it seemed probable that the fire which had raged in Mazanderan and three other places, and had been extinguished with such difficulty and with so much bloodshed, might burst forth in Teheran and destroy the state.

Hence, while the fighting was going on in Zanjan, it was decided that the Bab himself must be gotten rid

of, in the hope that when he was gone his followers would cease to fight. Gobineau makes it clear(39) that it was not because of his religious views that the Bab was put to death, for the Iranian government has seldom taken any interest in suppressing heretics and free thinkers, of whom there have been many in that land. Rather, the Bab was sentenced to death because it seemed to the authorities that his execution was necessary for the good of the state. Nasiru'd-Din Shah when he was Crown Prince had presided at the trial of the Bab in Tabriz, and knew that the Muslim clergy had pronounced him an apostate worthy of death. But, though two years had passed since that trial, the Shah had not ordered his execution, and probably would never have done so, had not the Babi uprisings occurred. It seems that the Bab had not incited his fiery followers to fight, and hence should not be held personally responsible for what they did. Nevertheless, it had been his claims to be the Bab and the Mahdi which had caused these bloody wars, and had resulted in the deaths of thousands of the Shah's subjects, both Babi and Muslim. It is understandable, therefore, that the authorities responsible for the peace of the country should want to remove from the scene the one who in their opinion had occasioned all this strife. Banishment had not proved effective, so the Bab must die.

Accordingly, orders were issued from Teheran by the Prime Minister for the Bab to be brought from his prison at Chihrig to Tabriz and there publicly executed.(40) On reaching Tabriz he was given a form of trial by a civil tribunal, so that it could be stated officially that he was being put to death for apostasy. The members of this court accused him of claiming divinity for himself, and of writing a Koran of his own and promulgating it among the people, and they challenged the Bab to call upon God to send down a revelation to him in support of his claims. It is said that the Bab thereupon uttered many

verses so similar to the Koran that his enemies were confounded. (41) His fate, however, had already been decided, and the authorities only wished to humiliate him as much as possible, so as to dispel the halo which, in the eyes of many people, had gathered about his head. The

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poor prisoner was therefore dragged about the city and treated most shamefully by the mob, after which he was locked in prison with several of his disciples for three days.

On the night before his execution the Bab sat talking with his friends. "Tomorrow they will slay me shamefully," he said. "Let one of you now arise and kill me – for it is far pleasanter to die by the hands of friends than of foes." His disciples all hesitated, except one, Mirza Muhammad Ali, who arose to obey his Master. The others stopped him, rebuking him for such presumption. "This act of mine," he replied, "is not prompted by presumption, but by unstinted obedience." The Bab smiled and approved his devotion, and then said to all, "Tomorrow when you are questioned, repudiate me and renounce my doctrines, for this is the command of God." (42) The repudiation coupled with renunciation was especially impressed upon the Bab's amanuensis Sayyid Husayn. (43) All agreed to do so, except Mirza Muhammad Ali (also referred to as Mirza Aqa), (44) who begged to be allowed to die with his Master, and at last the Bab acquiesced. Next day the family and wife and little children of this devoted disciple came to him and besought him to recant, but he refused to do so. The other prisoners in obedience to the Bab recanted, and were released. Thus it became possible for Sayyid Husayn to carry documents and relics of the Bab to Subh-i-Azal, as the Bab had directed. (45)

On July 8, 1850, the Bab and Mirza Muhammad Ali, bare footed and clothed only in their underwear, were led out to execution. (46) They were first taken to the houses of three Muslim clerics from whom a sentence of execution for apostasy according to Islamic law was procured. The two condemned prisoners were then dragged through the streets, subjected to every sort of humiliation, and treated most shamefully. They were then led to the barracks in the Citadel for their execution. The execution was carried out by firing squads of soldiers, who fired three volleys. The first firing party was composed of Christian soldiers, and the second of Muslims.

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In the presence of a great crowd Mirza Muhammad Ali was suspended by ropes from the parapet, and his body was riddled by the first volley of bullets. Then a second volley was fired by the same firing squad at the Bab, who was similarly suspended. When the smoke rolled away, "a cry of mingled exultation and terror arose from the spectators – for the Bab had disappeared from sight! It seemed, indeed, that his life had been preserved by a miracle, for, of the storm of bullets which had been aimed at him, not one had touched him; nay, instead of death they had brought him deliverance by cutting the ropes which bound him, so that he fell to the ground unhurt."

Had the Bab been able to maintain his presence of mind and rush out alive and unhurt among the crowd, the spectators would without doubt have hailed his escape from death as a miracle of God, and would have eagerly espoused his cause. No soldier would have dared shoot at him again, and uprisings would have occurred in Tabriz which might have resulted in the overthrow of the Qajar dynasty. However, dazed by the terrible experiences he had passed through, the Bab took refuge in one of the rooms of the barracks. There he was soon found, "was seized, dragged forth, and again suspended; a new firing party was ordered to advance (for the men who had composed the first refused to act again); and before the spectators had recovered from their first astonishment, or the Babis had time to attempt a rescue, the body of the young prophet of Shiraz was riddled with bullets."

What became of the bodies of the two martyrs"? According to some accounts, they were dragged through the streets, and then thrown outside the city walls to be devoured by the dogs and wild beasts.(47) But the Babi historian Mirza Jani writes:(48) "The bodies of the two victims were exposed for two days, after which they were buried. Some of the Babis exhumed them, wrapped them in white silk, and, according to the Bab's own instructions, brought them to Subh-i-Azal, who, with his own hands, buried them in a certain spot..... This matter is at present kept secret, and it is

unlawful for any one who has knowledge of it to divulge it till such time as the Lord may see fit to make it known." These words were written not long after the death of the Bab. The later Babi account states(49) that the bodies were secured by a loyal disciple by the name of Sulayman Khan, who was afterward killed in the 1852 massacre of Babis in Teheran;(50) were sent to

Teheran in the keeping of Mulla Husayn of Khurasan, who also was killed in the Teheran massacre of 1852; (50) and were buried in one coffin secretly.

It would seem most improbable at a time of turmoil like this that the Babis of Tabriz, even by the payment of a large sum of money to the authorities, should have been able to get possession of the earthly remains of their beloved Master and his loyal disciple.

However, Mr. Azal, who has carefully studied the evidence,(51) is convinced that the bodies were secured by the payment of money, were later sent to Subh-i-Azal, who interred them together in the shrine of Shah Abdu'1-Azim near Teheran, where many dead were buried, and later took them to the shrine of Imamzadeh Ma'sum. Afterward they were taken away by the followers of Baha'u'llah.

Professor Browne wrote to Subh-i-Azal to get his testimony as to what became of the Bab's body, and his reply in Persian has been translated as follows: (52) "When the Bab was imprisoned in Chihriq he wrote to say that 'the place of Shah Abdu'1-Azim is a good land, by reason of the proximity of *Wahid* which has the same numerical equivalent as Yahya, the name of Subh-i-Azal] for keeping'..... After the martyrdom of the Bab his body was kept in the house of Sulayman Khan and had that Trust [the body] conveyed to Teheran with the assistance of two believers.....I was unwilling to keep that Trust in the precincts of Shah Abdu'1-Azim, as graves of the dead were daily ripped up and others were interred in them. Therefore I deposited it in a spot in the shrine of Imamzadeh Ma'sum. Two persons had knowledge of that spot..... After the 'pretender' [Baha] had set

up his pretensions he assigned certain persons to steal the Trust, and the Trust was stolen.”

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According to this account, the body of the Bab was transferred from one resting place to another, and found little rest. According to the later Baha'i accounts, Abdu'l-Baha had the body brought to Akka in 1899, and arranged for its final interment in a beautiful mausoleum on Mt. Carmel near Haifa in 1910. It is said that the body was laid facing Mecca, as is the Muslim custom of burial. But who can prove that the remains conveyed to Akka and buried on Mt. Carmel were those of Sayyid Ali Muhammad the Bab?

### NOTES

1. *New History*, pp. 42-44, Mirza Jani in *New History*, pp. 360-361.
2. For explanation of the “Letters” see Chapter IV.
3. The story of Qurratu'l-Ayn is related in *New History*, pp. 270-284. See also Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, 309-314.
4. *Qisasu 'l-Ulama*, quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 198, Subh-i-Azal in *New History*, pp. 403-404.
5. *Azal's Notes*, p. 859.
6. *New History*, pp. 357-358.
7. Mirza Jani in *New History*, pp. 357-359, Browne in *New History*, pp. 359-360, *Gobineau I*, pp. 208-211.
8. *Gobineau I*, pp. 208-211, Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 357, *Azal's Notes*, p. 862.
9. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 359.
10. Avareh in *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, g. 28. The bestowal of the title “Baha” by Qurratu'l-Ayn is confirmed by Abdu'l-Baha's aunt in her reply to him inviting her to become a Baha'i – *Tanbihu 'na'imin*, p. 5. See *Azal's Notes*, p. 865 and *Materials*, pp. 226-227.
11. Mirza Jani in *New History*, pp. 360, 378.

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12. *Ibid.*, pp. 358-359.
13. Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 32, note 2.
14. Mirza Jani in *New History*, pp. 50, 361.
15. *Gobineau I*, pp. 217-219.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-222.
17. Browne in *New History*, p. 361, note 1, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 863-864.
18. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 362, *New History*, p. 59.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 362, Persian Introduction to *Nuqtatu'l Kaf*, p. Sim Ha.
20. *New History*, p. 69.
21. *Mirza Jani in New History*, p. 363.
22. *Gobineau I*, pp. 244-245.
23. *New History*, pp. 95, 363.

24. Ibid., p. 84.
  25. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 365.
  26. *New History*, pp. 86-87, *Gobineau I*, pp. 261-262, *Subh-i-Azal in New History*, 409-410.
  27. *New History*, pp. 88, 89, 366, *Gobineau I*, pp. 263-264.
  28. *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 179.
  29. Mirza Jani in *New History*, pp. 378-380, *Azal's Notes*, p. 490.
  30. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 379, *New History*, p. 65.
  31. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 380.
  32. *New History*, pp. 144 ff., *Mirza Jani in New History*, p. 371, *Browne in O'.B.A.S. 2997*, pp. 761-827, *Gobineau I*, pp. 272-290.
  33. *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 217, *New History*, p. 261, *Mirza Jani in New History*, p. 370.
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34. *New History*, pp. 250-267, *Mirza Jani in New History*. 369-370, *Browne in A Traveller's*, pp. 211-217.
  35. Summary by Browne from *New History*, p. 266, in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 216.
  36. Since in many of the more recent Baha'i publications reference has been made to "the 20,000 Baha'i martyrs" in Iran, it is necessary to remind the reader that none of those who gave their lives in the struggles described in this chapter were Baha'is. They were all Babis, and owed no allegiance to Baha. And the number of the Babis who lost their lives was probably less than 5,000.
  37. *New History*, pp. 116-131, 370.
  38. Browne in *New History*, p. 280, note 2, *Nasikhu't-Tawarikh* quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 183-184.
  39. *Gobineau I*, pp. 300-303.
  40. *New History*, pp. 292-293, *Gobineau I*, pp. 292-307.
  41. *New History*, pp. 294-296, *Nasikhu't-Tawarikh*, quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 182.
  42. *New History*, p. 298.
  43. *Subh-i-Azal*, *New History*, p. 412.
  44. Aqa is a title used in Iran equivalent to Sir or Mr.
  45. *New History*, p. 299, *Mirza Jani in New History*, p. 381, *Testamentary Dispositions of the Bab addressed to Subh-i-Azal*, in *Azal's Notes*, pp. 550-880, *Letter of Dr. Sa'eed Khan to the author*. Sayyid Husayn was killed in the Teheran massacre of 1852 (note #50).
  46. Browne in *A Year Amongst the Persians*, p. 64, *New History*. 299-308, *Mirza Jani in New History*, pp. 382-383, Browne in *New History*, p. 301, note 1, *Haji Sulayman Khan to Mirza Jani in New History*, pp. 309-310.
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47. *Gobineau I*, p. 310, Avareh in *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 142.

48. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 383.
49. *New History*, pp. 311-312, *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 46, note 1.
50. Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*. 329 (4) and 332 (26) and 330 (13).
51. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 884-889, *Epistle of the Bab to Sulayman Khan in J.R.A.S. July 2892*, p. 481, *Browne in A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 110, note 4.
52. *Azal's Notes*, p. 889, which contain an appendix with the Persian text of Subh-i-Azal's statement, in the handwriting of his son Mirza Ridwan Ali. See *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 46, note 1. See also Appendix II, #37.

#### 4. The Doctrines and Decrees of the Bab

Before continuing the history of the Babi movement after the death of its founder, we must pause to give an account of the Bab's teachings and precepts. This is no easy task, for the writings of the Bah in which his doctrines are expounded were very numerous, and the style is sometimes most difficult. The Bab wrote in both Persian, which was his mother tongue, and in Arabic the language of the Koran, which to most of the people in Iran was a foreign and largely unknown tongue. Many of the Bab's books were not preserved by his followers, but there are a number of volumes which are still in existence today. These are rare, and with a few exceptions, are in manuscript and have never been translated or printed.(1) Had it not been for the labors of several western scholars, notably the Comte de Gobineau, Professor Edward G. Browne and N. A.L.M. Nicholas, little would have been known in the west of the beliefs and ideas which the Has left as a heritage to his followers. To Browne, the Comte de Gobineau, and particularly to Mr. Jelal Azal, I am indebted for most of the material in this chapter.

To his earlier books the Bab gave distinctive names, such as "Commentary on the Suratu'I-Yusuf." However,

most of the later writings were included under the term "*Bayan*" (Utterance, Exposition). The Bab himself classified all his writings under five categories:(2) 1) Verses in the style of the Koran, 2) Prayers and supplications, 3) Commentaries, 4) Scientific treatises, and 5) Persian treatises. According to Browne,(3) the book known as the "*Persian Bayan*" is "the most systematic, the most coherent, and the most intelligible of the Bab's works." Professor Browne has published in English a very extensive analytical Index of its contents which fills forty large pages, from reading which it is possible for one who does not know Persian to gain some conception of the nature and extent of the Bab's amazing cogitations. (4) The Bayan is, says Browne, a conglomeration of doxologies, mystical rhapsodies, expositions, admonitions, precepts, doctrine and prophecy, much of which was to him "of almost inconceivable incomprehensibility."

In the opinion of the Bab, however, the Bayan has no equal, for it is incomparable and inimitable.(5) He says that if all creatures on earth should unite, they could not produce the like of it. It is identical in essence with the Gospel and the Koran. Whoever believes in it is in Paradise. It includes all things. It must be written in the best handwriting (or may be printed), and carefully preserved. It is to be bound in nineteen volumes. The believer is to read 700 verses of the Bayan night and morning, and if he cannot do this he is to mention God 700 times by saying "*Allahu Azhar*" (God is Most. Manifest).

For the historian, one of the most important matters to be considered in a study of the Bab's teachings is his claim for himself. In Chapter I it was explained that the Shi'ite Muslims of Iran and Irag believe in five or six Great Prophets, who in succession brought

Cod's laws to men and established God's rule on earth, the last and greatest of whom was Muhammad. They also believe that the Imams, a line of twelve (or seven) descendants of Muhammad, have the same rank as Muhammad, and differ from him only in that they did not bring new laws to replace the Koran,

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which are to be in effect till the Day of Resurrection. Shi'ites eagerly await the return of the last Imam, whom they call the Mahdi and the Qa'im, who is said to be alive and in hiding somewhere. The beliefs of the Shaykhis also were mentioned, who attributed divinity to the Imams, and held that there must always be on earth one who is a channel of grace between the Hidden Imam and believers, and who understood the Resurrection predicted by Muhammad not as physical but spiritual. How did Sayyid Ali Muhammad of Shiraz relate himself to these various conceptions?

As was explained in Chapter II, convinced that he had a divine mission, Sayyid Ali Muhammad appropriated to himself all the names and titles which Shi'ites had used in connection with their beliefs regarding the Absent Imam, such as Bab, Mahdi, Proof of God, Remnant of God, etc. As a result, some of those who believed on him as well as most unbelievers assumed that he was using these terms in the sense in which the Shi'ites used them, and that he was claiming to be either a Gate to the knowledge of the Absent Imam, or else the Imam himself whose coming had been so long awaited.

There are indications, however, that from the beginning of his mission the young man from Shiraz in making use of Shi'ite terminology intended something different, and did not limit his mission to Shi'ite conceptions and expectations. In his *First Book* written in Arabic before his declaration in Shiraz on May 23, 1844, Sayyid Ali Muhammad while calling himself the Bah suggested that he had a universal mission, claimed to be the "Point"(6) (the significance of which term will be explained later), and commanded the entire company of monarchs to convey his message to the peoples of the East and the West.

Moreover, there was no expectation among the Shi'ites that the Hidden Imam would on his appearing give new laws to men, for it was assumed that the Koranic laws were God's final revelations and would never be replaced by others. But when Sayyid Ali Muhammad wanted to convince men that he had a divine mission, what did he do? He did just what the Prophet

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Muhammad had done, he pointed to his verses and writings, saying that no one else could produce the like of them. He also began to issue laws and regulations for all aspects of the life of men, both religious and social and civil, as Muhammad had done. And his verses in Arabic were in imitation of the Koran, with which he said his Bayan was identical. In his book the *Seven Proofs* he argued that if it was a miracle, as Muslims agree it was, that Muhammad produced a small book (the Koran) in his native tongue, it is surely a greater miracle that a young man from Iran should be able in a few hours to write thousands of verses in Arabic, which to him was a foreign language, and produce a huge book like the Bayan, which surpasses the Koran in spiritual knowledge and

eloquence. The Bab definitely considered himself to be not an Imam, but a Prophet superior to Muhammad. (7)

It seems clear that the Bab's chief disciples early came to understand that their Master was greater than an Imam. When Mulla Sadiq inserted his name in the call to prayer (Chapter II), he proclaimed "Ali Muhammad is the Gate of God (*Babu'llah*)," that is, the Manifestation of God. It is said that at the Badasht Conference Qurratu'l-Ayn explained to the other Babis that the Bab had come to inaugurate a new prophetic dispensation, which had taken the place of the Koranic dispensation inaugurated by Muhammad, and that some of those present therefore considered themselves free from the Islamic regulations.

From his declaration in 1844 till 1848 Sayyid Ali Muhammad made himself known as the Bab. Then, while still in Maku, he proclaimed that he was the Qa'im and Mahdi.(8) It has been generally supposed that he was using these terms with their Shi'ite meaning, and that he who had till now claimed to be the Gate (Bah) to the Hidden Imam at this time put forth a higher claim, namely, that he was himself the Imam, who was commonly called the Mahdi or Qa'im. However, in making this declaration the Bab adopted the title Qa'im (He Who Ariseth) with a new meaning, for in the Bayan he stated that it meant "He who prevails over all men, whose arising is the Resurrection."(9) The Bayan

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makes it quite clear that the Bah claimed to be a Major Prophet.(10)

What then of the orthodox Shi'ite belief that Muhammad is the last of the Great Prophets? Here the Bab followed the Shaykhis who maintained that the Shi'ites were mistaken. They held that when Muhammad predicted the Day of Resurrection, he was really fore-telling the coming of another Prophet who would give new life to the spiritually dead people of the world. The Bah claimed to be such a Prophet, and not merely a Great Prophet, but the Manifestation of the Divine Will. For an understanding of this doctrine an explanation is necessary.

It is known to students of religion in the Middle East that much of the teachings of the early Gnostics and Neo-Platonists was carried over into Islam, and even today occupies a central place in the philosophy of the Sufis and Hukama of Iran. The Bab based his system of doctrine upon these ancient Gnostic conceptions, so that there was little that was new in the Babi theology.(11) According to the Bab's doctrine, God while comprehending all things is himself incomprehensible. Since the Divine Essence cannot be known by man, "knowledge of God" means only "knowledge of the Manifestation of God." From time to time in history, God's Primal Volition (*Mashiyya*), which is an emanation from the Divine Essence, and by which all things were created, manifests itself in Prophets who appear among men, and to know these Manifestations is to know God. The Divine Volition when manifested in the Prophet is called the *Nuqta* (Point) of each prophetic cycle.

For an understanding of this basic Babi belief we can do no better than to quote several portions of *Azal's Notes*:(12) "The Divine will (*Irada*) can in no wise be revealed except through the will of the Volition (*Mashiyya*)..... There is One Volition which manifests

itself through One Author (the Manifestation) in each theophanic cycle. There can be no two Suns of Truth and no two Authors in one theophanic cycle..... All that is in the macrocosm is in the Bayan; all that

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is in the Bayan is summed up in a prescribed verse; all that is in the verse is synthesized in the formula *Bismillah* ['In the Name of God', a phrase frequently found in the Koran and often repeated by Muslims]; and all the letters in *Bismillah* are created from the Point of the [Arabic] Letter BA in *Bismillah*, and, returns unto it. The Letter BA is composed of a single straight line with a diacritical point directly beneath it (–). The Point differentiates the Letter BA from its fellows [other letters], and is in reality its essence. This Point (*Nuqta*) is the Station of the Volition of the Divine Manifestation. The Author of the Age is the Point. The Point is like the Sun, and the other Letters of *Bismillah* are like Mirrors placed before it. The whole Bayan is but the evolution of this Point.(13) That is why the Bab calls himself the Point, the Primal Point, the Letter BA, the Point of the Bayan..... The

Author of the Age, who is the Bab in the Bayanic dispensation, is the Living (*Hayy*).” Thus, according to this doctrine, Adam, who was supposed by the Bab to have lived 12,210 years before him, was the Point of the first cycle of which we have knowledge (there were other worlds before Adam). Later, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad appeared, each one being the Point of his particular Manifestation. These Major Manifestations are all one, as the sun of yesterday is one with the sun of today. The mortal form of the Manifestation changes, but the Volition is the same. The earlier Manifestations all exist for the later ones, each is more perfect than its predecessor, and each attests the preceding Manifestation and predicts the one to follow. The Bab compares the Major Manifestations to a boy, who as Adam was a mere embryo, as Jesus was ten years of age, as Muhammad was eleven, and as the Bah was twelve years of age. From this we see that the Bah thought the Manifestations appeared about every one thousand years (a thousand years representing one year in the life of the boy), and he considered himself to be the greatest Manifestation which had till then appeared. As Browne says:(14) “The theory now advanced by the Baha’is that the Bah. considered himself as a mere herald or forerunner of the Dispensation which Baha’u’llah was shortly to establish, and was to him

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what John the Baptist was to Jesus Christ, is..... devoid of historic foundation. In his own eyes, as in the eyes of his followers, Mirza Ali Muhammad inaugurated a new Prophetic Cycle, and brought a new Revelation, the Bayan, which abrogated the Koran, as the Koran had abrogated the Gospels.”

The Bab did not imagine, however, that his would be the final Manifestation. As the Sun of Truth had risen again and again in ages past, each Manifestation more perfect than the one which preceded it, so it would continue to arise in ages to come. Hence the Bab spoke of the Prophet in the next Resurrection as “He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest.” One of the striking features of the Bab’s writings is the frequent reference which is made to this

greater Manifestation which is to follow him. In the *Persian Bayan* alone the term He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest is found some seventy times. (15) The People of the Bayan, as the followers of the Bab are called, must all accept Him, and not be like the Jews who rejected Jesus, and the Christians who rejected Muhammad, and the Muslims who have rejected him the Bah. He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest is divine, and is one with the Point of the Bayan and all other Manifestations. All previous Manifestations were created for Him, and one verse revealed by Him is better than a thousand Bayans. If one should hear a single verse from him, and recite it, it is better than that he should recite the Bayan a thousand times. **He only can abrogate the Bayan.**(16) He will arise suddenly, and no one can claim falsely to be He. Only God knows the time of His coming, but the Bab refers to the time by the number of the words *Ghiyath* and *Mustaghath*. Each letter of the Arabic alphabet has a numerical value, and the letters of these words have the value of 1511 and 2001 respectively. It is clear, therefore, that the Bab expected the next Manifestation after 1511 and before 2001 years.

In the *Persian Bayan* we read:(17) “If He shall appear in the number of *Ghiyath* and all shall enter in, not one shall remain in the Fire [unbelief]. If He tarry until [the number of] *Mustaghath*, all shall enter in, not one shall remain in the Fire, but all

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shall be transformed into His Light [belief].” When He comes the Tree of the Bayan will bear its fruit. It is clear that the Bah assumed that his dispensation would last as long as those of the previous Major Manifestations. He expected that Iran would adopt his religion and laws, and he wrote detailed regulations for the conduct of the Babi Theocratic Society.

In every Manifestation of Deity, the person or “Point” has two stations: 1) the station of divinity in the realm of names and attributes, where he is the Mouthpiece of God, and says, **as the Bab did: “Verily, I am God; there is no other God but me; all beside me is my creation;”**(18) and 2) the station of humanity in which he as a creature warships God. **The Bab as the Point embodied in himself the whole Manifestation. He was dependent on God only, and all others were created by him and were dependent on him.** His followers usually referred to him as “His Holiness the Point.” He was also called “The Reminder,” “The Most High” and “The Tree of Truth.”(19) One of the many titles for the Twelfth Imam was “The Remnant of Gad,” and this title also the Bab used for himself.(20) One of the interesting and unique aspects of the Bab’s system was the order of “The Letters of the Living,” who were the first eighteen persons to believe on him. He, the Sun of Truth., the Living (*Hayy*), shone on them and gave them life,(21) and they became **Mirrors reflecting his light. There were 18 Letters, because the numerical value of the Arabic letters in *Hayy* is 18.** The Letters were not a part of the Major Manifestation, as has been sometimes erroneously supposed, but were Minor Manifestations. The Bab was not dependent on them, but they depended on him the 18 Letters with the Bah make up the **number 19, which is the numerical value of the Arabic letters in *Wahid* (One, Unique, i.e., God).** The names of all the Letters are not known. **Mirza Yahya (Subh-i-Azal) and his older brother Mirza Husayn Ali (Baha) were not among the Letters,(22) and only later became followers of the Bab.** Most of the Letters died in the fighting in Mazanderan.(23) When they died the Bab did not appoint others in their places.

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The Eighteen Letters of the Living, according to the Bab, were the “return” of Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, the twelve Imams, and the four Babs who had been the intermediaries between the Hidden Imam and the Shi’ites.(24) Mulla Husayn, the First Letter, entitled Babu’l-Bab, claimed to be the return of the Imam Husayn, grandson of Muhammad. Mulla Muhammad Ali, the Last Letter, called Quddus, was thought to be the return of Muhammad. Since, according to this doctrine, Muhammad and all the Imams “returned” as Letters of the Living, it is evident that the Bab did not consider himself the return either of the Twelfth Imam or of the Prophet Muhammad. He claimed to be the same Sun which had risen as Muhammad, but was not his “return.” What the distinction was is not clear to the author. Likewise, Qurratu’l-Ayn, the only woman to become a Letter, was the return of Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad and the mother of the Imams Hasan and Husayn. Other believers beside the Letters were thought to be the return of saints of the past, while notorious unbelievers were thought by some Babis to be the return of Pharaoh and other enemies of the truth.

