

Juan R. I. Cole

IRANIAN MILLENARIANISM AND DEMOCRATIC THOUGHT IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Between 1905 and 1911, Iranians were engaged in a protracted struggle over whether a constitutionalist regime would replace royal absolutism.¹ Little in Iran's political culture before 1905 had hinted at this conflict before it broke out, and for the past thirty years historians have been seeking this genealogy for it. Most have searched among the papers of officials and diplomats, often examining unpublished or posthumously published manuscripts with little or no contemporary circulation, at least before the revolution,² but we might get closer to its context if we look at what was going on outside the governmental elite. Here I will explore the growth of belief in representative government within an Iranian millenarian movement, the Bahai faith, in the last third of the 19th century, as an example of how the new ideas circulated that led to the conflict.³ Historians have noted a link between millenarianism and democratic or populist thought elsewhere, after all; for instance they have long recognized the importance of chiliastic ideas in the English Revolution of the 17th century.⁴ The republicanism of American dissidents and revolutionaries was also sometimes tinged with a civil millennialism. The Bahais of Iran, too, combined democratic rhetoric with millenarian imagery in the generation before the Constitutional Revolution.

The Bahai faith developed out of the Babi movement begun by 'Ali Muhammad Shirazi, the "Bab" (1819–50) in 1844.⁵ Although the state and the Shi'ite clergy repressed Babism, a prominent Babi, Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri (1817–92), known as Bahau'llah, transformed it in the 1860s and 1870s into a new religion, the Bahai faith, which attracted thousands of new adherents. By 1900, Bahais probably numbered between 50,000 and 100,000, in a population of 9 million.⁶ They had a wide regional and class representation. A tiny remnant of Babis refused to accept Bahau'llah, and most of them followed his half-brother Azal and became known as Azalis.

The growth of stronger states in the 19th-century Middle East, bolstered by increased tax revenues from the spread of cash-cropping, by the influx of foreign capital, and by better communications and transportation technology, contributed to the rise of movements demanding representative government. As the state proved able to affect the population in a much more direct way than had earlier been the case, the groups thus affected mobilized against absolutism. The Young Ottomans and other constitutionalists indirectly ruled Ottoman lands in the 1860s

and 1870s, and the ^ᶜUrabi movement in Egypt in 1881–82 both demanded popular representation. Despite the tracts written by reformists calling for innovations such as cabinet government, and despite the revolt in 1890–92 against a tobacco concession granted by the shah to a British company, traditional historiography does not report a popular movement for representative government in Iran until 1905. Still, if we examine activists outside government it becomes clear that Iran was not isolated from the Ottoman and Egyptian events of 1876–82, and I will present evidence here of a convergence of Young Ottomanist ideas with those of the Bahai movement. Some research on the link between millenarianism and nationalism in Iran has been devoted to the small Azali sect of Babism, which produced some prominent radical intellectuals in the late 19th and early 20th century. Yet Azali intellectuals who embraced modern ideas beginning in the 1890s had often left their faith and become secularists; Browne estimated that by 1909, for every hundred Bahais there were only three or four Azalis (for a total of 2,000 to 4,000 Azalis, if our estimates for Bahais are correct).⁷ The Bahais, so far neglected by historians of Iranian constitutionalism, were numerically much more significant, and, as I will show, more united at a much earlier time in support of representative government.

Sometimes Western scholars have misconstrued Bahai attitudes in the period from 1868 to 1892. For instance, the Hungarian Orientalist Ignaz Goldziher, in an otherwise penetrating discussion, concluded from the criticism made by Bahauallah of aspects of *hurriyya* (liberty) that Bahais were not in the liberal camp⁸; but we need a better understanding of what he meant by *hurriyya*. At all events, in the absolutist 19th-century Middle East, as in many parts of Europe, advocacy of representative government and of freedom of conscience was a punishable offense under the law. One has to understand Bahauallah's thought in that context.

The policy of nonintervention in politics later adopted by Bahai leaders beginning about 1907 has also impeded our understanding of the earlier period. Like the 17th-century English religious dissidents, the Bahais' relationship with the revolution itself, once it came, was complex. After supporting the constitutionalists in 1905–7, ^ᶜAbd al-Baha^ᶜ ^ᶜAbbas (1844–1921), then the head of the religion, declared his community's neutrality for the remainder of the conflict, for several reasons. Bahais were excluded as heretics from membership in parliament, giving them little stake in it and convincing them that it was turning into a tool of Shi'ite theocracy. ^ᶜAbd al-Baha^ᶜ, a pacifist, foresaw civil war and foreign intervention should the revolution continue, and could abide neither prospect. Some Bahais continued to fight for the revolution, and, in any case, the neutrality of the community differed from the actively proroyalist stance of most Shi'ite clergymen and their followers. Even ^ᶜAbd al-Baha^ᶜ himself remained convinced that his father, Bahauallah, had prophesied the revolution and constitution.⁹ All this is a bit moot here, since I am concerned in this essay primarily with the development of Bahai ideas on democracy in the period up to Bahauallah's death in 1892.

I want to explore, then, the circumstances under which the Bahai prophet Bahauallah developed a commitment to representative government in the decades before the revolution and to discover whether Bahauallah's social teachings and his

religious ones are related in some way. Can we link his precocious advocacy of democracy and his millenarian ideas? He saw himself, after all, as a universal messiah—the promised one of the Jews, the symbolic return of Christ for Christians and Muslims, and the Shah-Bahram of the Zoroastrians. His advent would surely turn the world upside down. Was the coming of a more egalitarian society one manner in which the prevailing order would be upset? Democracy, after all, would represent a massive change for so hierarchical a society as Qajar Iran.¹⁰ What were the Bahais' relations with other dissident groups in the Ottoman Empire and Iran that sought democracy or other reforms? Were they really the quietists the secondary literature would lead us to expect in the period 1868–92, or did they form part of the “dissident milieu” in the Middle East? How did the Bahais react to this constitutionalist message? That Bahauallah's writings circulated in manuscript and in some printed editions throughout Iran during his lifetime, and were read and memorized by tens of thousands of Bahais, is beyond doubt. The few reactions I have found suggest that Bahais read Bahauallah in several ways, both in a liberal fashion and in a more radical one, though all agreed on the desirability of representative government. In what way did Bahauallah's message manage to hold together this diverse Bahai community back in Iran, with its impatient artisans, its visionary intellectuals, its staid import-export merchants?

THE RISE OF THE BAHAI RELIGION

The roots of the Bahai faith lay in the esoteric and millenarian Shaykhi movement in Shi'ite Islam, and in the subsequent adventist Babi movement,¹¹ but it had other cultural roots as well. Bahauallah's exile to Iraq (1853–63), to Rumelia (1863–68), and finally to Palestine (1868–92) in the Ottoman Empire brought him into direct contact with the debate on modernist reform in Ottoman lands. He responded to the concerns of the Turkish and Arabic press and had contact with reformist thinkers and officials. He communicated the concerns he developed in this Ottoman context to the esotericist and underground Babi community back in Iran, where such public debate was proscribed. The interaction between Iranian millenarianism, Ottoman and Qajar reformism, and European modernity formed the context of the new religion's social teachings.

The Iranian state and the Shi'ite clergy joined forces to put down the millenarian Babi movement founded by Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad Shirazi in the 1840s. After the Bab's execution, and a Babi attempt on the life of the shah, the state subjected the community to a country-wide pogrom. The Nuri brothers, from a noble family, emerged as the focus of loyalty among the disheartened Babis of the 1850s. Mirza Buzurg Nuri had been a high functionary under Fath-'Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834), with close links to the first minister, Abu al-Qasim Qa'im-maqam. Muhammad Shah (r. 1834–48) dismissed several of Fath-'Ali's close courtiers, had Qa'im-maqam killed, and deprived Mirza Buzurg, the governor of Luristan, of his office. Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri, one of Mirza Buzurg's sons, later became a Babi in 1844, followed by his younger brothers, Mirza Musa and Mirza Yahya (then aged 14; later he took the title “Subh-i Azal”), and some of his sisters.¹² The elder Nuri brother, Mirza Husayn 'Ali, known as Bahauallah, was found innocent of any crimes

by the state but was exiled from Iran to Baghdad early in 1853. His younger brother, Azal, whom most Babis looked to as the religion's new leader, joined Bahauallah there.

The complex relationship between the two brothers is controversial and not relevant here; suffice it to say that they gradually fell out with one another. From Baghdad, Bahauallah sent letters and other writings back to Iran that, by their mystical sensitivity and stress on spiritual ethics, attracted many Babis to a special loyalty to him, though he publicly supported Azal's position. Iranian officials, alarmed at Bahauallah's growing influence, put pressure on the Ottomans to exile him to a place less accessible to Iran than Baghdad was. The Ottoman authorities acquiesced; in the spring of 1863 they ordered Bahauallah to come to Istanbul. In April 1863, just before his journey to the Ottoman capital, Bahauallah declared himself to a handful of close disciples as "he whom God shall make manifest" (*man yuzhiruhu Allāh*), a further messianic figure whose advent the Bab had foretold.

No sooner had Bahauallah and his followers arrived in Istanbul than Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861–76), bowing to further Iranian pressure, exiled him to Edirne in Rumelia. Bahauallah at first refused to obey the command, suggesting that the Babis in his household refuse to give him up, which would result either in their martyrdom or in overturning the sultan's decree. Azal and others refused to go along with this plan and, since it required unanimity to succeed, it fell through. This incident shows Bahauallah's willingness to oppose the state when he felt it was acting unjustly.¹³

Bahauallah and a few other Babis, including Azal, lived in Edirne until the summer of 1868. From 1864 Bahauallah began sending letters back to Iran informing a few trusted friends of his advent as the Babi promised one, and his charisma was sufficient to bring the vast majority of Babis over to his side in the space of a few years. In 1867 Bahauallah and Azal broke off relations. Bahauallah's emissaries gained adherents in important Babi communities like those of Shiraz and Isfahan among influential merchant or Sayyid elites such as the Afnans and the Nahrīs. The adoption of the new faith by provincial urban notables who had a power base independent of the state and the clergy proved extremely important for its survival and spread, as did the response of the demographically more significant artisans and workers.¹⁴ The swiftness with which Bahauallah attracted to himself tens of thousands of adherents was remarkable, though he surely built on networks of influence he had established from Baghdad in the 1850s and 1860s. Although his initial appeal to the Babis was entirely charismatic, he went on to consolidate his position as the head of a new religion by defining its relationship to the state and setting down a set of ethical principles as well as a new "social gospel."

