Theological Responses to Modernity in the Nineteenth-century Middle East:

The examples of Bahá'u'lláh and Muhammad Abduh

by Oliver Scharbrodt

Introduction: Bahá'u'lláh, Muhammad Abduh, and the challenge of modernity

The emergence of Western modernity in the nineteenth-century Middle East led to the appearance of a variety of movements that responded to modernity. The military, political and economic dominance of Western powers in the Middle East that resulted in the colonisation or semi-colonisation of many countries of that region illustrated the backwardness of Muslim countries which were not prepared for the exposure to Western modernity. Therefore, political movements sought the modernisation of the state apparatus by introducing Western administrative patterns and legal reforms, constitutionalists demanded the abolition of absolute monarchy and supported democratisation, and state officials intended to prepare Middle Easterners intellectually to modernity by establishing a Western-like educational system. Usually the discussion of the emergence of modernity in the Middle East is concerned with these socio-political issues.

However, Western imperialism had a deep psychological impact on Middle Easterners as well. The dominance and rule of non-Muslims over Muslims questioned the strength of Islam and forced Muslims to admit that the followers of Christianity, a religion Islam was supposed to supersede, have achieved a greater civilisation.[1] The belief that Islam was the final and perfect revelation of God was contradicted by the vulnerability and dependence of Muslim states on Western intervention. Hence, the emergence of Western modernity has an important theological dimension, since the backwardness of Muslims in relation to the so-called infidels from Europe questions the superiority of the Islamic religion. Only a small minority abandoned Islam at all, thinking the religion itself responsible for the decline of the Middle East and seeking a solution in Western secularism. The majority searched for a religious response to modernity and hoped for a restoration of the glorious past of Islam.[2] Any response which does not intend to abandon the religious tradition at all, has to find an explanation for the present decline of Muslim societies and to explain how the religious tradition can be made relevant for modernity in order to maintain its universal validity. If such a religious response intends to modernise Muslim societies, it has to find a theological justification for reform on the basis of the Islamic tradition. Such an approach is not unusual to Muslim theological discourse which always had political implications and was pursued in support of a specific political agenda.

This paper will present and compare two religious responses to Western modernity in the nineteenth-century Middle East: the theological ideas of Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892) and Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905). Muhammad Abduh is undoubtedly one of the most influential thinkers of modern Islam. Being the disciple of Jamál al-Dín al-Afghaní and the teacher of Rashíd Ridá, Abduh stands in the line of eminent personalities in the Islamic world of the last two centuries. Afghání's fame is based on his Pan-Islamic political activism, while Ridá's significance lies in his ideological impact on modern Muslim political movements like the Muslim Brotherhood. Both secular liberal-minded Muslim intellectuals and fundamentalist ideologues refer to Abduh as their predecessor in reforming Islam. Abduh received a traditional education at Azhar where he came in contact with Afghání and became one of his closest disciples. Because of his support for the nationalist movement that emerged in Egypt in the 1870's, Abduh was exiled to Beirut after the defeat of Urabi's nationalist revolt in 1882. Later he went to Paris and allied with Afghání, publishing with his teacher the anti-British journal *al-Urwat al-Wuthqá*. In 1888, the permission was given to him to settle again in Egypt, where he started working as a judge and became chief mufti of Egypt in 1899. Until his death in 1905, he was much involved in publishing activities and tried to implement administrative and educational reforms at Azhar.

Both Bahá'u'lláh and Abduh deal in their writings with those socio-political issues that other reform movements in the Middle East discussed. However, this paper will focus on their theological ideas, following the thesis that any reform attempt with a religious outlook has to provide a theological justification for its aims. Bahá'u'lláh and Abduh are not interested in theology *per se*, but intend to provide a metaphysical framework

for their respective reform programmes. Abduh's most important theological work is the *Risalat al-tawhíd*, a systematic treatise on Islamic theology that was published after his return to Egypt on the basis of the lectures he gave during his exile in Beirut. Bahá'u'lláh has not written a systematic treatise on the subject, but His theological ideas are spread throughout His writings. The Kitáb-i-ˆqán, which He wrote in Baghdad in the late 1850s or early 1860s before His open proclamation, expresses His growing prophetic consciousness and can be considered to be the theological manifesto of the Bahá'í Faith. This paper will compare Bahá'u'lláh's and Muhammad Abduh's ideas on theology, prophetology, and salvation history. The comparison does not only aim at showing differences and parallels, but also at finding reasons for them in relation to the objectives of their reform programmes. It demonstrates how both thinkers try to bridge tradition with modernity and to find a theological response to the tension between both forces by appropriating, stressing, dismissing and modifying elements of the traditions they come from and enriching them with modern ideas. The comparison distinguishes between four modern motifs in their theologies.

Modern motifs in Bahá'u'lláh's and Muhammad Abduh's theologies

Rationalism

It is not surprising that both thinkers refer to Mu'tazila rationalism and nominalism in order to modernise and to a certain extent rationalise theology. However, Bahá'u'lláh and Muhammad Abduh only make selective use of Mu'tazila ideas and use them to a different degree. Abduh's point of departure is a philosophical proof of God's existence. According to him, it is possible to prove God's existence rationally without any reference to revelation. One can find analogies of this philosophical approach in medieval Christian and Muslim theological discourses which have appropriated the Aristotelian theory of existence to prove the validity of either the Christian or Islamic revelation universally, based on reason.[3] For Abduh, logic provides universal canonical rules for secure and objective knowledge.[4] Abduh applies this notion of logic to his philosophical approach to theology in order to provide it with a foundation which he considers to be rational and hence universally valid.