It is difficult to determine exactly what was meant by “return” when the word was used by the Babis. In some instances it seems that it approximates the doctrine of transmigration of souls, but in other cases it implies an identity of situation and disposition rather than of soul. Thus when Quddus (Holy) was killed at Shaykh Tabarsi the signs of holiness according to Mirza Jani, passed at once to Subh-i-Azal, who became his “return.” Professor Browne interprets this to mean that the virtues and gifts of the martyred saint were transferred to Subh-i-Azal, who was hundreds of miles away.(25) “Return,” says Mr. Azal,(26) “is the appearance of another person, born of other parents, but inspired by God with the same spirit and power. This coming again of these persons was fulfilled in the appearance of the Letters of the Living.”

As for the Babi doctrine of the Resurrection, which was thought to be the coming of a new Manifestation, the Bab held that the length of each Resurrection Day

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was the period of time from the appearance of a Manifestation till his death. Thus the Resurrection foretold by Muhammad began with the declaration of the Bab on May 23, 1844, and it ended with his death on July 8, 1850. As the fruit of Islam is gathered in the Bayanic Resurrection, so the fruit of the Bayan will be gathered in the next Resurrection, namely, the appearance of Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest. The Bab predicted that this coming Resurrection would last 19 years. “Meeting with God” in the Resurrection means meeting the new Manifestation. Between the bright Days of Resurrection are long dark periods of night.(27)

Likewise, the Islamic doctrines of the Last Judgment, the Trumpet, the Bridge across which men must pass to Paradise, the Scales in which God weighs men’s actions, the pleasures of Heaven and the pains of Hell, are understood in an allegorical manner. The Bab says that the Day of Judgment is not different from any other day – it passes, and most men are unaware of its coming. According to the Bah, it was because people were looking for a literal fulfilment of prophecy that they always failed to recognize the new

**Manifestation when he appeared.** Had they interpreted these predictions properly, the Jews would not have rejected Jesus, nor the Christians Muhammad, nor the Muslims Sayyid Ali Muhammad. Because they were looking for outward signs instead of inward reality they failed to believe and be saved.

Though doctrinal discussions, mystical meditations and countless prayers for use when visiting sacred shrines and on other occasions occupy a large place in the Bab's writings, he gave also many specific directions for the life of his followers here on earth. He proposed, as Muhammad had done, to set up a universal Theocratic Society, and issued laws for the regulation of both civil and religious affairs of the people of Bayan. We can mention only the principal provisions of the new system.

Since the numerical value of the word *Wahid* (Unity) is 19, the Bab decreed that all activities of the People of the Bayan should be governed by groups of 19 persons. For instance, each city and village was

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to have one or more temples for worship, each of which was to be in charge of 19 attendants. Shrines were to be erected only over the graves of the Bab and the 18 Letters, and these 19 Holy Places would embrace under their shadow the graves of other martyrs and holy men. The holy places of previous dispensations were to be no longer preserved. All believers living within 250 miles of the Bab's tomb must visit it every year, provided they are in good circumstances, and remain for at least ten days.(28) Also, they must visit the tomb of the 18 Letters, travelling if possible on foot. Pilgrims to these Holy Places must give gifts to each of the 19 guardians in each shrine.

Moreover, believers who are in good circumstances must once in their lifetime visit the "Place of the House," or "God's House," which is the Bab's birth- place. The place changes in each Manifestation. In that of Muhammad it was in Mecca, and in that of the Bab it is in Shiraz. Those believers whose country is separated by sea from Shiraz are excused from making this pilgrimage, and all women are discouraged from going to the House. Residents of Shiraz are to visit the House every year, and give gifts to each of the 19 guardians. The House is the *qibleh*, or prayer direction, and Babis must face it in worship and be buried facing it when they die.

In addition to the pilgrimages to the 19 shrines and the House in Shiraz, yet another was required, namely, that to the "Place of the Blow" in Tabriz. This was the house in which the Bab got the bastinado after his first trial. Every believer residing in Tabriz and within a radius of 412 miles of Tabriz, who has reached the age of 29 and is in good circumstances, was required to visit this Place every year and remain there 19 days and perform the prescribed rites. Those who are too poor to do this must perform the rites at home.

Non-Babis were not to be permitted to reside in the dominions of a Babi monarch, the inhabitants of which profess the Babi faith. And no unbeliever was to reside in Fars, Central Iran, Khurasan, Mazanderan and Azarbaijan, the provinces of Iran where the Babi faith

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had first been propagated. However, non-Babis who carry on business which benefits Babis are exempted from these prohibitions.

The Bab placed great importance upon talismans. Since numbers and names were thought to represent the realities of things, all believers were commanded to wear certain amulets and charms and seals designed by the Bab himself. Charms were to be tied about the necks of infants. It seemed to Gobineau (29) that the Bab wished to revive the ancient paganism of Chaldea which had long been lying dormant, for in his opinion the Babi system was full of animistic practices, and even polytheistic features were not wanting. A Babi monarch was authorized to seize the properties of non-Babis in his dominions, but if they embraced the Babi faith their properties were to be restored. In the event of the conquest of a country by Babi armies, the most priceless property was to be reserved for the Bab, if he is alive. If he is dead, it is to be held for Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest. Subject to this reservation, one-fifth of the value of all property so taken was to be applied 1) to the marriages of the People of the Bayan, 2) to grants to the author of the victory, and to his men, and 3) the residue was to be kept for the erection of shrines not yet erected, or for distribution to all the People of the Bayan.

It is not clear how these regulations about conquest of countries and division of booty were to be reconciled with other commands in the Bayan, such as: "No one is to be slain far unbelief, far the slaying of a soul is outside the religion of God.....and if anyone commits it he is not, and has not been, of the Bayan." Coercion for the purpose of conversion to the Babi faith was forbidden. Also, the carrying of instruments of war was forbidden, except in time of necessity and fighting. As far as is known, the Bab did not either encourage his followers who fought so furiously for his cause in Mazanderan and Zanjan, nor did he forbid them to use the sword. Perhaps the prohibition of slaying written by the Bab at the time when the fighting was

going on indicated his disapproval of what his followers were doing. However, if he had clearly forbidden them to use the sword there would probably have been far fewer Babi "martyrs."

Whatever severity might be used toward unbelievers, the Bab enjoined the greatest kindness and gentleness toward brothers in the faith. He did not authorize corporal punishment or imprisonment or the use of force, and capital punishment had no place in his system of government. If taxes were not paid they were not to be forcibly collected. The only punishments appointed for the People of the Bayan were fines, and prohibition for men to approach their wives, who presumably did not share their guilt. It is not clear how these punishments were to be administered.

It seems that the Bab may have wished to abolish the outward forms of religion which have played so important a part in the lives of many Muslims. This, however, would have been unacceptable to most of his followers, and so he contented himself with lightening somewhat the burden of ceremonialism. For Shi'ites the problem of ceremonial purity is an important one, since swine, dogs, blood, dead bodies, excrement and many other things are considered unclean. If anyone becomes defiled by contact with an unclean object or person he must make ablution in a prescribed manner in order to become clean

again. The Bab abolished these regulations, and pronounced all things clean for the People of the Bayan, thereby making ceremonial ablutions unnecessary. He decreed that an unclean object may be made clean by saying over it sixty-six times the name of God, or by exposing it to the action of the sun, or the earth, air, fire or water, all of which are clean. Minute directions are given regarding certain very personal matters.

The People of the Bayan were permitted to deal in business with unbelievers, though they are unclean, and their property is unclean. Far any property transferred by them to believers becomes clean “because of the honor accorded to it by reason of the association with the Babi faith.”

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While regulations regarding ceremonial purity were abolished, the Bayan laid great stress on cleanliness, which was said to be the nearest access to God, and the best of acts of devotion. Every village was to have a hot bath house. Every believer was required to wash himself frequently, remove hair and apply henna to his body, and cut his nails. The Muslim worship which the Shi'ites are required to perform at least three times each day in the Arabic language facing Mecca was abolished by the Bab. There was to be no congregational worship, like that in the mosques on Friday, except for the dead. Whether in the place of worship or at home, worship was to be performed individually and so there was no need for an order of clergy to lead the worshippers. The one time of required worship is noon, when the “Unity Prayer” was to be recited. This act of worship is based on the number of *Wahid* (One), which is 19, and consists of 19 prostrations made as the worshipper presumably faces the House of the Bab in Shiraz. The words to be spoken in Arabic 19 times in this daily act of worship were as follows: “God witnesseth that there is no god but He: to Him belongeth creation and command. He quickeneth and causeth to die: then He: causeth to die and quickeneth, and verily He is the Living, who dieth not. In His grasp is the dominion of all things: He createth what He pleaseth by His command: verily He has power over all things.” (*Persian Bayan*, VII, 19 and other writings of the Bab).

The Bab changed also the Muslim salutation “*Salam Alaykum*” (Peace be to you). In the *Persian Bayan* VI, 5 he directed that the salutation spoken by men should be “*Allahu Akbar*” (God is most mighty), and the reply should be “*Allahu A'zam*” (God is Most Great). Women should say “*Allahu Abha*” (God is Most Splendid), with the reply “*Allahu Ajmal*” (God is Most Beautiful).

The Muslim month of fasting, Ramazan (Arabic *Ramadan*) lasts a full lunar month, and when it falls in summer the faithful must refrain from taking food and drink for almost eighteen hours each day for 28 days. The Bab reduced the Fast to one Bayanic month of 19 days,

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making it last from sunrise to sunset. And since the Babi Fast always comes in the spring of the year, and is the last month of the Babi year, which immediately precedes No Ruz, the New Year Festival (March 21), it does not last in Iran longer than twelve hours. As in the Muslim Fast, eating and drinking is permitted at night.

The Bab placed great importance upon marriage, which he made obligatory upon all believers. At the age of eleven, or at latest when they reach the age of puberty, they must marry. In the cities the man at marriage must give to the woman a minimum of 19 and a maximum of ninety-five *mithqals* of gold, and in the rural areas the same amount of silver.(30) A man was permitted to have two wives, but polygamy was discouraged, and the form of concubinage permitted by Shi'ite law was strictly forbidden. The Bab himself had at least two wives. Divorce was permitted only when the parties had waited a full year. If one of the parties in marriage should die, the widower must remarry within ninety days, and the widow within ninety-five days.

Though the Bab had no children of his own except an infant who died, he showed great concern for the training of children. He forbade the beating of boys by their masters, and all other cruel punishments. It is probable that his emphasis on kindness and love, as well as his attitude toward women and children, had been influenced by his reading of the New Testament, which was translated into Persian in Shiraz by Henry Martyn nine years before the Bab was born there, and was published four years later. The use of the veil by women, according to the Muslim custom, was forbidden by the Bab, and men and women were permitted to associate with one another freely, but to avoid all over-familiarity. The Bab had seen Christians in Isfahan and Azarbaijan, and in the Bayan he spoke favorably of their cleanliness and dignity, and was no doubt impressed by their customs. But he stated that in spite of all their good qualities they are still in the Fire (unbelief), because they did not accept Muhammad, who is superior to Jesus.

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Since the numerical value of the Arabic word *Wahid* (One, i. e., God the One) is nineteen, the Bab thought that everything should be arranged on the basis of the number 19. He accordingly proposed a new calendar with 19 months of 19 days each ( $19 \times 19 = 361$ ) that all may advance through the 19 degrees of the Letters of the Unity from the point of entrance [into the sign of] the Ram to the limit of its course....in the sign of the Fish." By rejecting the Muslim lunar calendar, and making the ancient Iranian New Year (No Ruz), which usually falls on March 21, the vernal equinox, the beginning of the Babi year, it seems that the Bab wished to demonstrate his patriotic feelings. (31) The first Babi month is called Baha (Splendor), and is the special month of the Point of the Manifestation, who is the Bab in the Bayanic dispensation. The first day of the first month, which is No Ruz, is called the Day of God, and is the day of the Point (the Bab) . The declaration of the Bab in Shiraz on May 23, 1844 A.D. was on Jamad-i-Awwal 5, 1260 A.H., and it has been generally supposed that the Babi Era began on that date, or on the No Ruz which preceded it (March 20, 1844).(31) However, from the Bab's personal Diary, which is in existence, we see that he intended that the Bayanic Era should begin just six years after his declaration. That is, according to the Bab, Jamad-i-Awwal 5, 1266 A.H. (March 19, 1850 A.D.), which was No Ruz in that year, was the first day of the month Baha in year one of the Babi Era (or Farvardin 1, 1229 of the Iranian solar year). This is confirmed in the Bab's *Book of Names of All Things*, and also in the *Tablet of the Temple of the Religion*. Thus Sayyid Ali Muhammad celebrated the beginning of the new Era only four months before his execution.(32)

The Bab made no provision for the intercalary days, omitted between 361 and 365 (or 366 in Leap Year).

This lack was later remedied by Subh-i-Azal, his successor. It is of interest that the Bab stated that his mission began “1270 years after the mission of Muhammad.” For some reason he preferred to date his

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mission not from the *Hijra* (622 A.D.), but from the beginning of Muhammad’s mission, which the Bab dated ten years prior to the Sojourn to Madina.

Not only did the Bab rearrange the calendar on the basis of the numerical value of the letters in *Wahid* (19), he wished everything to be so arranged. The monetary system, weights, measures, taxes, fines, etc. were to be based on the same principle. The Bayan, the Scripture of the new faith, was to have consisted of 19 grand divisions (*Wahids*), each containing 19 subdivisions (Babs). The Bab predicted the coming of the time when “even the pens on the pence shall be according to the number of the *Wahid* (19).”

The Bab issued many other regulations for his followers, a few of which we will mention. According to his decree, all books revealed by God in previous prophetic dispensations, presumably the Bible and the Koran, have been abrogated by the appearing of the new Manifestation, that is, their validity has been annulled.(33) When God gives a new revelation, namely, the Bayan (which embraces the great mass of writings of the Bab), believers must refer to it alone for guidance. And as the divinely-revealed books of previous dispensations are abrogated by the Bayan, so are the many books written by men who were followers of previous Manifestations. The Bab, therefore, forbade the reading of all non-Babi books, and commanded that they be burned. He no doubt had in mind the countless volumes composed by Shi’ite theologians and philosophers, which presented many conflicting views of religion, and produced not enlightenment but confusion and unbelief. Therefore, believers must read only the Bayan, and books written by eminent Babi scholars under the shadow of the Bayan. No one is permitted to own more than 19 books, the first of which is to be the Bayan, the precepts of which will be binding on believers till the coming of Him-Whom-God-Will- Manifest. For the Bayan is the Straight Path of Truth. It is obligatory for the People of the Bayan to acquire knowledge and impart it to others. Every monarch to emerge in the Bayanic dispensation must choose twenty- five learned men to assist him in the furtherance of

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the Babi faith, and in going to the relief of the weak and needy.

A detailed arrangement for the division of inheritance is prescribed. Contrary to Muslim law, the Bab made it permissible to take interest on loans. Everyone is required to follow an occupation to earn his living. Begging is strictly forbidden, but giving of charity to the poor is enjoined. Believers are to wear as fine clothing as they can afford, and to use gold and jewels if they have them. Men must shave their faces clean, contrary to Muslim custom. Believers must not sit on the floor like the Muslims, but sit on chairs. All personal effects must be changed every 19 years. Foreign travel is forbidden, except for business, or for assisting some person. Arms are not to be carried within the Bayanic

state. Every believer must take a bath every four days, and teeth must be cleaned after meals.

It was obligatory that every male believer serve the Point in person for 19 days, but the Point may grant exemption. The Point must be treated with great respect, and his family must be honored by all. Special prayers are to be said for him and his parents. Every believer who has property worth 100 *mithqals* of gold must set aside the sum of 20 *mithqals* as the "Right of God." Of this sum, one *mithqal* is to go to the Point, and one to each of the 18 Letters, and one is "for God" (perhaps for charity). After the deaths of the 19, the tax goes to their heirs, or if they have none, for the marriage of believers, and the one *mithqal* for God is to be kept for Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest, or spent in the work of the Bayan.

Every Family must entertain 19 guests every 19 days, even though they may be able to serve them nothing but water. The dead are to be washed once, or may be washed three to five times, and hurried in stone coffins, with engraved rings on their fingers. After burial their graves must be visited by their friends once every month (of 19 days). The use of opium, alcohol and tobacco was forbidden. Pack animals were not to be over-loaded, and cows must not be used for

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riding, or for carrying loads. The milk of asses must not be drunk, and eggs must not be kept where they will spoil.

Near the end of the *Arabic Bayan* (X,4) the Bab wrote: "The essence of religion in your beginning and return consists in your belief in God beside whom there is no god; then in Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest on the Day of Resurrection in your return; then in the Book God will send down to him; then in Him-Whom-God-Has-Manifested under the name of.....Sayyid Ali Muhammad the Bab; and then in that which God has sent down to him in the Bayan."(34)

This, in brief, is the system of doctrine and of society and government which Sayyid Ali Muhammad believed God wished to establish through him in Iran and throughout the world. It seems that he realized the need for a spiritual and social reformation in his country where at that time religion consisted largely of empty forms of worship, and where there was little knowledge of the true God, and little love for men. The reader may judge for himself the adequacy of the Bab's theology, and of his laws and precepts for establishing a just and effective social order for the world.

Whether the Bayanic system was given by revelation to the Bab from God, or whether it was the utopian dream of a man long in prison facing death, it never became a reality. No king ever adopted the Babi faith and used his authority to propagate it, and no nation ever attempted to order the life of its people in accordance with the laws of the Bayan. If the Bab was indeed, as he thought himself to be, a Major Manifestation of God, come to establish a new Theocratic Society which would take the place of Islam and all previous religious systems, and last for at least 1511 years, why were his high hopes for the future not realized? Whatever one may think of his claims and his regulations, one cannot but admire the Bab for his devotion to the cause for which he gave his life.

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**NOTES**

1. For lists and descriptions of books written by the Bab the reader is referred to *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 335-347, *J.R.A.S.* 1892, pp. 445-499 and 637-659, *Materials*, pp.198-208. The books which were printed are the following (*Azal's Notes*, p.893): *Arabic Bayan*, *Persian Bayan*, *Lawh-i-Haykal al-Din* (Tablet of the Temple of the Religion), *Commentary on the First Verse of Lawh-i-Haykal*, *Panj Sha'n* (Five Grades), *Dala'il-i-Sab'a* (Seven Proofs) in both Persian and Arabic, *Personal Diary of the Bab*, *Lawh-i-Hurufat* (Tablet of Letters), *Collection of Autograph Epistles of the Primal Point*, and *Sahifa-i-Adliyya*. Both the *Arabic* and the *Persian Bayans* and the *Persian Seven Proofs* were translated in full into French by A. L. N. Nicholas and published (*Materials*, pp. 182, 204). The writing of the *Arabic* and *Persian Bayans* was probably begun when the Bab was in Maku, and continued after his transfer to Chihriq (*Azal's Notes*, p. 894, and Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 274). Neither book was completed, for the former ended with XI, 19, and the latter with ZX, 10. Each was to have had 19 Divisions (*Wahids*).
2. *Materials*, p. 201, *J.R.A.S.* 1889, p. 893 and 1892, pp. 452, 462 ff.
3. *Materials*, p. 205.
4. Browne in English Introduction to *Nuqtatu'2-Kaf*, pp. LIV-XCV.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. LVIII-LX.
6. *Azal's Notes*, p. 530.
7. *J.R.A.S.* 1889, pp. 916-917.
8. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 369, states that the Bab first called himself- "Qa'im" in a letter to Mulla Shaykh Ali.
9. *Azal's Notes*, p. 932.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 835. Refer to the *Persian Bayan* in which the Bab states that he is the Gate of God (I,1 and II,1), the Sun of Truth (IV,6), and the Point of the Letter BA (II,17, IV,1, VI,13) .

11. *Materials*, p. XIV.
12. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 732-736.
13. *Persian Bayan*, III,8.
14. *Nuqtatu'l-kaf*, English Int., p. XXIV.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. LXIX-LXXII, *A traveller's Narrative*, pp. 347-349.
16. Bab quoted in *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, English Int., p. LIV.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. XXV-XXVI (*Persian Bayan*, II, 16, 17), *Azal's Notes*, p. 898.
18. *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, English Int., p. LXVII.
19. *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 229-230, *New History*, p. 374.
20. See Appendix II, #55.
21. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 720-721.
22. Browne in Persian Int. to *Nuqtatu'l-kaf*, p. 35, note 5.
23. Subh-i-Azal in *New History*, p. 417.
24. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 744, 856-857.

25. *New History*, p. 380, note 1.
  26. *Azal's Notes*, p. 934.
  27. *Ibid.*, pp. 753-760. See Appendix II, #47 for "19 Years."
  28. According to the Babis, the tomb of the Bab is at Imamzadeh Ma'sum near Teheran, but according to the Baha'is it is on Mt. Carmel near Haifa in Israel. The graves of most of the Letters are unknown. It is evident that the Bab, by these provisions, wished to put an end to the Shi'ite practice of visiting the numerous shrines of the Imams and their descendants in Iran and Iraq. Also he wished the pilgrimage to his birthplace in Shiraz to take the place of the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.
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29. *Gobineau*, II, p. 77.
30. One *mithqal* is equivalent to five grams.
31. Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 424-425.
32. *Azal's Notes*, p. 613. See Appendix II, p. 3, #29 and 30.
33. See Appendix II, #64 and #65.
34. The principal sources for the doctrines and regulations contained in this chapter are: 1) Browne's exhaustive Index to the *Persian Bayan* in *Nuqtatu'l-kaf*, English Introduction, pp. LIV-XCV, 2) *Gobineau's* Chapter XII on the Books and Doctrines of the Babis (II, pp. 43-101), and 3) *Gobineau's* translation of the Babi book which he calls *kitab-i-Hukkam* (II, p. 219-337). Browne states that the author of this Book of Commandments is the Bab, and he terms the book "the shorter Arabic Bayan" (*J.R.A.S.* 1889, p. 1001). It seems, however., that the book is the *Lawh-i-Haykal al-Din* (Tablet of the Temple of the Religion), which is a summary of his laws, composed by the Bab while he was in Chihriq (*Azal's Notes*, p. 937). And 4) the scholarly and copious Notes supplied to the author by Mr. Jelal Azal, without whose understanding of the Babi history and doctrines the early chapters of this book could not have been thus written. Material related to the Bab is found in many sections of *Azal's Notes*, especially in pp. 125-130, 530- 531, 623-624, 687-782, and 829-937.

## 5. The Vicegerency of Subh-i-Azal

It is the belief of the Shi'ite Muslims that the Prophet Muhammad shortly before his death publicly appointed his son-in-law Ali as his successor, or vicegerent, to become the first Imam, and that Ali and each of the succeeding Imams in like manner appointed the men who were to succeed them as the leaders of the believers. Did Sayyid Ali Muhammad, the Point of the new Manifestation, follow the example of his ancestor Muhammad, the Point of the preceding Manifestation, in naming his vicegerent? Yes, he did.. Realizing the certainty of his early death, the Point of the Bayan did what his followers expected him to do, and appointed his successor.. Accordingly, after the execution of the Bab in Tabriz on July 8, 1850, Mirza Yahya Subh-i-Azal became the recognized head of the People of the Bayan, was accepted by the Babi community as their divinely ordained ruler, and continued in this position for some sixteen years. Since the history of this period has unfortunately been inaccurately related in some of the books purporting to give a true account of the Babi and Baha'i movement, it is necessary for us to present in some detail the established facts.

Mirza Yahya the successor of the Bah was the son of Mirza Buzurg of the district of Nur in the

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province of Mazanderan. He was born in Teheran in 1831 A.D.(1) His father, according to the Babi historian, was "accomplished, wealthy, and much respected," but was not a prince,(2) as some have alleged. Mirza Yahya's mother and father. died when he was a child, and he was committed to the care of his father's second wife,(3) who, it is said, was warned in a dream of his future destiny, and showed him the greatest love and consideration.(4) His education was supervised by his half-brother Mirza Husayn Ali, the son of Mirza Buzurg and this second wife, who was thirteen years older than Mirza Yahya. This half-brother later became known as Baha, and long after in Akka as Baha'u'llah.(5) In his history of the Babi movement written about 1851 A.D., Mirza Jani quotes the following statement which Mirza Husayn Ali had made regarding his younger brother:(6) "I busied myself with the instruction of Janab-i-Azal.(7) The signs of his natural excellence and goodness of disposition were apparent in the mirror of his being. He ever loved gravity of demeanour, silence, courtesy, and modesty, avoiding the society of other children, and their behaviour. I did not, however, know that he would become the possessor of [so high] a station." This statement shows how amicable were the relations of the two brothers shortly after the death of the Bah when Mirza Jani penned these words, and in what high esteem the elder held the younger.

When Mirza Yahya was still young, his brother used to bring followers of the Bab to his house in Teheran, and it was from their conversations that he first learned of the appearing of the Lord of the Age. He read some of the Bab's writings, and about 1847 A.D. became a believer.(8) So great was his attachment to his Master, whom he had never seen, that when the Bah commanded his followers to go to Khurasan, the eastern

province of Iran, the seventeen year old youth tried to obey, but was forbidden by his brother.(9) Later, however, he went to Mazanderan, and on the way he met and became acquainted with Hazrat-i-Quddus,(10) and accompanied him to Barfurush. There he met Qurratu'l-Ayn. Both these leaders showed him great kindness and attention, and at the command of Quddus, Qurratu'l-Ayn

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conducted Mirza Yahya to the: Nur district in Mazanderan.(11) We have already described in Chapter III the attempt that he and his brother at a later time made to reach Shaykh Tabarsi, and their capture and release.(12) Of this period Mirza Jani writes:(13) "I was in attendance on Janab-i-Azal in Mazanderan, night and day, for four months or more.....He was filled with ardour and ecstasy, and I found him ever disposed by nature to devotion and emancipation such that he utterly disregarded the world and its circumstances.....He showed a wonderful attachment to Hazrat-i-Quddus, and used often to read aloud with sweet utterance the homilies and prayers of that Master of the world." When the news of the death of Hazrat-i-Quddus in Mazanderan on May 22, 1849, reached Mirza Yahya he fell ill for three days. Then, says Mirza Jani,(14) "the signs of holiness (*qudsi*) appeared in his blessed form .....and this event took place in the fifth year of the Manifestation of the Truth, so that Janab-i-Azal became the blessed domain of the Will. (Irada)....."(15) Sometime after this Mirza Yahya sent a communication to the Bab in his prison in Chihriq by the hand of Mirza Ali Sayyah, on reading which the Bab was over- come with joy, for, said he, "the Bayan has now borne fruit'." From this saying Mirza Yahya received the title, "His Highness the Fruit" (*Hazrat-i-Thamara*). At once the Bab appointed Mirza Yahya as his successor, (16) giving him high titles, such as "Morning of Eternity" (*Subh-i-Azal*), "Splendor of God" (*Baha'u'llah*), "second Point" (*Nuqta-i-Thani*) and "The one" (*Wahid*).(17) It seems that the title *Subh-i-Azal* by which the Bab's successor is best known was given him because he rose to prominence in the fifth year of the Bab's Manifestation (1849 A.D.), which, according to a well-known tradition, was characterized by the words, "A Light which shone from the Dawn of Eternity."(18)

The Bab gave written notice of the appointment of Subh-i-Azal to the Letters of the Living who had survived the fighting in Mazanderan and to other Babi leaders, as is recorded in old manuscripts.(19) Also to his successor-to-be he sent some of his own personal

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effects, such as penceases, paper, writings, clothing and rings, that, as Mirza Jani observes,(20) "the outward form might correspond with the inward reality," intending that "after him Subh-i-Azal should hear the divine influences." "He also wrote a testamentary deposition," says Mirza Jani, "explicitly nominating him [Azal] as his successor." In this connection Mirza Jani expresses his own conviction that Subh-i-Azal was himself He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest whose coming the Bab had predicted, and other Babis shared this opinion. with him.(21) However, in this matter he was mistaken, for as we have seen in Chapter IV, the Bah did not anticipate the appearance of the next

Manifestation before at least 1511 years, and moreover Subh-i-Azal never made the claim that he was He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest” and later in his writings he dismissed this opinion as erroneous.(22)

When Professor Browne visited Subh-i-Azal in Cyprus in 1896 he was shown the original document, written and sealed by the Bab himself, in which the Bab appointed Mirza Yahya Subh-i-Azal as his successor.(23) Browne published a facsimile of a transcript of the: Arabic text, and has translated it as follows: (24)

”God is Most Great with Uttermost Greatness.

