



'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

The original photograph was signed and presented to the author by his grandson, Shoghi Efendi (see page 152)

*Shoghi Effendi*

A precious souvenir presented to my dear friend Mr. Miller  
Haifa, Palestine, March 23 1923 *Rich. Robinson*

# BAHĀ'ISM

*ITS ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND TEACHINGS*

By

WILLIAM McELWEE MILLER, M.A., B.D.

*Missionary of the Presbyterian Church,  
U. S. A., at Meshed, Persia*

Introduction by

ROBERT E. SPEER, D.D.



NEW YORK                      CHICAGO  
Fleming H. Revell Company  
LONDON      AND      EDINBURGH

Copyright, MCMXXII, by  
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue  
Chicago: 851 Cass Street  
London: 21 Paternoster Square  
Edinburgh: 99 George Street

BZ E. B. M 61 Dec 22-'31

42159

*To*  
*MY MOTHER.*



## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS book needs no apologetic or commendatory introduction. It stands on its own merit.

But I am glad to introduce its author as a competent and careful scholar, a faithful and effective missionary, and as a dear and trusted friend. Mr. Miller is a graduate of Washington and Lee University in the Class of 1912. For some time after his graduation he was engaged in Christian work among students. Then, in 1919, he went to Persia where he has since worked with his home in Meshed, the great shrine city of Persia. Here he has lived in daily contact with Shiah Mohammedans coming to visit the shrines of Imām Rezā and Gauhar Shād, and his itinerating trips have taken him all over northeastern Persia. He has lived in the Persian mind. Inevitably he has been brought into contact with Bahā'ism and is thoroughly familiar with its literature and with its life and thought. He has done a valuable and necessary service in setting forth with accuracy and trustworthiness the truth about Bahā'ism. No religion has been so widely misrepresented in its presentation in the West. It is well to have it described with competence and veracity in Mr. Miller's book, as it has been in history and as it is in Persia today.

Some of these Western transformations of Bahā'ism have had much vogue in America, and voluntary mis-

sionaries have represented the faith as an enlightened humanism with a new and original message of universal peace. As a matter of fact, there is not one truth in these Occidental representations of Bahā'ism that is not borrowed from Christianity, while practically all that constitutes the real Bahā'ī faith has been sloughed off and forgotten. This interest in Bahā'ism will of course be short lived. It contains no authentic message about either God or man and it has no dynamic with which to propel its borrowed ideas. Mr. Miller's book tells the truth about it. And this book is needed and will do good.

ROBERT E. SPEER.

*156 Fifth Avenue,  
New York.*

## PREFACE

**A**LL impartial observers of Bahā'ism<sup>9</sup> in Persia are agreed that here in the land of its birth this religion, which once showed promise of capturing all Central Asia, is now steadily losing ground. Few new converts are being made, many of the Bahā'ī<sup>10</sup> leaders of yesterday have openly proclaimed their defection from the movement, and some have written able books exposing the errors which they formerly laboured to propagate. It is only a matter of time until this strange movement, like Manichaeism and Mazdakism before it, shall be known only to students of history.

It would seem, therefore, to be but a waste of time and effort to write a book about a dying movement, and I should never have attempted this task were it not for the activity of the Bahā'is in Europe and America in carrying on their campaign of propaganda. Four years ago I was in Geneva, Switzerland. As I was looking at the titles of new volumes in the show-window of a most attractive bookstore, what was my surprise to find there a large and beautiful scroll upon which were written the "principles" of Bahā'ism. A number of Bahā'ī books and magazines also were offered for sale. I entered and purchased a copy of *The Bahā'ī Magazine*, remarking as I did so that it seemed very strange to us who lived in Persia to see people of the West taking up this Persian religion.

## PREFACE

The clerk replied that the owner of the shop was much interested in the Bahā'ī movement and would be glad to talk with me if I had time to meet her. I readily consented, and had a most pleasant visit with this cultured lady. She told me that she had been much impressed by the Bahā'ī teachings, and had accordingly gone to Haifa to meet Shoghi Efendi, the "Guardian of the Cause." Though she had not become a Bahā'ī herself yet, she said she felt that in Bahā'u'llāh the Spirit of Christ had again appeared on earth. When I asked whether she had made a careful study of the history of Bahā'ism she admitted that she had not, and asked me to suggest some books which she might consult. I did so, urging her to inform herself thoroughly as to the character and life of Bahā'u'llāh and his son, 'Abdu'l-Bahā, before attesting their claims.

In the copy of the magazine which I bought I was interested to read this paragraph: "One of the most gracious proofs of the operation of the Holy Spirit has been the attraction to the Bahā'ī Cause of the owner of a well-known bookshop [in Geneva], dealing with all kinds of progressive thought literature. This gifted woman caused a beautifully illuminated scroll to be displayed in the window of her store, embodying in three languages the Bahā'ī Principles. . . . Let it be our earnest prayer that in this important world-centre the Divine Oriflamme may grow with ever increasing radiance." <sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising that this "gifted" friend of Bahā'ism knew nothing of Bahā'ī history, for the Bahā'īs take but little interest in the history of their

"cause." Among the many books which they have published in European languages, not one contains any adequate treatment of this subject. In fact, Bahā'is do everything possible to divert the attention of Westerners from the early history of the movement, and in the brief accounts which they give of these events they sadly distort the facts, as will be seen in the pages which follow. Had we been dependent for a knowledge of this history upon the Bahā'is themselves, the world would never have known the true nature of the beginnings of Bābism and Bahā'ism. But fortunately there were two European scholars of the first rank who took an intense interest in the movement, and who collected and translated many of the original writings of the Bāb and his followers, and from their books it is possible for the student to gain an accurate knowledge of what this movement was and is.

The first of these authorities was Comte de Gobineau, who was in the French Legation in Teherān from A. D. 1855 to 1858, first as a secretary and later as minister. The Comte de Gobineau came to Persia only five years after the Bāb had been put to death in Tabrīz, and he therefore had an excellent opportunity to get first-hand information regarding him and his followers. Added to a thorough knowledge of Persian and Arabic, Comte de Gobineau possessed a remarkable understanding of the character and beliefs of the Persians in general and of the Bābīs in particular. His sympathetic interest in the Bāb led him to view the whole movement in the most favorable light possible, and the account which he has left us of the first

decade of Bābī history is entirely free from all prejudice. It would have been impossible to find a historian more learned or sympathetic to give to the West a true picture of the Bāb.<sup>11</sup> *Les Religiones et Les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*,<sup>2</sup> a large part of which is devoted to the Bābīs, will ever remain one of the primary sources for the study of the movement.

It was through reading Comte de Gobineau's brilliant book that the late Dr. E. G. Browne, of Cambridge University, first became interested in the Bābīs. When a young man he stumbled on the volume by chance in the university library, and was so captivated by it that he at once formed the plan of going to Persia himself to learn more of Bābism while some of the contemporaries of the Bāb were still alive. He reached Teherān in A. D. 1887 and spent a year travelling about the country, living in the most intimate relations with the people, and coming to know them in twelve months far better than most Europeans are able to do in as many years. The story of this sojourn is contained in a large volume entitled *A Year Amongst the Persians* (London, 1893). Dr. Browne's primary purpose in coming to Persia was, as we have seen, the study of the Bābī movement. But, to his great disappointment, it was for some time impossible for him to make the acquaintance of any Bābīs whatever. Try as he would, he could not get into touch with them, for at that time they were concealing their faith most diligently. At last, however, he was overjoyed to discover one in Isfahān, and having once gained admittance to this secret fraternity he was able

## PREFACE

during the remainder of his stay in Persia to meet Bābīs wherever he went. He was admitted to their meetings, was instructed in their doctrines, was given their sacred writings, and was even initiated by them into the mysteries of opium, from which he extricated himself with the greatest difficulty. After returning to Cambridge, Dr. Browne published several articles in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, giving a detailed and scientific account of the history and writings of the Bābī movement.<sup>3</sup>

But not content with the information he had already acquired, Dr. Browne, in A. D. 1890, made another journey to the East to visit the two rival claimants to the headship of the Bābī movement, namely, Subh-i-Azal in the Island of Cyprus and Bahā'u'llāh in 'Akkā in the Holy Land. He saw each of these brothers a number of times, and had the opportunity of asking many questions of them and their followers. He then published two more books, the first a translation of *A Traveller's Narrative*, written by 'Abdu'l-Bahā,<sup>4</sup> the son of Bahā'u'llāh, and the second a translation of *The New History*,<sup>5</sup> both of which give the Bahā'ī interpretation of Bābī history. These books contain most valuable notes by Dr. Browne.

Then, in A. D. 1910, Dr. Browne published the Persian text of the *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*,<sup>6</sup> an invaluable history of the events of the years A. D. 1844-1851, written by a prominent Bābī who was put to death in Teherān in A. D. 1852. This book has an English and a Persian introduction, both of which are of immense value to the student of Bahā'ism. And finally, in A. D. 1918,

Dr. Browne published his last book on this subject, entitled *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*.<sup>7</sup> Dr. Browne is known by all Orientalists as one of the leading European authorities in the field of Persian literature and thought. His books on Bābism and Bahā'ism are all written with the greatest fairness and scientific accuracy. Like the Comte de Gobineau, he was, especially in his earlier years, an enthusiastic admirer of the Bāb, and no Persian sect ever had a more sympathetic or faithful historian than he.

In addition to these books there are still other treatises dealing with Bābism and Bahā'ism in English and French, such as those of Baron Victor Rosen and A. L. M. Nicolas. Dr. S. G. Wilson, for years a resident in Persia, in 1915 wrote a book called *Bahā'ism and Its Claims*,<sup>8</sup> in which he exposes the fallacies and failures of the movement. The Western Bahā'is, moreover, have shown great zeal in publishing certain of the writings of their Master, and have written a number of books expounding the teachings and principles of Bahā'ism.

In view of this mass of material it would seem unnecessary for another book to be added to the list. But, as a matter of fact, the sources are not easy to get at. Most of the books mentioned above are out of print, and even if one were able to consult them it would take more time to go through them and sift the facts than the average reader possesses. Moreover, some of the principal sources, such as the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* ("The Most Holy Book") of Bahā'u'llāh, have not yet been translated into either English or French, and there are



few Western readers who possess a knowledge of Arabic and Persian adequate to enable them to consult such works. And the books which the Bahā'īs themselves are publishing give a totally inadequate and usually erroneous presentation of their movement.

The glimpse which I got of Bahā'ī propaganda while in Geneva made me realize the need of a brief book on Bahā'ism which would make available in a convenient form the scholarly researches of Dr. Browne and others, that people who wish to investigate more carefully may be able to do so. On returning to my home in Persia I suggested to Rev. W. N. Wysham, the chairman of the Persia Intermission Literature Committee, that he appoint someone to prepare such a book. He replied by asking me to undertake it myself. I at first hesitated to do so, for there are others in Persia who know Bahā'ism more intimately than I do. But as it seemed that no one else had the leisure to undertake the task I finally agreed to do so. I have not attempted to write anything original on the subject. I have merely tried to present the results of my own investigations that those who wish to know the facts may be better able to do so.

I wish here to express my deep appreciation to all those who have aided me in the accomplishment of this task—to my mother, who spent many hours reading the French sources with me, to Āqā Nādirī for his help in translating the *Ṭqān* and the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas*, to Āqā A. Nakhoshteen for typing my manuscript, to Dr. Sa'īd Khān, of Teherān, for reading the manuscript and supplying me with much valuable first-hand in-

formation, to Rev. W. N. Wysham, of Teherān, for sending me a number of books and correcting my manuscript, to Dr. C. R. Murray and others of my colleagues for many helpful suggestions, and finally to Dr. R. E. Speer for his kindness in agreeing to write an Introduction to my book and in undertaking to secure its publication.

W. McE. M.

*The American Presbyterian Mission,  
Meshed, Persia.*

### NOTE TO THE READER

The reference numerals in the text will be found to relate to material placed at the end of the volume, beginning with page 189. There is a separate paragraph for each chapter and the reader, by referring to the material following any figure, will learn what the author has to say concerning the point so indicated.

## CONTENTS

|       |   |     |
|-------|---|-----|
| I.    | THE ISLĀMIC BACKGROUND . . . . .                              | 19  |
| II.   | THE APPEARANCE OF THE BĀB . . . . .                           | 30  |
| III.  | BĀBĪ INSURRECTIONS . . . . .                                  | 41  |
| IV.   | THE TEACHINGS OF THE BĀB . . . . .                            | 55  |
| V.    | THE PONTIFICATE OF SUBH-I-AZAL . . . . .                      | 69  |
| VI.   | THE SCHISM BETWEEN SUBH-I-AZAL AND BAHĀ'-<br>U'LLĀH . . . . . | 82  |
| VII.  | BAHĀ'U'LLĀH . . . . .   | 93  |
| VIII. | THE TEACHINGS OF BAHĀ'U'LLĀH . . . . .                        | 108 |
| IX.   | 'ABDU'L-BAHĀ . . . . .  | 125 |
| X.    | SHOGHI EFENDI . . . . .                                       | 146 |
| XI.   | BAHĀ'ISM IN PERSIA TODAY . . . . .                            | 158 |
| XII.  | CAN A CHRISTIAN BECOME A BAHĀ'Ī? . . . . .                    | 181 |
|       | APPENDIX . . . . .  | 189 |

## SOURCES CONSULTED BY AUTHOR

### ENGLISH AND FRENCH

*A Literary History of Persia*, E. G. Browne, London; *A Traveller's Narrative Written to Illustrate the Episode of the Bāb*, Vol. II, edited by E. G. Browne, Cambridge, 1891; *A Year Amongst the Persians*, E. G. Browne, London, 1893; *'Abbās Efendi*, Phelps, Putnam, 1903; *Articles on the Bābī-Bahā'ī Movement*, E. G. Browne, the Royal Asiatic Society's *Journal*, July 1889, Oct. 1889, April 1892, July 1892, Oct. 1892, Oct. 1897; *Bahā'ism*, Canon Sell, C. L. S. for India, 1912; *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, edited by Horace Holley, Brentano's, 1923; *Bahā'ism and Its Claims*, S. G. Wilson, Revell, 1915; *Bahā'u'llāh and the New Era*, J. E. Esslemont, Brentano's; *Five Years in a Persian Town*, Napier Malcolm, London, 1905; *Letters from Shoghi Efendi*, New York, 1925; *Les Religions et Les Philosophies dans L'Asie Centrale*, Comte de Gobineau, 2 vols., Paris, 1923; *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, edited by E. G. Browne, Cambridge, 1918; *Mission Problems in New Persia*, Beirut, 1926; *Some New Notes on Bābism*, J. R. A. S., July, 1927; *Studies in Bahā'ism*, S. Neale Alter, Beirut, 1923; *The Bahā'ī Magazine*; *The Bahā'ī World* (1926-1928), Vol. II, Bahā'ī Publishing Co., New York, 1928; *The Book of Assurance* (Īqān), Bahā'u'llāh, translated by Ali Kuli Khan, Brentano's; *The New History of the Bāb*, edited by E. G. Browne, Cambridge, 1893.

### PERSIAN AND ARABIC

*Al-Kitābu'l-Aqdas*, by Bahā'u'llāh, lithographed privately, without title or date; *Al-Munāzaratu'd-Dīniyya*, a Manual to guide Bahā'īs in preaching their faith to Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, Egypt, A. H. 1342; *Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, by Nikū (2 vols.), Teherān, 1928; *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, by Āvāreh, Teherān, 1928; *Kitāb-i-Mustatāb-i-Īqān*, by Bahā'u'llāh, printed in Egypt, A. H. 1318; *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, edited by E. G. Browne, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial xv, 1910.

## I

### THE ISLĀMIC BACKGROUND

**I**T is as impossible for one to understand Bahā'ism without a thorough knowledge of Islām as it would be to understand Christianity without a knowledge of the Old Testament. Bahā'ism is an offshoot of Shi'ite Islām, and however much modern Bahā'is may stress the universal aspects of their religion and strive to dissociate themselves from the past, nevertheless the foundations of their faith are laid on Persian soil, and Persian soil is soaked with Islām—hence we need to study Islām. But since it is impossible for us here to give a full account of the rise and development of Islām the reader is referred for further information to such standard books as Margolouth's *Mohammed* (Heroes of the Nations Series), Macdonald's *Development of Muslim Theology*, E. G. Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, and the *Koran* (Everyman's Library). However, before beginning the story of the Bāb, a brief sketch of the historical background of the Bābī movement may not be out of place.

In the early part of the seventh century there appeared in Arabia a preacher of monotheism and a reformer of morals, Muhammad by name. Influenced by the teachings of Jews and Christians, with whom he had associated intimately, he began to attack the idol-

atry of his people in Mecca, proclaiming the Unity of God, the Resurrection, and the Judgment, promising paradise to those who repented and threatening with hell fire those who did not. Muhammad was convinced that his commission to preach was from Allāh the Supreme God. He said that from time to time certain verses were conveyed to him from Allāh by the angel Gabriel, and these verses he repeated to the people as the very words of Allāh. When asked to show some sign or miracle to convince unbelievers of the truth of his divine mission he replied that his verses were his signs, and challenged others to produce the like of them. A few of Muhammad's friends believed on him, but for some years most of his fellow townsmen refused to accept him, and instead frequently persecuted him and his followers. At last Muhammad resolved on flight, and in A. D. 622 he and some of his followers made their way secretly to Madīna, where a number of people had already expressed their readiness to accept him.

On reaching Madīna, Muhammad found himself much better situated than he had been in Mecca. His followers now numbered several hundred men, and when his party, which was growing rapidly, gained the supremacy over the other factions in the city, Muhammad the Preacher became Muhammad the Chief of Madīna, with armed men at his back. Having failed to win the allegiance of the idolaters of Mecca by his preaching and verses, he now undertook to convince them by the sword. Seven months after his arrival at Madīna he began to attack, without any provocation

whatever, the caravans of the people of Mecca in which most of their wealth was invested. At first he met with little success, but in A. D. 624 he succeeded in capturing a large caravan, killing many of its guards and dividing the booty among his followers. This led to other wars, and finally the idolaters were defeated and Muhammad became master first of Mecca (A. D. 630) and then of almost all Arabia. Those who owned him as their ruler and accepted Islām as their religion became equal sharers in the benefits enjoyed by his followers. Those who would not submit were forced to pay taxes or fight. Thus Islām became not a Church merely, but a Church-State. Muhammad was both Prophet and King. Religion and politics have been one in Islām from the beginning, at least in theory. In the *Koran* (which is a collection of the verses revealed to Muhammad) regulations for marriage and divorce, the conduct of war with the infidels, the division of the booty, and other civil matters are interwoven with instructions as to prayer, fasting, clean and unclean foods, and various moral questions. Muhammad felt that it was his duty as Messenger of Allāh to regulate *all* phases of life.

Muhammad probably took Moses as his model of what a prophet should be and do, for he knew far 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. But his mission was not for the Arabs alone, it was for all mankind. He called upon all men, Jews, Christians, and heathen, to acknowledge and obey him.

He believed that Jesus had predicted his coming,<sup>9</sup> 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, and he warmly rejected the claims which Christians made for Jesus. He called himself the Seal of the Prophets, implying that he was the greatest and the last of the prophetic line.

The reforms which Muhammad was able to effect in Arabia were no doubt great, but were by no means so far-reaching as they are sometimes represented. He preached against idolatry, but ended by incorporating into his system the worship of the Black Stone in Mecca. He forbade his followers to take more than four wives, but himself (according to the Muslim historians) married nine wives and five concubines. He put a stop to the burying alive of girl babies, but he brought to his house Ayesha, his favourite wife, when she was nine years of age and he fifty-three. He slaughtered his enemies, and divided their wives and children and property among his followers. No wonder that he was commanded by Allāh to ask pardon for his sins (*Koran*, Sura 47:21)! With such an example before them it is not surprising that so many of the followers of Muhammad were and are like their prophet. Granted that the standards of Islām may have been somewhat higher than those of pre-Islāmic paganism in Arabia, they were in every respect far inferior to those of Christianity. If the reader wishes to corroborate these statements he is referred to the *Koran* and the traditions of Islām.



Muhammad made no definite provision as to his successor which all of his followers could agree upon. On his death, in A. D. 632, the stronger party among the believers choose Abu Bakr as Caliph (successor), and he ruled the Church-State of Islām in Muhammad's place. Abu Bakr was succeeded in turn by 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī, who were all chosen in like manner. To the democratic Arabs it seemed altogether proper that their chief should be thus appointed. 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, and in the name of Allāh overthrew the forces of Persia and Byzantium, and conquered Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Iranian Plateau for Islām.

However, there soon grew up a party in Islām whose members held a theory of the Caliphate 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 have been thus chosen. As a Prophet must be appointed by God, so must his successor also be divinely appointed. This party came to be called "Shī'ites," or separatists. They held firmly to the principle that the successor of the Prophet, whom they called the Imām, or Supreme Pontiff of the Faith, "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 Imām, and in other cases by the preceding Imām . . . the Imām was none the less Imām though recognized only by a small

minority, and to recognize and yield allegiance to the rightful Imām was the supreme duty of the believer.”<sup>1</sup> The Shī'ites held that the first Imām, or vicegerent of the Prophet, was 'Alī, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law (Muhammad left no son), and after 'Alī his descendants. They asserted that Muhammad had publicly appointed him to succeed him, saying to all the people, “Let whoever owns me as his master own 'Alī [also] as his master.”<sup>2</sup> They therefore looked upon Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān as usurpers and as enemies of God and His chosen Imām. Thus the Muslim World was from early times divided between the Shī'ites and their opponents the Sunnites, and this division remains to the present day. Though the Shī'ites were always in the minority, and were often divided among themselves as to who was the rightful Imām of the age, they showed the most passionate devotion to their opinions, and much Muslim blood was shed over this question of the Succession.

The Persians were especially susceptible to Shī'ite influences. They despised the Arabs by whom they had been conquered, and in espousing the cause of 'Alī and his family they found an opportunity for expressing their national spirit and maintaining something of their independence. The Persians, 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 conquest by the Arabs to give the Imāms 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 Shī'ites never succeeded in gaining temporal authority for any of their Imāms (except 'Alī), but they always longed to do so, chafing under the unrighteous rule of worldly Caliphs chosen by men.

The majority of Shī'ites are agreed in acknowledging twelve Imāms in the line of 'Alī. They say that all of them suffered violent deaths at the hands of their enemies except the twelfth, Muhammad son of Hasan al-'Askarī, the "Lord of the Age," who as a child disappeared from the view of men in A. H. 260 (= A. D. 873), but is still alive, and will again appear on earth. "For in every age there must be an Imām immune to sin." For some seventy years after his disappearance, the Twelfth Imām communicated his will to men through four *Bābs* ("Gates"), who in succession acted as the channels of grace to mankind. When the fourth Bāb died no one succeeded him, and from that time on Shī'ites were cut off from direct communication with the "Lord of the Age," and could only long for his return. This they have done for the past thousand years. "O Allāh, hasten his joy, and cause us to behold his victory, and make us his helpers and his followers!" prays a Shī'ite divine of the fourteenth century A. D.,<sup>3</sup> and pious Shī'ites make the same prayer today. They look for his appearing as earnestly as ever the Jews did for their promised Messiah.

<sup>1</sup> Books of Shī'ite popular theology give the most

minute description of the long expected coming of the "Mahdī," as the Hidden Imām is called.<sup>4</sup> Only God knows the time of his coming. But Shī'ites know everything else about it! His appearance will be preceded by wars, confusion, eclipses of sun and moon, the terrible increase of infidelity and corruption of morals. Men will cease saying the prayers, will lie, take interest and bribes, will build strong houses, and will take counsel with women. Women will enter business, will sing in public, and ride astride. Muslims will become the most abject of peoples, Anti-Christ (Dajjāl) will appear, riding on an ass, and will entice many people after him and destroy them. Then will appear the "Mahdī," the Lord of the Age. At once his 313 followers, who have also been hidden for a thousand years, will rush to his side from the ends of the earth. All true believers will join him with drawn swords, and win for him the rule of which he has been wrongfully deprived these many centuries. His armies will scour the whole earth, killing all who refuse to own allegiance to their Lord. All former prophets and Imāms will also return and aid him. He will bring to an end all oppression and will fill the earth with justice. Then only Shī'ites will be found on the earth, and the religion of mankind will at last become one. Following a long reign of the saints, all will die again, and then will come the Resurrection and the Last Judgment. Let not the reader imagine that these details are to the Shī'ites mere imagery! The swords which today may be seen hanging in many shops in Persia in readiness for the coming of the "Lord of

the Age" prove how real these hopes are to many of the people, and how central a place in their expectations is occupied by the conquest of unbelievers and the establishment of an earthly kingdom.

Among the Shī'ites there have been many sects whose members have not contented themselves with considering the Imāms as sinless and possessing miraculous powers, but have taught that they were also Emanations of the Deity and Manifestations of the Divine Essence. These sects (known as *ghulāt*) were all characterized by certain cardinal doctrines, chiefly Metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*), Incarnation (*hulūl*), and "Return" of individuals or types in successive cycles (*ri'at*). From time to time in Persian history we find individuals putting forward the claim that they were the "return" of some previous prophet or Imām, and were therefore Divine manifestations. One of these leaders who claimed to be God was Al-Muqanna', "the Veiled Prophet of Khorāsān," known to English readers through Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. He taught that the Divinity had been incarnated in all the prophets from Adam down, and had finally passed to him. He gathered about him a great number of people who worshipped him and fought for him, but he finally perished miserably with his followers in A. D. 779. A half-century later Bābak made the same claim, and kept Western Persia in turmoil for twenty years, during which time he is said to have killed upwards of a half a million people. At last he, too, was captured and executed (A. D. 838). Again in A. D. 922 al-Hallāj was put to death in a horrible manner for saying, "I am

the Real " (*i. e.*, God). Al-Hallāj is said to have been "an ignorant, pushing, headstrong fellow, over-bold against authorities, meddling in high matters, eager to subvert governments, claiming divinity among his disciples, preaching the doctrine of Incarnation—claiming that the Deity had become incarnate in him, and that he was God." "To his disciples he would say, to one, 'Thou art Noah;' to another, 'Thou art Moses;' to another, 'Thou art Muhammad;' adding, 'I have caused their spirits to return to your bodies.'"<sup>5</sup> As Dr. Browne remarks, "these doctrines [of Incarnation, Return, etc.] appear to be endemic in Persia, and always ready to become epidemic under a suitable stimulus."<sup>6</sup>

One of the latest of these ultra-Shī'ite sects to appear in Persia is that of the Shaykhīs,<sup>7</sup> or followers of Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'i (died A. D. 1826). The chief doctrines of this sect were: (1) That 'Alī and the eleven Imāms who followed him were divine beings; (2) that there must always exist among men some person who is in direct supernatural communication with the Hidden Imām and acts as the channel of grace between him and his Shī'ites; (3) that there is no bodily Resurrection. Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'i was during his lifetime considered by his disciples to be the "Channel of Grace" between believers and the Hidden Imām, as was also his successor Sayyid Kāzīm of Rasht. Both of these men were sometimes called by the title "Bāb" (Gate) by which the first four intermediaries spoken of above had been known. These Shaykhī teachers led their disciples to expect the ap-

pearance of the Hidden Imām himself in the near future. Some traditions said that he would return at the end of a thousand years, and many pious Shī'ites had grown eager with expectation, for the time was drawing nigh.

When Sayyid Kāzim died, his disciples were in doubt for some time as to whom they should turn for guidance. Soon two rival claimants for the leadership appeared, and the Shaykhī brotherhood was torn in two. One faction followed Hājji Karīm Khān of Kirmān and continued to go by the name "Shaykhī." The other faction (which was the stronger) followed Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad of Shīrāz. The latter adopted the title "Bāb," and his followers became known as "Bābīs."<sup>8</sup> We are now ready to proceed with the story of Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad the Bāb and the remarkable movement of which he was the central figure.

## II

### THE APPEARANCE OF THE BĀB

**M**ĪRZĀ 'ALĪ MUHAMMAD, who is better known to the world as the Bāb,<sup>1</sup> was born in Shīrāz, Persia, on October 9, 1820. He was a Sayyid, that is, a descendant of Muhammad the Prophet of Islām. His father, who was a cloth merchant of Shīrāz, died when he was quite young, and he was left to the care of his uncle who raised him. As a child he is said to have been quiet and modest, and as he grew older he became studious and pious. At the age of seventeen he moved to Bushire on the Persian Gulf, where he earned his living by trade, and spent his spare time in pursuing his studies. Five years later his deep interest in religion led him to abandon his commercial pursuits and undertake a pilgrimage to the shrines of the Imāms in Mesopotamia, and there he remained about a year. While in Karbalā he became acquainted with Hājji Sayyid Kāzim of Rasht, who, as the head of the Shaykhī movement, was giving lectures there. Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad attended these lectures and was profoundly influenced by them, and he, in turn, by his gentleness and devotion, won the affection and esteem of both his teacher and his fellow students.

It is not possible for us to trace in detail the change



that took place in Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad's mind during these years. He had become disgusted by what he had seen of Islām as it was then practised. The lectures of Hājji Sayyid Kāzim had centred his attention upon the Imāms, especially the Hidden Imām, who would surely come soon to right the wrongs of the world. Long meditation and much prayer had brought to him the conviction that he himself was to become the "Channel of Grace" between the Imām and men. Accordingly, when Hājji Sayyid Kāzim died, and his followers were still in doubt as to whom they should look for guidance, Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad came boldly forward and proclaimed himself to be the Bāb, or "Gate," to the knowledge of the Hidden Imām. This declaration was made in Shīrāz on May 23, 1844, when Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad was only twenty-four years of age. As was mentioned previously, this claim was disputed by another of the Shaykhīs, Hājji Karīm Khān of Kirmān, who claimed for himself the succession to the leadership of the Shaykhī movement. Thus the Shaykhīs were divided, some following Hājji Karīm Khān and continuing to be known as "Shaykhīs," and the majority acknowledging Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad as their leader and becoming known as "Bābīs." The most bitter hatred arose between these two parties, which, though the Shaykhīs are now but few in number, has continued to the present day.

The first to hear and attest the claim of Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad was Mullā Husayn of Bushrawayh. Mullā Husayn was a man of learning and influence and great force of character. He had been one of the

followers of Hājji Sayyid Kāzim, and had become acquainted with Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad in Karbalā. Five months after the death of his master he came to Shīrāz seeking for the God-appointed "Channel of Grace." Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad, by answering numerous questions about difficult points of theology, convinced him that he was the possessor of super-human knowledge, and after several days of doubt and indecision, Mullā Husayn enthusiastically owned him as the new Bāb and from him received the title of "Bābu'l-Bāb" ("the Gate of the Bāb"). Soon several other eminent men believed, among them Mullā Muhammad 'Alī of Bārfurūsh, who, it is said, "had no sooner seen and conversed with the Bāb than, because of the purity of his heart, he at once believed without seeking further sign or proof. . . . So, because he recognized the Proof [the Bāb] by its very nature he received the title of Janāb-i-Quddūs ("His Excellency the Holy"). These new disciples immediately went forth to other cities and began to proclaim with the greatest boldness and zeal the advent of the Bāb. And although Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad had not yet openly claimed to be anything more than the "Gate" to the Hidden Imām, it is clear that his disciples considered him to be no less than the long-expected Mahdī (the Hidden Imām) himself. They read to the people the writings which the Bāb had composed and pointed to them as a proof of his Divine Mission. Thus a great stir began to be made all over Persia, some people showing their readiness to believe, and others treating the Bāb's agents with great disrespect. The Bāb him-

self then set out for Mecca, where, according to one tradition, the Mahdī would make his appearance, and there proclaimed himself to some of the pilgrims. When the Bāb reached Bushire on his way home he sent one of his zealous disciples ahead to Shīrāz, commanding him to insert his name in the Muslim call to prayer. This invocation incensed the people, and several of the Bābīs who were responsible for it were seized and severely beaten by the governor's orders, and were then expelled from the city. Horsemen were also sent to Bushire to arrest the Bāb and bring him to Shīrāz. After his arrival there he was examined by the governor, who, fearing further trouble, kept him imprisoned for about six months. To understand the attitude of the Persian officials it is necessary to remember that the putting forward of a claim to be the Mahdī has always in the history of Islām been connected with an uprising against the State. As was pointed out previously, the first thing the Mahdī was expected to do after his appearance was to fight. In arresting the Bāb the authorities were therefore only doing their duty in trying to forestall a probable insurrection. But in this effort they were unsuccessful. The fire had already been kindled, and was spreading rapidly on all sides. The people had long been in expectation. Now, just one thousand years after his accession to the Imāmate, the cry was raised that the Twelfth Imām had again appeared.<sup>2</sup> Bold and eloquent preachers were going all over Persia proclaiming his advent, and multitudes were on the point of believing on him. The Government did well to be alarmed.

