

Article

# Three Iranian Intellectual Icons of the 1960s and Their Attitudes Toward the Bahá'ís †

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## Abstract

This article examines the works of three iconic Iranian intellectuals of the 1960s—the Muslim thinker Jalál Ál-i-Aḥmad, the Islamist ideologue 'Alí Shari'atí, and the Marxist theorist Iḥsán Ṭabarí—and argues that their shared underlying assumption is the claim that the Bahá'í religion has foreign roots and that its leaders maintain clandestine ties with foreign powers. By uncritically accepting the master narrative of Bahá'í espionage—shaped in large part by *The Confessions of Dalgurúki* in the 1940s—these intellectuals, contrary to their role as agents of change and critics of authority, helped further consolidate and perpetuate this narrative. In doing so, and given their significant influence, they contributed to the distancing of their readers from their Bahá'í compatriots.

**Keywords:** 1960s Iran; Jalál Ál-i-Aḥmad; 'Alí Shari'atí; Iḥsán Ṭabarí; Muslim intellectuals; Islamism; Marxism; Bahá'í community; Anti-Bahá'í discourse; *The Confessions of Dalgurúki*; espionage master narrative

## 1. Introduction

The intellectual environment of Iran in the 1960s was dynamic and deeply influenced by political, social, and ideological struggles. It was shaped by several key factors, including the Pahlaví regime's modernization policies, the influence of Western thought, the rise of Marxist, Islamic, and Islamist movements, and the emergence of significant intellectuals. The undercurrents of discontent at work in Iranian society in the 1960s would eventually lead to the 1979 Revolution.

The 1960s saw a significant shift in the self-perception and public function of Iranian intellectuals. The role of the public thinker or intellectual (*rawshanfikir*) transformed from being primarily a reformer and an enlightened transmitter of Western ideas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to a more politicized, confrontational figure by the 1960s. Heavily influenced by Western “counter-culture” and Third World discourse, Iranian intellectuals advocated for a “committed intellectual” whose pen was a weapon and whose knowledge had to lead to action (Nabavi 1999). This article focuses on the anti-Bahá'í attitude of three of the most iconic of these intellectuals. By examining their rhetoric and discourse, the



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study contributes to the historiography of ideas, showing how intellectual authority can further normalize exclusion.

The life of the Bahá'í community of Iran vis-à-vis the larger Iranian society in the 1960s saw both a continuity of the trends begun in the early 1940s and a subtle yet considerable change. With Riḍá Sháh Pahlaví's forced abdication and the accession to the throne of his young son in 1941, the influence of the ulama resurged, and within a few years, various groups with Islamic and/or Islamist agenda proliferated (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001, pp. 90–98; 2008, pp. 204–10). The widespread publication in 1942 and subsequent multiple republications of the purported memoirs of a nineteenth-century Russian ambassador to Iran, *The Confessions of Dalgurúki*, long adduced as a document proving the claim that the Bahá'ís of Iran were spies of foreign powers, created the master narrative of Bahá'í espionage—a master narrative being a story that by virtue of being widely shared and repeated across time becomes deeply embedded in a culture (Halverson et al. 2011, p. 182). According to these *Confessions*, Dalgurúki was commissioned as a translator to the Russian embassy in Iran in the 1830s with a secret mission. He converted to Islam, studied under a certain Ḥakím Aḥmad Gílání, disguised in the garb of a cleric, and employed a number of people as spies, not least of whom was the future founder of the Bahá'í religion, Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí. After returning to Russia, he set off for the 'atabát (the Shí'í shrine cities of Iraq) under the alias, Shaykh 'Isá Lankarání. Upon arriving in the 'atabat, he persuaded a young seminary student from Shiraz to return to Iran and launch the Bábí movement. He subsequently returned to Iran himself as the Russian ambassador and began to bring about the appearance of the Bahá'í religion by giving instructions to Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí. The goal of each of these measures was to destroy the national unity that Islam had created among Iranians in order to serve the interests of his own country<sup>1</sup>. Even scholars who adamantly rejected the authenticity of *The Confessions of Dalgurúki* created their own versions of it: arguing, for example, that Bahá'ís were clandestinely tied to Britain (Momen 2004, p. 28; Yazdani 2009a, p. 200). In the numerous anti-Bahá'í polemics that were published subsequently, Bahá'ís were depicted as the puppets of imperialism ('*ummál-i-ampiryálím*) (Yazdani 2011; 2009b). In 1955, a widespread anti-Bahá'í campaign erupted throughout the country in which the Shí'í clerics and the state collaborated in persecuting Bahá'ís (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001, pp. 106–10; 2008, pp. 215–20; Yazdani 2017, pp. 53–58). Faced with international reactions to the persecutions, the government stopped the campaign. As Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi demonstrated in his study of the episode, the 1955 anti-Bahá'í campaign was both the apogee of the state-cleric collaboration and the point of their separation (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001, p. 110; 2008, p. 220). During the campaign and the months following it, the publication of anti-Bahá'í polemics soared. The next series of violent attacks on the Bahá'ís of Iran occurred in June 1963 during the uprising following Rúḥu'lláh Khomeini's fiery speech against the Sháh and his subsequent arrest. In the tradition of almost all socio-political upheavals in Iran, in a number of cities and localities, mobs attacked Bahá'í properties and looted and plundered them. From around this time to the last two years of Muḥammad Riḍá Sháh's rule, for some thirteen years, Iranian Baha'ís lived in a state of relative peace (Yazdani 2017, pp. 58–59). The anti-Bahá'í society called Anjuman-i-Khayríyyiy-i-Hujjatíyy-i-Mahdaviyyih, founded in 1953 with the stated goal of disrupting and preventing Bahá'í activities, continued to function (Yazdani 2017, p. 67). The publication of anti-Bahá'í polemics went on, as did, every now and then, anti-Bahá'í remarks made in the works of various authors from different backgrounds, some of them well-known intellectuals, and at a time when their self-perception was leaning toward more socio-political responsibility.

The “root cause” of Iranian Shí'ite hostility toward the Bábís and Bahá'ís, Abbas Amanat asserts, lies in their call to “abandon Islam as an abrogated revelation” and their challenge to the “raison d'être of clerical authority”. This anti-Bahá'í sentiment, he adds, was transmitted “remarkably intact” into the “anti-state dissent of the 1950s and 1960s” (Amanat 2005, pp. xvii–xviii). He offers insights into this phenomenon, to which I return in the pages

that follow. H. E. Chehabi has also explored secular (by which he appears to mean non-clerical) anti-Bahá'ísm. He explores three basic secular anti-Bahá'í lines of argumentation: that Bahá'í are causes of division, that foreign powers have used them in ways harmful to the national interest of Iran (conspiracy theories), and that they were disproportionately represented in the inner circles of power in the Shah's regime, the assumption being that they used their influence to their own community's benefit. Chehabi's own explanation of the phenomenon is that Bahá'í cosmopolitanism and the anti-cosmopolitan nationalism of many secular Iranians are at the root of the latter's anti-Bahá'í prejudice. He finally proposes that for many Iranians, Bahá'ís constitute the internal Other, and adds, "to be a 'true' Iranian, it would seem, one has to be at least culturally from a Twelver Shí'í background" (Chehabi 2008, pp. 186–87, 191–92, 195). In addition to the factors listed by Chehabi, in conversations with erudite Iranians, this author has heard other factors being proposed as the causes of the anti-Bahá'í attitude of secular Iranians: the tendency of Bahá'ís to teach their religion and convert others to it, their non-interference in partisan politics, and their perceived "conservatism" in local as well as global politics, to name a few.

Based on a close reading of the works of three of the most influential Iranian intellectuals of the 1960s—the Muslim intellectual Jalál Áli-i-Aḥmad; the Islamist 'Alí Sh̄arí'atí, and the Marxist Iḥsán Ṭabarí—this paper argues that while all the factors presented in Chehabi's article—or even other factors the author has heard—as the cause of the anti-Bahá'í attitude of these three intellectuals do have some validity to them, the underlying assumption shaping their attitude are the claims of foreign roots of the Bahá'í religion and a clandestine relationship of its leaders with foreign powers. By passive acceptance of the master narrative of Bahá'í espionage created by *The Confessions of Dalgurúki* in the 1940s, counter to their role as committed intellectuals and agents of change, and by virtue of their influence among the people, these intellectuals contributed to the further consolidation and perpetuation of this master narrative.

## 2. Jalál Áli-i-Aḥmad (1923–1969)

Jalál Áli-i-Aḥmad has been characterized as "the intellectual leader of a new generation of Iranian thinkers" (Richard 2006, p. 189)<sup>2</sup>. Undoubtedly one of the most influential intellectuals, writers, and political activists in Iran in the twentieth century, Áli-i-Aḥmad was born into a religious family. His grandfather, father, and older brother were all clerics. At the age of twenty, his father sent him to the Shí'í seminary in Najaf to study theology. A few months later, however, Áli-i-Aḥmad returned to Iran and enrolled at Tehran Teachers College, from which he graduated in 1946. Later, he pursued a doctorate in Persian literature at Tehran University, a program he never finished. Meanwhile he broke with religion and became an active member of the Marxist, pro-Soviet Union Tudeh party. A few years later, he left the Tudeh party, and in the mid-1950s, became an independent political activist while concentrating on his literary interests as a writer, translator, and ethnographer (Boroujerdi 1996, pp. 65–66; Dabashi [2006] 2008, pp. 42–64; Milani 2008, p. 832). Gradually, he moved toward a more nationalistically oriented ideology while returning to his Shí'í roots. The mass uprising of 1963 led by Ayatollah Khomeini convinced him of the crucial role religion could play in mobilizing the masses, and that religious forces were at the forefront of the fight for liberty and independence. Shortly thereafter, he traveled to Mashhad to meet a group of clerics, including 'Alí Khamenei, the future supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this meeting, he offered an alliance between Iranian intellectuals and the clergy, which proved to be a key factor in both the Islamization and subsequent victory of the 1979 Revolution (Boroujerdi 1996, p. 66; Rahnema 1998, p. 191; Milani 2008, p. 835).