”This is a letter on the part of God, the Protector, the Self-Existent, to God, the Protector, the Self- Existent.

”Say, ’All originate from God.’ Say, ’All return unto God.’

”This is a letter from Ali before Nabil [*Nabil* is numerically equivalent to *Muhammad*, and *Ali before Nabil is Ali Muhammad*], *God’s Reminder unto the worlds, unto him whose name is equivalent to the Name of the*

*One [Wahid = 28 = Yahya, the name of Subh-i-Azal], God’s Reminder unto the worlds.*

”Say, ’Verily all originate from the Point of Revelation. ’

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”O Name of the One [Yahya], keep what hath been revealed in the Bayan, and enjoin it,(25) for verily thou art a Mighty Way of Truth.”

To this document the seal of the Bab was attached. “Verily I am the Proof of God and His Light.”

It is noteworthy that in this document the Bab addresses Subh-i-Azal with the same high titles that he claimed for himself, indicating that he considered his successor to be one with him. The Shi’ites thought of Muhammad as the Sun, and Ali whom they held to be his true successor and one with him, as the Moon, reflecting the Sun’s Light. Just so in the Bayanic Cycle the Bab was thought to be the Sun, and his successor Subh-i-Azal, the “Mirror of the Bayan,” was the Moon, from whom the Light of God shone forth. The “testamentary deposition” to which Mirza Jani referred is found in old Babi manuscripts, and a facsimile of a transcript of it, with an English translation, has been supplied by Mr. Azal(26) Among other things the Bab in this document says to Subh-i-Azal:

”O Name of Eternity [Azal]! Bear witness that there is no God but me, the Mighty, the beloved.....God rules the place of the Manifestation.....as He pleases by His command.....When [the Command] is cut off from the throne recite the verses of thy Lord.....Recite thou for myself every night and day.....and bear witness that in truth I am alive in the most splendid (abha) horizon. and hear whoever makes mention of me.....If God manifests grandeur in thy days make manifest the Eight Paths (27).....and if God manifests not grandeur in thy days, cleave steadfastly to what has been revealed and change not one letter.....that men disagree not touching the religion of God.....Preserve thyself.....Then preserve what has been revealed in the Bayan, and then what is revealed in thy part, for verily this is that will subsist till the Day of Resurrection.

”If God cause one like unto thee to appear in thy days, then he it is to whom shall be bequeathed the

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Command [of the Babi Cause] on the part of God..... But if such an one appears not, know for a surety that God hath not willed to make Himself known, and render up the authority to God.....and ordain the Witnesses who fear Gad.....”

According to this document, the Bab’s instructions to Subh-i-Azal for the period after his death were as follows: 1) to recite the Bab’s verses; 2) to complete the Bayan by writing the eight Sections (Wahid) which the Bab had left unwritten (there were to be 19 Sections), thus indicating Azal’s oneness with the Bab; 3) in case the time should not be propitious to complete the Bayan, to preserve carefully what the Bab had written, and to preserve himself; 4) if a worthy person like himself should appear, to appoint him as his successor – otherwise he is to appoint Witnesses, and leave the Cause in the hands of God. Subh-i-Azal evidently did not consider the time propitious, for he did not complete the Bayan. After the death of the Bab he did appoint several Witnesses to assist him in the administration of the Babi Cause, one of whom was his brother Baha.(28) He did not appoint a successor, nor did he leave a Will, nor did he appoint Witnesses with authority to lead the People of the Bayan after his death. The reason for his inability to do these things will appear later.

On the death of the Bab the Babi community accepted Subh-i-Azal and accorded him the high honor which the Bab had bestowed on him. As is clearly seen in Mirza Jani’s history, the Babis in 1851 A.D. considered Subh-i-Azal and the Bab to be one. The Comte de Gobineau, who was in intimate contact with the Babis of Teheran from 1855 to 1858 confirms the statements of Mirza Jani.(29) He says that some of the Babis thought Subh-i-Azal to be He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest, while others thought him to be a return of the Bab, and he was the undisputed leader of the Babi movement. There is not the slightest historical evidence dating from this period that anyone other than Subh-i-Azal was appointed or acted as successor to the Bab as Professor Browne writes,(30) “The evidence that at this period, and for some considerable time afterwards,

Subh-i-Azal.....held undisputed sway over the Babi Church is absolutely conclusive.”

It was no easy task to which Subh-i-Azal, as yet only nineteen years of age, fell heir when his Master was executed. The Babis were still in arms against the Iranian government in Zanzan and in other parts of the country, and were feared and bitterly hated by the majority of the Muslim population. The Babis returned this hatred with interest, and considered both Nasiru’ddin Shah and the Mullas to be enemies of God and worthy of death because of their rejection of the Divine Manifestation. The new leader realized, however, that it was not expedient for the Babis to continue further this conflict with the government, and he issued orders for his followers to lay aside the sword.(31) He was obeyed, and there were no more large uprisings after the ending of the Zanzan conflict. Subh-i-Azal made some journeys to visit scattered Babi communities for the purpose of encouraging the believers. He spent the summer months in the vicinity of Teheran, and in the winter went to the warmer regions of his native province of Mazanderan. He was busily occupied in arranging, transcribing, and circulating among believers the books of the Bab, and in teaching the Babi doctrines.(32) Though the Prime

Minister was very hostile to the Babis, it seems that for a time there was little open opposition to and persecution of the movement, which continued to grow after the execution of the Bab. It is impossible to estimate accurately the number of Babis in Iran at this time. Gobineau thought that there were some five thousand in Teheran. (33) No doubt there were many times this number in the provinces. It was during this brief period of comparative quiet (1851-1852) that Mirza Jani wrote his history *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, to which frequent reference has been made.(34)

While temporarily free from attacks from without, the Babi community was disturbed by confusion within. Mirza Jani has described at length(35) the curious phenomenon of the appearance of a number of men from among the Babis who revealed verses and claimed to be Manifestations of God. He tells the stories of two

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of them, Zabih and Basir, who thought they were the return of John the Baptist and the Imam Husayn. "We, in reading these pages of Mirza Jani's history," writes Browne,(36)"cannot but marvel at the chaos of 'Theophanies' which he describes; but he.....sees therein only a fresh proof of the greatness and dignity of the 'Manifestation' [of the Bah]." Some of the Babis, jealous of the honor of their Master Subh-i-Azal, wished to silence these claimants, but Mirza Jani states that Azal would not permit this, demanding only that they recognize his authority.

Mr. Azal has suggested (37) that the cause of this confusion was chiefly lack of understanding of the station of the Bab. The Babis were all Shi'ites who believed that after the return of the Twelfth Imam, the Imam Husayn, grandson of Muhammad, would return also. Mistakenly thinking that the Bab had been the Twelfth Imam, some of the Babis were expecting the Imam Husayn to appear, and each of these rival "Manifestations" claimed to be he. Some of them also identified the return of Husayn with the coming of Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest foretold by the Bab.

Mirza Jani says of Basir, (38) "He announced himself to be a 'return' of [the Imam] Husayn, which claim was substantiated by the production of verses, homilies, and prayers; and he wrote letters to Hazrat-i-Azal and Janab-i-Baha (39) concerning his Manifestation. Hazrat-i-Azal in reply honored him with an epistle expressing his regards....." Other Babis warmly opposed these new claimants, and others who later advanced claims, and strife and even murder resulted. All this proliferation of "Manifestations" was of course entirely contrary to the Bab's doctrine, according to which he was not the Twelfth Imam but a Major Manifestation like Jesus and Muhammad, the Sun of Truth, and it was impossible for there to be in the heaven of reality more than one Sun at a time, and the next Major Manifestation was not to be expected for at least 1511 years after the Bah. Moreover, it was the belief of the Bah that Muhammad and all of the twelve Imams, including the Imam Husayn,(40) had already returned as his Letters of the Living. Hence, from the point of view of the

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Bayan these claimants were all false pretenders and it is surprising that Subh-i-Azal did not deal more severely with them.

Some later claimants based their pretensions on the passage in the *Arabic Bayan* (VI,15) which reads: "In the year nine ye will attain unto all good."(41) Interpreting this vague prediction as the appearing of Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest nine years after the Bab's declaration in Shiraz in 1844 A.D., they sever- ally at the appointed time set forth their claims to be "He," ignoring the clear statements in the Bayan about the lapse of 1511 years. They also misinterpreted a communication from the Bah to a Babi leader entitled Azim regarding the "two Wahids," namely, Mirza Yahya Darrab and Mirza Yahya Subh-i-Azal, appropriating the prediction to themselves.(42)

In spite of these internal problems it seems that all went fairly well with the Babis till the summer of 1852 A.D., when an event took place which entirely altered the situation. For some time rumors had been going about the Teheran bazaar that the Shah was going to be killed. Finally, on August 15, 1852, as Nasiru'ddin Shah was riding out on a hunting expedition in the hills above Teheran, three men approached him as though they wished to present a petition. When they had come quite near, one of them drew a pistol and fired at the Shah, wounding him in the arm. Then they attempted to drag him from his horse and to cut his throat, but the Shah's retainers rushed up and saved him, killing one of the assassins and capturing the other two. When they were questioned the two captives confessed they were Babis, and said that their purpose was to avenge the death of the Bab. The man who was killed was the servant of Mulla Shaykh Ali surnamed Azim, a devoted disciple of the Bab, who had been plotting against the government for some time.(43) The Muslim historian says that Azim had induced twelve Babis to agree to take part in the assassination, but only three of them arrived on time. That this attempt on the life of the Shah was the result of a deliberate plot on the part of the Babis, and not the act of a single madman as some have incorrectly stated, is adequately proved by

Gobineau, who wrote a most vivid description of the attempted murder.(44) The pistol had been charged with shot in order that the assassins might fell the Shah, and then kill him by cutting his throat, as they had been ordered to do. The Shah, however, was not seriously wounded.

The excitement and confusion which followed may be imagined. The gates of Teheran were guarded, and a systematic search was made in Teheran and throughout Iran for the Babi leaders, about thirty-five of whom were arrested. As the days went by the Shah became more and more terrified over the situation in his kingdom, and believing, probably with some reason, that there was a volcano hidden from sight which was about to erupt and destroy him and his empire, he resolved to make an exhibit of the Babis whom he had gotten into his power. He accordingly divided them up among the different classes of his subjects, giving one to the Muslim clergy, another to the princes, another to the nobles, another to the artillery, etc., informing all that the measure of their devotion to their sovereign would be revealed by the zeal with which they executed these offenders. It seems that several of the prisoners were able to prove their innocence, probably by denying that they were Babis, and they were released. It is possible that a number of those sentenced to die had no direct part in the attempt on the life of the Shah, but to be known as a Babi was sufficient to condemn one.

On September 15, 1852 the execution was carried out, each group trying to outdo the others in the barbarity with which they killed their unfortunate victims. An Austrian officer in the employ of the Iranian government was so horrified by the unbelievable brutality of the scenes which he witnessed that he resigned from his position.(45) Twenty-eight Babis were done to death, one of whom was the beautiful and gifted Qurratu'l-Ayn, who had for some time been under arrest and could not have been implicated in the attempted assassination. Another was Mirza Jani the historian. Still another was Mulla Shaykh Ali Azim. Most of the victims showed the greatest courage and

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devotion as they faced death, and their bold testimony won many new converts to their Cause. (46) From this time on the Babis were more careful than ever to conceal their faith, and were usually ready to deny it when their lives were in danger. This practice of dissimulation (*taqiya*) was approved by their leaders, as it had been previously approved by the Shi'ites.(47)

Subh-i-Azal and his brother Baha were not of those who perished. The Shah attempted to arrest the leader of the Babi movement, and offered a large reward for his capture. But Subh-i-Azal managed to escape in the garb of a dervish, and made his way to Baghdad in Turkish territory, for he realized that he could no longer live in his native land.(48) After his flight two regiments of royal troops raided his ancestral home in the district of Nur in Mazanderan in order to capture him and his followers, arrested members of his family and a number of his relatives and friends, and brought them to Teheran, where many of them died in prison.(49) Five of the arrested persons, including Mirza Husayn Ali Baha, were kept in prison pending further investigation., there not being sufficient evidence to incriminate them.(50) After four months Baha was released.(51) It has been said that in order to save his life Baha denied. that he was a Babi, as the Bah had ordered his disciples to do at the time of his execution.. This is not improbable, for it seems that those prisoners who were known to be Babis were put to death, whether or not they were proved guilty of implication in the plot: to kill the Shah.(52)

It appears that the Russian Legation in Teheran helped to secure Baha's release on condition that he leave Iran,(51) and Baha later stated that both Russian and Iranian officers accompanied him and his family when he departed from Teheran one month after his release. He arrived in Baghdad in April, 1853,(53) where he joined his brother Subh-i-Azal. Soon many other Babis followed them to Baghdad.

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From the beginning of 1853 till the spring of 1863 Baghdad was the seat of the Vicegerency of Subh-i-Azal, and the center from which secret Babi propaganda was

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carried on in Iran and Iraq. We do not possess a full account of the happenings of these ten years, for there was no historian like Mirza Jani to leave a reliable record of events, but the main features of the story are clear. Subh-i-Azal was looked upon by the Babi

community as their supreme head, one in rank and authority with the Bah himself. Baha, however, was not satisfied with this situation. He probably realized that the Babi Cause in order to survive needed stronger leadership than his brother Azal was able to give. He was confident that he had the ability to supply this need. But it was necessary for the leader to have a divine appointment on which to base his authority. Did Baha have this? He had received no authority from the Bab, yet he had a growing conviction that he was the new Manifestation whose coming the Bab had predicted.

It is said (54) that when Baha was in Karbala in Iraq in 1851 he met one day in the street Shaykh Hasan-i-Zunuzi who was eagerly searching for the promised Imam Husayn. Whereupon Baha confided to him the secret that he was himself the Imam Husayn, but forbade him to tell others. Also it is said (55) that after Baha's arrival in Baghdad two years later he disclosed secretly to his friend Mirza Aqa Jan "a glimpse of the as yet unrevealed glory of his station," and Aqa Jan became the first believer. It seems, therefore, that Baha had determined at some suitable time to make a claim for himself, and take over the leadership of the Cause. However, his attitude and conduct were displeasing to the other Babi leaders, who accused him of gathering about him a crowd of disreputable people to assist him in his purpose.(56) Those who sided with Baha replied that this opposition to him by his brother and other Babis was due to envy of Baha's increasing influence.

Of this difficult time Baha later wrote:(57) "In these days such odours of jealousy were diffused that .....from the beginning of the foundation of the world .....until the present day such malice, envy and hate have in no wise appeared."

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When at the end of the first year in Baghdad the Babi leaders administered a severe rebuke to Baha for his conduct, he became angry, and left Baghdad in the night, telling no one, not even his own family, where he was going. For two years he lived as a dervish in the Kurdish mountains in northern Iraq.(58) Finally, Subh-i-Azal discovered his whereabouts, and wrote to him to return. Baha obeyed, wrote a letter of repentance to his brother, and came back to Baghdad in the spring of 1856 A.D. (59)

Subh-i-Azal then received and forgave his brother Baha, and showed his confidence in him by delegating great authority to him, while he himself retired into greater seclusion.(60) This arrangement, it seems, was in accordance with the command of the Bab, who shortly before his death had written a strong letter to Mirza Husayn Ali (Baha), charging him to take the best possible care of Subh-i-Azal lest any harm should come to him.(61) And since the Muslims of Baghdad were showing more and more hostility toward the Babis, Baha was able to convince his brother that it was not safe for him to appear in public, or to see visitors.(62) Also, this arrangement was agreeable to Subh-i-Azal's natural disposition, for he, as Professor Browne says, (63) being a "peace loving, contemplative, gentle soul .....caring little for authority, and incapable of self-assertion," was willing to leave "the direction of affairs in the hands of his half-brother Baha, a man of much more resolute and ambitious character, who thus gradually became the most prominent figure and moving spirit of the sect."

As we noted above, many of the Babi leaders were prolific writers, and Subh-i-Azal and his brother Baha were no exceptions, rather, they exceeded them all. Baha in later years referred to the many “verses” he had composed in Baghdad, none of which are in existence. (64) The only book of importance which he wrote while in Baghdad was the Persian *Iqan*, which in its English translation by Shoghi Efendi is entitled “The Book of Certitude.” This book was composed about 1862 A.D. for one of the maternal uncles of the Bab who was still a Muslim. It was first called *Khaluiyya* (Uncle’s), and

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Mirza Husayn Ali Baha'u'llah  
Said to have been taken when he was in Edirne (1863-1868)

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later, after the revision made in Edirne or Akka, it was renamed *Iqan*.(65) The chief purpose of the *Iqan* was to prove that the Bab was a Major Manifestation of God. Baha writes:(66) “Behold.....how great and lofty is His [Qa’im, i.e., Bab] station! His rank excelleth that of all the Prophets, and His Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones.” The standpoint of the author is that of a loyal

disciple of the Bab. Little of the material in the book is original, for Baha merely repeats and elaborates the doctrines already taught by the Shaykhis and the Bab. There are more references to the Arabic New Testament than are found in the Bayan. The book is full of Shi'ite traditions and doctrines. Baha refers to the Word of God as a "City," and says:(67) "Once in about a thousand years shall this City be renewed and re-adorned," and he proceeds to mention the books which were revealed by God to Moses and Jesus and Muhammad, "and in this day the Bayan; and in the dispensation of Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest.....the Book which standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme." Thus Baha agreed with the Bab that the interval between the Manifestations, including that between the Bah and the manifestation to follow him, is "about. 1000 years." It is noteworthy that in the *Iqan* Baha clearly represents himself as obedient to his brother Subh-i-Azal. Regarding his sojourn .in Kurdistan he says:(68) "Our withdrawal contemplated no return, and Our separation hoped for no reunion. The one: object of Our retirement: was to avoid becoming a subject of discord among the faithful.....until the hour when, from the Mystic Source, there came the summons bidding Us return whence We came. Surrendering Our will to His, We submitted to His injunction." He also says,(69) "We have never gloried in any thing, nor did We seek preference over any soul." However, from the insistence of his appeal in the *Iqan* to the Babis to accept Him-Whom-Gad-Will-Manifest, it seems that Baha was contemplating putting forth his own claim to superiority, though he had not yet done so.(70) In Baghdad Baha acquired some property, and he and Subh-i-Azal also acquired Ottoman nationality.(71) With

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the abundant funds at his disposal which came to Subh-i-Azal from the loyal Babis of Iran, in accordance with the laws of the Bab, Baha was able to set up an impressive establishment with adequate facilities for extending hospitality to guests from Iran. His servants would go forth to meet the Shi'ite pilgrims who had come to Iraq to visit the shrines of the Imams, and would conduct them to Baha's center, and there they would be entertained and instructed in the faith of the Bayan.(72) They would usually not even get a glimpse of the Vicegerent of the Bah, for access to Subh-i-Azal was through his intermediary Baha, who often withheld permission under some pretext. Thus Subh-i-Azal, who lived in seclusion and rarely appeared in public, gradually decreased in importance in the eyes of the public as his aggressive older brother increased. To the Turkish officials, and no doubt to many of the Babis also, Baha now appeared to be the actual leader of the movement, although he still acted merely on behalf of Subh-i-Azal. But Baha was not the only one who at this time was prepared to make a claim for himself.. For a man named Mirza Asadullah of Khuy surnamed Dayyan, who had been appointed by the Bab as amanuensis to Subh-i-Azal, declared that he was He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest, and demanded that all the Babis: obey him, and some of them became his followers,(73) Baha had a long discussion with him, and Subh-i-Azal denounced him in a book he wrote, but as Dayyan remained obstinate he was murdered by Mirza Muhammad of Mazanderan, probably being drowned in the Tigris River.(74) Dayyan was not the only per- son thus eliminated by the Babis in Baghdad.(75) There were several others who advanced the same claim as Dayyan. In fact, to quote a Babi

writer,(76) “the matter came to such a pass that everyone on awakening from his first sleep in the morning adorned his body with this pretension.” The pretensions of these claimants naturally encouraged Baha to press his own claims, far to prevent chaos someone must be in control, and he had a better chance of success than anyone else. Hence, urged on by Aqa Jan of Kashan, later known as Khadimu’llah (Servant of God), Baha continued to put himself forward.(76) However, the opposition from the other

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Babi leaders was so fierce that he was forced to wait awhile longer before openly declaring himself is Baha who is held responsible, and the name of Subh-i-Azal is not mentioned in the correspondence.

Meanwhile, the zealous Babis continued their efforts to convert the Shi’ite pilgrims as they went on their way to visit the shrines of the Imams Ali and Husayn in Najaf and Karbala, an effort which was bitterly resented by the Muslim religious leaders. As a result, there was fighting between the Muslims and the Babis. Finally, the Iranian government, incited by the Muslim Mullas, intervened and requested the Turkish government to remove the Babi leaders from Iraq. The letter sent from Teheran to the Iranian ambassador in Istanbul instructing him to try to arrange for this transfer reads in part as follows:(77)

”Sometimes, moreover, he [Baha] hath put his hand to sedition and incitements to murder, as in the case of.....Mulla Aqa of Darb and, whom they grievously wounded with intent to kill.....besides sundry other assassinations which took place.....In the face of these proceedings, it would be a proof of the most complete negligence.....on the part of the Iranian government to disregard these acts which may produce such deplorable consequences.....It will not do to leave Mirza Husayn Ali [Baha] there [in Baghdad], or to allow fuller scope to their mischievous ideas and probable actions.” The Iranian government, therefore, requested either that Baha and his followers be sent back into Iran where they could be properly watched, or else that the Turkish government “arrange as quickly as possible to deport and detain that mischief maker and his several intimates from Baghdad to some other place in the interior of the Ottoman Kingdom which has no means of communication with our frontiers, so that the channel of their mischief making and sedition. may be stopped.” When we recall Shaykh Tabarsi and Zanzan and the attempt on the life of the Shah, we are able to understand why the Iranian government did not want the Babis to make Baghdad, so near the Iranian border, the center for their activities. It is noteworthy that it was not the heretical views of the Babis that the Iranian government feared, but their political activities and their lawlessness. Also, it

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It seems that the Turkish government was quite ready to comply with this request from the government of Iran, for the quarrels *and* fightings of the Babis and Muslims in Baghdad had no doubt been the cause of great trouble to the authorities there. It was probably because Baha had become a Turkish subject that the decision was to deport him and his family and followers to another part of the Turkish Empire, and not to return

them to Iran. Accordingly, in May 1863 Baha and his family left Baghdad on their way to Istanbul, and were joined in Mosul by Subh-i-Azal who preceded them by two weeks. They reached Istanbul after a long and difficult journey of four months, and there they stopped for another four months. Since there was a large Iranian colony in Istanbul, and the Turkish authorities feared they might cause disturbance there as they had done in Baghdad, they were ordered to proceed yet farther west to the extreme border of Turkey, and to settle in the city of Edirne (Adrianople). They arrived there in December 1863, and there they remained for four and one half years, far away from their native land. (78) In most of the Baha'i publications it is stated that before leaving Baghdad Baha spent twelve days (April 22 – May 3) in the Garden of Rizwan, and that he there announced to his followers that he was He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest. Hence Baha'is observe these dates as the anniversary of this important Declaration. (79) If such a declaration was made at that time, which is improbable, it must have been very private, for even Baha's son Abbas Efendi did not mention this in his book *A Traveller's Narrative*, which purports to be a true and authorized history of the Baha'i Cause. Moreover, the public declaration which resulted in the great schism in the Babi community was not made till several years later in Edirne, (80) as we shall see in Chapter VI. Till then the Babis continued to consider Subh-i-Azal as their divinely appointed head, though Baha had become their actual leader.

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## NOTES

1. I. E. G. Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 56, note 2, Subh-i-Azal in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 373-376, Mirza Jani in *New History*, pp. 374-376, Mirza Jani in *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, pp. 238 ff., Azal's Notes, pp. 551, 946. Far Family Chart of Mirza Buzurg see Appendix II, #8.
2. Avareh in *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, presumably first edition, p. 30.
3. *This wife, whose name was Khadijeh, was a widow when she became the wife of Mirza Buzurg (Azal's Notes, p. 633).*
4. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 375.
5. Avareh in *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, Vol. I, 6th impression, p. 21.
6. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 375.
7. *J'annah* is a title equivalent to "excellency."
8. Subh-i-Azal to Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 376, Subh-i-Azal in *Materials*, pp. 212, 218-219.
9. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 376.
10. Hazrat is a title higher than *Janab*, often used for prophets and kings, equivalent to "Highness" or "Holiness."
11. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 378.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 377-379.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 379.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 380.
15. According to the *Persian Bayan* (II,16), all the worlds derive their origin from the Divine Will (*Irada*), which was created by the Divine Volition (*Mashiyya*) which is self-subsisting. In the Koranic Cycle according to the Bab, Muhammad had the

station of Volition, and his son-in-law Ali that of Will. Similarly in the Cycle of the Bayan the Bab held the station. of Volition, and Subh-i-Azal was given that of Will (*Azal's Illustres*, p. 948).

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16. Mirza Jani in *New History* p, pp. 381, 426, *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, p. 244, *Azal's Votes*, pp. 514, 515, 551-555, 605-608. It is said that the date of the appointment was Farvardin 25, 1229 A.H. (about April 15, 1850), and the Bab commanded that this day be observed as a feast (*Azal's Notes*, p. 949).
17. Authors of *Hasht Bihisht*, quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 353. The numerical value of the Arabic letters in *Wahid* is 28, the same as in *Yahya* (*New History*, p. 426). *Wahid* (pronounced Waheed) is a different word from *Wahid* meaning One (i.e., God), which has the value of 19.
18. Mirza Jani in *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, English Int., p. XXXI.
19. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 552, 945, 87B, and the Bab's Five Grades. See Appendix II, #26 and #27.
20. Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 381.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 381, *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, pp. XXXI, 244.
22. *Azal's Notes*, p. 951.
23. *J.R.A.S. 1897*, p. 763.
24. *New History*, pp. 420, 426, 427, Browne in *J.R.A.S. 1889*, pp. 996, 997, October 1892, p. 763.
25. This is a correction of Browne's translation made by Mr. Azal.
26. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 550, 555, 687, 688, Appendix II, p. 3, #28.
27. That is, the eight Wahids of the Bayan which the Bab had not written.
28. *Azal's Notes*, p. 790.
29. *Gobineau, Vol. II*, pp. 72, 73.
30. *New History*, p. XX. *Gobineau, Vol. II*, pp. 7, 41.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 7, Browne in *New History*, p. XIX.
32. *Gobineau, Vol. II*, pp. 9, 38.

