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ART. VI.—*The Bábís of Persia. I. Sketch of their History, and Personal Experiences amongst them.* By EDWARD GRANVILLE BROWNE, M.A., M.R.A.S.

My object in the present essay on the Bábís is twofold. *Firstly*, I desire to bring to the notice of those who are interested in the history of thought generally, and Oriental thought in particular, the results of my investigations into the doctrines, history, and circumstances of a religious body which appears to me to constitute one of the most remarkable phenomena of the present century.

Secondly, I wish to point out how much still remains to be done to thoroughly elucidate the matter, and to emphasize the fact that every year which passes will render it more and more difficult to fill in certain important details in the history and chronology of this sect. I sincerely hope that some, who have the means and opportunities of assisting in this task, may be induced to do so while it is still possible; for there are many men living who can remember the earliest events of the Bábí movement, and could some of these be persuaded to contribute accounts of those occurrences of which they have reliable knowledge, and their exact dates, it would doubtless be possible to compile from them a thoroughly accurate and trustworthy history. Believing as I do that Bábíism is destined to leave a permanent mark in the world, I feel very strongly how desirable it is that this work should be accomplished; and to this end I shall put

forward as accurate a chronological sketch of the chief events connected with this movement as I have been able to compile from the materials at my disposal.

I shall also state of what new sources of information I have been able to avail myself, and point out the most important inconsistencies in the several accounts of the Bábís hitherto published in Europe and the East.

My desire is that the chronological arrangement which I suggest may meet with the fullest criticism, in order that it may be amended and corrected wherever it can be shown to be erroneous.

In the present paper I propose to deal mainly with the history of the Bábís, and my personal experiences amongst them in Persia between the autumns of the years 1887 and 1888, leaving an account of their literature and beliefs for another occasion.

My attention was first attracted to the subject by a perusal of the most admirable and clear-sighted work of M. le Comte de Gobineau (formerly attaché at the French Legation in Teherán), entitled "*Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*," from whose graphic and vivid description of the first beginnings and early struggles of the Bábís I derived more pleasure than I can describe. Anxious to learn more on the subject, I sought for other accounts, which should inform me of the further progress of the sect, but to my disappointment I could find none; the history was in no case continued beyond the year 1852, which was marked by the attempted assassination of the Sháh on the part of certain individuals belonging to the Bábí community, and the terrible persecution of the latter consequent thereon. All that I could learn was that the sect existed in secret, and was believed to be increasing in numbers. I therefore determined that should I ever have an opportunity of visiting Persia, I would make the investigation of this matter one of my chief objects.

In the year 1887 this much-wished-for opportunity presented itself. I was elected to a Fellowship at Pembroke College, Cambridge, and it was intimated to me that I should

do well to spend some time in travelling in Persia to acquire a fuller acquaintance with the language which was my favourite study. In the autumn of that year, therefore, I proceeded, by way of Constantinople and Trebizonde, and thence overland by Erzeroum, Khúy, and Tabríz, to Teherán, where I arrived on November 22nd, visiting on my way the town of Zanján, so celebrated in the annals of the Bábís.

At first I met with nothing but disappointment in my attempts to penetrate the mystery in which the sect is shrouded, and I was advised by my Persian friends, whenever I alluded to the subject, to abstain from mentioning a name so distasteful to the government. After remaining two months and a half in Teherán, I had scarcely added to the information which I already possessed to any material extent, and though I had met with people evidently well disposed towards the Bábís, I had not found one who would avow to me that he belonged to them, or who would speak of them in any but the most guarded manner.

Discouraged at my ill-success in this matter, in February, 1888, I proceeded to Isfahán, where at length my hopes were fulfilled, and I obtained the clue which enabled me, during the remaining seven months which I spent in Persia, to pursue my investigations in a manner which exceeded all that I had hoped.

It befell in this wise. One day two dalláls, or vendors of curiosities, came to show me their wares. Having learnt to my cost that the inexperienced traveller is likely to be imposed upon by these people, I was not very anxious to buy anything, and while we were disputing about the price of some articles, one of the two men stepped up to me and whispered in my ear, "I am not a Musulmán that I should desire to cheat you; I am a Bábí."

My astonishment at this frank avowal was only equalled by my delight, and I replied to him, "If you are indeed a Bábí, you may, perhaps, be able to assist me in obtaining some books which will tell me about your beliefs." Seeing that I was really anxious to learn about them, he not only promised to do this, but also offered to take me to his house

on the following Saturday, where I should meet the chief Bábí in Isfahán, "for," said he, "he visits the houses of all of us who have believed in this *zuhúr* or 'manifestation,' at stated intervals, and next Saturday it will be our turn."

It is needless to state how gladly I accepted this offer, or how delighted I was when on the following day the dallál, according to his promise, brought me two Bábí books, one of which was the *Ikán*, an important work in which an attempt is made to prove the truth of the new dispensation, or "manifestation," to use the Bábí term. Of the contents of this I shall have to speak in my next paper, in dealing with the Bábí literature.

On the appointed Saturday I was instructed to be in waiting at a certain spot at a certain hour, and to follow one who would indicate by a sign that he was to be my guide to the rendezvous. Acting according to these directions, I was presently conducted to the house of the dallál, and after partaking of some tea, and waiting a little while, a middle-aged man, of grave and prepossessing countenance, entered the room, and was received by my host with much respect. This, as I soon learned, was one of the chief Bábís, not only in Isfahán, but in the whole of Persia; he does not reside for long in one place, but travels about from city to city, edifying believers, making converts where possible, and paying an occasional visit to Acre (*'Akká*) in Syria, which is the present headquarters of the Bábís, and the residence of their spiritual chief, *Behá*.

This was the only occasion on which I saw this remarkable man, as I had arranged to leave Isfahán a few days later for Shiráz, where I was anxious to arrive before the Persian *Naurúz*; and during this one short interview I was naturally unable to learn much from him.

On hearing that he had been to Acre, I asked him what he saw there, to which he only replied, "*Insánt-rá didam dar kumál-i-insániyyat*," "I saw a man in the perfection of humanity."

He promised, however, to write to some of the principal Bábís at Shiráz to inform them of my desire to converse

with them, "and," he added, "these will give you the names of others in any of the towns which you may subsequently visit."

It was further arranged that I should on the following day visit the graves of the "*Martyrs of Isfahán*" (two Seyyids who were put to death some eight or ten years ago for being Bábí), which is one of the places of pilgrimage of their co-religionists.

Next day I was accordingly taken by the dallál to the great cemetery called "*Takht-i-Fúlád*," where we were met by a poor man connected in some capacity with the place, who also proved to be a Bábí. After he had read the *ziyarat-náma*, or form of prayer appointed by Behá to be used by those visiting these graves, which is partly in Arabic and partly in Persian, he told me that he had become a Bábí by reason of a dream, wherein he saw hosts of pilgrims visiting this place.

We then sat down by the graves, which are marked only by a low mound of earth and bricks (the Muhammadans having destroyed the tombstones once placed there), and the dallál proceeded to give me an account of the death of these two martyrs, known amongst the Bábís by the titles of "*Sultánu'sh-Shuhadá*" (the King of Martyrs), and "*Mahbúbu'sh-Shuhadá*" (the Belovéd of Martyrs).

As this constitutes one of the most important events in the recent history of the sect, I may perhaps be permitted to give a somewhat full account of it, compiled from what I heard not only on this occasion, but also subsequently, in Shíráz, Yezd, and Kirmán.

I will begin with the account given me by the chief Bábí, whom I met at Shíráz, the fellow-worker (and for some time the fellow-exile at *Khartúm*, in the Soudan) of him whom I have just described as the chief of the sect at Isfahán.

He told me that, shortly before the event we are discussing, he was at Acre, intending to start for Persia in a few days. Behá was in a garden where he sometimes goes, and my informant, with two others, was standing before him. Behá bade them to be seated, and gave them tea. Then he

said to them, "A great event will shortly take place in Persia." In the evening one of them asked him privately where it would be, and he replied, "*In the land of Šíd,*" which is what the Bábís call Isfahán. The questioner wrote this information to his friends in Persia, and his letter is believed to exist still, but I have not seen it.

On the arrival of my informant at Káshán, on his way to Isfahán, news came of the martyrdom of the two Bábí Seyyids, Hájí Mírzá Hasan and Hájí Mírzá Huseyn, and he at once recognized this to be the fulfilment of the prediction.

Their death had been brought about in this way. They were merchants of considerable wealth and great integrity, amongst whose debtors was a mullá of Isfahán called Sheykh Bákir, who owed them the sum of 10,000 túmáns (about £3000). They began to press him for payment, and he, anxious to avoid this, went to the Imám Jum'a of Isfahán, and denounced them as Bábís, also laying great stress on their wealth. The two then went to the Zill-i-Sultán, the Sháh's eldest son, who was at that time governor of Isfahán, and represented their case to him. He replied that he could not put them to death merely on account of their being Bábís, but that if they, as the representatives of Islám, gave a fatvá for their execution, he would not hinder its being carried out.

The two mujtahids therefore collected seventeen other members of the 'ulamá, and signed the death-warrant of the two Seyyids, who were cast into prison. When this was known, efforts were made by some of the European residents in Isfahán, by whom the prisoners were known and respected, to obtain their release, and telegrams were sent to his Majesty the Sháh praying him to stop the execution of the sentence. The remand was sent, but arrived too late. The two Seyyids, having been offered their lives on condition of renouncing their creed, and having refused to do so, had their throats cut; their bodies were then dragged through the streets and bazaars of Isfahán, and finally cast under an old mud wall outside the city, which was then overthrown on them.