In the early summer of A. D. 1846 a plague broke out in Shīrāz, and during the confusion caused by this the Bāb managed to escape, and made his way to Isfahān. There he was received by Minūchihr Khān, the Georgian governor of the city, who showed him great kindness and afforded him hospitality and protection for nearly a year. It is probable that Minūchihr Khān hoped that some uprising would occur which would overturn the Government, for he is said to have offered the Bāb a strong army with which to march against the Shāh, if he desired to do so.<sup>8</sup> This offer was declined, for as far as we know the Bāb had no desire to fight. However, when his followers later took up the sword, the Bāb never forbade or rebuked them, and a conquest of the world by the Bābī armies certainly formed a part of his final program. While in Isfahān the Bāb met and talked with some of the leading ecclesiastics of the city. When asked by what sign or miracle he could establish the truth of his claim, he answered, "By verses, for without pause of pen I can, in the space of six 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 his hearers admitted that such power must be of God, being beyond the capacity of man.

About this time Mullā Husayn of Bushrawayh, the Bāb's most zealous missionary, was in Teherān busily engaged in preaching the good news of the appearing of the "Lord of the Age" and inviting men to believe on him. He made a considerable stir in the Capital, and even tried to influence the King, Muhammad Shāh, to

accept the new teaching. The Shāh and his prime minister, Hājji Mīrzā Āqāsī, were both interested in theological questions, and cherished, moreover, a bitter hatred towards the mullās of Islām. They were therefore at first inclined to favour the new movement, and wished to bring the Bāb to Teherān to debate with the mullās, hoping that he might humiliate them. But fear lest his coming might stir up the people and involve the State in serious danger prevented them from carrying out this plan. For according to Shī'ite belief, the Shāh holds his throne pending the appearance of the "Lord of the Age." If the Bāb were truly what his followers proclaimed him to be, then it would be incumbent upon the Shāh to descend from his throne and do homage to him as his Lord. This would entail political consequences which the Government was not yet prepared to accept! Accordingly, Mullā Husayn was ordered to leave Teherān.

In the early part of A. D. 1847 Minūchihr Khān, the Governor of Isfahān, died, and his successor, wishing to show his loyalty to the Government, sent the Bāb, under the care of an escort of armed horsemen, to Teherān. At Kāshān a respectable merchant by the name of Mīrzā Jānī bribed the guards to allow the Bāb to stop in his house for two days. Mīrzā Jānī later wrote the earliest and best history of the Bābī Movement, and in A. D. 1852 died as a martyr to the Bābī Cause. At a village near Teherān a number of believers came to meet the Bāb, one of them being Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī of Nūr in Māzanderān, later known as Bahā'u'llāh. But the Shāh did not allow the Bāb

to enter the Capital. Instead, he sent him off to Mākū, a strong fortress on the northwest frontier of Persia, hoping that if he were kept out of sight the agitation which was being carried on in his name would die down of itself.

The Bāb remained in Mākū for six months, and was then transferred to Chihriq, near Lake Urumiah, where he was imprisoned till his death, in A. D. 1850. He conducted himself with such mildness and patience during the long horseback journey across Persia, and while in prison, that he won the hearts of more than one of his guards. The Bābī historian is careful to explain that the Bāb of his own free will suffered himself to be thus treated, for he was "fully able to effect his escape had he so pleased." "Such an one is able to do what he wills, for his will is identified with God's will."<sup>4</sup> At Mākū the prisoner was treated kindly, and was allowed to communicate to a certain extent with his friends, but at Chihriq his confinement was much more rigorous. Soon after reaching Chihriq he openly declared himself to be the "Qā'im," another title by which the Mahdī, or Hidden Imām, is known. He spent his time during the three years of imprisonment in writing the books which were to guide his followers after he was taken away from them. The Bāb was a prolific writer. A list of more than twenty-five volumes composed by him is given by Subh-i-Azal,<sup>4a</sup> and there were other books which were not included. The mystical nature of these writings and the impractical character of many of the laws contained in them was no doubt due in part to the fact that they were

composed while their author was in prison with little besides his own thoughts to keep him company.

Shortly after his arrival at Chihriq the Bāb was summoned to Tabriz by the Crown Prince Nāsiru'd-Dīn Mīrzā, who was then Governor of Āzarbaijān, that he might be examined as to his claims. The accounts we have of this trial are contradictory, the Bābī historians representing the Bāb in the most favourable and the Musulmāns in the most unfavourable light possible. What seems authentic is that when the Bāb was asked whether the writings which were being circulated in his name were his he admitted that they were. When asked what he meant by the title "Bāb" which he had assumed for himself, he replied that he meant the same as was meant in the tradition attributed to Muhammad, "I am the City of Knowledge, and 'Alī is its Gate (Bāb)." He also told his examiners that he was the Mahdī whom they had been expecting for a thousand years. The clergy and the Crown Prince asked him many foolish questions in order to expose his ignorance, and did everything possible to humiliate him. When they had made an end of their sport the assembly broke up.

It seems that what prevented the judges from pronouncing a decision was their uncertainty as to whether the Bāb was sane or not. Accordingly, a commission of three doctors was appointed to examine him and make a report. One of the members of this commission, Dr. Cormick, an English physician long resident in Tabriz, has left us a brief account of his interview with the Bāb. He says: ". . . He was loath 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 . . . our report to the Shāh at that time was of a nature to spare his life [that is, the doctors were inclined to believe that his mind was unbalanced] . . . On our report he merely got the bastinado. . . . 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. . . . In fact, his whole look and deportment went far to dispose one in his favour. . . . 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.”<sup>5</sup> The fact that the Bāb was beaten is also mentioned by the Bābī historian.<sup>6</sup> The attendants of the Crown Prince are said to have refused to inflict this punishment, whereupon the Shaykhu’l-Islām took the poor prisoner to his house and had his own servants beat him.

We must here mention three documents<sup>7</sup> which came into Dr. Browne’s possession in A. D. 1912. The first is a letter written by the uncle of the Crown Prince to Muhammad Shāh, describing the trial of the Bāb at which he had been present. Among other things he says: “When the discussion was concluded, His Reverence the Shaykhu’l-Islām was summoned, who had the Bāb 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."

The second document, unsigned and undated, is, to quote Dr. Browne, "apparently in the Bāb'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,<sup>10</sup> or whether it is the recantation referred to in the last paragraph of the preceding document or another." I will quote several sentences from this letter: "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. . . . Therefore it is thus hoped from the clemency of His Imperial Majesty and of Your Excellency that they will exalt the head of him who continually prays for them by the favours and graces of the clement and compassionate court. Farewell."

The third document is addressed to the Bāb, and contains the *fatwā*, or ecclesiastical sentence, of the Muhammadan doctors, by two of whom it is formally sealed. The second seal probably belongs to the Shaykhu'l-Islām who caused the Bāb to be beaten. The letter reads as follows:

“Sayyid ‘Alī Muhammad-i-Shīrāzī:

“In the Imperial Banquet-hall and August Assembly of His Highness the Crown Prince of the undeclining 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 apostacy and justified thy death. The repentance of an incorrigible apostate is not accepted,<sup>8</sup> 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-Qāsim al-Hasanī al-Husaynī

‘Alī Asghar al-Hasanī al-Husaynī

From these documents it seems to be fully established that the Bāb did recant and repent, and that his repentance was not accepted by the Muslim clergy. We know that the Bāb later commanded his disciples to deny him in order to save their lives,<sup>9</sup> and he may have felt that he also was justified in denying his claims for the same purpose. Perhaps the most charitable judgment that we can pass upon him is to agree with those who believed that his mind was affected. After this ordeal in Tabrīz was over the Bāb was sent back to Chihriq, where he continued to write books and epistles, setting forth his claims to be a new Manifestation of God, and laying down laws for the regulation of his Church-State.

### III

#### BĀBĪ INSURRECTIONS

**W**HILE the Bāb was in prison, engaged with his claims and his writings, his fiery missionaries were busy travelling about Persia calling upon the Shī'ites to accept him as their long-expected Mahdī. Mullā Husayn of Bushrawayh went eastward to the province of Khurāsān, meeting everywhere with great success, especially in Nishāpūr, where several of the leading ecclesiastics believed on the Bāb, and it seemed for a time as though the whole city might follow their example. But when he reached Meshed, the shrine city of the Imām Rezā,<sup>2</sup> one of the most fanatical cities of Persia, the mullās (Muslim clergy) rose against him and had him arrested. He managed to escape, however, and seeing that he was in peril he gathered a number of his converts about him, and then proceeded westward. Others joined him along the way, and his band became quite formidable. Soon a fight occurred with the Musulmāns in which the Bābīs were worsted, and they fell back on Shāhrūd. There they tried to force the chief mullā to believe, and another fight was just about to break out when word arrived that the King, Muhammad Shāh, had died (Oct. 5, 1848).

The death of the Shāh was a most fortunate event

for Mullā Husayn and his followers, for during the confusion which ensued he was able to withdraw from Shāhrūd and start northward toward the province of Māzanderān. At a place called Badasht the Bābīs halted for a time. There they were joined by other notable Bābī leaders, such as Mullā Muhammad 'Alī of Bārfurūsh, Qurratu'l-'Ayn, Mīrzā Yahyā [Subh-i-Azal], and his half-brother Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī [Bahā'u'llāh], the first three of whom were among the "Letters of the Living." Qurratu'l-'Ayn was a woman, the only woman included among the "Letters." She was learned and eloquent, and on becoming a follower of the Bāb (whom she had never seen) she gave herself unreservedly to the advancement of his cause. She is said to have discarded the veil and preached openly in the city of Qazvīn, to the great scandal of her husband and her uncle, who were both mullās. Her uncle thereupon cursed the Bāb publicly, and was in consequence of this act murdered shortly afterward in the mosque by some Bābīs. Qurratu'l-'Ayn then fled from Qazvīn to Teherān, and thence to Badasht. Her freedom in travelling about the country with the Bābī chiefs scandalized many people, and there was undoubtedly ground for criticism of her conduct. The Bābīs considered this period a time of freedom—they had been released from the restrictions of Islām, and the new laws of the Bāb had not yet been fully revealed, and as most of them considered themselves to be a "return" of prophets and Imāms of the past, they thought themselves above all law and custom. The Bābī historian clearly states that the Bāb is mas-

ter of all men and all women, and can interchange husbands and wives at will, and he indicates that the Bāb himself had united Qurratu'l-'Ayn with Mullā Muhammad 'Alī of Bārfurūsh (known as Hazrat-i-Quddūs). "And this is assuredly sanctioned by the Holy Law," he continues, "for our Master hath certainly as much authority as every master hath over his slaves and handmaidens."<sup>3</sup> But it shocked even the loose-living Muslims for a married woman to be given to another husband without first being divorced.

At Badasht a conference of the Bābī chiefs was held. According to Gobineau, Qurratu'l-'Ayn delivered a wonderfully impressive address which moved her hearers to tears. Many other people besides the Bābīs crowded about, and on hearing her appeal joined the Bābī company. However, things were said and done at Badasht which caused even some of the Bābīs to stumble, and they took their departure.<sup>22</sup> The whole company seemed to have been intoxicated by the new teachings which they had adopted. It was here that Mullā Muhammad 'Alī adopted the title "Quddūs" (The Holy), and claimed to be the return of the Prophet Muhammad. He claimed also to be Christ. Here, too, it is said, Qurratu'l-'Ayn gave the title "Bahā" (splendour) to Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī [Bahā'u'llāh].<sup>4</sup> The conduct of the Bābīs soon brought down upon them the wrath of the villagers, and on being attacked they dispersed—to meet again in Māzanderān.

The Bābīs moved on Māzanderān with the full intention of getting control of that province and setting

up there their "Reign of the Saints." The time was propitious, for the new King, Nāsiru'd-Dīn Shāh, had not yet ascended the throne, and there was no one prepared to oppose their designs. More than three hundred strong, they entered Bārfurūsh armed, and thus provoking strife they were soon attacked by the Muslims, and several of them were killed. Then the Bābīs began to fight. Mullā Husayn, according to the Bābī historian, "notwithstanding his slender and fragile frame and trembling hand," attacked the man who had killed the first Bābī and "sliced him in two like a fresh cucumber." Six other Muslims also were killed. "One child was killed accidentally with its father, a dervish, whom they [the Bābīs] slew because he purposely gave them a misleading answer to a question which they had put to him as to their road."<sup>6</sup> After a pitched battle of several days duration in Bārfurūsh, the Bābīs were allowed to retire.

After another skirmish in which they came off victorious, the Bābī forces moved to a shrine in the forest called Shaykh Tabarsī. Here they strongly entrenched themselves, hoping to make this position the base from which to conquer Māzanderān. Many people had now joined them, and their numbers are said by Gobineau to have reached two thousand.<sup>7</sup> They also carried on an active campaign of preaching from their fort, telling the people that the Bāb was shortly going to become master of the whole world, and bidding them accept him at once. Crowds assembled about the fort, and, stirred by the hope of conquering the world, united with the Bābīs. Within

the fort they divided the world up among themselves, apportioning to various ones the wealth of India, China, and Europe! A small force sent against them was defeated in a night attack and one hundred and thirty of the enemy were killed. A village also was sacked by the Bābīs, men, women and children being massacred. Then a large force under the command of Prince Mahdī-Qulī Mīrzā was sent by the new Prime Minister with strict orders to destroy the Bābīs. The Prince wrote a letter to Hazrat-i-Quddūs, asking him what he was fighting for. "We," replied the Bābī leader, "are the rightful rulers, and the world is set under our signet-ring. . . . Know that Nāsiru'd-Dīn Shāh is no true King, and that such as support him shall be tormented in hell-fire."<sup>6</sup> The Bābīs looked upon Hazrat-i-Quddūs as God, and prostrated themselves in his presence. Mullā Husayn told his principal officers that they were the "return" of various Imāms, and assured them that if they were killed they would return again to earth in forty days. The Bāb also wrote them frequent letters of encouragement. The Bābī troops finally reached such a pitch of enthusiasm that they affirmed that the Bāb had predicted that after their conquest of Māzanderān they would march on Teherān, capture it, and slay ten thousand Muslims.<sup>6</sup> To these zealots the establishment upon earth of the Bābī Kingdom seemed just at hand.

The royal forces under the command of the Prince had now drawn near the fort. But before they could attack, the Bābī leaders, choosing a time when the

enemy were off their guard because of a severe snow-storm, with three hundred picked men, fell upon them with such fury that the whole army was dispersed, and several princes and many of the troops were killed. It was a brilliant stroke, especially as the Bābīs lost but three men. At length the Bābīs resolved on a counter attack at night. The plan of battle in such night attacks was this:<sup>11</sup> Mullā 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 centre of the hostile army with cries of ' Yā Sāhibu'z-Zamān! ' ( ' O Lord of the Age! ' ). Then, with swords not worth more than five krans<sup>9</sup> which they had wrought for themselves within the castle, they would cut down men whose gear had cost a thousand tomans." <sup>10</sup> This time also their attack met with complete success, and the royal army was again routed. But the Bābīs suffered an irreparable loss, for Mullā Husayn, the first to believe on the Bāb, and the strongest of the Bābī leaders, was mortally wounded just in the hour of victory, and with difficulty succeeded in reaching the fort. Before his death he commanded his officers to be firm in their faith, promising them that he would return to earth again in fourteen days. He bade his intimate friends bury him secretly, fearing no doubt that the Muslims might find and mutilate his body. After his death his brother, a youth of eighteen, succeeded to his title and command.



The loss of Mullā Husayn was the beginning of the end for the defenders of Shaykh Tabarsī. Not only was the leading spirit of the Bābī army gone, but provisions began to run low, and the garrison were reduced to eating horse-flesh and grass. Some of the Bābīs deserted to the enemy, who, on hearing of the famine within the fort, began to attack more vigorously. The royal troops had two cannons with which they battered down the Bābī defences and set fire to all the sheds and wooden structures within the walls, forcing the besieged to dig tunnels for themselves in which to hide. But in spite of their reduced strength the Bābīs fought furiously to the last, realizing that they had little hope for mercy from enemies whom they had defied for six months. Finally a new commander was sent by the Shāh with fresh orders to destroy the Bābīs immediately. The garrison had nothing to eat whatever, and the royal troops were trying to scale the walls of their fort. 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." <sup>12</sup>

The commander of the royal troops then sent a message to the Bābīs, asking on what terms they would surrender. Hazrat-i-Quddūs replied that they would stop fighting if guaranteed their lives and permission to leave Māzanderān. Thereupon the officers of the

royal army swore on the *Koran* to allow them to pass safely out of the province. Then two hundred and thirty Bābīs, the sole survivors of the two thousand or more who had manned the fort at first, dragged themselves out and walked to the royal camp. They were there given food to eat. When Hazrat-i-Quddūs was questioned as to why he had raised this insurrection, he laid the blame on Mullā Husayn, and is said by Mīrzā Jānī even to have cursed Mullā Husayn.<sup>18</sup> Next day the Bābīs were commanded to lay down their arms. They were very reluctant to do so, fearing treachery. Their fears were well grounded, for no sooner had they disarmed than the enemy fired upon them and massacred them to a man. Their bodies were left to the wild beasts, and the royalist troops, overjoyed by their victory, moved off to Bār-furūsh, taking Hazrat-i-Quddūs and several other chiefs with them. There in his native town Hazrat-i-Quddūs was executed by the hand of one of the leading clergy, and his body was cut in small pieces and cast to the winds. This took place in May, 1849. Thus ended the first and most brilliant attempt of the Bābīs to found their World Kingdom.

Some time before the fall of Shaykh Tabarsī, Hazrat-i-Quddūs demanded assistance. Among those who tried to join him were Subh-i-Azal and his brother Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī [Bahā'u'llāh] and Mīrzā Jānī the historian, but they were arrested by the authorities before they reached the Bābī fort. After being reviled and shamefully treated by the populace they managed to secure their freedom by giving bribes to their cap-

tors. A little later, according to Mīrzā Jānī, Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī [Bahā'u'llāh] "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 . . . considered it expedient to send him to the capital."<sup>14</sup> How different the later history of the Bābī movement would have been had these three men been able to reach Shaykh Tabarsī, as they wished to do, and perished with Mullā Husayn of Bushrayawh and Hazrat-i-Quddūs and the rest of the garrison!

Soon after this defeat another serious Bābī insurrection took place in the city of Zanjān, which is situated between Teherān and Tabrīz. The moving spirit in this uprising was Mullā Muhammad 'Alī of Zanjān, "a turbulent spirit," who, on receiving a letter from the Bāb while he was still in Shīrāz, had immediately recognized him as the promised Mahdī, and had proclaimed him so effectively in his mosque in Zanjān that three thousand people immediately believed. The Bābī community soon became so strong and bold that the Government began to fear for the consequences. For some time nothing happened, but at last one of the Bābīs drew a knife on a Musulmān; this led to blows, and soon the whole city was in a turmoil. The Bābīs, drawing their swords and shouting, "O Lord of the Age!," assembled in the centre of the city, where they built strong defences and prepared to stand a siege. The Musulmāns attacked them,<sup>15</sup> but were unable to dislodge them. The Shāh sent up regiment

after regiment of royal troops till at last thirty thousand men are said to have been assembled around Zanjān. But the Bābīs defended themselves with the same frenzied courage which had characterized the garrison of Shaykh Tabarsī. 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. The Bābīs were as savage as the Musulmāns, torturing their prisoners, and cutting off the heads of their slain enemies and sticking them upon spears on the roofs of their defences as a warning to others. The fighting dragged on for months, and the garrison was not finally reduced till the latter part of the year A. D. 1850. As at Shaykh Tabarsī, the besiegers finally promised the Bābīs their lives if they would surrender, but put them all to the sword as soon as they got them in their power.

Sometime during the year A. D. 1850<sup>16</sup> the Bābīs meditated an insurrection in Teherān itself. One of them revealed the plot, and the Government, terrified by the thought of what might occur if the Bābīs actually rose in arms, frantically arrested all the members of the sect that could be discovered. Thirty-eight in all were captured, and were offered their release provided they would renounce the Bāb. 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 Lord. One of these confessors was the Bāb's own uncle, Hājji Mīrzā Sayyid 'Alī. When led out to be killed, the martyrs were urged to deny their faith and 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.

During the same year serious Bābī uprisings, which we need not describe in detail, occurred at Yazd and Nīrīz. Suffice it to say that the Shāh and his Prime Minister were deeply concerned over the condition of their kingdom, for it looked as though the fire which had broken out so fiercely in Māzanderān and other places, and had been extinguished with such difficulty, might blaze forth in Teherān also and completely destroy the State.

Hence, while the war was still raging in Zanjān, it was decided that the Bāb himself must be gotten rid of, in the hope that when he was gone his followers would cease to fight. Gobineau makes it very clear that it was not for his religious views that the Bāb was put to death, for the Persian Government has never taken any interest in suppressing heretics and free-thinkers. Rather the Bāb was sentenced to die because it seemed to the authorities that his death was necessary for the good of the State. Although the Bāb had not definitely incited his followers to fight, and hence could not be held personally responsible for what they did, still it had been his claims to be the Mahdī which had caused the uprisings in Māzanderān and Zanjān, and had resulted in the death of thousands of the Shāh's subjects. It was not strange, therefore, that the Gov-

ernment should have desired to rid itself of the man who had occasioned the insurrections.

Accordingly, orders were issued from Teherān for the Bāb to be brought from his prison at Chihriq to Tabriz and there publicly executed. On reaching Tabriz he was given a form of trial by the clergy. But his fate had already been decided upon, and the purpose of the authorities was only to humiliate him as much as possible in order to dispel the halo which, in the eyes of many people, had gathered about his head. He was therefore dragged about the city and treated most shamefully by the mob, after which he was locked up in prison with several of his disciples for three days.

On the night before he was to be executed the Bāb sat talking with his disciples. "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 friends all hesitated, however, except one, Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī, 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 Bāb 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."<sup>17</sup> All agreed to do so, except Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī, who begged to be allowed to die with his master, and at last the Bāb acquiesced. The next day the family and wife and little children of this

devoted disciple came and besought him to recant, but he refused to do so. The other Bābīs recanted and were released.<sup>23</sup>

On July 8, 1850, the Bāb and Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī were led out to execution. After being dragged through the streets and subjected to every humiliation they were taken to the barracks in the citadel. In the presence of a great crowd Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī was first suspended by ropes from the parapet, and his body was riddled by a volley of bullets from the soldiers detailed for the execution. Then a volley was fired at the Bāb himself, who was similarly suspended. When the smoke rolled away, "a cry of mingled exultation and terror arose from the spectators,—for the Bāb 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."<sup>18</sup> Had the Bāb maintained his presence of mind, and rushed out among the spectators, proclaiming his escape to be a miracle, the crowd would undoubtedly have hailed him as their Mahdī, and no one would have dared to lay hands on him. But, dazed by the terrible experiences he had just passed through, he fled and hid himself 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 Bābīs had had time to attempt a rescue, the body of the young prophet of Shīrāz was riddled with bullets." <sup>18</sup>

The two corpses were then dragged outside the city walls to be devoured by dogs and jackals. But, according to the Bābī account, Hājji Sulaymān Khān, a disciple of the Bāb, bribed the sentinels and recovered the bodies, and after wrapping them in white silk put them in a box and sent them to Teherān to Subh-i-Azal, whom the Bāb had appointed as his successor.<sup>19</sup> Subh-i-Azal buried the bodies with his own hands in a spot which was kept secret for many years. Here they remained until after the split occurred between Subh-i-Azal and his brother Bahā, when the Bahā'īs got possession of the precious relics,<sup>20</sup> and, according to their account, brought them to Haifa.<sup>21</sup> There the tomb of the Bāb may be seen today by the traveller, alongside of that of 'Abdu'l-Bahā.



(according to Muslim belief) abrogated the Gospels. The *Bayān* has no equal—it is the essence of science and philosophy. If all creatures on earth should unite they could not produce the like of it. The *Bayān* was to have consisted of nineteen main divisions (Wāhids), each of which was to contain nineteen subdivisions (Bābs), but the Bāb wrote only eleven “Wāhids,” leaving the rest to be composed by his successor Subh-i-Azal.<sup>8</sup>

Strange as it may seem to us, it was more the teachings of the Bāb than his personality that attracted people to him, for thousands of those who fought and died for the Bābī cause had never seen their master. What, then, were the doctrines that called forth such whole-hearted and enthusiastic response from multitudes in every part of Persia? To a Western mind there is certainly nothing very inspiring in the Bāb's theology, for it is only a revived and reformed Gnosticism. It is well known to students of Persian philosophy that much of the teaching of the early Gnostics and Neo-Platonists was carried over into Islām, and even today occupies a central place in the philosophy of the Sūfis and the Hukamā. The Bāb bases his system of doctrine upon these ancient Gnostic conceptions.

According to the Bāb's teaching, God, while comprehending all things, is Himself incomprehensible. Since the Divine Essence cannot be known, “knowledge of God” means “knowledge of the Manifestation of God.” God's Will (*Mashiyyat*), which is an emanation from the Divine Essence, and by which all things were created, manifests itself from time to time

in prophets who appear among men. This "Will" is called the Nuqta, or "Point," of each prophetic Cycle. Thus Adam, who was supposed by the Bāb to have lived twelve thousand two hundred and ten years before him, was the "Point" of the first cycle of which we know (there were other worlds before Adam). Later Abraham and Moses<sup>3</sup> and Jesus and Muhammad appeared, each one being the "Point" of his particular Manifestation. These Manifestations are all one, as the sun of yesterday is one with the sun of today. The earlier Manifestations all exist for the later ones, and each one is more perfect than the one which preceded it. The Bāb compares the Manifestations to a boy who as Adam was a mere embryo, as Jesus was ten years old, as Muhammad was eleven, and as the Bāb was twelve. Thus we see that the Bāb believed that the Manifestations appeared about every thousand years (a thousand years representing one year in the life of the boy), and that he considered himself not only a Manifestation; but *the greatest Manifestation* which had yet appeared. As Dr. Browne says,<sup>2</sup> "The theory now advanced by the Bahā'īs that the Bāb considered himself as a mere herald or forerunner of the Dispensation which Bahā'u'llāh was shortly to establish, and was to him what John the Baptist was to Jesus Christ, is . . . devoid of historic foundation. In his own eyes, as in the eyes of his followers, Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad inaugurated a new Prophetic Cycle, and brought a new Revelation, the *Bayān*, which abrogated the *Qur'ān* [*Koran*], as the *Qur'ān* had abrogated the Gospels,

and the Gospels the Pentateuch. It is true that the Bāb emphatically and repeatedly declares that he is not the last Manifestation of the Universal or Prophetic Spirit, and that his Revelation is not final, but that he will be followed by another and greater Manifestation, whom he calls 'Him whom God shall manifest.' " He urges his followers to accept this new Manifestation when it comes, and not be like the Jews who rejected Jesus and the Christians who rejected Muhammad and the Muslims who rejected him. But he thought of himself as a "forerunner" of the next Manifestation only as Jesus was the forerunner of Muhammad, and Muhammad of the Bāb. He assumed that his dispensation would last a long time, for in the *Bayān* he gave full directions for the conduct of the Bābī State, and anticipated the time when Persia should have adopted Bābism as the national religion. He likens "Him whom God shall manifest" to a boy fourteen years of age, thus indicating that he might not come for two thousand more years (see above). Moreover, the time of his coming is represented in the *Bayān* by the words *Ghiyāth* and *Mustaghāth*, the numerical values of the letters of which are 1511 and 2001 respectively. Thus we read, "If He shall appear in the number of *Ghiyāth* and all shall enter in, not one shall remain in the Fire [Hell]. If He tarry until [the number of] *Mustaghāth*, all shall enter in, not one shall remain in the Fire, but all shall be transformed into His Light" (Persian *Bayān*, II, 17). The Bāb considered his own Revelation all-sufficient for the present age.

Thus we see that the Bāb believed himself to be not merely a Gate, or "Channel of Grace," to the Hidden Imām, nor even the Return of the Imām himself. The Bāb claimed rather to be the "Point" of the Manifestation of the Deity, and even spoke of himself as God. But it is important to note here that he did not claim to embody in himself alone the *whole* Manifestation. There were eighteen others who were with him integral parts of the Manifestation, all being equally Emanations of the Deity, and grouping themselves about him as "Point," or Centre, of the Theophany. With him they make up the number 19, which is the numerical value of the letters in the Arabic Word *Wāhid* (meaning "One," or "Unique," i. e., God). Since the number 19 expresses the Divine Nature, the Bāb taught that the universe must therefore be organized on the basis of this number, and that 19 is to be found in everything. Now the eighteen individuals who with the Point make up the "First Unity" were called "Letters of the Living." We do not know the names of all the "Letters" of the Bāb, but the first was Mullā Husayn of Bushrawayh, the second Mullā Muhammad 'Alī of Bārfurūsh, and the third Subh-i-Azal. The Bāb accepted all the acts and utterances of the "Letters of the Living" as though they had been his own. For instance, while he did not himself command his followers to draw the sword, he did not forbid the "Letters" when they did so, and accepted without a word the consequences of their acts.

In addition to being Divine Emanations, the "Let-

ters of the Living" were also believed to be the "return" of the prophets and Imāms of the past. Mullā Husayn of Bushrawayh, entitled "Bābu'l-Bāb" ("The Gate of the Bāb"), claimed to be the "return" of the Imām Husayn, the son of 'Alī. Mullā Muhammad 'Alī of Bārfurūsh, called Hazrat-i-Quddūs, claimed to be the "return" of Jesus and Muhammad and also of the Hidden Imām. He was for a while the "Point" of the Theophany. During this time Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad ceased to be the "Point" and became the "Gate" of Hazrat-i-Quddūs, and revealed no verses till after the death of Hazrat-i-Quddūs, when he became the "Point" once more. Qurratu'l-'Ayn was thought to be the "return" of Fātima the daughter of Muhammad and mother of the Imāms. Not only the "Letters" but all believers as well were considered identical with saints of the past, while outstanding unbelievers were thought to be the "return" of Pharaoh and other notorious enemies of the truth. We even read in Mīrzā Jānī's history that a dog which was howling one night was declared by a Bābī leader to be the "return" of a certain unbeliever who had recently died! It is difficult to determine exactly what is meant by "return" in such cases. It seems at times to come close to the doctrine of transmigration of souls, but in other instances implies an identity of situation and disposition rather than of soul. Thus when Hazrat-i-Quddūs was killed, his *Quddūsiyya* (Holiness) at once passed to Subh-i-Azal, who became his "return." In the same way the other Bābī warriors who were killed at

Shaykh Tabarsī were expected to "return" again in other persons in forty days.

The Bābīs followed the Shaykhīs in the interpretation of the Islāmic doctrines of the Resurrection, the Day of Judgment, etc. They explained the Resurrection as being the appearance of a new Manifestation. Thus Islām was the Resurrection of which Jesus had spoken, the Bāb's Manifestation was the Resurrection predicted by Muhammad, and the Resurrection which the Bāb predicts is the coming of "Him whom God shall manifest." The Day of Judgment is not different in any respect from other days—it passes, and most men are altogether unaware of its coming. In like manner the Trumpet, the Clouds of Heaven, the Bridge across which souls must pass to Paradise, the Scales which weigh men's actions, the joys of Heaven, the punishments of Hell, etc., are all interpreted figuratively. According to the Bāb, it was because people were looking for a *literal* fulfilment of prophecy that they always failed to recognize the new Manifestation. Had they interpreted these things correctly the Jews would not have rejected Jesus, nor the Christians Muhammad, nor the Muslims Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad. But because they were looking for outward signs instead of inward reality they failed to believe and be saved.

Though doctrine occupies a large place in the Bāb's writings, he did not confine himself entirely to theological speculation. He proposed, as Muhammad had done before him, to set up a universal Church-State, and it was therefore necessary for him to provide laws

for the regulation of both the civil and religious affairs of the Bābī community. We have space only to mention the principal provisions of the new system.

The Bāb proposed to form a powerful priestly caste to attend to religious affairs. Each city and village was to have one or more temples for worship, and each temple was to be in charge of nineteen priests. Temples were to be erected over the graves of the martyrs of the Bābī faith and were to be adorned as richly and beautifully as possible, but there was to be no congregational worship (such as the Sunnites have). The Bāb commanded that his birthplace and his place of burial be made places of pilgrimage for all believers. Everyone living within two hundred and fifty miles of his tomb (which he predicts will be in Tabriz) must visit it every year and stay at least ten days. All Bābīs must also visit the tombs of the eighteen "Letters of the Living," travelling on foot if possible. Pilgrims must give money to the nineteen guardians of each shrine they visit. Women are discouraged from going on pilgrimage.

The Bāb placed great importance upon talismans. As 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 Bāb himself. As Gobineau points out,<sup>4</sup> the Bāb wished to revive the ancient paganism of Chaldea which had been long lying dormant, and in this he was quite successful. For his system is full of animistic practices, and even polytheistic features are not wanting.