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34. Browne in *New History*, p. XIX.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 384 f., *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, 252-255.
36. *New History*, p. 394.
37. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 953, 977.
38. *New History*, p. 390.
39. Mirza Jani here gives the higher title *Hazrat* to Subh-i-Azal, and the lower title *Janab* to his older brother Baha, whom he seldom mentions in this part of the history.
40. In the *Arabic Bayan* (I,6) the Bab states that the Imam Husayn "has returned."
41. See Appendix II, #41.
42. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 979-986.

43. *New History*, p. 392, Gobineau quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 53, note 1, *Nasikhu't-Tawarikh* quoted by Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 185.
  44. Gobineau, Vol. II, pp. 10-36, *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 50, 323-325.
  45. *Materials*, pp. 267-271.
  46. Gobineau, Vol. II, pp. 17-36, *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 313, 327-334.
  47. Gobineau, Vol. II, p. 37.
  48. *A Traveller's Narrator*, pp. 354, 374, *New History*, p. XX, *Azal's Notes*, p. 561.
  49. *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 374-376, *New History*, pp. 414-415.
  50. *Nasikhu't-Tawarikh* quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 186, 327.
  51. *Materials*, p. 6, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf by Baha'u'llah, translated by Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Publishing Trust 1962, pp. 16, 20-22, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 183-187, 520.
  52. Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 327.
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53. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, Baha'i Publishing Trust 1965, pp. 108, 109.
54. *Dawn Breakers*, translation of Shoghi Effendi, American Edition, pp. 593-594.
55. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 115.
56. *Hasht Bihisht*, pp. 301-302
57. *Iqan* by Baha'u'llah, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By*, pp. 118-119.
58. *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 64, 356, *Materials*, pp. 7-9. See Appendix II, #38.
59. *Hasht Bihisht* quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 357, *Azal's Notes*, p. 651.
60. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 596-597.
61. *Idem.*, p. 608, which quotes the Bab's letter to Baha.. See Appendix II, #3I.
62. *Notes of Dr. Sa'eed Khan*, p. 13 of the translation, deposited in the Library of Princeton University.
63. *New History*, p. XXI.
64. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 15-19, 425-426, 447, 458, 581- 582, 587.
65. *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf'*, Persian Int., pp. 35-36, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 532-537.
66. *The Eitab-i-2'qan – The Book of Certitude*, p. 244.
67. *Idem.*, p. 199.
68. *Idem.*, p. 251.
69. *Idem.*, p. 249. A more accurate translation of the Persian word *bartari* (translated "Preference") in this connection is "superiority."
70. The following editions of the *Iqan* have been consulted by the author: Persian edition, published in Egypt in 1900 A.D. *The Book of Assurance*, translation of the *Iqan* by Ali Kuli Khan, Brentano's, New York, without date. *The Kitab-I-Iqan – The Book of Certitude*, translated by Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1960. It is instructive to note that the two Baha'i translators of the *Iqan* have consistently translated the Persian first person singular, which Baha used by the plural "We" with a capital, the "plural of majesty." More serious than this, Shoghi Effendi in his translation on p. 251 erroneously rendered the Persian *masdar-i-amr* (the source of command) as "the Mystic Source," thereby intentionally concealing the obvious meaning of the passage. The "source of command" was the Vicegerent of the Bab, Subh-i-Azal, whom Baha at the time the *Iqan* was written acknowledged as his

commander. Ali Kuli Khan had in his earlier translation (p. 180) rendered the phrase correctly

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71. *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 111, note 1, *God Passes By*, p. 146, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 47, 64, 189, 964.

72. *Notes of Dr. Sa'eed Khan*, p. 8 of the translation.

73. *Gobineau*, vol. II, p. 6, *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 357, 365, *Materials*, p. 218, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 965, 973.

74. *Hasht Bihisht* states that Baha ordered his servant Mirza Muhammad to kill Dayyan (*A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 357). Baha says the decree was issued by Subh-i-Azal (*Epistle to the Son of the wolf*, pp. 175-176). In any case it seems that he was executed for his claims by the order of one of the Babi leaders. For a full discussion of the evidence see *Azal's Notes*, pp. 965-973. See also Appendix. II, #39.

75. *Azal's Notes*, p. 973.

76. Authors of *Hasht Bihisht*, quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 358.

77. *Materials*, pp. 279-287.

78. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19, *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 90-92, *New History*, p. XX, Browne in *J.R.A.S.* 1889, p. 514, *The Chosen Highway*, Lady Bloomfield, p. 59.

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79. *Materials*, p. 16, *Baha'u'llah and the New Era*, by J. E. Esselmont, Brentano's, first edition., pp. 93, 36-37, *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi, pp. 151-155, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 974-975.

80. Edirne was often referred to by the Babis as "the Land of the Mystery," because the numerical value of the Arabic letters in *Edirne* is the same as in *Sirr* (mystery). Also, they say, because it was there that the separation of Light and Darkness took place (authors of *Hasht Bihisht*, quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 361). In the schism that occurred there, each party claimed to be Light, and condemned their opponents as Darkness.

## 6. The Schism Between Subh-i-Azal and Baha

In Edirne the task which faced Subh-i-Azal, who for some sixteen years had been generally considered by the Babis to be the divinely appointed Head of the People of the Bayan, one with the Bah in rank and glory, was by no means easy. As Professor Browne writes: (1) "A community like that which.....existed at Adrianople [Edirne] consisting almost entirely of exiles and potential martyrs, and in large part of religious enthusiasts, revolutionary visionaries, and speculative mystics, whose restless activity, debarred from external action, is pent up within limits too narrow for its free exercise, requires a firm hand to control and direct its energies. Such firmness Subh-i-Azal seems to have altogether lacked." His older brother Baha, "a man of much more resolute and ambitious character," had come gradually to occupy the place of actual leadership, though till now he had done everything in the name of Subh-i-Azal. However, about three years after reaching Edirne, probably in 1866 A.D.,(2) with no strong Babi leaders nearby to oppose him, he suddenly threw off all disguise and made to the Babi community the claim which he had for several years been contemplating, that he was He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest, whose coming the Bab had predicted

(Chapter IV). He then called on Subh-i-Azal (3) and all the Babis scattered over Turkey, Iran, Syria and Egypt to acknowledge his supreme authority, and to accept as God's Word the revelations which he forthwith began to promulgate.

To understand the nature of Baha's claims let us recall what the Bab in the Bayan had written about Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest, who would be another Major Manifestation (Chapter IV): (4) He is divine, and his command is God's command. He is not to be asked why he does anything. All previous Manifestations were for him, and one verse of his writings is better than a thousand Bayans. He is to be recognized by himself. Only God knows the time of his advent, but he will come not prior to 1511 years, and not later than 2001 years, after the Bab.(5) He will "reveal verses spontaneously and powerfully, without study and without the means accessible to the learned. It is impossible that any other than He.....can lay claim to the command....." (6) As we saw in Chapter V, a number of men had claimed to be a return of the Imam Husayn, a mirror within the orbit of the Bayan, and had mistakenly identified Husayn with Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest. They were rejected by the Babi leaders as pretenders, and Dayyan was murdered by the Babis in Baghdad. Nabil, who made the same claim there, later withdrew it, gave his allegiance to Baha, and became a Baha'i historian. (7) Baha, however, because of his position of leadership under Subh-i-Azal and his relationship to Subh-i-Azal, had a better chance of success than did the previous claimants. Accordingly, he who had considered himself to be the return of the Imam Husayn now advanced the claim to be a Major Manifestation of Deity, the same claim which the Bab had made some twenty-two years earlier.

Before considering the effect of this declaration on the People of the Bayan, it is appropriate that we here give a brief account of the life of the man who claimed to be He-

Whom-God-Will-Manifest. His name was Mirza Husayn Ali. It is said that he was born on November 12, 1817 A.D.(S) His father, known as Mirza Buzurg, a man of considerable influence and wealth

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who had come from the district of Nur in Iran's northern province of Mazanderan, died when Mirza Husayn Ali was about twenty years of age.(9) The young man received the same kind of classical education from tutors which was customary for the youth of his class of society in Iran at that time.(10)

Soon after the Bab's declaration in Shiraz in 1844 A.D., Mirza Husayn Ali met some of the Bab's disciples in Teheran and became a believer. There is no trust-worthy evidence to support the story that a special message was at this time sent to him by the Bab. The Bah did not then or later appoint him as one of the eighteen "Letters," or bestow on him a title. (11) When the Bab ordered his followers to proceed to Khurasan, the eastern province of Iran, Mirza Husayn Ali obeyed, and in Sabzevar he met Qurratu'l-Ayn. There with her, writes Mirza Jani,(12) "he tarried, doing her much service both there and at Teheran, and, indeed, providing her and her companions with the means of continuing their journey, and hearing all their expenses.....In short, he remained in Sabzevar till Hazrat-i-Quddus came thither, on whom he had the honor of waiting, and for whom he entertained the truest devotion. He was one of the most illustrious of the great believers, he was present at the revolt at Badasht, stood firm in his love, expended large sums of money, and helped the believers in every way." There is no indication in Mirza Jani's history that Mirza Husayn Ali played a leading role in the Badasht Conference. However, it is said that it was here that Qurratu'l-Ayn bestowed on him the title *Baha* (Splendor), which is the name of the first month of the Babi year. (13)

In his account of these events Mirza Jani mentions Baha much less frequently than his younger brother Mirza Yahya, usually giving to him the inferior designation *Janab*, and referring to Mirza Yahya as *Hazrat*. It is quite clear that Mirza Jani at the time when he wrote his history in 1851 A.D. considered Baha's position to be inferior not only to that of: his brother Subh-i-Azal but also to that of Hazrat-i-Quddus and Qurratu'l-Ayn and the other Letters.(14) As previously

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stated (Chapter III), Baha attempted to reach the Babi fort at Shaykh Tabarsi, but was arrested by the local authorities, punished,(15) and released. Baha's son Abbas Efendi states (16) that "after the death of the late prince Muhammad Shah [September 4, 1848] he [Baha] returned to Teheran having in mind (the intention of) corresponding and entering into relations with the Bab." From this statement it seems that up to this time Baha had neither seen the Bab, nor had he been in contact with his Master.(17) Some time later the Bab wrote to Baha,(18) instructing him to take the best possible care of Subh-i-Azal, whom he had appointed as his successor. There is no evidence from the early documents to support the statements made by Abbas Efendi in *A Traveller's Narrative* (pp. 62,63), and also in later books, that Subh-i-Azal

was made a screen to protect Baha, who from the first was the true leader of the movement. (19) Nor is there authentic evidence that Baha played a leading part in the Babi movement prior to his expulsion from Iran. (20) After the execution of the Bab in 1850 he left Iran and went to Iraq, where he remained for about a year (1851-1852 A.D.). It was at this time that Baha is said to have met Shaykh Zunuzi in Karbala, and informed him that he (Baha) was the return of Imam Husayn. When, after the attempt on the life of the Shah in 1852 A.D., a number of leading Babis were arrested, Baha was one of them, probably because he was known to be the brother of Subh-i-Azal the head of the movement. A large reward was offered for the arrest of Subh-i-Azal, but he succeeded in escaping. Twenty-eight of the prisoners were executed. Baha was kept in prison in Teheran for four months, and then, a month after his release from confinement, he left Teheran for Baghdad, and there he joined his brother Subh-i-Azal in April, 1853 A.D. In the previous chapter we have told how Baha in Baghdad gradually took over the leadership of the Babi community, and came to be looked upon by the Turkish officials as the chief person. Then in Edirne in 1866 he definitely rejected the role of service to the Babi

Cause under the Vicegerent Subh-i-Azal, and demanded that all recognize him as supreme ruler, a Divine Manifestation. It is said that he sent a letter to Subh-i-Azal demanding his submission, but his brother refused. Thereupon Baha tried to force Subh-i-Azal to yield by withholding his share of the allowances which were paid by the Turkish government through Baha for the Babis in Edirne. As a result, the family of Subh-i-Azal lacked food, and his little children became ill. His wife then went to the wife of the Turkish governor to complain, an act which was deeply resented by Baha. The blame for the opposition of Subh-i-Azal to Baha's claims has been laid by the Baha'is on Sayyid Muhammad of Isfahan, who had been an intimate friend of the Bab, and had married the Bab's widow Fatima. (21)

Of these events Professor Browne writes: (22) "Amongst the Babis the effect of this announcement (for which, no doubt, the way had been already prepared) was little short of stupendous. From Constantinople [Istanbul] to Kirman and from Cairo to Khurasan the communities of the faithful were rent asunder by a schism which every subsequent year has rendered wider and more permanent....At Adrianople [Edirne] itself the struggle was short and the triumph of Baha complete. Subh-i-Azal was so completely deserted, that, as he himself informed me, he and his little boy had to go themselves to the bazaar to buy their food. Elsewhere, though active and astute emissaries were at once dispatched in all directions by Baha" the conflict, though its issue was from the first hardly doubtful, was longer maintained. For the question at issue was not merely whether one leader should be replaced by another, whether certain doctrines should be understood in this way or in that, or whether the ethics, practices or forms of worship of the sect should be reformed or modified....but whether the doctrines and writings of the beloved Master [the Bab], for which his followers had been ready to suffer death or exile, were to be regarded as abrogated and cancelled in favor of a new revelation; whether his chosen vicegerent, whom they had so long regarded as their Supreme Pontiff and as the

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incarnation of all purity, virtue, and heavenly wisdom, was to be cast down from this high position, and branded as 'the First Letter of Denial' of the New Dispensation; and whether the Bab himself was to be looked upon, not as the 'Point of Revelation,' a veritable Manifestation of the Divine, but as a mere harbinger and precursor of a more perfect Theophany."

It is clear, however, that the vital issue was not that of reforming the laws and customs decreed by the Bab, for there is no evidence to indicate that Baha abrogated the Bayan. The problem was how Baha could take over the supreme control of the Babi Cause. This he did by by-passing the Vicegerent Subh-i-Azal, and proclaiming himself a Major Manifestation. (23)

Though most of the People of the Bayan sooner or later acknowledged Baha as He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest, his brother Subh-i-Azal steadfastly refused to do so. He held fast to the teachings of the Bab, believing that they were the all-sufficient revelation of God for the present age, and that they must be accepted and obeyed by multitudes of people for many centuries, as the Gospel of Jesus and the Koran of Muhammad had been, before it would be time for another Manifestation to appear. To Subh-i-Azal and the Babis who clung to him it seemed utterly unreasonable to believe that the elaborate system revealed by God to the Bah could have been established for only twenty-two years. Had not the Bah in the Bayan indicated clearly that He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest would not come for at least 1511 years and might not come till 2001 more years had passed? (24) What farmer would plant a vineyard, and then before any fruit whatever had been gathered from it would cut down the vines and plant others?

Surely God would wait long enough to reap some fruit from the tree of the Bayan before He would remove it and send another Manifestation!(25)

All the Babis were convinced that the Bab had been sent by God and was infallible. Then, since Subh-i-Azal had been appointed by the Bab himself as his successor, was not he also sent by God, as they had for sixteen years believed? And did he not possess

divine wisdom, and was he not one with the Bab? How then could it be possible that such an one as Subh-i-Azal should be unable to recognize Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest when he appears? But Subh-i-Azal rejected the claim of his brother to be "He!" Hence, for those Babis who accepted Baha, and later became known as Baha'is, there was no alternative except to say that the Bab, who was divinely inspired and knew all things, had deliberately chosen as his vicegerent a man who was to become the "Point of Darkness," the chief enemy of Him-Whom-God-Will-Manifest.(26)

In their effort to escape this dilemma, Baha and his partisans did two things: first, they got rid of most of the leading Babis who sided with Subh-i-Azal; and second, they rewrote the history of the Babi movement, largely ignoring Subh-i-Azal, greatly magnifying the position and person of Baha, and degrading the Bab from the position of a Major Manifestation to that of a "forerunner" of Baha, who was the real Manifestation

for the age. Those who have read the later teachings of Baha and his son Abbas Efendi (Ahdu'l-Baha) regarding truth and love and kindness to all mankind may find it difficult to believe that the authors of such noble sentiments could have had any part in the falsification of history or the assassination of opponents. We are dealing, however, not with what we would like to believe, but with historical facts established beyond a doubt which we cannot but accept.

Though this sad chapter of the history has been largely omitted by the Baha'i historians, (27) the truth is that of those Babis who remained faithful to Subh-i-Azal, later known as Azalis or Babis, about twenty were murdered in Baghdad, Edirne and Akka by the followers of Baha. (28) Two of those who were killed were brothers of Fatima the widow of the: Bab, (29) and one was her husband Sayyid Muhammad of Isfahan, and two were Letters appointed by the Bah. It has been said that these assassinations were the work of the too-zealous followers of Baha, and that he was not himself responsible. However this may be, could not one who possessed the divine knowledge and power to influence men which Baha claimed to have,

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been able to prevent such acts on the part of his intimate disciples? And could he not have disowned them, or at least punished them, for their deeds? as far as is known he did neither. To understand this attitude, so foreign to that of religious people in the West, it should be remembered that the men who committed these crimes were kindred spirits to those who had plotted the assassination of the Shah of Iran (Chapter V). Muslim historians relate that the Prophet Muhammad approved of the assassination of certain individuals who opposed him. (30) Therefore it might be argued that if one Manifestation puts down opposition in this way, could not a greater Manifestation do the same? "Surely," said an Iranian Baha'i to Professor Browne, (31) "you cannot pretend to deny that a prophet, who is an incarnation of the Universal Intelligence, has as much right to remove anyone whom he perceives to be an enemy to religion and a danger to the welfare of mankind as a surgeon has to amputate a gangrened limb?" Accordingly, acts which to some might seem criminal could to others with a different point of view appear as the expression of the righteous will of God.

According to the Azalis, Baha not only sanctioned the murder of these Babis who refused to accept him, but also attempted to have his brother Subh-i-Azal poisoned. The Baha'i replied that it was Subh-i-Azal who tried to poison Baha. (32:) Browne confesses his inability to decide where the guilt lay, but a careful study of the evidence indicates that the charges against Subh-i-Azal cannot be substantiated. (33) Whatever the truth of the matter may be, both sides agree that an attempt was made by one of the brothers to poison the other. This is indeed a blot on the history of the Babi movement in which both brothers had for a number of years been the leaders. A second attempt on the life of Subh-i-Azal, according to the Azalis, was later made by the Baha'i barber in the bath, after escaping which he separated himself entirely from Baha and his followers. (34) Finally, the conflict between the two unequal parties became so fierce that the Turkish authorities decided to separate them, and apparently without making

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any effort to determine who was in the right they sent all the Babi exiles away from Edirne. Subh-i-Azal and his family and a few followers were sent to the Island of Cyprus, and Baha and his family and followers were sent to Akka (Acre) in Palestine, both regions being at that time under Turkish rule. In order to keep informed as to their doings, the authorities detailed for Baha'is to go to Cyprus to spy on Subh-i-Azal, and four Azalis to do the same for Baha in Akka. One of the four Azalis was murdered by the Baha'is before leaving Edirne, and the other three were likewise murdered soon after their arrival in Akka.(35) Regarding this Browne writes:(36) "As to the assassination of the three Azalis.....by some of Baha's followers at Acre, there can, I fear, be but little doubt.....There is, however, no evidence to prove that the assassins acted under orders." In the *Hasht Bihisht*, a book written by two sons-in-law of Subh-i-Azal, it is stated (37) that while the Babis were still in Edirne anonymous letters were written at Baha's direction, and left at night at the doors of numerous Turkish officials in Istanbul. These letters stated that 30,000 Babis, whose king was Mirza Yahya Subh-i-Azal, were concealed about Istanbul, and were ready to overthrow the Sultan of Turkey, unless he believed in their religion. It would seem most improbable that Baha in an effort to discredit his brother should have adopted a strategy which was certain to injure him also. However, a document has been discovered by an Iranian scholar in the government archives in Istanbul,(38) sealed with Baha's seal "Husayn Ali," in which Baha gives information to the authorities in Edirne against Subh-i-Azal and his followers, whose names are given, alleging that they have conspired against the Ottoman government, and urging that an investigation be made. The investigation was made, and a report was sent to the Sultan. The report stated that both Subh-i-Azal and Shaykh Husayn Ali claimed to be prophets, and therefore "such men of error could not be left at large to conduct their disruptive activities unchecked." The report recommended their transportation for life to

some remote penal places, subject to their being kept under surveillance or open arrest. The report was dated June 18, 1868, and the imperial warrant for their exile was issued in Istanbul on July 26, 1868. Accordingly, both parties to the struggle left Edirne for their respective places of exile in the early part of August 1868. (39) Thus Baha, in attempting to rid himself of his brother, succeeded in getting himself sent under a sentence of life imprisonment to Akka.

Not content with getting rid of the influential Babis who refused to follow Baha, the Baha'i party undertook to rewrite the whole history of the Babi movement so as to make Baha's claims more plausible. In doing this they reduced the Bab from being an independent Major Manifestation, like Jesus and Muhammad, to the rank of a "forerunner," like John the Baptist. They totally ignored Subh-i-Azal, or else portrayed him as the chief enemy of the truth. And they represented Baha as having been from the first the leading figure in the Babi movement. This tendency is clearly seen in *A Traveller's Narrative*, an official though anonymous history of the movement written by Abbas Efendi the eldest son of Baha, and also in other Baha'i writings.(40)

In order for this false version of Babi history to gain universal acceptance it became necessary that many of the old Babi books and manuscripts be gotten rid of, for they gave

the lie to the Baha'i statements. The followers of Baha, therefore, began systematically to conceal or to destroy the writings of the Bab and of the early Babis. (41) They were so successful that when Professor Browne visited Iran in 1888 he was able only with the greatest difficulty to obtain a copy of the Bayan.(42) And when he visited Akka in 1890 he had a similar experience. "I can affirm," he wrote after his visit there,(43) "that, hard as it is to obtain from the Baha'is in Persia the loan or gift of Babi books belonging to the earlier period of the faith, at Acre it is harder still even to get a glimpse of them. They may be, and probably are, still preserved there, but, for all the good the enquirer is likely to get from them, they might almost as well have suffered

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the fate [destruction] which the Azalis believe to have overtaken them." We have already related in the Introduction how the history written by Mirza Jani (*Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*) in 1851 was completely suppressed in Iran, so that Browne was unable to get any information whatever about this valuable book, and how the one extant copy in Europe was found by him in Paris, and published by him, to the consternation of the Baha'i leaders. By some of them Professor Browne was accused of having become an Azali, and of having been bribed by them to publish this book.(44)

Regarding the suppression of Mirza Jani's book, Browne writes:(45) "It is hard for us, accustomed to a world of printed books and carefully guarded public libraries, to realize that so important a work as this could be successfully suppressed; and equally hard to believe that the adherents of a religion evidently animated by the utmost self-devotion and the most fervent enthusiasm, and, in ordinary everyday matters, by obvious honesty of purpose, could connive at such an act of suppression and falsification of evidence..... This fact, were it not established by the clearest evidence, I should have regarded as incredible." It is to non-Baha'i scholars such as Gobineau and Browne and Nicholas, and to the Azalis, and not to Baha and his followers, that the world is indebted for the knowledge it has of the writings of the Bab and the early Babis.(46)

Since the great majority of the Babis became followers of Baha, our principal concern from now on will be with the Baha'i branch of the Babi movement which had Akka for its center and Baha for its head. However, before leaving Subh-i-Azal and his small minority of disciples, we will relate briefly the story of his later life. He with his two wives (47) and his children and a few followers(48) reached Famagusta on the Island of Cyprus in August, 1868. Their sentence was life imprisonment, and they were given a daily allowance by the Turkish government. In 1878 Cyprus passed from Turkish to British control, and the Azali prisoners became pensioners of the British government. Living thus in isolation

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Subh-i-Azal

Mirza Yahya Subh-i-Azal from *New History of the Bab* by E.G. Browne

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Subh-i-Azal was almost completely forgotten, for when Browne made inquiries about him in Iran in 1887 he was amazed to discover that the Baha'is whom he met knew nothing, or pretended to know nothing, about him, and many said they had never even heard of him. However, Baha'is sometimes threatened him.(49)

After careful investigation Browne learned that Subh-i-Azal was in Famagusta, and in March 1890 he went to Cyprus to visit him. He thus describes his first meeting with Subh-i-Azal: "We ascended to an upper room, where a venerable and benevolent looking old man of about sixty years of age, somewhat below the middle height, with ample forehead on which the traces of care and anxiety were apparent, clear searching blue eyes, and long grey beard, rose and advanced to meet us. Before that mild and dignified countenance I involuntarily bowed myself with unfeigned respect; for at length my long-cherished desire was fulfilled, and I stood face to face with Mirza Yahya Subh-i-Azal ('The Morning of Eternity'), the appointed successor of the Bab."(50)

During a period of two weeks Browne daily spent several hours conversing with Subh-i-Azal, and obtaining from him a vast amount of first-hand information regarding the Babi movement. "Of the Bab and his first apostles and followers," writes Browne,(51) "as of his own life and adventures, Subh-i-Azal would speak freely, but concerning the origin of the schism which for him had been attended with such disastrous results, and all pertaining to Baha and the Baha'is, he was most reticent, so that, perceiving this subject to be distasteful, I refrained for the most part from alluding to it." Subh-i-Azal and his sons always treated their visitor with the greatest courtesy.

Thereafter Subh-i-Azal and his sons rendered great assistance to Professor Browne in his researches by supplying him with numerous books in manuscript written by the Bab and by Subh-i-Azal and the early Babis, and by answering many questions about the Babi writings and history which Browne put to them.

Subh-i-Azal lived to the age of eighty-one, and died in Famagusta on April 29, 1912. An account of his death and burial, written by one of his sons, who, on becoming a Christian, renamed himself "Constantine the Persian," has been published by Professor Browne. (52) Subh-i-Azal left no will, and appointed no one as his successor,(53) and his followers have carried on no propaganda. However, there are in Iran several thousand people(54) who consider themselves Babis, and who believe that in this unfortunate schism the right was with Subh-i-Azal.