That night, when all was quiet, an old and faithful servant

of the murdered men came in secret and removed the bodies from under the ruins of the wall, which had so fallen as to cover without crushing them. He then reverently washed them, cleansing the blood from the gaping wounds, and placed them in two ready-made graves, which he filled in.

In the morning, the soldiers discovered that they had been moved, and tried to intimidate the old servant into revealing their last resting-place, but he refused to do this, asserting that he had buried them out in the *Hazár Deré*.

Soon after this a terrible letter came from Acre to Sheykh Bákir, threatening him with God's vengeance. Shortly afterwards he got into trouble, and was requested to retire to Kerbelá. On his return thence to Isfahán he was overwhelmed with troubles, both domestic and pecuniary; his daughter disgraced him; his wife proved unfaithful to him; and he finally died miserably.

The Imám Juma had, it is said, on witnessing some hesitation on the part of the executioner in slaying the victims, placed his hand on his neck and said, "If there be any sin, let it be on my neck."

After the execution he too fell into disgrace, and retired to Mash-had, where he was attacked with abscesses in the neck, and returned to Isfahán only to die there; and thus were the martyrs avenged.

The stress which I have laid on the various predictions or prophecies of Behá in connection with these events, may be surprising to some. I may say that I have not been able to see any of the documents referred to, except the letter addressed to Sheykh Bákir, of which I failed to obtain a copy, and only had time to note one paragraph, which was specially pointed out to me as having been fulfilled by the downfall of the Zill-i-Sultán last year. The translation of this is as follows: "Verily we heard that the countries of Írán were adorned with the ornament of justice, but when we made investigation, we found them the rising-places of tyranny and the dawning-places of oppression. Verily we see justice under the claws of tyranny. We ask God that He will deliver it by a power from beside Him, and an

authority on His part. Verily He is the Guardian over whomsoever is upon the earth and in the heavens."

Similar prophecies are often quoted by the Bábís as a proof of their religion. Amongst many others I may mention, of the earlier ones, the prediction of the downfall and death of Mírzá Takí Khán, the first Prime Minister of the present Sháh, by whose advice the Báb was put to death at Tabríz in July, 1850; the former event taking place a little more than a year after the latter. This prediction is ascribed by Gobineau to some of the sufferers of Zanján. Again, *Kurratu'l-'Ayn*, the Bábí heroine and poetess, who was put to death in 1852, is said to have told Mahmúd Khán, the Kalántar, in whose house she had been confined previously to her execution, that he would shortly be killed, which actually occurred, according to Kazem Beg, in 1861. This prediction is also mentioned by Gobineau, and I have heard from one who was himself acquainted with Mahmúd Khán; and who had the story from him, that in like manner she foretold the circumstances of her own death the day before its occurrence.

Amongst later predictions, namely those given by Behá, I may mention, besides those already referred to, that of the downfall of Napoleon III., and the Franco-German war, said to have been foretold about 1863, which a Bábí at Yezd assured me that he had read four years before those events took place.

Besides these, the downfall of *Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz*, the death of *'Alí Páshá* away from his native country, and the assassination of the Turkish ministers who were killed by Cherkez Hasan, are all said to have been foreshadowed by Behá, and many of those Bábís who have been much at Acre relate instances of verbal warnings of impending events and dangers in their own cases.

As instances of the latter, the following, which I heard from one of the two Bábí missionaries to whom the events occurred, may be taken as typical.

They were returning to Persia from Acre, by way of Diyár Bekr, Mosul, and Rawándíz, carrying with them some

Bábí books and documents. Before starting they received instructions to the effect that, so soon as they crossed the Persian frontier, they were at once to hand these over to some trustworthy person to convey them to Tabríz, and on no account to keep them themselves. Without in the least understanding the object of this command, they nevertheless obeyed it literally, and on reaching Souéh Bulák, and learning that a certain Bábí merchant was there, they sent a note to him telling him that they desired to see him on important business. He understood, and came out to them, and the three walked away together in silence till they had left the town. Then they sat down by a stream, and the missionaries, telling the merchant the orders they had received, handed over the books and papers to him. These he took, and promised, though with some trepidation, to convey them to Tabríz. Next day the two missionaries continued their journey, but they had not gone more than a farsak^h on their road when they were attacked by Kurdish robbers, and stripped of everything that they had except their shirts and drawers. Had the books been with them, they too would have been lost.

The following is a narrative of another event which I have on the same authority as the last, my informant and his fellow-worker being, as before, the actors therein. It occurred about the year 1866, when Behá was at Adrianople, before he was sent to Acre, and they had been visiting him there for a while. On leaving, they were instructed to proceed to Cairo to visit and encourage the Bábís there, and avert a threatened schism. They took their passage in a steamer on which was a Persian merchant also belonging to the sect, but before starting they had been told *on no account to speak with him on the voyage*. As before, they obeyed, without understanding, their orders. They reached Cairo safely, and occupied themselves in instructing and encouraging their co-religionists, quieting dissensions amongst them, and conversing with such Persians and others as came to them to learn about their doctrines. The Persian Consul tried to prevent this, and failing to do so, he invited

the two missionaries to his house, saying that he wished to hear about their religion, of which he had been unable to obtain accurate accounts. They accordingly went, suspecting no danger, and until six hours after sunset talked with the Consul on religious matters. Suddenly the Consul commanded his servants to seize them, and confine them in a room in his house. He then sent other servants to search the domicile of his guests, and these returned bringing with them five or six Bábí books which they had found there. Next day he laid the matter before *Isma'íl Páshá*, informing him that these two men were confessedly Bábís, dangerous alike to Islám and the state; that he had consequently arrested them by stratagem, and also obtained their books, amongst which was their *Kur'án*, by which they asserted the Muhammadan *Kur'án* was abrogated; and that by these their heresy was sufficiently proved.

Isma'íl Páshá had the books in question laid before the *Mejlis-i-Istinták*, or Council of Enquiry, by whom their owners were pronounced to be heretics, and condemned to exile for life to *Khartúm*, in the Soudan, whither they were sent without further trial or chance of defending themselves, together with six or seven other Bábís. The merchant who had been their fellow-traveller from Adrianople, and whom they had been forbidden to speak to on the journey, was also accused, and only escaped exile because it was proved that during the voyage he had held no communication with the others. They then understood the reason of the prohibition which they had received from Behá.

At *Khartúm* they remained for about seven years, and were for some time unable to communicate with Behá, concerning whom, indeed, vague rumours reached them that he had been removed from Adrianople to some other place, which they finally learnt from some Protestant missionaries with whom they made friends, was Acre. By means of these they were further enabled to send a letter there, and in answer to this a letter was written by Behá, consoling them in their exile, and telling them that they would shortly be released and rejoin him at Acre, and that their oppressor,

Isma'íl Páshá, would soon fall from power. This letter was brought to Khartúm by an Arab named *Jásim*, who took six months to reach it. At that time the exiles saw no hope of release, but, shortly after, General Gordon arrived, and finding these Persians imprisoned there enquired what their crime was. They replied that they did not know, as they had never been tried or given an opportunity of meeting their accusers. On hearing this, General Gordon telegraphed to Isma'íl Páshá, demanding the reason of their imprisonment and exile, and, receiving no satisfactory reply, ordered the Bábís to be released, and gave them permission to go wherever they pleased. My informant and his companion returned to Acre, and once more, as foretold, stood in the presence of Behá. The other exiles preferred to remain at Khartúm, where they married and settled.

The narrator of these events I met at Shíráz, whither I proceeded on leaving Isfahán, and where I remained for about three weeks. There, thanks to the letter which had been written about me from Isfahán, and another fortunate chance, I saw a great deal of the Bábís; and, sometimes in their houses, sometimes in the beautiful gardens which surround the city, and which alone render it worthy of all the praises bestowed upon it by Háfiz and a host of other poets, I used to sit with them for hours, hearing their books read, listening to their anecdotes or arguments, and discussing their doctrines.

By the kindness of these friends I obtained two manuscripts of the utmost value for further investigation. One of these was the "*Lawh-i-Akdas*," or "Most Holy Tablet," which may be described as the Qur'an of the Bábís.¹ It is quite a small volume, written in Arabic, and summing up the doctrine in its essentials, with regulations concerning prayer, the fast, the division of the year, marriage, inheritance, the punishment of crime, and other matters. I hope to give a more detailed account of its contents on a future occasion.

¹ More mature consideration has made me regret having used this term, owing to its ambiguity, and the number of Bábí works to which it has been applied, as will be pointed out in my second paper.

The other book was a voluminous manuscript of the earlier history of the sect in Persian. The author implies that he was not a Persian, but a Frenchman who was travelling in Persia, and who, having witnessed the persecutions inflicted on the Bábís, and their fortitude, was desirous to learn more about them. Having succeeded in meeting and conversing with many influential and learned votaries of the new religion, he wrote this history to embody the results of his investigations. None of the Bábís, however, believe that the author was anything but a Persian, and some of them informed me who he was, for he is no longer alive. The history only extends down to the events of the year 1850, viz. the martyrdom of the Báb at Tabriz, and the "seven martyrs" at Teherán. The important events of 1852 are not included in it. The author continually refers to a second volume, which he intended to write if he lived, but unfortunately he did not accomplish his purpose.