There was to be no place in the Bābī State for

non-Bābīs. Not one unbeliever was to be allowed to live in Persia proper! The property of unbelievers was to be seized by Bābīs and kept as lawful booty, but in case they repented and believed it was to be given back to them. One-fifth of the spoils, together with whatever was incomparable in value or beauty, was to belong to the Bāb, and after his death was to be held in trust for "Him whom God shall manifest." Of what remained the warriors who had won it were to take what sufficed for their needs. The residue should be given to the poor and expended upon the upkeep of shrines of martyrs, etc. To understand the Bābī uprisings and the bitter hatred which the Muslims felt toward the new sect this aspect of the Bāb's programme must be kept clearly in mind. The Bābīs intended to conquer the world, taking for their own all that belonged to the unbelievers, for they held that *everything in the world* belonged to them by right—no wonder the "unbelievers" looked on the movement with horror! If any non-Bābīs remained, they were to be treated as slaves with no rights whatever. In the system of the Bāb tolerance was unknown.

But while any kind of severity short of taking life might be used toward unbelievers,<sup>5</sup> the Bāb enjoined the greatest kindness and gentleness toward brothers in the faith. He did not authorize corporal punishment or the use of force, and capital punishment had no place in his system. Taxes had to be paid to the State, but if not paid they were not to be collected by force. The only punishments appointed for Bābīs were fines and prohibition from approaching their wives.



The Bāb apparently wished to get entirely rid of the outward forms of religion which play such an important part in the lives of Muslims, but as this would have been unacceptable to many of his followers he contented himself with lightening somewhat the burden of ceremonialism. Among Shī'ites the problem of ceremonial purity is an important one, swine, dogs, blood, dead bodies, excrement, etc., being considered unclean, and if one becomes polluted by contact with anything unclean it is necessary for him at once to make ablution in a prescribed manner in order to become clean again. The Bāb taught that for believers all things were clean, and that ceremonial ablutions were therefore unnecessary. Unbelievers were unclean, but as soon as their property came into the hands of Bābīs it immediately became clean. In another place he says that an unclean thing may be made clean by saying the Name of God over it sixty-six times, or by exposing it to the action of sun, or of earth, air, fire, or water. Minute directions are given regarding various other matters which I hesitate to translate into English.

The *namāz*, or worship, which the Shī'ites must perform at least three times every day was practically abolished by the Bāb. The Muhammadan month of fasting (Ramazān) lasts a full lunar month, and when it falls in summer the Muslims must refrain from food and drink for almost eighteen hours. The Bāb reduced the fast to nineteen days, and made it last only from sunrise to sunset, and, since the Bābī month of fasting always falls in the spring of the

year, this would never be much longer than twelve hours.

Like Muhammad, the Bāb placed great importance upon marriage, which he made obligatory upon all Bābīs as soon as they reached eleven years of age, or at least when they reached the age of puberty. In the cities the man must give to the woman a dowry of ninety-five misqāls of gold, and in the villages the same amount of silver.<sup>6</sup> The Bāb permitted a man to have two wives, but he discouraged polygamy and strictly prohibited concubinage<sup>7</sup> (which is held to be meritorious in Shī'ite law). Had his followers contented themselves with one wife, as their Master advised, much of the strife which later arose within the Bahā'ī Movement would have been avoided! Divorce was permitted only when the parties had waited for a full year. If a man or woman died, the wife or husband of the deceased must remarry in ninety days. The Bāb showed great concern for the training of children, and strictly forbade the beating of boys by their masters and all other cruel treatment. It is quite clear that he had been influenced in his attitude towards women and children by reading the New Testament, which had been translated into Persian in Shīrāz by Henry Martyn nine years before the Bāb was born. The use of the veil by women was forbidden, and men and women were commanded to associate with one another freely, but avoiding all overfamiliarity. This injunction, however, has never been carried out by Bābīs in Persia, for the veil is worn by all to the present time.

As has been noted above, the Bāb proposed to rearrange and reorganize everything on the basis of the number nineteen. The calendar was to be changed so that there would be nineteen months of nineteen days each, a system which is neither lunar nor solar. The monetary system, weights, measures, taxes, fines, etc., were to be based on the same principle. The *Bayān*, the Sacred Writings of the Bāb, was to have consisted of nineteen grand divisions, each containing nineteen subdivisions. The Bāb predicts the time when "even the pens on the pencease shall be according to the number of the Wāhid [19]."

The Bāb gave various other directions for the regulation of the lives of his followers, a few of which we will mention. Begging is strictly forbidden, but charity to the poor is enjoined. Bābīs are to wear as fine clothes as they can afford, and to use gold and jewels. Men must shave their faces clean. Bābīs must sit on chairs, not on the floor as the Muslims do. All non-Bābī books must be burned, and may in no case be read. The sciences and philosophy must not be studied. All one's personal effects must be changed every nineteen years. Foreign travel is forbidden. Arms are not to be carried within the Bābī State. Charms must be tied around the necks of infants. All Bābīs must take a bath every four days. The teeth must be cleaned after meals. Each believer must give twenty per cent. of his income to the Manifestation, one per cent. to go to each of the "Letters." Every male believer must serve the Bāb in person nineteen days each year. The Bāb must be treated with the

greatest respect, and his family also must be honoured by all. Special prayers must be said for him and for his parents. Bābī families must entertain nineteen guests every nineteen days, even if they can give them nothing to eat but water. The dead are to be washed five times, and buried in stone coffins, after which their graves must be visited by their friends for nineteen days and nights. The use of opium, tobacco, and alcohol is forbidden. Pack animals must not be overloaded, and cows must not be used at all for riding or carrying burdens. Asses' milk is not to be drunk, and eggs are not to be kept where they will spoil! To such detail does the Divine Legislator descend!

Now let us sum up the principal features of the Bābī system. At the head of everything stands the Bāb himself (or his successor), the Centre of the Divine Manifestation, whose word is the Word of God, and whose every act is the Act of God, to whom everything in the world belongs, and who is free to do whatever he wills. With him are associated eighteen others who are also parts of the Manifestation. These nineteen Divine Beings must be recognized and obeyed and honoured by all mankind, and tithes must be paid to them. Those who submit become partakers in the privileges of the Bābī State, and those who refuse to submit must forfeit their property and their civil rights, and leave Persia altogether. Kings and governors must defend and support the Bābī Cause. A powerful priesthood will control the innumerable temples which are to be erected, and will grow rich off the gifts of the people. Insignificant details of the lives

of the people are to be regulated by a code of laws which is often puerile in the extreme, and in which many important matters are entirely overlooked. This system is to remain in effect till "He whom God shall manifest" shall appear, which will probably not be for a long time. Such was the Cause for which the Bāb and many of his companions laid down their lives.

## V

### THE PONTIFICATE OF SUBH-I-AZAL

**O**N the death of the Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad, all the Bābīs at once recognized as their Supreme Head Mīrzā Yahyā, entitled "Subh-i-Azal" ("The Morning of Eternity"), who had been specifically named by the Bāb as his successor. For more than a decade Subh-i-Azal was the undisputed pontiff of the Bābī Church, till the split occurred between him and his half-brother Bahā, which deprived him of most of his followers. Since the history of this period has been sadly misrepresented by the followers of Bahā, it is necessary for us to give special attention to the presentation of the established facts.

Mīrzā Yahyā was the son of Mīrzā Buzurg of the district of Nūr in Māzanderān. He was born in Teherān about A. D. 1830. His father, according to the Bābī historian, was "accomplished, wealthy, and much respected."<sup>1</sup> His mother died when he was a child, and he was committed to the care of a second wife,<sup>2</sup> who, warned in a dream of his future destiny, showed him the greatest love and consideration. His education was supervised by his half-brother Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī [Bahā'u'llāh], who was thirteen years his senior. Mīrzā Jānī, in his history (written about

A. D. 1851), quotes the following statement which Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī [Bahā'u'llāh] had made regarding Subh-i-Azal:<sup>3</sup> "I busied myself with the instruction of Janāb-i-Azal. 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."<sup>4</sup> Subh-i-Azal was influenced by his brother to believe in the Bāb, and so great did his attachment become for the Master whom he had never seen that when the Bāb commanded his followers to go to Khurāsān he, though still a boy, attempted to obey, but was hindered by Bahā. Later he attended the Badasht Conference and met Hazrat-i-Quddūs and Qurratu'l-'Ayn, who showed him great kindness and attention. We have already described his attempt to reach Shaykh Tabarsī and his capture and release. Mīrzā Jānī writes: "I was in attendance on Janāb-i-Azal in Māzanderān, 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-Quddūs, and used often to read aloud with sweet utterance the homilies and prayers of that Master of the World."<sup>5</sup>

When Subh-i-Azal heard the news of the death of Hazrat-i-Quddūs in Māzanderān, he is said to have fallen ill for three days. Then "the signs of holiness

(*qudsī*) appeared in his blessed form," that is, the virtues and gifts of the martyred saint were transferred to Subh-i-Azal. It was shortly after this that the writings of Subh-i-Azal came to the notice of the Bāb, who is said to have prostrated himself to the earth and blessed God for raising up this "mighty luminary" in the night. He recognized Subh-i-Azal as his divinely appointed successor, sent him some of his own personal effects, such as pencases, paper, writings, clothing, and rings, "that the outward form might correspond with the inward reality," intending that "after himself Azal should bear the Divine influences." "He also wrote a testamentary deposition, explicitly nominating him [*i. e.*, Azal] as his successor, and added, 'Write the eight [unwritten] Wāhids of the Bayān.'" The Bāb purposely left the Bayān incomplete in order that he might thus make known to men that his successor, who was to complete it, was truly one with him.<sup>6</sup>

When Dr. Browne met Subh-i-Azal in Cyprus, in A. D. 1890, he was shown the document, written and signed by the Bāb himself, in which Subh-i-Azal was nominated as the Bāb's successor.<sup>7</sup> The English translation of this document is as follows:

"God is Most Great with the 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 'Alī before Nabīl,<sup>8</sup> God's



Reminder unto the Worlds, unto him whose name is equivalent to the Name of the One [Wahīd = 28 = Yahyā, Subh-i-Azal's name], God's Reminder unto the Worlds.

"Say, 'Verily all originate from the Point of Revelation.'

"O Name of the One [Yahyā], keep what hath been revealed in the *Bayān*, and what hath been commanded, for verily thou art a Mighty Way of Truth."

[Signature]

It is important to note that the Bāb in this document gives the same titles and rank to Subh-i-Azal as to himself. As is clear from Mīrzā Jānī's history, the early Bābīs believed that the two were one, and some of them (among whom was Mīrzā Jānī) were convinced that Subh-i-Azal was none other than "He whom God shall manifest," of whom the Bāb had spoken so often.<sup>9</sup> Comte de Gobineau, who was in intimate contact with the Bābīs of Teherān from A. D. 1855 to 1858, confirms the statements of the Bābī historian. He says that some Bābīs thought Subh-i-Azal to be "He whom God shall manifest," while others thought him to be a "return" of the Bāb.<sup>10</sup> There is not the slightest historical evidence dating from this period to support the present claim of the Bahā'īs that the successor of the Bāb was Bahā, not Subh-i-Azal. Even Bahā himself, in his book the *Iqān*, written in Baghdād in A. D. 1861, makes no claim whatever for himself, but considers himself subject to another,<sup>11</sup> who is undoubtedly Subh-i-Azal. "The evidence that at this period . . . Subh-i-Azal held un-

disputed and absolute sway over the Bābī Church is absolutely conclusive.”<sup>12</sup>

It was no easy task to which Subh-i-Azal, as yet only twenty years of age, fell heir when his Master was executed. The Bābīs were still in arms against the State at Zanjān and other places, and it is hard for us at this distance to realize the intense hatred with which they were regarded by the majority of the people of Persia. The Bābīs returned this hatred with interest. Not only the Muhammadan mullās but the reigning dynasty also were considered enemies of God and fit only for the sword. Subh-i-Azal realized, however, that it was not expedient for the Bābīs to continue further their conflict with the State, and he therefore issued orders for his followers to lay aside the sword—at least for the present. He was obeyed by all, for no other insurrections occurred after his accession. He then began to travel about Persia, visiting the scattered Bābī communities, and encouraging and comforting them. In the summer he was usually in the neighbourhood of Teherān, and in the winter in Māzanderān. He spent his time in arranging, transcribing, and circulating the books of the Bāb, and in preaching the Bābī doctrines. Though the Prime Minister was very hostile to the Bābīs, and to Subh-i-Azal in particular, the movement continued to grow rapidly.<sup>15</sup> It was at this time (A. D. 1851 or '52) that Mīrzā Jānī wrote his excellent history,<sup>18</sup> in which he described in detail the events of A. D. 1844-1851.

Mīrzā Jānī tells us that soon after Subh-i-Azal's accession numerous other Manifestations appeared.

He describes at length several of these.<sup>14</sup> They all claimed to be God, produced verses, and possessed the qualities necessary for a Manifestation. Some of the Bābīs, jealous for the honour of their Master, wished to interfere with these claimants, but Subh-i-Azal prevented them, saying that the more Manifestations the better—provided only that they recognized him as the "Point" of the Theophany. "The more branches and leaves a tree bears," says Mīrzā Jānī, "the greater is its perfection," by which he means that the more of Subh-i-Azal's disciples there were who claimed to be partakers in the Theophany the more perfect did the Manifestation become. Apparently Mīrzā Jānī believed Subh-i-Azal to be greater than the Bāb.<sup>15</sup>

All went well with the Bābīs till the summer of A. D. 1852, when something occurred which entirely altered the situation. For some time rumours had been going about the Teherān bazaar that the Shāh was going to be killed. Finally, on August 15, 1852, as the Shāh was riding out on a hunting expedition from his summer residence in the hills above Teherān, 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 Shāh, wounding him in the arm. Then they dragged him off his horse<sup>17</sup> and were about to cut his throat when the Shāh's retainers rushed up, killed one of the assassins, and captured the other two. When examined, the two captives confessed that they were Bābīs, and that their purpose was to avenge the death of the Bāb. Sādiq, the one who had been killed, was the servant

of Mullā Shaykh 'Alī, one of the Bābī leaders,<sup>18</sup> who had been plotting against the Government for some time. The Musulmān historian says that Mullā Shaykh 'Alī had gotten twelve of the Bābīs to agree to take part in the assassination, but only three of them arrived in time. That this attempt on the Shāh's life was the result of a deliberate plot on the part of the Bābīs, and not the act of a single madman as the Bahā'īs now say,<sup>19</sup> is sufficiently proved by Gobineau, who gives a most vivid account of the attempted murder.<sup>20</sup> The pistol had been charged with shot in order that the assassins might fell the Shāh and then kill him by cutting his throat, as they had been ordered to do. Fortunately, the Shāh was not seriously wounded.

The excitement and confusion which followed may be imagined. The gates of Teherān were guarded, and a systematic search was made in Teherān and throughout Persia for the Bābī leaders, about forty of whom were rounded up and brought to Teherān. Several of those arrested, notably Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī [Bahā'u'llāh], the brother of Subh-i-Azal, were able to prove their innocence, but were kept in prison pending further investigation. As the days went by, the Shāh became more and more terrified over the situation in his kingdom, and believing (probably with some reason) that there was a terrific volcano, hidden from sight, which was just about to break forth and destroy him and his empire, he resolved to make an exhibit of the Bābīs whom he had gotten into his power. He accordingly divided them up among the

different classes of his subjects, giving one to the clergy, another to the princes, another to the nobles, another to the artillery, etc., 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 is probable that many of those sentenced to die had no direct part in the attempt on the Shāh's life, but to be known as a Bābī was sufficient to condemn one.<sup>21</sup> On September 15, 1852, the execution was carried out, each class trying to outdo the others in the barbarity with which they killed their unfortunate victims. Twenty-eight Bābīs met their death at this time, one of whom was the beautiful and gifted Qurratu'l-'Ayn, and another Mīrzā Jānī the historian. Most of the victims showed the greatest courage and devotion as they faced death, and many new converts were won to the Cause by this massacre. However, from this time on the Bābīs systematically concealed their faith, and denied it when their lives were in danger.<sup>22</sup> The Bahā'īs continue this practice to the present day.

Subh-i-Azal was not among those who perished. The Shāh tried to arrest him, and offered a reward of one thousand tomans for his capture, but he managed to escape in the garb of a dervish, and made his way to Baghdād in Turkish territory, for he realized that he would be unable to live longer in Persia. After his flight a raid was made by two regiments of royal troops upon his home in Māzanderān with a view to capturing him and his followers, and, though he himself escaped, his relatives and friends were arrested

and taken to Teherān, where most of them died in prison. Subh-i-Azal's brother Bahā, after being imprisoned for four months, was released, and was allowed to depart from Persia to Baghdād. There, near the close of A. D. 1852, he joined Subh-i-Azal a few months after the arrival of the latter.

From this time until A. D. 1863 Baghdād was the seat of the Pontificate of the Bābī Church, and the centre from which active propaganda was carried on in Persia. We do not possess a full account of the happenings of these ten years, but the main features of the history are clear. Subh-i-Azal continued to be looked upon by all Bābīs as their Supreme Head, but being a "peace loving, contemplative, gentle soul . . . caring little for authority, and incapable of self-assertion," he retired into almost complete seclusion, "leaving the direction of affairs in the hands of his half-brother Bahā, a man of much more resolute and ambitious character, who thus gradually became the most prominent figure and the moving spirit of the sect."<sup>31</sup> Bahā no doubt realized that it was absolutely impossible for the Bābī community to obey the regulations and realize the hopes which the Bāb had bequeathed to them. There was no way of retreat back to Islām, and therefore the only possibility remaining to them was to change some of the impossible features of the system and make it adaptable to life as they must live it. Bahā therefore began to make various innovations which were very obnoxious to the old school Bābīs, and they remonstrated with him so sharply that he grew angry and left Baghdād al-

together, wandering as a dervish in the mountains of Kurdistān for two years.<sup>23</sup> At last Subh-i-Azal found out where he was and wrote to him, commanding him to return, and he obeyed (about A. D. 1856). The *Īqān*, which was composed by Bahā in A. D. 1861,<sup>24</sup> clearly shows Bahā as obedient (at least outwardly) to his brother. He says: "I have not gloried in any matter, nor have I sought superiority over any." "I swear by God that I had no intention of return from this exile [to Kurdistān] nor hope of reunion after this journey. My only purpose was to avoid being an object of disagreement among the friends. . . . Finally the decree of return emanated from the Source of Command [*i. e.*, Subh-i-Azal], and I involuntarily obeyed and returned." <sup>25</sup>

The purpose of the *Īqān* is to prove that the Bāb was one of the Major Manifestations of God, and to explain why the Shī'ites had rejected him. The standpoint is that of a disciple of the Bāb. Bahā only elaborates the doctrines already taught by the Shaykhīs and the Bāb, but refers to the Gospels more than the Bāb had done. The book is full of Shī'ite traditions and Shī'ite beliefs. From the importance that Bahā places upon the coming of "Him whom God shall manifest, and his appeal to the Bābīs to accept him when he comes, it is evident that he is contemplating putting forward a claim of his own—though as yet he has not done so.

But Bahā was not the only Bābī who was prepared to make claims for himself. About this time Dayyān, who had been appointed by the Bāb as amanuensis to

Subh-i-Azal, declared himself to be "He whom God shall manifest." Bahā had long discussions with him, and as he remained obstinate he was murdered by the Bābīs.<sup>26</sup> There were also three or four others who advanced the same claim. In fact, to quote a Bābī writer, "the matter came to such a pass that every one on awakening from his first sleep in the morning adorned his body with this pretension."<sup>27</sup> The pretensions of these numerous claimants only encouraged Bahā to press his own claims, for he was in fact the active leader of the Bābī Movement, and had better grounds for his pretensions than any one else. Hence, urged on by Āqā Jān Kāshī, called Khādimu'llāh, Bahā began to put himself forward, but he was so fiercely opposed by the other Bābī leaders that he was forced to wait a while before openly declaring himself.

Meanwhile the Bābī propagandists were so active in carrying on their campaign among the Persians who flocked to Baghdād to make the pilgrimage to the shrines of the Imāms, and there was so much fighting between the Bābīs and the Musulmāns, that the Persian Government was at last compelled to request the Turkish Government that the Bābī colony be removed from Baghdād to some spot more distant from Persia. I will quote a few sentences from the letter sent by the Persian Government to the Persian Ambassador in Constantinople instructing him to arrange for this transfer: "Sometimes, moreover, he [Bahā]<sup>28</sup> hath put his hand to sedition and incitements to murder, as in the case of His most accomplished Reverence



Mullā Āqā of Darband, whom they grievously wounded with intent to kill . . . besides sundry other assassinations which took place." Bahā has, moreover, surrounded himself with armed men and has assumed a defiant attitude. "In the face of these proceedings, it would be a proof of the most complete negligence . . . on the part of the Persian Government to disregard these acts which may produce such deplorable consequences. . . .

'I see beneath the ashes the glow of fire,  
And it wants but little to burst into a blaze.'

"It will not do to leave Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī [Bahā] there [in Baghdād], or to allow fuller scope to their mischievous ideas and probable actions." The Persian Government therefore requests either that Bahā and his followers be sent back into Persia where they can be properly watched, or else that the Turkish Government "arrange as quickly as possible to deport and detain that mischief maker [Bahā] and his several intimates from Baghdād 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."<sup>29</sup> It is only necessary to recall Shaykh Tabarsī and Zanjān and the attempt on the Shāh's life to understand what it was that the Persian Government was fearing!

The Turkish Government was glad to comply with this request, for the quarrels and fightings of the Bābīs and Musulmāns in Baghdād had been the cause of great trouble to the authorities there.<sup>30</sup> And so in

the spring of A. D. 1863 Bahā and Subh-i-Azal and their families and followers were deported first to Constantinople, and after a stop there of four months, were sent on to Adrianople, which they reached in December, 1863. Here they remained for five years, and here occurred the first great split in the Bābī community.

## VI

### THE SCHISM BETWEEN SUBH-I-AZAL AND BAHĀ'U'LLĀH

**A**S we have seen in the preceding chapter, Subh-i-Azal was the undisputed Head of the Bābī Movement during the whole Baghdād period of eleven years, and was considered the "Point" of the Divine Manifestation no less than the Bāb had been. But as time went on, especially after the deportation of the Bābīs to Adrianople, Subh-i-Azal proved unequal to the difficult task of ruling and leading the Bābī community. "A community like that which had existed at Adrianople," writes Dr. Browne, "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 Bahā, "a man of much more resolute and ambitious character," came gradually to occupy the place of actual leadership, though he did everything in the name of Subh-i-Azal. At last, however, about three years after

reaching Adrianople,<sup>1</sup> he threw off all disguise and publicly made the claim which he had been wishing to make for several years, namely, that he was "He whom God shall manifest" who had been predicted by the Bāb, and he called upon Subh-i-Azal and the Bābīs scattered over Persia, Turkey, Egypt, and Syria 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 Bahā's claim we must recall what the Bāb had said of "Him whom God shall manifest": Only God knows the time and place of His advent, but He will surely come before 2001 years. He is divine, and His command is God's command. He is not to be asked why He does anything. All previous Manifestations were created for Him. One verse of His scripture is better than a thousand *Bayāns*. He is to be recognized by Himself, and it is impossible for one falsely to claim to be He. Thus, while the Bāb indicated that "He whom God shall manifest" would not appear for a long time, he left the door open to any one who could reveal "verses" in the style of the *Koran* and whose personality exerted an all-compelling influence over other men. As we saw in the preceding chapter, several men ere this had claimed to be He, but had won no following. Now there was nothing to prevent Bahā from making the claim if he wished to, for the Bāb had said that no one could falsely claim that high station. The Bāb had also commanded Subh-i-Azal, in case "He whom God shall manifest" should appear

in his time, to acknowledge Him immediately and abrogate the Bayān.

"Amongst the Bābīs," writes Dr. Browne, "the effect of this announcement [of Bahā's] . . . was little short of stupendous. From Constantinople to Kirmān and from Cairo to Khurāsān the communities of the faithful were rent asunder by a schism which every subsequent year has rendered wider and more permanent. . . . At Adrianople itself the struggle was short and the triumph of Bahā 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 Bahā, the conflict, though its issue was from the first hardly doubtful, was longer maintained. For the question at issue was . . . whether the doctrines and writings of the beloved Master [the Bāb], for which his followers had been ready to suffer death or exile, were to be regarded as abrogated and cancelled in favour of a new revelation; whether his chosen vicegerent [Subh-i-Azal], whom they had so long regarded as their Supreme Pontiff and as the incarnation of all purity, virtue, and heavenly wisdom, was to be cast down from this high position . . .; and whether the Bāb himself was henceforth to be looked upon, not as . . . a veritable Manifestation of the Divine, but as a mere harbinger and precursor of a more perfect Theophany. Bābīs who remember that time cannot easily be induced to speak of it." <sup>2</sup>

Though the great majority of the Bābīs sooner or later acknowledged Bahā as "He whom God shall manifest," Subh-i-Azal steadfastly refused to do so. He held to the teachings of the Bāb, 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 Gospels and the *Koran* had been, before it would be time for another Manifestation. To Subh-i-Azal and those Bābīs who clung to him it seemed utterly unreasonable to believe that the elaborate system of the Bāb could have been established of God for a period of only twenty-two years. Who would plant a vineyard, they ask, and before any fruit whatever had been gathered from it, would cut down the vines and plant others? Certainly God would wait long enough to reap some fruit from the tree of the Bāb before sending another Manifestation.<sup>8</sup> If the Bāb was sent of God, as all Bahā'īs believe him to be, then Subh-i-Azal, who was appointed by the Bāb himself as his successor, must also have been of God. And if Subh-i-Azal was divinely sent and endowed with superhuman knowledge, as all Bābīs had believed him to be, then should he not have been able to recognize "Him whom God shall manifest" when He appeared? But Subh-i-Azal rejected Bahā, and for his refusal to believe was called by Bahā the "Point of Darkness," or chief opponent of the New Manifestation. Hence the Bahā'īs have no choice but to believe that the Bāb, who was divinely inspired and knew all things, deliberately chose as his vicegerent a man who

was to become the chief enemy of "Him whom God shall manifest."

To escape this dilemma, Bahā and his partisans did two things: first, they got rid of all of the leading Bābīs who sided with Subh-i-Azal; and second, they rewrote the history of the Bābī Movement, completely ignoring Subh-i-Azal,<sup>4</sup> and pretending that Bahā was the true successor of the Bāb, who was merely his "forerunner." To some who have read the teachings of Bahā and his son 'Abdu'l-Bahā regarding love and kindness to all mankind it may seem incredible that the authors of such sentiments could have been guilty of the assassination of their opponents and of the falsification of history. We are dealing, however, not with probabilities but with historical facts established beyond a doubt which we cannot but accept. All prominent supporters of Subh-i-Azal (hereafter known as "Azalīs") were marked out for death, and something like twenty of them were murdered by the partisans of Bahā in Baghdād, Adrianople, and later in 'Akkā.<sup>5</sup> Some of these men were among the "Letters of the Living." If we excuse Bahā himself from the direct responsibility for these murders (which is hardly possible), certainly one who possessed the divine knowledge and power which he claimed for himself should have been able to prevent such acts on the part of his intimate followers. Let not the reader forget that these were the same Bābīs who had shed much blood in Persia and had attempted to assassinate Nāsiru'd-Dīn Shāh. "Surely," said a Persian Bahā'ī to Dr. Browne, "you cannot pretend to deny that a

prophet, who is an incarnation of the Universal Intelligence, has as much right to remove any one 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? " \* The Prophet Muhammad had assassinated some of his personal enemies, and it should not greatly surprise us that Bahā did the same.

But even worse charges are brought against Bahā by the Azalīs. They claim that an attempt was made to poison Subh-i-Azal himself. The Bahā'īs reply that it was Subh-i-Azal who tried to poison Bahā. Dr. Browne confesses his inability to decide where the guilt lay,<sup>7</sup> but in view of the other assassinations which were certainly carried out by Bahā's party it seems more probable that in this instance also he was the offender. At any rate, both sides agree that an attempt was made by one of the brothers to poison the other, and whichever side was guilty of this crime, it was a blot upon the Bābī Church in which both brothers had for ten years been leaders. According to the Azalīs, a second attempt was made on Subh-i-Azal's life by the Bahā'ī barber in the bath, after escaping which he separated himself entirely from Bahā and his followers.

Finally the quarrel between the two unequal parties became so fierce that the Turkish authorities were compelled to separate them, and without making any investigation to see who was in the right, they sent all the Bābīs away from Adrianople, Subh-i-Azal and his party to the Island of Cyprus, and Bahā and his followers to 'Akkā (Acre) in the Holy Land. In



order to keep well informed as to their doings, the authorities detailed four Bahā'īs to go to Cyprus to spy on Subh-i-Azal, and four Azalīs to do the same thing in 'Akkā for Bahā. One of these four Azalīs was murdered by the Bahā'īs before leaving Adrianople, and the other three were likewise killed soon after reaching 'Akkā.<sup>8</sup> This exodus from Adrianople took place in A. D. 1868.

But not content with getting rid of the Azalīs who refused to accept Bahā, the Bahā'īs undertook to rewrite the whole history of the Bābī Movement so as to make Bahā's claim more plausible. The Bāb was reduced by them from an independent Manifestation like Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, to being a "fore-runner" like John the Baptist. Subh-i-Azal was ignored altogether, unless he was mentioned as the enemy of the Truth, and Bahā was represented as having been from the first the leading figure in the Movement. This tendency is most clearly exhibited in the *Traveller's Narrative*, an anonymous history of the Movement, which was written by 'Abbās Efendi ('Abdu'l-Bahā), the eldest son of Bahā,<sup>9</sup> and is to be found in all the histories published by Bahā'īs. Now if this version of the Bābī history was to gain universal acceptance, it was absolutely necessary that many of the original Bābī books be gotten out of the way, for they gave the lie to Bahā's claims. Therefore Bahā's followers began systematically to get rid of the writings of the Bāb and the early Bābīs, and they were so far successful that even in A. D. 1888, when Dr. Browne visited Persia, he was able only

with the greatest difficulty to obtain a copy of the *Bayān*. When he visited 'Akkā the Bahā'īs there would not let him see the Bāb's writings, though they undoubtedly had them hidden away somewhere.<sup>9a</sup> When M. Nicolas translated the *Bayān* into French, 'Abdu'l-Bahā was very angry with him and asked him why he had published an abrogated book.

One of the books most injurious to the claims of Bahā was the history written by Mīrzā Jānī, the devoted disciple of the Bāb, who died a martyr to the Bābī Cause in Teherān, in A. D. 1852. This book proved conclusively that the Bahā'ī version of the history was false. The Bahā'īs therefore rewrote the book (about A. D. 1874), retaining whatever was valuable for their purpose, omitting everything that was prejudicial to their cause, and sometimes inserting statements contradictory to Mīrzā Jānī's account.<sup>10</sup> This book was published under the name of *The New History*, and has been edited by Dr. Browne. But, try as he would, Dr. Browne, while in Persia and afterwards, could find no trace of the original history of Mīrzā Jānī. The Bahā'īs all professed absolute ignorance of it, and it seemed that it had been completely gotten rid of and that not one copy had remained. But, by a fortunate chance, among the Persian books which Comte de Gobineau had taken back to Paris with him when he left Persia, there was a manuscript copy of this book.<sup>23</sup> This copy Dr. Browne happened to discover in A. D. 1892, and on examining it found that it contained invaluable material for a correct understanding of the early Bābī

history. He therefore translated the most important parts of it,<sup>12</sup> and later published the full Persian text.<sup>13</sup> So furious was 'Abdu'l-Bahā at this exposure of the Bahā'ī falsification of history that he said that Dr. Browne had *himself* become an Azalī, and had been bribed by the Azalīs to write this book.<sup>22</sup>

Of this suppression of Mīrzā Jānī's history by the Bahā'īs, Dr. Browne writes: "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. . . . Of this much I am certain, that the more the Bahā'ī doctrine spreads, especially outside Persia, and most of all in Europe and America, the more the true history and nature of the original Bābī Movement is obscured and distorted."<sup>14</sup>

Since the great majority of the Bābīs followed Bahā, our principal concern from now on will be with the Bahā'ī Movement which had 'Akkā for its centre. But before leaving Subh-i-Azal for good, it will not be out of place to tell briefly the story of his later life. Subh-i-Azal, with his wives<sup>15</sup> and children and a few followers and four Bahā'īs to spy on him, reached Famagusta, in the Island of Cyprus, in August, 1868.<sup>16</sup>

In A. D. 1878 Cyprus passed from the hands of the Turks to the British, and Subh-i-Azal and his family became pensioners of the British Government. There his very existence seems to have been forgotten, for when Dr. Browne came to Persia in A. D. 1887, expecting to find Subh-i-Azal, the acknowledged Pontiff of the Bābī Church (as Gobineau had described him as being in A. D. 1864), he was amazed to find that Bahā'īs knew (or pretended to know) nothing whatever of him, and many said that they had never even heard of him.<sup>17</sup>

After careful investigation, Dr. Browne discovered his whereabouts, and in March, 1890, went to Cyprus to see him. He thus describes his first meeting with him: "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 Mīrzā Yahyā Subh-i-Azal ('The Morning of Eternity'), the appointed successor of the Bāb."<sup>18</sup> During a period of two weeks Dr. Browne daily spent several hours conversing with Subh-i-Azal, and obtained from him a vast amount of first-hand information regarding the Bābī Movement. "Of the Bāb and his first apostles and followers, 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 Bahā and the Bahā'is, he was most reticent." Subh-i-Azal and his sons always treated their visitor with the greatest courtesy.