THE EPISTLES TO THE RULERS

After putting himself forward to the Babis as a Manifestation of God, Bahauallah began writing letters to the world's major rulers. He declared himself the fulfillment, not only of millenarian hopes in Islam and Babism, but also in Christianity,

Zoroastrianism, and other traditions. This millenarian teaching was combined with a specific program of national and international reform aimed, first of all, at preventing wars and reducing war budgets and taxes. From about 1868, Bahauallah began advocating parliamentary government, a radical idea in the absolutist Middle East.

In an unguarded moment in January of 1866, Ottoman Foreign Minister Âli Pasha had confessed to the Austrian ambassador that Bahauallah, then in exile in Edirne, was “a man of great distinction, exemplary conduct, great moderation, and a most dignified figure” and spoke of Babism as “a doctrine which is worthy of high esteem.”¹⁵ He said that he still found the religion politically unacceptable because it refused to recognize a separation of religious and temporal authority. Âli Pasha (1815–71) and his colleague Fuat Pasha (1815–69) had been at the forefront in promoting and implementing the 1856 reform laws (Tanzimat) of the Ottoman Empire, which made Jews and Christians equal to Muslims under law and established the secular conception of “Ottomanism” as the basis for a political loyalty for all subjects of the sultan.¹⁶ These reforms dethroned Islam as the foundation of the Ottoman state, and from the reformers’ point of view a messianic movement such as Babism, whatever its virtues, threatened such achievements by seeking to put all authority, religious and secular, back in the hands of a charismatic spiritual leader.

Although Âli Pasha may have been right about Babism, he missed the mark regarding Bahauallah’s own ideas, which were more compatible with the Tanzimat than he thought. In 1866 Bahauallah produced a wide-ranging statement, entitled *Sūrat al-Mulūk* (Chapter of the Kings), addressing in a general way the planet’s political and religious leaders. Starting in 1868, he wrote letters to the rulers of the world—including Napoleon III, Queen Victoria, the Tsar of Russia, the Pope, Sultan Abdūlaziz, and Nasir al-Din Shah of Iran—in which he announced himself as the promised one of all religions and set forth the necessary global and national reforms he foresaw.¹⁷ Ironically, a major theme of the epistles to the Muslim rulers was the acceptance in the new Bahai religion of a separation of religion and state, the legitimacy of the secular state, and the abstention of Bahais from violent sedition.

In the *Chapter of the Kings* Bahauallah declared that he had not come to destroy Ottoman lands, but to elevate the cause of the sultan by giving him good counsel—advice that his ministers and courtiers had spurned.¹⁸ In his long letter from Edirne to Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–96) in 1868, Bahauallah proclaimed that the sedition of certain ignorant Babis had never been approved by him and that the community, in becoming Bahais, had ceased to be responsible for unrest in Iran.¹⁹ Bahauallah here made public his complete break with Babi radicalism and violent agitation. Still, he did not offer to give way on any matters of principle and continued to advocate reforms at variance with state policy. He desired, by recognizing the legitimacy of the secular state, to achieve the position of spiritual counselor for it. Historian Mangol Bayat has pointed out that Bahauallah’s policy in this regard “embraced what no Muslim sect, no Muslim school of thought ever succeeded in or dared to try: the doctrinal acceptance of the de facto secularization of politics which had occurred in the Muslim world centuries earlier.”²⁰

Bahau'llah's attitudes, in accepting the equality of all religious communities under the state, were thus not so far removed from those of the Tanzimat reformers of Istanbul after all. Bahau'llah's first invocation of the need for consultation in government, as opposed to unadorned absolutism, comes in his Edirne period, when he advised the sultan to gather together his ablest ministers and consult with them (*shāwara*) on affairs. He also castigated Abdūlaziz for allowing his subjects to live in squalor while high functionaries lived opulently.²¹ His advocacy of ministerial consultation may have been innocuous advice, but "consultation" often appears in this period as a reformist codeword, accepted by the state because of its classical connotations of mere counsel. Even the Young Ottomans, who wanted a full-blown parliamentary system, a very radical and quite illegal idea, referred to it as *meşveret*, "consultation," a Turkish word from the same Arabic root.

By exiling Bahau'llah and the other Iranians from Edirne in the summer of 1868, Sultan Abdūlaziz pushed the Bahai leader into openly condemning the tyranny of absolutism and advocating parliamentary democracy. Azali complaints against Bahau'llah provoked a general inquiry into the activities of the Iranians in Edirne, and the Ottoman commission concluded that, while Bahau'llah had a right to complain about Azal and his supporters, he was making a messianic claim and spreading his message in a way that might provoke turmoil in the empire. Iranian pressure probably also played a major role in the decision to banish the Bahais and Azalis to yet more isolated places. Ottoman officials exiled Bahau'llah and his entourage from Edirne to Acre on the coast of Ottoman Syria, where he spent the rest of his life. At the same time, they sent Azal to Cyprus.²² Ironically, Bahau'llah's exile proved fortunate, because it placed him in the Holy Land near Jerusalem and lent the weight of sacred geography to his messianic claims.

Bahau'llah was furious over the Ottoman government's decision to exile him to the pestiferous fortress of Acre. He branded Sultan Abdūlaziz a tyrant and predicted that social unrest and division would soon overtake the empire. In a letter concerning Ottoman Foreign Minister Fuat Pasha, one of those who exiled him, who died in Nice of heart trouble early in 1869, Bahau'llah wrote, "Soon will We dismiss the one [Āli Pasha] who was like unto him, and will lay hold on their Chief [the sultan] who ruleth the land."²³ He continued his proclamation to the rulers of the world upon his arrival in Palestine in the summer of 1868, but, perhaps because of his bad experience with the reformers-from-above of the Tanzimat type, his social message took an increasingly radical-reformist turn. The new program placed the Bahais somewhat in the same camp as progressive Ottoman dissidents for whom the Tanzimat reforms had not gone far enough.

Later in the same year Bahau'llah went much further than advocating ministerial consultation and began praising parliamentary government. Iranian travelers had described the British parliament to their readers back home for over a century, so well-read Iranians knew something about representative government.²⁴ The Bahai turn in this direction converged with several other dissident movements of the time. A group of intellectuals, mainly translators and journalists, began a secret society called the Patriotic Alliance in Istanbul in 1865, which criticized Āli Pasha and Fuat Pasha for subservience to the European Powers and for ruling

autocratically. A high official from the viceregal family of Egypt, Mustafa Fazil Pasha, then out of power, published an open letter to the sultan in 1866, denouncing corruption and pleading for political liberalization. In the same year his brother, Ismail Pasha, created a Chamber of Deputies in the Ottoman vassal state of Egypt, though this advisory body was hardly a parliament. In 1867, Mustafa Fazil met with the young intellectuals to form the Young Ottoman Society, which decided to publish its newspaper, the *Muhbir*, from London to avoid censorship. From August 31, 1867, the editor, Ali Suavi, openly advocated the establishment of a national representative body, the exclusion of foreign influence from the Ottoman Empire, and reform along Islamic and Ottoman lines.²⁵ About a year later, in June of 1868, another expatriate liberal newspaper was begun by Namik Kemal, also a Young Ottoman. These newspapers, smuggled back into the Ottoman Empire, apparently enjoyed a wide circulation. Reform-minded Iranian expatriates in Istanbul, such as Mirza Malkum Khan (1833–1908), were in contact with the Young Ottomans and wrote for the London-based newspapers. Malkum had once sought refuge with Bahauallah in Baghdad from the wrath of the shah, and probably knew Bahais in Istanbul.²⁶ The Young Ottoman movement exercised a general influence on Iranian thinkers resident in Istanbul, including Iranian Ambassador Mirza Husayn Khan Mushir al-Dawla himself.²⁷

Bahauallah's stance differed from that of the Young Ottomans, not only in his lack of faith in clerical jurisprudence as the solution to all ills, but also in his millenarianism. Bahauallah repeatedly linked chiliastic concerns with democratic themes, showing the way in which he saw his advent as a world messiah to have turned the world upside down. He melded four themes together in his epistles to the rulers. First, he announced himself as the fulfillment of the millenarian hopes of all the world religions. Second, he expressed his advocacy of political democracy both directly and through apocalyptic imagery. Third, he insisted that it was the duty of the state to care for the poor and to provide them with essential services. He linked this principle to his fourth, the need for a form of world governance. He believed that there would be much smaller military budgets and reduced taxes on the poor if the world's major states would form a global political union based upon the principle of collective security.

Bahauallah's letter to Queen Victoria, written in the fall of 1868 soon after his banishment to Acre, combines all four of these themes in one letter. He began by proclaiming himself, in essence, the spiritual return of Christ: "All that hath been mentioned in the Gospel hath been fulfilled. The land of Syria hath been honoured by the footsteps of its Lord."²⁸ What are the social consequences, in his view, of this advent? We may surmise them from his concentration on social reforms of an egalitarian nature. He singled out Queen Victoria for praise on two counts. He first commended her for abolishing slavery, saying it was also forbidden in his religion. (It was still practiced in most of the Middle East.) Second, he congratulated her on having "entrusted the reins of counsel into the hands of the people (*awda^cti zimām al-mushāwara bi-ayādī al-jumhūr*)."²⁹ He added, "Thou, indeed, hast done well, for thereby the foundations of the edifice of thine affairs will be strengthened, and the hearts of all that are beneath thy shadow, whether high or low, will be tranquillized."

Although Bahauallah spoke only of the “counsel” offered to the queen by the people, he clearly was using the word in the new sense of representative government. But what had Queen Victoria done to warrant this praise? She had hardly initiated the British parliamentary system. The reference must have been to the Reform Act of 1867, which extended the franchise to many urban union workers. In the new, postadvent world, he was saying, the voice of the ordinary folk would be heard in the halls of state. Although *jumhūr* could be used in several ways in Arabic in the 1860s, the word had connotations of what we would now call democracy. A writer of the time could use it as an abstract noun to denote “democracy” or “republicanism,” but could also employ it to refer to a concrete republic or democratic country. Such words remained fluid in the 19th century. Bahauallah seems to have used the word *jumhūr* here in its older sense of “the populace,” making it clear that he was not speaking of oligarchy.³⁰ That he intended by the word *mushāwara* or “consultation” a representative form of government is made even clearer by his subsequent discussion of the duties of members of parliament (*al-majmaʿ*, or *al-majlis*).