This history has many defects in style and arrangement, and there are very few dates given, while some of those that are given are utterly wrong, as can be clearly proved. It contains 374 pages, at least half of which are irrelevant to the subject, consisting of tirades against the mullás and the like. Nevertheless it gives a mass of most interesting details of the lives, conversions, adventures, discussions, and characters of many of the principal actors in the earlier events of the Bábí movement, including the Báb himself, so that, in spite of its manifold defects from a literary point of view, it is of the greatest value as well as of the utmost interest.

At Shiráz I saw some of the relations of the Báb, who are called by the Bábís "*Afnán*," just as the sons of Behá, the present chief of the sect, are called "*Aghşán*," both these words meaning "branches." I likewise met, on one occasion, the Bábí courier, a taciturn old man, who enjoys the title of Sheykh. I subsequently learned some particulars concerning him which I think are of sufficient interest to be recorded. He visits the south of Persia (Shiráz, Isfahán, and Yezd) once a year, going from town to town collecting the letters which are to be forwarded to Acre, and distributing

those sent from thence, which are called by the Bábís “*Ahwáh*” (tablets), and are regarded in the light of revelations. The north of Persia is similarly visited by another courier. The Sheykh, having accomplished this distribution and collection of letters, times his journey so as to reach Bushire some few weeks before the beginning of the month of *Zi'l-Hijjé*, and goes thence with the pilgrims to Jedda and Mecca. From thence he proceeds to Acre, after the rites of the Hajj are accomplished, and remains there about two months; after which he returns by land to Mosul, where lives an important personage amongst the Bábís, whose business it is to revise carefully all copies of the sacred books, to see that they are accurate before they are sent out for distribution. There the Sheykh remains for about a month, after the lapse of which he returns by way of Baghdad and Bushire to Persia. In his land journeys he always goes on foot, carrying his packets of letters on his back in a sort of wallet, after the manner of Persian *Kásids*. For food, a few onions and a piece of bread suffice him. He walks generally out of the beaten track, to avoid meeting people who might recognize him. At night he sleeps in graveyards or other places outside towns and villages, unless it be at a place where there are Bábís, when he sometimes stays with them. His fear of being recognized is not imaginary. On one occasion he was recognized by some one in a village near Yezd. News was given to the *Kedkhudá*, or chief man of the village, who, being busy, ordered him to be seized and confined till he had leisure to attend to the matter. The Sheykh accordingly found himself locked up to await the arrival of his inquisitors. The only thing which troubled him was that his wallet was filled with letters from the Bábís to their chief at Acre. If these were discovered the writers would be known, and might get into trouble. There was no fire, and it was impossible to bury them, so he proceeded to chew them up and swallow them. This was no light task, as they were very numerous, and amongst them was one particular letter from the south-east of Persia which gave him much trouble. Finally, however, he accomplished

his task before the arrival of the Kedkhudá and his attendants, and though these proceeded first to question and then to beat him, in order to make him confess, he stubbornly declined to make any declaration, so that they were eventually compelled to release him. On another occasion, the ship in which he was going from Bushire to Basra was wrecked, and all on board were lost except himself and a dervish, who escaped by clinging to some planks, and were picked up after fourteen or fifteen hours.

At Shíráz also I first saw specimens of the new writing of the Bábís. It must not be supposed that this is at all generally used, either in their books, or letters; for it is only known to a very few. I regret to say that I did not secure any specimens of it, neither did I learn to read or write it. It is written from left to right, and the letters are separated from one another. Each one consists essentially of an oblique straight line running downwards to the left, like the downward strokes in copy-books. To this are appended various thin curved lines and hooks which particularize the letter. This writing is intended for a time when Bábíism shall become the state religion of some country. It is called by the Bábís "*Khaff-i-Badí*," and there are several varieties of it.

There are also seals with a particular device cut in cornelian which are used by some members of the sect. This device consists of a vertical straight line with a hook at either end turned to the left, which is crossed by three horizontal lines, also with curves at both ends. The upper and lower of these latter have also at each end an affix resembling the soft *h* (*há-yi-hawwaz*, or *há-yi-dú-chashmt*).

I may here mention one or two other customs of the Bábís, though I only discovered some of them at a later date.

Firstly, their salutation. In mixed society they of course use the ordinary Muhammadan "*es-selámu 'aleykum*" (peace be upon you), to which the answer is, "*wa 'aleykumu 's-selám*" (and upon you be peace). But amongst themselves, when they are sure that no strangers are present, their salutation is "*Alláhu abhá*" (God is most bright), and the answer is the same. In the *Beyán*, which is the book of Mírzá 'Alí

Muhammad the Báb, the salutation was different in the cases of men and women. The former were commanded to say "*Alláhu Akbar*" (God is most great), the answer being "*Alláhu a'zam*" (God is most mighty). The latter were to say "*Alláhu aġmal*" (God is most beautiful), the answer of which was "*Alláhu abhá*" (God is most bright). The last of these is, as I have said, the only one used now, probably out of respect to the present head of the religion, for *Behá* and *Abhá* come from the same root.

Secondly, their fast is not in Ramazán, but during the nineteen days preceding the *Nawrúz*, or Persian New Year's day, which is the first day of the first of the nineteen months, of nineteen days each, of which their year consists. Five intercalary days, corresponding to the five days called *Gátá* by the Zoroastrians, are placed before the month of fasting, and are directed to be spent in hospitality and charity. It is not at present rigidly insisted on that the Bábís should observe this fast, because to do so would at once show them to be Bábís, which is inexpedient. The same applies to other distinctive ordinances. Circumcision is, for example, stated by Gobineau to have been abolished by the Báb, though on this point I can find no clear command either in the *Beyán* or the *Lawh-i-Aġdas*; and while some of the Bábís say that it is indifferent, and others deny that it has been abolished, as a matter of fact it is still continued. In like manner it was no doubt intended by the Báb that the use of the veil by women should be discontinued, but of course this cannot at present be done in Persia, at any rate openly. The Báb also desired to abolish divorce, and, as far as possible, polygamy, as well as to allow fuller freedom to women, and grant them admittance into society; but at present these reforms have only met with partial success, though I have on rare occasions met Bábí women in general assemblies.

In Turkey I am informed that the Bábís may be recognized by their appearance. They wear the Turkish fez, surrounded by a small white turban, and the jubbé as a garment; they neither shave their heads nor allow their hair to grow below the level of their ears, discarding the

zulf generally worn by Persians. In Persia, however, these distinctions are not observed.

I have often heard it said by those who were not Bábís, that members of this sect are able to recognize each other by some sign. After careful inquiry I have come to the conclusion that this, like many other statements made about them, is only true to a very partial extent.

Some of them say that they can recognize one another by "affection" (*mahabbat*), or by the "light in their faces," but the greater number agree that mutual recognition is only possible by conversation. Of this latter fact there is no doubt; not only have they a different manner of looking at things to the Muhammadans, but likewise they often employ words and phrases which are not used, or less frequently used, by the latter. One of these is the word "*zuhúr*" (manifestation), which with them bears somewhat the sense of the word "dispensation" in the mouths of our theologians. Thus they speak of the Bábí movement as "*in zuhúr*" (this manifestation), and similarly they call former revelations "*zuhúrá-t-i-kábl*."

The word "*mazhar*," which means "place of appearance, or manifestation," is much used by them. Thus they will say, speaking of *Kurratu'l-'Ayn*, whom they call *Jenáb-i-Túhiré* (Her Excellency the Pure), "*Mazhar-i-Jenáb-i-Fátima-ast*" (She is the place-of-manifestation of Her Excellence Fátima), while they will say of one of their persecutors, "*Mazhar-i-Shimrast*," or "*Mazhar-i-Yazídist*" (He is the place-of-manifestation of Shimr or Yazíd).

It is perhaps easier for a Christian to recognize a Bábí when he meets him than for a Muhammadan; partly because the Bábís are less afraid of disclosing their tenets in such a case; partly because they are, as a rule, friendly to the Christians, whom they do not, like the strict Muhammadans, regard as impure ("*najis*"); partly because they frequently have a very considerable knowledge of the Gospels, which they will quote, and from which they will try to prove that their religion is true, and that the promised coming of Christ was fulfilled in the Báb or Bchá.

At Taft, through which I passed on my way from Shíráz to Yezd, I recognized a Bábí in this way. He first asked me whether I were a Christian, and, on my replying in the affirmative, he questioned me concerning the signs of Christ's coming. Then he remarked, "Perhaps He *has* come," and presently asked me, "Has the news of this *zuhúr* reached you?"

At Yezd, as at Shíráz, I remained three weeks, and there too saw much of the Bábís. I had been informed that Bábísm was spreading amongst the Zoroastrians, which seemed very surprising, considering how long they had adhered to their ancient creed in the face of much persecution, oppression, and contempt. However, after much intercourse with the Zoroastrians of Yezd and Kirmán for the space of three months and a half or more, I came to the conclusion that, though not a few of them were very well disposed towards the Bábís (probably in great measure because the latter are not only much more tolerant of other religions than the Muhammadans, but likewise recognize Zoroaster as a prophet), few if any had actually adopted the Bábí creed.

