

'non-recruitment' variety – there is no mention of the real threat that this stance poses to the security of the life and liberty of religious minorities and depressed caste groups in India today (cf. Mayer, Freston, Sharkey, Claerhout and De Roover). Hindu Nationalist opposition to proselytizing in India especially since Independence has been fanned by the periodic occurrence of mass conversions by low-caste and Dalit (formerly 'Untouchable') groups to Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism. The evident social and political stakes of such conversions point to an important facet of proselytizing which is concealed, rather than revealed, by arguments about 'group protection,' 'anti-imperialism,' or 'non-recruitment.' It is not only global missionary groups, national elites, and international human rights lawyers who have a stake in the adjudication of proselytization; nor are these the only groups who have learned to stake their claims in the language of human rights. The voices of the proselytized must also be taken into consideration.

This limitation of scope aside, *Proselytization Revisited* brings together a wealth of research on the controversies proselytization has provoked, the forms of legal regulation that have been imposed upon it, and the techniques by which proselytizing groups have negotiated and contested legal regulation (cf. DeBernardi, Rahn, Balci). This wealth of perspectives from around the world offers valuable critical perspective on how the issues are framed in any given context.

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**Oliver Scharbrodt, *Islam and the Baha'i Faith: A comparative study of Muhammad 'Abduh and 'Abdul-Baha 'Abbas*. Abingdon/New York, Routledge (2008). 237pp., £76 (Hardback), ISBN: 978 0 415 77441 3.**

Baha'ism and its antecedent Babism are topics that have been seriously neglected by Islamicists and scholars of Iranian history. The reasons are not hard to find. For all its intrinsic interest, Babism was a short-lived movement that fell far short of its original hopes to revolutionize Shi'ite Islam. Baha'ism moved rapidly away from any identification with Islam to become a separate religious movement that has spread internationally, but never made any serious numerical growth. The greatest neglect here has been from sociologists of religion.

Oliver Scharbrodt provides a striking exception to this history of disinterest and neglect. He does not just take a second look at the two movements; he places them firmly within the history of modern Islamic reform. The result is a compelling achievement that opens up new avenues for research in both areas and for the re-examination of matters chronologically prior to and after the two men whose careers form the basis for the present work. Scharbrodt's own research is just what a study like this demands: detailed, wide-ranging, and careful. Although previous writers, notably Juan Cole, have done well in recreating the reformist milieu in which the Baha'i prophet Mirza Husayn 'Ali "Baha' Allah" (1817–1892) and his son 'Abbas Effendi 'Abd al-Baha' (1844–1921) built a modernizing, post-Islamic faith in late 19th-century Ottoman Turkey and Syria, Scharbrodt goes a step further. He writes parallel accounts of 'Abd al-Baha' and that enduring figure of modern Islamic reform, Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), and he does so by demonstrating that, however dissimilar their lives may seem on the surface, they converge in unexpected and creative ways.

This is not a book that will appeal greatly to either Baha'is or Muslims. Baha'is prefer to see the lives and teachings of their holy figures as severely divorced from the currents in which they swam, and modern admirers of 'Abduh (including his Salafi offspring) are deeply averse to the thought of any link between their hero and what represents, after all, the Great Apostasy of modern Islam. And it's not just that. Like his father, 'Abd al-Baha' has suffered from a very limited range of biographical information, mainly because his Baha'i contemporaries preserved a limited range of hagiographically focussed information. 'Abduh too suffered from a hagiographical spin, particularly from his disciple Rashid Rida, who emphasized his connections to orthodoxy while sidelining his involvement with Sufi mysticism and the radicalism of his mentor Jamal al-Din al-Afghani.

That, of course, is precisely what makes this such a groundbreaking study. Scharbrodt shows how Baha'ism moved from its roots in the doctrinally bizarre and jihadist Babi movement to become a liberal, pacifist, and reformist sect that finally declared itself a post-Islamic religion. And he paints a fresh picture of 'Abduh, in which he emphasizes his revolutionary roots through his long association with and personal devotion to Afghani, and his mystical training in Sufism, before describing the passage to a mixture of educational reform and scriptural traditionalism.

Scharbrodt focuses throughout on the relevance of Weber's theories concerning charismatic authority, a marked feature of Babism and Baha'ism, but also present in the Sufi circles in which the young 'Abduh found much of his religious inspiration. And just as Baha'ism underwent the beginnings of a radical routinization of charisma during the lifetime of 'Abd al-Baha's grandson, Shoghi Effendi (1897–1957), so did Salafism under 'Abduh's leading disciple Rashid Rida (1865–1935) move away from its charismatic underpinnings to the routinization of fraternities like the Muslim Brotherhood.

According to Scharbrodt, While the physical encounter between 'Abdul-Baha and Muhammad 'Abduh initiated this study, their historical relationship was sidelined and almost became irrelevant in the course of the research. Rather than excavating letters, sifting through memoirs and biographers, collecting newspaper articles in order to discover clues on how their relationship might have evolved throughout their lives, contextualizing and comparing these two religious reformers promised to be a more exciting research project – exciting because it was unusual, as it connects to religious movements which are normally not brought together' (pp. 169–170).

Underpinning the narrative of this comparative intellectual biography is Scharbrodt's detailed weaving of the 'contextualization' referred to above. Religious movements, especially those in the first flush of youth, often feel obliged to cover up or re-write their origins, to make them conform to later doctrinal and historiographical opinion. For those Muslims who see 'Abduh as the doyen of modern Islamic orthodoxy, his personal roots in Sufism and in the heterodox thought of the political dissident Jamal al-Din al-Afghani represent a stain on his character that has to be covered by a more conventional portrayal of his early life.