Throughout his career as a writer and a political activist, and regardless of the transformations he experienced in his thinking and political orientation, Ál-i-Aḥmad maintained an anti-Bahá'í stance. At the age of twenty, he collaborated with one of the most active anti-Bahá'í societies formed in the 1940s, the Anjuman-i-Tablígħát-i-Islámí (The Society for Islamic Propaganda) (Anjuman-i-Tablígħát-i-Islámí [1322] 1943, pp. 13, 21). Later, whether writing as a social critic or a novelist, he incorporated his disdain for Bahá'ís.

### *Gharbzadigí*

In 1962, Ál-i-Aḥmad published a monograph entitled *Gharbzadigí* (Westoxication)<sup>3</sup>, which Homa Karouzián identifies as “the peak” of the author’s “radical social criticism” (Katouzian 2025, p. 222). The book has been described, in terms of its impact on the psyche of both intellectuals and the public at large, as “perhaps the single most important essay published in modern Iranian history” (Dabashi [2006] 2008, p. 74), and arguably one of the most widely read books in Iran in the two decades leading up to the Revolution (Mashhúrí 2000, p. 68), and decades after its first publication, the text and its author continue to inspire both interest and controversy (Dabashi 2021; Hendelman-Baavur 2015)<sup>4</sup>. In *Gharbzadigí*, Ál-i-Aḥmad used a medical metaphor to denote a social illness (a contaminating social malady): Iranian society’s and its intellectuals’ indiscriminate borrowing from the West (Boroujerdi 1996, pp. 67, 72–73; Dabashi [2006] 2008, pp. 73–87). *Gharbzadigí* included one negative remark about the Bahá'ís in its first 1962/1341 edition and a couple more in the revised second edition, which was the base for subsequent ones (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1964; 2006).

Referring to colonialization of Africa by the West, he writes that Africa was receptive of colonialism and vulnerable to domination because it was “dispersed” (*parákandih*), each tribe had its own god, and Christian missionaries went along with the colonizers to Africa. “We the Muslim Easterners” he adds, were in a different situation. We were not receptive to colonialism because of our “Islamic totality” (*Kullíyyat-i-Islámí*), and that is exactly what the West targeted and challenged. Then, he provides a list of historical processes through which the West attempted to undermine the “Islamic totality” of the Muslim Easterners: “The bloody promotion of Shiism in the early Safavid period, causing conflict between us and the Ottomans, the encouragement of Baháism in the middle of the Qájár period, smashing the Ottomans after the WWI, and finally, opposing the Shí'í clerical establishment (*rawḥáníyyat-i-shí'í*) from the Constitutional upheaval on” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1962, p. 11; 1964, p. 32; 2006, p. 23). What Ál-i-Aḥmad proposes about the Bahá'í religion here, is, in essence, not much different from the main message of *The Confessions of Dalgurúki*; colonizers forged this religion in order to divide the Muslim community. The matter-of-factness with which he lists each of these processes is noteworthy, but in this paper, the focus is his remarks about the Bahá'í religion. He does not explain how the “West” encouraged or supported Bahá'ís in the nineteenth century; for him, it is an already forgone conclusion.

In the second, revised edition of *Gharbzadigí*, he made further references to Bahá'ís. In a passage contrasting the developments in the “Western world” in the “recent three centuries” when they went through the industrial revolution and urbanization, with “us” just “weaving ourselves in our own web” (*dar tár khud tanidím*), he adds, “even if we had an uprising (*qíyám*), we donned the garb of the Bátínís, Nuqtavís, Ḥurúfís and Bahá'ís<sup>5</sup>. For every school and laboratory they established in the West, we created secret assemblies and took refuge in the seven esoteric layers of meaning in the mysteries, and in the Most Great Name (*ism-i-a'zam*)” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1964, p. 57; 2006, p. 43). The first three religious movements were centuries older than the “recent three centuries”. Therefore, his lamentation contrasting the developments in Europe during this time with those in Iran applies only to the Bahá'í religion, even though he added it only in the revised edition<sup>6</sup>.

Elsewhere in *Gharbzadigí*, in a footnote on “*fukuli-ma’ábi* (dandyism) or *ghirtí-bázi* (coxcombry)”, which he considered “a symptom of the bigger disease of *gharbzadigí* (Westoxication)”<sup>7</sup>, he quoted a 1948 passage from Muḥammad-Báqir Húshyár (d. 1957), the foremost education specialist of Iran at the time, criticizing Iranians’ imitation of the superficial layers of Western culture while disregarding its deeper layers, particularly the role that, as Húshyár believed, religious traditions played in Western educational systems. Praising Húshyár as “perhaps the first person” who diagnosed the “main cause” of this problem of Iranian society, Ál-i-Aḥmad added, “*even though (garchih)* he had the reputation of *Bahá’igari* (Baha’ism)!” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1964, p. 79, fn1; 2006, p. 63, fn.1 Emphasis added)<sup>8</sup>. This remark indicates that Ál-i-Aḥmad found the expression of this insight to be at odds with the fact that Húshyár was a Bahá’í (which Ál-i-Aḥmad prefers to consider a rumor).

#### *A Letter to Ráhnamáy-i-Kitáb*

Ál-i-Aḥmad’s harsher and more explicit critiques of Bahá’ís, though, appear in his later works. In October/November 1966 (Ábán 1345), the magazine *Ráhnamáy-i-Kitáb* published an article from sociologist Sháhpúr Rásikh in which the author had, in passing, referenced “two important Iranian religious movements which have spread throughout the world”, without mentioning the name Bahá’í, since doing so would have placed the article’s publication at risk. This short and passing allusion to the Bahá’í Faith so infuriated Ál-i-Aḥmad that he wrote a letter to Íraj Afshár, the magazine’s chief editor, criticizing him sharply for having published Rásikh’s article, and asked sarcastically: “Please...why don’t you devote a whole issue of your magazine to these people so that they can defend their worldwide religion?!? Why don’t you suggest that they establish a Chair for the study of Bahá’í at the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences?!?” He then moved on to more direct criticism, telling Afshár that it was ethically wrong and morally reprehensible [*qabih*] of him to support such “absurd falsities”, asking how the author dared to refer to this “very private and closed-doors religion which is extremely coxcomb-creating (*qirtí-sáz*), that wipes away all native authenticities (*zudáyandiy-i-işálatháy-i búmí*), as having spread throughout the world, when even Socialism and Communism with all their pomp (*kabkabih*) and grandiloquence (*dabdabih*) cannot be thought of in such terms” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978b, pp. 212–13).

As mentioned, in *Gharbzadigí*, Ál-i-Aḥmad had defined *ghirtí-bázi* (coxcombry) as a symptom of *gharbzadigí*. Therefore, by referring to the Bahá’í Faith as “coxcomb-creating”, he depicted Bahá’ís as *gharbzadih*, Westoxified. He tells his reader who a *qirtí* (coxcomb) is: “He spends an inordinate amount of time on his looks, shoes, clothes, and car. It always seems as if he has just been unwrapped. He always looks like he has stepped out of a *farangí* (European) *maison*” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1962, p. 75; 2006, p. 123). It seems, therefore, that Ál-i-Aḥmad’s critique of Bahá’ís has partly to do with how he perceives them to dress, socially behave, and carry themselves in society. This perception reminds one of Chehabi’s wondering “whether Iranian Baha’is’ frequently *soigné* appearance may not have contributed to generating an elitist image of them” (Chehabi 2008, p. 191). Ál-i-Aḥmad’s generalization about how Iranian Bahá’ís—who, in fact, come from different social and economic backgrounds—aside, can it not be said that the foreign-connection myth is at work here too? To Ál-i-Aḥmad, it is the religion, after all, which is responsible for its believers looking like *farangís*. His depiction of the Bahá’í religion as “private” and “closed-door”, like his reference in *Gharbzadigí* to the alleged Western support of Bahá’ís “in the middle of the Qajar period”—discussed earlier—seems to be merely a reflection of the conspiratorial thinking about Bahá’ís that reigned in Iran in earlier decades—just an updated version of the gist of *The Confessions of Dalgurúki*.