Yezd bears the official title of "*Dáru'l-'ibádat*," or "Abode of worship," and it deserves this name; for the Muhammadans, Zoroastrians, and Bábís of that ancient city are all characterized by a greater degree of zeal and strictness in their religious beliefs and practices than I have witnessed elsewhere. The Bábís of Teherán, some of whom I saw on my return thither on my homeward journey, are also very notable for their learning and piety.

The Muhammadans often accuse the Bábís (of whose doctrines they are usually quite ignorant) of immorality, communism, and wine-drinking; and several European writers have repeated these accusations. Now with regard to *wine*, strict Bábís do not drink it, though the prohibition thereof, at least till lately, appears to be less absolute than in Islám. I do not deny that I have seen Bábís drink it, and in some cases even take too much of it, but it is well known that in Persia the Muhammadans are very

lax about this matter; certainly at least as much so as the Bábís.

With regard to *communism*, it appears from the statements of some writers that this has been imagined to be one of the essential features of Bábíism, as though the latter were a *political* rather than a *religious* movement. This might also be inferred from some of the statements of the Persian historians and others. Thus Mr. Stack, in his admirable and instructive book entitled "Six Months in Persia," quotes the following remark made to him by a Persian gentleman: "We, too, have our Nihilists, and they are called Bábís by us." So also the author of the Persian history called *Násikhlu't-Tawárikh* represents their doctrines as resembling those of Mazdak, which are usually believed to have been communistic. Now the only sense in which the Bábís can be said to be communistic is in the same sense as the early Christians might be so described; namely, in a readiness to share their possessions with one another, and a generous liberality in helping each other, such as is often witnessed in young and struggling faiths. Concerning this, an Armenian gentleman at Shiráz said to me: "I like the Bábís because of their freedom from prejudice, and open-handedness; they will give you anything you ask them for without expecting it back, though on the other hand they will ask you for anything they want, and not return it unless you demand it." Their liberality in helping one another is so well known that I have observed instances of certain ignoble persons trading on it, and pretending to be Bábís, so as to avail themselves of the open-handedness of rich members of the Bábí community.

With regard to the accusations of *immorality* brought against them, which, as the writer of the article "Bábí" in the new Encyclopædia Britannica observes, "seem to be founded solely on the misconduct of particular members of the sect," they doubtless arose partly from the false assertions of the author of the *Násikhlu't-Tawárikh* and others that, according to the Bábí religion, a woman was allowed to have nine husbands and the like; partly from the tendency com-

monly observed in history to traduce and malign new religions, the tenets of which are imperfectly understood owing to the secrecy necessarily observed concerning them. It will be remembered that precisely similar accusations were made against the early Christians, probably for similar reasons. Of course I do not mean to imply that individual members of the sect may not be guilty of immoral actions, for amongst those who profess any religion some persons may always be found whose conduct is at variance with the essential principles of morality. What I do confidently assert is that those who, professing to be Bábís, are guilty of immorality, are contravening the precepts of their religion.

I will not dwell at greater length on my experiences amongst the Bábís in Persia, of which I hope to give a fuller account at a future date, except to comment on a statement or conjecture of Mírzá Kazem Beg's in his lengthy and valuable article on *Báb and the Bábís* in the *Journal Asiatique* for 1866 (sixième série, tome viii. p. 393). He says, "Thus lived the Báb, for a long while inoffensive, while the community of Bábís was secretly organized, being recruited by dreamers, mystics, superstitious people, who were by habit in expectation of the immediate advent of the imám, revolutionaries dissatisfied with the government and the clergy, as well as evilly-disposed persons who, under the pretext of Bábíism, hoped to serve their own interests. Thus there were formed amongst the Bábís three categories: the blind adorers of Báb, who belonged to the low class of the people, political agitators who had become his disciples, and evilly-disposed sectaries."

Now, although I do not altogether agree with this statement, I am nevertheless convinced that Bábíism attracts several very different types of thinkers.

Firstly, those who, having been rigorous and pious Muhamadans, are convinced by the arguments adduced by the Bábís from the *Qur'án* and Traditions, that in the appearance of this religion are fulfilled the promises given, or believed to have been given, concerning the advent of the twelfth Imám, or Imám Muhdí.

Secondly, those who desire the reform and progress of their country, and behold in Bábíism capacities for this which they do not see in Muhammadanism.

Thirdly, Súfís and mystics, who regard Bábíism as a systematized and organized Súfíism, essential in its doctrines with their own pantheistic beliefs; and who consider its fundamental teaching to be the divine spark latent in man, by the cultivation of which he can attain to the degree of "*Fená fi'lláh*," or "Annihilation in God," wherein he may cry out, like Mañsúr-i-Hálláj, "*Ana'l-Hakk*," "I am the Truth," or "I am God."

Lastly, there are a certain number of people who are attracted by sheer admiration and love for the Báb, or his successor Behá. These stand more or less isolated from the Bábí community; they are satisfied with dwelling in their minds on the perfections of their hero, and celebrating his praises in poems. As a specimen of this class I will relate briefly the story told me by a young Bábí at Kirmán of his conversion to Bábíism. "Some time ago," he said, "I fell deeply in love; so that whenever I beheld the object of my affections, my whole body used to tremble; and when unable to gaze on my beloved, I used to console myself by reading the ghuzals of Sheykh Sa'dí. One day a friend of mine requested me to give him my copy of the latter. I replied, 'I have no other book, and what can I do without it?' He answered, 'I will give you instead of it a better book,' and placed in my hands the Mañnaví of Mawláná Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí. I thereupon began to read this, but at first understood nothing. '*Listen to the flute when it makes lament*,' what did that mean, and what had it to do with me or my beloved? I was sorry I had consented to receive this in exchange for my Sa'dí, but having nothing else, I continued to read it, until at length my soul became filled with the love of the Eternal Belovéd, and I saw that one should concentrate one's affections on *that*, and not on the transitory beauty of an earthly form, however lovely. One day, as I was walking outside the city, I came upon a man who was reading aloud, and the sweetness of the words caused me to

stop and listen, and after a while I accosted him, and asked him what book it was. After some hesitation he informed me that it was the Beyán of Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad of Shíráz, commonly known as the Báb. I was desirous to hear more, and finally succeeded in obtaining a copy of the Beyán for myself. It is thus," he concluded, "that my soul became filled with the love of His Highness, the Point of Utterance (*Hazrat-i-Nuq̄ṭa-i-Beyán*), so that when I sing poetry it is no longer addressed to an earthly beloved, but is uttered in His praise."

This young man declined to ally himself altogether with either the Behá'ís or the Ezelís, the two unequal parties into which the Bábís of to-day are divided. The former of these recognize Behá not only as the Báb's successor, but as "*He whom God shall manifest*" (*Man yuz-hiruhu 'lláh*) himself, of whose coming the Báb continually spoke, and of whom he declared that to read one verse of His was better than to know the whole Beyán. The latter recognize Mírzá Yaḥyá (called by them "*Hazrat-i-Ezel*," "His Highness the Eternal") as the Vicegerent of the Báb, and consider that "*He whom God shall manifest*" has not yet appeared. They are by far the least numerous of the two parties, and indeed are hardly to be found except in Kirmán and one or two other places, whereas the Behá'ís are diffused throughout the whole of Persia, and are to be found in large numbers in Turkey, Syria, Egypt, and perhaps other countries as well.

When asked by the Behá'ís to recognize Behá as the one foretold by the Báb, he would only reply, "His Highness the Point of Utterance is sufficient for me;" yet he did not categorically deny the claims of Behá like the Ezelís.

I will now conclude this part of my Essay with a brief summary of the chief events in the history of the Bábís, as I promised to do in the beginning of my paper, with the view especially of fixing the dates as far as possible; adding such remarks and criticisms as appear to me necessary. The literature and doctrines of the sect I hope to discuss on a future occasion.

First I will enumerate the sources of information, already

placed before the public, of which I have been able to avail myself;¹ then those to which I have had access, and which, as far as I am aware, have not hitherto been accessible, but which will, I hope, soon be rendered so.

Of the former, the principal ones are: M. le Comte de Gobineau's "*Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*," and Mirzá Kazem Beg's articles in the *Journal Asiatique* for 1866, already referred to; the two Persian histories entitled respectively *Násikhū't-Tawárikh*, and *Rawzatū'ş-Safá* (or rather Mirzá Rizá Kull Khán's continuation of the latter); and incidental notices in other works of travel and history, amongst which I will only mention Mr. R. G. Watson's "*History of Persia under the Kájár Dynasty*," and Lady Sheil's "*Diary in Persia*," both of which are of great use in examining critically the chronology of some of the chief events connected with the Bábí movement. Besides these I believe that treatises exist by Dr. Ethé, and M. Pillon, of which, I regret to say, I have hitherto been unable to avail myself. Of all these I consider the work of M. le Comte de Gobineau the best, and I cannot avoid paying a tribute of respect and admiration to the author of this most brilliant treatise on Persian thought.