Abduh distinguishes three epistemological categories which have ontological counterparts. Everything that can be known can be categorised as being either possible (*mumkin*), impossible (*mustahíl*) or necessary (*wájib*).[5] Three principles of existence follow these categories of knowledge. Abduh discriminates between "that which is contingent,[6] that which is necessarily self-existent[7] and that which is inherently impossible of existence."[8,9] These three categories of existence enable Abduh with a tool to deduce from them the existence of God, while discussing them *en détail*. The mode of the impossible or non-existent is only an imaginative category which can neither in reality nor logically be existent.[10] The contingent possesses potentially and equally both the mode of being and the mode of non-being. It requires an external force that causes the actualisation of the principle of being. The existence of the contingent depends on a prior cause, as it can never cause its existence by itself. The contingent ceases from existing when a cause lacks or stops the continuous process of causation. The contingency of things of the created world can be perceived, as they come into being and disappear later. All contingent things of the world constitute the contingent which requires a primal cause. This cause cannot be part of the contingent since, being a cause, it must exist prior to the contingent. The necessarily existent and the non-existent are the two ontological modes that precede the contingent. However, since the non-existent does not exist, only the necessarily existent can be the primal cause.[11]

After having shown that the necessarily existent Being causes the contingent, Abduh introduces the essential qualities of the primal cause. One of its characteristics is its pre-existent eternity, since it precedes all contingent things.[12] All attributes must be assigned to it in their most complete form to maintain its perfection. As it bestows attributes to contingent things and hence determines their nature, it must possess these attributes perfectly.[13] The qualities of life, knowledge, will, freedom of choice must be then, according to Abduh, essential attributes of the necessarily existent Being as well.[14] One can find a similar discourse on the attributes of the Supreme Being among Neoplatonists, except for the stress on unity (*wahda*) which has been added to this set by Al-Ash'arí and Al-Ghazálí in Muslim theological discourse.[15] Likewise for Abduh, the oneness of the necessarily existent Being "in His essence, His attributes, His existence and His acts"[16] has to be assumed. The attribute of unity implies its non-composite nature and its uniqueness, as no being is equal to it.[17] With this philosophical approach to God's existence, Abduh presumes to have proven the rationality of the fundamental

belief in one God and to have shown the harmony of reason and revelation in the basic question of God's being. For Abduh, reason alone is sufficient to lead to the belief in God. Abduh revives the philosophical approach to God of medieval Muslim theologians and philosophers for his apologetic aim of demonstrating the reconcil-ability of Islam with reason.[18]

In contrast to Abduh, Bahá'u'lláh does not seek a rational foundation for the faith in God. Although He shares with Abduh the distinction between the contingency of creation and God as its non-contingent creator, He does not provide a logical explanation of God's existence, but embeds God and His creation in a Sufi-like cosmological scheme. Apparently, Bahá'u'lláh does not see the necessity to prove God's existence, and the addressees of His writings probably never doubted it anyway.

The different attitudes of Bahá'u'lláh and Abduh towards reason can be observed in their discussion of the divine attributes as well. Both share a nominalistic and skeptical view of language, but again the extent and the purpose they use it for differs. Both agree that the divine essence is neither attainable by human compre-hension nor expressible by language—only through His attributes can God be recognised. Whereas for Abduh most attributes can be rationally deduced from the necessarily existent Being, Bahá'u'lláh underlines that all attributes assigned to God have no reality and do not reflect the divine essence. This difference can be explained by their different objectives. Although Abduh follows the scholastic tradition in expounding a philo-sophic approach to God's existence and emphasises the necessity and importance of a rational basis of theol-ogy, he does not entirely agree with a complete appropriation of speculative philosophy in theological dis-course. For him, the attempt to integrate wholly Greek philosophy in Muslim theology entails a danger that the ultimate truth criteria of Qur'án and Sunna could be replaced by those of peripatetic philosophy.[19] Furthermore, Abduh is critical of many scholastic discussions which he considers to be futile, as they seek to grasp theo-logical ideas which are not rationally comprehensible. Such discussions have often led to unnecessary sectar-ian divisions that have undermined Muslim doctrinal unity. Abduh's primary aim is to find the essential doc-trines of Islam which all Muslims can agree on. He therefore eschews subtle theological speculations which he considers to be counter-productive.[20]

Abduh legitimises the necessity of philosophical caution in reflecting on God by quoting the following hadíth: "Ponder the creation of God, but do not take your meditations into the Divine essence, or you will per-ish."[21] In accordance with this hadíth, Abduh employs the atomistic theory of philosophy that distinguishes between accidents and substance of a thing.[22] Only accidents of a thing, namely its qualities, are accessible for the human mind, while the substance of a thing which lies behind its accidents is not comprehensible, because "reason quite lacks the competence to penetrate the essence of things."[23] Due to the ultimate alterity of God, it is impossible to grasp the divine essence.[24] Only some of God's attributes are accessible by the rational facul-ty. Most problems of theological speculation are not solvable, such as whether the attributes of God are part of the divine essence, separated from it, or what other kind of relationship they have to each other. Such ques-tions transcend human understanding. Any controversy around these issues is a controversy around words which can never fully reflect reality, "for linguistic usage [isti'mál al-lugha] does not 'grasp' truth [al-haqíqa], and even if words do come to expressive grips with reality, the way language put things never does full justice to them as they really are essentially."[25] Abduh employs a nominalistic and sometimes even agnostic attitude in order to avoid subtle theological speculations that have divided the Muslim community, but is willing to adopt a philosophical approach to God as long as it promotes his intention to rationalise theology.

Bahá'u'lláh's use of nominalism serves different purposes. In the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, theology and prophetology are connected with cosmology. The structure of Bahá'u'lláh's theological cosmos provides the metaphysical background that illustrates the station of God and the prophets and the function of revelation. Hence, any discussion of theological issues in Bahá'u'lláh's writings has to start with an outline of His meta-physics. The most well-known structuralistion of cosmos is the threefold scheme that distinuishes between the world of God ('álam al-haqq), the world of command ('álam al-amr), i.e. the world of the Manifestions, and the world of creation ('álam al-khalq). The world of the Absolute Truth (haqq) stands on top of the hierarchy. It refers to God's primordial divine essence in its non-manifest and undifferentiated status of pure oneness (ahadiyya).[26] In this realm God is one, as there is no distinction between His substance and His Attributes, and God is absolutely transcendent, as all Attributes ascribed to Him on that level fail to reflect divine Reality and even the Prophets have no access to this realm and cannot comprehend God's pure Essence.[27] Since God is con-

tained as a non-manifest essence in the highest realm, any attempt to describe His Being in this stage is futile. An impersonal description of God is dominant in reference to this world. Any description of God can never represent His inaccessible divine Essence and any conceptualisation of the absolute Truth is inevitably misconceived.[28] In the Kitáb-i-ˆqán Bahá'u'lláh affirms: "So lofty is this station that no testimony can bear witness, neither evidence do justice to its truth . . ."[29] At this stage a negative theology of the *deus absconditus* (the hidden God) prevails, which almost resembles an agnostic attitude.[30]