Thereafter Subh-i-Azal aided Dr. Browne in his researches by supplying him with various books written by himself and by the Bāb and the early Bābīs. In spite of the daily prayers which Bahā is said to have offered that he might be delivered from his brother,<sup>19</sup> Subh-i-Azal lived to old age, and died 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 Dr. Browne.<sup>20</sup> He is said to have appointed one of his sons as his successor, but at the time of his death very few of his followers remained. Even to the present day, however, one occasionally meets in Persia men who are known to be Azalīs.<sup>21</sup>

## VII

### BAHĀ'U'LLĀH

**A**S has been pointed out by Sir Cecil Spring-Rice,<sup>1</sup> formerly British Minister at Teherān, the problem which Bahā'u'llāh<sup>2</sup> had to solve was not merely one of succession to the leadership of the Bābī 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 Bāb had confidently predicted the time when his religion would cover the earth, it had already become clear to Bahā and other discerning Bābīs, as it was clear to unprejudiced observers from the first, that such a system as that outlined by the Bāb could never make any headway outside of Persia. The Bābī hope of establishing by force a reign of the saints on earth had proved impossible of fulfilment, and many of the laws laid down by the Bāb were entirely unsuited to the needs of mankind, either in Persia, or out of it. To cling to the old system would mean only the speedy disintegration of the movement for which the Bābīs had suffered so much. It was probably the realization of this fact, together with a very strong personal ambition, that led Bahā to put forward his claim to be "He whom God shall manifest."

No'sooner was Bahā "firmly established in his authority," says Dr. Browne, "than he began to make free use of the privilege accorded by the Bāb to 'Him whom God shall manifest' to abrogate, change, cancel, and develop the earlier doctrines. His chief aim seems to have been to introduce a more settled order, to discourage speculation, to direct the attention of his followers to practical reforms . . ., to exalt ethics at the expense of metaphysics, to check mysticism, to conciliate existing authorities, including even the Shāh of Persia, . . . to abolish useless, unpractical, and irksome regulations and restrictions, and, in general, to adapt the religion at the head of which he now found himself to the ordinary exigencies of life, and to render it more capable of becoming, what he intended to make it, a universal system suitable to all mankind."<sup>8</sup> He sought, moreover, to "eliminate the tinge of Shī'ite thought which the Bābī doctrine still maintained," and to cultivate a better understanding with Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians.

Immediately after putting forward his claim, Bahā began to send forth epistles to Bābīs and others in which he sought to establish his pretensions and induce men to accept him. In the *Lawh-i-Nāsir*, which is one of the earliest writings composed after his declaration, he says, "I revealed all the heavenly books by the glorious tongue of (Divine) Might," that is, he claims to be God, the Author of the Old and New Testaments, the *Koran*, and the *Bayān*. He also says that he is the Bāb returned to earth again,

and speaks of the execution of Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad at Tabrīz as though it had been his own. How different this tone from that of the *Iqān* written only a few years previously when he called himself a "slave" and declared that he had "never sought supremacy over any one"! About the same time he composed the *Suratu'l-Mulūk*, or "Chapter of the Kings," in which he addressed the rulers of the earth and bade them acknowledge him. "O Kings of the earth! " he writes, "Hearken to the voice of God from this fruitful, lofty tree."<sup>4</sup> The tone which he adopted toward the Shāh of Persia was, says Dr. Browne, "one of fierce recrimination."<sup>6</sup> He upbraided the Shāh for the murder of the Bāb, and then continued, "And when ye slew him, one from amongst his friends arose in retaliation,<sup>5</sup> and none knew him, and his purpose was concealed . . . Then it is not meet that you should blame any one for this, but rather blame yourselves for what you have done." He also bade the kings to reduce their armies. "Be at peace one with another, and reduce your armies that your expenses may be diminished . . . And [even] if ye should raise up differences between yourselves, ye will not need great military forces, but only so much as will suffice for you to guard your domains and realms."<sup>7</sup>

After reaching 'Akkā, Bahā sent an epistle (*Lawh-i-Sultān*) to the Shāh of Persia of quite a different character. "It is written with great humility and moderation. The writer speaks of himself as 'this slave,' and prays to God for help and courage to ad-



dress 'the King." He says that he sincerely desires the welfare of the Shāh, and has never resisted his authority. "Strife has never been and is not beloved of God, nor is the slaughter [of their fellow creatures] which some of the ignorant have committed, pleasing [to Him]." He appeals to the Shāh to grant toleration to his followers residing in Persia, and exhorts him to be just and seek the truth.<sup>8</sup> But this fair speech was not able to blot out of the mind of the Shāh the attempt which the Bābīs had made upon his life seventeen years previously, for when Bahā's messenger, a youth named Mīrzā Badī', drew near to present the epistle, the Shāh had him arrested, and on learning that the letter was from Bahā, commanded that he be put to death in a most cruel fashion. This occurred in July, 1869.

While still in Adrianople, Bahā composed an epistle<sup>9</sup> intended to prove to the Bābī community the validity of his claims. The proof of Muhammad had been his "verses," the proof of the Bāb had likewise been his "verses." This proof had been sufficient for the Bābīs, and on hearing the "verses" of the Bāb they had left all and followed him. Why, then, Bahā asks, will they not believe on him when he comes forward with similar "verses"? If "verses" were the sign of a Divine mission, then there were no grounds on which they could rightfully reject his claims.

But, as we have seen in the previous chapter, there were some Bābīs, notably Subh-i-Azal, who did reject Bahā's claims, and the strife waxed so fierce that the Turkish Government separated the brothers and sent

Bahā and his party to 'Akkā (Acre). There he and about seventy of his adherents arrived on August 30, 1868. The weather was very hot, and for a time the exiles suffered considerably from crowded quarters and bad food. Says Mīrzā Jawād in his *Historical Epitome*,<sup>10</sup> "So the [military] barracks had the honour 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." Later they were given an allowance of money instead of bread. The climate was very bad, and soon half of the exiles fell sick, and three of them died.<sup>12</sup> "After the lapse of some months," continues Mīrzā Jawād, "the hardships which befell them gave rise to doubt in the minds of those who were of the company of His Holiness our Master, 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 Bahā'u'llāh and his family were removed from the military barracks and given a house in the city of 'Akkā where they were fairly comfortable,<sup>11</sup> and they continued to live in the city for about nine years.

Soon after reaching 'Akkā, the Azalīs who had been sent to spy on Bahā's company began to cause the Bahā'īs great annoyance by attempting to arouse the natives of the city against them. The Muhammadans of Syria and Palestine are mostly Sunnites, and are much less tolerant than the Shī'ites towards heretics such as Bahā. Therefore in order to avoid trouble, Bahā and his followers took great pains in 'Akkā to conceal their beliefs from their Sunnite neighbours. They went to the mosques and said the Muslim prayers in the manner of the Sunnites; they also kept the Muslim month of fasting, and tried in every way possible to convince the Sunnites that they were one with them. Bahā strictly forbade his followers to circulate some of his writings in Syria and Palestine.<sup>13</sup> The Azalīs, therefore, according to Mīrzā Jawād,<sup>14</sup> began to circulate among the people of 'Akkā some of Bahā's "verses," with interpolations of their own, to the great embarrassment of the Bahā'īs! "Their numerous efforts to stir up mischief and their provocative actions caused bitter sorrows to all the Friends, and grievous trouble befell them."

Finally the Bahā'īs determined to get rid of the trouble-makers. When Bahā was consulted he is said to have strictly forbidden his followers to carry out their plan.<sup>15</sup> But seven of the Bahā'īs, on January 22, 1872, came upon three of the Azalīs in a house in 'Akkā and murdered them.<sup>17</sup> The Turkish authorities at once arrested Bahā and his sons and the whole Bahā'ī community, and they were kept in confinement for several days. Bahā and his sons were soon re-

leased. The seven murderers were sent to the harbour, where they were kept in prison for some years, and were later freed, on 'Abbās Efendi's ('Abdu'l-Bahā) making himself surety for them.<sup>18</sup> Sixteen of the other Bahā'is were kept in prison for six months, and were then released, in answer, says Mīrzā Jawād, to a prayer taught them by Bahā'u'llāh.<sup>15</sup> According to Subh-i-Azal, about twenty of the Azalis were murdered by the Bahā'is in 'Akkā at various times.<sup>15a</sup> Thus did the Bahā'is find rest from their enemies!

During the early part of the 'Akkā period Bahā composed a number of epistles which he addressed to various Christian rulers,<sup>20</sup> to the Czar of Russia, Napoleon III. of France, the Pope, Queen Victoria, the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, and also to the Sultān of Turkey and "The Chief" (some Turkish official).<sup>19</sup> In his epistle to the Sultān, which seems to have been written soon after reaching 'Akkā, Bahā violently denounces the Turkish Sovereign for the wrongs done to him and his followers, and complains of the harsh treatment he is receiving in 'Akkā. The Czar of Russia, on the other hand, is praised profusely for the help which one of his ambassadors had rendered Bahā, and is promised "a lofty station" as a reward. To the Pope, Bahā proclaims himself as God the Father, as the Comforter promised by Christ, and as Christ Himself come again, and bids him and all Christians accept him. "Dost thou dwell in palaces," he asks, "while the King of Manifestation is in the most ruined of abodes ['Akkā]? Leave palaces to those who desire them,

then advance to the Kingdom with spirituality and fragrance.”<sup>21</sup> The Emperor of Austria is censured for not stopping at ‘Akkā to visit Bahā when he was on his way to Jerusalem on pilgrimage. Queen Victoria is bidden to recognize him as her Lord, and to rule her subjects according to his directions. The conciliatory attitude adopted in this epistle may be accounted for by the fact that the British Consul-General at Baghdād had once offered to take Bahā under British protection.<sup>22</sup> Napoleon III., however, is severely reprimanded for neglecting an epistle which Bahā had previously sent him, and is told that “affairs shall be changed in thy Kingdom, and the empire shall depart from thy hands, as a punishment for thy action.”<sup>23</sup>

Bahā’u’llāh continued to live in ‘Akkā for about nine years. Then, to quote Mīrzā Jawād, in A. D. 1877 “he rented the palace of ‘Abdu’llāh Pāshā which lies to the north of ‘Akkā at a distance of about an hour and a half from the town; and at times he used to live in the town and at other times in the palace, until the year A. D. 1880, when he rented the palace of ‘Ūdī Khammār [in the Garden of Bahjī] situated in a northerly direction at a distance of half an hour from ‘Akkā. Most of his time he passed in this palace in the company of his three sons and his family<sup>24</sup> . . . sometimes he used to visit the town, and while he dwelt outside the town visitors . . . used to have the honour of seeing him after permission had been obtained by them, and used to spend some days and nights there.”<sup>24a</sup> The palaces and beautiful gardens

which Bahā at first rented and later bought were made possible for him by the money which poured to him from his followers in Persia.

During his sojourn in 'Akkā and its vicinity Bahā lived largely in seclusion, as Subh-i-Azal had done in Baghdād. His purpose in so doing was principally to veil himself from the gaze of men that his claim to Deity might seem more plausible. No one was allowed to come to 'Akkā to see him except by special permission. Each visitor was carefully prepared for his interview 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 of the flesh, he would see only a man, but if he was of the spirit he would see God.<sup>25</sup> When his expectations had been sufficiently aroused, the pilgrim was led before Bahā and was allowed to gaze for a few moments upon the "Blessed Perfection," care being taken that the "visitation" came to an end before the spell was broken. The almost magic effect of such interviews is seen in the account which Dr. Browne has given of his visit to 'Akkā, in A. D. 1890.<sup>26</sup>

After obtaining permission to make the journey, Dr. Browne travelled on horseback from Beirut along the beautiful Mediterranean seacoast towards 'Akkā. "The last day was perhaps the most delightful of all," he writes, "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 Bahā has stigmatized as 'the most desolate of countries.'" On reaching 'Akkā he

was greeted by Bahā's son 'Abbās Efendi ('Abdu'l-Bahā), "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 pleasant features," and was taken by him to the palace outside the city where Bahā resided. There he spent five days, and was deeply impressed by the hospitality of the Bahā'is, and by the "spiritual atmosphere" which pervaded the place and exercised a sort of magic influence on those who came near it.

"During the morning of the day after my installation at Behjé [Bahā's Palace] one of Bahā'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 ante-chamber my conductor paused for a moment while I removed my shoes.<sup>27</sup> 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 *tāj* 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 interview lasted twenty minutes, during which time Bahā spoke of the wrongs he had suffered and of his efforts to bring about peace and good will among the nations. "These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease," said he, "and all men be as one kindred and one family." He also read aloud one of his Tablets.

It is interesting to contrast with this friendly account of Dr. Browne's the impressions of an Azalī traveller who went to 'Akkā to see Bahā.<sup>84</sup> "The misleading of the Black Darkness," he writes, "brought me into the City of Blood, the town of Acre. . . . There I plainly saw the manifestation of plurality, to wit, the combination of thunder, lightning, darkness, and the thunder-bolt. . . . For 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 'Abbās Efendi ('Abdu'l-Bahā), whom he calls "the Whisperer," a name for the devil. "After that," he continues, "I saw the rest of the Wicked 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 *Bayān* or of any other religion. They are all devoid of knowledge, ignorant, short-sighted . . . hypocrites, corrupters of texts, blind imitators." After several days he was admitted to Bahā's audience-chamber. "When I was come there," he says, "and looked upon that Arch-idol . . . that rebellious Lucifer, that envious Iblis,<sup>28</sup> I saw a form on a throne, and heard the 'lowing of the calf.'"<sup>29</sup>

The location of Bahā in 'Akkā, which was much more accessible to the Persians than Cyprus, Subh-i-Azal's place of banishment, had no doubt considerable effect on the growth of Bahā's influence. For from the time he was taken to 'Akkā, numbers of his devoted followers began making the pilgrimage there in the hope of seeing their Lord. Bahā, however, did not encourage his followers in their desire to see him in the flesh. There was too great risk of their seeing and hearing things in 'Akkā which would cause their faith to falter,<sup>30</sup> and the presence of large numbers of ardent worshippers in the city would undoubtedly have led to complications with the native population. The Bahā'is of Persia were therefore told that if they

gave to Bahā the money they would have spent on their journey they would gain the same merit as if they had come before his Presence. But the intimate relationship which existed between him and his followers was not allowed to weaken. The place of personal interviews was taken by personal epistles, or "Tablets," which were sent by the hundred to the believers of Persia and other lands, answering their questions, or praising them for their fidelity to the Cause. Dr. Browne describes one of Bahā's couriers whom he met in Persia, an old man who used to go to 'Akkā each year carrying with him letters from the Bahā'īs of South Persia, and after the answers to these communications had been written, he conveyed them to their various destinations. His task was not without its perils, and he told Dr. Browne how on one occasion, when he had been arrested in some Persian village, he ate his whole packet of letters rather than let them fall into the hands of the enemy! Happy was the Bahā'ī who received an epistle from Bahā'-u'llāh! He would show it to his friends, who would kiss it and ask for copies of it, and would then lay it away among his choicest treasures. The secluded life which he led gave Bahā ample opportunity for writing these epistles, and he composed a vast number of them in addition to numerous longer treatises. All such "Tablets" written or dictated by him were considered by the Bahā'īs to be the Word of God.<sup>31</sup>

During this period the Bahā'īs of Persia continued to increase in numbers and influence. At the time of Bahā's death, in A. D. 1892, their numbers were esti-

mated by 'Dr. Browne at five hundred thousand,<sup>32</sup> but since they concealed their religion and outwardly appeared to be Muslims it was impossible to find out exactly how numerous they were. While there were uprisings of the Muslims against them from time to time, they usually managed to save their lives, and the number of Bahā'īs who were put to death was comparatively small. Mīrzā Jawād, the devoted disciple of Bahā, gives in his history a list of about thirty Bahā'īs who were martyred between A. D. 1867 and 1891. There may have been a few others, but it is not probable that Mīrzā Jawād omitted the names of many of those who were known to have died for the faith. As long as the Bahā'īs did not stir up trouble, the Persians were usually willing to leave them alone.

Bahā lived in 'Akkā, which he frequently referred to as "the Most Great Prison," for some twenty-four years. "In the later years of his sojourn at 'Akkā," says Mīrzā Jawād, "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 Bahā'u'llāh to an extent which neither writing nor utterance can express." He then quotes several of Bahā's sayings which reveal his sorrow. "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." <sup>88</sup> This sadness was due, says Mīrzā Jawād, to his knowledge of the events that would follow his death.

At length, at the age of seventy-six, Bahā fell sick, and after a brief illness he died on May 28, 1892. His body was buried in the house of his son-in-law Sayyid 'Alī in the Garden of Bahjī, and his tomb has become a shrine for the Bahā'īs who visit 'Akkā. No sooner had Bahā passed away than a serious schism occurred among his followers. We must leave the recital of this sad story for a later chapter.

## VIII

### THE TEACHINGS OF BAHĀ'U'LLĀH

**I**T is impossible in one brief chapter to give more than an outline of the teachings of Bahā. As was mentioned previously, Bahā was as prolific a writer as the Bāb, and is said to have composed in all some one hundred volumes. But unlike the Bāb, he did not write many long treatises. Most of his writings were fairly brief epistles addressed to individuals or groups of his followers in answer to questions raised by them, and while all these so-called "Tablets" are considered equally authoritative as the Word of God, no complete collection of them has been made, or can be made. They are, moreover, written in a style of Persian and Arabic<sup>1</sup> which is frequently quite difficult to understand, and even if one could gain access to all these numerous epistles (which is not possible), it would be an almost impossible task to digest them and give in orderly form a summary of their contents. As Dr. Browne discovered during his stay in Persia, the Bahā'is have *no* definite canon of Scripture. Not only all the writings of Bahā, but now all the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahā also are counted as "Scripture." A few of these epistles have been translated into English and other Western languages and are being circulated in Europe and America.

Notably a large and well edited book of 576 pages, entitled *Bahā'ī Scriptures*,<sup>3</sup> containing some of the principal writings of Bahā and 'Abdu'l-Bahā, was recently published by the Bahā'is of America, and any one who wishes to acquaint himself first-hand with the teachings of Bahā is referred to Part I of this volume.

The theological background of Bahā'ism is the same as that of Bābism. God in His Essence is impersonal and unknowable, and men can know Him only through His Manifestations. The greatest Manifestation who has yet appeared is Bahā'u'llāh. He is "He whom God shall manifest" predicted by the Bāb, he is the Comforter promised by Christ, he is God the Father manifest in the flesh. He is greater than all the previous Manifestations, for while they were incarnations of the Divine Attributes, he is the Manifestation of the Divine Essence itself, and can be known by no other save himself. For his sake the world and all therein was created. One word of his is sweeter than the words of all the people of the world. His coming has been predicted by Isaiah<sup>4</sup> and all previous prophets. One hair of his head is better before God than all there is in heaven and earth. He has knowledge which no one else possesses or is able to possess. Nothing can move between the heaven and the 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,<sup>5</sup> it is true, and there is no doubt therein; and no one has the right to oppose him, or say 'why' or 'wherefore.' . . . Verily no

account, shall be demanded of him for what he shall do." 6

On the appearance of Bahā it became incumbent upon all men of all religions to lay aside their former beliefs and practices and accept the New Manifestation. Like the Bāb, Bahā proposed to establish a universal Church-State, a Theocracy in which he was to stand in the place of God, and all kings and rulers were to obey him. Unlike the Bāb, he sought to attain this end by peaceful means, for he had seen the futility of religious war. His teachings and his laws were to regulate the individual and corporate life of mankind for the next one thousand years.

But while many of the precepts and ordinances of Bahā have been made available for Western readers in English translations, there has been one very serious omission. Strange to say, *Bahā'ī Scriptures entirely omits* (except for one brief paragraph) that one of Bahā'u'llāh's writings which more than all the rest deserves to be called "Scripture," namely, the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* (the "Most Holy Book"). The *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* is a little volume about the size of the Gospel of Mark, written in Arabic, which contains a summary of the laws laid down by Bahā for his followers. It is considered by the Bahā'ī leaders as the most important of Bahā's writings. For instance, 'Abdu'l-Bahā in his Will and Testament commanded that the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* be the rule of faith and practice for all Bahā'īs in all matters covered by it, and he mentioned no other of Bahā's writings in connection with it. "Unto the Most Holy Book every one

must turn,"<sup>7</sup> he writes, adding that matters not provided for in the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* are to be referred to the Universal House of Justice. The *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* is the Constitution, so to speak, according to which Bahā's World Empire is to be ruled for the next one thousand years. Then how has it happened that while scores of Bahā's epistles have been translated into English by the Bahā'is, the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* has not yet been translated and published by them, and is barely referred to in the large collection of *Bahā'ī Scriptures*? The reason is not far to seek. The *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* was written with Persian Bābīs, not American and European Christians, in mind. It was composed by Bahā at the urgent request of some of his followers after he claimed to be "He whom God shall manifest," and its purpose was to abrogate the impossible provisions in the *Bayān* of the Bāb, and to provide his followers with a set of regulations for life and worship better suited to their needs. Bahā disapproved of the publication and distribution of this book among non-Bahā'is, for it would have shown the Muslims that he had abrogated the *Koran* and set up a new religion of his own, and it would have proved equally offensive to the Christians because of its legalistic spirit and its similarity to Islām. Hence the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* is sometimes referred to, rarely quoted, and never circulated among the Bahā'is of the West! Since it is not available in English,<sup>8</sup> it will be necessary for me to give a fuller account of its contents than I would otherwise have done.

The book begins with a statement as to the abso-



lute necessity of a knowledge of and faith in Bahā for salvation. "Whosoever attaineth thereunto hath attained unto all good, and he who is deprived [thereof] is indeed of the people of error, even though he bringeth all [good] actions." Believers are then commanded to obey the precepts which follow. The first of these concerns prayer, or worship. Private worship is to be performed three times a day, morning, afternoon, and evening, while the worshipper faces "the Most Holy Region" ('Akkā), which God has made the centre of the universe. Worship is to consist of nine prostrations.<sup>9</sup> As in the *Bayān*, all congregational worship 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 one's worship unacceptable to God, as Muslim mullās say it does. All above fifteen years of age must say the prayers, but the old and sick are excused. If water for the ablutions before worship is not available, the worshipper must say five times, "In the Name of Allāh the Purest of the Pure," and then repeat the prayers. Women during their menstrual periods are not to say the prayers, but only to make ablution and repent ninety-five times during twenty-four hours, "Praise be to Allāh, Possessor of Appearance and Beauty!" During a journey one prostration is sufficient. When the regular prostrations have been completed, the worshipper must seat himself and repeat seventeen times, "Praise be to Allāh, Possessor of Dominion and Kingdom!" God is to be thanked

for His graciousness in making worship so easy for the believer!

Next come instructions for fasting. As enjoined by the Bāb, the nineteenth month of the Bābī year<sup>10</sup> is to be kept as a fast, and from sunrise to sunset food and drink and sexual intercourse are prohibited. Travellers, the sick, pregnant women, and those giving suck to their babes are excused from fasting. The five intercalary days are to be spent in entertaining relations and friends and feeding the poor, and Nōrūz,<sup>11</sup> the first day of the New Year, is to be observed as a feast.

Each day every believer should wash his hands, then his face, and having seated himself facing Allāh (turned towards Bahā in 'Akkā[?]), should say ninety-five times, "Allāh is the Most Splendid!" Murder, adultery, slander, and backbiting are forbidden.

Then the law of inheritance, very complicated and obscure, is set forth. Seven classes inherit, namely, children, wives, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and teachers, the share of each diminishing from the first to the last.<sup>12</sup> In the absence of one or more of these classes, the portion of the inheritance which belongs to it goes to the "House of Justice," which is to spend it for widows, orphans, and public works. There is to be a "House of Justice" in every city, consisting of at least nine men, who are God's trustees and representatives on earth.

All male believers who are able must make the pilgrimage to the House [of the Bāb in Shīrāz], but

women are excused. All Bahā'is must be engaged in some useful occupation, for work is worship. The kissing of the hands of men, and confessing one's sins to men are forbidden.<sup>12</sup> Believers are bidden to arise and serve the Cause, but not in such a way as to involve them in trouble with unbelievers. Austerities and ascetic practices are forbidden. If one enjoys Bahā's love a golden throne is not good enough for him, and if he doesn't the very dust will cry out to God for shame because he has sat upon it!

Next follows a statement which was intended to prevent any Bahā'ī from claiming to be another Manifestation. "Whoever claims a Mission (*amr*) before a full thousand years is a lying impostor . . . whoever shall interpret this verse, or explain it otherwise than it has been revealed obviously, is indeed deprived of the Spirit of God."<sup>16</sup>

Shaving the head [as the Muhammadans do] is forbidden. The hair [of men] should be dressed according to the prevailing custom, but it must not fall below the ears.<sup>15</sup>

The control of religious endowments is to belong to Bahā as long as he lives, then to his sons, and then to the House of Justice.

A thief is to be imprisoned for the first and second offence, and for the third he is to be branded on the forehead. "Do not let pity restrain you."<sup>14</sup>

The use of gold and silver plate and ornaments is not forbidden [as in Islām]. Knives and forks are to be used instead of the fingers in eating. Cleanliness is insisted upon.

Every father is commanded to educate his sons and daughters. If he fails to do so the House of Justice must supervise their education, charging the expenses to the father, or if he is poor, paying them out of charity funds.

If a man and woman commit adultery they must each pay nine misqāls of gold <sup>17</sup> to the House of Justice, and for a second offence the fine is to be doubled. "Whosoever sins must repent and turn to God,<sup>18</sup> for He forgives whom He will."

"We have made listening to music lawful for you," <sup>19</sup> but it must be dignified.

All differences among believers are to be referred to Bahā for settlement. "If you differ in any matter refer it to God so long as the Sun continues to shine from the horizon of this heaven; and when it hath set (that is, when Bahā dies), then refer it to what hath been revealed by Him."<sup>20</sup>

In every city there must be a feast for Bahā'īs every nineteen days, if only water is furnished the guests.

When a hunter is about to fire his gun at game he must name the Name of God, and the game will become lawful for him without its throat being cut [as in Islām].

If a man burns down a house purposely, he must be burned to death; and a murderer must be killed—or both may be imprisoned for life.

Marriage is obligatory for all, "that there may be people to remember Me." The consent of both parties and of their parents is necessary, that no quar-

reling may result. "Beware of taking more than two women, and he who is satisfied with one handmaid<sup>21</sup> will enjoy peace himself, and so will she, and there is no harm in taking a virgin for service."<sup>22</sup> A dowry of nineteen to ninety-five misqāls of gold<sup>23</sup> must be paid for their wives by city dwellers, and the same amount of silver by villagers. If a husband goes on a journey he must fix a definite date for his return. In case he does not keep his word and does not inform his wife, she must wait for nine months, after which she is free to marry again. If quarrels arise between a man and his wife, he is not to divorce her at once, but must wait for a year. In case they are not reconciled within that time he is then free to put her away, but may take her back at the end of any month so long as she has not married again.<sup>24</sup>

The traffic in slaves is forbidden. Cleanliness is enjoined. Legal impurity is abolished, and all people are to be considered clean, and are to be associated with. The prayers of people with dirty clothes won't ascend to God. The use of perfumes and attar of roses is enjoined, for God likes this. The books of the people of other religions may be read.<sup>25</sup>

The kings of the earth are then addressed and exhorted to accept and obey Bahā. He assures them that he has not come to take away their sovereignty but to rule men's hearts. "Blessed is the king who stands in my kingdom!" To the "King of Berlin" he says, "There is no God but me, the Abiding, the Unique, and the Eternal." Further on he says, "O kings of America and chiefs of the Republic—there is

no God but me, the Abiding, the Forgiver, and the Merciful." Then various cities in Persia are addressed, and praised or blamed according as they had treated him. Pages of empty words follow here.

All believers who possess more than one hundred misqāls of gold (two hundred and thirty-five dollars) must give nineteen per cent. of their property [to Bahā], that the remainder may become lawful for them.<sup>26</sup>

The nails are to be cut. A weekly bath must be taken in clean water sufficient to cover the whole body. Avoid Persian baths. Change the water in any pool which smells. It is also permissible to bathe by pouring water over one's body.

It is forbidden that a man marry the wife of his deceased father.<sup>27</sup> "I am ashamed," writes Bahā, "to speak of the matter of boys" (*i. e.*, sodomy).

The lips are not to be moved in prayer as one walks through the streets [as is sometimes done by Muslims]. Worship is to be performed in one's own home, or in the house of worship. Every one must make a will. There are to be two chief festivals, to celebrate the Manifestations of Bahā and of the Bāb.<sup>28</sup> When worshippers go to the house of worship they must sit in silence and listen to the chanting of the Word of God [Tablets of Bahā], for in this way a spiritual "state" is produced.

"God has permitted whoever wishes to learn foreign languages [to do so]," that the Word of God may be spread abroad.<sup>29</sup> As in the *Bayān*, wine and opium are prohibited. "A rational creature will not

partake of anything which takes away the reason." But while in the *Bayān* God forbade asking for anything, He has now removed this restriction, and believers may ask for whatever they want, particularly for things profitable in religion.

The dead are to be buried in pomp in coffins of stone or glass or wood, with rings on their fingers on which is to be engraved the following: "I have come from God and I return to Him, separated from all except Him, and clinging to His Name, the Compassionate and Merciful." The body must be wound in five cloths of silk or cotton (one is sufficient if the people are poor), and buried not further than one hour's journey from the city where death occurred.<sup>30</sup>

The prohibition in the *Bayān* of going aboard a ship and visiting foreign countries is abrogated by Bahā—"there is no God," he adds, "but me."

Then follows an appeal to the Bābīs of the Azalī sect to believe on him. "He who knows me has known the End [of his desire],<sup>31</sup> and he who turns to me has turned to the Object of Worship (God). . . . It is better to read one of my verses than to read all the books of the ancients and the moderns.<sup>32</sup> This is the saying of the Merciful (God) if you will hear it."

The *Bayān* forbade intermarriage with non-Bābīs. This command is abrogated. "Consort with all peoples with spirituality and fragrance." Believers are not to enter a house in the absence of its master without his permission. Both begging and giving to beggars is unlawful. If one is able to work he must do

so; if not, he should be cared for by the community. Quarreling, striking, and giving pain to others is forbidden.

The reading of the verses of God (Bahā) is required morning and evening. It is not good to become proud through reading and praying a great deal. Better is it to read one verse "with spirit and fragrance" than a great deal with weariness. One should not burden his spirit with what will cause him sorrow, but should think of what will make him happy.<sup>33</sup> Children must be taught to chant the word of God so sweetly in houses of worship that the hearts of hearers will be attracted.

The command of the Bāb that one's household effects be renewed every nineteen years must be obeyed if possible, but if not, God will forgive the failure to do so. Every one must wash his feet daily in summer and once every three days in winter.

Believers are to speak kindly to those who speak roughly to them. They are not to do evil to those who do evil to them, but must leave them to themselves, and trust in God.

The Word of God is not to be read from high pulpits [as in Persian mosques]. God likes it better if the reader sits on a chair.

Gambling and opium are unlawful. Invitations to feasts and weddings must be accepted with joy. It is forbidden to carry arms, except when necessary. Silk clothes are permitted, as was stated in the *Bayān*. "God has removed the restrictions regarding clothing and the beard,"<sup>34</sup> an act of grace from



Him." If God should make lawful what has been from the first unlawful, or vice versa, no one should find fault.

Then follow some passages which seem to be addressed to Bahā's rival brother Subh-i-Azal. "O rising place of opposition! Cease [wilfully] to close thine eyes; then speak of the truth amongst the people. By God! My tears flow over my cheeks because I see thee advancing after thy lust and turning aside from him who created thee and fashioned thee. . . . Return unto him humbled, abased, trembling. . . . verily, thy Lord is swift to repent, the Precious, the Merciful." The doctors of religion [of Islām?] are also addressed at length and urged to believe on Bahā. He says, "By God, the Real! today the books of the world and what is in them will not suffice for you, except only this Book <sup>35</sup> which speaks from the axis of the world." If any one is in doubt about the meaning of the Book he must "refer to the Branch which has shot forth from this Steadfast Trunk." <sup>36</sup> "This [Book] is the rule of guidance for everyone in heaven and on earth."

Beasts are not to be overloaded.<sup>37</sup> If one kills a man accidentally he must pay one hundred misqāls of gold (two hundred and thirty-five dollars) as compensation to the relatives of the deceased.