The new sources of information which I have been able to avail myself of are, besides oral tradition, *firstly*, the manuscript history of the Bábis, of which I have already spoken; *secondly*, a manuscript copy of the Persian Beyán which I obtained with great difficulty in the district of Rafsinján in South-eastern Persia; and *thirdly* the short poetical summary of the chief events in the life of Behá written by Nabil, one of the chief Bábí poets of the present day, who resides at Acre. Of these, the second clearly fixes some doubtful points

¹ Since writing the above, several other works bearing on the subject have come under my notice. To some of these I shall allude more fully in my next article on the Bábis. Briefly, they are as follows: Descriptions of Bábí MSS. in the St. Petersburg Library by Dorn (*Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale de St. Pétersbourg*, 1864-65), and Baron V. Rosen (*Collections de l'Institut Oriental*); Description of three Bábí (Ezeli) MSS., by C. Huart, in the *Journal Asiatique* for 1887; an article on Bábíism, in the Arabic Encyclopædia, called *Dá'iratu'l-Ma'arif*, published at Beyrout by Butrus-el-Bustani, which is based chiefly on information supplied by Jemálu'd-Din el-Afghán; and a few pages on "Báb and his teaching," in A. von Kremer's *Herrschenden Ideen des Islams*.

of great importance, and affords a certain amount of information about the Báb, who is believed by every one, I think, except Mírzá Kazem Beg, to be its author; while the third is of the greatest use in determining the chief points in the history of the sect subsequently to the death of the Báb (1850), and before the year 1286 A.H. (1869 A.D.).

I have said that the most startling discrepancies exist even in the few authorities at our disposal. In no point is this more evident than in the age which they assign to the Báb, and the year in which they approximately place his birth. It seems desirable to begin with a date about which there is comparative unanimity of opinion; I mean the date of the *zuhúr*, or period when Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad became assured of his divine mission. By the Persian historians this is placed in the year 1260 A.H., corresponding to the year 1844 of our era. Gobineau says "about the year 1843," and Kazem Beg places the second visit of the Báb to Shíráz, his native town, when his doctrines first began to be preached, in 1844. Now this date is fixed with great accuracy in the Beyán, than which we can surely have no better authority, even though we were to assume, with Kazem Beg, that it was the work, not of the Báb himself, but of his intimate disciple, and continual companion, Aká Seyyid Huseyn of Yezd, which there seems no reason for supposing. It is mentioned as follows in the seventh chapter of the second Váhíd (Unity) of the Beyán: "*avval-i-án (zuhúr) ba'd az dú sá'at ú pánzdah dakíka az shab-i-Jum'a, pauchum-i-Jamádi-ul-U'lá, sené-i-hazár ú divíst ú shast, ki sené-i-hazár ú divíst ú haftád-i-bi'sat mí-shavad.*" "The beginning of that (manifestation) (was) after two hours and fifteen minutes (had elapsed) from the eve of Friday, the fifth of Jamádi-ul-U'lá (in) the year one thousand two hundred and sixty, which is the year one thousand two hundred and seventy of the mission" (of Muhammad). It will be seen from this that the Báb gives the hijra date of his mission as well as the date which he usually prefers, namely, that of the commencement of the preceding *zuhúr*, or mission of Muhammad. In one other passage in the Beyán (Váhíd vi. chapter 13), he repeats the

date of the month explicitly, namely, Jamádí-ul-U'lá 5th, but describes the year after his favourite method thus: "*va ba'd az ghars-i-shajaré-i-Kur'án kemál-i-án dar hazár ú divst ú haf-tád sál rasid.*" "And after the planting of the Tree of the Kur'án, the perfection thereof arrived in one thousand two hundred and seventy years." Now this date (Jamádí-ul-U'lá 5th, A.H. 1260), corresponds to *May 23rd, A.D. 1844*, and we may regard it as a fixed point from which to work.

Now with regard to the age of the Báb at this time, different authorities vary by at least fourteen years. Lady Sheil, writing in 1850, says: "This celebrated person was born forty years ago in Shíráz." This, the earliest date given, would place his birth in the year 1810. Kazem Beg, basing his calculations on certain passages in the *Násikhū't-Tawárikh*, which describe the Báb as being about forty years old, fixes the year 1812. Gobineau, on the other hand, begins his narrative thus: "About the year 1843 there existed at Shíráz a young man, not more than nineteen years old if so much, named Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad." This would make 1824 the year of his birth.

All these various statements are apparently referable to two sources: the assertions of the Muhammadan historians, especially the author of the *Násikhū't-Tawárikh*, and the tradition of the Bábís; Lady Sheil and Kazem Beg have followed the former, Gobineau the latter. Now it seems, *primâ facie*, much more likely that the Bábís, who were deeply interested in the matter, should be right, than the Muhammadans, who probably cared very little about it, and on this ground alone I should prefer the date given by Gobineau. For the Bábís are unanimous in speaking of Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad, the Báb, as having been nineteen years old when he commenced preaching his doctrine. I confess that the number nineteen, being the sacred number of the Bábís, looks a little suspicious, but at least the difference between this and his actual age cannot have been more than two or three years, for had he really been nearly forty years of age, such a tradition could never have gained currency amongst his followers within so comparatively

short a time of his death. Moreover they lay great stress on his youth : I have heard them speak of him as "*bacha-i-núzdah sála*," "a child of nineteen years old;" and in the Bábí history it is stated that the Báb's teacher, Hájí Seyyid Kázim of Resht, during the latter days of his life, used to speak chiefly of the approaching advent of the *Ká'im*, or Absent Inám; and when asked for the signs whereby he might be known, indicated three : *firstly*, that he would be a Hášimí (by which the Bábís understood a Seyyid); *secondly*, that he would be youthful in years; and *thirdly*, that he would be untaught in the learning of men; and all these signs they consider to have been present in the Báb. Now the author of this history says in one passage that *thirty years have passed wherein the Bábís have been visited with all sorts of severities*, and, writing so soon after the events he chronicled, and which he had from eye-witnesses, it appears perfectly incredible that he should go out of his way to state that Hájí Seyyid Kázim mentioned *youthfulness* as one of the signs of the expected *Ká'im*, if the Báb, whom he wishes to prove is the *Ká'im* or Imám Mahdí, were not actually young.

But apart from these arguments, two passages in the *Beyán* throw light on the matter. The first occurs in the first chapter of the second *váhid* and the translation thereof runs thus : "One from whose life twenty-four years had passed, and who was entirely devoid of all the sciences which others had studied, and now recites verses in this manner without thought or reflection, and writes in the space of five hours a thousand verses in prayer without pause of the pen, this thing is assuredly from God."

The other passage occurs much further on, in the eleventh chapter of the sixth *váhid*, and runs as follows : "As, in the manifestation of the *Furkán* (*i.e.* the *Kur'án*), no one recognized that Sun of Truth until forty years had passed (over him), and in (the case of) the *Nuqta-i-Beyán* ("Point of Utterance," *i.e.* the Báb) (until) twenty-five years."

Now it will be observed that in the first of these passages the Báb speaks of himself as being twenty-four years old,

and in the second as twenty-five. What are we to understand by this difference if not this: that when the first passage was penned the writer was twenty-four years of age, and that the second was written a year later? The *Beyán* is a large book (I mean, of course, the Persian *Beyán*, not either of the two Arabic *Beyáns*, the shorter of which was translated into French by Gobineau, and the longer of which I have not yet been able to see), and it may well be supposed that a year elapsed between the utterance of the two passages above quoted. The only other suppositions are—either that one of the statements is a copyist's error (which seems scarcely likely, when we consider that the scribe must almost certainly have been a *Bábí*, and would therefore hardly commit so gross an error in the transcription of what he regarded as a sacred book); or else, which is even more improbable, that the mistake was the *Báb's*, and that he did not even know his own age!

I will therefore assume that the first passage indicates truly the age of the *Báb* at the time it was written. The question now arises, when was it written? I think it is possible to fix this date also within certain limits. I have references to fourteen passages, mostly in the earlier part of the book, stating explicitly or implicitly that the latter was written during his exile in *Mákú*, near *Tabríz*. Now we know that the *Báb* did not leave *Isfahán*, whither he went after his first imprisonment at *Shíráz*, till the death of *Minú-chihr Khán*, *Mu'tamadu'd-Dawla*, which took place, according to *Kazem Beg*, in the year 1847, and according to *Mírzá Rizá Kuli Khán*, author of the supplement of the *Rawzat-u's-Safá*, in the month of *Rabí'ul-Ulá*, which would fix the date as being either the latter half of February or the first part of March, 1847.

Now supposing the *Báb* to have left *Isfahán* immediately after this, and to have been conveyed direct to *Mákú* by way of *Teherán*, within a short distance of which he was brought before his escort received orders to convey him to *Tabríz* and *Mákú*, he can scarcely have reached the latter place before the middle or end of April, 1847. Now he remained at

Mákú for three years, according to the Bábí historian, that is, till his martyrdom in July, 1850, except for six months out of that time, during which he was confined at Chihrik, near Urumiyyé. As it is implied in the very same chapter from which the first reference to his age is drawn, that this was written at Mákú, it seems unlikely that its date should be earlier than the end of 1847 or the beginning of 1848. If, then, his age at that date were twenty-four years, he must have been born at any rate *not earlier* than A.D. 1824, which agrees with Gobineau's statement, and the Bábí tradition, that he was only nineteen years old at the period of the *Zuhúr*. Putting all these things together, I think we may fix the birth of the Báb at about the year 1824 of our era.

The next point which I wish to discuss is the date of the Báb's martyrdom at Tabríz, in connection with which I shall have to speak of the dates of the great Bábí insurrections at Sheykh Tabarsí, near Bálfurúsh, in Mázandarán, and at Zanján in the *Khamsa*.