The most important point in the passage from Ál-i-Aḥmad’s letter to Afshár, however, as far as this paper is concerned, is his remark that the Bahá’í Faith wipes away “all native

authenticities” of Iranians. As above-mentioned in *Gharbzadigi*, he was concerned with “Islamic authenticities”, gradually, however, he became more focused on Shi’í Islam (See, for example, [Ál-i-Aḥmad \(1978a, 2:57–74\)](#)). For him, the essence of “native authenticities” was nothing but Shi’ism and its manifestations, Shi’ism was at the heart of Iranian identity ([Boroujerdi 1996, p. 72](#)). Therefore, a post-Islamic religion, even one that emerged from the heart of Iran, was nothing but an aberration of authentic Iranian identity. Ál-i Aḥmad’s text here is a prime example of what Abbas Amanat refers to as Bahá’ís having been “a sore point of non-conformity within a society seeking monolithic unanimity in the face of overwhelming threats from within and outside its boundaries” ([Amanat 2008, p. 108](#)). But, again, Ál-i Aḥmad’s description “*zudáyandiy-i-işálat’háy-i-búmi*” (that which wipes away all native authenticities) has the two main elements of *The Confessions of Dalgurúki* at its heart: the Bahá’í religion is foreign, and not *búmi*, and it aims to divide the Shi’a society of Iran.

#### *Nifrín-i-Zamín*

Ál-i-Aḥmad’s expression of negative attitudes toward Bahá’ís went beyond his works of social critique. Even in his 1967/1346 novel *Nifrín-i-Zamín* (The Cursing of the Land), a Bahá’í is an unwanted and undesirable if not fully foreign element of society, the importer of foreign culture, and despised by the villagers. One of the protagonists of the novel, “a Jew who became a Bahá’í” (*Yahúdíy-i-Bahá’í shudih*), a stranger to the village, purchases land from the landlord of the village and intends to dig a deep well and establish a chicken farm there and bring foreign things, like one-day-chickens, artificially inseminated cows, and Dutch alfalfa. The narrator of the story likens the chicken farm to a “parasite that attaches to the bottom of a tree and derives nourishment from its water, soil, and fertilizer”<sup>9</sup>. At the end, the villagers attack the chicken farm ([Ál-i-Aḥmad 1967, pp. 199, 254, 261; Chehabi 2008, p. 193](#)). Ál-i-Aḥmad’s choice of the protagonist as “a Jew who became a Bahá’í” is neither incidental nor innocent. He was highly dedicated to Rúḥ’ulláh Khomeini since the latter’s elevation to the lead opposition figure since June 1962 (see below). In his speeches against the government’s intent to remove the conditions of maleness, belief in Islam, and taking oaths on only the Qur’án for the election on the provincial councils, Khomeini had used similar notions: speaking in a gathering in Tehran on 23 November 1962 (2 Ádhar 1341), he referred to “a bunch of Jews disguised as Bahá’ís” ([Mu’assisiy-i-Tanzím va Nashr-i-Athár-i-Imám Khumayní 1999, 1:94; Yazdani 2012, p. 598](#)), and to a group of people of Tehran on 30 November 1962 (9 Ádhar 1341), he mentioned “Yahúdíháy-i-Bahá’í” (The Bahá’í Jews), and “Bahá’í-looking Jews” ([Mu’assisiy-i-Tanzím va Nashr-i-Athár-i-Imám Khumayní 1999, 1:104; Yazdani 2012, p. 598](#)) being behind the intended changes.

#### *Dar Khidmat va Khíyánat-i-Rawshanfíkrán*

The harshest criticism of Bahá’ís and their religion appeared in one of Ál-i-Aḥmad’s seminal works that he completed in the last year of his life<sup>10</sup>, *Dar Khidmat va Khíyánat-i-Rawshanfíkrán* (On the Services and Treasons of the Intellectuals). After the 5 June 1963 (15 Khurdád 1342) protest led by Khomeini, appalled by the indifference the secular intelligentsia had shown toward that protest, Ál-i-Aḥmad began writing this book, in which he criticized secular forces for their ineffectiveness ([Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, 1:16; Boroujerdi 1996, pp. 72–73, 85](#)). He claimed that during the previous one hundred years, it had always been the Shi’í clerics in Iran who led the resistance against the cultural and political onslaught of the West. He proposed that intellectuals and clerics cooperate in order to remedy the ills of Iran ([Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, 2:52](#)). To facilitate this cooperation, he insisted that the intellectuals must reach out to the clergy and the masses and the clerics must abandon their conservative stances ([Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, 2:61; Boroujerdi 1996, p. 73](#)). Ál-i-Aḥmad incorporated the

full text of Rūḥu'lláh Khumaynī's October 1964/Ábán 1343 speech against the Shah, which led to the former's exile in this book (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, pp. 84–90)<sup>11</sup>, and made several references to “The Revered” (*Haḍrat*) Khomeini as one of three examples in the history of Iran of clerics leading political protests, next to Mírzá-yi-Shírání in the Tobacco Revolt and Shaykh Fadlu'lláh Núrí in the Constitutional Revolution (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, pp. 55, 66).

The first of the several references to the Bahá'í religion in this two-volume book appears where discussing the role of the intellectuals, Ál-i-Aḥmad comments that “since it is the time of the finality (*khatm*) of prophethood”, there is no need to express one's thoughts in “the garb of the supernatural and the tongue of the unseen world (*'álam-i-ghayb*) and assertively states, “the mistake of Siyyid-i-Báb and Bahá'u'lláh and other recent manufacturers of religion was that they did not understand these points” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, 1:143). Elsewhere, in the second volume, blaming various groups of intellectuals for their opposition to the Shí'í clerics, he listed “all the Bahá'í books, tablets [*alváḥ*] and texts” as one of the categories of publications with anti-clerical contents, next to the works of Aḥmad Kasraví, historian and social critic, and a number of other intellectuals. He then emphasized that all those listed took a serious position against the colonial governments, “except for the works of Bahá'ís” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, p. 36), a comment that reflected both Ál-i-Aḥmad's limited knowledge of the texts being discussed as well as the image created by *The Confessions of Dalgurúki* of Bahá'ís as “agents of colonialism”. His negative attitude then extends to the literary style of all the Bahá'í writings and criticizes their “*ta'qíd-i-kalám*” (excessive verbal complexity), which to him represented the “ultimate decline (*naháyat-i-inḥiát*) of the Persian language and literature” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, p. 37). To a reader familiar with both Persian literature in general and the Bahá'í writings in particular, this unfair comment betrays a deep-seated prejudice, one with a strong emotional component that puts a veil over the eyes of the author. He then poses the question of why Iranian intellectuals opposed the clerics. He wonders whether their opposition was caused by the encouragement and “internal persuasion” (*vasvasiy-i-báṭiní*) of the governments of the time, who saw the clergy as their rivals in power. In support of this idea, he provides three examples in a footnote, one of which is the case of Manúchihr Khán Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih, the governor of Isfahan who supported the Báb. He cites 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn Navá'í, the twentieth-century editor of the book *Fitniy-i-Báb* written by the Qájár prince I'tidádu's-Saltānih, who by adding his own annotations turned an already unfriendly account of the history of the Báb into an outright polemic. According to Navá'í, Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih's goal of inviting the ulama for a debate session with the Báb was to dishonor the ulama; if they won the debate, it would be nothing of significance because they had won against a lay individual, and if they lost, it would be their utter humiliation (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, 2:37–38 ft1). Readers recall that in *Gharbzadigí*, Ál-i-Aḥmad had referred to the West's “encouragement of Baháism in the middle of the Qájár period”, without clarifying to what exactly he was referring. It could well be that all he had in mind was Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih's devotion to the Báb in the particular way he had understood it via Navá'í.

Ál-i-Aḥmad distinguished between Bábí and Bahá'í religions or avoided doing so, depending on which was convenient for his arguments. The next instance is one in which he clearly distinguishes between the two. Recalling the Protestant Reformation, Ál-i-Aḥmad questions the necessity of any similar reforms in Shí'í Islam as some had argued. He then mentions the Báb among those attempting such a reform and adds, “he [the Báb] does not know, at all, what he wants”, and then continues with a vitriolic attack on the Bahá'í religion: “But the outcome of his [the Báb's] act in Bahá'ígari (Baháism) is that instead of reform in Shiism [which Ál-i-Aḥmad believes was what the Báb intended], we now face a new manufacturing of religion, investigating the harm of which is beyond the scope of this book” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, 2:40).

Ál-i-Aḥmad extends his critique of the intellectuals to those of the period immediately following the Constitutional Revolution of 1906–1911. He blames the intellectuals who acceded to the change of the political regime [from the Qájárs to the Pahlavís in 1925] and compromised [with the establishment] in the twenty-year period [a reference to the rule and reign of Riḍá Khán and Riḍá Sháh 1921–1941]. They, Ál-i-Aḥmad believes, were responsible for the subsequent enervation (*bíramaqí*) of the intellectuals. With the “silence or participation” of these intellectuals, a number of “games” were deliberately created (*bi ráh andákhtih shud*) aiming to replace or deactivate the “intellectualism and clericalism” (*rawshanfikrí va rawḥáníyyat*) of the early constitutional era. Among the “games” was “the Bahá’í game” (*Bahá’í-bázi*), “which had a longer history” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, 2:152–53). Even though Ál-i-Aḥmad’s tone and language is quite different from *The Confessions of Dalgurúki*, the same conspiratorial thinking is present. In a suspicious and mysterious way, unnamed agents developed “games” — “the Bahá’í game” being an older one among them — in order to undermine the genuine agents of change of Shí’í society.