In the epistle to Queen Victoria, Bahauallah called upon members of parliament in Britain and elsewhere to rise up and reform world society and cure its ills. The best remedy, he said, is global unity through the adoption of a single world religion. During the tense period leading up to the Franco–Prussian War, he called upon the world’s rulers to establish peace and to cease their ruinous military build-up, which they were paying for through onerous taxes on the poor. He stigmatized such actions as “a heinous wrong,” and urged lower, bearable taxes, saying that if these rulers established peace, they would not need such huge war budgets. He called for a system of collective security, such that if any nation transgresses against another, all the others would attack and defeat the aggressor. Bahauallah evinced a strong concern for the welfare of the poor and working classes, whom he thought grossly over-taxed and exploited. He proposed a reduction in levies and the implementation of social welfare measures through the savings that would accrue from disarmament. Despite his political liberalism, he was no advocate of *laissez-faire*, and he obviously felt that the poor had a right to food, shelter, and education just as they had a right to representative government.

Bahauallah’s views on other Western forms of government sometimes differed starkly from his attitude toward Britain’s. He disapproved of Napoleon III, partially because this ruler had neglected to respond through the French consuls to his letter announcing himself as the world messiah and asking the French to put pressure on the Ottomans to stop their persecution of the Bahais. In 1869, in a second missive to the emperor, Bahauallah taunted him for boasting of his compassion toward the oppressed when he joined the Crimean War against the Russians. Napoleon’s indifference to the plight of the Bahais, he said, showed the falsity of that boast. Bahauallah added, “For what thou hast done, thy kingdom shall be thrown into confusion, and thine empire shall pass from thy hands, as a punishment for what thou hast wrought.”³¹ Of course, Napoleon III went down to defeat before the Prussians at Sedan only a year later, an event that much added to Bahauallah’s prophetic charisma among Iranians who had read the 1869 letter to the emperor. Later, in 1873, Bahauallah apostrophized Kaiser Wilhelm I in his *al-Kitāb al-Aqdas*

(Most Holy Book), warning him that the same fate could befall him that had been inflicted on Napoleon. He added, "O banks of the Rhine! We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and you shall have another turn. And We hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in conspicuous glory."³² The Kaiser offended Bahauallah, not through hostility or indifference toward the Bahai faith, as "Napoleon the Little" had done, but on account of his militaristic pride.

In the same work Bahauallah addressed "Tehran" (i.e., Iran) predicting that "affairs within you will undergo a revolution, and you will be ruled by a democracy of the people" (*sawfa tanqalibu fiki al-umūr wa-yahkumu ʿalayki jumhūr min al-nās*).³³ In his letter five years earlier to Queen Victoria, Bahauallah had commended the parliamentary form of government, but here he went even further and talked of popular sovereignty. The word he used for "the people," *al-nās*, indicates the ordinary people and suggests that he had a genuine democracy in mind, not a parliamentary oligarchy.

Bahauallah appears, then, to have saved his dire predictions and apocalyptic imagery for undemocratic states (Napoleon and Bismarck handily outmaneuvered their so-called legislatures) that showed the least interest in protecting freedom of conscience for the Bahais in the Middle East. Although he apostrophized the presidents of the republics in America in his *Most Holy Book*, as with Britain, Bahauallah made no predictions about the American republics; he simply hoped they would prove just toward the oppressed.³⁴ His letter to Tsar Alexander II is not as approving as one might expect, given that the Russians gave some aid to Bahauallah when he was imprisoned in 1852 (his brother-in-law was employed in the Russian legation in Tehran). Although he expressed his gratitude, Bahauallah warned the tsar, "Beware lest ye barter away this sublime station."³⁵

In general, Bahauallah reserved praise for constitutional monarchies and republics, and foresaw toppled thrones and rivers of blood in the Bonapartist or absolutist states of imperial France, Prussia, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran. These changes, in his view, were intimately connected with his own messianic advent. He wrote in 1873, "The world order has been upset through the influence of this most great Order (*al-naẓm al-aʿẓam*). A change has been introduced into its organization [*al-tartīb*] through this unprecedented [system]—the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed."³⁶ I take this passage to suggest that the messianic advent not only turns the world upside down spiritually, but politically as well. The Arabic word *al-tartīb* could also bear the meaning of "constitution" in the 19th century, so that in the original this passage may have had connotations for readers of constitutional change.³⁷

Soon after his arrival in Acre Bahauallah wrote a letter to Shaykh Salman, a follower in Iran, in which he said, "One of the signs of the maturity of the world is that no one will accept to bear the weight of kingship. Kingship will remain with none willing to bear alone its weight. That day will be the day whereon wisdom [*ʿaql*] will be manifested among mankind. Only in order to proclaim the Cause of God and spread abroad his faith will anyone be willing to bear this grievous weight."³⁸ This passage shows that Bahauallah unequivocally thought royal absolutism would completely die out, and he here gave only two conditions

for the survival of monarchy in any form. The first was that the monarch share the burden of governing with others rather than attempting it all alone (*wahdahu*); the other was that the monarch become a Bahai and employ his or her office to spread the new religion. Like the epistle to Queen Victoria, this passage assumes that the only good monarchy is a constitutional one.

Although he framed his views in an apocalyptic style, Bahau'llah's writings of the late 1860s and early 1870s brought the nascent Bahai movement into the mainstream of modernist liberalism in the Middle East. On each essential social question—restrictions on monarchy, representative government, and the abolition of slavery—his position was similar to that of liberals such as the Young Ottomans and Midhat Pasha, though he lacked the Young Ottomans' faith in traditional Islam as a bulwark against tyranny. In Ottoman terms, in the late 1860s and early 1870s, Bahau'llah stood on the far left with Namik Kemal. In Iranian terms his forthright championing of parliamentary government was matched at that time perhaps only by the Azerbaijani translator, Fath-'Ali Akhundzada, who resided in tsarist Tiflis. Bahau'llah called for the kind of limits on the shah's absolute power that went far beyond the program of reformers such as Mirza Husayn Khan, who merely advocated cabinet government. In the late 1860s and early 1870s, these Bahai stances posed a radical challenge for the royal-absolutist regimes.

THE BAHAIS, THE YOUNG OTTOMANS, AND IRANIAN REFORM

Clearer connections can be drawn in the 1870s between the Bahais and Middle Eastern reform movements, whether the Young Ottomans or the administrative innovators in Iran. These relationships took the form of actual meetings, as well as Bahai writings that respond to this decade of change. The Bahai leaders now made more explicit the sort of society they wished to see in the Middle East, moving from apocalyptic vision to rational exposition. I am not so much interested here in demonstrating an influence of one movement on another as in pointing to the intertextuality of reformist thought in this period, of the ways in which some ideas were "in the air."

In the early 1870s, the Young Ottoman expatriates came home from exile, after the death in 1871 of First Minister 'Ali Pasha, their chief nemesis. In 1873, however, the sultan banished several Young Ottomans to provincial prisons, partly because of their close links with the impatient heir apparent Murad Pasha. The state exiled Namik Kemal to Cyprus, Ebüzziya Tevfik to Rhodes, and Nuri Bey and Hakki Efendi to Acre. During their exile, they certainly came into contact, and interacted intellectually, with the Bahais. Ebüzziya mentioned the earlier banishment of the Bahais, whom he referred to as Babis, from Istanbul to Acre via Rhodes (his own place of exile). He took their side, seeing their imprisonment in the fortress as a result of foreign (Iranian) interference in internal Ottoman affairs, of which he took a dim view. He defended the Bahais from the Ottoman charge of proselytizing within the empire, and although he accepted "Babism" as a "religious belief," he thought the core of the movement a political doctrine clothed in religious garb. It was, he said, "interested in revolutionary activity

solely in Iran.” He ended by noting that the first news to reach him from Acre about his fellow Young Ottomans, Nuri Bey and Ismail Hakki Efendi, came through the “demonstrated humanity of an individual . . . called Bahaeddin Efendi” who was himself a “Babi.”³⁹ He was certainly referring to Bahauallah, whose name outsiders often confused with the more common “Baha² al-Din.”

Namık Kemal, sent to Cyprus, had more contact with Azalis than with Bahais, though he developed a friendship with the Bahai Mishkin Qalam, whom the Ottomans had perversely sent to the island with the Azalis. One of his closest companions in exile was Shaykh Ahmet Efendi, hero of the Kuleli uprising, who had adopted Babism or the Bahai faith in his Cyprus exile. By 1876, the year of his release, Namık Kemal was forced to deny rumors circulating in Istanbul that he had become a “Babi.”⁴⁰ Namık Kemal corresponded extensively with ‘Abd al-Baha², Bahauallah’s son, though the Bahai leader later burned the letters for fear of Ottoman searches.⁴¹ The relationship between the Bahais and the Young Ottomans Nuri Bey and Hakki Efendi in Acre was clearly very warm, and Hakki Efendi paints a vivid picture of the Bahais as cosmopolitan intellectuals who had their children tutored in European languages and took a keen interest in the international press.⁴² Since the Young Ottomans and the Bahais had the same enemies high in the Ottoman state and since they shared many ideals, they viewed one another sympathetically. When the reformer Midhat Pasha (a sometime patron of the Young Ottomans) became governor of Syria in 1878–80, he called Bahauallah’s eldest son ‘Abd al-Baha² to Beirut for a meeting.⁴³ Bahai contacts with Ottoman dissidents continued even after the government’s turn to reaction in the 1880s. Abdullah Cevdet, one of the five founding members of the Young Turk movement, at some point became a Bahai and was tried for heresy in this connection in the early 1920s.⁴⁴

The Bahais were active, not only in the Ottoman Empire, but also in Iran, where there was political ferment in the early 1870s. The diplomat Mirza Husayn Khan Mushir al-Dawla returned to Tehran from Istanbul to become first minister in 1871, and, influenced by Ottoman reforms, he attempted to work out a system of cabinet government with Nasir al-Din Shah. He made the mistake, however, of seeking to develop Iran’s economy and resources by granting a huge concession to Baron Julius de Reuter, a British subject. This unwise move aroused the opposition of merchants, intellectuals, some ulama, and of the Russians, and the whole scheme had to be canceled. The fiasco, along with Nasir al-Din’s unwillingness to share any power with his cabinet, led to Mirza Husayn Khan’s demotion to foreign minister in 1873.⁴⁵ This event convinced the Azerbaijani secularist, Akhundzada (d. 1878), a translator for the tsarist viceroy of the Caucasus, that Iranians could not implement French-style constitutionalism until the masses were educated.⁴⁶

Although as Iranian ambassador to Istanbul Mirza Husayn Khan showed great enmity to the Bahais up to 1868, he later changed his mind about them and once let a Bahai courier caught at Aleppo go free. In the early 1870s, Bahauallah quizzed one visitor from Iran about the behavior of Mirza Husayn Khan and described the reformer as “wiser than the rest” (*a^cqal az sa²irin*) of Iranian politicians.⁴⁷ ‘Abd al-Baha², Bahauallah’s eldest son, responded much more

hopefully to the Iranian reformism of the 1870s than did Akhundzada, writing a Persian book in Palestine in 1875 known in English as *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, which he published in Bombay in 1882.⁴⁸ ‘Abd al-Baha’ argued for a limitation on the absolute power of government officials, the establishment of representative, elected governmental institutions, the relieving of the poverty of the masses, the improvement of the country’s infrastructure, the setting up of a modern school system, and the systematization of Iran’s secular and religious laws and legal systems. He also advocated global disarmament and the establishment of a union of the nations, and the renewal of religion to combat modern atheism. The program ‘Abd al-Baha’ laid out not only concurs at many points with the ideas of the Young Ottomans—some of whom were also in exile in Acre while he was writing this book—but also has something in common with those of Iranian reformers such as Akhundzada, the diplomat Yusuf Khan, and the official Mirza Muhammad Husayn Khan Dabir al-Mulk, and needs to be studied in that context.⁴⁹ It is strange that so far the scholarly literature has entirely ignored the *Risāla-i madaniyyat*, since ‘Abd al-Baha’'s book was printed and distributed throughout Iran from Bombay, and it had an earlier, wider public than most better-studied reformist writings. ‘Abd al-Baha’'s emphasis on relieving poverty, on peace, and on some form of international union distinguished his Bahai program, as did his deep mistrust of European militarism. We know little about how the Bahai message of representative government and the rule of law was received in Iran. Yet such social teachings must have been among the attractions of the new religion, and help to explain its growth.