With regard to the Mázandarán insurrection, all authorities are agreed that it began shortly after the death of Muhammad Sháh (September 4th or 5th, 1848), and was finally quelled in July or August, 1849. But in the case of the two other events, there is some difference.

Watson, Piggott, and Kazem Beg all place the commencement of the siege of Zanján in the month of May, but whereas the two former make the year 1850, the latter asserts it to have been 1849. According to the first two authorities, an interval of about nine months must have elapsed between the fall of Sheykh Tabarsí and the commencement of the troubles at Zanján; while the latter states explicitly that the news of the former event reached the Bábis, who were defending themselves at Zanján, during the latter part of 1849, and served to discourage them.

Lady Sheil records the siege of Zanján, and the ultimate fate thereof, in her Diary of the events of 1850, and after speaking of the execution of seven Bábis ("The seven martyrs," *Shuhadá-i-sab'a*) at Teherán, proceeds, "In Zanján . . . the insurrection broke out with violence." The

balance of evidence is therefore in favour of May, 1850, as the date of the commencement of the siege. Watson says that it lasted "all through the summer of 1850," and that "the scene of operations was visited in the month of October by Sir Henry Bethune." This statement, however, introduces a further difficulty, for Kazem Beg makes the siege last from May till the following January, whereas according to Watson's account, it can only have lasted from May till October; unless, indeed, we are to understand that Sir Henry Bethune visited the scene of operations before the conclusion of the siege, and that Lady Sheil, in chronicling the events of the year 1850, mentioned the conclusion of it, which did not actually occur till the beginning of 1851.

On the whole, I am inclined to believe that Kazem Beg was in error, as he certainly is in placing the Báb's death in 1849. The latter error appears to result from the former, for there seems no reason to doubt that the Báb was shot at Tabriz during the siege of Zanján (as is explicitly stated by Watson), and in the month of July. Kazem Beg himself quotes a statement of M. Mochenin's (from whose notes he draws much of his information), to the effect that the latter had himself seen the Báb at Chihrík, in June, 1850, but he says in a note at the bottom of the page, "M. Mochenin must be deceived about the date; in 1850 Báb no longer existed. He was put to death towards the middle of July, 1849." It is difficult to see what facts made Kazem Beg reject so clear a testimony to the fact that the Báb was still living in June, 1850, unless it be, as I have suggested, that his error concerning the date of the siege of Zanján threw him into this further mistake, and that he followed the Násiklu't-Tawárfík, which makes the year A.H. 1265 (which ended on November 16th, 1849) the date of this event. The Bábí history, on the other hand, fully supports the statements of Watson and Lady Sheil in favour of the year 1850, for it says: "The holy spirit of that noble one (*i.e.* the Báb), flying from that delicate frame, ascended to the highest horizon; and this event occurred on Thursday the 27th of the month of Sha'bán, in the year one thousand two hundred and sixty-six

of the hijra, which was the seventh year of the manifestation" (*zuhúr*). If this be correct, as there is every reason to believe (since the Bábís would surely be more interested than any one else in preserving the exact date of the death of their founder), we obtain *July 9th*, 1850, as the day on which the Báb suffered martyrdom. Gobineau likewise gives Sha'bán 27th as the date, but does not, I think, mention the year.

We have now fixed five important dates, from which it is possible approximately to arrange the remaining events of this period in chronological order. These I shall give in a tabular form at the conclusion of this part of my paper, but before doing so, the history of the Bábís from the date of the Báb's death down to the year 1869, when Nabil's poetical chronicle was written, must be sketched in outline.

On the death of the Báb, Mírzá Yahya, who received the title of "*Hazrat-i-Ezel*" ("His Highness the Eternal"), was chosen by general consensus of opinion as his successor, and appears to have left Persia and taken up his residence in Baghdád almost immediately. He laid no claims to prophetic rank, being merely the "*Khalifa*," or vicegerent of the Báb.

In January, 1852, Mírzá Takí Khán, the Sháh's first prime-minister, at whose suggestion the Báb was put to death, and who had fallen into disgrace with the Sháh and been dismissed from office a few months previously, was secretly put to death at the palace of Fín, near Káshán.

In August of the same year (Aug. 15th, 1852), the attempt on the life of the Sháh by certain Bábís was made, and a fierce persecution of the sect immediately succeeded it; in which, amongst other victims, the beautiful and accomplished Bábí heroine and poetess, *Kurratu'l-'Ayn*, as well as the Báb's former amanuensis and fellow-prisoner, *Aká Seyyid Huseyn of Yazd*, and *Suleymán Khán*, whose extraordinary fortitude under the most terrible tortures has rendered his name famous, suffered death. Behá, who had failed in an attempt to join the Bábís in Mázandarán during the siege of Sheykh Tabarsí, narrowly escaped death on this occasion, and appears actually to have been arrested; but as he had just returned to

Teherán, his friends succeeded in proving that he could not have had any complicity in the attempted assassination of the Sháh, and, after a short period of imprisonment, he also went to Baghdad, where Mírzá Yahyá already was. This occurred, according to Nabíl, in A.H. 1270 (Oct. 4th, 1853–Sept. 24th, 1854).

Here he remained, with occasional periods of retirement into solitude, for 10 years (till A.H. 1280), and during this period (in A.H. 1278) he wrote the *I'kán*, or proof of the truth of the Bábí doctrines, of which I have already said something. About the same time the Bábís at Sultánábád in 'Irák-i-'Ajamí suffered a severe persecution, of which I have heard a very detailed account from one who but narrowly escaped the death which befell four of his fellow-prisoners. Besides these, a Bábí woman was sent thence to Teherán, and there strangled by order of the Sháh.

The Persian Government viewed with disfavour the presence of the Bábís at Baghdad, and finally, in A.H. 1280 (A.D. 1863–4), prevailed on the Turkish Government to remove them to a spot more remote from Persia.

They were first taken to Constantinople, where they remained for about four months; thence, in Rajab, A.H. 1281 (December, A.D. 1864), they were sent to Adrianople, called by the followers of Behá, "*Arz-i-sirr*," "The Land of the Mystery," because it was there that Behá announced his divine mission, and claimed to be "He whom God shall manifest" (A.H. 1283 = A.D. 1866–7). On his making this announcement, the Bábís were divided into two parties, some admitting Behá's claim, and others, at the head of whom was *Mírzá Yahyá*, who had hitherto been regarded by all as the Báb's successor and vicerent, denying it. These latter argued that "He whom God shall manifest" could not come until the religion founded by the Báb had obtained currency, and the laws laid down in the Beyán had been adopted, at least by some of the nations of the earth. They asserted that it was an impossible thing that one revelation should so soon be abrogated by another, and that so brief a period should separate

two "*zuhúrs*," or manifestations; while they further adduced texts from the Beyán to prove that more than a thousand years, and probably either 2001 or 1511 years (represented respectively by the sum of the letters in the words *Ghíyás* and *Mustaghás* according to the abjad notation) must elapse between the time of the Báb and the advent of "Him whom God shall manifest."

Against these arguments the followers of Behá quoted numerous texts from the Beyán to the effect that the day and place of His coming were known to God alone (Persian Beyán, iv. 5, vi. 3, vii. 10); that He will arise *suddenly* (vii. 9), and is to be known by Himself, not by the Beyán (vii. 11), for he is the fulfilment of the verse "*Leysa Ke-mithlihi shey*" (There is none like unto Him) (v. 16); and that it was impossible that any one should falsely claim to be Him (vi. 8). They urged, moreover, that all through the Beyán the utmost stress was laid upon "verses" (*áyát*) being the essential sign and proof of a prophet, and that the *Laúh-i-Našir*, in which Behá announced his prophetic mission, and other writings of his, fulfilled the conditions which constituted "verses," viz. Eloquence of diction; rapidity of utterance; knowledge unacquired by study (*Ílm-i-laduní*); claim to divine origin; and power to affect and control the minds of men.

The discussion between the two parties grew fierce, and finally they came to blows in some cases, and several on either side were killed. The Turkish Government decided to separate them, and it was determined to send Mírzá Yahyá and his followers to Cyprus, and Behá with his adherents to Acre on the Syrian coast. The latter place was used by the Turks as a prison and place of exile for convicts, and is said to be extremely unhealthy, especially during the summer months. The Bábís declare that it was chosen on that account, in the hope that it might prove fatal to Behá and his followers, and that this scheme was devised by the French and Persian ambassadors at Constantinople in conjunction with 'Álí Páshá, who said, "I will send him to a place where he will soon die." It was on this account that

the letters sent by Behá to Napoleon III., foretelling his downfall, and to 'Alí Páshá, prophesying his death in a foreign country, were written; and in another letter, addressed to the Emperor of Russia, thanks are bestowed for kindness shown by the Russian minister. Of these documents, which, with some others addressed to other potentates, are collectively known as the "*Súra-i-Heykal*," I shall speak more particularly in treating of the Literature of the Bábís.

It was further decided that a few of the Ezelís, or followers of Mírzá Yahyá, should be sent with Behá and his adherents to Acre; and that some of the latter should be transported with the majority of the Ezelís to Cyprus. The reason of this arrangement was a hope that in each case the dissentient minority would strive to hinder Persians and others from coming to visit either of the Bábí chiefs, by giving information of their arrival and intention to the Turkish Government. Much difficulty was experienced in carrying out this arrangement, the Behá'ís refusing to be separated from their chief. One of them cut his throat, and refused to allow the wound to be dressed and the hæmorrhage checked, until he received a promise that he should be allowed to accompany his master to Acre. Others cast themselves out of the ships which were to separate them from him into the sea.