The most acerbic critique of Bahá’ís appears when Ál-i-Aḥmad discusses the disconnection of the Iranian intellectuals from the majority of the people, and the *pátuqs* (“hubs”) they created to live in. Iranian intellectuals, Ál-i-Aḥmad wrote, could not breathe in the “native environment” (*muḥit-i-búmi*), therefore, they created these artificial environments to breathe in, secure and disconnected from people. The first of these *pátuqs* was *Bahá’igari* (“Baha’ism”). In Ál-i-Aḥmad’s narrative, unlike the original Bábís and Azalís — who were the forerunners and founders of this way, had armed uprisings against the state, and were the first intellectuals immediately prior to constitutionalism — the Bahá’ís, who sidelined the two<sup>12</sup>, “forgot opposing the state and contended themselves with opposing the clerical system, imagining it was only the clerics who halt the progress of the country, oblivious to the fact that there were also colonialism, and governments that depended on it, that contribute to financial instability and backhandedness [of the country]”. He then continued with a barrage of more accusations against Bahá’ís along with an astonishing yet tacit justification of their persecution: Disconnected from people, they have become a closed-door sect. Suffering from intellectual stagnation (*tahajjur-i-fikrí*), they make nonsense claims (like that all Americans are Bahá’ís) indicative of their mental illness. They imitate other religions in the fundamentals and practical rulings of religion. They are Westoxified in their behavior<sup>13</sup>. They support the tyranny of the current government. “After years of repression (*ikhhtináq*) and destruction of the temple and other stories”<sup>14</sup> he adds, “following the internationalization of oil<sup>15</sup>, because our governments suppress religion, and need more Westoxication, Bahá’ís have now gained some grounds to flourish, and like any other *parvenu* minority have so lost themselves that I worry for them”<sup>16</sup>. Then, he reminds the reader of the ban issued by the clerics on the consumption of Pepsi, and on the use of television because their license holder was a Bahá’í<sup>17</sup>, and recounts an event in the south of Iran in which on the night of the 15th of *Sha’bán* (believed to be the anniversary of the birth of the Twelfth Shí’a Imám, hence a time of heightened Shí’í sensibilities), due to a problem in the valves of a dam, the electricity of a number of cities was cut off. Soon a rumor went around that the administrators of the dam were Bahá’ís. At the end, he asks readers [given all he has just said], “Do you not believe that in this way [i.e., Bahá’ís continuing being who they are], grounds will be prepared for more grudges?” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, pp. 241–44). The last question makes his intent in interspersing the accusations he levels against Bahá’ís with references to people persecuting them and being suspicious of them clear. He is tacitly justifying their persecution: By aligning themselves with the modernizing efforts of the government, which he simply dismisses as Westoxication, Bahá’ís deservedly made themselves a target for the wrath of the masses — the masses who were engaged in a just struggle against the West and its puppet regime. Ál-i-Aḥmad blames Bahá’ís for inviting attack and persecution<sup>18</sup>.

### 3. 'Alí Shari'atí (1933–1977)

'Alí Shari'atí has been regarded as “the ideologue”, “the ideologist”, “the architect”, and the “Voltaire” of the 1979 Iranian Revolution (Abrahamian 1982a, p. 24; Sachedina 1983, p. 191; Richard 2006, p. 200; Abedi 1986, p. 229; Farhang 1979, p. 31), “Iran’s most celebrated religious intellectual of the 1960s and the 1970s” (Boroujerdi 1996, p. 105), and “the Islamic ideologue par excellence”, who managed “to capture the revolutionary imagination of an entire generation”, and the one who extended the implications of what Ál-i Aḥmad had suggested beyond his expectations and abilities (Dabashi [2006] 2008, pp. 102–3). Ál-i Aḥmad articulated the dilemma of Iranian intellectuals as *gharbzadigí*, and Shari'atí offered a solution to that dilemma; *bázgashṭ bi khishṭan* (return to the self) (Boroujerdi 1996, p. 106), which for him meant adopting Shí'ism as a political ideology<sup>19</sup>.

'Alí Shari'atí came from a family with a professional religious background. His father, Muḥammad-Taqí Shari'atí (1907–1987) completed Shí'í seminary studies in Mashhad but chose not to don the traditional clerical garb. Instead, he engaged in teaching activities aimed at protecting the youth in Mashhad from the influence of both the Tudeh Party and Aḥmad Kasraví (d. 1946), who developed the trend of anti-Shí'í Iranian nationalism. He founded the Kánún-i Nashr-i-Ḥaqáyiḳ-i-Islámí (The Center for the Propagation of Islamic Truths) in 1947 in Mashhad, wherein he presented a “rational and modern religious discourse” (Rahnema 1998, pp. 11–17). Like Maḥmúd Ḥalabí (d. 1998), who later founded the anti-Bahá'í organization Hujjatíyyih, Shari'atí, the father, occasionally confronted Bahá'í teachers and engaged in debates with them in religious gatherings in Mashhad (Aḥmadzádiḥ 1999, p. 28). The young Shari'atí frequented his father's Center.

Having finished his education up to a Bachelor degree in Persian language and literature in Mashhad, 'Alí Shari'atí moved to Paris thanks to a state scholarship. He majored in History of Medieval Islam and earned a doctorate degree (doctorat d'université) from the University of Paris (Sorbonne) in 1963 (Matíní 1993, pp. 842, 846–47; Saffari 2017, p. 6)<sup>20</sup>. As a student in Paris in the revolutionary fervor of 1960s, he was influenced by the ideas of several contemporary Western intellectuals and Third World nationalist thinkers such as Aimé Césaire (d. 2008) and Frantz Fanon (d. 1961), whose *Les damnés de la terre* (The Wretched of the Earth) he translated into Persian. He was fascinated by their works on colonialism. In the anti-imperialist circles of 1960s Paris, and particularly in contact with the National Algerian Liberation Front and Fanon, Shari'atí developed a keen interest in reconciling a form of socialist anti-imperialism with Islam (ari'atí 2004, p. 109; Kraiss 2020, pp. 216–17), and wished to be a politico-religious thinker in the context of Third World liberation struggles (Richard 2006, p. 201). He believed that Islam had to undergo a transformation process from a culture to an ideology—an ideology that could produce warriors and intellectuals (Boroujerdi 1996, p. 111). He returned to Iran in 1965 and his reputation as a lecturer spread rapidly. He actively preached in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the Ḥusayníyyih Irshád, a progressive Islamic institution and lecture hall founded in 1964. He was an agile and mesmerizing orator. His lectures were recorded and circulated by mimeograph (Richard 2006, p. 201). Developing Shí'í Islám as a political ideology, he superimposed upon an underlying Marxist premise Qur'anic and other canonical precepts, thereby creating an ideological hybrid (Dabashi [2006] 2008, p. 137). He was imprisoned several times because of his political activities. In May 1977, he left Iran for London, where he died of a heart attack a month later (Boroujerdi 1996, p. 105; Rahnema 1998, pp. 330–35, pp. 363–68).

Shari'atí made a number of references—all negative—to the Bábí and Bahá'í religions in his works, even though he did not join the anti-Bahá'í organization when he was encouraged to do so. On one occasion, during the heyday of his lectures at the Irshád lecture hall, he was approached by a number of Hujjatíyyih sympathizers who told him, “Given

your level of knowledge and eloquence, you are responsible to the Imám of the Age (i.e., the Twelfth Imám of Shí'í Islam) to do something in this regard [about the Bahá'ís]". These Hujjatíyyih sympathizers urged him to join the Hujjatíyyih Society. Sharí'atí is said to have responded that, rather than expending energy on proving what is wrong with Bahá'ís, he would instead "do his best to demonstrate the authentic face of Islam. Once this authentic face of Islam was clarified, both Baháism (Bahá'íyyat) and Marxism would collapse and end once and for all" (Lámi'í 2007, pp. 174–75). Sharí'atí's statement reveals that the Others against whom he was defining his political Islam were Bahá'ís and Marxists. In the process of forging his version of political Shiism, he made vitriolic remarks in a sarcastic manner about Bahá'ís.

### *Má va Iqbál*

In a long talk delivered during a commemorative conference on the Indian Muslim philosopher and poet Muḥammad Iqbál Láhúrí (d. 1938), held in Tehran on 24 April 1970 (4 Urdíbihisht 1349), he began by referring to Iqbál's "*athar-i-buzurg*" ("great work"), *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (arí'atí 2004, p. 30), identified him as a "reformer" (*muṣliḥ*) of Islam on par with Siyyid Jamálu'd-Dín Afghání (d. 1897), and the fruit of the seeds of religio-political awakening sown by him in the soil of the *ummah* barren for centuries (arí'atí 2004, pp. 30, 53–54). He praises Iqbál's "political awareness" and anti-colonial stance, for having gone to Europe, being recognized there as a philosopher, and never "submitting" (*taslím*) to Europe, and instead "conquering" (*taskhír*) it, and for having returned from Europe to "us", with his gifts of reformed Islam (arí'atí 2004, pp. 46–47, 50). The collective identity of Sharí'atí, his "us", is not Iranian; it is Muslim. He shares this identity with the Indian Iqbál. His concern is the East and the Islamic *ummah* (arí'atí 2004, p. 33). He then delves into a discussion of the power of Islam in fostering sociopolitical change, its success in Africa in mobilizing people against colonialism, and the necessity of an Islamic "rebirth" or renaissance (arí'atí 2004, pp. 62–72).