Throughout the late 1860s and early 1870s, the Young Ottoman thinkers had spread ideas of modern representative government. The constitutionalist forces grew in strength in Ottoman lands, and in 1876 they overthrew Sultan Abdülaziz and, after the brief reign of the deranged Murad V, they installed the young Abdülhamid as sultan. Reformers such as Midhat Pasha imposed a constitution and a parliament on the inexperienced young monarch. The first Ottoman parliament was elected and met in 1877.⁵⁰ In a chain reaction, this movement helped provoke a similar struggle for parliamentary government in the Ottoman vassal state of Egypt, where the Khedive Ismail had shunted aside his Chamber of Delegates. ‘Abd al-Baha’ followed the Egyptian constitutionalist press, such as the newspaper *Miṣr* and penned a letter to one of its contributors, the expatriate Iranian Sayyid Jamal al-Din Asadabadi “al-Afghani.” He wrote, “I read your splendid article printed in the newspaper *Miṣr*, which refuted some English newspapers. I found your replies in accord with prevailing reality, and your eloquence aided by brilliant proof. Then I came across a treatise by Midhat Paṣa, the contents of which support your correct and magnificent article. So, I wanted to send it along to you.”⁵¹ The letter reveals ‘Abd al-Baha’ as a widely read intellectual with a brief against Western imperialism, who attempted to establish connections among reformists like Sayyid Jamal al-Din and Midhat Pasha and implicitly between them and the Bahais. Sayyid Jamal al-Din appears in the late 1870s to have had a positive view of Babism, and under his influence the Lebanese journalist Adib Ishaq classed the Babi movement with the French

Revolution, European socialism, and the Ottoman constitutional revolution of 1876 as an exemplar of the struggle for liberty.⁵²

The success of the republicans in France in 1871 raised new questions for Middle Eastern reformers. In his *Bishārāt* (Glad Tidings), Bahauallah preferred constitutional monarchy. He wrote, "Although a republican form of government (*jumhūriyyat*) profiteth all the peoples of the world, yet the majesty of kingship is one of the signs of God. We do not wish that the countries of the world should remain deprived thereof. If the sagacious combine the two forms into one, great will be their reward in the presence of God."⁵³ Note that Bahauallah did not reject republicanism outright, but praised it. He did, however, insist that it lacked the unifying symbol provided by a constitutional monarch. The form of his statement resembles the categories of Islamic law, in which things are ranked as forbidden, disapproved, neutral, approved, and required. Approved actions are said to be rewarded if performed, but not punished if neglected. He seems to imply, then, that constitutional monarchy is approved rather than required and republicanism not forbidden. Since no organized movement for republicanism existed in the 19th-century Middle East, Bahauallah's view accords with that of the most liberal Ottoman thinkers. The Istanbul-based Lebanese journalist Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, who supported the Ottoman constitutional movement in 1876–78, also favored a constitutional monarchy, which he said was not much different from a republic.⁵⁴

Nineteenth-century sources make it clear that the reformist and constitutionalist ideas of Bahauallah's tablets to the kings circulated widely among Bahais during the 1870s and after. A Christian minister in Isfahan referred in 1874 to a collected volume he had read of Bahauallah's letters to the monarchs as "the latest *Bible* of the Baabis" and added that "the sect of Baabis which is now increasing in Persia is that called Baha'i."⁵⁵ Some of Bahauallah's letters to the rulers were bound together and circulated in manuscript copies in this period. In 1890, they were published in Bombay, and a copy of this book was purchased for Cambridge Orientalist E. G. Browne in Hamadan in 1896.⁵⁶ In 1875, a brilliant young seminary teacher named Mirza Abu al-Fadl Gulpaygani (1844–1914) was investigating various religions in Tehran. At a Bahai meeting he saw a copy of the *Lawḥ-i Fuṣṣād* that said God would "take hold of" Sultan Abdūlaziz for his treatment of Bahauallah. The Constitutionalist coup of 1876 followed by the sultan's suicide, by appearing to fulfill the prophecy, helped convince Mirza Abu al-Fadl to become a Bahai.⁵⁷ We do not know whether these events so moved him only because they seemed prophetic confirmation of a millenarian turmoil abroad in the world, or whether he had some political sympathies with constitutionalism of the Young Ottoman sort as well. The story of his conversion, in fact, suggests the inseparability of the two motifs within Bahai culture at this point.

The Babis, as they became Bahais, traded militancy for pacifism, anti-intellectualism for a commitment to modern science and technology, and conspiracies for community discussions of reform and representative government. Close and cordial relations developed between the Bahai leaders in Acre and reformists such as the Young Ottomans, and Bahai authors responded seriously to moves toward reform in Iran itself, helping communicate modern ideas to that

more isolated country. Bahauallah's new message was spread by traveling apostles, many of them highly learned men, by notable families of Sayyid merchants, physicians, and landowners, by women with their own networks, by artisans such as goldsmiths and tailors, and by scribes who conscientiously copied out and circulated hundreds of manuscripts of his tablets and letters. His major works were printed in Bombay and circulated in Iran. His supporters, though impeded by governmental and clerical persecution, nevertheless attracted thousands of converts. The challenge now facing the movement lay in building a community with lasting institutions.

FROM COMMUNITY CONSULTATION TO TOBACCO REVOLT

Bahauallah devoted the last nineteen years of his life to imbuing the Bahai community back in Iran with an ethos and set of rituals and religious laws that differed substantially both from those of Islam and from the Babi regulations of the Bayan. Consultative forms of community self-government formed a cornerstone of Bahauallah's vision, as he sought to avoid the Usuli Shi'ite system of dominance by clerics, and these local ideals tied in nicely with his prodemocracy views on national government. Was the turn to community-building partly a consequence of the political reaction in Istanbul and Tehran from the late 1870s into the next century? After all, reform programs at the national level—such as that set out by 'Abd al-Baha³ in 1875—went out of fashion among the Middle Eastern monarchs and their high officials, and there seemed little point in working to influence things at that level.

The promise of reform offered in the Ottoman Empire and Iran had proved false, or at least premature. In 1878, Sultan Abdülhamid, in the wake of a defeat by Russia, prorogued parliament and reverted to royal absolutism until the 1908 Young Turk Revolution. By the mid-1870s, Iran's Nasir al-Din Shah had also turned against the idea of any administrative reform that would limit his power, and had in any case never contemplated calling a parliament. Royal absolutism and cultural conservatism dominated high politics in the 1880s and 1890s, though officials planned or implemented some infrastructural improvements (more in the Ottoman Empire than in Iran). Both the Ottoman and the Iranian rulers even grew suspicious of modern, Western-style education. Sultan Abdülhamid's censors forbade the mention of names such as Namık Kemal, Rousseau, and Voltaire, and banned words like "liberty," "strike," "constitution," "revolution," and "socialism." Nasir al-Din's censors had similar instructions.⁵⁸

In this increasingly conservative environment, Bahauallah's writings praising representative government looked more seditious than ever. Not only Bahauallah's more important writings, but 'Abd al-Baha³'s treatise on civilization as well contained ideas, such as limits on the power of state officials and parliamentary government, that were explicitly proscribed by the shah and the sultan. These, moreover, had a potentially wide audience because of the increasing use of the printing press. E. G. Browne noted after his visit to Iran in 1887–88 that Bombay-printed editions of the *Secret of Divine Civilization* and of Bahauallah's mystical

Book of Certitude were widely circulated.⁵⁹ Like many other printed materials, the Bahai tracts most often evaded the vigilant but overworked censors.

Starting in 1878, manuscripts of Bahau'llah's new (1873) book of laws, the *Most Holy Book* began to circulate among Iranian Bahai communities. In 1890, this central text was printed in Bombay by the Afnan merchants based there. The new religion emphasized community participation and collective leadership that harmonized well with the political doctrines of representative government. The *Most Holy Book* stipulates that in every city the Bahais should set up a local governing body called a "house of justice" (*bayt al-^ḥadl*) composed of at least nine members. Bahau'llah told these local assembles that "it is incumbent to take counsel together (*shāwirū*) and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God" and to implement Bahai laws.⁶⁰ The word used for taking counsel together is a verbal form of the *mushāwara* we found used earlier to refer to parliamentary government. Clearly Bahau'llah saw these houses of justice as consultative steering committees for local Bahai communities. Most Shi'ite communities, in contrast, would have been led by an individual Muslim *mujtahid* to whose rulings laymen owed blind obedience (*taqlid*).

In his later supplements to his *Most Holy Book*, Bahau'llah said that a universal house of justice would be established in the future for the entire Bahai world and gave it specific duties. It was to legislate on religious policy issues not covered by the *Most Holy Book*, promote peace and lobby against burdensome military budgets, choose a world language, safeguard and exalt the place of religion in human affairs, and fix interest rates (Bahau'llah allowed the taking of fair interest on a loan from anyone, contrary to many interpretations of Islamic law).⁶¹ On the other hand, he clearly envisioned the Bahai houses of justice as coexisting alongside secular parliaments and rulers, since he praised the retention of monarchy and praised the British parliamentary system.