## NOTES

1. Browne in *Illeu History*, p. XXI.
2. The date of Baha's declaration (1866-1867 A.D.) was fixed by Nabil, a follower of Baha, in his Chronological Poem, in which he states that Baha was fifty years old when he set forth his claim to be a Manifestation (*J.R.A.S.* 1889, pp. 983- 990). The famous Baha'i writer, Mirza Abu'l-Fazl stated that the declaration was in 1868 (*J.R.A.S.* October 1892, p. 703, note 1). Abbas Efendi, eldest son of Baha, in his book *A Traveller's Narrative* (pp. 55, note 3, and 66), in the opinion of Browne "deliberately and purposely antedated the Manifestation" (*J.R.A.S.* April 1892, p. 306), in order to make it appear that Baha had from an early time been a leading figure in the movement. The date of the declaration as given by Abbas Efendi was 1852 A.D., about fourteen years too early. Modern Baha'is give the date as April 22, 1863 A.D. (Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By*, pp. 148-162), which is at least three years too early. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 1021-1023.
3. The date of this order, according to Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By*, p. 167, was Shawwal 22, 1282 A.H. (March 10, 1866 A.D.).

4. Browne in English Int. to *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, pp. LXIX-LXXI.
5. *Persian Bayan, II, 16*, where the date 2001, the numerical equivalent of the Arabic word *Mustaghath*, is clearly stated in words. Refer to Chapter IV. Baha at first attempted to explain the words *Ghiyath* (1511) and *Mustaghath* (2001) in some way that would not conflict with his claims. However, near the end of his life in his Tablet O Creator of All Creation, Baha revoked his earlier interpretation and stated that "He who was named in the Bayan 'He-Who-Will-Appear' [that is, He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest) shall in truth come in the Mustaghath with manifest power." He did not explain how it happened that he (*Baha'u'llah*) had come before the *Mustaghath*. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 256, 257, 1021-1023.
6. *Persian Bayan*, VI, 8. See Appendix II, p. 5, 445.
7. Nabil is the author of the *Dawn Breakers*. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 500, 999.
8. The exact date of Baha's birth is not known, since at the time no official records of births were kept in Iran. A fairly accurate statement of the dates in the life of Baha is found in. Nabil's Chronological Poem composed in Akka in 1869 A.D. (*J.R.A.S.*

October 1889, pp. 983-990). See also *Azal's Notes*, pp. 450-456, 996, and Browne's Chronological Table for Babi History (*J.B.A.S.* July 1889, pp. 521-526).

9. Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 56, note, Mirza Jani in *New History*, p. 374, Subh-i-Azal in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 373.

10. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 457-459.

11. Persian Introduction to *IFuqtatu'l-Eaf*, p. 35, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 464-470, 607.

12. *New History*, p. 377, *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, p. 240, *Azal's Notes*, p. 482.

13. Avareh in *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, presumably first edition, p. 28, also statement from Bayan in English Int. to *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, p. LVIII. Since the numerical value of the Arabic letters in *Baha'* is 9, *Baha'* is attach great importance to this number.

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14. *New History*, pp. 310, note 1, 375, *Azal's Notes*, p. 483, 498, 515.

15. Mirza Jani in *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, p. 242.

16. *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 62.

17. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 477, 478.

18. Dr. *Sa'eed's Notes*, p. 15 in translation, *Azal's Notes*, p. 608. See Appendix II, 031.

19. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 503 ff.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 448, 479-485.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 642 ff., Mirza Jawad in *Materials*, pp. 21-24.

22. *New History*, pp. XXII, XXIII.

23. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 1000, 1009.

24. *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, p. XXV, *Persian Bayan, II*, 17, *J.R.A.S.* July 1889, pp. 514, 515.

25. Authors of *Hasht Bihisht* in *J.R.A.S.* October 1892, p. 686.

26. Browne in *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, pp. XXXIII, XXXIV.

27. The assassinations of Azalis by *Baha'is* at this period are entirely overlooked by *Baha* in his writings, by Abbas Efendi in *A Traveller's Narrative*, by Shoghi Effendi 'n *God Passes By*, as well as in later *Baha'i* accounts of the history of the movement. See *Azal's Notes*, pp. 548, 1013.

28. The names of a number of Azalis murdered by the *Baha'is* are given by Browne in the Persian Int. to *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, p. 42, and also in *New History*, pp. XXIII, XXIV, and *J.R.A.S.* July 1889, p. 517, and by the authors of *Hasht Bihisht* quoted by Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 359-373.

29. Both of these brothers wrote refutations of the claims of *Baha*, and it was because of this that they were murdered by *Baha's* followers (*Azal's Notes*, pp. 543, 566, 567).

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30. *Nasikhu't-Tawarikh*, vol. II, part. 1, pp. 132, 135 (quoted in *Life of Muhammad by Sell*, pp. 124-130.)

31. *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 372.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 368, 369, *J.R.A.S.* April 1892, pp. 296, 297, *Materials*, pp. 22, 23.

Many years after these events Abbas Efendi (Abdu'l-Baha) in his Will and Testament

(Persian text, p. 4, line 9) stated that “Subh-i-Azal shed the pure blood [of Baha] in Edirne,” an allegation which Baha himself never made, and for which no adequate evidence exists (*Azal’s Illo~as*, p. 1015).

33. *Azal’s Notes*, p. 198.

34. *J.R.A.S. April 1892*, p. 297.

35. *A Traveller’s Narrative*, pp. 361, 370, *J.R.A.S. July 1869*, pp. 516, 517.

36. *A Traveller’s Narrative*, p. 370. See appendix II, #72, in which Baha’u’llah admits the assassins acted under orders.

37. Authors of *E7asht Bihisht*, who were Shaykh Ahmad Ruhi and Mirza Aqa Khan, both of Kirman (*Azal’s Notes*, p. 1016), quoted in *A Traveller’s Narrative*, p. 360.

38. *Journal of the Book Society of Iran (Rahnama-i-Kitab)* April 1963, pp. 102-110. The article is by Dr. Muhammad Ali Muwahhid. The file in the archives in Istanbul is No. 1475, 812 and 13. It is probable that much more information hearing on the Babi history may lie buried in the Istanbul archives. See Appendix II, C7 and 513.

39. *Azal’s Notes*, p. 1016.

40. Refer to the Introduction of this book, also to Browne in *New History*, p. XXXI, and to *A Traveller’s Narrative*, p. XLV.

41. Subh-i-Azal quoted in *A Traveller’s Narrative*, p. 343, *J.R.A.S. July 1892*, p. 452, *Azal’s Notes*, Pp. 207-213.

42. *J.R.A.S. July 1889*, pp. 505, 506.

43. *New History* p. XXVIII.

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44. It is said that this charge is found in the Persian book *Bada’i’l-Athar*, vol. II, by Abbas Effendi. Many years passed, and then in 1970 a book was published under the title *Edward Granville Browne and the Baha’i Faith*, by H. M. Balyuzi, George Ronald, London. The author, a learned Baha’i, in this volume which contains much valuable information, has undertaken to prove that Professor Browne was prejudiced in favor of the claims of Subh-i-Azal, and in his later years was in his writings unfair to Baha’u’llah and his followers.

Mr. Balyuzi devotes 25 pages of his book to a consideration of the *Nuqtatu’l-Kaf*, which Browne had published in 1910. He maintains that while Hajji Mirza Jani did write a history of the Babi movement, the book which Browne published was not the original work, but was a forgery composed later by some follower of Subh-i-Azal. It is therefore untrustworthy, and does not possess the great importance attached to it by Browne.

Also, Mr. Balyuzi questions the authorship of the long Persian Introduction to the *Nuqtatu’l-Kaf*, and gives reasons why he thinks Professor Browne was not the author, though it bears his name. It is evident that the purpose of the questioner is to discredit the testimony of Browne to the appointment of Subh-i-Azal by the Bab as his successor, which Mr. Balyuzi strenuously denies.

Mr. Balyuzi describes Subh-i-Azal as a weak and unworthy person. Yet he concedes that, in the words of Shoghi Effendi (*God Passes By*, p. 163), Subh-i-Azal after the execution of the Bab was the “recognized chief of the Babi Community” (P, 39).

But, we ask, if the Bah failed to appoint a successor (which is improbable), was there not among the devoted and able followers of the Bab some one worthy to be chosen by them as the chief of their community, and their leader in those difficult years? How did it happen that a very young man (19 years of age when the Bab died),

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weak and unworthy in the opinion of Mr. Balyuzi, who was not one of the Letters of the Living, and had not even seen the Bab, was recognized by the Babis as their chief? Might it not have been because the Babis all believed that the Bah himself had appointed him? This is what Subh-i-Azal and other faithful followers of the Bab have maintained. And Professor Browne agreed with them.

Mr. Balyuzi rightly speaks of Edward Browne as an “eminent orientalist, matchless among his peers, for his knowledge of Persia and Persian, a man of great charm and great learning” (p. 121). Yet he maintains that Browne was unaware that the *Nuqtatu’l-Kaf* was a forgery, and that he had been deceived by it. It should be remembered that the Comte de Gobineau presumably acquired his manuscript of this history while he was in Iran (1855-1858, 1861-1863), and brought it with him to France not later than 1863. It was this manuscript that Browne published. Hence, the book in its present form must have been written sometime before 1863, and prior to the declaration of Baha’u’llah and the division in the Babi community. Whether, therefore, the book published by Browne was written entirely by Mirza Jani before his death in 1852, or whether others wrote the book after the death of Mirza Jani and gave his name to it, the *Nuqtatu’l-Kaf* is by far the earliest account in our possession of the early Babi history, written by Babis. It accordingly merits the importance attached to it by Edward Browne.

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But even if it should be proved that the charge of Mr. Balyuzi is true, and that Browne in 1910 published as authentic a spurious work, why did not some Baha’i scholar at once call his attention to his mistake by publishing a critical review of the book? Or why did not Abdu’l-Baha himself, when he met Professor Browne in 1912 in London, explain to him his mistake, and give him the opportunity to retract his erroneous statements? Browne never admitted that he had been mistaken in his estimate of the authenticity of the *Nuqtatu’l-Kaf*, for he was evidently convinced that he had not erred. There is a well-known Persian verse which says:

If I see a pit, and a blind man nearby, If I sit in silence, a sinner am I.

Did not the failure of Abdu’l-Baha to warn Edward Browne of the pit of error into which he saw him falling, make him also responsible for his friend’s mistake?

However, if Browne had never seen and never published the *Nuqtatu’2-Kaf*, he would probably have maintained to the end his firm belief that Subh-i-Azal had indeed been appointed by the Bab to succeed him. For even before his journey to Iran in 1887 he had been convinced by the writings of the Comte de Gobineau and others that Subh-i-

Azal by the appointment of the Bab was the chief of the Babis. His later studies and the finding of the *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf* only confirmed Browne in his belief.

Another fact which should not be forgotten in considering the authenticity of the *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf* is that there is another manuscript copy of this book in the Library of Princeton University, which had previously belonged to Dr. Sa'eed Khan of Teheran. In a note on p. 35 of his book, Mr. Balyuzi states that he had known Dr. Sa'eed, whose "probity was unquestionable." Dr. Sa'eed has stated that his copy of the *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf* had been carefully compared with that published by Browne, and had been found to be in substantial agreement with it. Dr. Sa'eed did not consider his copy to be a forgery.

It is indeed regrettable that now after sixty years, when Edward Browne is no longer able to defend himself, his competence as a scholar, and even the integrity of his character, should be thus called in question.

45. *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, p. XXXIV.

46. For lists and descriptions of extant Babi manuscripts see Browne in *J.R.A.S.* 1892, pp. 433-499, and *Materials*, pp. 198-243.

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47. Subh-i-Azal married in all at least six wives and had fifteen children, some of whom died in infancy. Three of his wives remained in Iran when he fled to Iraq in 1852. It has been said that Fatima, the Isfahan wife of the Bah, was later married for a time to Subh-i-Azal, but this is denied by others. She was finally given in marriage to Sayyid Muhammad of Isfahan. A complete list of the wives and children of Subh-i-Azal is given in *Azal's Notes*, pp. 560-563, 566-572.

48. An official document gave the number of adults as sixteen (*A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 381).

49. *Ibid.*, p. XV, *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, p. XXXIV. See Appendix II, p. 3, #32 and 33.

50. *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. XXIV.

51. *Ibid.*, p. XXV.

52. *Materials*, pp. 311 ff.

53. *Azal's Notes*, p. 557.

54. In 1930 A.D. Dr. Sa'eed of Teheran estimated the number of Babis (Azalis) in Iran to be about 1500, counting women and children. Mr. Azal, during his visit to Iran in 1963, estimated the number to be from 4000 to 5000. It is said that they have no organization.

7. *The Manifestation of the Baha'u'llah*

When Mirza Husayn Ali Baha was in prison in Teheran following the Babi attempt on the life of the Shah, the Russian minister helped to secure his release.(1) In Baghdad the British Consul General offered the protection of the British government to Baha, but this offer was rejected, since he preferred to accept Turkish nationality.(2) When in Edirne he was in difficulty with the Turkish government, Baha turned to France for help. He wrote a letter to the Comte de Gobineau, former French minister in Iran and historian of the Babi movement, imploring him "to lay the petition of this servant at the foot of the throne of the Monarch of the Age [Napoleon III]," in order that he might become a protege of France. Gobineau in reply informed Baha that he had delivered his message to Napoleon, but said that His Majesty had not been pleased to signify his pleasure in the matter. However, he informed Baha that he was at liberty to address himself to French diplomatic missions in Turkey to have his grievances redressed.(3) Baha was delighted, but his hope for assistance from France was short lived, for in the war with Prussia in 1870 France was defeated, and the Emperor lost his throne.

And so Baha, a subject of Turkey and a political prisoner, without assistance from any government, began to play his new role as a Divine Manifestation and ruler of the great majority of the Babis scattered throughout the Near East. As has been pointed out by Sir Cecil Spring-Rice,(4) formerly British Minister at Teheran, the problem which Baha had to solve was not merely one of succession to the leadership of the Babi movement, but whether the religion which he represented was to become a world religion addressed to all mankind, or was to remain only an obscure Persian sect. For while the Bab had confidently predicted the time when his religion would cover the earth, it had already become clear to Baha, as it was clear to unprejudiced observers from the first, that such a system as that outlined by the Bab could never make any headway outside Iran. Many of the laws laid down by the Bab were entirely unsuited to the needs of mankind, either in Iran or out of it, and the hope cherished by the Bab's zealous followers of establishing by force a Babi theocracy had proved impossible of fulfilment. Accordingly, Baha, while not abrogating the Bayan of the Bab, adopted a policy of ignoring some of the impractical aspects of the Babi system, and its connection with Shi'ite Islam, and of emphasizing the universal character of the religion of which he had become the head. As he moved westward, he came near to lands in which many Christians and Jews resided. Hence he undertook to attract them as well as Babis and Muslims to himself. One way in which he did this was by issuing numerous epistles, or Tablets (Lawh), as they were called, in which he set forth his claim to be a Manifestation of God, and commanded people to accept and obey him.

In the *Lawh-i-Nasir*,(5) which is one of the earliest writings composed after his declaration, Baha says: "I revealed all the heavenly books by the glorious tongue of (Divine) Night;" that is, he, speaking as the Divine Will, claims to be the author of the Bible, the Koran and the Bayan. He also claims he is the Bab returned to earth again,

saying, "In the Bayan I admonished all in the language of power." And he speaks of the execution of the Bab at Tabriz as though he had been the victim, saying, "At length they suspended my

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glorious body in the air, and wounded it with the bullets of malice and hatred, until my spirit returned to the Supreme Companion." Baha complains bitterly of the sufferings he is enduring from his enemies, and he charges Nasir, probably some Babi to whom the epistle is addressed, not to listen to anyone who tries to turn his heart from the love of Baha. He addresses Nasir as "O my slave!" How different is this attitude from that revealed in the *Iqan* written a few years earlier when he declared that he "never sought supremacy over anyone."(6)

It is probable that the *Suratu'l-Muluk* (Chapter of Kings) like the *Lawh-i-Nasir* was composed before Baha's departure from Edirne. In this epistle he addressed the rulers of the earth and bade them acknowledge him. (7) "O Kings of the earth'." he wrote, "Hearken to the voice of God from this fruitful, lofty Tree." The Bab had called himself the Tree of Reality, in reference to the burning bush from which God addressed Moses, and Baha here adopts the same title.(8) The tone in which he addressed the Sultan of Turkey was hardly conciliatory.(9) "Hast thou heard, O King, what hath befallen us at the hands of thy ministers, and what they have done unto us, or art thou of the heedless? ....I will tell Your Majesty of what befell us at the hands of these oppressors. Know then that we came at thy command and entered into thy city with conspicuous honour, but were expelled from it with dishonour, wherewith no dishonour in the world can be compared." Baha also commanded the kings to reduce their armies. "Be at peace one with another, and reduce your armies that your expenses may be diminished," he writes.(10) "And [even] if ye should raise up differences between yourselves, ye will not need great military forces, hut only so much as will suffice for you to guard your domains and realms." This is perhaps Baha's first written appeal for world peace.(11) There is no evidence that the *Suratu'l-Muluk* was ever received by or dispatched to the kings of the earth to whom it was addressed, but it no doubt deeply impressed the followers of Baha to whom it was read. They probably did not have the privilege of listening to the reading of Baha's appeal to the Comte de Gobineau to intercede on

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his behalf with the Emperor of France, which was written about the same time as the Epistle to the Kings.

Neither appeals nor protests availed, and in the first part of August, 1868 the Babi leaders, those who were loyal to Subh-i-Azal as well as those who had followed Baha, were deported from Edirne. Baha and about seventy of his family and adherents made the long journey by carriage and then by ship to Acre (Akka), a penal colony on the Mediterranean coast near Haifa. There they arrived on August 31. The weather was hot, and for a time the exiles suffered much from crowded quarters and bad food. Of this period Mirza Jawad, who was with Baha and was his devoted disciple, writes thus in his *Historical Epitome*:(12) "So the [military] barracks had the honor of receiving them, and

they locked the doors and set military sentinels over them. That night we could obtain no water to drink, save such stale and stagnant water in the tank there as was absolutely unfit for drinking. The community also remained without food that night until morning after that, however, there were assigned to each one three loaves of bread, but they were utterly unfit for food, and used to be exchanged in the market for two [better] loaves so that it might be possible to eat them. In all ways matters went hard with this community.” The climate was had, and soon half of the exiles fell sick, and some died.

”After the lapse of some months,” continues Mirza. Jawad,(13) “the hardships which befell them gave rise to doubt in the minds of those who were of the company of His Holiness our Master [Baha], and they began to turn aside from the path of truth and steadfastness, and to forsake loyalty and love.....The schism was fierce, nor do I care to discuss it in detail.” After two years Baha and his family were removed from the military barracks and provided with a house in the town of Akka. “We were given a comfortable house with three rooms and a court,” said the daughter of Baha to Mr. Phelps.(14) They continued to live in different houses in the town for nine years.(15)

In Akka Baha had ample leisure to meditate, and to prepare the proofs for his claim to be a new Manifestation.

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The Bab had adduced his “verses” as the proof that he spoke for God, and Baha in like manner issued numerous Tablets and other pronouncements which he said were the Words of God. But these supposedly inspired utterances did not convince everyone that their author was truly the “He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest” predicted by the Bab, and so Baha used all his erudition and ingenuity in producing other grounds on which to base his claims to Divinity Mr. Jelal Azal has made an exhaustive study of this subject, the results of which are contained in his Notes(16) and to him I am indebted for the material included in this brief summary.

As has been noted in grievous chapters, the only one in the Bayanic Dispensation who was authorized to bestow titles was the Point of the Manifestation, and the Bab was most generous in giving very high and mighty titles to his letters and to his Vicegerent Subh-i-Azal. But there is no valid evidence whatever that the Bab gave a title to Mirza Husayn Ali. Avareh has stated that when others received titles from the Bab at the Badasht Conference, Mirza Husayn Ali was hurt because none was given to him. So to comfort him, Qurratu’l-Ayn bestowed on him the title *Baha* (Splendor, or Glory), one which she had herself received from the Bab.(17) Others may have called him by this name, but there is no valid evidence that the Bab ever did so. On March 27, 1850, only three months before his death, the Bab, according to the notation in his personal Diary, wrote an epistle to “238, the brother of the Fruit.” As we have seen, the Fruit was Subh-i-Azal. The numerical value of the Arabic letters in Husayn Ali is 238. Hence, it seems that when the Bab wrote his epistle to Mirza Husayn Ali, charging him to take the utmost care of Subh-i-Azal, he used no title in addressing him, but referred to his younger brother as “the Most Glorious (*Abha*) Element.” The epistle clearly indicates that it was written by a superior to an inferior.(18)

Thus, whether this title was given by someone not authorized to bestow titles, or whether it was self- assumed, Mirza Husayn Ali became Baha, and for his purpose a better title could not have been found. Baha was the name given by the Bab to the first of

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the 19 months of his calendar. Also, Baha was the name given by the Bab to the first day of the first month, which was the great Iranian festival of No Ruz. (19) moreover, the word *Baha* is found in its various forms many hundreds of times not only in the writings of the Bab but also in the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians. Mirza Husayn Ali no doubt spent many hours searching for this beautiful word in all the sacred writings, and claiming it wherever it was found as a reference to himself. The result was most satisfying to him and his followers, but not always to others. It was as though a man who became dissatisfied with his surname should decide to change it and become Mr. Love, and then persuade himself and others that every reference to *Love* in the Bible was a reference to him. If he had previously been embarrassed by an inferiority complex, the assurance that “the greatest of these is love” would no doubt give him much encouragement.

But even better than *Baha* was a phrase found in the Bayan, namely, *Baha’u’llah* (The Glory of God). This he took as his full title, and by this name he is known today. According to the Bayan, this is a title for each of the Divine Manifestations.(20) The Bab pronounced it in the Bayan(2.1) “the best of names,” and he assumed it for himself, and also bestowed it on Subh-i-Azal.(22) But like Esau’s birth right it was taken by his brother.

In claiming all occurrences of *Baha* as references to himself, Mirza Husayn Ali frequently read the passages out of context, and usually failed to state the chapter and verse from which he was quoting. Thus he often appropriated to himself words and statements which were intended for others. For example, in his testamentary document addressed to Subh-i-Azal, the Bab wrote: “.....bear witness that in truth I am alive in the Most Splendid (*Abha*) Horizon.” The reference of *Abha* is here to the Bab and to Subh-i-Azal, but was taken by Baha as belonging to himself.(23) Similarly, in his *First Book* the Bab mentioned “red ruby ships intended for the people of Baha.” By *Baha* he meant himself (the Bab), since he was *Baha’u’llah*. But his

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brother appropriated this phrase, and *Aqdas* (p. 47) referred to a red ship (Baha’is).(24) In the same way Baha title “Remnant of God” which the Bab had used for the Hidden Imam, and in had taken for himself. In these and in numerous other ways the new Manifestation sought to justify his claims.(25)

As the Bab gave titles to some of his faithful followers, so Baha’u’llah used his prerogative as a new Manifestation to bestow titles on certain believers. (26) To his first wife, *Asiya* whom he married in Teheran in 1835 A.D., and who bore him six children,

he gave the title “Nawwaba,” because she was the daughter of Nawwab (Highness) of Teheran. To his second wife Bibi Fatima, his cousin whom he married in 1849 A.D., who also bore him six children, he gave the title “Supreme Cradle,” a title reserved for the Queen-Mother in Iran. To his third wife Gohar whom he married in Baghdad or Edirne, who bore him a daughter Furughiyya, he gave no title. Since Baha’u’llah was the tree of truth his sons were called “Branches.” Abbas Efendi, eldest son by his first wife, received the title “Most Mighty (A’zam.) Branch,” and Mirza Muhammad Ali, eldest son by his second wife, became “Most Great (*Akbar*) Branch.” The other sons were given the titles “Most Pure Branch” and “Most Luminous Branch.” And to his daughter Bahiyya was given the title “Supreme Leaf.”(27) One of his faithful followers received the title “Servant of God,” another became “Divinely Fragrant,” and the barber was entitled “Barber of Reality.” Perhaps the possession of these marks of dignity made it somewhat easier for these exiles to endure their lot.

According to Mirza Jawad,(28) the Azalis who had been sent to spy on the Baha’is began after a time to cause them great annoyance by attempting to arouse the natives of the town of Akka against them. The Muslims of Akka were all Sunnites, and were quite intolerant of heretics such as the Baha’is. Therefore, in order to avoid trouble, Baha’u’llah and his followers took great pains to conceal their real beliefs, as they had done previously in Iran, Baghdad and Edirne, and to

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profess and practice in public the faith of Islam. Accordingly, they went regularly to the Muslim mosques and recited the prayers after the manner of the Sunnites. They also kept the Muslim month of fasting Ramazan, and tried in every way possible to convince the Muslims that they were one with them. So successful were they in this effort that when Baha’u’llah and his son and successor Abbas Efendi died, the Sunnite clergy conducted their funeral services. This they would never have done had they realized that Baha’u’llah claimed to be a Manifestation of God, greater than Muhammad. The title “Baha’u’llah,” the Splendor of God, was therefore carefully avoided in Akka, and the leader of the Baha’is was known as Baha Efendi, or Baha’u’Din, the Splendor of Religion.(29) This attempt to conceal the nature of their faith, says Mirza Jawad, was being thwarted by the Azalis, who began to circulate among the people of Akka some of the verses of Baha’u’llah, with interpolations of their own. “Their numerous efforts to stir up mischief,” he says, “and their provocative actions caused bitter sorrows to all the Friends, and grievous trouble befell them.”

Finally, the Baha’is determined to get rid of the trouble-makers. On January 23, 1872, seven of the Baha’is came upon three of the Azalis in a house in Akka and murdered them.(30) Though some Baha’i writers have entirely omitted this part of the history, there is no doubt whatever that the assassinations took place.(31) Whether this deed was done in obedience to the command of Baha’u’llah, or was contrary to his orders, is uncertain.(32)

The Turkish authorities at once arrested Baha'u'llah and his sons and most of the male members of the Baha'i community, and kept them in confinement for several days. Baha'u'llah and his sons were soon released. The seven murderers were sent to the harbour, where they were kept in prison for some years, and were later freed. Sixteen other Baha'is were kept in prison for six months, and were then released, in answer, says Mirza Jawad, to a prayer taught them by Baha'u'llah.(33) It was not without reason that

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the Turkish authorities used some severity in their treatment of the Baha'is in Akka.

While Subh-i-Azal and Baha'u'llah were enduring life imprisonment in distant lands, what was happening to the Babis in Iran? Most of them had become Baha'is, and were sometimes persecuted by the Muslims. Some had become Azalis, and were opposed by both Muslims and Baha'is. Ever since the massacre which had resulted from the Babi attempt on the life of the Shah in 1852, all of them had practiced "concealment" in order to be able to live their lives in peace among their unbelieving neighbours. Little is known as to the numbers or the activities of these people who, when recognized, were generally despised as heretics. So effectively did they conceal their beliefs, that, as Professor Browne discovered when he visited Iran in 1887, it was almost impossible to make contact with them. During these years there were occasional outbursts of opposition, with a few murders. Some Muslims who wished to get rid of their personal enemies would do so by branding them as "Babis," and getting them killed. Mirza Jawad in his Historical Epitome lists about thirty-one Baha'is who were killed in Iran and Iraq between 1866 and 1891.(34) It is not known how many Azalis were killed by Baha'is and Muslims, but the number was not very large the statements often heard about the many thousands of Baha'i martyrs in Iran are entirely false.