In the next section (perhaps following a break in his lecture if the published text is nothing but the transcript of the lecture), he begins with an indirect, sarcastic, and mocking way to refer to the Bábí and Bahá'í religions with layers of oblique references. In the nineteenth century, he begins the parody, "eleven Imáms of the Age appeared, 'all contemporary!'" One of them, he adds, was a French "trickster" (*huqqihbáz*) who forged a religion using dry milk powder that had just been invented in Europe. He travelled to Africa and told people that since they were hungry, God sent him with this miracle to them; "bring me water, and I will change it to milk", and so they did. People believed in him and his religion, then, "like his contemporary in Iran who announced, 'I am the Báb, the awaited Mahdí, prophet, God Himself in human garb, and that 'Nuḩṩiy-i-Úlá' [Primal Point] will appear later, and I am his harbinger; when I leave, he will come', he [i.e., the dry milk prophet] gave the glad tidings of the next revelation, and then General Guillaume came—the conqueror of Africa!" To make sure his allusions are not lost to the reader, Sharí'atí continues: "They [the Africans] accepted the general as the prophet who was the promised one of the dry milk guy, and now there are many songs praising the Hájj Qayyúm as the savior. One of my own African friends from Mauritania is now writing his dissertation on this religious movement". In a footnote on "Hájj Qayyúm", he explains that it is Guillaume who becomes the Qayyúm, from the same [Arabic] root of *qiyám* and *Qá'im* (arí'atí 2004, pp. 88–90). To anyone familiar with the Bábí and Bahá'í religions, Sharí'atí's oblique references are clear. He is referring to the Bahá'í belief that Siyyid 'Alí Muḥammad-i-Shírází, the Báb (1819–1850), was the forerunner of Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí Núrí, Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet-founder of the Bahá'í religion, whose advent, according to Bahá'ís, the Báb had promised. For Bahá'ís, the Báb was the *Qá'im*, i.e., the promised one of Twelver Shiism,

and Bahá'u'lláh, the Qayyúm (self-subsisting). By Guillaume, *Shari'atí* means General Augustin Léon Guillaume (30 July 1895–9 March 1983), who served as the Resident-General in French Morocco, from August 1951 to May 1954.<sup>21</sup> *Shari'atí's* reference to Africans singing praises of the characters in his parody is likely his reaction to the fact that there were (and there are) Bahá'ís in that continent, too. The last point in the parody, *Shari'atí's* friend writing a dissertation on the dry milk religion, will be deciphered by a passage in his other work, *Bázgasht* (see below). The covert and disguised aggression—born perhaps out of hatred—in this parody aside, *Shari'atí* has adopted this indirect sarcastic and mockery style to repeat almost the same narrative created by the forged *Confessions of Dalgurúki* without looking coarse and unrefined—he was an intellectual and academic after all! The message is the same: The Bábí and Bahá'í religions were created by Europeans who had colonial plans for Iran and the rest of the world. This passage from *Shari'atí* exemplifies what Abbas Amanat refers to as “embarrassing conspiratorial obsessions” of Iranian intellectuals with the Bahá'í religion (Amanat 2009b, p. 50).

Following the above parody, he writes, “such was yesterday’s Africa, colonialism entered like a cat, comfortably and without a noise, ...but today Africa’s thinkers and leaders have realized what happened”, and he quotes the words of Jomo Kenyatta (d. 1978), the Kenyan anti-colonial activist<sup>22</sup>: “When the Europeans came, we had land, they had the Gospel; now, they have land, we the Gospel” (arí’atí 2004, p. 90). Clearly, if subtly, *Shari'atí* applies Kenyatta’s words about the well-known historical phenomenon of the link between European colonization and Christian missionary activities to his imaginary, conspiratorial, *the Confessions of Dalgurúki* like genealogy of the Bahá'í religion. Later, he mentions “the cultural plans of colonialism in the nineteenth century”, and writes several pages on revolutionary Islam, how it is different from other religions that are “*takhdíri*” (narcotizing), and how in Africa it was only the Muslims who fought against the colonialist powers (arí’atí 2004, pp. 90–96). Then, in a manner quite reminiscent of Ál-i-Aḥmad’s critique of Iranian intellectuals, he blamed them for distancing themselves from true Islam, imitating their European counterparts in averting religion (arí’atí 2004, pp. 97–99). The most hidden face of Western colonialism, he writes, is cultural and intellectual imperialism, which targets thoughts, “changes our religious understanding”, and prepares the way for its own influence. The real intellectual is the one who rejects Western values and returns to his own *iṣálahá* (authenticities) and cultural values. Europe has not come only to pillage our natural resources, but also to distort our “traditional roots, religion, and history” (arí’atí 2004, pp. 102, 107, 108). He then moves on to make a contrast between what European intellectuals see in their collective cultural past, and what “our society” experienced. “Exactly during the same years”, *Shari'atí* laments, “of Hegel, Nietzsche, ... Marx, *The Capital*, the philosophy of history, Socialism, revolutionary ideologies, and workers’ movements in Europe”, in Iran, “there emerged the *Shaykhí* movement, Mírzá [sic]’Alí-Muḥammad Báb, Mírzá Ḥusayn ‘Alí Bahá, the Bábí uprising, the Kitáb-i-Bayán, the tidings of a revelation, the fake Imám of the Age, and the prophet-game (*payghambar-bázi*)”. He then avers that the history of our society went in the reverse direction; while Europeans went from the Middle Ages to the golden age of civilization, we went from our golden age to the depth of the dark abyss and deadly suffocating Middle Ages (arí’atí 2004, pp. 118–19). The elements that *Shari'atí* listed first as signs of deterioration and negligence in the recent past of Iranian intellectual history were all germane to the Bahá'í Faith and its history, and the reference in the latter part of his statement to “fake” and “game” summarized his overall judgment about it. Again, in his usual way of saying and not saying something, after those remarks about Europe’s insidious ways of distorting the culture of the colonized, he is implying that while the Europeans were progressing in every aspect, they forged the Bábí

and Bahá'í religions to defile our culture. It is difficult to see any difference between this and the thought of *The Confessions of Dalgurúki*.

Ironically, Iqbal Láhúrí, in whose honor Shari'atí was speaking, in his seminal work *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* having highlighted the milestones in Iranian religio-philosophical thought, declared toward the end, "But all the various lines of Persian thought once more find a synthesis in that great religious movement of Modern Persia—Babism or Bahaism" (Iqbal 1908, p. 143). Needless to say, Shari'atí completely disregarded such remarks of the Indian philosopher in his eulogy of him.

In the rest of the text, Shari'atí continues the discourse of Islam as a powerful anti-colonial force, rejects peaceful reformist Islam, tacitly refers to Siyyid Qutb's *Ma'álim fi't-Tariq* (*Milestones*), without mentioning the author's name, and supports Aḥmad Fardíd's notion of *gharbzadigi*, or the *yúnánima'ábi* (Hellenization) of Islamic philosophy, again not stating his name (ar'atí 2004, pp. 248, 250)—writing in allusions seems to be part of his style.

### *Bázgasht*

Shari'atí's other references to the Bábí and Bahá'í religions appear in the book titled *Bázgasht* ["Return", short for *Return to the Self*] (ar'atí 1979). This book contains two parts; one (pages 1–42), titled, "*Bázgasht bi Khíshtan*" (Return to the Self), is the text of an invited lecture delivered at the university of Jundíshápúr in the southern city of Ahváz, in March 1971/Farvardin 1350, and the other, "*Bázgasht bi Kudám Khísh?*" (Return to Which Self?), is a long text he wrote later. Those references that are the focus of this article appear in the second part of the book, but a summary of the first part is necessary to provide a window into some of the major elements of his thought.

Following an introduction, he tells his audience that the "fundamental" topic of his talk is that "return to the self", which has been suggested by intellectuals in Africa, Latin America, and Iran as the way to struggle against colonialism. Intellectuals have a social responsibility toward their society in this regard. Citing a number of Third World intellectuals like Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, he states that the "self" to which people in each society must turn differs based on their history and culture. For our society, the "self" to return to is Islam, not as a tradition or heritage, but as an ideology. Since the eighteenth century, the West has tried to impose its civilization and culture as the only civilization and culture. The fact, however, is that there was a time [during the Middle Ages] when the only place in the West where there was a civilization was Spain which had gained it from [Islamic] North Africa. The West has spoken differently to Africans as compared to us Iranian Muslims. To dominate Africans, Westerners have told them they are incapable of building a civilization. Regarding us, they even praised our culture—as evidenced, for example, in the works of Western orientalist on certain texts in Sufism<sup>23</sup>—but they subjected it to a grotesque metamorphosis (*maskh kardand*). As a result, Iranian intellectuals become *farangímaáb* (Europeanized, Europ-oriented); they know Beckett<sup>24</sup>, but not Abúdhār Ghaffárí (ar'atí 1979, pp. 12–31). He then rejects the idea of *úmánízm* (Humanism) as trying to join two opposing poles; as long as the colonizer sees himself as "human" (*insán*) and us as "natives" (*búmi*), Humanism is a lie "aimed at negating our cultural character" in favor of the colonizers, and like "national brotherhood", it is of those fake relations that want to connect two enemies in favor of the powerful and to the detriment of the weak. Humanism, he thought, would be impossible in a world divided between the colonizer and the colonized (ar'atí 1979, pp. 34–35). What Iranians need, he asserts, was a return to Islam as an "enlightening" and "protesting" ideology, and it is the intellectuals who awaken the society through the power of religion (ar'atí 1979, pp. 40–41).