Despite the transcendence of the impersonal God, Who is so far beyond mystical experience or philosophical conception[31] then even the possibility of adequate worship is thrown into doubt,[32] Bahá'u'lláh assigns attributes to Him. Following orthodox Islamic theology, God is described as "the Eternal,"[33] "the Powerful, . . . the Almighty"[34] and as the omniscient source of all knowledge, having sight, hearing, speech, life and unity.[35] However, in accordance with the Muʿtazila, Bahá'u'lláh makes only nominalistic use of these attributes, considering them not as real entities but rather as allegorical descriptions of God's indescribable nature,[36] since "it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the divine Being is immensely exalted beyond every human attribute, such as corporal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress . . ."[37] Attributing qualities to God irrespective of their insufficiency illustrates that God is beyond all imperfections.[38]

God becomes manifest in the realms inferior to the World of Absolute Truth. Only through these manifestations is God approachable. The first manifestation occurs with the emergence of the Primal Will that emanates from the primordial divine essence. This *logos* becomes the point of departure of theology. Since there is no real theology outside God's manifestation, only a negative theology referring to God as the Absolute Truth, one should speak of "manifestation theology"[39] or "theophanology."[40] The Word of God (*kálimát alláh/kalám alláh*) or *logos* is not only the first but also the pivotal attribute that becomes manifested, as it links God's inscrutable essence with creation. The Word of God is the generative and creative force in the universe, being "the Cause of the entire creation, while all else besides His Word are but the creatures and the effects thereof."[41] Bahá'u'lláh is only nominalistic in reference to God in the highest realm to underscore the inaccessibility of divine essence. This negative approach to God becomes the foundation of His manifestation theology. God is only accessible through the revelation of His attributes in the metaphysical realms and for human beings through the appearance of a Manifestation of God.

Hence, the appropriation of Muʿtazila rationalism by Bahá'u'lláh and Abduh depends on how useful it is for the ultimate purposes of their theologies. Abduh's aim is to rationalise religious belief and to achieve Muslim doctrinal unity by eschewing contentious theological controversies. His dogmatic exposition is supposed to be generally accessible and to show the essential beliefs Muslims have in common in order to overcome sectarian divisions.[42] Islam is presented as *Vernunftreligion*[43] (religion of reason) that reconciles revelation with philosophy, because they share the same basic axiom. Philosophy starts from the existence of the necessarily existent Being and Islamic theology is based on the Qur'ánic teachings of God that do not contradict, but even confirm the philosophical approach.[44]

Bahá'u'lláh's use of nominalism serves different purposes. For him, theology is not rationalisable, as reason fails to comprehend God who is as a logic-transcending entity beyond all forms of conceptualisation. His negative approach to divine essence illustrates the necessity of the revelation and manifestation of divine attributes in creation. Bahá'u'lláh appropriates Sufi terminology and concepts as a means to expound the dependence of human beings on the Manifestations of God to recognise God. Any knowledge about God stems from His Manifestations alone. Whereas Abduh intends to rationalise theology, Bahá'u'lláh develops theology as a metaphysical framework that makes the continuous revelation of God in history plausible and allows the possibility of a post-Qur'ánic revelation.[45]

Ethics

Another approach Bahá'u'lláh and Muhammad Abduh use to rationalise theology is to give prophethood primarily a socio-moral function and to stress the ethical necessity of divine revelation. For both, the prophets or Manifestations provide knowledge of the afterlife, lay the foundations for solidarity and unity of a community, and bring doctrines that become the source of a new civilisation. Individual and collective well-being depends on divine revelation. Both assume the priority of ethics over theological and metaphysical expositions. Abduh follows al-Ghazálí's emphasis on ethics in composing the *Risalat al-tawhíd* as "un traité éthico-

théologique"[46] which underscore the necessary relevance theological discussions must have to moral questions. Likewise, a shift from metaphysics to ethics is discernible in Bahá'u'lláh's writings. As the nature of metaphysical realities transcends human comprehension and the perception of them depends on the beholder's perspective, all knowledge of them is inevitably provisional and limited. Therefore, the moral consequences and spiritual message a metaphysical concept conveys are more important than the actual reality of such a concept.[47] Nevertheless, how prophethood fulfils its moral function is conceived by both in a slightly different way which reveals their different attitudes towards reason. Additionally, Abduh's exposition of prophecy remains in orthodox framework, whereas Bahá'u'lláh's employs Sufi concepts and terms to give a new notion of prophethood.

Abduh has an elitist approach towards ethics. Like the Mu'tazila, Abduh uses an aesthetic point of departure for ethics. According to the Mu'tazila doctrine, the aesthetic distinction between beautiful and ugly *(hasan wa qabíh)* is inherent to human nature. Although there might be different opinions on what actually defines beauty or ugliness, all human beings agree that there is a basic distinction between both qualities.[48] This aesthetic distinction is transferred to the ethical sphere, since actions likewise possess beauty or ugliness in themselves or in the results they produce.[49] Hence, Abduh assumes like the Mu'tazila, an intuitive aesthetic competence with an ethical counterpart that can discriminate between beautiful and ugly and good and bad, respectively. Therefore, reason would theoretically be sufficient for the determination of moral values without divine revelation.[50]

However, only a small minority is able to use its rational faculty adequately to come to right moral conclusions. Most people can only make limited use of their reason, as its full application is circumscribed by their passions.[51] A small elite can actualise the right moral values on their own without revelation, but the morality of certain acts is difficult to prove rationally to the whole of humanity. Hence, a guidance is necessary that gives an adequate understanding of those aspects of religion and ethics that are not attainable by the majority of people.[52] The prophets are the mediators that bring knowledge of God and His Attributes to the generality of people and convey those truths, the elite already has realised. Speaking with superior divine authority, they provide secure foundations of religious and moral knowledge and bestow a strong belief, that cannot be achieved by reason.[53]

In contrast to Abduh, Bahá'u'lláh has a skeptical attitude towards reason and its moral competence. For Him, everybody requires divine revelation, as it conveys knowledge which is unattainable by reason at all. Human beings cannot rely on their nature to determine ethical values, since they only partly follow the natural law as an instinct-reduced being. The dual animal and angelic nature of human beings necessitates guidance that reveals the divine potentialities in them. Revelation is the Archimedic point all morality is rooted in.[54]

Likewise the channels of moral guidance, namely the prophets and Manifestations, are differently conceived. Abduh follows the orthodox Sunni prophetology. He stresses the human nature of the prophets who are ordinary human beings dependent on the conditions of human life and do not differ from others on this purely human level.[55] He upholds the doctrine of *'isma* that the prophets are exempted from sin and error. God chooses exceptional souls that are receptive for divine revelation and possess moral and spiritual superiority to their contemporaries to mediate between him and creation. The prophets reveal books which contain the Word of God and which are sufficient proof of the authenticity of their prophecy due to their inimitability.[56] The authenticity of their prophetic mission encourages obedience to the revealed moral laws. In order to rationalise the Islamic doctrine of prophecy, Abduh restricts the infallibility of the prophets to their prophetic mission.[57] Abduh particularly stresses that the prophets do not have any authority on scientific issues. Neither reason nor revelation affirms the absolute infallibility of the prophets in all aspects of life.[58] Abduh excludes prophetic infallibility from science for the purpose of opening scientific research for humans and interpreting prophetic references to nature that might contradict modern sciences allegorically.