Bahau'llah offered criticisms, as Goldziher noted, of *hurriyya*, the word usually used to translate the French *liberté*. It is clear, however, that in the 19th-century Middle East *hurriyya* bore the connotations, not only of liberty as understood in republican countries, but also of libertinism. Thus, Bahau'llah criticized liberty/license for leading to sedition or public turmoil (*fitna*) and to immorality. On the other hand, he did not reject the positive aspects of liberty, writing, "We approve of liberty in certain circumstances and refuse to sanction it in others."⁶² He concluded that perfect liberty lay in following the commandments revealed through him. Clearly, Bahau'llah approved of political liberty as manifested in democratic institutions, but not of antireligious libertinism (the other connotation of *hurriyya* in 19th-century Arabic). Other Middle Eastern liberals commonly linked liberty with the fulfillment of duties. The Syrian Christian journalist Adib Ishaq, wrote Ayalon, "defined liberty as 'the right to fulfil the known duty' (*haqq al-qiyām bi-al-wājib al-ma'lūm*)."⁶³ Ishaq, a freemason, courageously and indefatigably advocated representative government in Egypt in the late 1870s and early 1880s, showing that even someone who was obviously a liberal in Middle Eastern terms could still hold a conception of liberty as the fulfillment of duty. Goldziher erred in attempting to use the French Revolution as a universal template for measuring the Left and the Right, in which religionists were generally on the

Right. After all, the Young Ottomans, revolutionaries demanding a constitution and parliament, were also committed believers. So, too, were the American Baptists who supported the American Revolution.

For Bahauallah, the term *hurriyya* could be deconstructed into two warring significations: political freedom, which was good; and moral license, which was bad. The word thus carried the additional connotations of antinomianism, abandonment or persecution of religion, and, perhaps, political nihilism. Middle Eastern authors often gave precisely these attributes to 1789. A typical Ottoman view of the French Revolution said:

When the revolution became more intense, none took offence at the closing of churches, the killing and expulsion of monks, and the abolition of religion and doctrine: they set their hearts on equality and freedom, through which they hoped to attain perfect bliss in this world, in accordance with the lying teachings disseminated among the common people by this pernicious crew.⁶⁴

Since Middle Eastern writers frequently portrayed both liberty and the French Revolution in this manner, Bahauallah naturally had apprehensions about the full implementation of such *hurriyya*. His reservations about liberty/license did not, as Goldziher apparently suspected, derive from a belief in absolutism or in the monopoly of a church over opinion. Unlike their contemporary, Pope Leo XIII, the Bahai leaders insisted on representative government and urged that the state treat all religions with equal toleration.⁶⁵

Once the *Most Holy Book* began circulating among Bahais back in Iran, they started to implement some of its provisions. Elderly Bahai notables set up a secret house of justice or assembly of consultation in Tehran in 1878, and from there spread the institution in the 1880s to towns in the provinces of Khurasan, Mazandaran, Fars, and Kashan.⁶⁶ Membership in these institutions at first resembled induction into a cell of a secret society, but the invitation no doubt arose from a community consensus on the most qualified elders. At that time only men served on the assemblies, though women developed their own committees, classes, and networks. Bahauallah himself wrote that “today the handmaidens of God are regarded as men (*rijāl*),” but the Iranian community appears to have implemented this principle in private spheres (such as educating girls) rather than in public ones.⁶⁷ The houses of justice functioned in a consultative and collective manner and differed from the sort of leadership offered in Qajar society by individual hereditary nobles or clerical jurisconsults who demanded absolute obedience from ordinary folk. I have not determined when the assemblies began being formally elected in Iran, but United States electoral practices may have been influential once the religion spread to North America in the 1890s. When Bahauallah’s son and successor, ‘Abd al-Baha, instructed the American Bahais to hold elections in the opening years of the 20th century, he wrote, “the rules for election are those which are customary in that country.”⁶⁸

The democratic message evident in the *Lawḥ-i dunyā* (Tablets to the Monarchs) and the *Most Holy Book* continues to appear in the major writings of Bahauallah in the last twenty years of his life. He made it clear again in the 1880s, for instance, that he disapproved of absolute monarchy. In *Kalimāt-i firdawsīyyah* (Words of

Paradise), written in 1889, Bahauallah condemned the tyranny of Muhammad Shah (r. 1834–48). He said, “His Majesty Muhammad Shah, despite the excellence of his rank, committed two heinous deeds. One was the order to banish the . . . Primal Point [the Bab]; and the other, the murder of the Prince of the city of statesmanship and literary accomplishment [Qa’im-maqam].”⁶⁹ Qa’im-maqam served Fath-‘Ali Shah as first minister in 1821–34, but in 1835 was put to death by the newly installed Muhammad Shah, and Bahauallah’s own father was dismissed from his governorship at the same time. This passage combines the two major indigenous sources of Bahauallah’s constitutionalism. The first derived from the threat of arbitrary dismissal, mulcting, or even execution faced by government officials in an absolutist system. Bahauallah, of course, came from precisely the class that suffered most from this arbitrariness. The second source was the monarch’s role in upholding the state religion, Shi‘ite orthodoxy, which had led to state collusion in the persecution of the Bab and his followers. Only constitutional and parliamentary restraints on the ruler, Bahauallah was convinced, could ensure security of life and property, and freedom of conscience.

At the very end of Bahauallah’s life, a glimmer of political change in Iran appeared in the Tobacco Revolt of 1891–92. Arguably the first popular rebellion with a nation-wide impact since that of the Babis in mid-century, this revolt protested the granting of a concession in the marketing of Iranian tobacco to a British speculator.⁷⁰ The shah and his officials stood to profit from kickbacks in the deal, and hoped foreign expertise would increase revenues from this commodity. But the move endangered the profits of Iranian brokers, merchants, and growers and provoked a series of demonstrations that eventually made the shah rescind the concession. The angry merchants and farmers also drew to their support many intellectuals and Shi‘ite clergymen.

The tobacco concession typifies the sort of changes occurring during the 19th century that may have made acquiring some control over government policy increasingly appealing to Iran’s growing middle classes and to the peasants and artisans. The volume of Iran’s external trade increased twelve times between 1800 and 1900. The country was further incorporated into the world market as a supplier of raw materials and although disease devastated the silk industry from the 1860s, farmers supplemented their incomes with tobacco, opium, cotton, and rice. The population doubled over the century and became more sedentary and slightly more urban. Although Anglo–Russian rivalry prevented the building of a railroad, the expanding telegraph network aided national integration.⁷¹ The constant temptation the capital-hungry state faced of attempting to farm out for development the country’s resources to foreigners increasingly brought it into conflict with a growing middle class and with guildsmen and peasant farmers.

In July 1891, Bahauallah addressed some of the cultural and political themes in the air in his *Tablet to the World*. In a passage that demonstrates a strong Iranian patriotism, despite his internationalist sentiments, he lamented the loss of Iran’s ancient position as a world center of knowledge and polite culture, and its descent into a self-destructive fractiousness. He bemoaned the “thick clouds of tyranny” that had “darkened the face of the earth, and enveloped its peoples.”⁷² He referred to the passage in his *Most Holy Book*, written nearly twenty years earlier, that

prophesied “a democracy of the people” would rule from Tehran, but regretted that as yet usurpers and tyrants were in power. He singled out for opprobrium the Qajar prince Mahmud Mirza Jalal al-Dawla, the governor of Yazd, who had that spring been involved in the killing of seven prominent Bahais. Echoing his letter to Queen Victoria written nearly a generation earlier, he advocated that an Iranian parliament, like “the system of government which the British people have adopted in London,” should be established and that Iranian representatives should meet with the shah to fix a gathering place.⁷³ He warned that without such government by consultation, Iran would descend into chaos—a warning that took on particular urgency during the violent nationwide protests of the Tobacco Revolt.

Despite his hopes for Iran’s regeneration and his disgust with Qajar tyranny, Bahauallah directed his followers to avoid conflict and contention. He did not mean nonparticipation in violence during the Tobacco Revolt to end in acquiescence to tyranny or reaction, however. Bahauallah, convinced of the inevitability of constitutional and parliamentary government in Iran, wanted Bahais to work for it peacefully, not with the old Babi scimitar. As for the point of dispute in the Tobacco Revolt, he wrote, “Special regard must be paid to agriculture. . . . Agriculture is highly developed in foreign lands, however in Persia it hath so far been grievously neglected. It is hoped that His Majesty the Shah—may God assist him by His grace—will turn his attention to this vital and important matter.”⁷⁴ As of July 1891, a year and a half after Nasir al-Din Shah granted the tobacco concession, Bahauallah maintained that the ruler had neglected to develop Iranian agriculture. The passage perhaps ironically implies that granting concessions to foreigners constitutes no agricultural policy at all, but rather a neglect of this vital sector.

To place Bahauallah’s thought in Iran’s political spectrum of the time, it is instructive to compare the *Tablet to the World* to a petition from the “Liberal Movement” or reformist intellectuals in Iran protesting the tobacco concession early in 1892.⁷⁵ The petition decries Qajar officials as despotic and inhuman, just as Bahauallah did. It calls for the establishment of organic laws and the dismissal of the current ministers, and demands the rule of Islamic law. It says the “reformers” do not wish to introduce European-style legal codes, satisfied that a true application of indigenous Islamic law would suffice. It calls upon the European powers to intervene diplomatically with the shah to temper his absolutism, and pledges that the newly formed “National League” would “in endeavoring to realise our sacred ideal . . . employ neither force nor rebellion.”

Like Bahauallah, the reformers renounce violence as a means to their political ends. Still, one is struck that in some ways Bahauallah’s program is more radical. The Bahai prophet predicted and advocated representative government on the British model as a solution to Iran’s problems in general and to the Tobacco Revolt in particular, whereas the National League petitioners eschew European laws and institutions, wishing only to implement a rule of law according to the Islamic code. The mechanisms by which this code could curb absolutism in fact are left completely vague. Second, despite Bahauallah’s own internationalism, he, unlike the National League, did not here seek the intervention of European powers in

Iran's internal affairs. Instead, he advocated that the shah convene an indigenous parliament to negotiate an end to the conflict.

In view of these differences, if the supporters of such reformist petitions were progressive, then clearly Bahauallah was even more so. After decades of advocating mere administrative reforms, the embittered ex-diplomat Mirza Malkum Khan, recently dismissed for corruption, finally came out clearly for elected, parliamentary government in his London-based journal, *Qānūn*, in December 1892.⁷⁶ Historians of modern Iranian intellectual history have seen this call as something of a breakthrough. Yet Bahauallah had, of course, been making this argument openly since 1868, and in the context of the Tobacco Revolt he strongly reaffirmed it in the *Tablet to the World* a year and a half before that historic issue of *Qānūn*. Abhorred by conservative nobles and to the left of most reformist intellectuals, the Bahais cast themselves as a sort of "loyal opposition," a force that would work with the Qajar system to achieve democracy without violence and without corruption or undue foreign interference. Their millenarian belief in divine intervention in human affairs helped give them the patience for a moderate course.