He begins the second part of the book with this statement: "The fate of thoughts amongst us is pitiful". He goes on to describe the long-lived conflict between two ap-

proaches, *ummulízm*, a term that can be translated as traditional, religious populism, and *fukulízm*, superficial Westernized modernism. He, of course, rejects both sides (arí'atí 1979, pp. 43–44). He then repeats the same juxtaposition between the intellectual dynamism of nineteenth century Europe and its opposite in Islamic societies wherein several messianic figures appeared during the same time. The passage is almost the same as the one discussed above from *Má va Iqbál*.

Elsewhere in the second section of the book, he recounts that at some point, apparently while he was in Paris to begin his doctoral studies, the famous Iranian writer and translator Muḥammad 'Alí Jamálzádiḥ (d. 1997) advised him that given his knowledge of Islam and interest in scholarship, he should choose a research topic that would bring him both fame and fortune, a topic that would have *kharídár va pushtibán* (buyer and supporter), meaning that there were sponsors and a market for the work. Jamálzádiḥ then clarified what kind of work he had in mind: “In the national library of Paris, on the East side, there are numerous manuscripts in Arabic and Persian, precious documents, from Mírzá [sic] 'Alí Muḥammad Báb, Mírzá Yaḥyá Şubḥ-i-Azal and Mírzá Ḥusayn 'Alí Bahá and other prominent figures of Bábism and Baháism ... if you manage to gather these documents, particularly those pertaining to the Báb, and edit, compare various copies, provide explanation or even translate part of all of them into French, then you both can present the result as your doctoral dissertation...and having completed a heavy research in the history and culture of Iran in recent times, your work would be appreciated beyond imagination by the orientalist of the world, and Iranian researchers and scholars” (arí'atí 1979, pp. 254–55). By recounting this memory, Şharí'atí seems to be tacitly implying European support for Bahá'ís. His reference in the parody cited above to an African friend writing a thesis on the religion born by quackery seems to have originated in this experience.

#### 4. Iḥsán Ṭabarí (1917–1989)

Iḥsán Ṭabarí was one of the major figures and leading theoreticians of Iran's communist Tudeh (lit. “masses”) Party. Born to a prominent landed family in Mazandaran, he studied in Britain and at Tehran University (Abrahamian 1982b, p. 296). As a law student, he was one of fifty-three men who were arrested in May 1937 in Tehran on the account of having formed a secret *ishtirákí* (collectivist—a term used for socialism as well as communism) organization. As a junior member of the group, he was sentenced to three years imprisonment. Five of the detainees were soon released, yet the group became famous as “the Fifty-Three”, and a few years later, formed the nucleus of the Tudeh Party (Abrahamian 1982b, pp. 154–55, 160, 296). Founded shortly after Reza Shah's 1941 abdication, in the beginning and for most of the 1940s, the party consisted of various leftist and democratic tendencies. Later, it was turned into a communist party, with almost complete loyalty to Moscow (Katouzian 2009, p. 234; Amanat 2017, p. 509). In early 1949, following an unsuccessful assassination attempt carried out against Muḥammad Riḍá Sháh by a presumed Tudeh sympathizer, the Tudeh Party was declared illegal (Amanat 2017, p. 523)<sup>25</sup>. Over two hundred of its leaders and organizers were arrested. Although a member of the nineteen-man Central Committee, Ṭabarí managed to evade arrest in February 1949 and was condemned to death in absentia (Abrahamian 1982b, pp. 317–18). He fled to Russia and lived in Moscow from 1950 to 1957 and then moved to Leipzig in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) until the spring of 1979, when he returned to Iran.

*Barkhí Barrasíhá darbáriy-i-Junbishháy-i-Ijtimá'í dar Írán*

Ṭabarí, whom Abbas Amanat describes as “a historian of some weight” (Amanat 2017, p. 805), authored a series of books analyzing Iran's socio-historical developments through a Marxist perspective. The first of these series was published in 1968/1347, under the title

*Barkhí Barrasíhá darbáry-i-Junbishháy-i-Ijtimá'í dar Írán*<sup>26</sup>. While the book's publisher and place of publication are unknown, given the circumstances, the prevalence of the clandestine distribution of outlawed publications and the weight that Ṭabarí had as a leftist intellectual, it can be safely assumed that his book was widely read by the intellectuals at the time. In the preface to the book, he explains that it contains a collection of historical-philosophical explorations of a selection of worldviews and social movements in Iran from pre-Islamic to post-Islamic times. He asserts that his discussions of worldviews and movements reflect his support for some and rejection of others, and clearly asserts his dichotomous vision: “two threads of black vs. white; the war between God (*Yazdán*) and Ahriman; thinking vs. worship; knowledge vs. ignorance, Materialism vs. Idealism, reaction vs. revolution and free thinking vs. prejudice pass through all of these explorations” (Ṭabarí 1968, pp. 10–11). His discussion of Islám and Shí'ism begin with Marx's reference to the change brought by Islám as “Islamic revolution”, and Engels's reference to “Muḥammad's religious revolution”. His own interpretation is that Islam represented the ideological change from a “tribal” to a “centralized feudal system” (Ṭabarí 1968, pp. 134–35). He then follows with a rather extensive examination of Islam and Shí'ism based both on academic sources, including those written by Islamicists from the USSR, and primary sources (Ṭabarí 1968, pp. 134–54). He devotes a full chapter to “The Movement of the Bábís” (*Junbish-i-Bábíyán*) (Ṭabarí 1968, pp. 384–93). He begins the chapter by describing the Bábí “movement” as sharing “many characteristics of the medieval movements”, locating it “at the borderline between traditional feudal society and its rapid dissolution and collapse—itsself contributing to the collapse” (Ṭabarí 1968, pp. 384–85)<sup>27</sup>. He puts the Bábí movement alongside the Sepoy Rebellion in India (1857) and Taiping Movement in China (1850–1864) as parts of a chain of international revolutions of the nineteenth century. He then asserts that the Bábí movement no doubt influenced the later governmental reforms, including those of Amír Kabír, and provided the grounds for the constitutional revolution. He is quick, though, to distinguish the Bábí movement from “Baháism” (Bahá'ígari), which he asserts, “tries to use the revolutionary traditions of the Bábís for its own propaganda”, and “in which we are dealing with a calculated manufacturing of religion and not a revolutionary current” (Ṭabarí 1968, p. 385). He further comments on the “conservatism” of Bahá'ís as opposed to the revolutionary spirit of the Bábís (Ṭabarí 1968, p. 388, fn1), which is the stance taken by his main source “contemporary Iranologist, Professor Ivanov's *Barrasí-i-Tárikh-i-Írán*” (Ṭabarí 1968, p. 390)<sup>28</sup>. He also engages with the history of the division of the followers of the Báb into two branches, one following Bahá'u'lláh and the other, his rival brother Mírzá Yaḥyá, depicting the latter as having remained “faithful” to the Báb (Ṭabarí 1968, p. 388, ft 1, pp. 392–93)<sup>29</sup>. He ends his rather long discussion of the Bábí movement as a “bright chapter” in the history of heroic uprisings in Iran with another dark remark regarding the Bahá'í Faith; “it is a religious sect whose heads are closely related to the imperialist circles” (Ṭabarí 1968, p. 393)<sup>30</sup>. He does not provide any explanations or evidence for the bold statement he makes about the “heads” of the Bahá'í community being in clandestine relationship with imperialists. Obviously, the dominant theme here is clandestine superpower dependency and relations—the master narrative created by *The Confessions of Dalgurúki*.

In his analysis of the appeal of the Báb's movement to Marxist historians as just “part of an ongoing class struggle in Iran's ‘feudal’ society”, without paying attention to its “non socioeconomic dimensions”, and “doctrinal renewal”, Abbas Amanat makes an astute observation. “One outcome of this mode of thinking”, he writes, “is a sense of distrust toward Baha'is for their doctrinal ‘deviation,’ as they label it” (Amanat 2005, p. xv). Amanat's assessment and analysis aligns closely with Ṭabarí's orientation toward the Bahá'í religion<sup>31</sup>, even though he believes that Ṭabarí offered a more nuanced reading of the Bábís (Amanat 2005, p. xv). As we saw, praising the Bábí movement, Ṭabarí saw in the Bahá'í Faith a “deviation”

from the Báb's mission, and a "calculated manufacturing of religion"<sup>32</sup>, but he certainly went beyond that and adopted the conspiratory theories.