Eventually only three or four of the followers of Behá were conveyed to Cyprus. One of these was the celebrated "*Mushkin-Kalam*," who is famous among the Bábís for his penmanship, and who keeps, or used to keep, a coffee-house at, I think, Larnaka-Skala. Whenever a Persian landed there, he used to invite him in, and offer him tea or coffee and a *qalyán*; and if, in the course of conversation, he succeeded in eliciting from his visitor that he had come thither to see Mírzá Yahyá, he tried to prevent him doing so, either by persuasion, or by warning the Turkish officials of his intention. Since Cyprus has become a British possession, I do not know how the matter stands, and though I have made some inquiries, I have hitherto been unable to learn whether

Mírzá Yahyá is still alive or not.¹ It is probable that if he be so, he will be at *Lefkosia*, and it is extremely desirable to find this out, for much precious information concerning the Báb could undoubtedly be gathered from him. His followers soon dwindled to a very small number, and I was informed by a Bábí who had visited him a few years ago, that he was living alone in great poverty, and, I think, deserted by his own sons. He is said to spend his days in lamenting over the death of the Báb, and writing poems in his praise.

With regard to the seven Ezelis sent to Acre, they were massacred one night by some of the followers of Behá, but without the knowledge of the latter, so far as we can judge. The names of five of these unfortunate victims were: *A'ká Ján*, nicknamed "*Kaj-Kuláh*" (crooked-cap), a young man of great strength, who had served in the Turkish artillery, till dismissed and imprisoned for being a Bábí, and who was first killed, as he came to open the door on hearing the knocks of the assassins; *Háji Seyyid Muhammad*, of *Isfahán*, one of the companions and disciples of the Báb himself; *Mírzá Rizá*, nephew of the above; *Háji Seyyid Huseyn*, of *Káshán*; and *Mírzá Haydar 'Alí*, of *Ardistán*, described as a man of wonderful fire and enthusiasm.

The Turkish officials, on hearing of this massacre, confined all the followers of Behá in the caravansaray, till the twelve murderers gave themselves up, saying, "We killed these men on our own responsibility and without the knowledge of the others. Punish us, not them." They were thereupon imprisoned for some time, but eventually released on Behá's son, 'Abbás Effendi (called *A'ká Sirru'lláh*, "The Mystery of God"), making himself surety for them. They were not permitted to leave Acre, and were for some time compelled to wear gyves upon their ankles.

¹ In the article on Bábism in the Arabic Encyclopædia called *Du'iratul-Ma'arif*, to which I have alluded in a previous note, it is stated that the Turkish Government "exiled *Subh-i-Ezel* ('the Morning of Eternity,' i.e. Mírzá Yahyá) to the island of Cyprus, where he died; and exiled Behá to Acre, where he still lives with a number of his followers." Within the last few weeks, rumours have reached me from Beyrout to the effect that Behá is dead, and that one of his followers named Seyyid 'Alí, Shírázi, has been chosen to fill his place. For the truth of this report, however, I cannot vouch.

This event occurred about a month after the arrival of Behá and his followers at Acre, *i.e.* about October or November, 1868. From that time till the present day, the followers of Behá have been increasing in number and influence, and the followers of Mírzá Yahyá decreasing, so that among the many Bábís with whom I formed acquaintance in Persia, I only met six Ezelís. These, of course, do not accept any of the writings of Behá as inspired, and their sacred books are confined to the Beyán, and other writings of the Báb. Mírzá Yahyá is also the author of some books, I believe, but these are only regarded, even by the Ezelís, as of secondary importance, while the Behá'ís reject them entirely.

Thus at the present day nearly all the Bábís are Behá'ís, and the Beyán, and other writings of the Báb, are in their eyes already an abrogated revelation;—a sort of Old Testament, read occasionally for edification, but no longer authoritative as a guide of life and belief. It is this fact which makes copies of the Beyán so difficult to obtain, since they have become scarce; and moreover the Bábís prefer to place in the hands of the inquirer the writings of Behá.

The latter are very numerous, since all the letters sent by him to his followers or others are regarded as inspired writings in the fullest sense of the word. Behá is now 74 years of age, and still dwells at Acre, where he is visited by numbers of his followers, as well as by inquirers. According to what I have heard, the respect paid to him by the former is unbounded. They regard him as an incarnation of the Deity, and indeed commonly speak of him as "*Hakk*" (*God*, or the *Truth*), although, as I hope to explain more fully on a future occasion, they understand his divinity in different ways. He has several sons, one, already alluded to, named '*Abbás Efendi*, and called by the Bábís "*Ghuşn-i-A'sam*," or "*Áká Sirru 'lláh*," who travels about to Beyrout and other places in Syria; another, named *Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí*, and entitled "*Ghuşn-i-Akbar*." Behá himself is named *Mírzá Husayn 'Alí*, and is of noble family. He was born in A.H. 1233, on Muharram 2nd, in Teherán. He never appears in public, and never leaves Acre except to visit a garden which he

possesses in its vicinity, and this he does at night. He is constantly waited on by one known amongst the Bábís as *Jenáb-i-Khádimu'lláh* (His Excellence the Servant of God), who admits those who desire an audience in parties of from half a dozen to a dozen, at stated times. A scribe is also present who writes so swiftly that he can take down verbatim all the utterances of Behá, which are subsequently copied out for distribution.

These audiences of which I have spoken do not appear to last long as a rule. One of them was described to me minutely by a Bábí with whom I was intimately acquainted, and who visited both Acre and Cyprus in the course of his travels. At the former place he remained seventy days, and during this time was "honoured" ("*musharraf*"), that is, admitted to an audience with the Behá, twelve times. The first occasion was three days after his arrival. He was accompanied by a friend who had been there before, and by the afore-mentioned *Khádimu'lláh*. On reaching the flight of stairs leading to the room where Behá was with his two sons, my informant saw his companions prostrate themselves, and enter the room on their knees. While he was hesitating as to whether he should do the same, Behá called out to him "*Lázim nist,*" "It is not necessary." Behá then placed his hands on their heads, and greeted them twice with the words "*Báraka'lláhu 'aleykum*" ("God hath blessed you," or "May God bless you"). Then he said, "Most blessed are ye, in that ye have been honoured with beholding me, for prophets have desired this most ardently." He then told them to sit down, and tea was placed before them. My informant's companion hesitated to drink it before receiving permission, seeing which, Behá said to him, "The meaning of placing tea before a person is that he should drink it." *Khádimu'lláh* then read a "*Laah*" to them, and they were dismissed. My informant added, that being taken ill a little while after, he was sent some *piláv* from Behá's own plate, and that on eating this he was cured. Many of the Bábís strove to carry off a few grains of rice for themselves. On another occasion when he was admitted to an audience, Behá said to him, "I desire that all men may become even as I am."

Since the arrival of Behá at Acre, the most important events in the history of the sect are the despatch of the Letters to the various sovereigns of some of the chief countries in Europe and Asia, inviting them to embrace the new religion, and the martyrdom of Badi', the youthful messenger who carried the letter addressed to the Sháh of Persia to Teherán, which probably occurred about A.D. 1869; and the death of the "Martyrs of Isfahán," described above, about A.D. 1880 or 1881.

The letters were as follows:¹ to *the Sháh of Persia*, the bearer of which went on foot from Acre to Teherán, where he suffered a painful death, being branded to death with hot bricks; to *Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz*; to *Napoleon III.*; to the then reigning *Emperor of Russia*; to the *Pope*; to the *President of the United States*; and to our own *Queen Victoria*. In the latter much commendation is bestowed on the Queen and the English Government.

I must here conclude this imperfect account of the history of this interesting and curious religion, which, although far from being as accurate and precise as I should have wished, contains, I believe, matter hitherto not brought before the public. I hope soon to be in possession of fuller materials, and to be able to publish a better account of the subject. Meanwhile I shall be very greatly obliged to any one who will correct any of the dates given, or supply me with any fuller information. The Literature and Doctrines of the sect I propose to consider in another Paper. My hope is that this attempt to give some further account of a most important religious movement in the East, which may not improbably again play a prominent part in history, may at least serve to attract the attention of Orientalists and others to a hitherto much neglected subject, which, alike from the claim to be a Universal Religion put forward by Bábism, and from the tragic events which befell its founder and many of his followers, surely deserves the fullest investigation.

¹ Of the second and sixth of these I do not possess a copy, and of the existence of the latter I am doubtful. The other letters, as well as the *Laah-i-Ra'is*, not mentioned here, are fully discussed in my second paper.

In conclusion I feel bound to state that, as far as my personal experience goes, I have found the Bábís, as a general rule, men of learning, reasonable, and humane; and in almost all cases actuated and dominated by that boundless devotion to their creed, and their spiritual chief, which has, throughout all their history, been their most remarkable characteristic.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS IN
THE HISTORY OF THE BÁBÍ.