The book closes with the command that mankind choose one language and one character of those which already exist and adopt them for universal use in communicating with one another, for this will result in unity and harmony and civilization. And the state-

ment is added that the use of opium is unlawful, and no one who uses it belongs to Bahā.

Let it be clearly understood that the little book, the contents of which I have just given in the order (or disorder) in which Bahā arranged them, is not a collection of good maxims to be taken or rejected as one wills, but is *the fundamental code of laws according to which the moral, religious, social, political, and economic life of mankind for the next one thousand full years is to be controlled and directed*, according to Bahā and 'Abdu'l-Bahā. Every word of it is the Word of God, and it is the most perfect of all the Holy Books sent from God to man.<sup>38</sup>

Shortly before his death Bahā sent Dr. Browne a little manuscript, which contained a compendium of his principal teachings compiled especially for him.<sup>39</sup> These were in brief as follows:

(1) The abolition of religious war [as practised by the Muhammadans and Bābīs].

(2) Permission to all sects and peoples to unite in friendly intercourse.<sup>40</sup>

(3) Permission to study foreign languages, and the choice of one language and one character for all mankind.<sup>41</sup>

(4) Bahā'īs are to give loyal support to any king who protects them.<sup>42</sup>

(5) Bahā'īs are to submit to the laws and customs of the land in which they dwell.

(6) Promise of the "Most Great Peace."<sup>43</sup>

(7) All may follow their own taste in dress and wearing of the hair.

(8) Christian priests must abandon their seclusion and engage in useful service. They are permitted to marry.

(9) Sins are not to be confessed to men, but to God.

(10) The Bāb's command to destroy all books of science and philosophy is abrogated.

(11) The study of useful arts and sciences is encouraged.

(12) All men must learn and practice some craft, trade, or profession.

(13) The settlement of differences, the apportionment of alms, and the ordering of the affairs of the commonwealth generally, are entrusted to the "House of Justice."

(14) Pilgrimages to the tombs of saints and martyrs [as commanded by the Bāb] are no longer obligatory.

(15) The best form of government is a combination of a republic and a monarchy.

Bahā'īs sometimes say that Bahā had never studied in any school, and that these teachings of his must therefore have come to him direct from God. But this is not true. In his youth Bahā received a fairly good education in Persian and Arabic,<sup>45</sup> in the *Koran* and the traditions of Islām, as his writings clearly show.<sup>51</sup> He had also read the Bible with some care. After coming to 'Akkā we know that he saw the newspapers,<sup>44</sup> and he had a large library of his own and read much. He probably read also the books of the Christian Beirut Press.<sup>46</sup> He had ample opportunity

to acquaint himself with the thoughts and movements of the Western World, and the differences between his early book the *Iqān* (composed in Baghdād) and his later writings shows clearly the effect of these broadening influences. There is almost nothing that is original in Bahā's teachings. "The fact is," writes Dr. Browne after having studied Bahā'ism for more than thirty years,<sup>47</sup> "that, though the synthesis may be original, almost every single doctrine held by the Bābīs and Bahā'īs . . . was previously held and elaborated by one or another of the earlier cognate sects" of the Shī'ites in Persia. And other teachings which cannot be traced to a Persian source were derived either from the Bible or from contemporary Western thought. All teachings regarding love to one's enemies, kindness to the poor and needy, and the unity of mankind were taken directly from the Bible. "The most Great Peace" goes back to Isaiah 11. Slavery had already been abolished by England and America when Bahā forbade it. The Bāb had proposed to make Persian the language of the world when his Bābī State should have become universal, and Bābīs were forbidden to learn other languages. Bahā realized that this was impracticable, permitted the learning of other languages, and commanded that some one language be made universal,<sup>48</sup> without saying which one it was to be!

The ethical teachings of Bahā are, to quote Dr. Browne again, "in themselves admirable, though inferior, in my opinion, both in beauty and simplicity to the teachings of Christ." Any unprejudiced reader

will agree that the wearisome effusions of Bahā are inferior in spiritual freshness and power not only to the matchless parables of Jesus but also to the *Confessions* of Augustine, the *Pilgrim's Progress* of Bunyan, and the sermons of Alexander Whyte and J. H. Jowett. Had Bahā thought of himself merely as one of the many preachers of reform and progress who have been sent to guide mankind we would have thanked God for his vision of peace and unity and good will among men. But when he adds to his moral precepts the claim that he is the Manifestation of the Essence of God, the Father<sup>49</sup> revealed in the flesh, the only hope of the world for the next thousand years, and commands all mankind to obey and worship him alone, our judgment of him must necessarily be different.<sup>50</sup>

## IX

### 'ABDU'L-BAHĀ

**B**AHĀ'U'LLĀH, remembering the quarrels over the succession which had resulted first in the split between the Shaykhīs and Bābīs, and later in the schism between the Azalīs and Bahā'īs, attempted to forestall the occurrence of any such strife and division among his followers after his death. Foreseeing trouble, no doubt, he devoted most of his last Will and Testament to an appeal for peace and unity. "The purpose of this Oppressed One," he says, "in enduring these adversities and calamities, the revelation of the verses and the manifestation of the proofs, has been to quench the fire of hatred and animosity. . . . The creed of God is for love and union; make it not the cause of discord and disunion. . . . He hath forbidden dispute and strife with an absolute prohibition in the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas*. . . . O servants, make not the cause of order to be the cause of confusion, and make not the reason of union to be the occasion of discord." <sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately these injunctions were unavailing, for almost immediately after Bahā's death a bitter quarrel arose among his sons. "Alas, alas for that we see today!" writes Mīrzā Jawād.<sup>3</sup> "All these spiritual virtues and humane practices [of Bahā'-

u'llāh] have undergone a complete change. Concord has been replaced by dissension, constancy by cruelty, and affection by enmity. Dissent and mutual avoidance have appeared in this community . . . antagonism and separation arose between father and son, brother and sister, husband and wife, and so forth; nay, God be our refuge! even envy and hatred." The cause of this dissension was, according to Mīrzā Jawād, "the love of self and seeking after supremacy" of 'Abbās Efendi,<sup>1</sup> the eldest son of Bahā, and his opposition to the last Testament of his father. "On the ninth day after the Ascension [*i. e.*, the death of Bahā'u'llāh]," he writes, "'Abbās Efendi chose nine persons from amongst the Companions, one of whom was the author [Mīrzā Jawād], and disclosed to them this document [Bahā's Testament], concealing, however, a portion of it with a blue leaf [of paper] without any reason or justification, and gave it to them that they might enjoy the blessing of its perusal . . . one of them . . . read it . . . to the place concealed by the blue leaf, whereupon 'Abbās Efendi said to the persons above mentioned, 'Verily a portion of this book is concealed for a good reason, because the time doth not admit of its full disclosure.' . . . Let it not be hidden from persons of discernment that the injunctions set forth in the above-mentioned book all refer to this community generally; how then could it be right for 'Abbās Efendi to disclose what he wished and conceal a portion thereof? For there is no doubt that if what was concealed had not been suitable [for general pub-

lication] His Holiness Bahā'u'llāh would not have written it in his august writing."

According to the Testament (as it has been published by 'Abbās Efendi), all of Bahā's sons and relatives are bidden to "look to the 'Most Mighty Branch' (*Ghusn-i-A'zam*)," the title given by Bahā to 'Abbās Efendi, and it appears that Bahā intended that he should be the leader of the Movement after his death. Of Muhammad 'Alī, the eldest son by his second wife, entitled the "Most Great Branch" (*Ghusn-i-Akbar*), Bahā says, "Verily God hath ordained the station of the 'Most Great Branch' after the station of the former . . . we have surely chosen the 'Most Great Branch' after the 'Most Mighty Branch' as a command from the All-knowing, the Omniscient."<sup>4</sup> But Bahā never intended that his son or any of his successors should claim a rank equal to his own. We have already seen how in the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* some twenty years before his death he carefully guarded against such an eventuality, saying that any one who claimed to be a Manifestation before a thousand years was a liar and a prevaricator. But 'Abbās Efendi, though he took the name 'Abdu'l-Bahā ("the Slave of Bahā"), and ever professed absolute devotion to his father's memory, soon began to make claims for himself, and allow others to make claims for him, which seemed blasphemous to many of the Bahā'īs. "'Abbās Efendi," writes Mirzā Jawād, "after he had attained to supremacy . . . claimed such lofty stations and high degrees as belong exclusively to Divine Theophanies."



Some of the lofty sayings of 'Abbās Efendi which Mīrzā Jawād quotes are the following: "The Goal and Sum of all are the products of this Pen, and the Proof is that which this tongue utters." "This servant is the expositor of the Perspicuous Book, and whatever of God's writings is not confirmed by this servant is not worthy of credence."<sup>5</sup> And in another place he says, "you must ask him ['Abbās Efendi] regarding the meaning of the texts of the verses. Whatsoever he says is correct. Without his will, not a word shall any one utter."<sup>6</sup> He did not say that he was a New Manifestation, but he claimed that he alone had the authority to interpret Bahā's writings, and that his own writings were equally authoritative with those of his father. These claims are accepted by modern Bahā'is.<sup>7</sup>

Muhammad 'Alī, the "Most Great Branch," became the leader of the opposition to the claims of his half-brother. He and his party called themselves the "Unitarians," while they were stigmatized by 'Abbās Efendi and his followers as "Violators of the Covenant." The strife waxed fierce, and much was said and done that was unseemly. The "Unitarians" sought a conference with 'Abdu'l-Bahā's party that they might refer the question to Bahā's writings, as he had bade them do in case a difference should arise among them, but the proposal was not accepted. Each party accused the other of tampering with the writings of Bahā'u'llāh to make them conform to their own purposes. 'Abdu'l-Bahā is said by Mīrzā Jawād to have "magnified his gifts" to those who flattered

him with high titles, and so "they exaggerated the more, and carried matters to the point of polytheism." Later he deprived his brothers of their allowances, so that they began to be in want.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, after five years of strife, Janāb-i-Khādimu'llāh, who had first encouraged Bahā to put forward his claim to be a Manifestation, and had been his lifelong amanuensis, invited all the companions to the shrine of his Master, and addressed them as follows:<sup>9</sup> "This servant hath been silent all this time and hath not uttered a word, for fear of giving rise to dissension. Now, however, I perceive that my silence causeth increase of discord in God's Religion; therefore I say unto you that the deeds and words which have issued from 'Abbās Efendi and his company are all contrary to God's commands, and at variance with His injunctions revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The covenant and Promise mentioned aforetime in the Immaculate Writings refer to previous and subsequent Theophanies, but 'Abbās Efendi hath appropriated them to himself, and ye have so accepted them, wherein ye have greatly erred."

'Abbās Efendi was informed of what was going on, and he immediately appeared on the scene, seized the old man by the hand, and "expelled him from the house bareheaded and barefooted, while his followers beat him on the head and face." Paying no attention to his protests, they dragged him to the tomb of Bahā, "where 'Abbās Efendi struck him with his hand a painful blow," after which he was imprisoned in a stable. Later, after being released, he went one

day to the house of 'Abbās Efendi in 'Akkā, hoping to have a conference with him about the situation, but he was refused admittance, and finally was handed over to the police. In A. D. 1901 he died, and all the relics and writings of Bahā which he had in his possession were taken away by night by 'Abbās Efendi.<sup>10</sup>

Writing of a pamphlet composed about this time by one of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's zealous followers, Dr. Browne remarks:<sup>11</sup> "One fact which is very clearly brought out by this pamphlet is that the detestation in which the followers of 'Abbās Efendi hold the rival faction of his half-brother Muhammad 'Alī equals, if it does not exceed, that in which the Bahā'īs hold the Azalīs. . . . This second schism amongst the Bābī community . . . was singularly fierce and bitter." And in another place<sup>12</sup> he writes of the same quarrel: "This last schism, I confess, and the bitterness to which it gave rise, created a very painful impression on my mind,<sup>13</sup> for, as I have repeatedly inquired of my Bahā'ī friends, where is the compelling and constraining power which they regard as the essential and incontrovertible sign of the Divine Word, when, in the face of such texts as 'Associate with [the followers of all] religions with spirituality and fragrance' and 'ye are all the fruit of one Tree and the leaves of one Branch,' they can show such bitter animosity towards those of their own household?"<sup>14</sup>

Nor did the quarrel always stop with angry words and blows. Dr. Browne has published evidence<sup>15</sup>

which proves conclusively that at least in one instance the old Bābī methods were resorted to by 'Abbās Efendi to get rid of a dangerous enemy. A certain Mīrzā Yahyā, who had been first an Azalī, then had become a Bahā'ī, and finally had given his whole-hearted support to Muhammad 'Alī, was carrying on an active propaganda against 'Abbās Efendi. Finally, "God's patience was exhausted and His anger moved to destroy the offender." 'Abdu'l-Bahā issued a "Tablet" in which he commanded Mīrzā Yahyā to desist from his opposition and repent, if perchance he might be forgiven. "For if not, then expect the Divine Vengeance, and look for blackness of face (disgrace) in both worlds. . . . For abasement, remorse, and disgrace shall be the portion of those who violate the Covenant of the High, the Mighty." At 'Abdu'l-Bahā's orders, the "Tablet" was read to Mīrzā Yahyā, but he remained obdurate. A few nights later Mīrzā Yahyā was found in a serious condition with blood flowing from his throat, and after several days he died.<sup>16</sup> This occurred in Jedda (near Mecca) in October, 1898. 'Abbās Efendi's agent, Hājji Mullā Husayn, who had been sent to read the "Tablet" to the unfortunate man, thus reported his death: "God, Mighty is His glory, has removed Yahyā, that incorrigible Covenant-breaker. . . . The simoon of Divine Wrath blew, and the gale of Celestial Anger breathed, and his [Yahyā's] darkened spirit, fulfilled with envy and hatred, descended to the abyss of Hell." A pamphlet was published by another of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's fol-

lowers describing this event as a remarkable instance of his Master's foreknowledge and power. He says that never was so clear a threat followed by so swift and condign a punishment, or so explicit a prophecy so speedily accomplished; for though God's patience is almost inexhaustible, there at last comes an end to it, and the guilty must perish. According to the opponents of 'Abdu'l-Bahā, this was not the only instance in which the "Divine Wrath" found it necessary to remove troublesome "covenant-breakers."<sup>17</sup>

While these events were taking place in the East, the first Bahā'ī missionary to the West was busily engaged in preaching and making converts in America. This was Dr. Khayru'llāh, a Syrian Christian by birth, who was led to become a Bahā'ī in Egypt, and in A. D. 1893 went to Chicago and there began to carry on an active propaganda for Bahā'ism, giving lectures and publishing in English the writings of Bahā'u'llāh. After a few years he claimed to have made hundreds of converts. A most interesting summary of his course of lectures was sent to Dr. Browne by one of his hearers, and has been published by him.<sup>18</sup> The first ten lectures had little to do with Bahā'ism, but dealt with metaphysics, numbers, dreams, allegorical interpretations of the Bible, prayer, etc. But the intense curiosity of his hearers was aroused by the promise of the revelation of some mystery in the eleventh lesson. Accordingly, in Lecture Eleven the appearance of the Bāb, Bahā, and 'Abdu'l-Bahā was announced. The Bāb, according to Dr.

Khayru'llāh, had proclaimed that the Father had come. Bahā was the Father, the Incarnation of God, and 'Abbās Efendi was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Millennium, he said, was to come in A. D. 1917, when one-third of the people of the earth would become Bahā'is. He stated that there were at that time (A. D. 1898) fifty-five million Bahā'is. He applied the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation to the times of Bahā. The Napoleons were the Anti-Christ. "We have been taught nothing about the life and character of Bahā," writes Dr. Browne's correspondent. "No ethics, no religious life, does he pretend to teach." Only those who would write a letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahā giving him their allegiance were allowed to attend more than thirteen lectures, but those who wrote the letter were promised great spiritual gifts, and a knowledge of the "Greatest Name" of God. "I am sorry to say," she continues, "that some people have sent the letter for the sake of the rest of the teaching and for a mysterious something which they hope to get." "An air of mystery is over the whole affair." The converts were not told that any books had been written about the Bāb or Bahā, and all of them were hopelessly ignorant of the history of the movement. One of the most enthusiastic believers, when asked who Subh-i-Azal was, said "that she had heard him lecture—she thought he was one of the Hindoo Swamis!"

In A. D. 1895, Dr. Khayru'llāh divorced his wife (who had remained in Egypt) and married an English woman.<sup>69</sup> He continued to propagate his faith and

organized groups of converts in New York, Philadelphia, Ithaca, Kansas City, and Kenosha, as well as in Chicago. In A. D. 1898, Mrs. Phoebe Hearst asked him to accompany her and a group of American Bahā'īs on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Bahā'u'llāh. He accepted her invitation, and journeyed with the party to 'Akkā, doing missionary work in Europe en route. On his arrival 'Abdu'l-Bahā gave Dr. Khayru'llāh a cordial reception, and kissed him, saying, "Welcome to thee, O Bahā's Peter, O second Columbus, Conqueror of America!" Moreover, he had a fez put on his head as a mark of honour, and took him to the tomb of Bahā, telling him "that he was the first pilgrim to whom the door of this chamber had been opened." He was also given the unique honour of joining 'Abdu'l-Bahā in breaking ground for the mausoleum of the Bāb<sup>19</sup> which he was about to build on Mount Carmel. "This is an honour which none of the believers except thee has enjoyed," said 'Abdu'l-Bahā. He also gave him the title of "Shepherd of God's flocks in America."

Dr. Khayru'llāh remained six months in 'Akkā. During the time he was there both he and the American pilgrims were carefully guarded by 'Abdu'l-Bahā and were not permitted to meet Muhammad 'Alī and his followers, and every possible effort was made to prejudice them against these "Covenant-breakers." But, in spite of these precautions, the relationship between 'Abdu'l-Bahā and Dr. Khayru'llāh began after a while to become strained. They disagreed on certain points of theology, and 'Abdu'l-

Bahā refused to discuss matters further with his speculative missionary. Dr. Khayru'llāh asked for some of Bahā'u'llāh's writings, but his request was refused. Some of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's words to the American ladies also displeased Dr. Khayru'llāh, as, for instance, his saying that his photograph "would only be taken when his Father's crown should be placed on his head and he should be led forth to martyrdom, when thousands of rifle bullets should pierce his body." <sup>20</sup>

After returning to America, Dr. Khayru'llāh definitely broke with 'Abbās Efendi and joined the party of Muhammad 'Alī, and several hundred of the American Bahā'īs <sup>21</sup> followed him. Then began in Chicago the struggle which had been raging in 'Akkā and the East since Bahā's death. "The Chicago and Kenosha assemblies were rent asunder. In the correspondence . . . they hurl at each other such terms as falsehood, lie, malevolence, injustice," <sup>22</sup> etc. 'Abbās Efendi immediately took vigorous steps to destroy Dr. Khayru'llāh's supremacy in America and keep hold of the American believers. In A. D. 1900 'Abdu'l-Karīm was sent from 'Akkā to Khayru'llāh himself to try to win him back. "'Abdu'l-Karīm promised me plenty of money," says Dr. Khayru'llāh, "and when I refused he denounced me, and prohibited believers from buying or reading my book." <sup>23</sup>

A little later Hājji Mīrzā Hasan also came to America seeking to win back Dr. Khayru'llāh. "I came here especially to bring you back to your al-



legiance to 'Abbās Efendi," said he to the apostate, "and I am prepared to stay ten years, if necessary. If you return . . . I will cause the American believers to follow you as head in everything. . . . If you will not listen to me . . . your abode will be in the bowels of the earth. . . . If 'Abbās Efendi should give me the word to cut you in pieces, or to tear your eyes out, or to kill you, I will do so at once." He then cited the fate of Mīrzā Yahyā as a warning of what would happen to him if he remained obstinate.<sup>24</sup> Dr. Khayru'llāh, however, never returned to the fold. In A. D. 1902, Mīrzā Abu'l-Fazl, of Gul-pāyagān,<sup>25</sup> one of the most famous of the Bahā'ī missionaries, was sent to continue the campaign for 'Abbās Efendi in America, and stayed there several years.

Meanwhile the conduct of 'Abbās Efendi in 'Akkā, and the strife between him and his brother, led the Turkish authorities to confine him once more to the town of 'Akkā, after he had been free to travel about Syria for some twenty years. This confinement lasted for seven years (1901-1908), and was terminated by the Turkish Revolution of A. D. 1908. He was permitted to receive pilgrims, however, and many came to him from the East and some from the West. The Western pilgrims who visited 'Akkā at this time picture 'Abdu'l-Bahā as spending his time in deeds of loving service. "It is the custom of 'Abdu'l-Bahā each week, on Friday morning," writes one, "to distribute alms to the poor. From his own scanty store he gives a little to each one of the needy who

come to him to ask assistance.”<sup>26</sup> The writer goes on to describe the crowd of a hundred beggars whom he had seen waiting to receive money from ‘Abdu’l-Bahā.<sup>27</sup> One of my Persian friends, who went from Turkeṣtān to ‘Akkā, mostly on foot, about this time, says that he saw nothing of this care of the poor during the seventy days he was in ‘Akkā. ‘Abbās Efendi did a good deal of entertaining, but it was the officials, not the poor, who were his guests. It is probable that the sights which wealthy American Bahā’īs saw in ‘Akkā differed considerably from those seen by poor Persian pilgrims. The Americans seem to have heard nothing, for example, of the strife which had split up Bahā’s family into two hostile camps. “Five days we remained within those walls,” writes Mr. Chase, “prisoners with Him who dwells in that ‘Greatest Prison.’”<sup>28</sup> It is a prison of peace, of love and service. No wish, no desire is there save the good of mankind, the peace of the world. . . . All troubles, tumults, worries or anxieties for worldly things are barred out there.”<sup>29</sup> “These men are Lovers,” says Mr. Phelps, “lovers of God, of their Master and Teacher, and of each other, and of all mankind.”<sup>30</sup>

‘Abdu’l-Bahā, like his father, carried on a large correspondence with the believers in Persia and elsewhere. By the strength of his personality and the influence which he exercised over his followers he was able to draw the great majority of the Bahā’īs of the world after him. His “Tablets” were as highly esteemed as those of his father had been. But

while he was held to be Christ<sup>81</sup> by the Americans he lived among the Sunnites of 'Akkā as a Muhammadan, carefully saying the Sunni form of prayers in the mosque, keeping the fast of Ramazān, and never hinting to his neighbours that he was other than a faithful adherent of Islām. The Bahā'ī women continued to wear the veil. All the marriages in the family were performed by a Sunni Qādī according to Muhammadan law.

In A. D. 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahā left Syria for a tour of the West. He spent some time in London and Paris, giving addresses and talking with many inquirers, and then returned to Egypt and Syria. In the spring of 1912 he sailed for America, where he remained for seven months, travelling all over the country, and addressing all sorts of groups and assemblies. While in Chicago he dedicated the grounds for the *Mashriqu'l-Azkār*, the Bahā'ī Temple, which may be seen today at Wilmette.<sup>82</sup> He then revisited Great Britain and France, after which he proceeded to Germany and Austria, then to Egypt, and on December 5, 1913, he returned once more to Haifa.

In the addresses given in Europe and America, and in his various other utterances, 'Abdu'l-Bahā continued to carry out the liberalizing tendencies which we have already noted in the teachings of Bahā'u'llāh. The Bābīs are now left far out of sight, and even much of Bahā's teaching is kept in the background, and doctrines more congenial to the spirit of the West are brought to the front. Thus at Clifton, England (January 16, 1913), 'Abdu'l-Bahā

said: "Nearly sixty years ago,<sup>33</sup> when the horizon of the Orient was in a state of the utmost gloom, warfare existed and there was enmity between the various creeds; darkness brooded over the children of men and foul clouds of ignorance hid the sky—at such a time His Highness Bahā'u'llāh arose from the horizon of Persia like unto a shining sun. He boldly proclaimed peace, writing to the kings of the earth and calling upon them to arise and assist in the hoisting of this banner. In order to bring peace out of the chaos, he established certain precepts or principles." And then he proceeds to enumerate and explain ten of the "principles" of Bahā'u'llāh. Briefly they are as follows:

- (1) "The independent investigation of truth."<sup>34</sup>
- (2) "The oneness of the human race."<sup>35</sup> "God is the real Father, all are His children."<sup>36</sup>
- (3) "International Peace."
- (4) "The conformity of religion to science and reason."<sup>37</sup>
- (5) "Religious, racial, political, and patriotic prejudice" must be banished.
- (6) "The equality of men and women."<sup>38</sup>
- (7) "All classes of society are to work together in love and harmony."<sup>39</sup>
- (8) "The parliament of man" as a court of last appeal in international questions.<sup>40</sup>
- (9) "Universal education."<sup>41</sup>
- (10) "A universal language."

It is very instructive to compare this list with that drawn up by Bahā himself which was given in the

previous chapter. In these "principles" 'Abdu'l-Bahā has succeeded perfectly in shaking off every vestige of the old Bābī order and has so completely clothed his Movement in the new garments of Western thought that there is nothing whatever left which a Christian Englishman or American could not heartily endorse! As Dr. Browne remarks, there has probably been no other religion which has so completely changed its character in the same length of time. Compare 'Abbās Efendi's pacific addresses in Christian churches in America with the fiery speeches of Hazrat-i-Quddūs at Shaykh Tabarsī, and remember that 'Abbās Efendi's father was one of those who was eager (if not able) to take an active part in the Bābī insurrection! The early exclusiveness of the Bābīs was also in a measure put aside by 'Abdu'l-Bahā, and all religions were said to be true. "Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, the Bāb, and Bahā'u'llāh are one in spirit and reality."<sup>42</sup> "His Holiness Bahā'u'llāh has commanded that a place be built for all the religionists of the world, that all religions and races and sects may gather together."<sup>43</sup> The Bahā'ī Movement includes *all*. "Whoever acts completely in accordance with the teachings of Christ is a Bahā'ī."<sup>44</sup> "By religion we mean those necessary bonds which unite the world of humanity."<sup>45</sup> All differences of whatever sort are to be put aside, and all mankind are to realize their oneness in Bahā'u'llāh.<sup>46</sup>

But while these ethical and humanitarian teachings to which few people would object were always

placed in the foreground by 'Abdu'l-Bahā in his addresses to Christians, the careful reader will note that the older doctrines still linger in the background. Though Muhammad was usually passed by in silence, he was nevertheless considered by 'Abdu'l-Bahā as one of the great Divine Manifestations, greater, in fact, than Christ. Bahā'u'llāh is God Manifest—"This is the day in which the Lord of Hosts has come down from heaven on the clouds of glory."<sup>47</sup> His Manifestation is greater than any which has preceded it. "The Abhā Beauty is the Supreme Manifestation of God and the Dayspring of His Most Divine Essence."<sup>48</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahā, who knows men's inmost hearts,<sup>49</sup> is the infallible expositor of the Word of God. "Whatever emanates from the Centre of the Covenant ['Abdu'l-Bahā] is right . . . while everything else is error . . . whoever deviated the least from the Centre of the Covenant is of the people of treachery and well deserves the wrath of God."<sup>50</sup> "All must obey Him; all must turn to Him . . . whatsoever He says is true."<sup>51</sup> That is, no one is free to express any opinion of his own on any matter which is in any way at variance with the teachings of 'Abdu'l-Bahā. In other words, the world unity which is sought is to be brought about by a slavish imitation by all men everywhere of this one individual. "Beware! beware!" he said to the Bahā'is of Chicago, "lest any one declare his own ideas."<sup>52</sup>

This warning was needed, for there were indeed many things in 'Abdu'l-Bahā's utterances to which

objection might be taken. For example, he said, "Bahā'u'llāh belonged to the royal family of Persia,"<sup>53</sup> a statement which is false. Again, "The proclamation of his manifestation and mission was made in Baghdād. . . . Afterwards he left the city and went alone into the mountains of Kurdistān."<sup>54</sup> As we have shown previously, Bahā did not proclaim himself till *some fourteen years later* in Adrianople. And again, "The Blessed Perfection was a prisoner twenty-five years. During all this time he was subjected to the indignities and revilement of the people."<sup>55</sup> "All the time of the sojourn of the Blessed Perfection . . . in this mortal world, He was either restrained with chains or kept under hanging swords, enduring the most painful afflictions."<sup>56</sup> As we saw in Chapter VII, Bahā lived during most of his years in 'Akkā in a large and comfortable Palace in ease and comparative freedom. Again, Qurratu'l-'Ayn, the Bābī heroine, 'Abdu'l-Bahā called a "Bahā'ī,"<sup>57</sup> whereas her rank among the Bābīs was much higher than that of Bahā. In speaking of Nāsiru'd-Dīn Shāh he says, "There was not a day during which he did not kill many people,"<sup>58</sup> a gross exaggeration. Again, "For the establishment of International Peace the blood of twenty thousand Bahā'īs was spilt."<sup>59</sup> As a matter of fact, it is doubtful whether there have been in all more than two hundred Bahā'ī martyrs. If the Bābīs are counted as Bahā'īs, a fact which is strenuously denied by Bahā in his conciliatory epistle to the Shāh, there were certainly not more than two or three thousand of them

killed in the various insurrections in Persia. And to say that either the Bābīs or the Bahā'īs died for International Peace is, to put it mildly, an historical error. Nor is 'Abdu'l-Bahā's knowledge of Bible history any more accurate than that of the history of the Bābīs. "Sarah was the sister of Abraham's mother."<sup>60</sup> "Moses lived in the wilderness of Terah."<sup>61</sup> "Before the rise of Christ it is a fact that in Persia the name of Moses had not been heard."<sup>62</sup>

But perhaps the most serious misstatements which 'Abdu'l-Bahā made were those regarding the influence which his father had exerted in Persia and the East. "In the Orient," he said in a church in Brooklyn, "the various peoples and nations were in a state of antagonism and strife, manifesting the utmost enmity and hatred toward one another. Darkness encompassed the world of mankind. At such a time as this, Bahā'u'llāh appeared. He removed all the imitations and prejudices which had caused separation and misunderstanding . . . when this was accomplished Muhammadans, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists all were united in actual fellowship and love."<sup>63</sup> And again, "We have for our subject . . . the reconciliation of the religious systems of the world. . . . Do not question the practicability of this and be not astonished. It has been effected and accomplished in Persia. . . . No traces of discord or differences remain; the utmost love, kindness, and unity are apparent. They are united and live together like a single family in harmony and



accord. 'Discord and strife have passed away. Love and fellowship now prevail instead.' <sup>64</sup> The impression which this passage gives is that Bahā'ism is the dominant religion in Persia, and that because of it religious strife has disappeared. As a matter of fact, the Bahā'is form only a small minority in Persia. The appearance of the Bābī Movement eighty years ago led, not to peace and unity, but to such hatred and bitterness as Persia has seldom seen; and though the followers of Bahā have laid aside the sword they are the most quarrelsome of all the sects in Persia. And even within the Bahā'ī Church it would be far from true to say that "discord and strife have passed away." Such statements might be made in America without fear of contradiction. To us who live in Persia they seem extremely ludicrous. Yet, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahā, we must all accept every one of them without question, for "whatsoever he says is true," and "whoever deviates the least from the Centre of the Covenant ['Abdu'l-Bahā] is of the people of treachery, and well deserves the wrath of God."

After his return from the West, 'Abdu'l-Bahā remained in Haifa (near 'Akkā) until his death. During the Great War he is said to have done much for the relief of the famine-stricken peoples about him, and to have been most generous in giving of his own provisions to the poor.<sup>65</sup> Finally Haifa fell into the hands of the British, and Turkish rule came to an end (September 23, 1918). On April 27, 1920, the Military Governor of Haifa, in recognition of his

services during the War, conferred on 'Abdu'l-Bahā a Knighthood of the British Empire, and he became "Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahā 'Abbās, K.B.E." <sup>66</sup> He continued to carry on his work actively to the end of his life, going to the Muhammadan mosque for the prayers, visiting the poor, and dictating letters. After a brief illness he died on November 28, 1921. The funeral took place the next day. A great multitude attended, consisting of officials, representatives of the various religions, men, women and children, both rich and poor. Muslims, <sup>67</sup> Jews, and Christians gave addresses eulogizing the one who had passed away. The body was buried beside that of the Bāb <sup>68</sup> on Mount Carmel in a beautiful mausoleum which 'Abdu'l-Bahā had himself erected. Messages of condolence were sent to the family of the deceased by Mr. Winston Churchill, Viscount Allenby, and many other notable people.