#### *Jámi'iy-i-Írán dar Dawrán-i-Riḍá Sháh*

Although the focus of this article is the 1960s, to provide the reader with a more comprehensive view of Ṭabarí's anti-Bahá'í attitudes, we need at least a look at the highlights of what he published in 1977/1356, when a congruence between secular and Islamic/Islamist groups against the government occurred. It was a survey of the history of Iran during the reign of Riḍá Sháh (1926–1941). In a section dealing with "Religious and mystical currents", he devoted a subsection to "Bahá'ígari [Bahaism] and Its Role" (Ṭabarí 1977, pp. 115–19). He wrote that based on the principle of the universal brotherhood of humankind, Bahá'ís inevitably are against social resistance, opposing the state, class struggle, uprising and revolution, and war (whether offensive or defensive). He added that the idea of universal peace gives Bahá'ís a hue of cosmopolitanism and passive pacifism, and concluded, "That is why some consider Bahaism to be the ideology of the bourgeoisie comprador class for which compromising with the state of the time, and the imperialists is the condition for their profit making" (Ṭabarí 1977, p. 117). This accords with Amanat's words on Iranian Marxists' view of Bahá'ís: "taking their lead from Ivanov, they view the Baha'is as the 'bourgeoisie comprador' who collaborate with the feudal state to serve Western imperialism against the interests of the masses" (Amanat 2005, p. xv). Also, Ṭabarí's reference to Bahá'í "cosmopolitanism" supports Chehabí's analysis of causes of secular anti-Bahaism. But the story does not end here. Soon, Ṭabarí continues with the familiar conspiratorial thinking and the notion of foreign dependency albeit limiting it to the Bahá'í leadership. He criticizes 'Abdu'l-Bahá's knighthood<sup>33</sup>, and writes of the rumors going around about the "relation between Bahá'í Assemblies with the imperialism of England and America", along with a list of factors feeding into the rumor: "the cosmopolitanism of Bahá'ís, their anti-revolutionary beliefs and their distance from the dominant religion of our country, the existence of their centers in America and Europe, and the semi-clandestine nature of their work, and their internal coherence". He then emphasizes, "there is no doubt" about the existence of relationships between "the main Bahá'í centers" and "imperialist centers". His next assertion is even more reminiscent of *The Confessions of Dalgurúki*: "one can guess that imperialist intelligence organizations such as the CIA, and the Intelligence Service use Bahá'í organizations towards their own goals". To his credit, one must say, Ṭabarí exempts every single Bahá'í from the suspicion of being a foreign agent and holds that they must be left free as long as they just act in accordance with their beliefs. However, he was quick to then declare—in a tone reflective of the revolutionary climate of the era, and an awareness of the persecution of Bahá'ís which had already begun<sup>34</sup>—that "no Iranian—Bahá'í or Muslim—should be permitted to betray his homeland in the interest of imperialism, and such a betrayal must not go unanswered" (Ṭabarí 1977, p. 118).

#### *Ávarandigán-i-Andíshiy-i-Khaṭá*

Ṭabarí's next and last reference to the Bahá'í religion was in the book he could not complete, as he died when writing it, but sections of it that he had already completed were published as a book posthumously. In 1983/1362, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran arrested and imprisoned Ṭabarí as one of the theoreticians of the Tudeh party. While in prison, he recanted his belief in Marxism. His subsequent publications aimed to please the Islamic Republic. One chapter of that last book was a rebuttal of Ahmad Kasraví (d. 1946), a scholar and journalist who was despised by the Islamic government because of his criticism of Shí'ism and the founding of his own quasi religion, called "Pákdíní" (pure faith)<sup>35</sup>. Asking the question whether Kasraví had been "inspired by foreigners" in his manufacturing of religion, he added that there were grounds for such a question. Then

to prove the legitimacy of wondering about foreign involvement, he listed the evidence: Edward Browne's publication of a Bábí book, Count de Gobineau's sympathy for the Bábís, the support of the Russian Embassy of "Mírzá Husayn 'Alí Bahá'", the knighting of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by the British government, America's direct support of the Bahá'ís of Iran, and "much more" (Ṭabarí 1999, pp. 50–51)—*The Confessions of Dalgurúki* volume two! All these, while the Bahá'ís of Iran were undergoing fierce persecution based on the same accusations.

## 5. Conclusions

The three influential Iranian intellectuals of the 1960s, Jalál Ál-i-Aḥmad, 'Alí Sharí'atí, and Iḥsán Ṭabarí, displayed hostile anti-Bahá'í attitudes in their speeches and writings. While it is true that various factors such as the cosmopolitanism of Bahá'ís and their non-involvement in partisan political affairs played a role in the attitude of these thinkers, the biggest element of their anti-Bahá'í attitude was their idea that Bahá'ís have established a clandestine relationship with foreign powers, and that their religion was manufactured by those powers. In adopting this idea, these figures, counter to their self-awareness as committed intellectuals—agents of change in society—were passively adopting and internalizing a widespread myth.

A master narrative is created once a myth, a story, is widely shared over time and repeated and becomes embedded in a culture. By the 1960s, *The Confessions of Dalgurúki*, a fiction masqueraded as history, had been published and republished so many times in Iran that its story had turned into a master narrative. These forged memoirs told the story of a nineteenth-century Russian ambassador in Iran who had created the Bábí and Bahá'í religions in order to divide the Muslim nation of Iran. This paper demonstrates that the underlying assumptions of all three intellectuals were shaped by the core message of *The Confessions*: The Bahá'í religion is fake, created and supported by foreigners to cause schism and disunity, and to weaken Iranian society. Ál-e Aḥmad considered the "Bahá'í game" to be what unidentified agents had deliberately created to weaken genuine intellectuals and the Shí'í clerics. Sharí'atí, hiding behind parody and ridicule, produced his own mini-*Confessions*—those of Guillaume! To his credit, Ṭabarí showed some understanding of the pivotal role that the Bahá'í principle of the oneness of humankind plays in shaping the social choices Bahá'ís make, even though he disagreed with them. However, for the theoretician of the Tudeh Party, there was "no doubt" about the clandestine relationship between the heads of the Bahá'í religion and imperialist circles. Such was the core of these intellectuals' orientation toward the Bahá'í religion that any other factors cited as the cause of their anti-Bahá'ism were secondary to this core idea and, for the most part, branched off from it.

By adopting this master narrative, these leading intellectuals further propagated and strengthened it. The notion of "commitment" that they advocated went no further than opposing the government. Their attitude toward a group of their compatriots, the Bahá'ís of Iran, was not different from the masses that had no such advocacy. In the case of Ál-i-Aḥmad and later of Ṭabarí, even the persecution of Bahá'ís was justified. For Ál-i-Aḥmad and Ṭabarí, it was the Bahá'ís who, by virtue of their foreign connection and behaviors resulting from it, attracted people's hostility and aggression.

The 1970s were the heyday of the influence of both Ál-i-Aḥmad and Sharí'atí, particularly the latter. The respect that Iranian youth in the 1970s had for them, particularly Sharí'atí, cast them as role models in high schools and universities alike. Ṭabarí too, despite living outside of Iran, was influential among groups of Marxists who obtained his writings clandestinely. The attitudes of these intellectuals, next to those of the Shí'í clerics, shaped the Iranian psyche of the decade. It was no wonder, then, that the years prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution witnessed an escalation in the persecution of Bahá'ís in various

parts of Iran, which in turn foreshadowed the decade of far more intense persecution that followed the Revolution. Decades of shared experience, however, have led to the emergence, in the twenty-first century, of genuinely “committed” Iranian intellectuals who not only reject all conspiratorial thinking about the origins of the Bahá’í religion and the lives of Bahá’ís, but also defend their rights as cherished compatriots.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For the first historiographical study of *The Confessions of Dalgurúki*, see Tavakoli-Targhi (2001, 2008). For a discussion of *The Confessions* within the context of conspiracy theories, see Ashraf (1995, 1997) and Chehabi (2009). For an extensive study of *The Confessions*, see Yazdani (2011, 2009b). See also, (Momen 1995).
- <sup>2</sup> Of Ál-i-Aḥmad’s intellectual stature in Iran of the late 1960s and 1970s, suffice it to note that a renowned historian of Iran writes, he “was regarded virtually as infallible until after the revolution” (Katouzian 2009, p. 293).
- <sup>3</sup> For the various renderings of the term “gharbzadigí” into English, see Boroujerdi (1996, p. 66). For the history of the writing and publications of this monograph, see Ál-i-Aḥmad’s own account in his introduction to the revised second edition, titled “*Píshdarámad*” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 2006, pp. 9–11). See also Dabashi (2021, pp. 140–50); Boroujerdi (1996, pp. 66–67); cf. Hendelman-Baavur (2015, p. 258). On the widespread influence of the notion of gharbzadigí, Katouzian observes, “it became the catchword of almost every man and woman, young and old, rich and poor, Islamist and Marxist-Leninist, etc., for anything and anyone they disliked. The author became ‘Jalal’ to everyone, the prophet who put down every ill of the Iranian society to the machinations of the West...” (Katouzian 2025, p. 223).
- <sup>4</sup> It was beyond the scope of this discussion to provide a critical assessment of *Gharbzadigí*, suffice it to say that Abbas Amanat counts it “among the most damaging Persian texts produced in the twentieth century” in terms of the influence of its “ideologically colored assertions” and the author’s “overall contemptuous view of Iran’s political legacy” on generations of “eager but naïve readers” (Amanat 2017, p. 693). Katouzian—himself an old friend of Ál-i-Aḥmad—offers a critique of *Gharbzadigí*, which he had shared with the author in person as early as 1962. His “strongest criticism” concerns Ál-i-Aḥmad’s “blatant resort to, and even invention of new conspiracy theories” (Katouzian 2025, pp. 223–24).
- <sup>5</sup> On the Nuḡṭavís, and Ḥurúfís, see Momen (1985, pp. 100–11); Amanat (2009a, pp. 73–90; 1989, pp. 13–14, 144–45). On the Bâtínís, see Momen (1985, p. 55); Amanat (1989, pp. 9, 12–14).
- <sup>6</sup> Interestingly, the entry on “*Gharbzadigí*” in *Dá’iratu’l-Ma’árif-i-Tashayyu’* [the Encyclopedia of Shí’ism], quoting this passage, contains additional sentences within parentheses that are not found in either the first or the second editions of the text of *Gharbzadigí* itself. One of these two sentences refers to the Bahá’ís being “fed and supported by the British”, and the other follows the Most Great Name, “of which the prayer-writers claim to be fully aware” (Sajjádí 2007, p. 57). In a personal email communication with this author, Sajjádí admitted that his encyclopedia entry has been a “*bardasht-i-ázád*” (free adaptation) of Ál-i-Aḥmad’s work, although in fact he had added words and meanings that are not in the text.
- <sup>7</sup> For Ál-i-Aḥmad’s full description of a *gharbzadih* (Westoxicated) individual, see Ál-i-Aḥmad (2006, pp. 120–30).
- <sup>8</sup> This footnote in the first edition of the book lacks the reference to Dr. Húshyár. See Ál-i-Aḥmad (1962, p. 36).
- <sup>9</sup> Chehabi’s translation (Chehabi 2008, p. 193).
- <sup>10</sup> At one point in the first volume of the book, Ál-i-Aḥmad refers to his meetings with ‘Alí Sharí’atí in Mashhad in the early days of Bahman 1347 (January 1969), some eight months before his own death on 18 Sharívar 1348 (9 September 1969). The first volume of the book was published by Raváq while he was still alive, but the second volume did not get published due to the censorship. Both volumes were published in 1357/1978 by Khwarzamí (see References).
- <sup>11</sup> Interestingly, Ál-i-Aḥmad omitted a few remarks of Khomeini rejecting male teachers teaching female students and the like, because they “smelled of clericality” (*búy-i-akhúnd-bází mídád*), adding, “these are the kind of words that devalue the clerical establishment as the social and religious leader” (Ál-i-Aḥmad 1978a, p. 86).