In Bahá'u'lláh's writings, the ethical dimension of revelation is illustrated by placing the Manifestations in the cosmological scheme. Bahá'u'lláh uses the term "manifestation" (*mazhar*, *zuhúr*) in two senses. On the one hand, it refers to the manifestation of divine attributes in creation as part of the permanent creative process of God. On the other hand, "Manifestation" describes the recipients of the secondary revelation of God, namely the divine prophets and messengers that have been sent to humanity throughout the course of history. This concept of the Manifestations[59] of God which follows to a certain extent the Islamic prophetology and adopts some

Sufi terms is probably one of the most original aspects of Bahá’u’lláh’s theology and plays the most significant role therein. The introduction of this term in the writings of Bahá’u’lláh implies His claim to offer a new vision of revelation and salvation history. The term “Manifestation” is meant to transcend the Islamic terminology, as prophethood or messengerhood represent lower definitions of theophany, whereas the introduction of a new terminology suggests Bahá’u’lláh’s intention to provide a fuller understanding of theophany.[60]

Nevertheless, the Qur’ánic terms prophet (*nabí*) and messenger (*rasúl*) can be found in Bahá’u’lláh’s writings as well as the basic prophetological concepts of the Islamic tradition, particularly of Shí‘ism. Like the major theologians of Shí‘í Islam, Bahá’u’lláh distinguishes between prophets with a merely admonishing function and “prophets endowed with constancy or legislating prophets.”[61] The prophets with constancy bring a new law, abrogating the provisions of the previous revelation. Likewise, a book has been revealed to them which becomes the instrument of the new divine legislation.[62] Like Islamic prophetology, Bahá’u’lláh stresses the sinlessness and moral infallibility (*‘isma*) of the prophets with constancy. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, He introduces the concept of the “Most Great Infallibility [*al-‘ismat al-kubrá*]”[63] which does not only consist of their moral perfection, but also of their independence from moral laws of the previous revelations. As divine legislators, these prophets act in a non-ethical realm.[64]

In the writings of Bahá’u’lláh, “prophets endowed with constancy” is synonymous with “Manifestations of God.” The Manifestations fluctuate between human and divine consciousness and not only transmit the Word of God but are identical with it. They are not ordinary humans or equal to other contingent beings; rather, being identical with the eternal *logos*, They are uncreated and precede the contingent world.[65] All divine attributes are perfectly reflected in Them and conveyed to creation. Their moral authority stems from Their status as Manifestation of God which perfectly represents divine attributes into creation to enable the spiritual progress of the individual and the material and spiritual progress of society. Human beings have to emulate this reflection to obtain divine attributes, that are inherent in themselvs, and to follow the moral laws introduced by the Manifestations for individual and collective well-being.[66] Despite the conceptual differences between Bahá’u’lláh’s and Abduh’s prophetology, both stress the ethical dimension of prophethood to make revelation relevant to the requirements of the modern world.

Evolution

Both Bahá’u’lláh and Muhammad Abduh expound an evolutionary notion of salvation history and a dynamic concept of religion. Salvation history is the gradual revelation of the divine will in the course of history that correlates to the evolutionary development of human civilisation. Likewise religion is not a static and immutable entity, but an active force that has to be revitalised and actualised to changing conditions. Bahá’u’lláh and Abduh distinguish between the essential part of religion that cannot be modified, but has to be preserved, and the changeable part that has to be assimilated to the requirements of time in order to keep religion alive as a social force. However, both use this evolutionary and dynamic concept of religion and salvation history for different purposes. Whereas Abduh uses the evolutionary motif to defend the superiority of Islam, Bahá’u’lláh employs it to make the necessity of a new theophany credible.

Particularly, the evolutionary thought of Herbert Spencer is considered to have been an influence on Abduh.[67] It enabled the development of an evolutionary concept of salvation history that serves as a further legitimisation of the finality of Muhammad’s prophethood. The development of humanity in general is analogous to the psychological development of the individual. Humanity passes from its childhood to adolescence and finally reaches its maturity.[68] The different religions constitute the divine educational programme for humanity and respond to the spiritual and intellectual capacity of the time they appear and convey prescriptions according to the needs of that specific period. Abduh divides history in three stages that represent the development of humanity. In the pre-prophetic period, the primary concern of humanity was the satisfaction of its material and physical needs. In this period, an animistic understanding of nature prevailed. People then became more conscious of the mechanisms of natural law and social life and partly realised the spiritual dimension of their existence in the prophetic period. The divine prophets appeared successively to reveal the divine Will. Humanity now lives in the post-prophetic period which does not require any further prophetic revelation.[69]

The religious education of humanity took place in the prophetic period with three successive revelations that

led humanity from infancy to maturity. The three religions Abduh refers to are very likely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The religion that appeared at humanity's childhood (Judaism) corresponded to the capacity and mentality of the people by appealing to the senses with miracles and containing simple and comprehensible provisions. It guided humanity by a rigorous ethics that demanded complete obedience.[70] Over the course of time, humanity made spiritual and intellectual progress and reached its adolescence. The religion which appeared at that stage responded to contemporary circumstances and had a purely emotional appeal. The primary objective of the adolescent divine revelation consisted in increasing the spiritual awareness of humanity: "It laid down for men sacred laws of asceticism, drawing them away from the world altogether and turning them towards higher life."[7] But this religion (Christianity) became corrupted by its religious leaders and its ascetic stress on the after-life neglected the material needs of human beings. This religion declined due to sectarian divisions. Anti-intellectual tendencies that revealed a strong hostility to science caused stagnation and social decay.[72]

The arrival of Muhammad's prophecy and the emergence of Islam mark the ultimate culmination of the evolutionary divine education of humanity. Islam has the most universal appeal, addressing emotion and reason simultaneously.[73] For Abduh, Islam introduced the essential unity of all religions, as their basic teachings are identical and they all represented different stages of the divinely guided salvation history: "[Islam] demonstrated that religion with God was one in all generations, that there was a single Divine purpose for their reform without and their cleansing within."[74] Differences among the religions are explained by the dissimilar conditions and circumstances of the times when new prophets appeared.[75] Although all religions participate in one single truth, Abduh presents inclusivist Islam as being the complete and final expression of truth.[76] Due to its complete nature and universal appeal, Islam leads humanity to maturity and builds the transition from the prophetic to the post-prophetic period. As humanity has achieved its maturity, Abduh believed, it does not require any further divine revelation, and as Islam already represents the complete expression of truth that cannot be augmented, prophethood terminated in Muhammad's mission. Hence, Abduh's view of salvation history delivers an evolutionary argument for the finality of Muhammad's prophethood.