One of the Baha'i martyrs deserves special notice. He was a young man who came from Khurasan to Akka in 1869 to visit Baha'u'llah, and from him received the name *Badi'* (Wonderful).(35) Badi' volunteered to deliver in person, without speaking to anyone about his mission as he journeyed from Akka to Iran, an epistle which Baha'u'llah had written to Nasiru'd-Din Shah.(36) In this epistle Baha'u'llah addressed the Shah with great humility, saying he has always been a loyal subject of the Shah, and condemning the attempt on the Shah's life. He put the blame for all the evil that had occurred on the Muslim clergy, and begged the Shah to grant freedom to the Babis in Iran to live and practice their religion in peace and freedom.

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The letter was carried by the young messenger on foot to Teheran, where, in accordance with instructions given him by Baha'u'llah, he stood by the wayside till the Shah passed, and succeeded in giving the message into his hands. When the Shah realized who the sender of the message was he became greatly disturbed, and remembering the attempt on his life seventeen years before, he commanded that the messenger be tortured to find out whether he had any accomplices, and then put to death. Badi' showed the greatest

courage in enduring suffering, and died for his Master. The date was July, 1869. No doubt this event which was publicized throughout Iran made it more necessary than before that the Baha'is conceal their faith.

Muslim historians relate that Muhammad sent letters from Madina to the kings of Persia and Byzantium and other countries, bidding them to acknowledge him as a Prophet of Allah.(37) Following his example Baha'u'llah, probably in the early part of his residence in Akka, composed a number of epistles which he addressed to numerous rulers.(38) **To the Czar of Russia he said, "One of thy ambassadors did assist me when I was in prison, in chains and fetters [in Teheran in 1852]. Therefore hath God decreed unto thee a station which the knowledge of no one comprehendeth."**(39) He severely condemned Napoleon III for his failure to assist him, and predicted his downfall.(40) (The epistle was probably composed *after* he lost his crown in 1870). He praised Queen Victoria for abolishing slavery and establishing representative government. {41) He violently denounced the Sultan of Turkey for the wrongs done to him and his followers in Akka.(42) The Epistle to the Shah of Iran is very different from the conciliatory message sent by Badi', for the tone "is one of fierce recrimination." The Shah is severely rebuked for killing the Bab, and the attempt of the Babis to assassinate him is excused if not approved. (43) To the Pope, Baha'u'llah proclaims himself as God the Father, as the Comforter promised by Christ, and as Christ himself came again, and bids him and all Christians accept him. "Dost thou dwell in palaces," he asks the Pope, "while the King of Manifestations is in the most ruined of abodes [Akka]? Leave

palaces to those who desire them, then advance to the Kingdom with spirituality and fragrance."(44) Baha'u'llah also addressed messages at this or at a later time to America, Austria, and Germany. There is no evidence that any of these epistles were ever sent, or were ever received by those to whom they were addressed. It is inconceivable that a subject of Turkey, banished to Akka as a political prisoner, should send a letter like the one referred to above to his Sultan. The result would have been the same fate that befell the unfortunate Badi' in Teheran. It is evident that the purpose of these eloquent epistles, known as the *Alwah-i-Salatin* (Epistles of the Kings) was to impress the Baha'is with the boldness of their Master. This purpose was fully achieved.

After living in various houses in the town of Akka for nine years, Baha'u'llah in 1877, to quote Mirza Jawad and more,(45) "rented the palace of Abdu'llah Pasha which lies to the north of Akka at a distance of about an hour and a half [by carriage] from the town; and at times he used to live in the town and at other times in the Palace, until the year 1880, when he rented the palace of Udi Khammar [the Mansion of Bahji], situated in a northerly direction at a distance of half an hour from Akka. Most of his time he passed in this Palace in the company of his three sons and his family and his Honour the Servant of God, while Abbas Efendi with his sister and children remained at Akka.(46) Sometimes he used to visit the town, and while he dwelt outside the town visitors, whether pilgrims or Companions, used to have the honour of seeing him after permission had been obtained by them, and used to spend some days and nights there.....Many spots in the

town were honoured by the approach of our Master Baha'u'llah, and likewise numerous places and villages outside it

.....So likewise he visited Hayfa four times," once remaining there three months. From this account by a devoted follower we learn that while Baha'u'llah was not free to leave the district he was yet given a great deal of freedom to move about Akka and its environs as he pleased. He was by no means "in prison" during most of his sojourn there. The palaces and beautiful gardens which Baha'u'llah at first rented

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and later bought were made possible for him by the large sums of money and generous gifts which poured to him from his faithful followers in Iran and other lands.(47)

During his years in Akka, contrary to his custom when he was in Baghdad and Edirne, Baha'u'llah lived largely in seclusion. No one was allowed to visit him except by special permission. Each visitor was carefully prepared for his audience with the Manifestation of God. He was told that what he saw when he came into the Divine Presence would depend on what he was himself – if he was a material person he would see only a man, but if he was a spiritual being he would see God.(48) When his expectations had been sufficiently aroused, the pilgrim was led into the presence of Baha'u'llah and was permitted to gaze for a few moments upon "The Blessed Perfection," care being taken that the visitation should end before the spell was broken. The almost magical effect of such visits is seen in the account which Professor Browne has given of his experience in Akka in 1890.(49)

After visiting Subh-i-Azal in Cyprus (Chapter VZ), Browne came to Beirut, and there asked permission by telegraph to visit the Baha'i headquarters in Akka. When this was granted he travelled on horseback, a journey of three days, to Akka. Of this journey he writes:(50) "The last day was perhaps the most delightful of all, and I was greatly astonished on entering the Acre plain to behold a wealth of beautiful gardens and fragrant orange groves such as I had little expected to find in what Baha has stigmatized as 'the most desolate of countries.'" After his arrival in Akka he was welcomed by Abbas Efendi, eldest son of Baha'u'llah, "a tall strongly-built man holding himself straight as an arrow, with white turban and raiment, long black locks reaching almost to the shoulder, broad powerful forehead indicating a strong intellect combined with an unswerving will, eyes keen as a hawk's, and strongly-marked but pleasing features.....One more eloquent of speech, more ready of argument, more apt of illustration, more intimately acquainted with the sacred books of the

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Jews, the Christians, and the Muhammadans, could, I should think, scarcely be found.....About the greatness of this man and his power no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt."(51) By Abbas Efendi Browne was conducted to the palace outside the city where Baha'u'llah resided.. There he spent five most interesting days, and was

deeply impressed by the hospitality of the Baha'is, and by the "spiritual atmosphere" which pervaded the place.

"During the morning of the day after my installation at Behje [the palace," continues Browne,(51) "one of Baha's younger sons entered the room where I was sitting and beckoned to me to follow him. I did so, and was conducted through passages and rooms at which I scarcely had time to glance to a spacious hall, paved.....with a mosaic of marble. Before a curtain suspended from the wall of this great antechamber my conductor paused for a moment while I removed my shoes.(53) Then, with a quick movement of the hand, he withdrew, and, as I passed, replaced the curtain; and I found myself in a large apartment .....Though I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the corner where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt head-dress of the kind called *taj* by dervishes (but of unusual height and make), round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow..... No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain! A mild dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: 'Praise be to God that thou hast attained!'"

The audience lasted about twenty minutes. Baha'u'llah spoke of the sufferings he had endured, though

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he desired only the good of the world. He wanted all men to become one in faith, and be as brothers. He wished diversity of religion and race to cease. He said that these fruitless strifes and ruinous wars would pass away, and the "Most Great Peace" would come. "Let not a man glory in this," he said, "that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind....." He also read aloud to his visitor one of his Tablets. Before his departure from Akka, Browne was given by Abbas Efendi a copy of *A Traveller's Narrative* in Persian, which, he was told, was an authentic history of the movement. Only later did he learn that the author was no other than he who presented the hook to him.(54)

It is interesting to compare with this enthusiastic account written by Professor Browne the impression of an Azali traveller who went to Akka to see Baha'u'llah. "The misleading of the Black Darkness," he writes,(55) "brought me into the City of Blood, the town of Akka .....There I plainly saw the manifestation of plurality, to wit, the combination of thunder, lightning, darkness, and the thunder-bolt.....Far these are they who have hidden the light of their original potentiality with the darkness of the attributes of wicked souls and the effects of a corrupt nature, and have been veiled from the Truth by Untruth." The first of the "unbelieving souls and manifestations of infidelity" whom he met on the seashore was Abbas Efendi, whom he calls "the Whisperer," a name for the devil. "After that," he continues, "I saw the rest: of the Nicked One's followers, and heard the words of each. Their sayings and arguments consist of a farrago of names, baseless stories, calumnies, falsehoods, and lies, and not one of them has any knowledge of even the first principles of the religion of the Bayan or of any other religion. They are

all devoid of know- ledge, ignorant, shortsighted.....hypocrites, corrupters of texts, blind imitators.” After several days this follower of Subh-i-Azal was admitted to the audience-chamber of Baha’u’llah. “When I was come there,” he says, “and looked upon that Arch-idol..... that rebellious Lucifer, that envious Iblis [the devil], I saw a form on a throne, and heard the ’lowing of the

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calf’.”(56) It is quite evident that this Azali was not converted by his visit to Akka, and neither was Professor Browne.

The location of Baha’u’llah in Akka, which was much more accessible to the people of Iran than was Cyprus, the place of Subh-i-Azal’s banishment, no doubt helped to accelerate the growth of Baha’ism. For from the time he was taken to Akka, many of his followers began making the pilgrimage there in the hope of seeing their Lord. Baha’u’llah, however, did not encourage the Baha’is in their desire to visit him. First of all, there was too great risk of their seeing and hearing things in Akka which might weaken their faith. There was a saying among the Baha’is of Iran that whoever went to Akka lost his faith.(57) And then the presence of large numbers of zealous believers in the city would undoubtedly have led to complications with the native Muslim population. The Baha’is in other lands were therefore told that if they gave to Baha’u’llah the money they would have spent on their journey they would gain the same merit as if they had come before his Presence.

However, the intimate relationship between him and his followers was carefully maintained. The place of personal visits was taken by personal epistles, or Tablets, which were sent by the hundreds to the believers in Iran and other lands, answering their questions, and praising them for their fidelity to the Cause. These letters were all carried by hand, as it was dangerous to entrust them to the posts. Browne describes one of the couriers whom he met in Iran, an old man who used to go to Akka each year carrying with him letters from the Baha’is of southern Iran. Then, when the replies to these communications had been written by Baha’u’llah’s scribe, and signed by him, they were taken by the courier to their various destinations. His task was not without its perils. He told Professor Browne how on one occasion, when he had been arrested in a village in Iran, he had eaten his whole pack of letters rather than let them fall into the hands of enemies! The Baha’i who received an epistle from his Master was indeed a

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fortunate man. He would show it to his brothers in the faith, who would kiss it and ask for copies of it, and he would then lay it away among his choicest treasures. The secluded life which he led gave Baha’u’llah ample opportunity for dictating these epistles. He composed a vast number of them, in addition to numerous longer treatises, some of which will be considered in Chapter VIII. All of these writings were believed by the Baha’is to be the Word of God.

Baha'u'llah lived in Akka or in its suburbs for twenty-four years. During this period the numbers and influence of the Baha'is in Iran and in other lands continued to increase. Browne estimated their number in Iran in the year 1892 to be five hundred thousand,(58) but since there was no census, and since the Baha'is concealed their faith, no accurate figures were possible. Usually they were able to live in peace with their Muslim neighbours, and for as long as they did not stir up trouble they were rarely molested.(59) The Iranian government has recognized four religions, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but has never recognized Baha'ism, and so Baha'is in Iran have been officially classed as Muslims.

Regarding the final period of Baha'u'llah's life, Mirza Jawad writes as follows:(60) "External conditions were the opposite of those which first prevailed, for his fame waxed great; power, majesty and triumph were apparent....[But] notwithstanding these circumstances and materials of glory, ease, and joy, we used to discover signs of sadness in His Holiness our Master Baha'u'llah to an extent which neither writing nor utterance can express." He then quotes several of the sayings of his Master which reveal his sorrow.(61) "By God's life, all things weep for what hath befallen this oppressed one at the hands of those who deny, after we had created them for pure truth, and had taught them the clear straight way of God. Alas, alas for what hath befallen me from every tyrant, from every sinner, from every liar!.....There hath descended on this oppressed one that which hath no likeness and no similitude.....I desire a dark and narrow dwelling, that I may lament and weep over my wrongs."

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This sadness was not due to any financial difficulties, for Baha'u'llah had been able with funds which his agents collected for him to provide well for himself and his family. He purchased lands for each of his four sons in villages in the vicinity of Akka, as well as in the Galilee and Haifa districts, and had these properties registered in their names.(62) But there were other problems in his family which gave him concern. He foresaw the trouble which Munira Khanum (63) the wife of Abbas Efendi might cause, and he charged his three younger sons to guard his writings carefully lest any of them fall into her hands and be destroyed by her.(64) He no doubt also realized that there would be another power struggle after his death, similar to the one which had caused his banishment to Akka. This, says Mirza Jawad, was the chief cause of his great sadness.(55)

At length Baha'u'llah fell ill, and at the age of seventy-four died on May 29, 1892. His body was buried according to the rites of the Sunnite Muslims in the house of his son-in-law Sayyid Ali Afnan in the Bahji Garden,(66) and his tomb soon became a shrine for the Baha'is who visit Akka. His youngest son Badi'u'llah Efendi wrote thus to Professor Browne about his father's death:(67)

"O friend of my heart, and delight of my soul! In these days the showers of affliction do so descend from the clouds of the firmament of fate, and the thunderbolts of grieves and sorrows do so succeed one another, that neither hath the tongue strength to describe, nor the pen power to utter them. For the horizon of the Phenomenal World is bereft of the

effulgences of the Sun of Wisdom and Revelation, and the throne of the Universe is deprived of the radiance of the Most Luminary.....The Sun of Truth has bidden farewell to this earthy sphere, and now shines with a brightness which waneth not in the regions of Might and Glory.” And after further expressions of grief, he quotes several passages from his father’s book, the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* (Most Holy Book), one of which is: (68) “O people of the earth! When the Sun of my Beauty sets, and the firmament of my form is hidden, be not troubled; arise for the helping of my work and

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the advancement of my Word throughout the worlds. Verily we are with you under all conditions, and will help you with the Truth.” No doubt the son’s grief was shared by many who looked to Baha’u’llah as the Manifestation of God for this age.(69)

### **NOTES**

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1. Mirza Jawad in *Materials*, p. 6
  2. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 12.
  3. Gobineau’s correspondence with Baha is preserved in La Bibliotheque Nationale in Strasbourg, France, the document being marked “3534.” See *Azal’s Notes*, pp. 360, 367, 376-396, 422, in which a full account of this correspondence is given, with a translation of large portions of Baha’s letters, in which he begs for help, and never once alludes to his divine mission, or to Subh-i-Azal’s rejection of him, and refers to himself and his fellow-prisoners as Babis. See. Appendix. II, #23 and 24.
  4. *Materials*, p. XXI.
  5. *A Traveller’s Narrative*, p. 96, note 1, *J.R.A.S.* October 1889, pp. 949-953.
  6. *Kitab-i-Iqan (Book of Certitude)*, translated by Shoghi Effendi, p. 249. The translation of the Persian phrase is by Browne.
  7. *J.R.A.S.* April 1892, pp. 268-283.
  8. *Ibid.*, p. 276, note 2.
  9. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
  10. *Ibid.*, p. 275.
  11. The occasion for this and other. appeals to the kings of the earth to reduce their armies and he at peace among themselves was probably the struggle between Russia, France and England for supremacy in the Near East. While Baha was in Baghdad
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the Crimean War was fought between Russia on the one side, and Turkey, Great Britain and France on the other. About the time he came to Edirne, France for a short time occupied Syria. When he was being transferred from Edirne to Akka, war almost broke out between Turkey and Greece. In 1870 France was defeated by Prussia and Napoleon III fell. In 1877 war again broke out between Russia and Turkey, and Turkey was defeated. Since the outcome of these struggles would have a direct bearing on his own fate, Baha no doubt watched with deep concern all that the nations were doing. It did not require a prophet then any more than now to predict that the race for supremacy would end in destruction. Baha was not the first to appeal for

peace. An International Congress of peace societies was held in London in 1843. In 1848 a second Congress was held at Brussels. The third was held in Paris in 1849 under the presidency of Victor

Hugo. Others were held at Frankfurt, London and Manchester. Still another was held at Paris at the International Exposition of 1878. Baha had himself witnessed the horrors of civil war in the Babi uprisings in Iran. While in Akka he read the newspapers (*Baha'i Scriptures*, p. 146), and was informed of these many efforts to secure peace. Therefore, however much we may honor Baha'u'llah for including "the Most Great Peace" in the program of his new dispensation, it is not surprising that he did so.

12. *Materials*, p. 45. This account was written in 1904.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
14. *Abbas Efendi*, by Phelps, Putnam's 1903, p. 66.
15. Mirza Jawad in *Materials*, p. 58.  
*Azal's Notes*, pp. 607-611, 682-786, 974-1027. 17. *Ibid.*, pp. 684, 712-716.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 607-611. See Appendix ZI, #29. 30 and 31.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 691.
4. 20. *Ibid.*, p. 697.
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6. Bayan quoted in *Nuqtatu'l-Kaf*, p. LVIII.
7. Authors of *Hasht Bihisht* quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 353.
8. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 686-689.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 698-700.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 718-721.
11. Authors of *Hasht Bihisht*, quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 361, 362, Avareh in *AL-Kawakib*, Vol. II, pp. 4, 6, B. For lists of members of the family of Baha'u'llah see Mirza Jawad in *Materials*, pp. 62, 63, and Browne in *Materials*, pp. 320, 321. See also Appendix II, #25. In addition to the three wives named here, it is stated by Avareh that when Baha'u'llah was seventy years of age he married Jamalieh, the fifteen year old niece of "Muhammad Hasan the servant" (*Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, vol. I, 6th impression, p. 104). See also *Azal's Notes*, pp. 626, 1033. Baha did not divorce any of his wives, and all of them, with the possible exception of Nawwaba, survived him.
12. *Azal's Notes*, p. 1029.
13. *Materials*, p. 51, 52.
14. *Azal's Notes*, p. 58.
15. *Idem.*, p. 1031.
16. Authors of *Hasht Bihisht* quoted in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 361-364, 370, 371, *J.R.A.S.* July 1889, p. 517, October 1889, pp. 995, 996.
17. In one of his Tablets written near the end of his life, and published in a book of 295 pages called *Ishraqat, Tarazat at (and) Tajalliat*, on pages 12, 14-15, Baha'u'llah repeatedly admonished his followers to avoid sedition, strife, murder and plunder, and to associate with all sects of people with love and friendship. Then he added: "Though in the early days there had been revealed from the Supreme Pen what is obviously

repugnant to the new Cause of God, for instance passages such as these, 'the necks have stretched out in discord, where are

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the swords of thy Power, O Dominant of the Worlds?' But the abject thereof was not strife and sedition.....[but] that the oppression of the Pharoahs of the earth has reached such a pitch that the like of this verse had been revealed from the Supreme Pen. And now we exhort God's servants not to adhere henceforth to some of the utterances, and not to become a cause of hurt to other [fellow] servants." In this rather veiled statement it seems that Baha'u'llah admits that the "swords" were literally used at his command by his followers against his enemies, hut that this must not be interpreted by his followers in later times as permission to engage in sedition and murder. How- ever, "in the early days" the zealous followers of Baha'u'llah, acting on the authority of this and other statements of their Master, were able to assassinate a number of Azali leaders in various places, as has been narrated in Chapter VI. See *Azal's Notes*, pp. 189-193, and 1111-1113A, and *Appendix II*, #72.

1. 18. *Materials*, pp. 55-58.
  2. 19. 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-43, *Azal's Notes*, p. 502.
  3. 20. *J.R.A.S.* October 1889, pp. 954-960, *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. XLV, 102-105, *Materials*, pp. 47-49.
  4. 21. A part of this epistle is found in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 108-151, 390-400.
  5. 22. *Life of Mohammad*, Muir, London 1861, vol. IV, p. 54.
  6. 23. *J.R.A.S.* October 1889, pp. 953-972, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 373-424, *Baha'i Scriptures*, pp. 67-188.
  7. 24. *J.R.A.S.* October 1889, p. 969.
  8. 25. *Ibid.*, p. 968.
  9. 26. *Ibid.*, p. 970.
  10. 27. *Ibid.*, pp. 960-963.
  11. 28. *Ibid.*, pp. 954-960.
  12. 29. *Ibid.*, pp. 963-966.
  13. 30. *Materials*, pp. 58-60.
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14. 31. Baha'u'llah and his second wife lived in the Mansion at Bahji, while his first wife lived with her son Abbas Efendi and his wife and his sister in Akka. Baha's third wife and her daughter lived in a house opposite the Mansion (Subhi, *Payam-i-Padar*, p. 107).
15. 32. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 48-51.
16. 33. *Niku, Filsifa-i-Niku*, vol. II, p. 127.
17. 34. *Traveller's Narrative*, pp. XXX, XLIII.
18. 35. *Ibid.*, p. XXX.
19. 36. *Ibid.*, p. XXXVI.
20. 37. *Ibid.*, p. XXXIX.
21. 38. See Exodus 3:5.

22. 39. *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. XLII, Materials, p. 4, note 1.
23. 40. *J.B.A.S.* October 1889, pp. 694, 695. The traveller was Mirza Aqa Khan a son-in-law of Subh-i-Azal (Azal's Notes, p. 1033).
24. 41. The reference is to the Golden Calf which the Children of Israel worshipped at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 32:1-6, Koran 2:48, 88, etc.).
25. 42. Niku, *Filsifa-i-Niku*, Vol. II, p. 128.
26. 43. This figure is certainly much too large (*Azal's Notes*, p. 1024).
27. 44. Browne in *A Traveller's Plazrative*, pp. 410, 411.
28. 45. *Materials*, pp. 59-61.
29. 46. *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 62.
30. 47. *Azal's Notes*, p. 49.
31. 48. *Khanum* in Persian usage is the equivalent of Miss or Mrs.
32. 49. *Azal's Notes*, p. 89.
33. 50. *Materials*, p. 61. See Appendix II, #21.
34. 51. *Ibid.*, p. 61, 62.

67. *J.R.A.S.*, October 1889, pp. 706, 709.
68. *Al-Kitab Al-Aqdas*, by Baha'u'llah, translated by E. E. Elder, Royal Asiatic Society, London 1961, p. 34.
69. It is interesting to note that in the year 1889, three years before the death of Baha'u'llah, a man in India (now Pakistan) put forth the claim that he was the recipient of divine revelation. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, born into a Muslim family in Qadian in the Panjab, like the Bab in Iran forty-five years earlier, became deeply influenced by the popular expectation of the coming of the Mahdi. Finally he announced that he was the great world Teacher whose coming had been predicted by the scriptures not only of the Jews, Christians and Muslims, but also of the Zoroastrians, Hindus, and Buddhists, and that the hopes of all the nations were to be fulfilled in him. He taught that God from time to time sends "renewers" of religion, and he claimed that in him as the Mahdi the Prophet Muhammad had made his "second advent." He rejected, however, the popular conception that the Mahdi was to be a man of war, and said that his *jihad* (religious war) was to be only a spiritual warfare. He attacked the Mullas for keeping the people in ignorance, and so made many enemies. Accordingly, he was condemned as an apostate by the orthodox Muslims, and some of his followers were killed. In spite of this opposition many people believed on him, and became known as Ahmadis, and carried on aggressive missionary work at home and in other lands. Since the claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad greatly resembled and absolutely contradicted those of Baha'u'llah, it is not surprising that there was no love lost between the Baha'is and the Ahmadis. One of the Ahmadi missionaries by the name of Sadru'd-Din wrote a pamphlet in Persian to prove the fallacy of the Baha'i faith.

## 8. The Doctrines and Decrees of the Baha'u'llah

It is impossible in one chapter to give more than an outline of the teachings of Baha'u'llah. Like the Bab and Subh-i-Azal, he was a very prolific writer, and during a period of some thirty years he is said to have composed more than one hundred volumes and countless epistles.(1) Most of his writings were addressed to individuals or groups of believers who had asked him questions, and were usually not very lengthy. They were called "Tablets." Some were written in Persian, some in Arabic, often in a style which is difficult to understand. No collection of all these writings has been made, or could be made. However, all are considered by Baha'is to be the Word of God. As Professor Browne discovered during his sojourn in Iran, the Baha'is have no definite canon of Scripture, as do Jews, Christians and Muslims. Some of the writings of Baha'u'llah have been translated into other languages, and are being circulated outside the Arabic and Persian areas, so that it is now possible for a larger number of readers to become acquainted with his doctrines and commandments and exhortations. Notably a large and well-edited book of 576 pages entitled *Bahai Scriptures*(2) was published in 1923 with the approval of the Bahai Committee on

Publications in America, more than half of which consists of writings of Baha'u'llah. More recently another compilation of his writings and those of his son Abdu'l-Baha has been published by the Baha'i Publishing Trust under the title *Baha'i World Faith*.(3) This book of 449 pages "has been compiled," according to the editor, "to replace the work published in 1923 under the title of *Baha'i Scriptures*, and contains later and more accurate translations."(4) To these volumes the reader is referred for first-hand acquaintance with Baha'u'llah's teachings.

The theological background of the Baha'i faith is the same as that of the Bayan of the Bab. Baha'u'llah like the Bab taught that God is unknowable except through his Manifestations. He considered the Great Manifestations to be those referred to by the Bab, namely, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Having himself been a Babi, and knowing that he and all the other early Babis had considered the Bab to be a Major Manifestation of God who had taken the place of Muhammad, Baha'u'llah did not deny this belief. However, he sought to lessen the status of the Bah by frequently referring to him as "my forerunner," and he made it to appear that the chief function of the Bab was to prepare the way for him, a much greater Manifestation. As was explained in Chapter VI, Baha'u'llah claimed to be He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest, and took for himself all the high titles and divine attributes which the Bab in the Bayan had said the coming Manifestation would possess (Chapter IV). He also said he was the "return" of the Imam Husayn of the Shi'ites. (5) Also he claimed to be the "return" of Jesus Christ, and the Comforter promised by Christ (Gospel of John 14:16,17), as well as the Manifestation of God the Father.(6) Though the Bab undertook to establish a universal religion,(7) he directed his appeal almost entirely to the Shi'ite Muslims. Baha'u'llah, however, extended his invitation to Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians as well, and

appealed to them from their own Scriptures. The position which Baha'u'llah claimed for himself was not merely that of a teacher or prophet, but was that of God. Hence, his wards purported to be not those of man, but of God Himself.