The peaceful and evolutionary strategy toward the achievement of representative government advocated by Bahauallah lent itself, of course, to a spectrum of interpretations among the tens of thousands of Bahais living in Iran, far from their religion's headquarters in Palestine. Some Bahais, disaffected with Qajar absolutism, came close to the radical camp in their attitudes. Others, fearing the dangerous consequences should the charge of political dissidence be added to that of heresy, remained politically neutral.

The career of Abu'l-Hasan Mirza Shaykh al-Ra²is (c. 1848–1918), a Qajar prince and dissident, affords an example of the more activist interpretation of Bahai ideals.⁷⁷ A grandson of Fath-⁵Ali Shah whose father held a position in the provincial government of Burujird, Shaykh al-Ra²is was exposed to Babism by his mother, a convert to the new religion. After his father's death, the family settled in Mashhad around 1863. Shaykh al-Ra²is studied in seminary in Mashhad, then in Samarra. Back in Mashhad, he became a seminary teacher and secretly adopted the Bahai faith. Shaykh al-Ra²is got into difficulties with the local authorities, then spent a decade in travel, and stayed in Istanbul some time. After a brief return to Khurasan, where he suffered because of political jealousies, he took refuge in Istanbul, where he was granted asylum. There, in 1892, he joined the Pan-Islamist circle encouraged by Sultan Abdülhamid, which began with twelve expatriate Iranians (himself included).⁷⁸ Its ranks included Shi^cites and also free-thinkers such as Sayyid Jamal al-Din, and the ex-Azali Babi agitators, Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Shaykh Ahmad Ruhi. This circle wrote to the Shi^cite ulama in Iraq and Iran, attempting to encourage Islamic unity against Europe through support for Sultan Abdülhamid.

In this period, Shaykh al-Ra²is wrote a treatise on pan-Islam called *Ittiḥād-i Islām*.⁷⁹ (I might point out parenthetically that Bahai support for the unity of the Muslim world against imperialism made perfect sense; Bahai openness to certain Western political innovations derived from a desire to strengthen Asian societies, not from a willingness to be ruled by Westerners.) Shaykh al-Ra²is opened a correspondence with Malkum Khan in which he employed the terminology of the

latter's League of Humanity, a secret society modeled on freemasonry.⁸⁰ The Ottomans declined to give him continued asylum, and, after visiting 'Abd al-Baha³ in Acre, he went to India. Shaykh al-Ra³is later played a prominent role in the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–11, and was imprisoned by Muhammad 'Ali Shah (r. 1906–9).

The more conservative side of the spectrum was taken by the Bahai merchants based in Bombay, many of them members of the Afnan clan from Shiraz. A petition to the shah from the Bombay Bahai community in early 1892 appeals for the release of unjustly arrested Bahais and “contains expressions of sincere loyalty to the Shah, repudiates all suggestions that they have any connection with the disturbers of the public peace, and points to Sayyid Jamal al-Din and his followers as the fomenters of trouble and disaffection towards the Shah and his sovereignty.”⁸¹ A superficial reading of this letter, however, may give a more conservative impression than is warranted by Bahai actions. First, clearly the state arrested some Bahais on charges of being involved in the revolt, and some of these charges may have been true. Second, these very Bombay Bahais were at that moment engaged in printing Bahai treatises calling for representative government and denouncing Qajar tyranny. The shah knew very well that the Bahais stood for democracy and represented an “opposition,” even if a cautious one, to absolutist monarchy. The Bombay community simply aimed at making the state understand that, unlike the Azali Babis and the political radicals, most Bahais constituted a nonviolent, loyal opposition.

The pacifist, gradualist Bahais, then, had little in common with radicals, a group that included political revolutionaries such as Sayyid Jamal al-Din and Aqa Khan Kirmani, who called for the violent overthrow of the shah, as well as outraged merchants and their followers who staged street demonstrations in 1891, and some of the more nativist members of the Shi'ite clergy, who employed the mosque to begin demonstrations and bazaar strikes. Unlike the radicals, Bahauallah believed, in liberal fashion, in the power of discourse to change human ideas and institutions. He took a dim view of several radical intellectuals who emerged as important during the Tobacco Revolt. When Aqa Khan Kirmani came to Acre in the late 1880s to investigate the claims of Bahais, Bahauallah had dismissed him as a schemer.⁸² In the summer of 1891, Bahauallah wrote against Sayyid Jamal al-Din Asadabadi “al-Afghani”—he had still not heard that the latter had fallen from the shah's favor and been expelled from Iran.

It is reported that a certain person [Sayyid Jamal al-Din] went to the seat of the imperial throne in Persia and succeeded in winning the good graces of some of the nobility by his behaviour. How pitiful indeed, how deplorable . . . certain dignitaries have allowed themselves to be treated as playthings in the hands of the foolish. The aforesaid person hath written such things concerning this people in the Egyptian press and in the Beirut *Encyclopedia* that the well-informed and the learned were astonished. He proceeded then to Paris where he published a newspaper entitled *Urwatu'l-Wuthqa* and sent copies thereof to all parts of the world. He also sent a copy to the Prison of 'Akka, and by so doing he meant to show affection and to make amends for his past actions. In short, this Wronged One hath observed silence in regard to him.⁸³

Bahau'llah criticized Sayyid Jamal al-Din for his scapegoating of the Bahais and his manipulative approach to politics. Sayyid Jamal al-Din, after all, never put the achievement of democracy in the forefront of his program, stressing anti-imperialism and reform-from-above instead.

Of the three main political currents—the conservative typified by the Qajar ruling elite, the liberal reformism of the middle strata, and the radicalism of revolutionaries—the Bahai stance most resembled that of the liberal reformers. Yet Bahau'llah's open and constant insistence on British-style parliamentary democracy distinguished his community from both the Iranian liberals and the revolutionaries during his lifetime. His refusal to condone violence and his commitment to a constitutional monarchy that would tame the Qajars without overthrowing them further distinguished him from the radicals. From the 1870s through the early 1890s Bahai thought on representative government put this religion in the progressive camp, especially given the conservative reaction during this era in both Istanbul and in Tehran. That the Bahai religion held no place for a formal clergy required the creation of new, collective forms of leadership, such as the assemblies of consultation or houses of justice on which prominent believers served. The emphasis on collective decision-making in Bahau'llah's writings accorded well with his democratic political program. The concentration on community consultation of the 1880s may have resulted from the turning away from political reform in Tehran, which dashed hopes that any audience existed there for the Bahai blueprints for democratic policies. Bahau'llah's writings on politics, though clear about the need for representative government, allowed both an activist and a quietist reading among Bahais back in Iran. Shaykh al-Ra^ḥī represented the activist wing, whereas the Afnan merchants adopted a less confrontational style.

Many Iranians appeared ready, from the 1840s onward, to listen to a messianic leader who might turn the world upside down. Neither the sometimes militant Babis nor their more liberal successors, the Bahais, had any use for Qajar absolutism or for its base in the exploitation of ordinary folk. The Bahais elaborated their ideals of governance in a detailed fashion, singling out British constitutional monarchy and the democracies of the Americas for praise. For them, the advent of the world messiah signified the end of absolutism, of the tyranny of shah and mullah, and the coming of a new world where the lay public would exercise influence over political and religious affairs. The introduction of a rule of law, of an elected legislature, of constitutional limits on monarchy, of low taxes on the poor and increased state investment in their welfare would have truly turned the society upside down. The monarchies that refused to bend before the new wind, they thought, would find themselves consigned to the dustheap of history—as with Napoleon III—or the rivers of their realms would run red with blood—as Bahau'llah prophesied to the Kaiser—or the despot would face public turmoil and deposition—as with Sultan Abdū'laziz. Bahau'llah envisaged the use of typically liberal means for implementing his vision of representative government, of discourse and discussion (*bayān*). Bahais would convince Iranians to become democratic, through consultative practices in the local houses of justice and through spreading belief in the Bahai scriptures and ideology. Bahau'llah's plan for democracy and social welfare, during an era of semifeudal Qajar absolutism, had the advantage of

being radical enough to appeal to disgruntled artisans and intellectuals, while remaining liberal enough to attract merchants of large property.

Goldziher's confusion about whether the Bahai faith stood in the liberal or the absolutist camp can now be resolved. In predicting and advocating government by the people, Bahauallah sounds more like Joseph Priestley than like Hobbes. In urging religious toleration, the Bahai leaders resemble John Stuart Mill more than Pope Leo XIII. In championing the poor against the feudal classes, in seeking to promote modern science and industry, and in advocating a global government, Bahauallah sounds remarkably like Saint-Simon. Combining messianism, an option for the poor, and a firm belief in representative government, the Bahais upheld what was in a Middle Eastern context a progressive program of social reform, though their mix of cultural motifs has made it difficult for Western scholars clearly to fix them on the European political spectrum.

Surprisingly, Bahais in the period 1868–92 had the same sort of links with dissident movements as did the Azali Babis. In their contacts with the Young Ottomans, in their advocacy of parliamentary democracy, and in the relations of their intellectuals such as Shaykh al-Ra^ʿis with Iranian dissidents in Istanbul, the Bahais appear to differ from the Azalis mainly in two ways. First, they had less antipathy toward the Qajars, though they still wanted them reduced to constitutional monarchs. Second, because they were pacifists, for the most part they sought irenic ways to effect social change, whereas the Azalis were willing to encourage violent demonstrations in 1891–92 and to advocate the assassination of Nasir al-Din Shah. Historians have tended, without warrant, to read the policy of nonintervention in politics adopted by ^ʿAbd al-Baha^ʿ in 1907 (and intensified by his successor and grandson, Shoghi Efendi Rabbani from 1921 to 1957) back into the period 1868–92. Shaykh al-Ra^ʿis may not have been such an anomaly, as an activist Bahai constitutionalist. Although the Bahai movement differed from the Young Ottoman society and from the ^ʿUrabi revolutionaries in Egypt in being a new religion, its political ideas were formed at the same time and in response to many of the same circumstances as were the other early constitutionalist forces. Even in regard to religion, there were some convergences. Young Ottoman activists like Namik Kemal experimented with mysticism, and the ^ʿUrabi revolution had millenarian overtones. Nor was the later Bahai turn to political neutrality unique. Most Young Ottomans, disillusioned after 1878, took little part in the 1908 Young Turk revolution. The ^ʿUrabi revolution ended with a British takeover of Egypt, and ^ʿUrabists like Muhammad ^ʿAbduh later concluded that the Egyptians were not ready for democracy. The constitutionalists—mostly intellectuals, merchants, artisans, and peasants—had little chance of immediate success in a Middle East dominated by quasi-feudal landlords and aristocrats supported by the European powers, though they articulated a long-term aspiration of Middle Eastern peoples.