Although divine revelation has ceased with Muhammad and brought salvation history to its ultimate climax, the evolutionary development of the Islamic religion does not stop, but the fundamental principles of Islam have to be re-actualised in correlation with the requirements of time. Abduh uses the concept of the *mujaddid* (renewer) who appears periodically to renew Islam by cleansing it from unnecessary traditions and reinstating the pristine faith of the early period.[77] As other Islamic scholars like Ibn Khaldoun or Ibn Taimiyya, Abduh distinguishes between rules concerned with questions of ritual and worship (*ibádát*) and rules dealing with humans' relations to the world and to each other (*mu'ámalát*). While the former are unquestionably prescribed by revelation and are immutable, the latter consist in abstract principles which have to be interpreted and applied to changing conditions.[78] Hence, Abduh encourages a new *ijtihád*, employing the general *mu'ámalát* principles to the present needs and aiming at the welfare of society (*maslaha*). He repudiates the imitation (*taqlíd*) of the legal theories of medieval Islamic scholars, because their provisions are not prepared for the demands of the modern world.[79] *Ijtihád* as interpretative instrument and *maslahah* as legal criterion guarantee the flexibility of Islam in order to make it relevant to modern issues.

Bahá'u'lláh introduces a dynamic concept of religion which undergoes different stages in its development. The emergence of a new theophany is referred to as being similar to the season of spring, as the revelation induces a new spirit into humanity and creates a new consciousness. Every religion reaches the zenith of its development, when its doctrines are widespread in society and the civilisation founded by that religion attains its climax.[80] However, after this period of progress, the decline of a religion inevitably commences, when people start corrupting the religion and its original teachings.[81] Bahá'u'lláh interprets symbolically the eschatological motif that in the Day of Judgement the sun and moon will darken; these signify the oblivion of the genuine teachings of religion and the merely outer performance of its rituals without the right ethical and spiritual consciousness.[82] In another passage, Bahá'u'lláh, referring to Shí'í Islam, compares the situation at the early days with the present-day conditions and concludes that Shí'í Islam declined because the believers abandoned its genuine doctrines, became dogmatic, and blindly followed the religious leadership.[83] The rise and decline of a religion is, hence, "an inevitable and natural process"[84] which is caused by its adherents.

This dynamic notion of religion going through stages of progress and decline necessitates the continuous

periodical renewal of revelation to re-establish the genuine faith of God which the believers have abandoned. Every new religion breaks "with past traditions; with obsolete, outworn forms and institutions; and with a ritualistic conservatism divested of any meaning."[85] In the Kitáb-i-ˆqán, Bahá'u'lláh speaks of the "City of Certitude" that is periodically re-constituted by the Manifestations of God.[86] However, this cyclical scheme with the reconstitution of the genuine Faith of God throughout salvation history is completed with a linear notion of progress. A new theophany does not only fulfil the transhistorical mission of the Manifestations and adapts it to changing circumstances, but each new revelation leads to progress and a higher consciousness.[87] In accordance with the evolutionary progress of humanity, every new Manifestation reveals a fuller account of truth which goes in line with the increasing receptivity of humanity and, therefore, supersedes the previous revelations.[88]

Bahá'u'lláh's concept of salvation history combines the cyclical theme of return and renewal with the linear theme of evolution and progress. All Manifestations of God are connected with Each Other as the agents of God's continuous evolutionary education of humanity. Salvation history as progressive revelation does not allow any claims to exclusivity or finality of any religion and stresses the continuity of revelation, as "not for a moment hath his grace been withheld, nor have the showers of His living-kindness ceased to rain upon mankind."[89] The future will experience likewise the emergence of new theophanies.[90] Bahá'u'lláh claims to be the Manifestation of God for this age who does not only re-emphasise the essential doctrines of all religions, but likewise provides teachings which contain the solutions for problems of this age. He further claims to be the fulfilment of the eschatological expectations of all religions. By identifying himself with the awaited messianic figures of Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism, He does not only underline the essential unity of all Manifestations, as every theophany is the return of the previous ones, but also universalises his claim considering himself to be the Promised One of all religions.[91] His theophany marks the *eschaton* which the scriptures of previous religions anticipate. Therefore, His mission will inaugurate a new age in the history of humanity as promised and will lead to the reconciliation of all religions and the establishment of world peace. Through Bahá'u'lláh's theophany, humanity will reach its maturity.

A radical break with the past occurs with Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, necessitated because tradition does not provide adequate solutions for modern problems. It is not enough to reform the *sharí'a*; what was needed was a new *sharí'a* equipped for modern challenges.[92] The concept of progressive revelation provides an explanation for the present decay of Muslim societies which is the inevitable result of the natural decline of the Islamic religion. However, progressive revelation links the new theophany with the previous traditions. It upholds the essential identity of all Manifestations who are part of salvation history and contains the idea of the periodical renewal of the faith of God under varying social circumstances.[93] This notion of essential identity between all religions facilitates the acceptance of new authority claims, since it suggests that by becoming a follower of Bahá'u'lláh one does not betray one's own tradition, as the essential beliefs are identical in all religions. Becoming a Bahá'í rather means following the most recent version of the genuine faith of God.