## X

### SHOGHI EFENDI

**A**S we have seen in the previous chapter, Bahā'u'llāh had clearly stated in his Testament that his younger son Muhammad 'Ali ("The Most Great Branch") was to succeed 'Abbās Efendi ("The Most Mighty Branch") in the leadership of the Movement.<sup>1</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahā, however, disregarded this provision, and appointed as his successor Shoghi Efendi, the eldest son of his eldest daughter, then twenty-five years of age. Remembering the strife which had arisen in the family on the death of Bahā, 'Abdu'l-Bahā devoted a large section of his Will and Testament<sup>2</sup> to the question of his successor, naming Shoghi Efendi explicitly, and charging all to accept and obey him as the "Guardian of the Cause."<sup>3</sup> "He is the expounder of the words of God, and after him will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendants."<sup>28</sup>

The "Universal House of Justice"<sup>4</sup> is to be associated with Shoghi Efendi in the government of the Movement. According to the Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahā, "whatsoever they decide is of God. Whosoever obeyeth him not, neither obeyeth them, hath not obeyed God; whoso rebelleth against him and against them hath rebelled against God; whoso opposeth him hath opposed God; whoso contendeth with him hath

contended with God . . . whoso denieth him hath denied God; whoso disbelieveth in him hath disbelieved in God. . . . May the wrath, the fierce indignation, the vengeance of God rest upon him! . . . Beware, beware, lest the days after the ascension [the death of Bahā'u'llāh] be repeated. . . . My object is to show that the Hands<sup>5</sup> of the Cause of God must be ever watchful and so soon as they find any one beginning to oppose and protest against the Guardian of the Cause of God, cast him out from the congregation of the people of Bahā and in no wise accept any excuse from him.”<sup>6</sup>

The “Hands of the Cause of God,” a council of nine men who are to labour for the advancement of the Cause, are to be appointed by Shoghi Efendi, with whom they are to be associated. “All must be under his shadow and obey his command. Should any . . . disobey and seek division, the wrath of God and His vengeance will be upon him, for he will have caused a breach in the true faith of God.”<sup>7</sup> Shoghi Efendi is also to be “the sacred head and the distinguished member for life” of the Universal House of Justice whenever it shall be established. “Should any of the members [of this body] commit a sin, injurious to the common weal, the Guardian of the Cause of God hath at his own discretion the right to expel him.” “Unto the Most Holy Book (the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas*) every one must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice.”<sup>8</sup> The Testament closes with a repetition of the charge to all to follow and

obey Shoghi Efendi implicitly in everything. "To none is given the right to put forth his own opinion or express his particular convictions. All must seek guidance and turn unto the Centre of the Cause and the House of Justice." <sup>9</sup>

What, then, is the authority which Shoghi Efendi is to exercise? He is to be, according to Bahā'ī doctrine, *the absolute lord of all mankind*. Only he has the right to interpret the words of God, and any one who differs from him is certainly in error. Only he has the right to say what men may do, and "whoso opposeth him hath opposed God." The "Universal House of Justice," to which, according to Bahā'u'llāh, all questions must be referred, does not yet exist, and even when it comes into existence all its members must obey Shoghi Efendi in everything, and should any one oppose him, he has the unrestricted authority to "expel him at his own discretion." Should the Bahā'ī prophecies be fulfilled and the greater part of mankind in the near future acknowledge Bahā as their God and Shoghi Efendi as their absolute lord, this young man would find himself in possession of an authority which the popes and emperors of the world have never aspired to, even in their wildest dreams. For the authority of the Guardian of the Cause is not confined to spiritual matters. He is to be the King of kings and the Lord of lords and the President of the presidents as well as the Pope of the popes of the earth. "All must be under his shadow and obey his command." In politics, in economics, in education, in social problems, in international problems, in re-

ligion, *in everything* he is the final authority, and his word is absolute law.

With this conception before her, a Bahā'ī writer thus speaks of the Guardian of the Cause: "The unique and outstanding figure in the world today is Shoghi Efendi. Unique, because the guardianship of this great Cause is in his hands, and his humility, modesty, economy, and self-effacement are monumental. Outstanding because he is the only person, we may safely say, who, entrusted with the affairs of millions of souls, has but one thought and one mind—the speedy promulgation of peace and good-will throughout the world. His personal life is absolutely and definitely sacrificed. The poorest boy in America struggling for an education would consider himself hardly used to have no more than those bare necessities which this young man voluntarily chooses for himself. . . . So to comprehend and administer all the relationships in a huge organization that only satisfaction and illumination result; never to see anything smaller than the worldwide import of all our movements, no matter how parochial; to clarify with a word the most obscure situations; to release in countless souls the tides of energy that will sweep the cargoes of these glad tidings round the world; to remain without one moment's cessation so poised in God as to be completely naturalized into His attributes—these are some of the outstanding characteristics that make of Shoghi Efendi the unique and outstanding figure of our time. And this without reference to his surpassing mental capacities that

mark this spiritually superb person<sup>10</sup> as a penetrating thinker and brilliant executive. The world, its politics, social relationships, economic situations, schemes, plans, aspirations, programmes, defeats, successes, lie under his scrutiny like infusoria beneath a microscope."<sup>12</sup>

What sort of person is this Shoghi Efendi who is set above all the rulers and judges of the earth? He is a young man of less than thirty-five,<sup>11</sup> a graduate of the American University at Beirut, who studied also for a time at Oxford University. I was told by one of his instructors that at Beirut he got his degree with the greatest difficulty, - and, like some other college students, took a much keener interest in novels than in his studies. At Oxford, also, he failed to distinguish himself in intellectual pursuits. One of his fellow-students there told me how he had afforded considerable amusement to the librarian by asking for one book which would contain everything about Economics. He explained that he was to become the head of some religion and must know all about every subject! I had the pleasure of meeting Shoghi Efendi in Haifa, in March, 1923, and found him very pleasant and courteous. He received me cordially when I presented a letter of introduction from the Beirut professor referred to above, and conducted me into his handsome and well-furnished stone house. His father, Mīrzā Hādī Shīrāzī, was also present, and as he knew no English I suggested that we talk in Persian. Shoghi Efendi, however, said he could express himself better in English, and so most

of our conversation was in that language. I will give here the notes which I took down immediately after the interview was over.

Shoghi Efendi said that Bahā'u'llāh was not an *Incarnation*, for God is (in His Essence) beyond all reach and cannot dwell in flesh and blood. He was rather a *Manifestation* of God, and in him the attributes of God were found and could be known. The Bāb who prepared the way for him, and 'Abdu'l-Bahā who carried on his work, were both quite different in rank from Bahā'u'llāh—they were only divinely prepared men. 'Abdu'l-Bahā was a prisoner in 'Akkā for forty years, was freed after the Revolution of A. D. 1908, after which he toured the world for four years, and finally retired to Haifa. When I asked whether 'Abdu'l-Bahā had considered himself sinless or not, he replied that he had not, but used constantly to confess his sins and ask God for pardon. His grandfather had appointed him to "carry on the Movement," and so he is busy organizing the World Council<sup>14</sup> which is to be associated with him in this task. He said he was not planning outward reforms for Persia, for this without a change of heart would be worthless. A spiritual reform must first be effected, then the other things would follow. He said that his principal task was that of uniting the "friends" of the East with those of the West. When I asked what Bahā'ism had to offer that Christianity did not have, he replied that the principles of both were the same, and only the outward forms differed, and they thought that the teachings of Bahā were best for today (he



did not specify why or in what respects). He said that many people wanted to limit Bahā'ism and narrow it, but it must be broad and include *all* religions, even Buddhism, etc., for all were from God.

Shoghi Efendi was quite humble, made no claims whatever for himself, and said that he was entirely unworthy of the great responsibility which had been laid upon him to guide this movement. He urged me to sit in the highest seat, and when I refused and requested him to take it himself, he acquiesced. A little Japanese believer with a long beard gave me tea, and my host himself handed me an orange. When I asked him to give me a picture of himself, he replied that he would prefer to give me one of his grandfather. A photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahā was then brought, and he wrote his name on the back of it, and presented it to me as a keepsake of my visit.

Early next morning I climbed to the top of Mount Carmel, and while descending I chanced upon the Guest House where Persian Bahā'ī pilgrims are entertained. When I addressed a Persian, who was standing outside, in his own tongue, he invited me in, and I was cordially received and given tea and bread and cheese in Persian fashion. I found that these Bahā'īs knew of my visit to their Master, and when I rose to go they offered to take me to see the Mausoleum of the Bāb and 'Abdu'l-Bahā, which was only a few yards away. On entering, we took off our shoes, and walked over the gorgeous Persian carpet to the threshold of the shrine itself. There my conductor prostrated himself and repeated the Arabic

formulas appointed for the "visitation." As I had to go on to Jerusalem that morning I was unfortunately not able to accept the invitation of Shoghi Efendi to go with him to 'Akkā to the shrine of Bahā'u'llāh.

As shown in his published letters, as well as in his conversation with me, Shoghi Efendi's chief interest is in the organization of the Bahā'ī Movement and in its ethical teachings, not in its philosophy and theology. He has written to the believers of America urging them to elect local "Spiritual Assemblies" in every place where there are nine or more Bahā'īs. These groups or committees are to be responsible for the progress of the Cause in each locality. They must help the sick and the poor, supervise the education of the children, correspond with other Bahā'ī groups, raise money to complete the *Mashriqu'l-Azkār* in Chicago, distribute Bahā'ī literature, supervise the regular meetings, etc. The *Bahā'ī World* (1928) gives a list of the "Spiritual Assemblies" throughout the world. About one hundred names and addresses of secretaries are given, half of these being in North America.<sup>15</sup> Shoghi Efendi has been in Europe and seen how little progress Bahā'ism has made, and it is refreshing to find him referring to facts as they are. There is nothing in his letters about "millions of believers," "the East and the West being Enlightened," etc. Instead we find more than once the statement that "the Bahā'ī Cause is still in its infancy."<sup>16</sup>

National Spiritual Assemblies have also been organized in several lands. The National Spiritual Assembly of America has adopted<sup>17</sup> a "Declaration

of Trust," or form of administration, with By-Laws for the government of the Bahā'ī Movement in America. Of special interest is the statement therein contained as to what is necessary for one to become a voting member of a Bahā'ī community. He must be at least twenty-one years of age, and must "possess the qualifications of Bahā'ī faith and practice, required under the following standard: Full recognition of the station of the Forerunner [the Bāb], the Author [Bahā'u'llāh], and 'Abdu'l-Bahā the true Exemplar of the Bahā'ī Cause; unreserved acceptance of, and submission to, whatsoever has been revealed by their Pen; loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's sacred will; and close association with the spirit as well as with the form of present-day Bahā'ī administration throughout the world."<sup>18</sup> It is difficult to understand how any conscientious person who has not read all or most of the hundreds of volumes composed by "the Pen" of the Bāb, Bahā, and 'Abdu'l-Bahā could confess his "unreserved acceptance of, and submission to, whatsoever has been revealed" therein. Before professing his faith, every Bahā'ī should at least have read the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* (the Most Holy Book), to which 'Abdu'l-Bahā in his Testament says "every one must turn"—but how can Western believers do so when almost none of them know Arabic, and the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* has not yet been translated in English? If voting is to be confined to those Bahā'īs who *know* all that the Bāb, Bahā, and 'Abdu'l-Bahā have written, and intelligently give it all their "unreserved

acceptance," it is safe to say that there will not be one Bahā'ī voter in either Europe or America!

According to Shoghi Efendi, the most important event in connection with Bahā'ism which has taken place in recent years is the decision of the Muhammadan doctors in Egypt pronouncing Bahā'is to be heretics and forbidding Muslims from intermarrying with them.<sup>19</sup> The document "condemns in most unequivocal and emphatic language the followers of Bahā'u'llāh," writes Shoghi Efendi, "as the believers in a heresy, offensive and injurious to Islām, and wholly incompatible with the accepted doctrines and practice of its orthodox adherents. . . . [Then] they proceed in a notable statement to deduce the fact that henceforth it shall be regarded as impossible for the followers of such a Faith to be designated as Muslim."<sup>20</sup> Shoghi Efendi then expresses his joy that at last it has become clear to the Muhammadans that Bahā'ism is a separate and independent religion. It is noteworthy that Bahā'is had been living in Egypt for more than fifty years before it became clear to their Muslim neighbours that they were heretics. Certainly they had kept their faith and practices well concealed!

Not only in Egypt but in America and Europe also the Bahā'is are careful to conceal from the public the real nature of their doctrines and claims. For instance, in the *Bahā'ī Magazine* of April, 1927, articles appear dealing with labour problems, race problems, and Esperanto, to which no Christian could take objection (on religious grounds). Conventions

are held in Christian churches<sup>21</sup> dealing with similar questions, and both Christian and Bahā'ī speakers are invited to give addresses. The impression is thus given that the Bahā'ī Movement, like the Anti-Saloon League, the Esperanto Movement, or the numerous peace societies which have been organized in various lands, is merely another movement which is ready to welcome into its ranks *all* those who are desirous of uniting in working for peace and unity and progress. "Whereas other associations are exclusive," writes Horace Holley, . . . "Bahā'ī association is inclusive, shutting the gates of fellowship to no sincere soul."<sup>22</sup> The Bahā'ī Temple "is freely open to people of all faiths on equal terms."<sup>23</sup> The Bahā'ī Message "does not require of them to give up the past teachings, but rather explains that the foundation of all religions is one."<sup>25</sup> From statements such as these people who have no knowledge of the history and doctrines of Bahā'ism would infer that a Jew, a Christian, or a Buddhist could become a Bahā'ī without giving up his former faith. Shoghi Efendi, as we saw above, has expressed himself as being well pleased that it has at last become clear to the Muslims of Egypt that Bahā'ism is a separate and distinct religion. It would therefore be well for him to make it clear in the West also that a Bahā'ī is different from a Christian or a Jew, that those who join the Movement may do so intelligently.<sup>26</sup> Bahā'ism has not only a set of "principles" to propagate, it has also a definite theology to teach. If the theology is neglected the movement will gradually cease to have any con-

nection with the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh, and will evaporate into air, as many other ethical and humanitarian movements have done before it. To many observers Bahā'ism seems to have already spent itself, and they predict that it will soon pass into history. Āvāreh prophesies that Shoghi Efendi will be the last Head that the Movement will have.<sup>27</sup> Whether this is to be the case or not, I will not venture to say. But it seems clear that, in spite of the high hopes of Shoghi Efendi, the movement has reached the climax of its growth, and from henceforth will continue steadily to decline, both in Persia and in the West.

## XI

### BAHĀ'ISM IN PERSIA TODAY

**T**HE picture which is painted by the Bahā'ī enthusiasts in the West of the progress of their Cause in Persia is an exceedingly bright one. Says 'Abdu'l-Bahā, "Consider how great and unexampled have been the diversities of race, the antagonisms of faiths, and the conflict of opinions in Persia. In this day, however, the fragrance of holiness has produced so complete a fusion of the divers elements in that land that its varied peoples, its opposing sects and hostile races have become even as one soul. Reflect how great is their [Bahā'īs] love one for the other, how firm their union. . . . Christian, Jew, Zoroastrian and Muslim, having all banished every trace of estrangement and difference from their midst, have all gathered together in perfect harmony and understanding, with all affection, happiness and freedom. Ponder in thine heart what the power of the Most Great Name [Bahā'u'llāh] hath wrought! " <sup>1</sup>

Likewise in a paper written by Rūhī Efendi Afnān "with the direct advice of Shoghi Efendi," and read by him at the "Conference of Some Living Religions within the British Empire," it is stated that "in the East, especially in the land of its birth, Persia, where

it [Bahā'ism] admittedly stands, amid the chaos and corruption of its heedless inhabitants, as the beacon light of progress and reform, its achievements have been great. There, under an unceasing storm of persecution, abuse, and calumny, the Movement has not only wrought a fundamental revolution in the life of the individuals but has also inaugurated various reforms of which I shall mention only two." He then proceeds to describe the changes which Bahā'ism has brought about in Persia in education and in the position of woman.<sup>2</sup> And in his "Survey of Activities" in *The Bahā'ī World*, Horace Holley, in describing the progress of the Movement in Persia, and its far-reaching influence in that land, gives the impression that the various reforms which are taking place today are being brought about principally through the efforts of Persian Bahā'īs. He says, "while public recognition of the degree to which Persian Bahā'īs are sustaining the responsibilities of civilization is officially withheld, the fact remains that any progressive measures undertaken to rehabilitate Persia along the lines of modern liberalism and progress, would have to be based upon the Bahā'ī community of that land for the same reasons compelling Constantine to base his public policies upon the Christian elements of his Empire."<sup>3</sup> It is our purpose in the present chapter to present the facts regarding Bahā'ism in Persia as we who live in daily intimate contact with the people of this land have come to know them, and we leave it to the reader to judge whether the above statements are accurate or not.



*Numbers*

It is very difficult to make an exact estimate of the number of Bahā'īs in Persia because of *taqiyya* (concealing one's belief) which, up to the present time, has been almost universally practised by the followers of Bahā in Persia. During the nine years that I have been in Persia I suppose I have not met in all more than a dozen men who confessed that they were Bahā'īs. I have talked with many who showed clearly by the expressions they used that they were members of, or in close relationship to, this movement, but when asked directly whether they were Bahā'īs or not, they would almost invariably deny that they were. A census was recently taken by the Persian Government of all its subjects, and every citizen was asked to state his religion. Shoghi Efendi instructed his followers to confess themselves, and the Government did not molest in any way those who did so. But most Bahā'īs failed to confess their faith, and later the Government ceased to ask the question about religion. Hence the census did not give any information as to the number of Bahā'īs.

Meanwhile, we can do no better than to follow the estimate which Nīkū, a former Bahā'ī leader and missionary, has made.<sup>5</sup> He lists about one hundred and twenty-five towns and villages of Persia in which there are Bahā'īs and gives the number in each. His total for the whole country is three thousand nine hundred and sixty. This figure seemed somewhat small to me, and I consulted Dr. Sa'id Khān, a prominent and trusted Christian physician in Te-

herān, who has been a careful student of Bahā'ism for many years. He replied that Nikū's figures included only men, and were in his opinion not far from correct. If women and children were also included the total would be something less than three times Nikū's figure, that is, ten or eleven thousand. "Their numbers are surely decreasing, and have decreased," writes Dr. Sa'id Khān. "Depend upon it, during the last decade not ten true proselytes have been made [by the Bahā'is]; hundreds, yea thousands may have attended [their meetings] and inquired, but [there have been] no steadfast conversions." Nikū confirms the above statement. He writes, "During the period of fourteen years that the writer has been informed of their society they have not been able to make ten converts who would become real Bahā'is like themselves and remain steadfast [in their faith]." <sup>4</sup> He says that many have entered the Movement, but have soon been disillusioned and left it again.

The pictures of groups of Persian Bahā'is which are printed in books and magazines and circulated in the West do not give a correct impression of their numbers in Persia, for always many of the people in these groups are non-Bahā'is. Pictures of similar groups of Americans are circulated in Persia to give the impression that vast numbers of the Christians of the West have been converted to the new religion. In America they say that two-thirds of the people of Persia are Bahā'is, and in Persia they encourage their little groups of believers by telling them that

one-half of the people of Europe and America have joined the movement.<sup>33</sup> So systematically has this propaganda been carried on in Persia that there is a widespread impression among the people that the American Christian missionaries at work here are really Bahā'is, and it has therefore been necessary for us constantly to deny this charge and to avoid all social intercourse with the Bahā'ī groups. Were we to go to their meetings once we would ever after be claimed by them as one of themselves, and our conversion might even be announced in the next issue of the *Bahā'ī Magazine!*<sup>30</sup> In brief, the members of this sect form only a small proportion of the population of Persia, certainly not more than one person in five hundred being a bona fide Bahā'ī. Though few in number, they exercise considerable influence. They largely control the Postal Department, and give most of the positions to their own co-religionists. They also are to be found in other government departments, especially in the army, and in all the various walks of life, even in the rural districts. But, like the notorious frog in the millpond, they give the impression that they are vastly more numerous than they actually are.

### *Defections from Bahā'ism*

During the past few years there have been a large number of Bahā'is who have forsaken their former faith. "Some Bahā'ī Jews who went on a pilgrimage to 'Akkā with sincerest intentions came back Jewish believers: they even demanded and received back

all the funds they had donated for the propagation of Bahā'ism. We may venture to say that the growth of Bahā'ism among the Jews is totally stopped." <sup>8</sup> The former amanuensis of 'Abdu'l-Bahā, who recently left the movement, writes that his reason for doing so was that during the years he was with 'Abdu'l-Bahā and Shoghi Efendi he saw that what he had heard of them was devoid of truth, and that they were ordinary men like himself. Another of the recent apostates is Āqā-yi-Sayyid Shahāb Firdūsī, a former Bahā'ī missionary, who has published a long statement <sup>9</sup> giving the reasons for his defection. These are briefly as follows: (1) The stupidity and ignorance and arrogance of the Bahā'is; (2) the confusion in Bahā'ī history, and the dishonesty of Bahā and 'Abbās Efendi in concealing the real facts; (3) the verses and the spiritless, cold, and incorrect words of Bahā; (4) the fact that Bahā stole his principles and teachings from others, and that no one is allowed to question anything he has said, whereas there are many things which reason cannot accept. Both Nikū and Āvāreh, in their recent books, tell of numbers of former Bahā'is who have now gone back to Islām—or to nothing.

But the most interesting of these apostates are Nikū and Āvāreh themselves. Nikū was for fourteen years a Bahā'ī, and was one of the leading missionaries of the Cause. His picture is to be found in the *Bahā'ī World* (Vol. II, p. 149), seated in the midst of a group of supposedly Burman Bahā'is. At last his eyes were opened, and he left the movement.

The Bahā'is of Teherān continued to claim him as one of themselves, and he was forced to write a book which he entitled *The Philosophy of Nīkū*<sup>10</sup> to prove that he was no longer a Bahā'ī. This volume was soon followed by a second, and I believe yet others are to appear. In a very able and interesting manner Nīkū describes all the things which he saw and heard which led him to turn back. He tells of the worldly ambitions of 'Abdu'l-Bahā, his greed for money, his flattering epistles to great and wealthy men whom he hoped to win, etc. In Volume II of his book he gives a list of all the places in the world where there are Bahā'is, and the number in each place. His grand total (of men) is five thousand two hundred and seven.

Āvāreh was connected with the Bahā'is for twenty years, and was considered one of their leading writers and missionaries. He is referred to by the Bahā'ī writer Dr. Esslemont as "the learned Persian historian of the Bahā'ī Movement,"<sup>11</sup> and is quoted by him several times as an authority. Last year Āvāreh published in Teherān his book *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*,<sup>12</sup> in which he tells in detail how he became a Bahā'ī, what he saw while he was in the Movement, and why he left it. He says that he had been told that there were "millions" of Bahā'is in Europe and America, and he believed it, especially after hearing the reports of 'Abbās Efendi's journeys to the West. On going to 'Akkā, however, he began to discover the fraud and corruption which existed at the centre of the Movement, and his faith began to waver. When he

wrote his history of Bahā'ism, 'Abbās Efendi forced him to misrepresent the facts. Finally, when he went to Europe a few years ago and failed to find the "millions" of believers of whom he had heard so much he realized that they had all been deceived by 'Abbās Efendi, and on his return to Haifa he broke with Shoghi Efendi and left Bahā'ism. He is now in Teherān.

These anti-Bahā'ī books created a great stir among the believers of Persia. They were forbidden to associate with the authors, and orders were sent out over the country that they should try to stop the circulation of the books. But this was impossible, for they were eagerly read everywhere, and I am told that many people have left Bahā'ism because of them. "The authors have received hundreds of letters from Bahā'īs who have given up the faith," and many inquirers have been disillusioned. Active propaganda still goes on, but little or nothing is being achieved by it.

### *Persecutions*

The early Bābīs were not treated with any toleration whatever by the Government and people of Persia, largely because of their political aspirations and their warlike attitude. Bahā was at first a Bābī, and it is easy to understand why he and his followers, even long after they had laid aside the sword, were suspected and feared by their fellow-countrymen. The Bahā'īs are even today frequently called "Bābīs," and are fervently hated by the Mus-

lims. It is not strange, therefore, that the blood of Bahā'is should have occasionally been shed, and during the past sixty years, since Bahā put forward his claim, there have been more than a hundred martyrdoms. But the amount of persecution to which the sect is now subjected is very little indeed. I have been in Meshed, perhaps the most fanatical city of Persia, for nine years, and during this time, so far as I know, not a single Bahā'ī has been put to death here.

The *Bahā'ī World* speaks of "the tragic conditions confronting the Persian believers almost continuously since . . . 1844."<sup>13</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahā referred in America to the twenty thousand Bahā'ī martyrs of Persia.<sup>14</sup> These statements are absolutely untrue. Āvāreh puts the total number of Bābī and Bahā'ī martyrs at from one to two thousand, most of whom were Bābīs, of course, who were killed fighting in the various insurrections. Mīrzā Jawād, the Bahā'ī historian, names about thirty martyrs of the period A. D. 1867-1891. In about A. D. 1904 there was an uprising of the Muslims against the Bahā'is in Yazd, and according to Āvāreh, about eighty of them were slaughtered in a most cruel fashion. There have also been a few others killed in more recent years. But, to quote Dr. Sa'id Khān, "there have not been many martyrs, and the persecutions of Yazd, etc., have not been for righteousness' sake, but political and pecuniary matters have been the cause."<sup>15</sup> People who had no connection whatever with the movement have been put to death by fanatical Muslims on the ground

that they were Bahā'īs. Others, equally unrelated to the sect, who have met a violent death for some reason or other, have been acclaimed by the Bahā'īs as martyrs to the Cause. For example, when Major Imbrie, the American Consul in Teherān, was killed by a mob in 1924, the Bahā'īs announced that he had died for his faith in their religion, whereas, as a matter of fact, he was in no way connected with them. Perhaps (to make a very liberal estimate) there may have been as many as two hundred "Bahā'ī martyrs" in Persia during the past sixty years, though it is impossible to say how many of these were really members of the sect. On the whole, the Bahā'īs are able to hold meetings, propagate their faith, and engage in any lawful employment without serious hindrance of any kind.

### *Truthfulness and Honesty*

What shall we say of the character of the followers of this religion in Persia? Are they, as a whole, shining lights in a dark land, examples of righteousness and love and good will, as they are pictured in the West? Are they better than their Muslim neighbours whom they so despise? As to their truthfulness, an English resident in Persia writes: "Personally, I came to the conclusion that, in matters even remotely connected with religion,<sup>15</sup> they were less truthful than the ordinary Shiah, but that in the ordinary affairs of life they were a trifle more reliable—they will not greatly alter the moral character of the people [of Persia]. They have not done



so heretofore.”<sup>16</sup> Dr. Sa’id Khān, who has been in intimate touch with them for nearly fifty years, says that if the morals of Bahā’īs are not worse than those of the Muslims, they are not better. “There is no conscience with them,” he writes, “they keep to no principle, they tell you what is untrue, ignoring or denying undoubted historical facts, and this is the character of both the leader and the led.”<sup>17</sup> And again he writes, “As to morality and honesty, the whole system has proved sadly disappointing. They are even more loose and dishonest among themselves than are their neighbours the Mohammedans. . . . I have been in contact with many Bahā’īs and have had dealings with many and have tested many, and unfortunately I have met not a single one who could be called honest or faithful in the full sense of these words.”<sup>20</sup> He then tells of a friend of his, a photographer, who had travelled all over the country selling pictures of the sons of Bahā to the members of the sect, who told him that in all his travels he had met but one honest Bahā’ī.

Āvāreh, who was for some twenty years actively engaged in propagating this religion, says in his recent book, “we have seen little of it [honesty] among the Bahā’īs, indeed we have not seen it at all,”<sup>21</sup> and he proceeds to relate with glee how he himself had once deceived Dr. Esslemont. Dr. Esslemont had written a book entitled *Bahā’u’llāh and the New Era*,<sup>18</sup> which he asked Āvāreh to correct, and in his introduction he expressed his appreciation to “Janāb-i-Āvāreh” for his valuable

assistance, and several times in the book itself quoted him as an authority on Bahā'ism. But now his recent book *Āvāreh* says of Dr. Esslemont, "He is absolutely uninformed as to the principles of Bahā'ism. He thanked me for correcting the errors in his book, whereas the book is so faulty that it is beyond all correction."<sup>17</sup> Dr. Esslemont apparently did not know Persian and Arabic, and he believed implicitly everything that *Āvāreh* had told him!

*Āvāreh* also confesses that the history which he himself wrote of the Bahā'ī Movement, which was published with the approval of 'Abdu'l-Bahā, is utterly untrustworthy. He says that 'Abdu'l-Bahā forced him to make it conform to the version of Bābī history as presented in the *Traveller's Narrative*, and would not allow him to use *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf* and other sources which give the history correctly. Nīkū, a former Bahā'ī leader, who once wrote a review of *Āvāreh's* history, says in his recent book, "I attest that most of the material of that history is fabricated—it has no soundness whatever."<sup>22</sup> When 'Abdu'l-Bahā himself had falsified Bābī history in his own book, the *Traveller's Narrative*, it is not strange that his disciple *Āvāreh* should have followed in his steps. And if the leaders of the Cause were thus, what can we expect from their uneducated followers in Persia!

### *Morals*

In morals, also, the Bahā'īs differ little if any from

the Shi'ites among whom they live. Though the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* forbids taking more than two wives, polygamy is frequently practised. A former amanuensis of 'Abdu'l-Bahā who several years ago left Bahā'ism writes to me as follows: "Most of the noteworthy Bahā'is have three or four wives—divorce is very frequent among them, likewise incompatibility between wives and husbands is very frequent. Nine out of every ten people are always complaining of unchastity on the part of the other party, the men complain of the unchastity of their wives, and the women of their husbands." He says that even in the family of Bahā the members of each of the rival factions tell evil tales about the women of the other factions, too evil for me to repeat. He also says that some of the leading Bahā'ī missionaries were notorious for their immoral lives, but because they were good propagandists 'Abdu'l-Bahā did not rebuke them.<sup>23</sup> He says further that while he was teaching Bahā'ī boys in Teherān he found that many of them were addicted to vicious practices. According to Bahā'ī law the sin of adultery may be atoned for by paying a fine of nine misqāls of gold (about twenty-one dollars) to Haifa, and it seems that no great importance is attached to immorality. If these charges which Āvāreh brings are true, Bahā'ism is indeed in a sorry plight in Persia; if they are false, we may well ask why 'Abdu'l-Bahā retained in his service and gave his confidence to such a liar. Did Bahā'ism have no more influence than this upon its

"learned historian?" But we fear most of the charges are only too true.

### *Love and Kindliness*

One of the most frequently quoted sayings of Bahā'u'llāh is, "Associate with [the followers of all] religions with spirituality and fragrance," and one of the words most often on the lips of his followers is "love." Unfortunately, the Bahā'īs of Persia are actually the most quarrelsome people with whom Christian missionaries have to deal. When evangelists go to visit outlying cities it frequently happens that, shortly after their arrival, a group of men will come to call, professing the sincerest friendship and sympathy towards them and their message. Soon the visitors begin to throw out remarks which indicate that they are Bahā'īs, as for instance, that the Bible must be interpreted figuratively, miracles are impossible, etc. When they discover that the Christians are not Bahā'īs, as they at first thought them to be, and do not agree with them on all points, they soon begin to argue with ever-increasing warmth, and the visit not infrequently ends in their rising and walking out in anger. Not only do they fail to associate with Christian missionaries in love, but they frequently go out of their way to stir up trouble for them. One of the Christian converts of Meshed who has travelled over a large part of Persia as a dervish, preaching and distributing literature, tells me that it is usually the Bahā'īs who first incite the Muslims to persecute him.

As an illustration of the typical conduct of Bahā'īs, I will quote from the report of a visit recently made by a Christian missionary to an important city of North Persia: "One night after we had had our public meetings going for ten days and were almost ready to conclude them I was suddenly reminded of the fact that we were in Persia after all . . . *but* the trouble we had came from Bahā'īs and not from Moslems. This particular night, after my preliminary Bible exposition, A. K. (a Persian Christian) told very effectively the story of his early life as the son of a notorious bandit and of how he became a Christian. A group of strangers had come in [Bahā'īs], and we learned afterwards that the Bahā'īs had definitely planned to make trouble, and since the head of the police was a Bahā'ī, the whole thing was probably a 'frame-up.'<sup>24</sup> One of these Bahā'īs interrupted A. K. once. . . . Both rooms were full of those listening. The crowd remained afterwards to hear more, so I began a very innocuous discourse on deeds as opposed to words. I had hardly finished when the same young man rudely interrupted again. I could have made him leave, I feel sure, for most of the crowd were with me, but a policeman in the Bahā'ī group took his part, and with this official recognition, the Bahā'īs all began to talk at once, and the meeting ended in disorder. Part of the plan was to complain to the police and to the governor, and this was done." As a result of this complaint, the missionary was asked by the officials to desist from any further "propaganda." The next night

"forty-five came to the reading-room and to our meeting for Christians. Many expressed extreme disapproval at the disturbance of the Bahā'is."