Historians have seen thinkers such as Akhundzada, Malkum Khan, Yusuf Khan, Talibuf, Sayyid Jamal al-Din, and Aqa Khan Kirmani as intellectual forebears of the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–11. Some of these figures laid little stress on democracy, and others had a limited audience for their ideas in Iran during their lifetimes. Given the evidence here presented, Mirza Husayn ^ʿAli Nuri

Bahau'llah must be added to this canon. As the founder of a new religion with tens of thousands of adherents, drawn from illiterate artisans and peasants as well as from merchants, intellectuals, and notables, Bahau'llah attracted a large audience in Iran. By studying both his writings and how they were understood by his audience, engaging in both a "writerly" and a "readerly" analysis, we can hope to gain insights into the social history of ideas in Iran, rather than simply into the ideas of reformist officials and diplomats.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

NOTES

Author's note: Many of the ideas in this paper owe a great deal to conversations with Amin Banani over the past decade, and I want to express my profound gratitude for his generosity and encouragement.

¹In English, see Vanessa Martin, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906* (London, 1989); R. A. McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission and the Persian Constitutional Revolution* (Minneapolis, 1974); also still valuable is Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (Cambridge, 1910).

²See, e.g., Faridūn Ādamiyyat, *Fikr-i Āzādi va Muqaddimah-²i Nahzat-i mashrūṭiyyat-i Īrān* (Tehran, 1340 s./1961-62); idem, *Andishahhā-yi Taraqqī va Hukūmat-i Qānūn-i Āṣr-i Sipāh Salār* (Tehran, 1352 s./1973-74); idem, *Idi²ulūzhi-i Nahzat-i Mashrūṭiyyat-i Īrān* (Tehran, 2535/1976); A. H. Hairi, *Shi'ism and Constitutionalism in Iran* (Leiden, 1977). I once saw a typescript on the Babi-Bahai movement and Constitutionalism by Denis MacEoin.

³Peter Smith, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions* (Cambridge, 1987).

⁴Christopher Hill, "John Mason and the End of the World," *Puritanism and Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1986 [1958]), pp. 311-23; idem, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1971); idem, *The World Turned Upside Down* (London, 1972); B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (London, 1972).

⁵See Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Bābi Movement in Iran, 1844-1850* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1989).

⁶P. Smith, "A Note on Babi and Baha'i Numbers in Iran," *Iranian Studies*, 15 (1984), 295-301.

⁷Nikki R. Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4 (1962), 265-95; Faridūn Ādamiyyat, *Andishahhā-yi Mirzā Āqā Khān Kirmāni* (Tehran, 1970); Mangol Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent: Socioreligious Thought in Qajar Iran* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1982), esp. pp. 157-61; E. G. Browne, "Babiism," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 1909, repr. in Moojan Momen, ed., *Selections from the Writings of E. G. Browne on the Bābi and Bahā'i Religions* (Oxford, 1987), p. 426.

⁸Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, tr. Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton, 1981), pp. 251-52.

⁹Abd al-Bahā called some of the early constitutionalist reforms, dated by internal evidence to 1906, "the basic foundation of the Most Great Civilization." See Ābd al-Bahā, *Majmū'ah-²i mubārakah* (Tehran, 1908), pp. 89-90. See also Juliet Thompson, *The Diary of Juliet Thompson* (Los Angeles, 1983), pp. 100-3.

¹⁰On Qajar society, see Ann K. S. Lambton, *Qajar Persia* (Austin, Tex., 1987); Shaul Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform under the Qajars 1858-1896* (London, 1978); Edmund Bosworth and Carole Hillenbrand, eds., *Qajar Iran* (Edinburgh, 1983).

¹¹For Shi'ism in this period, see Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906* (Berkeley, 1969); Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago, 1984); on Shaykhism, see Henri Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1971-72), vol. IV; Bayat, *Mysticism*, pp. 37-86.

¹²For Bahau'llah's (Bahā' Allāh) life, see H. M. Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh, King of Glory* (Oxford, 1980).

¹³Ustad Muḥammad 'Alī Salmānī, *Sharḥ-i hāl*, copy of Persian ms in author's possession, pp. 8, 14–16; partial tr. Marzieh Gail, *My Memories of Bahā'u'llāh* (Los Angeles, 1982), pp. 22, 39–41.

¹⁴See Mīrzā Ḥabīb Allāh Afnān, "Tārikh-i amrī-i Shīrāz," Persian MS, Afnan Library, London, pp. 153–68; see also H. M. Balyuzi, *Eminent Bahā'is in the Time of Bahā'u'llāh* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 216–24; Muḥammad 'Alī Fayzī, *Khāndān-i Afnān* (Tehran, 1970); 'Abd al-Ḥamid Isḥrāq-Khāvārī, *Nūrayn-i nayyirayn* (Tehran, 1966). For provincial notables in Iran, see William R. Royce, "The Shirazi Provincial Elite: Status Maintenance and Change," in M. Bonine and N. Keddie, eds., *Modern Iran: The Dialectics of Continuity and Change* (Albany, N.Y., 1981), pp. 289–300.

¹⁵C. S. de Gobineau, ed., *Correspondence entre le Comte de Gobineau et le Comte de Prokesch-Osten (1854–76)* (Paris, 1933), pp. 288–89; also tr. in Moojan Momen, ed., *The Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions, 1844–1944: Some Contemporary Western Accounts* (Oxford, 1981), p. 187.

¹⁶Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton, 1963), esp. chaps. 2, 3, 4, and 7; Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal, 1964), chaps. 5 and 6.

¹⁷Bahau'llah's letters to the monarchs were published by Victor Rosen in the *Collections scientifiques de l'Institut des langues orientales du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*, 6 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1877–1891), vol. VI, pp. 141–233; some are translated in Bahau'llah, *Proclamation of Bahā'u'llāh*, tr. Shoghi Efendi (Haifa, 1967). Early, somewhat flawed, discussions are E. G. Browne, "The Bābīs of Persia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 21 (1889), 953–72; idem, "Some Remarks on the Bābī Texts Edited by Baron Victor Rosen," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 24 (1892), 283–318.

¹⁸Bahau'llah, "Sūrat al-Mulūk," *Alvāḥ-i Nāzilāh Khīṭāb bih Mulūk va Ru'asā-yi Arḍ* (Tehran, 1968), pp. 3–70, esp. 17–19.

¹⁹Bahau'llah, "Lawḥ-i Sulṭān-i Īrān," in *ibid.*, pp. 143–201, esp. 160–61, 179–80.

²⁰Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 130.

²¹Bahau'llah, "Sūrat al-Mulūk," *Alvāḥ-i nāzilāh*, pp. 35–37.

²²Diplomatic correspondence concerning the exile of the Azalis and Bahais from Edirne is printed in Momen, *Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions*, chap. 11.

²³Bahau'llah, "Lawḥ-i Fu'ād," in Rosen, ed., "Manuscripts Babys," *Collections scientifiques*, 6:231–32. This passage tr. Shoghi Efendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, preface Firuz Kazemzadeh (Wilmette, Ill, 1967 [1941]), p. 63. Bahau'llah's letters to Āli Pasha of 1868, the Arabic "Lawḥ al-Ra'īs" (Tablet to the Leader) and the Persian "Lawḥ-i Ra'īs," are in Bahau'llah, *Alvāḥ-i Nāzilāh Khīṭāb bih Mulūk*, pp. 203–51, see esp. p. 233.

²⁴Ismā'īl Rīzavānī, "Qadīmtarīn Zikr-i Dimūkrāsī dar Nivīshṭah'hā-yi Fārsī," *Rāhnāmā-yi Kitāb*, 5 (1341/1962–63), 257–63, 367–70; Hafez Farman-Farmayan, "The Forces of Modernization in Nineteenth Century Iran," in W. Polk and R. Chambers, eds., *The Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 119–51.

²⁵An insider's account of the Young Ottoman movement is Ebüzziya Tevfīk, *Yeni Osmanlılar Tarihi*, ed. Ziyad Ebüzziya, 3 vols. (Istanbul, 1974); the most detailed modern English academic treatment is Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton, 1962), esp. pp. 46–47 on Suavi.

²⁶See Ebüzziya, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, 2:18; for Malkum and Bahau'llah in Baghdad, see Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh*, pp. 151–52; see also Hamid Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973), esp. p. 89.

²⁷Bakhash, *Iran*, pp. 44–45.

²⁸Bahau'llah, "Lawḥ Malīkah Wiktūriyā," *Alvāḥ-i Nāzilāh*, p. 131; tr., *Proclamation*, p. 33.

²⁹Idem, "Lawḥ Malīkah Wiktūriyā," p. 133; tr., *Proclamation*, p. 34.

³⁰Ami Ayalon, *Language and Change in the Arab Middle East: The Evolution of Modern Political Discourse* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 100–109; F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian–English Dictionary* (Beirut, 1975 [1892]), s.v. *jumhūr*.

³¹Bahau'llah, "Lawḥ-i Napūlī'ūn-i Sivvum," *Alvāḥ-i Nāzilāh*, pp. 102–3; tr. *Proclamation*, p. 20.

³²Idem, "Khīṭāb bih Qayṣar-i Almān," from *al-Kitāb al-Aqdas*, in *Alvāḥ-i Nāzilāh*, pp. 250–51; tr. *Proclamation*, p. 39.

³³Idem, *al-Kitāb al-Aqdas*, p. 98; my translation.

³⁴Idem, "Khīṭāb bih ru'asā-yi jumhūr-i Amriqā," from *al-Aqdas*, in *Alvāḥ-i Nāzilāh*, p. 258.

³⁵Idem, "Lawḥ-i Pādshāh-i Rūs," in *Alvāḥ-i nāzilāh*, p. 122; tr., *Proclamation*, p. 27.

³⁶Idem, *al-Kitāb al-Aqdas* (Bombay, n.d.), pp. 178–79; my translation.

³⁷Ayalon, *Language and Change*, pp. 89–91.