Universalism

The evolutionary scheme of salvation history in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and Muhammad Abduh stresses the essential identity of all prophets and the unity of all religions and explains the differences among them as being the result of the historical and cultural context the prophets appeared in. Hence, Bahá'u'lláh and Abduh give their theologies a universalistic outlook.[94] Behind the historical Manifestations of religion lies "the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future."[95] Both construe a "metareligion," a religion beyond religion that all adherents of concrete historical faiths should acknowledge sharing in common."[96] Such essentialist notions of religion can be found in the Islamic tradition, particularly in Sufism, which distinguishes between the exoteric (*záhir*) and esoteric (*bátin*) dimension of religion and emphasises likewise the essential esoteric unity of all religions behind the secondary exoteric differences.[97] Textual support for a universalistic idea of religion can be found in the Qur'án as well.[98] In addition to these antecedents of theological universalism in the Islamic tradition, Bahá'u'lláh's and Abduh's universalistic approaches conform to modern intentions of philosophy in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment to achieve an essentialist view of religion by philosophical abstraction. Enlightenment thinkers like Kant conceived a natural religion behind the positive religions with their theological corruption. This primordial religion of reason with its stress on ethics and spirituality should become the foundation for reconciliation of all religions.[99]

From Bahá'u'lláh's and Abduh's universalistic theology stems their call for practical tolerance and interreligious dialogue. For both, tolerance is the attitude that should determine the behaviour of all religionists to each other. Abduh stresses the tolerant nature of Islam by pointing at its peaceful spread, the actual motivation of which was to defend people's right to convert to Islam. There were neither systematic missionary activities nor forced conversions.[100] On the contrary, all inhabitants of the Muslim territories enjoyed religious freedom and co-existed peacefully regardless of their religious affiliations. The tolerant atmosphere of early Islam even allowed non-Muslims to achieve high positions in the state apparatus and encouraged Jews who were persecuted in Europe to immigrate to Islamic territories.[101] Finally, this spirit of tolerance that disregarded social, racial and religious distinctions promoted mass conversions to Islam. In contrast to the Western image of Islam as a religion of violence, Abduh underlines its peaceful character by giving *jihád* a purely defensive character.[102] Likewise, Bahá'u'lláh obliges his followers to adopt a tolerant attitude towards adherents of other religions. As the new source of divine legislative authority He claims to be, He abrogates any Islamic laws and practices He considers to be intolerant. Bahá'u'lláh prohibits *jihád*[103] and prescribes peaceful missionary activities. Any form of religious discrimination is prohibited, as well as religious fanaticism and factionalism and all practices that discredit other religionists.[104] Bahá'u'lláh explicitly abrogates the Shí'ite concept of the ritual impurity of non-Muslims[105] and the practice of despising and cursing them.[106] Another legal consequence of Bahá'u'lláh's call for tolerance is the lifting of any marital restrictions between adherents of different religions.[107]

However, for Bahá'u'lláh and Abduh the mere practice of passive tolerance is not sufficient. Both stress the necessity of dialogue among the adherents of different religions in order to overcome prejudices and the resolve hostility and separation among religions.[108] Abduh is credited with having been involved in interreligious activities between Muslims, Christians, and Jews during his exile in Beirut, aiming at a rapprochement of the three Semitic religions.[109] Bahá'u'lláh makes the participation of his followers in interreligious dialogue a religious obligation.[110] Such a dialogue is the requirement for the mutual reconciliation of all religions and the creation of a cosmopolitan consciousness that considers the whole humanity as one family and prioritises the collective welfare of humanity over particular interests.[111] This dialogical approach expresses the primary objective of Bahá'u'lláh's mission which consists in "the unification and pacification of the whole world."[112]

Despite the tolerant and universalistic tone of their theologies, Bahá'u'lláh and Abduh cannot be considered to be proponents of religious pluralism. Although they discourage religious exclusivity and its attendant intolerant excesses, both undertake an inclusivistic approach to other religions. They accept the divine origin and temporary validity of other religions, but their religion—Islam in the case of Abduh and the Bahá'í Faith in the case of Bahá'u'lláh—represents the most accurate version of divine revelation that is fully equipped to face the challenges of the modern world. For Abduh, Islam is the religion that harmonises perfectly with human nature, as it appeals to reason and emotion alike. The egalitarian tendencies and the liberating force of Islam make it a modern religion *par excellence*. According to his exposition, Islam is not only compatible to modernity but can function as a moral foundation of the modern society as well, and be the criterion which discerns the good and bad elements of progress: "Islam could serve both as a principle of change and a salutary control over it."[113] In a similar way, Bahá'u'lláh claims His religion to be the absolute and ultimate truth criterion by virtue of its being the latest divine revelation.[114] The inclusivistic appropriation of the previous religions in the concept of progressive revelation implies that the Bahá'í Faith supersedes all previous traditions. Bahá'u'lláh's "cross-cultural messianism"[115] is the means to universalise His claim. In order to transcend the boundaries of the Islamic tradition, He claims to be the promised messianic figure of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism, the four religions that co-exist in Iran.[116] This "multiple messiaship"[117] does not aim at supporting religious pluralism, but intends to create a link with other religious traditions in order to facilitate conversions from non-Muslims.

Conclusion: Bahá'u'lláh's post-Islamic and Abduh's modernist response to modernity

W. Shepard distinguishes five Muslim reactions to modernity which he terms Islamic secularism, Islamic modernism, radical Islamism, Islamic traditionalism, and neo-traditionalism.[118] Rippin adds to this categorisation a post-modern and a post-Islamic response: "It is a common phenomenon in religion that, if the questioning of the authority of the past is taken far enough in the desire to be able to accommodate or compensate for the changes of the modern period, there is a need for a new source of authority."[119] Considering Bahá'u'lláh's

theological concepts, it becomes evident that they intend to introduce Bahá'u'lláh as new source of authority which provides divine guidance in the face of modern requirements. Human beings cannot respond adequately to the modern challenge due to their limited perception of the whole problematique, but God has to respond himself to it via a new revelation, as He is the all-knowing Educator of humanity. Establishing Bahá'u'lláh as new source of authority and breaking with the past traditions endows Him with legislative flexibility, since He has not to compromise with the provisions of the previous traditions. Bahá'u'lláh's legislation is characterised by both a sacralizing and desacralizing process.[120] He desacralizes provisions and laws of previous religions that He considers to be outdated and sacralizes modern ideas of the Western world by giving them the status of a religious obligation. For instance, in the Lawh-i-Bishárát Bahá'u'lláh prohibits holy war, celibacy, the practice of confession and penance and dress restrictions as part of the desacralizing process and sacralizes modern values and concepts like religious tolerance, constitutionalism, disarmament or scientific and technological progress.[121] Introducing Bahá'u'lláh as new theophany and combining Islamic and non-Islamic elements in his theology implies a gradual dissociation of the Bahá'í Faith from its Islamic origin that characterises it as a post-Islamic response to modernity.[122]

Certainly, Abduh does not transcend the boundaries of the Islamic tradition. Nevertheless, Abduh's approach is fairly similar to the one of Bahá'u'lláh. Abduh also desacralizes elements of the tradition he considers to be inappropriate and condemns *taqlíd*. For Abduh, this desacralizing process intends to limit the doctrines Muslims must believe in to an essential minimum which is contained in the original sources, the Qur'án and the authenticated Sunna, and was embodied by the early generation of the believers. *Ijtihád*, that denies the authority of the medieval legacy and only holds sacred the original sources, enables the flexibility of the Islamic religion in the light of modern requirements. Despite his claim to refer only to the original Islamic sources, Abduh's understanding of Islam is informed by a Western view, and Islamic concepts are equated with Western ideas, as Hourani points out: "In this line of thought, *maslaha* gradually turns into utility, *shura* into parliamentary democracy, *ijma'* into public opinion; Islam itself becomes identical with civilization and activity, the norms of nineteenth-century social thought."[123] Hence, Abduh is eclectical in his method, selecting and re-interpreting elements of the Islamic tradition which support his view of Islam and can be reconciled or even equated with modern ideas.[124] This approach characterises Abduh as a representative of Islamic modernism.