The quarrelsome nature of the members of this sect has been clearly revealed of late in Persia by the conduct of the group of former Bahā'ī missionaries and leaders who have recently left the movement. "These men all hate each other, and the Bahā'is naturally hate them," writes one who knows them all personally. "Entirely apart from the terrible moral charges made against all these men by Bahā'is, and made by these men against other Bahā'is, the hatred and enmity and bitter quarrelling causing their defection and resulting from it are a striking contrast to the doctrines of brotherly love which Bahā'is preach in America and which they claim to be one of the most important things in their 'religion.' . . . These men who were prominent at the very centre of Bahā'ism have had fearful quarrels among themselves and are now tearing each other's characters to pieces." In spite of Bahā's injunction to associate with *all* men "with spirituality and fragrance," his followers have been forbidden by Shoghi Efendi from having any dealings whatever with Āvāreh, Nikū, and the other "apostates," who are hated by them with a bitter hatred. But with the examples of Bahā and Subh-i-Azal, 'Abbās Efendi and Muhammad 'Alī before them, what else could we expect, either of the Bahā'is or of the apostates? A servant is not greater than his lord.

### *Intoxicants and Opium*

In the matter of the use of intoxicants also Bahā'is are not superior to Muslims. The amanuensis of 'Abdu'l-Bahā referred to above writes me that "alcohol is used very much indeed among the Bahā'is, and opium also is used, but not so much [as alcohol]." Āvāreh says that the Bahā'is use more alcohol than any other people, and that even the sons-in-law of 'Abbās Efendi used to come to the meetings in Haifa intoxicated.<sup>32</sup> It was the Bahā'is in Kirmān who induced Dr. Browne to smoke opium and almost succeeded in getting him addicted to it.<sup>34</sup> Opium and intoxicants are both forbidden in the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas*.

### *Superstitions*

Bahā'ism has done little to free its followers from the superstitions which fill the minds and blight the lives of most of the Shī'ites of Persia. "They have taken away one superstitious system," writes Dr. Sa'id Khān, "and replaced it by another one as bad or worse." It will be remembered that the Bāb placed great importance upon amulets, charms, etc., commanded the visitation of the tombs of martyrs, and in short, according to Gobineau, revived the ancient Chaldean paganism almost *in toto*. Bahā did not forbid any of these animistic practices. Accordingly, we find the Bahā'is, both in Persia and in 'Akkā, adoring the sacred relics of Bahā and 'Abbās Efendi, their clothing, the knives and forks which they used, their pictures, their hairs, etc., etc. One of my friends, who visited 'Abbās Efendi in 'Akkā

and was embraced by him, tells how the believers eagerly pounced upon him when he came out from the interview and carefully picked off his coat some hairs from the beard of their Master which had clung to him, and treasured them as though they were priceless jewels. In Shīrāz they have made a shrine of the house of the Bāb, and pilgrims who visit it go through an elaborate ritual of kissing doors, bowing before an orange tree planted by the Bāb, etc., etc.<sup>26</sup>

### *Methods of Propaganda*

Bahā'ī methods of propaganda in Persia differ radically from those of other sects. The Christians, for example, distribute their scriptures broadcast throughout the cities and villages of the land, but the Bahā'īs never exhibit the writings of Bahā or 'Abdu'l-Bahā to the public, and it is difficult for non-Bahā'īs to get hold of them. Christians publicly invite people to know and believe on Christ, but all Bahā'ī propaganda is carried on in secret. Nīkū, who was himself once a missionary of this sect, has thus described their method of making converts:<sup>25</sup> A Bahā'ī says to his Muslim friend (who does not know that he is a Bahā'ī), "Last night they took me to the house of some Bahā'īs and talked with me for three hours, and to my surprise I found that their missionary talked very well." If the Muslim replies, "It's all rubbish, don't pay any more attention to it," the Bahā'ī will say, "Yes, you are right; I realize that it is only rubbish," and will drop the sub-



ject till a more convenient season. If, on the other hand, the Muslim shows a little interest, and asks, "What do they say?" the Bahā'ī will begin to explain their doctrines, but will add, "I wasn't able to answer them. You can talk better than I can; you come with me tonight and answer their arguments." Accordingly, they go to the Bahā'ī centre and find the missionary and a group of believers awaiting them. The Bahā'ī guide begins the conversation by asking questions and raising certain objections which he knows the missionary is especially skilled in answering. Other Bahā'īs join in the conversation, and tell of the miracles of 'Abdu'l-Bahā which they have seen. The Muslim is taken to a number of such meetings; presently his name is entered on their books as a Bahā'ī, and soon he is busy trying to win other converts. Nothing is said of forsaking sin, experiencing the new birth, and other matters which hold first place in all Christian propaganda. To meet and associate with the Bahā'īs and allow one's name to be entered on their books seems to be all that is required of a "convert."

The Bahā'īs make great efforts to win people in high positions to their cause, and usually pay but little attention to the poor and needy. Sometimes they undertake to force prominent men to join them by spreading the word about that they are believers. On all sides the report is heard that the head of such-and-such a department is secretly a Bahā'ī, and the unfortunate victim, who has perhaps never even been to a meeting of the sect, finding himself sus-

pected and avoided by his friends, and "rushed" by the Bahā'īs, must either give in and become what he is thought by all to be, or else make a public statement denying his connection with the movement—but since Bahā'īs deny their faith whenever it is convenient to do so, even a public denial will not suffice to clear him of suspicion! A Bahā'ī once told me that when they wanted to clinch a man whom they were working to win they would go to his street and inquire from all the shop-keepers where "So-and-So, the Bahā'ī," lived. Soon the man, finding that all his neighbours believed him to be a Bahā'ī, and that all other doors were closed to him, would be forced to enter the one door still open to him, and wholeheartedly join the movement.

Another method which has been tried more than once in Persia is that of worming their way into Christian missionary institutions and secretly propagating their doctrines in hospitals and schools and churches. For instance, a man (a Bahā'ī) comes to the Christian missionary and asks to study the Bible with him. When asked about his religion, he says he has been a Muhammadan. He shows great zeal in Bible study, finally professes Christianity, and is baptized. He may even become an assistant in a hospital or a teacher in one of the schools, and while receiving a salary from the mission be actively engaged in working secretly against Christianity and endeavouring to win over to Bahā'ism his Christian friends and fellow-workers. A few years ago in one of the cities of Persia reports began to come to the

missionaries that the Persian colporteur who was employed to travel about selling the Bible was secretly engaged in propagating Bahā'ism. This man had seemed so utterly sincere and had been trusted so completely by the mission that at first no attention was paid to these rumours. After some time, however, the evidence grew so strong that the colporteur was everywhere thought to be a Bahā'ī that it became necessary for him to sever his connection with the mission, even though he called God to witness that he was not a member of the sect. Soon after this he was employed by the Bahā'īs to write a book for them, and he has since admitted that even while he was in the employ of the mission he was a Bahā'ī. Whether he had been one from the first is not clear, but there is no doubt whatever that for some time he was sailing under false colours and secretly propagating doctrines which were fundamentally opposed to the Bible which he was paid to distribute.

Nor is this instance by any means unique. So often has it happened that it has become necessary for Christian churches to examine all candidates for baptism with especial care as to their previous history, and if it is discovered that they have had any connection whatever with Bahā'ism their probation period is usually prolonged and their examination made more rigid than would be necessary in the case of Jews, Zoroastrians, or Muslims. Some Christians have even gone so far as to hold that no ex-Bahā'ī, no matter how good a Christian he may seem to be, should ever be admitted into membership in a Chris-

tian Church. There seems to be a poison in the system which makes it very difficult for a Bahā'ī ever again to be thoroughly trustworthy. Some few have become sincere Christians, but most of the converts from Bahā'ism have proved to be failures.

### *Reforms*

The "believers" of the West picture Bahā'ism in Persia as a mighty reform movement which has changed and is changing the whole social and political life of the nation. It is true, I think, that Bābism and Bahā'ism have helped to break the power of the Muhammadan clergy, and have shaken the faith of many in Islām. Some of the old superstitions have been shattered, and some of the old fanaticism has been broken down. On the other hand, another division has been made by this movement among an already much-divided people, considerable blood has been shed because of it, and a vast amount of bitterness has been engendered by it. "It has retarded the civilization of Persia," says a former Bahā'ī leader. In the Revolution of A. D. 1906-1909, when a constitutional government was established, some of the Azalīs took a leading part in the work of reform, but the Bahā'īs, in obedience to instructions received from 'Akkā, refrained from taking any part in the Revolution and generally opposed the Constitution. 'Abdu'l-Bahā also forbade them to agitate for the abolition of the veil,<sup>28</sup> and the progress which has been made in this direction has been due almost entirely to the work of non-Bahā'īs. In the West

much is said of the efforts of the Bahā'is to promote education in Persia. As a matter of fact, they have done practically nothing for the country as a whole, as the schools which they have established have been principally for their own children.<sup>29</sup> Many good schools both for boys and girls have been established by the Persian Government all over the country, and thousands of students are studying in schools conducted by Christian missionaries and other foreigners, but this advance in education is the result of the labours of non-Bahā'is. Moreover, in spite of all their talk about universal love, there is not yet, after sixty years of Bahā'ism, a single hospital or dispensary established by Persian Bahā'is for the relief of the suffering of their needy countrymen. The Muhammadans have a number of such charitable institutions. The Christian hospitals treat more than fifty thousand patients each year. But the Bahā'is have as yet to open the first institution of this kind to express in tangible terms their "love" for their fellowmen.<sup>7</sup> Well did Bahā'u'llāh himself pass judgment on his followers when he said, "He whose words exceed his acts, know verily that his non-being is better than his being, and death better than his life."<sup>8</sup>

## XII

### CAN A CHRISTIAN BECOME A BAHĀ'Ī?

**I**N the West the impression is usually given that to be a Bahā'ī is essentially the same thing as being a Christian. "Whoever acts completely in accordance with the teachings of Christ is a Bahā'ī,"<sup>1</sup> said 'Abdu'l-Bahā in America. Fortunately, Shoghi Efendi has been more accurate than his grandfather in defining the meaning of the term "Bahā'ī." "The fundamental and primary considerations" are, he says, "full recognition of the station of the Forerunner [the Bāb], the Author [Bahā'u'llāh], and the True Exemplar ['Abdu'l-Bahā] of the Bahā'ī Cause as set forth in 'Abdu'l-Bahā's Testament; unreserved acceptance of, and submission to, whatsoever has been revealed by their Pen; loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of our Beloved's ['Abdu'l-Bahā's] sacred Will; and close association with the spirit as well as the form of the present-day Bahā'ī administration throughout the world."<sup>2</sup> This statement leaves us in no doubt as to what is required of a believer in this religion. To become a Bahā'ī it is not enough for one to accept the "principles" of Bahā or of 'Abdu'l-Bahā, such as world peace, a universal language, the equality of the sexes, etc. One must unreservedly accept and submit to *every-*

*thing* that has been written and taught by the Bāb as well as by Bahā and 'Abdu'l-Bahā, and must implicitly obey Shoghi Efendi, the Guardian of the Cause, as is required in the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahā. Any one who has read the preceding chapters with attention will realize at once that no Christian can possibly fulfil this requirement, unless he is prepared absolutely to deny the essential doctrines of his faith. For the sake of convenience I will give here a brief summary of some of the Bābī-Bahā'ī teachings which no follower of Christ can accept, and which make it impossible for a Christian to ally himself in any way with this movement.

1. According to Bahā'ī teaching, Christ has been displaced by Bahā'u'llāh. True, Jesus is represented as having been the Manifestation of God in His day, as Abraham, Moses, and Muhammad were in theirs, but His day is now past, and He and His teachings are no longer adequate for the needs of mankind. The Bahā'ī "reverences Christ and Muhammad and all God's former messengers to mankind," says Dr. Esslemont, "but he recognizes Bahā'u'llāh as the bearer of God's message for the new age in which we live, as the Great World-teacher who has come to carry on and consummate the work of his predecessors." \* "The Revelation of Jesus is no longer the Point of Guidance to the world," says Remey. "We are in total blindness if we refuse this new Revelation which is the end of the Revelations of the past." † Bahā'ism sets Christ aside and teaches that a greater than He has come. Bahā'u'llāh is said to

have been a Manifestation of God's Essence, while Christ, Muhammad, Moses, etc., were only Manifestations of the divine qualities. Bahā'u'llāh was the Father while Christ was only the Son. One word of Bahā'u'llāh's is sweeter than the words of all the people of the world (Christ included). "In the coming of Christ," said 'Abdu'l-Bahā, "the divine teachings were given in accordance with the infancy of the human race. The teachings of Bahā'u'llāh . . . are according to the stage of the maturity of the world and the requirements of this illumined world."<sup>4</sup> They are pure gold, while previous teachings were only iron and wood.<sup>5</sup> Christ's teachings are therefore abrogated and are no longer binding upon men. The *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* and the rest of Bahā's writings are to be the rule of faith and practice for all mankind for the next one thousand years. The Bahā'īs insist, in talking with Christians, that Bahā'u'llāh is essentially *one* with Christ, and that his teachings do not destroy but rather fulfil those of our Lord. The falsity of this claim will immediately become apparent to any unprejudiced person who compares the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* with the Sermon on the Mount, or Bahā'u'llāh's disgraceful quarrel with his half-brother Subh-i-Azal<sup>6</sup> with the Gospel record of Gethsemane and Calvary. Bahā'u'llāh can be said to be one with Christ only in that he makes the same absolute claims for himself that Christ made. If Christ's claims were true, Bahā'u'llāh is one of the "false prophets" predicted in Matthew 24. If Bahā'u'llāh is true, Christ was not what He claimed



to be. One who asserts that Christianity and Bahā'ism are the same knows but little either of Bahā'ism or of Christianity.

2. Bahā'ism teaches that not only Bahā'u'llāh but Muhammad also was superior to and has superseded Christ. For it is a fundamental doctrine in the Bābī-Bahā'ī system that each "Manifestation" is more perfect than the one preceding it. Moses was more perfect than Abraham, Jesus than Moses, Muhammad than Jesus, the Bāb than Muhammad, and Bahā'u'llāh than the Bāb.<sup>7</sup> In America, 'Abdu'l-Bahā said little about Muhammad, usually passing him by in silence when he named the great "Manifestations," and occasionally stating that Christians had been totally misinformed as to the character of the Prophet of Arabia. But in Persia the superiority of Muhammad to Christ is taught without a blush by the Bahā'īs. According to them, Christianity was the true religion for six centuries. Then, upon the appearance of Muhammad, all followers of Christ as well as Jews and pagans should immediately have given up all their former beliefs and practices, and should have accepted the new "Manifestation" and everything he taught. Christ's law of love was abrogated by Muhammad's *lex talionis*, kindness to enemies was replaced by Holy War with the infidels, monogamy gave way to polygamy and concubinage, and the licentious Arab warrior took the place of the pure and loving Son of Man as the standard of perfection for mankind. The Christians who forsook Christ for Muhammad were saved, but all those who

refused to do so were eternally lost. The whole Christian Church from the seventh century to the present time has been in total darkness because it failed to acknowledge Muhammad as Christ's successor and the *Koran* as the perfection of the Gospels. This is the unequivocal teaching of Bahā'ism. Can a Christian who knows anything of Islām agree to place, not only Bahā and the Bāb, but also Muhammad in a position superior to that of Jesus Christ?

3. Bahā'ism approves polygamy. However much Western Bahā'īs may endeavour to cover up or explain away this teaching, the fact remains that polygamy is permitted in the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas*<sup>8</sup> and sanctioned by the example of Bahā'u'llāh himself. Bahā'u'llāh had at least two wives and one concubine who survived him, by all of whom he had children.<sup>11</sup> Many Persian followers of his have imitated their Master in this respect and have taken more than one wife. The terrible quarrel which arose between the children of his different wives after Bahā's death ought to be a sufficient warning to all of the evils of polygamy, and the superiority of the Christian law of marriage to that of Bahā'ism. Certainly no pure-minded Christian would be willing to exchange the high standard of the New Testament for the loose marriage regulations of this system.

4. Bahā'ism approves the assassination of enemies of the faith. No beautiful sentiments expressed by Bahā'u'llāh regarding love towards all mankind can be quoted to refute this charge, for in such a matter actions speak louder than words. In the preceding

chapters we have seen how Bābīs killed Muhammadans, Bahā'īs killed Azalīs, and the followers of 'Abbās Efendi killed, and threatened to kill, the followers of Muhammad 'Alī. No such murders were committed by the Christians of the first century, for Christ forbade the use of the sword. Why, then, have the Bahā'īs, according to their *own* records,<sup>12</sup> acted so differently toward their enemies? Certainly it was because Bahā and 'Abdu'l-Bahā were either unable or unwilling to restrain their followers. The presumption is that these assassinations were carried out, not only with the approval of, but by the explicit orders of the leaders of the Movement, for it is the belief of Bahā'īs in Persia that a "Manifestation" has the right to remove any one who opposes him, just as a surgeon has the right to cut off a gangrenous limb.<sup>13</sup> At any rate, it speaks but poorly for the "compelling power of the divine Word," which Bahā'īs refer to as the chief proof that their Master was from God, that Bahā'u'llāh was unable to prevent a large group of his most intimate and devoted disciples from murdering in cold blood a number of the followers of his half-brother Subh-i-Azal.

5. Bahā'ism is pure legalism. The followers of Bahā are not under grace but under the law. The *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* contains a system of ceremonialism which, while somewhat less burdensome than that of Islām and Judaism, is none the less absolutely binding upon all believers. Salvation is to be obtained by performing the good works therein enjoined, among which are prayers, fasting, tithes, pilgrimages, etc.

Bahā'ism is merely a revival of the legalism from which Paul strove so desperately to save the early Christian Church. The Epistle to the Galatians might well have been written to the foolish Christians of the West who, after nineteen hundred years of liberty in Christ, wish to place again upon their necks the heavy yoke of the law. Only those who have a slave-mind will knowingly consent to be brought into such bondage.

6. Bahā'ism also denies other leading facts and doctrines of Christianity. It denies all miracles,<sup>14</sup> explaining them away as parables. It denies the death and resurrection of our Lord,<sup>15</sup> and His atonement for sin. It denies His ascension to heaven and His promised return in glory as described by the apostles. It has nothing to say of the Fatherhood of God,<sup>16</sup> for Bahā always addressed men as his slaves, not as his sons. There is no hope of a resurrection of believers in the Christian sense, and no certain doctrine of personal immortality. It is true that many Christian teachings have been incorporated in their message by Bahā'ī propagandists in the West, so that much of what is called "Bahā'ism" could easily pass for orthodox Christianity. What Bahā'ism really is I have attempted to show in the preceding chapters. It is to be found not in the *Bahā'ī Magazine*, or in the popular addresses of Bahā'ī speakers, but in the original writings of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh.

I have mentioned here only a few of the Bahā'ī doctrines and practices which are radically opposed to Christianity. There are others which might be

added to the list. What has been said, however, is sufficient to prove my contention that no Christian can profess his "unreserved acceptance of and submission to whatsoever has been revealed" by the authors of this religion. In other words, no follower of Jesus Christ can accept Bahā'ism without denying absolutely his Christian faith.

## APPENDIX

### NOTES, ETC.

#### PREFACE

<sup>1</sup> *The Bahā'ī Magazine*, April, 1927, p. 27; <sup>2</sup> First published in A. D. 1864; <sup>3</sup> *The Royal Asiatic Society's Journal*, July 1889, October 1889, April 1892, July 1892, October 1892, and October 1897; <sup>4</sup> Cambridge University Press, 1891; <sup>5</sup> Cambridge University Press, 1893; <sup>6</sup> Luzac and Co., London, 1910; <sup>7</sup> Cambridge University Press, 1918; <sup>8</sup> Fleming H. Revell Company, 1915; <sup>9</sup> The first *a* in Bahā has the sound of *a* in *bat*, the second that of *a* in *harm*; <sup>10</sup> The *ī* in Bahā'ī is pronounced like the *ea* in *eat*; <sup>11</sup> The *ā* in Bāb is pronounced like that in *barn*.

#### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Browne, *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, XX; <sup>2</sup> *Al-Bābu'l-Hādī Ashar* (W. M. Miller), p. 75; <sup>3</sup> *Al-Bābu'l-Hādī Ashar*, p. 81; <sup>4</sup> See *Aqā'idu'sh-Shī'a*, pp. 73-88; <sup>5</sup> Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, pp. 428-430; <sup>6</sup> Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, p. 311; <sup>7</sup> See Browne's *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, p. XXI; <sup>8</sup> The followers of Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad the Bāb called their Master the "Reminder," the "First Point," etc., and spoke of themselves not as "Bābīs" but as the "People of *The Bayān*." *The Bayān* was the Bāb's Book, as *The Koran* was the Book of Muhammad, and the *Injil* (Gospel) of Jesus; <sup>9</sup> From early times Muslims have referred to the promise of the Paraclete (John 14:16, etc.) as a prediction of the coming of Muhammad.

## CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup> The title "Bāb" was not applied to their Master by the Bābīs. They usually called him the "First Point" or "The Reminder" (*Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, October, 1889, p. 907); <sup>2</sup> The Twelfth Imām succeeded his father in A. H. 260, and Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad put forward his claim to be the Bāb in A. H. 1260; <sup>3</sup> *New History*, p. 211; <sup>4</sup> *New History*, pp. 226, 227; <sup>5</sup> *Traveller's Narrative*, pp. 335-347; <sup>6</sup> Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, pp. 261, 262; <sup>7</sup> *New History*, p. 290; <sup>8</sup> For a full account of these documents see Browne's *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, pp. 247-260; <sup>9</sup> According to the law of Islām, no mercy is to be shown to an apostate. Even though he repent and desire to return to the faith, he must be killed. See *Koran* 3:84: "As for those who become infidels, after having believed, and then increase their infidelity—their repentance shall never be accepted;" <sup>10</sup> *New History*, p. 298; <sup>11</sup> Dr. Sa'id Khān of Teherān writes me regarding this document: "The original document is kept safely in the *Majlis* [Parliament]. It was addressed, as the contents well proves, to the Crown Prince Nasserad Dīn Mīrzā, afterwards Shāh."

## CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup> The Imām Rezā was the eighth Imām. He was poisoned by the Caliph Ma'mūn in A. H. 203. At least one hundred thousand pilgrims visit his shrine in Meshed every year; <sup>2</sup> *New History*, p. 358; <sup>3</sup> Āvāreh's *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 28. According to Dr. Sa'id Khān, a letter had come from the Bāb apportioning tithes to certain of his chief followers. When Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī saw that he was overlooked in this distribution of worldly goods he became very sad, and Qurratu'l-'Ayn, to cheer him, gave him the title

of "Bahā," <sup>5</sup> *New History*, p. 361; <sup>6</sup> *New History*, p. 363; <sup>7</sup> Gobineau, Vol. I, p. 218; <sup>8</sup> Gobineau, Vol. I, p. 222; <sup>9</sup> Fifty cents; <sup>10</sup> One thousand dollars; <sup>11</sup> *New History*, p. 69; <sup>12</sup> *New History*, p. 84; <sup>13</sup> *New History*, p. 365; <sup>14</sup> *New History*, p. 380; <sup>15</sup> The fighting began on May 13, 1850; <sup>16</sup> It is not clear to me whether the "Seven Martyrs" were put to death before or after the execution of the Bāb; <sup>17</sup> *New History*, p. 298; <sup>18</sup> Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, p. 63; <sup>19</sup> *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, p. 250; *New History*, p. 413; <sup>20</sup> Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, p. 64; <sup>21</sup> There are many people who do not credit the story of the removal of the Bāb's remains from Tabriz. For instance, Āvāreh, the historian of the Bahā'ī Movement, who has recently defected from Bahā'ism, states emphatically in his book *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 142, that the Bāb's body remained in Tabriz. He says it would have been impossible for the Bābis to have recovered the body at such a time. Gobineau also thought the Bāb's body had been devoured by wild beasts at Tabriz, *Les Religions*, etc., Vol. I, p. 310; <sup>22</sup> Dr. Sa'id Khān states that "some even, out of disappointment, committed suicide;" <sup>23</sup> Dr. Sa'id Khān says that one of those who recanted and was released was Sayyid 'Aziz, the Bāb's faithful friend, who had gotten the Bāb his second wife in his own name in order to hold her secretly for his Master. Sayyid 'Aziz was especially ordered to recant in order to carry some documents and relics of the Bāb to Teherān to Subh-i-Azal.

## CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup> A. L. M. Nicolas, the French writer, also has made a thorough study of the Bāb and Bābism; <sup>2</sup> Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, pp. 544, 545; <sup>3</sup> *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, English Introduction, p. xxiv; <sup>4</sup> The Bāb states that David lived five hundred years before Moses, Moses five hundred



years before Jesus, and Jesus five hundred years before Muhammad. See Nikū's *Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, Vol. 2, p. 52; <sup>4</sup> *Les Religions et les Philosophies*, Vol. 2, p. 77; <sup>5</sup> The Bāb said, "No one is to be slain for unbelief," but this did not apply in time of war, it seems; <sup>6</sup> Ninety-five Bābī misqāls of pure gold now equals about two hundred and twenty-five dollars, and the same amount of silver about seven dollars and sixty cents; <sup>7</sup> I am told by Dr. Sa'id Khān of Teherān that the Bāb himself certainly had two wives, and probably three. The second wife was taken by his devoted follower Sayyid 'Azīz in his own name, and was then brought by him and presented to the Bāb while the latter was in Isfahān. "This woman I met in Teherān," writes Dr. Sa'id Khān, "and got much important information from her;" <sup>8</sup> The *Bayān* was actually completed by Subh-i-Azal. Dr. Sa'id Khān has a copy of it, as completed by Azal, in his library.

## CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup> Mīrzā Buzurg, the father of Subh-i-Azal and Bahā'u'llāh, was not a prince, as the Bahā'is say he was. (See Āvāreh's *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 30.) He had been a clerk [munshī], according to Dr. Sa'id Khān, and when he went to Kirmān with one of the princes he there accumulated his wealth in the corrupt manner so common among government employees in the East; <sup>2</sup> This second wife, or concubine, of Mīrzā Buzurg was the mother of Bahā'u'llāh; <sup>3</sup> *New History*, p. 375; <sup>4</sup> This statement from Bahā shows clearly the amicable relations which existed between the brothers about A. D. 1851; <sup>5</sup> *New History*, p. 379; <sup>6</sup> *New History*, p. 381; <sup>7</sup> See *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, October, 1897, p. 763. The Arabic text of this document, with English translation, is given in the *New History*, p. 426; <sup>8</sup> *Nabīl* is numerically equivalent to *Muhammad*, the sum

of the numerical value of the letters of each being ninety-two. Hence "‘Alī, before Nabil" is simply another way of saying "‘Alī Muhammad;" <sup>9</sup> *New History*, p. 381; <sup>10</sup> Gobineau, Vol. II, pp. 72, 73; <sup>11</sup> *The Book of Assurance*, pp. 179, 180; <sup>12</sup> Dr. Browne, *New History*, p. xx; <sup>13</sup> *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, edited by E. G. Browne, "Gibb Memorial," Vol. XV, London, 1910; <sup>14</sup> *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, p. 252 ff.; *New History*, p. 384 ff.; <sup>15</sup> It is impossible to estimate accurately the number of Bābīs in Persia at this time. Gobineau says that there were about five thousand in Teherān a few years after this. Supposing that the proportion to the population was the same all over Persia (which it was not), this would give about two hundred and fifty thousand in all Persia; <sup>16</sup> For instance, he says that while the Bāb could reveal one thousand verses in six hours, Subh-i-Azal was able to reveal the same amount in three hours. (*Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, p. 355); <sup>17</sup> According to Gobineau they were unable to unhorse the Shāh (Vol. II, p. 12); <sup>18</sup> Mullā Shaykh 'Alī claimed to be the "Gate" of Subh-i-Azal, (*New History*, p. 392); <sup>19</sup> See, for example, *Traveller's Narrative*, p. 50; <sup>20</sup> Gobineau, Vol. II, pp. 10-36; <sup>21</sup> If Bahā had confessed himself a Bābī he would almost certainly have been executed with the others. The fact that he was not killed is strong evidence that he denied his faith to save his life. Dr. Sa'īd Khān writes me that the Prime Minister was from Nūr in Māzanderān and knew Bahā personally, and so facilitated his escape. Bahā told the Prime Minister he did not believe in Muhammad, so how could he believe in the Bāb(!); <sup>22</sup> This practice, which is called *taqiyya*, is not thought to be wrong, but is considered obligatory by Shī'ites and Bābīs; <sup>23</sup> *Traveller's Narrative*, p. 356; <sup>24</sup> Dr. Browne, note in Persian Introduction to *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*; <sup>25</sup> See *The Book of Assurance*, pp. 179, 180. The Bahā'ī translator of this book always

translates Bahā's first person singular by "We," the "plural of Majesty;" <sup>26</sup> *New History*, p. 357; Gobineau, Vol. II, p. 6; <sup>27</sup> *New History*, p. 358; <sup>28</sup> Subh-i-Azal is not referred to in this communication. It is evident, therefore, that in A. D. 1862 Bahā was looked upon by outsiders as the leader of the Bābī Movement; <sup>29</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, pp. 283-287; <sup>30</sup> *Traveller's Narrative*, p. 358; <sup>31</sup> Dr. Sa'id Khān writes me that the Bāb had written to Bahā to take good care of Azal. Bahā accordingly forced Azal to live in seclusion, telling him that his enemies were trying to kill him, and that it was not safe for him to appear in public. Thus all communication with Azal was through Bahā, and he soon got all the affairs of the Bābīs into his own hands. He spent lavishly the money which poured into his lap from Persia in winning friends and supporters for himself, and he sent out his followers to meet the pilgrims who had come from Persia to visit the shrine of Karbalā and induce them to come to see him. Thus he stole away the hearts of the Bābīs from Subh-i-Azal.

## CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup> The date of Bahā's declaration is fixed by Nabil the follower of Bahā in his chronological poem. He says the claim was made when Bahā was fifty years old, which would be A. D. 1866-67 (*Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, pp. 983-990). Mīrzā Abu'l-Fazl, the famous Bahā'ī missionary, confirms this date, in his *Istidlāliyya* (*Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, October, 1892, p. 703, note 1). 'Abdu'l-Bahā, in his *Traveller's Narrative*, in his effort to make it appear that Bahā had been the leading figure in the Bābī Movement from an earlier time, "deliberately and purposely antedated the Manifestation," says Dr. Browne, stating that this important declaration was made

by Bahā in Baghdād in A. D. 1852, *fourteen years earlier* than it actually occurred! The modern Bahā'īs have fixed the date as April 21, 1863,—which is only three or four years too early (*Bahā'u'llāh and the New Era*, Esslemont, p. 36. See also *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, April, 1892, pp. 304-306; <sup>2</sup> Introduction to *New History*, p. xxii; <sup>3</sup> *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, October, 1892, p. 686; <sup>4</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahā, in his *Traveller's Narrative*, p. 62, seeks to explain the position of leadership which Subh-i-Azal had seemingly held by saying that he was set up as a sort of figurehead that all the wrath of the Muslims might be poured out upon him, in order that Bahā'u'llāh, the real head of the movement, might be protected from danger; <sup>5</sup> See *Traveller's Narrative*, p. 371; <sup>6</sup> See *Traveller's Narrative*, p. 372; <sup>7</sup> *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, April, 1892, p. 296; <sup>8</sup> *Traveller's Narrative*, p. 370; <sup>9</sup> Introduction to *New History*, p. xxxi. But in spite of the fact that it has been definitely proved that the *Traveller's Narrative* is the work of 'Abbās Efendi, the *Bahā'ī World* (1928, pp. 201-202) does not include it in the list of his books, and fails to name its author; <sup>9a</sup> Introduction to *New History*, p. xxviii; <sup>10</sup> Mīrzā Abu'l-Fazl, the well-known Bahā'ī missionary, had an important part in the preparation of this work (*New History*, p. xl); <sup>12</sup> Appendix II in the *New History*; <sup>13</sup> *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, "Gibb Memorial," XV, 1910; <sup>14</sup> English Introduction to *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, p. xxxiv; <sup>15</sup> Two wives were exiled with Subh-i-Azal. From first to last he had eleven or twelve wives (*Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, October, 1897, p. 767). For a short time he had the second wife of the Bāb, but his other wives forced him to give her to someone else; <sup>16</sup> The number of Bābīs exiled to Cyprus was given in the official reports as fourteen, and two servants (*Traveller's Narrative*, p. 381 ff.); <sup>17</sup> *Traveller's Narrative*, p. xv; <sup>18</sup> *Traveller's Narrative*,

p. xxiv; <sup>19</sup> Dr. Sa'id Khān, *Mission Problems in New Persia*, Beirut, 1926; <sup>20</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 311 ff.; <sup>21</sup> Dr. Sa'id Khān of Teherān writes me that counting women and children there are from fifteen hundred to two thousand Azalīs still living in Persia. They are found in Teherān, Kirmān, Yazd, Zanjān, Shīrāz, Isfahān, and Hamadān; <sup>22</sup> This charge is to be found in 'Abdu'l-Bahā's book *Badā'ī'u'l-Āthār* (Persian edition, Vol. II); <sup>23</sup> I recently saw a manuscript copy of the *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf* in the library of Dr. Sa'id Khān of Teherān. This copy was dated A. H. 1268 [A. D. 1852], the very year in which the author died for his faith in Teherān. Dr. Sa'id Khān told me that it had cost him infinite trouble to get this book into his possession. He also has many other rare Bābī books in his collection.