- 12 Ál-i-Aḥmad's relative positive attitude toward and falsely equating the Azalís with the "founding and forerunner" Bábís, and his adoption of the Azalí narrative of the Bábí history attract attention, but the causes and implications of his orientation were beyond the scope of this article to discuss.
- 13 Ál-i-Aḥmad's complaint about the "Westoxication in the behavior" of Bahá'ís probably had to do with the ways in which the everyday life of Bahá'ís differed from his nativist ideals, be it their cosmopolitan orientation reflected in behaviors such as openness towards foreigners, willingness to learn foreign languages, interactions among men and women, or even mundane things such as their preference to sit on chairs rather than the ground.
- 14 He is referring to the persecution of Bahá'ís over the years, and in particular, the 1955 anti-Bahá'í campaign, in which the dome of the Bahá'í Center in Tihrán was demolished. See Tavakoli-Targhi (2001, pp. 104–10; 2008, pp. 212–20).
- 15 He is sarcastically referring to the failure of the nationalization of oil in 1953 following the CIA-backed coup d'état. On the nationalization and the coup d'état see Katouzian (2009, pp. 245–53); Amanat (2017, pp. 531–58).
- 16 I have borrowed the rendering of *tazah-bi-dawran-rasidah* as *parvenu* from Chehabi (2008, p. 193).
- 17 See the documents on banning Pepsi: <https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/fa/archive/dstwr-ayt-allh-brwjrdy-mbny-br-thrym-ppsy-kwla> (accessed on 5 July 2005) <https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/fa/archive/rwznamh-khrasan-thrym-ppsy-kwla-dr-qm> (accessed on 5 July 2005).
- 18 Interestingly, and in contrast to the anti-Bahá'í positions discussed here, the contemporary Iranian award-winning author Arman Arian, based on a textual analysis of Ál-i-Aḥmad's 1961 novel *Nún va'l-Qalam*, proposes that the "Qalandars" in this work serve as an allegory for Bábís and Bahá'ís—whose teachings Ál-i-Aḥmad, at a certain stage of his life, appears to have secretly regarded as a possible path to salvation. Arian suggests that a combination of factors, including familial and peer pressure, as well as the dangers such a stance would have entailed, led Ál-i-Aḥmad to ultimately put aside any positive attitude toward Bahá'ís. See (Arian 2024).
- 19 Abdol Karim Soroush observes that Shari'atí's goal was to construct a revolutionary form of Islam. To this end, he offered a selective reading of the history of Shí'í Islam in which the path of the Third Imam, Imam Ḥusayn, was generalized and extended to all the Imams. In reality, however, Imám Ḥusayn's conduct was the exception rather than the rule. The other Imáms—with the possible exception of the seventh—were not revolutionaries (Soroush 2008).
- 20 For his doctoral research, he translated, edited, and wrote a commentary on a thirteenth century Persian text *Faḍá'il-i-Balkh* (The Merits of Balkh), a hagiographical/local-history work. Jalál Matiní, a Professor at Mashhad University, also held an administrative position there when Shari'atí was appointed following his return to Iran. Because of his administrative responsibilities, Matiní was well-informed about Shari'atí's academic credentials. He noted that Shari'atí's degree from the University of Paris was not in History but in Hagiology (Matiní 1993, pp. 843, 850). Despite this fact, many authors, and nearly all his advocates, refer to him as a sociologist. See, for example, Dabashi indicating that Shari'atí had studied "sociology and religious history" in Paris (Dabashi [2006] 2008, p. 109). Boroujerdi indicates that because what Shari'atí wrote fell within the framework of religious thought and because his approach to religion was informed by certain schools of thought within sociology, he can be described as a sociologist of religion (Boroujerdi 1996, p. 106). Saffari indicates that when in Paris, Shari'atí audited classes by French sociologist George Gurvitch (Saffari 2017, p. 7).
- 21 See <https://generals.dk/general/Guillaume/Augustin-L%C3%A9on/France.html> (accessed on 5 July 2025).
- 22 Kenyatta became the prime minister (1963–1964), and then the president (1964–1978) of Kenya.
- 23 Shari'atí's discourse here anticipates some of what Edward Said (d. 2003) proposed in his groundbreaking work, *Orientalism* (Said 1978).
- 24 One of the companions of Muḥammad and a supporter of Imám 'Alí.
- 25 According to Katouzian, Núru'd-Dín Kíanúrí, a Tudeh leader, was involved in the assassination plan, but the party as a whole did not have prior knowledge of it (Katouzian 2009, p. 242).
- 26 This book was re-published the next year with a slightly altered title. See Tabarí (1969) in References.
- 27 Nine years after the first publication of this work, another Marxist intellectual used almost the same words to title his monograph containing a deeper Marxist analysis of the Bábí movement. Muḥammad Riḍá Fasháhí (1977), *Vápasín Junbish-i-Qurún-i-Vustá'í dar Dawrán-i-Fi'udál* (Tihrán: Jávidán).
- 28 Other scholars exploring the works of Russian scholars on the Báhá'í Faith, provide similar summaries of the views of Ivanov on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faith; while the Bábí movement is introduced as progressive, the Báhá'í Faith is described as reactionary, anti-democratic, anti-nationalist, bereft of revolutionary spirit and supportive of capitalism. (See Ra'fatí 1996; Durri 1999).
- 29 Tabarí's source is Browne (1910). Tabarí was under the impression that Edward G. Browne had written the introduction of the book, whereas many years earlier than the time Tabarí wrote his book, Muḥammad Qazvíní confided to a friend, he himself (Qazvíní) was the real author of the Persian introduction to *Kitáb-i-Nuqṭatu'l-Kāf*, published under Browne's name (Qazvíní 1926, pp. 148–58).

- <sup>30</sup> Similar accusations against Bahá'ís appear in the works of other Marxists of the time. For example, see Báqir Mu'míní's statement indicating "religious sects like Bahá'í and Ismá'ílí" all being "branches of the international espionage centers" (Mu'míní 1975, pp. 68, 80).
- <sup>31</sup> Muḥammad Riḍá Fasháhí's account is a prime example of Amanat's assessment of Marxist authors' views of the Bábí movement and the Bahá'í religion. However, the degree of his hostility and blinding hatred toward the Bahá'í religion surpasses that of the most fierce polemics. See Muḥammad Riḍá Fasháhí (1977, pp. 189–203).
- <sup>32</sup> Interestingly, Tabarí, despite his Marxist commitments, appears to have had no objection to the implications of referring to a religion as "manufactured". This characterization implicitly acknowledges the existence of religions that are not "manufactured" but are instead of divine origin. Such a perspective was also seemingly shared by certain other Iranian Marxists. A friend of the present author—originally from a Bahá'í family—recounted that, in his youth, he chose not to register as a Bahá'í and became affiliated with a Marxist group in Iran. During a dispute with a fellow Marxist, he was told that Islam was a "real" religion, whereas the Bahá'í Faith was not.
- <sup>33</sup> On the knighting of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, see Momen (1981, pp. 343–45).
- <sup>34</sup> On the persecution of Bahá'ís in the last two years prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution, see Yazdani (2017, pp. 68–91).
- <sup>35</sup> Kasraví also authored an anti-Bahá'í polemic (Kasraví 1943). This polemical pamphlet is said to have influenced the attitude of generations of Iranians and non-Iranians about Bahá'ís (Amanat 2009b, p. 50). On Kasraví's *pákdíní*, see Amini (2012).

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