Bahá'u'lláh and Abduh definitely differ in their assessment of the modern relevance of Islam. Whereas Abduh tries to re-universalise Islam for modernity, Bahá'u'lláh intends to overcome Islam and to re-universalise religion by establishing a new one. What promoted conversion to the Bahá'í Faith from Muslims and members of the religious minorities in Iran at the end of the last century was the "combination of traditional religious symbolism and modernistic or rationalist argumentation."[125] For the converts, Bahá'u'lláh preserved the essence of past religions while actualising it to the modern context. The good parts of tradition were kept and completed with modern ideas. Such a characterisation *mutatis mutandis* applies to Abduh's approach as well. Although never leaving Islam, Abduh attempts to give an updated version of his religion, preserving elements of tradition that are authentic and essential and harmonising them with modernity. Bahá'u'lláh and Abduh have the objective in common to integrate modern values in a religious framework to counter the negative developments that are inseparably connected with the dialectics of modernity. The German sociologist Max Weber describes this dialectics by characterising the rationalising drive of modernity as making the world orderly and reliable but not meaningful.[126] Bahá'u'lláh and Abduh try to provide modern life in a rationalised and disenchanted world with religious meaning. No matter how one assesses the success of both to reconcile religion and modernity in their theologies, this issue is not only relevant to Middle Easterners in the Nineteenth Century, but remains an important issue in the present. The rapid spread of Western modernity through the forces of globalisation at the end of the Twentieth Century makes the conservation of a distinct cultural and religious identity even more difficult. In an increasingly secular environment, living a religious life becomes actually more challenging. Hence, the struggle for a religious identity will continue and affects Muslims, Bahá'ís and other religionists alike.

Notes

1) See Amanat 1989, 24ff..

2) Not surprisingly, messianic aspirations were revitalised in such a crisis milieu. The decay of Islam requires the appearance of the

Mahdí who would restore the dignity of Muslims and defeat the infidels. The Mahdí uprisings in Sudan that were directed against British colonialist rule in North Africa are just one example of the chiliastic tone religious responses to modernity could adopt.

3) See Michel/Razik 1925, Introduction, LVI.

4) See Uthman 1944, 60.

5) See Abduh 1966, 41; Horten 1916, 86.

6) *mumkin li-dhátihí*

7) *wájib li-dhátihí*

8) *mustahíl li-dhátihí*

9) Abduh 1966, 41.

10) See Abduh 1966, 41.

11) See Abduh 1966, 44;. Horten 1916, 86.

12) Abduh 1966, 45.

13) See Abduh 1966, 46.

14) See Abduh 1966, 47ff.

15)v See Michel/Razik 1925, Introduction, LVII.

16) Abduh 1966, 51.

17) See Abduh 1966, 52; Adams 1933, 146.

18) Interestingly, one can perceive a rather impersonal description of God, Who is called the necessarily existent Being (*wájib al-wujúd*) in order to find less anthropomorphic terms for God and His attributes. This impersonalism is meant to give Abduh's theology a more universal and rational outlook in contrast to an anthropomorphic representation of God in Christianity.

19) See Jomier 1954, 131.

20) See Adams 1933, 116f.

21) Abduh 1966, 53.

22) See Adams 1933, 117; Michel/Razik 1925, Introduction, LIX..

23) Abduh 1966, 54.

24) See Abduh 1966, 55.

25) Abduh 1966, 56.

26) See Momen 1988, Relativism, 3.

27) Bahá'u'lláh himself admits His ignorance referring to this realm: "And I, verily, in view of My injury and My misery am not informed of even a letter thereof." (Lawh-kullu't-Ta'ám II, 16)

28) See McLean 1992, 54.

29) *Kitáb-i-ˆqán* 91.

30) See Cole 1982, 3.

31) See Schaefer 1995, 118.

32)   That ideal King hath, throughout eternity, been in His Essence independent of the comprehension of all beings, and will continue, for ever, in His own Being to be exalted above the adoration of every soul.

        (*Kitáb-i-ˆqán* 52f.)

33) *Kitáb-i-ˆqán* 135.

34) *Kitáb-i-ˆqán* 219.

35) See Cole 1982, 3.

36) See Cole 1982, 3f.

37) *Kitáb-i-ˆqán* 98.

38) See Ma'sumian 1994, 3.

39) McLean 1992, 25

40) Cole 1982, 2.

41) *Tablets* 140.

42) See Uthman 1944, 123f.

43) Goldziher 1920, 363.

44) Particularly, Ibn Khaldún's influence on Abduh's exposition of the history of Islamic theological discourse can be discerned. Abduh adopts Ibn Khaldún's definition of *tawhíd*, the philosophical proof of God's existence and nominalistic notions of God from the Prolegomena. See Binder 1964, 66ff.

45) Bahá'u'lláh's and Abduh's different intentions are recognisable in their use of allegorical interpretation of the Qur'án (*ta'wíl*). For Abduh, *ta'wíl* is the exegetical instrument to resolve tensions between revelation and reason by searching for a symbolic meaning behind the literal contents of a Qur'ánic passage (See Uthman 1944, 137). Bahá'u'lláh likewise employs allegorical Qur'ánic interpretation in His writings, which has a long tradition in Shíʿism. However, the symbolic reading of eschatological passages in the Qur'án shall not only de-emphasise the miraculous meaning of a passage, but prove that Bahá'u'lláh fulfils eschatological prophecies not in a literal, but in a symbolic sense: "The reading Bahá'u'lláh rejects is a suspension of natural law. The reading he offers is an engagement of spiritual law, portrayed as vivifying the visionary landscape of the heart. The reader, open to a new interpretation will be open to a fresh source of authority." (Buck 1998, 6)

46) Uthman 1944, 124.