³⁸Bahau'llah, "Lawḥ-i Salmān," *Majmū'ah-ʿi Maṭbū'ah-ʿi Alvāḥ-i Mubārakah*, ed. Muḥyi al-Din Ṣabrī (Cairo, 1920; repr. Wilmette, Ill., 1978), pp. 125–26; this passage tr. Shoghi Efendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, p. 72.

³⁹Ebüzzıya, *Yeni Osmanlılar*, III:64. My thanks to James Stuart Robinson for his help in interpreting this passage.

⁴⁰Namık Kemal, *Hususi Mektuplar*, ed. Fevziye Abdullah Tansel, vol. 1 (Ankara, 1967), pp. 240–41, 450, 454.

⁴¹For the loss of Namık Kemal's correspondence with ʿAbd al-Baha, see Süleyman Nazif, *Nasiru'd-Din Şah ve Babilar* (Istanbul, 1923), pp. 52–53. The Bahai leader's letters may still be somewhere in Namık Kemāl's private papers.

⁴²Bereketzade Hakkı Efendi, *Yad-i mazi* (Istanbul, 1914), pp. 105–21.

⁴³Balyūzi, *Bahā'u'llāh*, pp. 378–79; Balyūzi fixes the meeting between Midhat Pasha and ʿAbd al-Baha in Beirut sometime in 1879.

⁴⁴M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi* (Istanbul, 1981); I am grateful to the author himself for drawing these facts to my attention.

⁴⁵See Guity Nashat, *The Beginnings of Reform in Modern Iran* (Urbana, Ill., 1981); Bakhsh, *Iran*, ch. 2; Azriel Karny, "Mirza Husein Khan and His Attempts at Reform in Iran, 1872–73," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1973; Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864–1914* (New Haven, Conn., 1968), esp. pp. 100–47.

⁴⁶Bayat, *Mysticism*, pp. 165–66.

⁴⁷Kāzım Samandar, *Tārikh-i Samandar* (Tehran, 1974), p. 199.

⁴⁸*Asrār al-Ghaybiyya li-Asbāb al-Madaniyya* was first printed in Bombay at the Ḥasanī Zıvar Press by al-Ḥājī Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥakīm al-Bahāʿī in Rabīʿ I 1299/January–February 1882, according to the frontispiece reprinted in Rosen, ed., *Collections scientificques*, 6:253. I have used the second printing: ʿAbd al-Bahāʿī, *al-Risāla al-madaniyya* (Cairo, 1911); a translation is ʿAbd al-Bahāʿī, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, tr. Marzieh Gail (2d ed., Wilmette, Ill., 1970). The Persian text of this book was reprinted in 1984 by the Bahaʿi Publishing Trust in Hofheim, Germany.

⁴⁹Bayat, *Mysticism*, ch. 5; Bakhsh, *Iran*, pp. 29–42; Dabir al-Mulk, "Risālah-i siyāsī," in F. Adamiyyat and H. Natiq, eds., *Afkār-i Ijtimaʿī va Siyāsī va Iqtisādī dar Āsar-i Muntashir Nashudah-ʿi dawrah-ʿi Qājār* (Tehran, 1356 s./1977–78), pp. 417–48.

⁵⁰See Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 105–86; Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (2d ed., Oxford, 1968), ch. 5; Berkes, *Secularism*, chaps. 7–8; Mardin, *Genesis*.

⁵¹Iraj Afshār and Aşghar Mahdavi, eds., *Majmū'ah-ʿi asnād va madārik-i chāp nashudah dar bārah-ʿi Sayyid Jamāl al-Din mashhūr bi-Afghāni* (Tehran, 1963), plate 62 (p. 133 of facsimiles). For Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn, see Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamālū'd-Dīn "al-Afghāni": A Political Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972).

⁵²Adīb Ishāq, *al-Durar*, ed. Jirjis Mikhāʿil (Alexandria, 1886), pp. 55–57 (Mişr, 1878).

⁵³Bahau'llah, "Bishārāt," *Majmū'ah-ʿi az alvāḥ-i Jamāl-i Aqdas-i Abhā kih baʿd az Kitāb-i Aqdas nāzil shudah* (Hofheim, 1980), p. 15; Bahau'llah, *Tablets of Bahā'u'llāh Revealed after the Kitāb-i Aqdas*, tr. Ḥabīb Tāhirzādah (Haifa, 1978), p. 28.

⁵⁴"Fi nisbat al-Fitna ilā al-Faransiyyīn," *al-Jawāʿib*, 26 October 1870, in Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, *Kanz a-Raghāʾib fi muntakhabāt al-Jawāʿib*, 7 vols. (Istanbul, 1871–1880), vol. 2, p. 78.

⁵⁵Bruce/Church Mission Society, 19 November 1874, in Momen, *Bābī and Bahāʿī Religions*, p. 244.

⁵⁶E. G. Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion* (Cambridge, 1918), p. 190.

⁵⁷Rūḥ Allāh Mihrābkhvāni, *Sharḥ-i Ahvāl-i Jināb-i Mirzā Abū al-Fazāʾil-i Gulpāygāni* (Tehran, 1974), pp. 44–45.

⁵⁸For the Hamidian reaction, see Berkes, *Secularism*, pp. 252–88; Lewis, *Emergence*, pp. 175–209; Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 172–272, esp. pp. 251–52 for censorship; for Iran, see Bakhsh, *Iran*, pp. 146–86, 261–93.

⁵⁹Browne, "The Bābīs of Persia," p. 944.

⁶⁰Bahau'llah, *al-Kitāb al-Aqdas*, p. 30; tr. Shoghi Efendi Rabbani in *A Synopsis and Codification of the Kitāb-i Aqdas, the Most Holy Book of the Bahā'u'llāh* (Haifa, 1973), p. 13.

⁶¹The following works in Bahauallah, *Majmū'ah'i az Alvāh*: "Bishrāt," pp. 14–15, Ṭāhīrzāda, tr. pp. 26–27; "Lawḥ-i Dunyā," p. 50, tr. p. 89; "Ishrāqāt," pp. 74–77, tr. pp. 127, 129–34.

⁶²Bahauallah, *al-Kitāb al-Aqdas*, p. 122; tr. *Gleanings*, pp. 335–36.

⁶³Ayalon, *Language and Change*, p. 53.

⁶⁴Bernard Lewis, *Emergence*, p. 66, quoting the memorandum of Ahmet Atif Efendi, 1798, reprinted in the chronicle of Ahmet Cevdet Paşa. See for this issue Leon Zolondek, "The French Revolution in Arabic Literature of the Nineteenth Century," *The Muslim World*, 57 (1967), 202–11.

⁶⁵Abd al-Bahā², *A Traveller's Narrative*, tr. and ed. Edward G. Browne, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1891), vol. 1, pp. 193–205 (Eng. tr. 2: 158–66). Contrast Pope Leo XIII, "Libertas Praestantissimum," where he wrote, "Justice therefore forbids, and reason itself forbids, the State to be godless; or to adopt a line of action which would end in godlessness—namely, to treat the various religions (as they call them) alike." In Michael Curtis, ed., *The Great Political Theories*, 2 vols. (New York, 1981), vol. 2, pp. 403–4.

⁶⁶Rūḥ Allāh Mihrābkhvāni, "Maḥāfil-i Shūr dar 'Ahd-i Jamāl-i Aqdas-i Abhā," *Payām-i Bahā'ī*, 28–29 (1981?), 9–11, 8–9; based on Mirzā Asad Allāh Iṣfahāni, "Yād-dāshthihā," Persian ms. (I am grateful to the author for sharing with me a photocopy of this ms.). See also Samandar, *Tārikh*, pp. 203–5.

⁶⁷Bahauallah in Aḥmad Yazdāni, ed., *Mabādi-i Rūḥāni* (Tehran, 104 B.E.), p. 109, "Imrūz imā² Allāh az rijāl maḥsūb."

⁶⁸Abd al-Bahā, *Tablets of 'Abdu-l-Bahā 'Abbās*, 3 vols. (Chicago, 1909–1916), vol. 1, p. 7.

⁶⁹Bahauallah, "Kalimāt-i firdawsīyyah," in *Majmū'ah'i az alvāh*, pp. 35–36; tr., p. 65.

⁷⁰See Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891–1892* (London, 1966); Lambton, *Qajar Persia*, pp. 223–76; and Faridūn Ādamiyyat, *Shūrish bar Imtiyāznāmah-i Rizhi* (Tehran, 1981).

⁷¹See Charles Issawi, ed., *The Economic History of Iran, 1800–1914* (Chicago, 1971).

⁷²Bahauallah, "Lawḥ-i dunyā," p. 47; tr., *Proclamation*, p. 84.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 47–48, 52–53; tr. pp. 85, 92–93.

⁷⁴Ibid, pp. 50–51; tr., p. 90.

⁷⁵"A Petition from Iranian Reformers to the Foreign Representatives in Tehran in Early 1892," quoted from "The Liberal Movement in Persia," *Manchester Guardian*, April 20, 1892, Appendix V of Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran*, pp. 152–54.

⁷⁶*Qānūn*, no. 35, quoted in Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan*, p. 237.

⁷⁷Azizu'llāh Sulaymāni, *Masābih-i Hidāyat*, 9 vols. (Tehran, 1948–1973), vol. 7, pp. 419–47; Ibrāhīm Ṣafā'ī, *Rahbarān-i Mashrūṭih*, 2 vols. (Tehran, 1984 [1966]), vol. 1, pp. 561–91 (oddly, does not accept that Shaykh al-Ra'īs was a Bahai).

⁷⁸See Afzalul-Mulk Kirmāni, "Biography of Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani," Appendix to Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion"; and Shaykh al-Ra'īs, *Muntakhab-i Nafīs* (Tehran: Maḥmudi, repr., c. 1960), pp. 117–23.

⁷⁹Shaykh al-Ra'īs, *Itiḥād-i Islam*, ed. Ṣādiq Sajjādī (Tehran, repr. 1984 [1894]).

⁸⁰Shaykh al-Ra'īs/Malkum Khan, 20 Safar 1312/23 August 1894, Supplement Persan, 1981, fol. 50, Bibliothèque Nationale, cited in Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan*, pp. 225–26.

⁸¹First Minister Amīn al-Sulṭān's summary, reported in F.O. 539/56, Lascelles/Salisbury, no. 124 (35), 16 Feb. 1892, and quoted in Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran*, p. 108.

⁸²See Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh*, ch. 40, esp. p. 385.

⁸³Bahauallah, "Lawḥ-i Dunyā," pp. 54–55; tr. *Proclamation*, pp. 94–95. For Sayyid Jamālu'd-Dīn in this period, see Keddie, *Sayyid Jamālu'd-Dīn "al-Afghāni"*, pp. 283–388.