## CHAPTER VII

<sup>1</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. xxi; <sup>2</sup> Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī was called *Janāb-i-Bahā* ("His Excellence the Splendour") by the early Bābīs, and it was only later that he adopted the title of *Bahā'u'llāh* ("The Splendour of God"). But in 'Akkā the Sunnites did not like the sound of "Bahā'u'llāh," as it seemed too high a title for man to bear, and so he called himself only "Bahā" among them (*Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 29); <sup>3</sup> *New History*, p. xxv; <sup>4</sup> The Bāb called himself "The Tree of Truth," and Bahā here applies the same term to himself; <sup>5</sup> The reference is to the attempt on the Shāh's life in A. D. 1852; <sup>6</sup> *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, pp. 955-56; <sup>7</sup> The occasion for this and other appeals to the kings of the earth to reduce their armies and be at peace among themselves was probably the struggle between Russia, France, and England for supremacy in the East. While Bahā was in Baghdād 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 Adrianople France occupied Syria for a short time. War almost broke out between Turkey and Greece at the time when he and his followers were transferred to 'Akkā. In 1870, France was defeated by Germany and Napoleon III. fell. In 1877, war again broke out between Russia and Turkey, and Turkey was defeated. Bahā no doubt watched closely these events which were taking place about him, as they had a direct bearing upon his own fate. It did not require a prophet then any more than it does now to predict that the race for supremacy and the increase of armaments would lead to nothing but destruction. Bahā's appeal to the kings of the earth to decrease their armies was by no means the first appeal of the kind to be sounded. For instance, 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. Another was held in Paris at the International Exposition of 1878. Bahā read the newspapers and was informed of these various efforts to secure peace, and it is not strange that he should have included "the Most Great Peace" in his programme for the new dispensation; <sup>8</sup> The almost cringing attitude of this epistle is so far removed from the defiant tone of the *Suratu'l-Mulūk* that it seems quite probable that Bahā had different readers in view in each case. The *Lawh-i-Sultān* was intended for the Shāh himself, and was meant to dispel the bitter hatred which that sovereign bore toward the Bābīs. In it Bahā makes *no* claim for himself or for the Bāb. But the *Suratu'l-Mulūk* was intended only for Bahā's followers, and sought to impress them with the courage and authority of their Lord. Hence the difference

in tone!; <sup>9</sup> The first part of the *Sura-i-Haykal*; <sup>10</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 45; <sup>11</sup> Bahiyya Khānim, the daughter of Bahā, said to Mr. Phelps, "We were given a comfortable house with three rooms and a court" (*Abbās Efendi*, Phelps, p. 66); <sup>12</sup> The Azalīs say that those who died were Azalīs, and that it was the Bahā'īs, not the climate, that killed them; <sup>13</sup> So successful were Subh-i-Azal and Bahā and 'Abdu'l-Bahā in concealing from their neighbours their real claims that when they died the Sunnite clergy took part in their funerals. Had it been known what they really taught they would all have been pronounced apostates, as the Bāb had been by the Shī'ite clergy of Tabriz; <sup>14</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 52; <sup>15</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 57; <sup>15a</sup> *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, p. 996. Also *Traveller's Narrative*, p. 370; <sup>16</sup> Browne, *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, July, 1889, p. 517; <sup>17</sup> There is no doubt whatever about the occurrence of this assassination. Mīrzā Jawād, the Bahā'ī historian, records it (*Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 55). A Bahā'ī in Persia told Dr. Browne of it with some pride, and said that the number of Azalīs murdered was seven (*A Year Amongst the Persians*, pp. 512-514); <sup>18</sup> It is clear either that Bahā had no control whatever over his followers, or else that he secretly commanded them to carry out this assassination while outwardly forbidding it. When one recalls the devotion of the Bābīs to the Bāb, and the similar devotion of these Bahā'īs to Bahā, it is inconceivable that they should have perpetrated this murder *contrary* to Bahā's orders. I therefore believe the deed to have been done with his approval, if not by his orders; <sup>19</sup> See *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, pp. 67-115; *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, April, 1892, p. 313; <sup>20</sup> Muhammad is said to have sent epistles to the kings of Persia and

Byzantium bidding them acknowledge him as the Prophet of Allāh, and Bahā seemingly followed his example. It is probable, however, that if Bahā actually sent these epistles to those to whom he addressed them (a fact which is stoutly denied by Āvāreh), his main purpose was to get help for himself, or else to impress his followers with his prophetic boldness; <sup>21</sup> Bahā apparently did not foresee that he would soon be dwelling in a Palace himself!; <sup>22</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 11'; <sup>23</sup> This prophecy of the downfall of Napoleon is frequently referred to by the Bahā'īs as an instance of Bahā's knowledge of future events. Āvāreh tells us, however, that Bahā had been angered because Napoleon had paid no attention to his first letter beseeching him to help him, and he therefore, *after* Napoleon's fall (1870), composed this epistle and passed it off as a prophecy written before the event. Āvāreh (*Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 80) asserts that he now has in his possession the original of the first letter, which never reached Napoleon at all. Bahā always had great hopes of assistance from Russia, and perhaps the hostile note which he adopted toward Napoleon (Russia's chief enemy in the Near East) was to win favour from the Czar. The Pope, as the ally of Napoleon, would naturally come in for his share of censure. It would be interesting to know whether in the Vatican or Paris or Leningrad any record of these epistles of Bahā is to be found; <sup>24</sup> Bahā's "family" consisted at this time of two wives and a concubine and numerous children. The fact that Bahā practiced polygamy is usually concealed by Bahā'ī writers, but it is true beyond a doubt. His first wife was Nawwāb, whom he married in A. D. 1835, and by whom he had six children, the eldest to survive being 'Abbās Efendi ('Abdu'l-Bahā). In A. D. 1849, while his first wife was still bearing him children, Bahā took as his



second wife his cousin Mahd-i-'Ulyā, who also bore him six children, the eldest of whom was Muhammad 'Alī, the rival claimant to 'Abbās. Not content with the two wives permitted by his own law, Bahā, in A. D. 1867, took a third wife, Gohar, spoken of by Āvāreh as a "wife," and by others as a concubine. She bore him a daughter Fārūqiyya. Āvāreh says that Bahā, in his seventieth year, married also Jamāliyah Khānum, the fifteen-year-old niece of his faithful follower Khādim'ullāh, and adds that she was not the only girl taken by him in his latter years (*Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 146). All of his wives survived him. See Wilson's *Bahā'ism and Its Claims*, p. 161, and Browne's *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 320. It is said that one of these wives once asked a Christian missionary lady, who used to call at the house, who God was. She said her husband claimed to be God, but she knew he was not (Alter's *Studies in Bahā'ism*, p. 5); <sup>24a</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 59; <sup>25</sup> *Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, Vol. II, p. 127; <sup>26</sup> *Traveller's Narrative*, p. xxx ff.; <sup>27</sup> "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground," said God to Moses out of the bush (Exodus 3:5); <sup>28</sup> The Devil; <sup>29</sup> The Azalīs compare Bahā to the Golden Calf which the Children of Israel worshipped; <sup>30</sup> There was a saying among the Persian Bahā'īs that whoever went to 'Akkā lost his faith (*Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, Vol. II, p. 128; <sup>31</sup> Mīrzā Jawād says that Bahā composed in all a hundred volumes; <sup>32</sup> Lord Curzon put their number in A. D. 1892 at from one-half to one million; <sup>33</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, pp. 60-61. Contrast this self-pitying attitude of Bahā with the manly courage and steadfastness of John Bunyan who for twelve years endured an imprisonment more severe by far than that of Bahā. The above senti-

ments were expressed, moreover, while Bahā was living in his Palace in Bahjī; <sup>34</sup> *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, October, 1892, pp. 693, 694.

## CHAPTER VIII

<sup>1</sup> One of the faults which Persians frequently find with the Bāb and Bahā is that so much of their writings is in Arabic, a language which is not understood by one person in a thousand in Persia. If their teachings are for us, why did they not give them to us in our own language? they ask. The reason was, no doubt, that by writing in Arabic they hoped to make their books appear more like the *Koran*. They were also afraid to set forth some of their doctrines in the language of the common people, and hoped to inspire awe in them by addressing them in an unknown tongue—just as the Roman Church long refused to allow its members to read the Bible in the vernacular. And even the "Tablets" composed in Persian are written in such an involved style, and are so wordy and full of empty phrases, that few Persian readers can understand what they read. Āvāreh says the verses of Bahā are so full of repetitions that they only waste the paper they are written on. A former Bahā'ī missionary gives as one reason for leaving Bahā'ism "the verses and the spiritless, cold, and incorrect words of Bahā;" <sup>3</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, edited by Horace Holley and approved by the Bahā'ī Committee on Publications, Brentano's, 1923; <sup>4</sup> "Everlasting Father," Isaiah 9:6; <sup>5</sup> That is, heaven (light) to be hell (fire); <sup>6</sup> All the statements of this paragraph are taken from *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, Part I, p. 554; <sup>8</sup> Dr. Browne gives a summary of the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* in the *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, October, 1889, pp. 972-982. I have quoted him in some cases in the pages which follow, but it appears that in a number of places his copy of the Arabic *Kitāb-i-*

*Aqdas* was different from my copy. The laws are practically the same, but the arrangement is different; <sup>9</sup> In Muhammadan prayers certain Arabic sentences are repeated with each prostration. Bahā commanded nine prostrations, but never gave his followers the appropriate words to be repeated with them! Hence Bahā'is either say the Muhammadan prayers, as Bahā and 'Abdu'l-Bahā always did in 'Akkā, or else (as usually happens) they entirely neglect this command to pray. They have a one-prostration prayer in Arabic which is sometimes used. Dr. Sa'id Khān writes me that there is a book of prayers published in Egypt, but I have not seen this myself; <sup>10</sup> Bahā adopted the Bābī calendar of nineteen months each of nineteen days ( $19 \times 19 = 361$ ), with five intercalary days following the nineteenth month. March 21 is to be New Year's Day. This calendar must be adopted by all mankind; <sup>11</sup> The old Persian custom of celebrating the day on which the sun enters the sign Aries as New Year's Day is retained in Bahā'ism; <sup>12</sup> The Muhammadan mullās encourage people to kiss their hands as a sign of respect, and forgive sins for a compensation; <sup>13</sup> Note that the male heirs inherit more than the female; <sup>14</sup> This abrogates the law of the *Bayān* which provided for no corporal punishments; <sup>15</sup> Bahā reserved the privilege of wearing long hair for himself and his sons; <sup>16</sup> Bahā thus guards himself against any who might interpret his "one thousand years" figuratively, as he had interpreted the "*mustaghāth*" (2001 years) of the Bāb; <sup>17</sup> Nine Bābī misqāls of pure gold now equals about twenty-one dollars; <sup>18</sup> That is, to Bahā; <sup>19</sup> Music is forbidden in Islām; <sup>20</sup> That is, to Bahā's writings; <sup>21</sup> Literal, "slave girl;" <sup>22</sup> This seems to mean that girls kept for service in the house are the lawful property of their masters. Āvāreh interprets it thus, and says that Bahā had

relations with girls who served him. Jamāliyah Khānum was one of these (*Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 146); <sup>23</sup> Nineteen Bābī misqāls of pure gold now equals about forty-five dollars, of silver about one dollar and fifty cents; <sup>24</sup> Nothing is said of the rights of the woman; <sup>25</sup> The Bāb had forbidden this; <sup>26</sup> Āvāreh says that this provision was always very strictly enforced, and that Bahā and 'Abdu'l-Bahā always wrote most laudatory epistles to all who sent them money, whatever their moral character might be (*Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 133, etc.); <sup>27</sup> Since this is the only limitation imposed by Bahā, Āvāreh infers that all other women besides one's father's wife are lawful; <sup>28</sup> The former is celebrated on April 21, and the latter on May 23; <sup>29</sup> The Bāb forbade the learning of other languages, and planned to make Persian and Arabic the official tongues of his world Bābī State. Bahā, after living outside Persia, realized the impossibility of this plan, and the necessity of his missionaries knowing other languages; <sup>30</sup> The Shi'ites used to carry dead bodies to Karbalā and Meshed and other shrines, hoping that the dead would have a better hope of salvation if buried near some Imām. This custom often resulted in the spread of disease, and has been largely discontinued; <sup>31</sup> That is, "He whom God shall manifest;" <sup>32</sup> For example, it is better to read the verse in the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* which commands a weekly bath than to read both the Old and the New Testaments; <sup>33</sup> Both Bahā and the Bāb forbade the mourning for martyred Imāms and prophets which forms so large a part of popular religion in Persia; <sup>34</sup> The Bāb had commanded that the face be shaved clean. Bahā now leaves the individual free to do as he wishes; <sup>35</sup> *The Old and New Testaments, The Koran, and The Bayān* are inadequate—only the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* is sufficient for men; <sup>36</sup> One of his sons, he does not indi-

cate which; <sup>37</sup> The Bāb also commanded this; <sup>38</sup> The reader will have noted the resemblance of these laws to those of the Bāb as described in Chapter III. There are differences in detail, and Bahā's laws are better fitted for actual life than are those of the Bāb, but both systems are one with Islām in being purely legalistic; <sup>39</sup> See *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, October, 1892, p. 678; <sup>40</sup> The Shi'ites, Jews, etc., consider outsiders unclean; <sup>41</sup> Bahā never suggested which language should be chosen; <sup>42</sup> That is, they are not to rebel, as the Bābīs did; <sup>43</sup> This was a later development of Bahā's earlier teaching regarding the reduction of armaments; <sup>44</sup> He says, "Newspapers are as a mirror which is endowed with hearing, sight, and speech; they are a wonderful phenomenon and a great matter" (*Bahā'i Scriptures*, p. 146); <sup>45</sup> His Arabic is severely criticized, however, by Persian scholars as being ungrammatical; <sup>46</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahā told Dr. Jessup that he knew the books of the Beirut Press (founded 1834); <sup>47</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. xiv; <sup>48</sup> Sir Thomas Urquhart, in the seventeenth century, wrote a book entitled *Universal Language*. The effort to invent a universal language seems to have first been made by Schleyer, a German monk (born 1839), and his language, Volapuk, which he gave to the world in 1880 spread rapidly in Europe during the decade which followed, so that by 1890 there were one million Volapuk students scattered over the earth. Bahā's insistence upon a universal language was largely an echo of the preaching of European enthusiasts on this subject; <sup>49</sup> While in speaking to Christians Bahā referred to himself as the Everlasting Father predicted by Isaiah, it must be clearly understood that "the Fatherhood of God" had no place in Bahā's theology. God is thought of as the Lord, the King, and men are always spoken of as His

slaves, never as His children. In addressing his followers Bahā always refers to them as "slaves;" <sup>50</sup> For the benefit of those who have not read Bahā's writings I will quote a few of his best sayings: "It is not for him who loves his country to be proud, but [rather] for him who loves the whole world." "O people of Bahā! ye are the Rising-places of Love and the Daysprings of the Divine Grace. Do not defile the tongue with the vituperation and cursing of any one. Keep the eye from that which is unseemly. Be not the cause of sorrow, much less of strife and sedition." "The Religion of God hath been revealed and manifested . . . for the unity and concord of the people of the world. Make it not, then, a cause of difference and strife." "The world is one country, and God's servants are one family, did they but know it." "Whosoever is angered against you, meet him with kindness, and he who revileth you, revile him not." "That ye should be slain for His good pleasure is better than that ye should slay." "If religion be the cause of discord and difference, then no religion is preferable." "He whose words exceed his deeds, know verily that his non-being is better than his being, and his death better than his life." When one recalls the history of the Bābis and the Bahā'is, it would be difficult to pass upon this movement a judgment more severe than that which Bahā himself has passed in the two last maxims which I have quoted; <sup>51</sup> It was the custom at that time for well-to-do people in Persia to have private teachers come to their homes to train their children. Bahā and all his brothers were thus educated at home, and their teacher was well known in Teherān, says Dr. Sa'īd Khān.

## CHAPTER IX

<sup>1</sup> 'Abbās Efendi was born in Persia in A. D. 1841. Modern Bahā'is say that his birth occurred "on May 23, 1844,

in the very same hour in which the Bāb declared his mission" (*Bahā'u'llāh and the New Era*, p. 53), but this is clearly a fiction. See *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 320. He accompanied his father to Baghdād in A. D. 1852, and later to Adrianople and 'Akkā. He married but one wife, and had four daughters; <sup>2</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, pp. 259-262; <sup>3</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 76 ff.; <sup>4</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 261. The Bahā'ī translator, either ignorantly or intentionally, misinterprets the titles of the two brothers; 'Abbās Efendi he calls the "Greatest Branch," and Muḥammad 'Alī the "Greater Branch," whereas both terms (A'zam and Akbar) have a superlative and an equally lofty meaning. The meaning of this passage is that after 'Abbās Efendi, Muḥammad 'Alī is to be the leader of the movement; <sup>5</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, pp. 77, 78; <sup>6</sup> *Star of the West*, November 23, 1913, p. 238; <sup>7</sup> The volume *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, for example, has two parts. Part I comprises the verses of Bahā, and Part II (larger than Part I) the writings and addresses of 'Abdu'l-Bahā. Both are considered equally authoritative. "The words of 'Abdu'l-Bahā . . . have equal rank and spiritual validity with those of the Manifestation" (*The Bahā'ī World*, Vol. II, p. 81); <sup>8</sup> Āvāreh says that while 'Abbās Efendi was robbing his relatives of their property and rights he continued to send out "Tablets" complaining of the way he was being mistreated by them (*Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 145); <sup>9</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 87 ff.; <sup>10</sup> "These included twelve Holy portraits [of Bahā], two hundred and seventeen Holy Tablets . . ., and a number of the Holy head-dresses, garments and hairs, besides many sacred Books" (Mīrzā Jawād); <sup>11</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 167; <sup>12</sup> *Nuqtatu'l-Kāf*, p. xlix;

<sup>13</sup> It will be remembered how sympathetic had been the attitude of Dr. Browne to the early Bābī Movement; <sup>14</sup> After engaging in quarrels such as these with his own family one wonders how 'Abdu'l-Bahā could have written to the Bahā'īs of America these words, "If two souls quarrel and contend about a question . . . differing and disputing, *both are wrong* . . . should there appear the least trace of controversy, they must remain silent . . . (*Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 544); <sup>15</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, pp. 155-167; <sup>16</sup> He had been poisoned, according to the doctor who attended him (*Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 158); <sup>17</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 156; <sup>18</sup> *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 116 ff.; <sup>19</sup> See p. 191, note 21; <sup>20</sup> This prophecy was, of course, never fulfilled, and his photograph was taken repeatedly during and after his visit to America; <sup>21</sup> The party which followed Muhammad 'Alī were henceforth called "Bahā'ists;" <sup>22</sup> Wilson, p. 269; <sup>23</sup> *The Three Questions*, p. 23 (quoted by Wilson, p. 269); <sup>24</sup> This is the account which Dr. Khayru'llāh himself gave of the interview (*Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 154); <sup>25</sup> Mīrzā Abu'l-Fazl, during the last years of his life in Egypt, entirely withdrew from the Bahā'īs and was buried as a Muhammadan (*Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 207); <sup>26</sup> Quoted in *Bahā'u'llāh and the New Era*, p. 58; <sup>27</sup> Had 'Abbās Efendi forgotten that it was forbidden in the *Kitāb-i-Aqdas* to give to beggars?; <sup>28</sup> 'Abbās Efendi was a "prisoner" only in the sense that he was not free to go outside 'Akkā; <sup>29</sup> Quoted in *Bahā'u'llāh and the New Era*, p. 59; <sup>30</sup> 'Abbās Efendi, Phelps, 1903; <sup>31</sup> Abdū'l-Bahā later denied that he was Christ, but as we have seen above, the claim was certainly made for him at first by his approved missionaries; <sup>32</sup> This Temple is still incomplete,



only the first story having as yet been finished. It is intended to symbolize the oneness of religions. "The Mashriqu'l-Azkār is freely open to people of all faiths on equal terms, expressing in this the Universality of Bahā'u'llāh" (*Bahā'ī World*, Vol. II, p. 114); <sup>33</sup> It will be remembered that Bahā really set forth his claim in A. D. 1867 in Adrianople, which was only forty-six years prior to this address, not sixty years; <sup>34</sup> This principle has been insisted upon by Shī'ite doctors for at least six centuries (see my *Al-Bābu'l-Hādī Ashar*, p. 7); <sup>35</sup> Apart from the Bible teaching on this subject, the Persian poet Sa'adī, in the thirteenth century, beautifully set forth this doctrine of the unity of mankind. "The sons of men are members one of another," he says; <sup>36</sup> It will be remembered that Bahā did not teach the Fatherhood of God; <sup>37</sup> I do not recall seeing this principle in any of Bahā's writings. Unfortunately, Bahā's own teachings were not always one with science. In the *Iqān* he says that if "copper is protected in its own mine from superabundance of dryness, it will in seventy years attain to the state of gold" (*The Book of Assurance*, p. 111); <sup>38</sup> Where in Bahā's writings is this principle to be found? His law allows a man to have two wives, but does not permit a woman to have two husbands, women inherit less than men, men only can be elected to the "House of Justice," etc.; <sup>39</sup> This also is Christian, not Bahā'ī, teaching; <sup>40</sup> Lord Tennyson, not Bahā, is the author of this phrase; <sup>41</sup> Bahā commanded the education of children, Christians have been striving to practice this principle for centuries; <sup>42</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 330; <sup>43</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 328; <sup>44</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 382; <sup>45</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 439; <sup>46</sup> 'Abbās Efendi did not suggest how he proposed to unite with his rival brother Muhammad 'Alī; <sup>47</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 266;

<sup>48</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 554; <sup>49</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 487; <sup>50</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 547; <sup>51</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 282; <sup>52</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 283. This is absolutely contradictory to what he said in a church in Brooklyn of "the right of unrestricted individual belief" (*Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 330); <sup>53</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 286; <sup>54</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 287; <sup>55</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 289; <sup>56</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 361; <sup>57</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 309; <sup>58</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 309; <sup>59</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 316; <sup>60</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 393. But see Genesis 20:12; <sup>61</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 393; <sup>62</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 395. The Jews had been in Persia for centuries before Christ; <sup>63</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 335; <sup>64</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 351; <sup>65</sup> *Bahā'u'llāh and the New Era*, p. 63; <sup>66</sup> What would history have said of Jesus Christ had He accepted a knighthood from Cæsar, and sat for His photograph on the occasion? But 'Abdu'l-Bahā is thought to be one with his father, who was greater than Christ; <sup>67</sup> One of the speakers was the Mufti, or head of the Sunnite community, of Haifa, a clear indication that 'Abdu'l-Bahā was still considered an orthodox Sunnite by his neighbours in Haifa; <sup>68</sup> See p. 191, note 21, as to whether the Bāb's body was really taken to Haifa or not; <sup>69</sup> Dr. Sa'id Khān writes me that Dr. Khayru'llāh had been excommunicated by the Christian community (he was a Christian by birth) for practicing polygamy and for other indecent conduct.

## CHAPTER X

<sup>1</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 261; <sup>2</sup> *Bahā'ī World*, Vol. II, p. 81 ff.; <sup>3</sup> Fortunately, there was no serious dispute over the succession this time. Muhammad 'Alī did not possess enough influence to press his claims, and the Bahā'īs everywhere accepted Shoghi Efendi without question;

<sup>4</sup> This has not yet been formed, though Bahā made provision for it some sixty years ago; <sup>5</sup> Shoghi Efendi's helpers; <sup>6</sup> *Bahā'i World*, Vol. II, p. 85; <sup>7</sup> *Bahā'i World*, Vol. II, p. 86; <sup>8</sup> *Bahā'i World*, Vol. II, p. 87; <sup>9</sup> *Bahā'i World*, p. 89; <sup>10</sup> Āvāreh says that the Bahā'is have begun to say that Shoghi Efendi is sinless; <sup>11</sup> Shoghi Efendi was twenty-five years of age in A. D. 1921; <sup>12</sup> *Bahā'i World*, pp. 132, 133; <sup>14</sup> I do not know whether Shoghi Efendi meant by this the "Hands of God" or the "Universal House of Justice," but I think it was the former; <sup>15</sup> Of the fifty names of secretaries given for America, forty-five are of women and five are of men; <sup>16</sup> Shoghi Efendi has taken a census of all the Bahā'is of the world, and according to Āvāreh he discovered that there are now in all ten thousand Bahā'is, or, if children are also counted, twenty thousand (*Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 192); <sup>17</sup> May, 1926; <sup>18</sup> *Bahā'i World*, Vol. II, p. 93. This statement was drawn up originally by Shoghi Efendi, and is therefore authoritative (*Bahā'i World*, Vol. II, p. 106); <sup>19</sup> This occurred, I think, about A. D. 1925; <sup>20</sup> *Bahā'i World*, Vol. II, p. 32; <sup>21</sup> *Bahā'i World*, Vol. II, p. 22; <sup>22</sup> *Bahā'i World*, Vol. II, p. 70; <sup>23</sup> *Bahā'i World*, Vol. II, p. 114; <sup>25</sup> *Bahā'i World*, Vol. II, p. 43; <sup>26</sup> Dr. Sa'id Khān, a prominent Christian physician of Teherān, and an authority on Bahā'ism, says of the American Bahā'is, "I have met a few of these. Their ignorance is appalling. I confess I have yet to see a Western so-called Christian who accepted Bahā'ism who knew his Bible well, or had a fair idea of Bāb's writings;" <sup>27</sup> *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 53. <sup>28</sup> As this book goes to the press a pamphlet has come to my notice which has an important bearing on this discussion of Shoghi Efendi. It is called "Abdul Bahā's Alleged Will Is Fraudulent," and is written by Mrs. Ruth White, a Bahā'i, and published by The Tut-

tle Company, Rutland, Vermont. Mrs. White describes how she, at great personal trouble and expense, has proved that 'Abdu'l-Bahā's will, in which Shoghi Efendi was appointed his successor, is a forgery. She tried in vain to get the Bahā'ī leaders of America to submit the will to a handwriting expert, and when they refused to do so, she went to England and secured photographs of the will and herself consulted an expert. His verdict was that the document was not all written by one person, and that no part of it has the characteristics of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's handwriting. If this charge of Mrs. White's is proved to be true, as it probably is, then it will be impossible to determine to what extent the so-called will represents 'Abdu'l-Bahā's wishes, and how far it is the expression of the desires of Shoghi Efendi's party. At all events, the result will almost certainly be another split in the already much-divided Bahā'ī community.

## CHAPTER XI

<sup>1</sup> *Bahā'ī World*, Vol. II, p. 51; <sup>2</sup> *Bahā'ī World*, Vol. II, p. 241; <sup>3</sup> *Bahā'ī World*, Vol. II, p. 37; <sup>4</sup> *Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, Vol. I, p. 71; <sup>5</sup> *Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, Vol. II, pp. 210-213; <sup>6</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 158; <sup>7</sup> Several American Bahā'ī women came to Teherān and did a certain amount of medical work, but this cannot be credited to the account of the Persian Bahā'īs; <sup>8</sup> Dr. Sadigh-ul-Hokama, a Jewish Christian of Hamadān; <sup>9</sup> *Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, Vol. II, pp. 216-223; <sup>10</sup> Or *The Good Philosophy*; <sup>11</sup> *Bahā'u'llāh and the New Era*, p. 8; <sup>12</sup> *The Exposure of Frauds*; <sup>13</sup> Vol. II, p. 37; <sup>14</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 337; <sup>15</sup> It will be remembered that almost all Persian Bahā'īs practice *taqiyya*, that is, deny their faith whenever they deem it expedient so to do; <sup>16</sup> Malcolm, *Five Years in a Persian Town* (1905), p. 96; <sup>17</sup> *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 64; <sup>18</sup> This book is now considered by the Bahā'īs as the best available presentation

of their movement. The *Bahā'ī Magazine*, in offering it for sale, says, "This is the most comprehensive summary and explanation of the Bahā'ī Teachings as yet given in a single volume;" <sup>19</sup> *Mission Problems in New Persia*, Beirut, 1926, p. 83; <sup>20</sup> *Mission Problems in New Persia*, Beirut, 1926, pp. 87, 88; <sup>21</sup> *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 16; <sup>22</sup> *Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, Vol. I, p. 125; <sup>23</sup> A recent convert from Bahā'ism to Christianity was led to break with Bahā'ism because a Bahā'ī missionary tried to seduce his little daughter. See also *Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, Vol. I, p. 124; <sup>24</sup> It was proved later that there was a deliberate attempt on the part of the Bahā'īs to break up the Christian meeting and involve the missionary in trouble with the police; <sup>24a</sup> Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, p. 487; <sup>25</sup> *Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, Vol. I, p. 56; <sup>26</sup> *Filsifa-yi-Nikū*, Vol. I, p. 144; <sup>27</sup> *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*, p. 211; <sup>28</sup> The veil is worn by Bahā'ī women, not only in Persia, where it would have perhaps been unwise for them to lay it aside prematurely, but also in Russian Turkistān and Syria, where it could have easily been discarded; <sup>29</sup> There are in Persia only three Bahā'ī schools; <sup>30</sup> Some years ago one of the American Christian missionaries in Teherān subscribed to the *Bahā'ī Magazine*, published in America, in order to inform herself as to the propaganda being carried on by the Bahā'īs abroad. In the next issue of the magazine her name was printed in the list of "Bahā'ī Centres;" <sup>31</sup> Dr. Sa'id Khān gave me some interesting information regarding the two famous martyrs of Isfahān whose graves Dr. Browne visited (*A Year Amongst the Persians*, p. 213 ff.). These men were both rich, and Zillu's-Sultān, the Prince-Governor of Isfahān, wanted their property. He therefore charged them with being Bahā'īs in order to get rid of them. Bahā had once said, "I have made Bahā'īs unlawful to the

sword" (*i. e.*, the sword is no more permitted to slay them). Hence these two men immediately telegraphed Bahā of their plight. He replied by wire, "God's hand is greater [than theirs]," *i. e.*, God will save them from their enemies. When examined, they denied their faith and cursed Bahā, but the Prince had them killed none the less. As the executioner cut their throats with his dagger he said, "He [Bahā] made them unlawful to the sword, but not to the dagger;" <sup>32</sup> Dr. Sa'id Khān tells me that Hājji Rabī Gunifurush, a Jewish Bahā'ī from Hamadān, went to 'Akkā to see 'Abdu'l-Bahā. As he sat with him in the evening, talking, Hājji Rabī, with a show of embarrassment, asked 'Abdu'l-Bahā to excuse him while he went out to get his usual evening drink of liquor. 'Abdu'l-Bahā replied that it was not necessary for him to go, and at once ordered his servant to bring in drinks. This was done, and the Jew was bidden to satisfy his thirst. He protested that, being a Jew, he feared poison, and begged his host to taste the drink first. 'Abdu'l-Bahā complied, and Hājji Rabī followed him. This performance was repeated again and again during the evening until 'Abdu'l-Bahā was quite intoxicated, according to the Jew's story. There was evidently a good store of liquor in 'Abdu'l-Bahā's pantry! <sup>33</sup> The number of Bahā'īs in America in 1916 was 2,884, and in 1926 it was 1,247 (see *Religious Bodies*, 1926. Published by U. S. Dept. of Commerce).

## CHAPTER XII

<sup>1</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 382; <sup>2</sup> *The Bahā'ī World*, Vol. II, p. 106; <sup>3</sup> Quoted by Wilson, p. 87; <sup>4</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 461; <sup>5</sup> *Bahā'ī Scriptures*, p. 490; <sup>6</sup> *Bahā'u'llāh and the New Era*, p. 71; <sup>7</sup> The Bahā'īs teach that *all* these "manifestations" were sinless. This doctrine is contrary both to the Bible and to *The Koran*; <sup>8</sup> See p. 116; <sup>9</sup> See

Chapter VI; <sup>11</sup> See p. 199, note 24. <sup>12</sup> See the History of Mirzā Jawād, the devoted follower of Bahā'u'llāh, published in *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, p. 55; <sup>13</sup> *A Year Amongst the Persians*, pp. 328, 406; <sup>14</sup> Since Bahā'u'llāh had no miracles to attest his claims it was necessary for him to deny the miracles of Christ lest he seem to be inferior in this respect; <sup>15</sup> Bahā'u'llāh attested the teachings of *The Koran*, and in *The Koran* (4:156) it is written concerning the crucifixion of Jesus, "Yet they slew Him not and they crucified Him not . . . they did not really slay Him, but God took Him up to Himself;" <sup>16</sup> When Bahā'īs speak of the "Fatherhood of God" they are using a term borrowed from Christianity. There is no such doctrine in the original writings of Bahā'u'llāh (see p. 204, note 49).