47) See Momen 1988, 15.

48) See Abduh 1966, 67.

49) See Abduh 1966, 68.

50) See Caspar 1957, 165.

51) See Michel/Razik 1925, Introduction, LXV.

52) See Abduh 1966, 74f.

53)   Only by dint of the revealed law do we have knowledge of obligation and of the good in that quality of certainty which brings peace to the soul.

   (Abduh 1966, 76)

54) See Schaefer 1997, 49.

55) See Abduh 1966, 78.

56) See Abduh 1966, 78.

57) Abduh refers to a tradition on the pollination of palm trees. According to this tradition, the Prophet initially prohibited the pollination of the trees, but later changed His mind: "He did so in order to teach men that their practices in such economic and practical fields are the results of their experiments and researches, and that these last are quite valid, so long as the Divine laws are observed and fine virtues maintained." (Abduh 1966, 80)

58) See Abduh 1966, 80.

59) Manifestation with capital "M" will be used referring to the Prophets and Messengers in order to distinguish Them from the general sense of the manifestation of divine attributes in creation.

60) See Cole 1982, 14.

61) See Cole 1982, 9f.

62)   In the days of Moses it was the Pentateuch; in the days of Jesus the Gospel; in the days of Muhammad the Messenger of God the Qur'án; in this day the Bayán [the major book written by the Báb]; and in the dispensation of Him Whom God will make manifest His own Book—the Book unto which all the Books of former Dispensations must needs be referred, the Book which standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme.

   Kitáb-i-ʾqán 199f

63) See *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* 36.

64) See *Tablets* 106ff.; Cole 1982, 11.

65) See *Lawh-i-Zuhúr* 2.

66) See Cole 1982, 30f.

67) See Hourani 1962, 143; Uthman 1944, 127.

68) See Adams 1933, 157.

69) See Uthman 1944, 105ff.

70) See Abduh 1966, 132.

71) Abduh 1966, 133.

72) See Abduh 1966, 133.

73) See Abduh 1966, 134.

74) Abduh 1966, 134.

75) See Abduh 1966 130.

76) See Michel/Razik 1925, Introduction, LXXVI; Uthman 1944, 150.

77) See Uthman 1944, 127.

78) See Hourani 1962, 148; Badawi 1976, 82f.

79) See Badawi 1976, 79f.

80) See Lundberg 1996, 9.

81) See Schaefer 1995, 139.

82) See *Kitáb-i-ˆqán* 41.

83) Behold, O Muhammad, how the sayings and doings of the followers of Shí'ih Islam have dulled the joy and fervor of its early days, and tarnished the pristine brilliancy of its light. In its primitive days, whilst they still adhered to the precepts associated with the name of their Prophet, the Lord of mankind, their career was marked by an unbroken chain of victories and triumphs. As they gradually strayed from the path of their Ideal Leader and Master, as they turned away from the Light of God and corrupted the principle of His Divine unity, and as they increasingly centered their attention upon them who were only the revealers of the potency of His Word, their power was turned into weakness, their glory into shame, their courage into fear.

   Gleanings 69

84) Lundberg 1996, 12.

85) Schaefer 1995, 140.

86) See *Kitáb-i-ˆqán* 199f.

87) See Schaefer 1995, 141.

88) See *Kitáb-i-ˆqán* 44.

89) *Kitáb-i-ˆqán* 14.

90) See Schaefer 1995, 142f.

91) See Lundberg 1996, 4.

92) See Amanat 1989, 406f.

93) See Amanat 1989, 408.

94) Abduh's essentialist view of religion can be observed in his characterisation of religious reform programmes. For him, any religious reform that aims at a return to original sources means a rapprochement to other religions, since the fundamental teachings of all religions are identical. In discussing Protestantism, he stresses its similarities with Islam. The Protestant opposition to ecclesiastic authority and the emphasis on an open and independent individual interpretation of the Bible allowed the emergence of modern sciences. However, according to Abduh's exposition, Protestantism kept dogmatic intolerance, supported literal scripturalism and contained anti-intellectualist tendencies. (See Michel/Razik 1925, Introduction, XLVI; Ayyub 1974, 129ff.)

95) *Gleanings* 136.

96) Cole 1998, 150.

97) See Cole 1998, 151.

98) To you hath He prescribed the faith [dín] which He commanded unto Noah, and which we revealed to thee, and which we commanded unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus. (42:11); Say ye: "We believe in God, an that which hath been sent down to us, and that which hath been sent down to Abraham and Ismael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and that which hath been given to Moses and to Jesus, and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. No difference do we make between any of them: and to God are we resigned (Muslims)." (2:130)

99) See Figl 1993, 170ff.

100) See Abduh 1966, 143f.

101) See Abduh 1966, 144.

102) See Abduh 1966, 147.

103) The first Glad-Tidings which the Mother Book hath, in this Most Great Revelation, imparted unto all the peoples of the world is that the law of holy war hath been blotted out from the Book.

   (*Tablets* 21)

104) See Schaefer 1997, 43.

105) See *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* 47.

106) Now let us beseech God—praised be His glory—to graciously guide aright the followers of the Shí'ih sect and to purge them of unseemly conduct. From the lips of the members of this sect foul imprecations fall unceasingly, while they invoke the word "Mal'ún" (accursed)—uttered with a guttural sound of the letter 'ayn—as their daily relish.

(*Tablets* 92)

107) See *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* 69f.

108) See Michel/Razik 1925, Introduction, XLVII; Schaefer 1997, 44f.

109) See Uthman 1953, 72.

110)   Consort with all religions with amity and concord, that they may inhale from you the sweet fragrance of God. Beware lest amidst men the flame of foolish ignorance overpower you. All things proceed from God and unto Him they return. He is the source of all things and in Him all things are ended.

   (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas* 72)

111) See Schaefer 1997, 16ff.

112) Smith 1987, 75.

113) Hourani 1962, p. 139

114) See Schaefer 1997, 33ff.

115) Buck 1986, 157.

116) See Buck 1986, 162ff.

117) Buck 1996, 158.

118) See Rippin 1993, 34ff.

119) Rippin 1993, 32.

120) See Buck 1999, 146.

121) See Tablets 21ff.; Buck 1999, 147ff.

122) See Rippin 1993, 33f.; Buck 1999, 175.

123) Hourani 1962, p. 144

124) See Hourani 1962, p. 143

125) Smith 1987, 93f.

126) See Cole 1998, 4.

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