	A. H.	A. D.
Birth of <i>Mirzá Huseyn 'Alí</i> , now known as " <i>Behá</i> ," and recognized as the spiritual chief of the sect by the great majority of its members.	1233 (Muharram 2nd)	1817 (Nov. 12th)
Birth of <i>Mirzá 'Alí Muhammad</i> , commonly known as "the Báb," after whom the sect is called.	(circá 1240)	(1824-1825)
Period of the " <i>Zuhúr</i> ," or "Manifestation," when the Báb first declared his divine mission.	1260 (Jamádi'ul-Ulá 5th)	1844 (May 23rd)
His apostles, sent from Bushire to Shíráz, are forbidden to preach, and have the tendons of their feet cut by order of Huseyn <i>Khán</i> , then Governor of Fárs.	1261 (Sha'bán 2nd)	1845 (August 6th)
Horsemen are sent from Shíráz to Bushire to arrest the Báb.	1261 (Sha'bán 16th)	1845 (August 20th)
The Báb is brought to Shíráz from Bushire, and, in company with his maternal uncle, examined before Huseyn <i>Khán</i> , who orders him to be kept in captivity.	1261 (Ramazán 21st)	1845 (Sept. 23rd)
The Báb remains imprisoned at Shíráz for about six months, when he escapes, and proceeds to Isfahán, where he is well received by <i>Minúchíhr Khán</i> , <i>Mu'tamadud-Dawla</i> .	1262 (circá Rabí'ul- Avval)	1846 (circá March)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Death of Minúchihir K̄hán, and removal of the Báb to Mákú. The Báb remains at Mákú or Chihirsk̄ (to which latter place he was transferred subsequently for six months) until put to death at Tabriz, on July 9th, 1850. | 1263
(Rabí'ul-Avval) | 1847
(Feb.—March) |
| During the captivity of the Báb his disciples have been busily engaged in spreading his doctrines, especially Hájí Mullá Muhammad 'Alí, in Mázandarán, and Mullá Huseyn of Bushraweyh, who visited Isfahán, Káshán, and Khurásán, and made many converts. | 1262–1264 | 1846–1848 |
| <i>K̄urratu'l-'Ayn</i> embraces the Bábí doctrine, and, discarding the veil, begins to preach openly at Kazvín, to the great scandal of the Musulmáns, and especially her uncle, Hájí Mullá Muhammad Takf, who curses the Báb publicly, and is in consequence killed by some Bábís in the mosque, on which account he is called by the Muhammadans “ <i>Shahíd-i-Şálig</i> ,” “the third martyr.” This event, according to the <i>K̄iṣṣatu'l-'Ulamá</i> (Stories of Divines), occurred in A.H. 1264. <i>K̄urratu'l-'Ayn</i> is obliged in consequence of this to fly from Kazvín, and sets out for Teherán, and thence for K̄horásán. | 1264 | 1848 |
| Mullá Huseyn, having been arrested at Mesh-hed, and confined by Hamzé Mrzá in his camp, escapes, on the outbreak of fresh disturbances at Mesh-hed, and sets out westwards with some of his adherents. At Miyámí he is met by about thirty believers. A | 1264
(Jamádi II.—
Zí'l-K̄a'da) | 1848
(between May
and Sept.) |

conflict occurs with the Musulmáns, and the Bábís retire to *Sháhrúd*. At this place, or at a village in Sawád Kúh called *Arím*, according to the Bábí history, they hear the news of the *death of Muhammad Sháh*.

1264 1848
(Zi'l-Ka'da 7th) (October 5th)

At *Badashí* Mullá Huseyn is joined by Hájí Mullá Muhammad 'Alí of Bálfurúsh, and Kurratu'l-'Ayn, with their followers, and a council is held. At this *Behá* was also present, and, according to Nabí's chronology, was then 32 years of age. This would make the year A.H. 1265, but in that case it must have been the very beginning of the year, which commenced on November 27th, 1848.

end of 1264 or
beginning of late autumn of
1265 1848

The Bábís, driven out of Bálfurúsh, retire to the tomb of *Sheykh Tabarsí*, twelve or fifteen miles S.E. of that town, and there entrench themselves.

Coronation of *Náşiru'd-Din Sháh* at Teherán.

1264 1848
(Zi'l-Ka'da 22) (Oct. 20th)

Arrival of Mahdí Kúlí Mírzá to subdue the Bábís at *Sheykh Tabarsí*, followed by 'Abbás Kúlí *Khán*, Sartíp-i-Lárijání, on both of whom the Bábís inflict several severe defeats, but Mullá Huseyn, the Bábí chief, is killed in one of these sorties.

1265 1848
(beginning) (December)

Suleymán *Khán*, Afshár, arrives to assist the besiegers.

1265 1849
(middle) (spring)

Fall of *Sheykh Tabarsí*, and slaughter of the Bábí garrison, after being given a promise of amnesty. Hájí Mullá Muhammad 'Alí and

1265 1849
(Ramazán-Shawwál) (July-Aug.)

One or two of the chiefs are executed at Bálfurúsh.		
Siege of <i>Zanján</i> , which was held by the Bábís under Mullá Muhammad 'Alí Zanjání for several months, against overwhelming numbers of troops.	1266 (middle and end)	1850 (May and onwards)
The execution of Mirzá 'Alí Muhammad, the Báb, with his disciple, Mirzá Muhammad 'Alí, Tabrízi, a young merchant of Tabríz, at that city. (The Báb's amanuensis, Aká Seyyid Huseyn, of Yezd, saves himself by recanting and renouncing his Master, but rejoins the Bábís at Tcherán, and perishes in the great persecution of a.d. 1852.)	1266 (Sha'bán 27th)	1850 (July 8th)
Fall of <i>Zanján</i> , and slaughter of the Bábís there.	1266 (end) or 1267 (beginning)	1850 (end)
Other events of this year are: the insurrections at Yezd and Níríz, under Aká Seyyid Yahyá, of Dáráb; and the death of the "seven martyrs" at Tcherán, who were—Hájí Mullá Isma'íl of Kum; Hájí Mirzá Seyyid 'Alí, the maternal uncle of the Báb; Mirzá Kurbán 'Alí, the dervish; Aká Seyyid Huseyn, mujtahid, of Turshíz; Hájí Mullá Naqí of Kirmán; Mirzá Muhammad Huseyn of Tabríz; and a man of Marágha.	1266	1850
Disgrace and banishment of Mirzá Taqí Khán, Amír-i-Kabír, and hitherto Prime Minister of Persia.	1268 (beginning)	1851 (end)
He is put to death at the Palace of Fín, near Káshán.	1268 (Rubí'ul-Avval)	1852 (Jan. 9th)
Attempt to assassinate the Sháh of Persia by three or four Bábís, as	1268 (Shawwál 28th)	1852 (Aug. 15th)

he was leaving his summer palace at Niyávarán to go on a hunting expedition.		
Arrest and execution, with great cruelties, of a number of Bábís, including <i>Suleymán Khán</i> (who was led to the place of execution with lighted candles inserted in wounds in his flesh, and who nevertheless continued to give expression to the liveliest joy at his approaching martyrdom, and to recite verses of poetry); <i>Kurratu'l-'Ayn</i> , who had for some time previously been confined in the house of <i>Mahmúd Khán, Kalántar</i> ; and <i>Aká Seyyid Huseyn</i> of Yezd, the Báb's amanuensis and fellow-prisoner, who escaped death with his Master at Tabríz in 1850.	1268 (Zi'l-Ka'da)	1852 (end of Aug.)
Behá, suspected of complicity in the plot to assassinate the Sháh, is imprisoned for four months in Teherán, when his innocence is proved, and he retires to Baghdad.	1268 (end) 1269 (beginning)	1852 (end) 1853 (beginning)
Baghdad now becomes the headquarters of the Bábís for ten years, Mirzá Yahyá (Hazrat-i-Ezel) being recognized as their chief. Two events of importance mark the latter part of this time: (1) The persecution of the Bábís at Sultánábád; (2) The composition of the <i>I'kán</i> by Behá.	1278-1279	1861-1862
The Bábís are transferred by the Turkish Government from Baghdad to Constantinople, where they remain for four months.	1280-1281	1864 (April-Aug.)
They are transferred thence to Adrianople.	1281 (Rajab)	1864 (December)

- Behá claims to be "*He whom God shall manifest,*" foretold by the Báb, and demands the allegiance of the Bábís, which is tendered by the majority, but refused by Mirzá Yahyá (Hazrat-i-Ezel) and his followers (the Ezelís).
- [Loft Adrianople]
1285 1868
(Rabí'us-Şání (August 10th)
20th)
- Quarrels arising between the followers of Behá and Mirzá Yahyá, they are separated by the Turkish Government, the former being sent to Acre, and the latter to Cyprus. A few of Behá's followers are, however, sent with the Ezelís to Cyprus, and a few of the Ezelís to Acre. The latter are murdered soon after their arrival.
- [Reached Acro]
1285 1868
(Jamádi'ul-Avval 12th) (Aug. 31st)
- Chronicle of Nabl, who was then forty years old, was written.
- 1286 1869
(Sha'bán) (Nov.-Dec.)
- Since that date I have no record of events at my disposal, neither do I know if any exist, though there is undoubtedly a chronicle kept at Acre. The letters addressed to the kings and rulers previously mentioned, and the martyrdom of "*Badí'*" at Teherán, also alluded to, as well as the exilo of sundry Bábís to Khartoum in the Soudan, of which I spoke at some length, all belong to about this period.
- The death of the martyrs of Isfahán, some eight or ten years ago, is the last important event of which I have any knowledge.
- (1297-1298) 1880 or 1881
-