For the Baha'is, especially after their entry into Western countries, two things became difficult: the militancy and doctrinal excesses of the Babis and the proper milieu within which their prophet Baha'ullah developed his modernizing thought. Baha'ullah and his son 'Abdul-Baha were as much a part of the wave of religious and political reformism that swept the late 19th-century Middle East as Afghani and 'Abduh. In the end, they went in very different ways, and it is in that parting of the ways that we gain our best insights into their motives and eventual disagreements.

Baha'ism may now be fairly treated as a non-Islamic faith, whether a world religion, as its adherents would have it, or a New Religious Movement, as its real-life status would suggest. But its Islamic roots are never far beneath the surface, to the extent that it serves to remind us of how acute the dilemma has been for modern Muslim reformers: break too far from the Qur'an and *hadith*, and you may find yourself venturing into the realm of anti-Islam. For all that Islam has spawned numerous movements since the 19th century, only Babism/Baha'ism has sought to move right away from the Islamic orbit. The general trend has been towards a conservative expression of the faith, in Wahhabism, Deobandism, Mawdudism, or any of the innumerable jihadist movements that capture the headlines of today. This makes the Baha'i innovation all the more interesting, not least because it is, of all the modern movements, the only one of any significance to emerge from a Shi'i matrix. This is why Scharbrodt's detailed contrast of Baha'ism and early Salafism is of such real interest. It is easy to forget that the earliest Babis were as noted for the rigour of their application of Islamic law as they not long after became notorious for their rupture with Islam.

Scharbrodt writes well, conveying often complex ideas in an uncluttered English style that allows the non-specialist to make sense of everything without, I think, much trouble. However, he has been let down badly by the lack of a competent proof-reader. There are mistakes everywhere, some, no doubt, Scharbrodt's, but others that should have been picked up by a different eye. Not to have picked up a use of 'disinterested' for 'uninterested' (p. 25) is careless, as is 'The ways how Baha'ullah and 'Abdul-Baha dressed was similar' (p. 91). As much as anything, this is a criticism of some academic publishing houses who dispense with the skills of professional proof-readers and leave such matters to their writers, whose focus may be entirely different.

There are one or two other niggles of a less stylistic nature. On pages 35–36, in an otherwise accurate description of a major phase in the development of Babi millenarianism and the replacement of the Islamic legal system with a bizarre and arbitrary Babi shari'a, the author mentions the Babi poetess and theorist Qurrat al-'Ayn only in passing, when he refers to her symbolic unveiling in 1848, at a gathering where the abrogation of Islamic law was determined on by a group of Babis. But Qurrat al-'Ayn had already appeared without a veil more than once some years earlier, during a long stay in Karbala' and Baghdad, and she was well ahead of her co-religionaries in advocating a rupture with Islamic law. This is important, because it shows how a breach with Islam had already commenced within a year or so of the Bab's declaration of his charismatic status, and that it occurred without any reference to the young prophet's later eccentricities. Had things worked out differently, given that Qurrat al-'Ayn was the centre of a sect within Babism, the Qurratiyya, we might have seen the appearance of a female prophet instead of a man. The fact that she was as learned as any of the men who rallied with her to the Bab's cause only serves to make it the more regrettable that we know so little of her life and have so few of her writings.

The other important omission is any reference to the process by which many Egyptian Sufi orders underwent a process of routinization and administrative re-organization in 19th-century Egypt. The way in which many of the 'sober' orders acquired a legal or semi-legal status that brought them into line with broader developments in society is of importance for 'Abduh's own shift from a Sufi perspective to one focussed on the re-organization of education and law. The topic has already been studied in some depth by Frederick de Jong (*Turuq and Turuq-linked Institutions in Nineteenth-century Egypt*), but those perceptions may well prove useful in any future study of 'Abduh in this context.

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**Richard Madsen, *Democracy's Dharma: Religious Renaissance and Political Development in Taiwan*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles (2007). xxvi + 191 pp., \$55.00 (hardback), ISBN: 978 0 520 25227 1, \$21.95 (paperback), ISBN: 978 0 520 24228 8.**

For sociologist Richard Madsen, the most intriguing aspect of Taiwan's religious renaissance is its relationship to recent political changes in Taiwan. His new book *Democracy's Dharma* examines how Taiwanese religions support its successful democracy despite Taiwan's heterogeneity. Multi-ethnic and class-divided, Taiwan has undergone remarkably smooth cultural and economic changes in recent years. Madsen contrasts Taiwan, where 'progressive' religion appears to have cooled the fires of dissension, with other places where 'reactionary' religion fans the flames of inter-group hostility, and credits Taiwanese religions with Taiwan's democratic success. He argues that they contribute to civil society through producing values necessary for the success of democracies and through practical support. They accomplish the latter by filling roles the government has neglected – providing social services and representing Taiwan internationally – in a way the state cannot given its ambiguous status.

To explore the religions' support of the state, Madsen focuses on four particular religious organizations, three Buddhist and one Daoist (although he describes all as manifesting hybrid religious ideologies). Madsen argues that these organizations, the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Association (Tzu Chi), Buddha's Light Mountain, Dharma Drum Mountain, and Enacting Heaven Temple, contributed to the success of Taiwan's democracy by reshaping traditional teachings into modern, globalization-savvy versions of Buddhism and Daoism refined to answer questions raised by contemporary Taiwanese life. These novel versions overlap with the needs of the government and serve as an alternative to Western foundations for liberal democracy. In positing the possibility of an Asian cultural foundation for successful