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Baha'u'llah claimed to have knowledge which no one else possesses, or is able to possess. He says that nothing can move between heaven and earth without his permission. He is infallible in everything. "If He declares water to be wine, or heaven to be earth, or light to be fire, it is true and there is no doubt therein; and no one has the right to oppose Him, or to say 'why' or 'wherefore'.....Verily no account shall be demanded of Him for what He shall do.....Verily if He declares the right to be left, or the south to be north, it is true and there is no doubt therein. Verily He is to be praised in His deeds and to be obeyed in His command. He hath no associate in His behest and no helper in His power; He doeth whatsoever He willeth, and commandeth whatever He desireth."(8)

According to the doctrine of Manifestations, whenever a new Manifestation appears it is incumbent on all men of all religions in the world to lay aside their former beliefs and practices and accept Him-Whom-God-Has-Manifested and submit to his new laws and follow his teachings. The Bab claimed to be the new Manifestation after Muhammad and undertook to establish a Theocracy and a new state of society, based on the laws of the Bayan, and governed by Babi rulers. As we have seen, the opposition was too strong, many lives were lost, and the Bab's hope was not realized. Baha'u'llah, by claiming to be the Manifestation predicted by the Bab, was able to take over the leadership of the movement. He, like the Bab, proposed to establish a Theocracy and a new state of society, which would be governed by Baha'i rulers on the basis of doctrines and laws given by Baha'u'llah. It should be clearly understood that Baha'u'llah gave to men not only ethical and spiritual principles which could be taken or refused, but also civil laws for his proposed society which would be enforced by the political and police powers of a Baha'i state. This will become clear when the laws are considered later in this chapter.

The people who believed on the Bab were all Shi'ite Muslims, who had followed a religion of law which prescribed in amazing detail what they were to eat and drink and wear, how they were to bathe, how many wives

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a man could take, how and when they could divorce their wives, what things were ceremonially clean and what unclean, how the dead were to be buried, how inheritance was to be divided among the heirs of the deceased, how and when to pray and to fast, etc., etc. The Bab, as we have seen in Chapter IV, changed many of the Shi'ite laws, and established another system of law which in some matters was more detailed and difficult to observe than that of Islam. But before the Babis had been able to learn and practice these regulations, Baha'u'llah came forward as a new Manifestation, and the Babis who followed him at once began to ask what his laws were. Should they obey the laws of the Bayan, or had the Bayan been abrogated by him, as the Koranic laws had been abrogated by the Bab? And if so, what rules for life and worship did Baha'u'llah give them?

Since Baha'u'llah had claimed to be He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest, it was to be expected that he would at once abrogate the Bayan, and give his followers a new Book from God. Strange as it may seem, there is no evidence whatever that Baha'u'llah abrogated the Bayan. On the contrary, while he was in Baghdad in 1862 Baha'u'llah wrote a letter in which he said:(9) "I swear by God that if any of the people of the Bayan [Babis] was to mention that the Book [Bayan] is abrogated, may God break the mouth of the speaker and the calumniator."

Then, if the Bayan is not abrogated, are its laws binding on Baha'is as well as on Babis? Such questions continued to come to Baha'u'llah after he reached Akka, and he accordingly supplied the answer. As he wrote in his *Ninth Eshraq* near the end of his life:(10) "His Holiness the Forerunner [the Bab] revealed laws. But the world of command was dependent on acceptance. Therefore, this wronged one [Baha'u'llah] implemented some of them, and revealed them in *Al-Kitab Al-Aqdas* couched in other terms.....Some laws of new doctrines were also revealed."(11) This book, which he named the Most Holy Book,(12) perhaps because in both Arabic and Persian the Bible is called the Holy Book, was composed in 1872, or soon after.(13) It was written in the

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Arabic language, like the Koran, though most of the Baha'is at that time were Iranians to whom Arabic was a foreign language. The Aqdas, as the book is frequently called, is small, about the size of the Gospel of Mark, but it is the most important of all the Baha'i literature. To it alone of all his books did Baha'u'llah refer in his Will ("The Book of My Covenant") when he wrote:(14) "Reflect upon that which is revealed in my book the Aqdas," calling attention to the provision given in it regarding the succession. Likewise his son Abbas Efendi (Abdu'l-Baha) in his Last Will and Testament wrote:(15) "Unto the Most Holy Book everyone must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice." And Shoghi Effendi, the great-grandson of Baha'u'llah, the first Guardian of the Cause, states (16) that this little volume "may rank as the most signal act of His [Baha'u'llah's] ministry." "This *Most Holy Book*," he continues, "whose provisions must remain inviolate for no less than a thousand years, and whose system will embrace the entire planet, may well be regarded as the brightest emanation of the mind of Baha'u'llah, as the Mother Book of His Dispensation, and the Charter of His New World Order."

The Most Holy Book was not printed for a number of years after it was written, since it was no doubt impossible to publish such a book in Syria where Baha'u'llah could not openly make known his claims. After some years the author authorized his son Mirza Muhammad Ali and Mirza Aqa Jan of Kashan (called the "Servant of God")(17) to revise the Aqdas and other of the sacred writings, and then take them to Bombay and supervise the publication of them. This was done in 1900. The *Iqan* and the *Kitab-i-Mubin* (*Sura-yi-Hay-kal*) and the *Kitab-i-Iqtidar* and other books as well as the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* were thus published for the first time. Since all these writings were revised prior to publication, they in their present form are to be dated near the end of the Akka period of the life of Baha'u'llah, and while he no doubt approved changes made in the text by the revisers, they cannot be considered the work of Baha'u'llah alone.(18)

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Realizing the importance of the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* in the Baha'i system, Professor Browne in 1889 published in English a resume of its contents.(19) In 1899 a Russian scholar, A. M. Tumansky, published the Arabic text of the Aqdas, with a translation into Russian, and a lengthy introduction.(20) Also, several other western scholars have published translations of portions of the book. However, no complete translation into English had been made till 1961, when Dr. E. E. Elder, a competent Arabic scholar, with the assistance of several scholars who had an intimate knowledge of Baha'i terminology and beliefs, published *al-Kitab al-Aqdas*, an accurate and readable translation of the whole book, with introduction and notes.(21)

However, in view of what the founder and leaders of the Baha'i movement have said about the unique importance of the Aqdas, it is surprising, to say the least, that as yet no authorized translation made by Baha'i scholars of the whole Aqdas has been published, either in Persian the language of Iran, or in any other language. In *Bahai Scriptures* among the 262 pages filled with the words of Baha'u'llah, only a few brief paragraphs taken from the Most Holy Book are to be found. Likewise in the later publication entitled *Baha'i World Faith – Selected Writings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha (1958)*, the Aqdas is referred to in the index (p. 457) only six times, and the book contains no quotations of any length from this "brightest emanation of the mind of Baha'u'llah." It is almost impossible to obtain an Arabic copy of the Aqdas, and even the headquarters of the Baha'i Faith in America stated in writing that they had never had a copy of the book.(22) In 1944 Shoghi Efendi, the Guardian of the Cause, stated that "the codification of the *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, the Mother-Book of the Baha'i Revelation, and the systematic promulgation of its laws and ordinances are as yet unbegun."(23) But more important than a codification is an authorized translation, and certainly a scholarly Baha'i translation of this book is long overdue.

Although, as was stated above, Baha'u'llah did not by a decree abrogate the Bayan of the Bab, he was

successful in eliminating it. Not only did he forbid his followers to read it,(24) he also caused it to be removed from circulation so completely that most of his followers were entirely uninformed as to its contents. He then, according to his own account quoted above, reproduced some of the laws of the Bayan, changed others, added numerous exhortations, and issued the resulting production as his own Most Holy Book. Mr. Azal has made an exhaustive study of the relation of the Aqdas to the Bayan,(25) and has demonstrated, as our notes will indicate, that most of the laws found in the Aqdas are derived from the Bab's Bayan. He calls the Aqdas "a rehash of the Bayan."

Because of its unique importance in the Baha'i system and the fact that it is so little known, Dr. Elder's translation of the entire Aqdas is included as Appendix I at the end of this volume, and the reader is encouraged to study it with care. However, to assist him in becoming acquainted with this book of Baha'u'llah's laws, we will now give a rather full summary of the contents of the Most Holy Book. The book begins with a statement regarding the necessity of knowing Baha'u'llah. "The first thing that God ordained

concerning His creatures is the knowledge of the Sunrise-place of His revelation and the Rising- place of His Cause, who was the Station of Himself in the world of command and creation. Whoever attains unto Him attains unto all good, and whoever is deprived of Him is of the people of error, even though he perform all [good] works.”(26)

He then enjoins obedience to the commands which follow, saying, “From My stipulations there passes the sweet smell of my gown, and. by them the standards of victory are erected on hillocks and hills. The tongue of My power has spoken in the might of My greatness, addressing My people, [saying], ‘Perform My stipulations out of love for My beauty’.” (27)

First there come regulations for worship. “Warship has been ordained for you – nine prostrations to God Who sent down the verses; when noon is past, in the morning and in the late afternoon.....Whenever you

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desire to worship, turn your face towards My most holy direction.” (28) The Muslim worship consists of seven- teen prostrations each day, divided among the five times of prayer, with prescribed words in the Arabic language, as the worshipper faces Mecca. The Babi worship consists of nineteen prostrations at noon facing Shiraz. The worship ordained by Baha’u’llah is briefer, and is to be performed three times each day, between sunset and two hours after sunset, and between sunrise and noon, and between noon and late afternoon. The words to be repeated are not given in the Aqdas. The worshipper is to face the place where Baha’u’llah resides, which is Akka.(29)

As in the Bayan, all congregational warship is abolished, except in the case of prayers for the dead. The wearing of garments which contain the hair of animals, or which are made of their skins, or have buttons of bone, does not render worship invalid, as is the case in Islam. All men and women above the age of fifteen must say the prayers, hut the old and sick are excused. If water for the ablutions before worship is not available, the worshipper must say in Arabic five times, “In the Name of God, the Purest, the Purest.” Women during their menstrual periods are not to perform the worship but are to make the ablutions, and repeat in praise to God ninety-five(30) times each day, “Praise be to God, the Possessor of Countenance and Beauty.” Travellers are to make one prostration only, or if this is impossible, to say, “Praise he to God!” After completing the required prostrations, the worshipper is to sit on the floor with feet crossed under him and hands on his knees, and repeat eighteen times, “Praise he to God, the Possessor of the kingdoms of this world and the next!” **All the prayers are to be in Arabic.** God is to be thanked for “this great Grace,” presumably, for this new Revelation.(31)

Then follow the regulations for fasting.(32) “O multitude of creation, we have ordained the Fast for you, certain limited days. After the completion of them we have made al-Nayruz [No Ruz] a feast for you.” In his arrangements for the Fast and also for the Badi’

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Calendar, Baha’u’llah adopted what the Bab had pre-scribed in the Bayan. The arrangement for the Fast is as follows: The year is to be divided into nineteen months of nineteen days each (19 x 19 = 361). The nineteenth month is the month of the Fast.

Immediately following the Fast comes the ancient Iranian festival of No Ruz (New Year), which is to be observed with joy and gladness. The four or five intercalary days were placed between the eighteenth and nineteenth months, and were to be spent in entertaining relations and friends and in feeding the poor. Thus Baha'u'llah followed the Bab in restoring the old Iranian solar year in place of the Arabian lunar year, and in giving religious sanction to the observance of the great festival of No Ruz, which from ancient times had been celebrated at the vernal equinox (on or about March 21) as the first day of the new year, a national rather than as a religious feast. (33) During the nineteen. days of the Fast, no food or drink is to be taken from sunrise till sunset. The Baha'i Fast is, therefore, less severe than that of Islam, which lasts for twenty-eight days, and. when Ramazan comes in the summer the day may be sixteen hours long. "This does not cause difficulty far the one who is on a journey, or for the ill, for the pregnant woman, or the ane who is nursing," that is, such persons are exempt from fasting.

Each day every believer should wash his hands, then his face, and having seated himself facing God [at Akka] should repeat ninety-five times, "*Allahu Abha!*" (God is Most Splendid). "In like manner, perform ablutions before Warship because of a command from God."(34) **Murder, adultery, back-biting and calumniation are unlawful.(35)**

Then follows the law of Inheritance as given by the Bab – "Thus commanded He who gave Good News of Me."(36) According to the Bayan, the property of the deceased must be divided into nine unequal parts. Two parts are to be used for funeral expenses, and the balance is then to be divided into 42 equal parts, of which 1) Children will receive 9, 2.) Husbands or Wives 8, 3) Fathers 7, 4) Mothers 6, 5) Brothers 5,

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6) Sisters 4, and 7) Teachers 3, making a total of 42. This division, however, was changed by Baha'u'llah. He says that when he heard the protests of unborn children saying that they would not get enough of the inheritance, he doubled their share, and reduced the shares of others. How this was to be done is not stated in the Aqdas, but Baha'u'llah in another of his books entitled *Question and Answer* made the division as follows:

- 1) 1) Children 18,
  - 2) 2) Husbands or Wives 6.5,
  - 3) 3) Fathers 5.5,
  - 4) 4) Mothers 4.5,
  - 5) 5) Brothers 3.5,
  - 6) 6) Sisters 2.5, and
  - 7) 7) Teachers 1.5,
- total 42.

Then follow in the Aqdas directions as to how the division is to be made in special circumstances. When there are no heirs to the portions for any of the above classes, their shares are to go to the House of Justice. It would be interesting to know how many loyal Baha'is during the past century since this law was given have been able to divide their possessions in accordance with this scale.

Next, provision is made for the House of Justice named above.(37) In every city there shall be a House of Justice, “and the souls according to *al-Baha* will assemble in it.” The numerical value of the Arabic letters in *Baha*’ is nine, hence the House of Justice must have nine or more members. They are to be God’s stewards, and must consult about the welfare of men for the sake of God.

Male believers who are able must “make the pilgrimage to the House”,(38) that is, the Bab’s house in Shiraz, and the house occupied by Baha’u’llah in Baghdad. All Baha’is must be engaged in some useful occupation, for work is worship.(39) The kissing of the hands of men, as was done to show respect to religious leaders, is forbidden. Also it is forbidden to confess sins to men.(40) Believers are bidden to arise and serve the Cause, but not in a way that will cause them to be troubled by the unbelievers. Ascetic practices are forbidden.(41) “Whoever attains unto My love has a right to sit on a throne of native gold in the chief seat.....Whoever is deprived of my Love, were he to sit on the ground,” the very dust would

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Then comes a warning against any one who may falsely claim to be a Manifestation.(42) “Whoever claims Command (*amr*) before the completion of a thousand years is a false liar.....Whoever explains this verse or interprets it in any other way than that plainly sent down, he will be deprived of the Spirit and Mercy of God.....Fear Gad and follow not your illusions.” Baha’u’llah in this statement made it clear that his dispensation will last at least till A..D. 2866.

Next, believers are told not to be troubled “when the sun of My beauty goes down and the heaven of My temple is hidden,”(43) that is, when Baha’u’llah dies, but they must rise up and help the Cause. They are warned against pride of wealth and position.

Religious endowments(44) are to be controlled by Baha’u’llah. as long as he lives, and at his death the control is to go to the “Branches,” that is, his sons. After them it is to go to the House of Justice.

The shaving of the head, as was done by some Muslim men, and was permitted in the Bayan, is forbidden. Men are not to allow their hair to fall below their ears.

Then comes the law for the punishment of a thief. (45) “Banishment and prison have been commanded [as punishment] for the thief. For the third offence put sign on his forehead [brand him]. Thus he will be known, so that the cities and the provinces of God do not receive him. Beware lest pity take hold on you...”

The use of gold and silver vessels is not forbidden as in Islamic law.(46) Cleanliness and good manners in eating are prescribed.

It is incumbent on every father to have his sons and daughters properly educated.(47) If he fails to do so, the House of Justice must supervise their education, using charity funds for this purpose when necessary. “Whoever educates his son or anyone’s sons, it is as though he had educated one of My sons.”

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Next is given the punishment for adultery.(48) “Gad has commanded that every adulterer and adulteress pay a fine to the House of Justice. The sum is nine *mithqals* of gold. For

the second offence double the punishment....Whoever is overcome by sin, let him repent and turn back to God. He, indeed, forgives whom He wills.....” Since the Babi *mithqal* is intended, the amount of fine for the first offence would have been, at the time the Aqdas was published, about \$21.00.

Music, forbidden in Islam, is permitted.(48) “We have made it lawful to you to listen to [singing] voices and to songs. Beware lest listening take you beyond the bounds of good breeding and dignity.”

While Baha’u’llah lives, disputed points are to be referred to him for settlement.(49) After his death they are to be referred to his writings. “O People,” he says, “do not be troubled when the kingdom of My Manifestation has disappeared.....In My Manifestation there is wisdom, and in My Disappearance there is another wisdom.”

”Hospitality has been prescribed [as an obligation], once every month, even though it be with water only.” (50) In this way believers will be drawn close together. “Be like the fingers of the hand and the limbs of the body.” The people of Iran pride themselves on their hospitality.

When a hunter kills his prey he must name the name of God,(51) and the game will become lawful for him to eat, without cutting its throat, as is required in Islam. “Take care not to be wasteful in that [hunting].”

Then comes the punishment for the murderer and the incendiary. “Whoever burns a house intentionally, burn him. Whoever kills a person with intent, kill him. Take the ordinances of God with hands of power and might....If you condemn them [the incendiary and the murderer] to perpetual prison, you have done no harm according to the Book.”(52)

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The regulations for Marriage fill several pages of the Aqdas.(53) “God has ordained marriage for you beware lest you go beyond two [wives], and whoever is satisfied with one of the handmaidens, his soul is at rest and so is hers, and one does no harm in taking a virgin into his service.” All must marry, that there may be born “those who will make mention of Me among My creatures.” People are warned not to corrupt the earth with immorality. In the Bayan the Bab had made the consent of the two parties the condition for marriage, but Baha’u’llah changed this regulation to make the consent of the parents of the bride and groom also a condition, to insure harmony in the family situation. In Muslim marriages it is customary for the husband to give the bride a dowry (*mahr*). Baha’u’llah followed this custom in his marriage regulations, just as the Bab had done. In the Aqdas as in the Bayan, the maximum amount of the dowry was set at ninety-five *mithqals* of gold for city jewellers, and the same amount of silver for villagers, and the minimum amount was nineteen *mithqals*. “Relationship by marriage is not realized except: by [payment of] dowries.” If a husband goes on a journey he must inform his wife and fix the time for his return. If he does not keep his word, and does not inform his wife, she must wait nine months for him, after which she is free to remarry. If trouble should arise between husband and wife, he must not divorce her within a year. If after a year the wound is not healed “there is no harm in divorce.” **As in Islam, no provision is made for the woman to divorce her husband.** After divorce the man may take his wife

back again at the end of every month, provided she has not married someone else. “God loves union and agreement and hates division and divorce.”

Traffic in slaves is forbidden.(54) Believers must adorn themselves “with the beautiful garments of [good] works.” “Let no one oppose another; nor one person kill another.....Do you kill him whom God brought to life through a Spirit from Him?”(55)

Ceremonial uncleanness is abolished, but cleanliness is enjoined.(56) “Catch hold of the rope of Purity so that no traces of filth are seen in your clothes.....

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There is no harm, however., in one who has an excuse [for not being clean].....Cleanse every unseemly thing with water which has not changed in three respects [that is, in color, smell or taste]. Fear God and be of the purified. The prayers of the one who is seen with filth on his clothes do not ascend to God.....Use rose water, then pure perfume. This is what God, who had no beginning, loved from the beginning.”

The Bab had commanded in the Bayan that all non Babi books should be abandoned. Baha’u’llah abrogates this law.(57) “We have permitted you to read of the learning [of the Islamic doctors] what is useful to you, but not that which results in controversy in speech.”

Baha’u’llah then addresses various kings and rulers of the earth, and exhorts them to accept him. “By God,” he says, “we do not desire to take possession of your kingdoms, but we have come to possess your hearts.....Blessed is the king who arises to help My cause in My kingdom and cuts himself off from all but Me!” The king of Austria [the Emperor Franz Joseph] is rebuked because he passed Akka on his way to Jerusalem [in 1869] without stopping to inquire about Baha’u’llah.(58) To the king of Berlin [probably Wilhelm I] he says, “Beware lest conceit keep thee from the Rising-place of Manifestation and passion screen thee from the Possessor of the Throne and the Earth.” To the rulers of America he says,(59) “O kings of America and chiefs of the multitude in it, hear what the Dove on the branches of Continuing Eternity warbles, saying, ‘There is no *god* besides Me, the Continuing, the Forgiving, the Generous.’ Adorn the temple [body] of the Kingdom with the garment of Justice and Piety, and its head with the crown of the Remembrance of your Lord. The Ottoman

Empire is severely rebuked and threatened,(60) no doubt because of its treatment of him. The address to Iran is most conciliatory, though it was here that the Babis had suffered most. “O land of *al-Ta* [Teheran], do not be sorrowful for anything.

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God has made thee the Rising-place of the Joy of the worlds. If He Wills, He will bless thy throne through him who rules with justice and gathers the sheep of God which have been scattered by wolves.....Rejoice thou in that God has made thee the Horizon of Light since the Rising-place of Manifestation [Baha’u’llah] was born in thee and thou art called by this Name..... Things shall be overturned in thee and the multitude of people shall rule thee.” The province of Khurasan also is addressed with words of hope.(61)

Since the Aqdas was not published till. 1890 A.D., and was not translated from Arabic, it is improbable that any of the kings and rulers here addressed ever read or heard of the messages intended for them.

Baha'u'llah then continues giving laws and regulations for his people. First he prescribes the amount of the capital tax.(62) "If anyone possesses a hundred *mithqals* of gold, nineteen *mithqals* of them are for God, the Maker of earth and heaven. Beware, O people, lest you deny yourselves this great favour. We have commanded you to do this although we can do without you.....By that command God desired the purification of your wealth.....O people, do not be dishonest in the duties owed to God; do not spend [God's money] except by His permission." This money was to be given to Baha'u'llah, and there is evidence that this was done by many Baha'is.(63)

To the learned men of Islam who criticized the style of the writings of Baha'u'llah, he replies that his Book is itself the standard, and "that which the nations have may be weighed by this Great Balance." (64) This is the same as the reply of the Muslims to those who criticized the style of the Koran.

Then follow more regulations.(65) The nails are to be pared. A weekly bath must be taken in water sufficient to cover the whole body. It is not permissible to get into water that has already been used, or to go to the bath-houses of the Iranians, in which the water in the pools was seldom changed. "It is like pus and purulent matter".....It is better for one

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who washes his body to pour water over him instead of getting into it. Indeed, He desired to make matters easy for you....."

"The wives of your fathers are unlawful unto you." (66) Since this is the only limitation imposed by Baha'u'llah's marriage laws, it has been inferred by some that all other women may be lawfully married. And regarding pederasty he says, "We are ashamed to mention the commandments regarding boys."

The lips are not to be moved in prayer as one walks through the streets,(66) as is sometimes done by those who wish to be seen of men. Worship is to be performed in a place of worship, or in one's own home.

"The writing of a will has been made incumbent on everyone.....One must adorn the top of the page with the Most Great Name and confess his faith in the Unity of God, in the Appearance of His Manifestation."(66) In this way the Baha'i testifies that he died in the faith.

There are to be two great festivals. (67) The first commemorates the declaration of Baha'u'llah. The date for this is not given in the Aqdas, but it is observed by Baha'is in the Feast of Rizwan from April 21 to May 2 (Chapter V). The second festival "is the day on which We sent Him who should tell the people the Good

News of this Name by which the dead are raised," that is, the declaration of the Bah, which was on May 23. It is noteworthy that Baha'u'llah here refers to the Bab not as a previous Manifestation, but as one whom he had sent to tell the good news of his coming. Then reference is made to another festival, which comes on the first day of the first month (*Baha*) of the Babi year, namely, the ancient Iranian national Feast of No Ruz (March 21). "It is the source and beginning of the months, and in it moves the breath of

life,” that is, the coming of spring. “Blessed is the one who apprehends it with joy and sweetness.”

When ill, “consult the skilful ones of the physicians. Indeed, We have not set aside the means [of

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healing] but have rather established them by this Pen.”(67)

The Bab had commanded that when his followers came to him they should bring him as a gift their most precious possession. Regarding this command Baha’u’llah says, “We have exempted you from this as a favour from Him. He, indeed, is the Generous Giver.”(68)

The “Sunrise-place of Remembrance” (*mashriq al-adhkar*) is the name given to Baha’i places of worship. It is good to go to such places “in the early mornings, mentioning [the Name of God], remembering, and asking forgiveness.” the worshipper should sit in silence, listening to those who chant the verses given by Baha’u’llah, for in this way a spiritual state is produced.(68) “He who speaks other than that sent down in My Tablets is not one of Mine.”

”Gad has permitted those who so desire to learn different languages that they may propagate the Cause of God and tell of it in the east and west of the earth, and make mention of it among the states and religious groups.”(68) The use of alcohol is discouraged. “The rational person does not drink that which takes away his reason.”(69) Then follows this excellent injunction: “Adorn your heads with the crown of faithfulness and integrity, your hearts with the cloak of piety, your tongues with true veracity and your temples [bodies] with the garment of good breeding.”(69)

Next comes a brief command of great importance for followers of Baha’u’llah. “When the Sea of Union [with Me] is dried up and the Book of Beginning is finished in the End, then turn to the one whom God desires, the one who is a Branch from the ancient Root..”(69) That is, one of his sons is to succeed him, but he does not here indicate which son is intended. More definite directions were given in Baha’u’llah’s *Book of My Covenant* (Chapter IX).

Freedom, says Baha’u’llah, is a dangerous thing.(70) “We see some people who desired freedom boasting of it.

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They are in manifest ignorance. The consequences of freedom end in sedition, the fire of which is unquenchable.....Man must be under regulations.....Look at mankind; they are like sheep, they must have a shepherd to keep them.....Freedom is in following My commands.”

”The number of months is nineteen according to the Book of God.”(70) Thus Baha’u’llah adopts the Babi calendar.

Also, in the matter of the burial of the dead he adopts the regulations given by the Bab. The dead are to be buried, as directed in. the Bayan, in coffins of “crystal or rare stones or beautiful hard woods.” But the inscriptions on the rings which must be placed on their fingers are to be different from what the Bab had commanded, and for both men and women the inscription (in Arabic) is to be: “I had my origin in God and I returned to

Him; I am separated from all but Him, and I hold fast to His Name, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”(71) The Bab had commanded that the body be wrapped in not- more than five garments of silk and cotton., but Baha’u’l-lah says,: “Whoever is unable to do this, one of them will be sufficient for him.” Moreover, the carrying of dead bodies to shrines at distant places, as the Muslims did, is forbidden. “It is unlawful for you to carry the dead body farther than the distance of an hour from the city. Bury him with joy and sweetness in a nearby place.”(71) This would be four or five miles, when horse-drawn vehicles were used.

Then follows a long exhortation to mankind, first those who have believed on the Manifestation, and then those who have not.(72) “O multitude of Creation, hear the call of the Possessor of Names. He calls you from the direction of His Most Great Prison [Akka], saying, ‘There is no god besides Me, the Powerful, the Proud, the Scoffer, the Exalted, the Knower, the Wise.’” They are reminded of what the Bab, “who told the Good News of Me,” had said about Baha’u’l-lah, and the Babis who had not accepted him are urged to do so. “Whoever knows Me, knows the Desired One. Whoever turns his

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face to Me, turns his face to Him who is worshipped... It is better for a person to read one of My verses than for him to read the books of the ancients and the moderns....O Multitudes of *al-Bayan* [Babis], z adjure you by your Lord, the Merciful, to look with the eye of equity at what has been sent down in Truth [the writings of Baha’u’l-lah], and be not of those who see the proof of God and deny it.” And again Baha’u’l-lah insists that the chief purpose of the Bah was to exalt him, “this Unapproachable, Extraordinary Manifestation.”

The Shi’ites of Iran considered peoples of other religions unclean., and so were forbidden to associate with them. Baha’u’l-lah says,(73) “Associate with those of other religions with joy and sweetness, that they may find in you the odour of the Merciful. Take care that the fanaticism of the Days of Ignorance among mankind does not take hold on you.” And he adds, “Take care not to enter a house when its owner is absent, unless [you have] his permission.(74) Persist in doing good on all occasions, and be not of the careless ones.”

One of the five “pillars of religion.” in Islam is the paying of the Poor-rate (*zakat*). Baha’u’l-lah adopted this, saying, “It has been ordained for you that you make pure [lawful] your food by paying the poor-rate.”(75) He promises to tell later in detail on what property the poor-rate is to be paid. Both begging and giving to beggars is forbidden. “It has been ordained that everyone earn his living. Whoever is unable to do so, let the guardians and the rich appoint for him what is sufficient.”(75)

In the *Bayan* quarrelling, disputing, and striking were forbidden, and anyone who caused sorrow to another was required to pay a fine of nineteen *mithqals* of gold, or if poor, of silver. Baha’u’l-lah says that in this Manifestation his followers are exempted from this penalty, and are exhorted to righteousness and piety. “Do not approve for another what you do not approve for yourselves.”(75)

He then commands that they “recite the verses of God every morning and evening. Whoever does not recite

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does not fulfil the covenant and bond of God.”(75) But it is not good to become proud through reading and praying a great deal. “Were one to read one of the verses with joy and sweetness, it were better for him than if he recite lazily the volumes of God.”(76) Children must be taught to chant the verses of God in such a way “that the hearts of those who sleep are attracted.”

The Bab commanded that house-furnishings must be renewed every nineteen years, and both he and Baha’u’llah “exempt him who is unable to do this.”(76) Also, the Bab commanded that believers must take a bath every four days. Baha’u’llah says, “Wash your feet every day in summer, and in winter once every three days.”(76) Then follows this exhortation which is an echo of the Sermon on the Mount, “Whoever becomes angry with you, meet him with gentleness. Whoever does evil to you, do not do evil to him. Leave him to himself and depend on God, the Avenger, the Just, the Powerful.”(76)

The verses of God are not to be recited from high pulpits, as in the mosques, but from a platform, on which the reciter is seated.(76) Gambling and the use of opium are forbidden. Invitations to feasts and banquets are to be accepted “with joy and gladness, and whoever keeps his promise [to come] is secure from threats.”(77)

It is forbidden to carry arms “except in times of necessity.”(78) The wearing of silk, which was forbidden in Islamic law, is made permissible for Baha’is. Also the Bab gave certain regulations regarding clothing and the hair and the beard. Baha’u’llah says,(78) “God has lifted from you the commandment restricting clothing and beards, as a favour from Him.....Do what the upright minds do not disapprove of.....Blessed is the one who is adorned with the garment of good breeding and conduct!” And to justify these changes in the divine regulations he says, “If God should make lawful what was forbidden in the eternity of past eternities, or vice versa, no one should find fault with Him.”(78)

Next come several pages of condemnation of the Shaykhis in Kirman (Chapter I) and the doctors of Islam for their rejection of Baha’u’llah. (79) They are urged to recognize the truth of God, and believe, and are warned against preventing people from coming to him. Then follows another important command, briefly given.(80) “O people of Creation, whenever the dove flies from the forest of praise and makes for the furthest hidden goal, then refer what you did not understand in the Book to the Bough which branches from the Self-Subsistent Stock.” That is, after the death of Baha’u’llah, questions about the interpretation of his Book are to be referred to his son. He does not here state which son is intended.

Once more Baha’u’llah appeals to the people of the Bayan to recognize and accept him. (81) “Take care,” he warns, “not to argue with *God* and [dispute] His Cause. He was manifested in such a way that He knows thoroughly all that was and will be.....Take care that what is in *al-Bayan* does not keep you away from your Lord, the Merciful. By God, it [the Bayan] was sent down as a reminder of Me, if you only knew. The sincere find in it only the odour of My love and of My Name.....O People, face towards what has been sent down from My Highest Pen. If you find in it an odour of God, do not turn away from it and do not deprive yourselves of the Grace and benefits of God.”

Then follows a stern appeal to an unnamed opponent, who was his brother Subh-i-Azal.(82) “O Rising-place of Deviation, quit concealing [the truth!.....By God, my tears have flowed down My cheeks when I saw thee following thy passion and forsaking the One who created thee and fashioned thee. Remember the Grace of thy Master when We educated thee by night and day for the service of the Cause Fear God and be of the penitent to God.” The allusion is to Baha’u’llah’s tutoring his brother when he was quite young. Then, referring to Hajji Sayyid Muhammad Isfahani, Baha’u’llah says, “God has taken the one who seduced thee.” This devoted Babi, who became the husband of the second widow of the

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Bah, was held responsible by Baha’u’llah for the failure of Subh-i-Azal to accept him as a Manifestation, and was assassinated by the Baha’is in Akka in 1872. (83) “Therefore,” continues Baha’u’llah, “return to Him [God] submissive, humble, and humiliated. He will pardon thy evil doings. Thy Lord is, indeed, the Relenting, the Powerful, and Merciful.” But in spite of this plea Subh-i-Azal never submitted to his brother.

Of the Most Holy Book he says,(82) “This is a Book that has become a lamp for the feet of all those in the world and his straightest way for the worlds Say: Indeed, it is the Rising-place of the knowledge of God, if you only knew. It is the Sunrise-place of God’s commands, if you only knew.”

Finally on the last page a few more commands are added. (84) Animals are not to be overloaded. “Whoever kills a person by mistake must pay blood-money to his people, and the amount is one hundred *mithqals* of gold. Peoples of the councils of different countries are to “choose a language among the languages, to be spoken by those on earth. Choose likewise the handwriting to be used.....This is a means for [attaining] union, if you only knew, and the greatest reason for agreement and civilization.”(85) And again he says, “The smoking of opium has been prohibited to you.....Whoever smokes it is not one of us.”

Then the Most Holy Book ends with these words:

”Fear God, O people of intelligence,

By My Most Great, Most. Holy, High, and Most Splendid Name’.”

In the above summary all the important laws and precepts (but not all the exhortations) contained in this book of fifty English pages have been noted in. the order, or rather disorder, in which Baha’u’llah prepared them. It will be remembered that the Bab had said that He-Whom-God-Will-Manifest would abrogate the Bayan.(86) Accordingly, Baha’u’llah, claiming to be He, proceeded to change certain Bayanic regulations,

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as we have seen above, though he never stated categorically that the Bayan had been abrogated. It is evident, therefore, that the laws of the Bayan which were not changed or rescinded by Baha’u’llah in the Aqdas remain in effect for Baha’is. But how are they to know these laws if copies of the Bayan are not available to them?

As one studies the Aqdas it becomes clear that while it contains numerous ethical and religious teachings which might be followed in any society anywhere, such as kindness to

others, abstention from drink and opium, provision for worship and fasting, etc., there are also in it numerous laws which presuppose the existence of a Baha'i State, with an executive, a judiciary and a police force. How else could taxes and fines be collected, and crimes be punished by imprisonment and death. Baha'u'llah definitely anticipated the time when the "People of Baha" like the People of Islam will establish a regime in which Religion and State will be one. The Most Holy Book is supposed to contain the basic laws for this world Theocratic-State for the coming one thousand or more years.

As we have seen, mention is made several times in the Aqdas of the House of Justice (*Baytu'l-Adl*), which must be established in every town, and to which various civil and religious responsibilities are assigned. There is also a suggestion that there is to be a Supreme House of Justice, one of the duties of which is to administer the religious endowments after the death of Baha'u'llah. But no clear directions are given in the Aqdas for the formation or the responsibilities of such a body.

However, in the Eighth Eshraq of the *Book of Eshraqat*, Baha'u'llah amended the Aqdas, as follows: (87) "This passage by the Supreme Pen [Baha] has been written at this moment and shall be read [together with and] as forming part of the *Kitab-i-Aqdas*. Affairs of the people are dependent on godly men of the House of Justice. They are the agents of God..... each day calls for an order, and each moment for an

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expediency. Consequently matters shall be referable to the House of Justice so that it may put into practice whatever it considers to be the requirements of expediency.....All political matters shall be refer- able to the House of Justice....." From this statement it is evident that Baha'u'llah anticipated a time when a state, having a parliamentary system of government, shall have adopted Baha'ism as the state religion, with full authority to legislate for the conduct of the state, subject to the provisions of the Aqdas. As Mirza Badi'u'llah, the youngest son of Baha'u'llah says,(88) "The purpose underlying this command is that matters should be dealt with by consultation and not by one man rule." It is said that the last book written by Baha'u'llah before his death was the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*.(89) In this Epistle of 180 pages Baha'u'llah addressed the son of the Muslim leader who had ordered the execution of two notable Baha'is in Isfahan (c. 1880 A.D.), (90) hut the message is intended for everyone. Baha'u'llah sternly rebukes this man, whom he calls "Shaykh," for his evil deeds, and bids him repent and believe. He bemoans all the sufferings he (Baha'u'llah) has endured from his enemies, and defends himself from the charges brought against him, which he denounces as false. Toward the Shah of Iran, who had ordered the execution of the Bab and had bitterly apposed the Babis, he shows a most conciliatory attitude, saying that he has ever striven for the peace and goad of the people of Iran and of the world. He begs the Shah to treat well the Baha'is in Iran. He quotes long section" from his own previous writings. He also quotes much from the sayings and writings of the Bab, whom he calls his forerunner, but neither he nor his interpret indicates from what writings of the Bab these quotations are taken. He quotes passages from both the God and the New Testaments in order to convince Jews and Christians, and the Koran and Islamic traditions for the benefit of Muslims. Here at the end of his life he restates his claims to be a Manifestation, and appeals to the People

of the Bayan (followers of Subh-i-Azal) to accept him. And he bitterly complains of the wicked opposition of his brother Subh-i-Azal, whom he calls “Mirza Yahya,”

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and those who had followed him. Baha’u’llah forbade the publication of this Epistle during his lifetime, and it was not published till later.(91)

Some of the finest of Baha’u’llah’s words found in various writings of his are the following, which are quoted by Mirza Jawad in his Historical Epitome:

”All of you are the fruit of one Tree and the leaves of one Branch. It is not for him who loves his country to be proud, but [rather] for him who loves the whole world.”(92)

”O people of Baha! Ye are the Rising-places of Love and the Daysprings of Divine Grace. Do not defile the tongue with the vituperation and cursing of anyone. Keep the eye from that which is not seemly. Be not the cause of sorrow, much less of strife and sedition.” (92)

”By the Most Great Name, if one of the Companions vexeth any one, it is as though he had vexed God Him- self. Ye are forbidden strife, quarrelling, sedition, murder and the like thereof with a stringent prohibition in God’s Book.”(93)

”I swear by the Sun of the Dawning of the Divine Unity, if the Friends of God be slain it is better in the eyes of this Oppressed One than that they should injure anyone.”(93)

”O people of God, do not concern yourselves with yourselves: take thought for the reformation of the world and the purification of its peoples. The reformation of the world will be [effected] by good and pure deeds and gracious and well-pleasing virtues.”(94)

”O people of earth, make not God’s Religion a cause of difference amongst you! Verily He hath revealed the Truth for the concord of all who are in the world.” (94)

In *Bahai Scriptures* this saying of Baha’u’llah’s is quoted:(95) “The principle of faith is to lessen words

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and to increase deeds. He whose words exceed his acts, know verily that his non-being is better than his being, and death better than his life.”

What has attracted many persons in various lands to Baha’u’llah has been not some unique service rendered by him to humanity, and not the laws which he promulgated for his proposed Baha’i Theocracy, but rather these ethical and humanitarian teachings regarding peace and unity among the people of the world. These teachings are, says Professor Browne,(96)”in themselves admirable, though inferior., in my opinion, both in beauty and simplicity to the teachings of Christ.” “Moreover,” continues Browne, “as it seems to me, ethics is only the application to everyday life of religion and metaphysics, and to be effective must be supported by some spiritual sanction; and in the case of Baha’ism, with its rather vague doctrines as to the nature and destiny of the soul of man, it is a little difficult to see whence the driving-power to enforce the ethical maxims can be derived.” This was the mature judgement of a great scholar who had studied Baha’ism with sympathy for more than thirty years.

Shortly before his death Baha'u'llah sent to Professor Browne a little manuscript entitled *Good News* which contained a compendium of his principal teachings composed especially for Browne. These were in brief as follows:(97)

- 1) Expunction of the commandment for *Jihad* ("Holy War") from the Book of God.
  - 2) All sects and peoples to associate with one another with joy and sweetness.
  - 3) Permission to study foreign languages, with a recommendation that kings and ministers of state choose one existing language and script as a medium for international communication, or else create one.(98)
  - 4) Baha'is must loyally serve and support any king who extends protection to their faith.
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- 5) Baha'is must behave themselves honestly, truthfully and sincerely towards the country in which they dwell.
- 6) Promise of the Most Great Peace revealed by the Supreme Pen.
- 7) All are permitted, subject to the dictates of decency and good taste, to follow their own inclinations as to dress and the wearing of the hair.
- 8) Christian monks and priests must abandon their seclusion and engage in useful service. "We have vouched them permission to marry."
- 9) Sins are to be confessed not to men hut to God.
- 10) Expunction of the commandment (of the Bah) far the annullment of books from writings and tablets.(99)
- 11) The study of useful arts and sciences is commanded.
- 12) **All men must learn and practice same craft, trade or profession.**
- 13) Subject to the rules for worship laid down in the Aqdas, the House of Justice is the competent authority to enact legislation for the people.
- 14) Pilgrimages to the tombs of saints and martyrs (as commanded by the Bab) are no longer obligatory.
- 15) The best form of government is a combination of a monarchy and a republic.

These are the "Baha'i Principles" as stated by Baha'u'llah himself in 1891. Most of them are taken from the Bayan and the Aqdas. It is instructive to compare this statement with the *Iqan*, written by Baha'u'llah some thirty years earlier, to see how his interests had broadened as a result of his experience and his studies of books and newspapers dealing with world problems while in Akka.(100) It is also instructive to compare this list of teachings with the

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principles" attributed to Baha'u'llah which were later adopted by Baha'is. The Will of Baha'u'llah and his provision for the succession and the leadership of the Baha'i Cause after his death will be considered in the following chapter.

## **NOTES**

1. Mirza Jawad in *Materials*, p. 64.

2. *Bahai Scriptures*, edited by Horace Holley, approved by Bahai Committee on Publications, New York, Brentano's, 1923.
3. *Baha'i World Faith*, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, 2nd edition 1956.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 454.
5. *Azal's Notes*, p. 254, *God Passes By*, by Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1965, p. 94.
6. *Azal's Notes*, p. 423, *Bahai Scriptures*, pp. 102- 104, *God Passes By*, p. 94.
7. *Persian Bayan*, III, 6, 8.
8. *Bahai Scriptures*, pp. 241, 243.
9. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 165, 599, 1055, 1056, 1086, *Letter No. One of Baha*. See appendix II, #4.
10. *Azal's Notes*, p. 1086.
11. From this statement it is clear that Baha'u'llah had read and studied the Bayan. It is therefore surprising to find in his *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (translated by Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Publishing Trust) on page 165 the following confession: "God testifieth and beareth me witness that this Wronged One [Baha'u'llah] hath not perused the Bayan nor been acquainted with its contents." See Appendix II, #66.

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12. *al-Kitab al-Aqdas* or *The Most Holy Book*, translated by E. E. Elder, The Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1961, p. 51. *Kitab-i-Aqdas* is the Persian name of the book.
13. *God Passes By*, p. 213.
14. *Bahai Scriptures*, p. 261.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 554.
16. *God Passes By*, p. 213.
17. *Materials*, pp. 9, 17. see Appendix II, #62.
18. Browne in *Materials*, p. 195, *Baha'i world 2926- 292B*, p. 200, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 7-13, 83, 89, 114, 249, 365, 366, .1059.
19. *J.R.A.S.*, October 1889, pp. 972-981.
20. *Materials*, p. 187.
21. See Note 012. The Introduction and Notes of the 1961 edition should be corrected to conform to what the author, after getting fuller and more accurate information, has written in the present volume.
22. Letter to Mr. Will Orick.
23. *God Passes By*, p. 411.
24. *Azal's Notes*, p. 1090.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 1054-1087.
26. *Aqdas*, p. 23.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25. "The worship of nine prostrations is a dead letter. In actual practice Baha'is hold three services of one prostration each" (*Azal's Notes*, p. 1060).
29. *Aqdas*, pp. 25, 60.
30. The number 95 derives its authority from *al-Bayan*, the name first applied to God. All the mystery of the Bayan is manifest in this name; because the numerical value of *al-Bayan* (=94) plus the *Wahid* without number (=1) make 95. Also, the numerical value of

the letters in *Wahid* (=19) multiplied by the number of the letters in *Bab* (= 5) is 95. Note that the number 19, to which the Bab attached so much importance, is retained in the Baha'i system (*Azal's Notes*, pp. 1062, 1063).

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1. 31. *Aqdas*, pp. 26, 27. All these matters regarding worship are fully provided for in the Bayan.
  2. 32. *Aqdas*, pp. 27, 28.
  3. 33. Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 418-425. *The Baha'i World 1936-2988*, pp. 447, 448, states that the Baha'i Era commences with the year of the Bab's declaration (May 23, 1844 A.D., 1260 A.H.), and quotes Baha'u'llah as saying, "The year of the Declaration of the Bab must be regarded as the beginning of the Badi Calendar." The No Ruz after the declaration (March 21, 1845) is accounted the first No Ruz of the Badi Calendar. However, according to the clear statements by the Bab in his autograph personal *Diary*, in the book *Five Grades* (pp. 12, 16, 19) and in other writings by him, the Babi Era (Badi Calendar) began on No Ruz (March 19) of 1266 A.H. and 1850 A.D., shortly before the Bab's execution. It is noteworthy that Baha'u'llah decreed that his Era begin, not at the time of his declaration, nor at the time decreed by the Bab, but at the time of the declaration of the Bab, whom he called his Forerunner. For a full discussion of the Badi Calendar see *Azal's Notes*, pp. 1065-1068.
  4. 34. *Aqdas*, p. 29. These provisions for worship are taken from the Persian Bayan, V, 17 and VIII, 10.
  5. 35. *Aqdas*, p. 29. Taken from Persian Bayan, IV, 5 and Arabic Bayan, X, 5.
  6. 36. *Aqdas*, pp. 29-31, *Azal's Notes*, p. 1070.
  7. 37. *Aqdas*, p. 31. The Bab had provided for a council of 25 members to assist the Babi authority which would be established (Arabic Bayan, XI, 2). Baha replaced this by a House of Justice of 9 or more members.
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8. 38. *Aqdas*, pp. 32, 33, 59.
9. 39. *Aqdas*, p. 32. Taken from Arabic Bayan, VIZZ, 17.
10. 40. *Aqdas*, p. 32. From Persian Bayan, VII, 14, where it is commanded that forgiveness should be sought from the Manifestation as long as he lives, and after his death it must be sought from God.
11. 41. *Aqdas*, p. 33. From Persian Bayan, VI, 7 and VIII, 15, Arabic Bayan, X, 10, where it is commanded that all must marry.
12. 42. *Aqdas*, p. 34.
13. 43. *Aqdas*, pp. 34, 35.
14. 44. *Aqdas*, p. 36. There is no provision in the Bayan which would enable the Bab or his appointed successor to control religious endowments.
15. 45. *Aqdas*, pp. 36, 37. The Arabic Bayan, X, 5 forbids theft, but there is no provision for banishment, imprisonment or branding.
16. 46. *Aqdas*, p. 37. From Persian Bayan, VI, 9.

17. 47. *Aqdas*, pp. 37, 38. The Bab in his book Four Grades made full provision for the education of one's children.
18. 48. *Aqdas*, p. 38. The *Arabic Bayan*, X, 5 says that adultery is a thing to be eschewed. The imposition of a fine is Baha'u'llah's provision. There is no provision in the *Bayan* regarding music.
19. 49. *Aqdas*, p. 39.
20. 50. *Aqdas*, pp. 39, 40. From *Arabic Bayan*, XI, 17.
21. 51. *Aqdas*, p. 40. There is no provision in the *Bayan* for hunting.
22. 52. *Aqdas*, p. 40. The *Arabic Bayan*, X, 5 forbids arson, but it appears that it makes no provision for punishment. Murder also is strictly forbidden in the *Persian Bayan*, IV, 5, and in the *Arabic Bayan*, XI, 16 it is commanded that the murderer must pay 11,000 *mithqals* of pure gold to the heirs of the murdered person.

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23. 53. *Aqdas*, pp. 40-43. In the *Persian and Arabic Bayans*, VI, 16 the Bab commanded that a husband may not absent himself from his home for more than two years if on land, and more than five years if at sea. Baha'u'llah removed this restriction. Except for this and other minor amendments, all the provisions regarding marriage found in the *Aqdas* are taken from the *Arabic Bayan*, VI, 12, 17, VIII, 15, X, 10.
24. 54. *Aqdas*, p. 43. It appears there is no provision in the *Bayan* regarding slavery.
25. 55. *Aqdas*, p. 44. From *Arabic Bayan*, X, 18.
26. 56. *Aqdas*, pp. 44, 45. Full provision is made for this in *Persian and Arabic Bayans*, IV, 10.
27. 57. *Aqdas*, p. 45. The Bab taught that when a new Manifestation appears the Book of the previous Manifestation is abrogated, and its validity is "destroyed." Likewise, religious books written by men in the former dispensation no longer have validity. The Bab, accordingly, forbade the Babis to read the books written by the Muslim theologians (*Persian Bayan*, VI, 6). He Permitted them to read only the *Bayan*, or books with the prescribed colophon from the *Arabic Bayan*, X, 11. The Bab forbade the tearing up of books (*Azal's Notes*, p. 1076).
28. 58. *Aqdas*, pp. 47, 48.
29. 59. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
30. 60. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
31. 61. *Ibid.*, p. 49, 50
32. 62. *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 51. This law, except for the pro- for the disposal of the money, is from the *Arabic and Persian Bayans*, VIII, 16.
33. 63. Avareh p. 133, in *Kashf'ul-Hiyal*, presumably first edition, *Azal's Notes*, pp. 48-51.
34. 64. *Aqdas, Bayan*, p. 51. This also is from the *Persian Bayan*, II, 1.

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35. 65. *Aqdas*, pp. 52, 53. The rules for cleanliness are from the *Bayans*, IV.
36. 66. *Aqdas*, p. 53. Pederasty is forbidden in the *Arabic Bayan* X, 5. It appears there is no prohibition in the *Bayan* against moving lips in prayer in the street. The provision

regarding places of worship is taken from the Arabic Bayan IX, 9, and that for writing a will is from the Arabic and Persian Bayans, V, 13.

37. 67. *Aqdas*, p. 54.
  38. 68. *Aqdas*, p. 55. The Bab's provision for bringing the most priceless thing to him is found in the Persian Bayan, VI, 16. The Bab did not forbid the learning of foreign languages, but the study of the "Science of Obsolete Words" (Persian Bayan, IV, 10).
  39. 69. *Aqdas*, p. 56. The use of alcohol is forbidden in the Arabic and Persian Bayans, IX, 8.
  40. 70. *Aqdas*, pp. 56, 57. There appears to be no provision in the Bayan regarding freedom.
  41. 71. *Aqdas*, p. 58. The provisions for burial are taken from the Arabic Bayan, V, 11 and VIII, 11.
  42. 72. *Aqdas*, pp. 58-62.
  43. 73. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
  44. 74. *Ibid.*, p. 62. From the Arabic Bayan, VI, 16.
  45. 75. *Aqdas*, p. 63. In Arabic Bayan, VIII, 17, begging and giving to beggars is forbidden, and earning one's living and giving relief to the destitute is commanded.
  46. 76. *Aqdas*, p. 64. The reading of verses is commanded in the Arabic Bayan, V, 8. Bathing is enjoined in the Arabic Bayan, VIII, 6. High pulpits are forbidden in the Arabic Bayan, VII, 11. Gambling and the use of opium are forbidden in the Arabic Bayan, IX, 8 and X, 5.
  47. 77. *Aqdas*, p. 65.
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48. 78. *Aqdas*, p. 66. Carrying arms except in time of necessity was forbidden in the Arabic Bayan, VII, 6. The provisions about clothing and hair are taken from the Persian Bayan, VI, 9 and VIII, B.
49. 79. *Aqdas*, pp. 67-69.
50. 80. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
51. 81. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.
52. 82. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.
53. 83. Browne in *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 93, note 1 and 370.
54. 84. *Aqdas*, p. 74. Provisions regarding overloading animals, and killing by mistake, and blood-money are taken from the Arabic Bayan, X, 15 and x, 8, 16
55. 85. *Aqdas*, p. 74. An artificial language known as Esperanto was invented for universal use by a Polish physician Dr. L. L. Zamenhof before the *Aqdas* was revised and printed in 1890.
56. 86. *Persian Bayan*, English Introduction to Nuqtatu'l-Kaf, p. LIV.
57. 87. *Azal's Notes*, pp. 334, 335. See Appendix 'II, #67.
58. 88. *Ibid.*, p. 332.
59. 89. Translated by Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Publishing Trust.
60. 90. Browne, *J.R.A.S.*, July 1889, pp. 489-491, and Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 400-403.
61. 91. *Azal's Notes*, p. 14
62. 92. *Materials*, p. 65.

63. 93. *Ibid.*, p. 67.  
64. 94. *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 70.  
65. 95. *Scriptures*, p. 158.  
66. 96. *Materials*, p. XXI.  
67. 97. *J.R.A.S.*, October 1892, p. 678, Azal's Notes, pp. 1090-1098. See Appendix II, #69.
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68. 98. A new script called *Khatt-i-Badi'* was created by Baha's son, Mirza Muhammad Ali, and was approved by his father. A specimen was printed in Avareh's *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, vol. III, 3rd printing, pp. 188- 189. See *J.R.A.S.*, July 1889, p. 498 and October 1892, p. 709, note 3. See Appendix II, #70  
69. 99. See Note 57.  
70. 100. Baha'u'llah had agents posted in Beirut, Cairo, Damascus and other cities who furnished him regularly with daily papers, periodicals and books on world problems. For example, he received from the famous Sayyid Jalalu'd-Din Afghani a copy of the periodical he was publishing in Cairo, and he read the article in the Arabic Encyclopedia which the Sayyid had written on the Babi movement. Evidence of his wide reading is found in his Tablets (*Azal's Notes*, pp. 1114-1115). See Appendix II #73.