

NOTES, COMMUNICATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MISCELLANY.

- I. Two letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi regarding the activities of Mirzā Ahmad Sohrab [Mirzā Ahmad-i Isfahānī, 1891-19] and the "New History Society";

Persian Colony
Haifa, Palestine
30-5-30

Dear Mr. Lunt:

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated May 12th 1930 as well as the enclosed minutes of the N.S.A. He hopes that the changes made in the secretarial work will be for the good, for generally dividing the work between heads brings confusion. After a few years of labour the secretarial work became systematic and organized. Shoghi Effendi hopes that the present form it has taken will be a step forward. Anyhow you have his earnest prayers and best wishes.

Concerning the New History Society which seems to have aroused great admiration ~~among some~~—& great indignation among others, it has really become a problem very difficult to solve. Even though both the Assemblies and individuals have written to Shoghi Effendi & asked his opinion none seems daring enough to make a stand. As long as Ahmed does not want to accept the administration, Shoghi Effendi cannot conscientiously trust him. To accept the Cause without the administration is like to accept the teachings without acknowledging the divine station of Baha'u'llah. To be a Baha'i is to accept the Cause in its entirety. To take exception to one basic principle is to deny the authority & sovereignty of Baha'u'llah, & therefore is to deny the Cause. The administration is the social order of Baha'u'llah. Without it all the principles of the Cause will remain abortive. To take exception to this, therefore, is to take exception to the fabric that Baha'u'llah has prescribed, it is to disobey His law.

In his letters to the Assembly as well as to the individual friends, Shoghi Effendi has made it clear that the friends should in no way associate themselves with the New History Society if these fail to obey the Assemblies. What the friends have been doing is to win over the Assemblies to the New History Society rather than by showing a firm stand make the History Society come to the Assemblies. And this has greatly displeased Shoghi Effendi.

In the May Number of the 'Psychology' a copy of which the History Society sent one there is an article on the Baha'i movement. It definitely states that there are "two sister organizations; one meeting at 119 West 57th Street; the other the New History Society." It is strange that old and experienced Baha'is should acquiesce with such articles that strike at the unity of the Cause, that the Master tried to secure.

It may be that the New History Society has succeeded to attract many souls into the Cause. No one denies that. But there is no reason why such work should not be achieved by the Baha'is. The teachings are Baha'i teachings only polluted. The only thing they have is that they possess on their staff a person who refuses to accept the social order of Baha'u'llah & whose main object is personal ascendancy. That they succeed only shows that the Baha'is are failing to do their duty and nothing more.

Excuse me for writing so strongly but it is a candid expression of Shoghi Effendi's attitude. Notwithstanding this, however, it all rests with the

National Assembly to see what is advisable. It is a local problem that they have to solve. Shoghi Effendi only hopes that the members of that spiritual body will be guided in their work and will follow what is to the best interest of the Cause.

Shoghi Effendi hopes that this newly elected assembly will succeed to accomplish a great deal in the field of teaching. We have to add to our numbers & get in new blood if we desire to live and inaugurate the social status that Baha'u'llah has brought to the world. With best wishes and loving greetings,

Yours ever sincerely,

Ruhi Afnan

[Postscript by Shoghi Effendi]

My dear co-worker:

The newly established Secretariat as well as the character of the proceedings of this year's memorable convention have filled my heart with joy and hopefulness. I strongly feel that the teaching work should be regarded henceforth as the paramount issue facing the American believers. Ahmad Sohrab's activities should be watched carefully, lest a weak handling of this extremely delicate situation may confuse the minds of the friends & cause a split in the Cause. The Cause has already triumphed over such cases which flare up for a time & then recede into the shadows of oblivion & are thought of no more. The case of Khayrullah, Fareed, Dyar, Mrs. Whyte and others testify to this truth. May the Beloved guide your steps, inspire your hearts & bless your efforts.

Shoghi.

30-8.30

Dear Mr. Lunt:

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge receipt of your letters dated June 20th, July 14th, 17th & 18th, copies of the Baha'i directory & the minutes of the National Assembly of June 17th to 29th 1930.

Concerning Ahmed's attitude towards the Assembly & the decision you have taken Shoghi Effendi has already sent you a cable heartily approving the language as well as the purport of the decision. Since then we have received letters from different parts of the world such as Australia & New Zealand informing us that Ahmed has been sending them his literature & keeping them informed of his activities. They all expressed indignation at his attitude & were astonished that nothing had been done. Anyhow, Shoghi Effendi is glad that the decision was taken for it would have had a very bad effect upon those countries where the friends are still unexperienced & where the Assemblies cannot stand the flouting of some individuals.

I personally believe that the reason why the New History Society succeeded in attracting new individuals was because that were so many devoted Baha'is found there a field for teaching & lend the society their whole-hearted assistance. I think if the Assembly provides a similar field for service & gives them a chance for work much greater work would be achieved. The work of the Assembly should be to capitalize the energy & devotion that exists among the

friends and guide them along proper channels, whereby good work would be accomplished & no harm be done to the Cause. The first quality for leadership, both among individuals and Assemblies, is the capacity to use the energy & competence that exists in the rank and file of its followers. Otherwise the more competent members of the group will go at a tangent & try to find elsewhere a field of work & where they could use their energy.

Shoghi Effendi hopes that the Assemblies will do their utmost in planning such teaching activities that every single soul will be kept busy.

In a cable that he sent about ten days ago Shoghi Effendi left the question of the publication of the Iqan in the hands of the Assembly. The help he could render was in translation work, the financial side has to be considered by the Assembly itself. Only a few days after sending the first part he mailed the second. I hope you have received that also.

Please convey to all the friends Shoghi Effendi's loving greetings, especially to the members of the National Assembly & the blessed angels working at the Evergreen Cabin.

Yours ever sincerely,

Ruhi Afnan

PS. Concerning the cornerstone of the Temple which was laid by the Master. Shoghi Effendi says that it has no other special significance than a great honour conferred by the Master upon that building & it should be treated as a cornerstone & nothing more.

Ruhi.

[Postscript by Shoghi Effendi]

With the assurances of my deep appreciation of your high endeavours, & of my prayers for the success of your manifold activities,

Your true brother,

Shoghi.

[Communicated by Loni Bramson-Lerche].

II. A Memorandum in reply to several questions posed by Mr. Robert Stauffer to the Research Dept. of the Universal House of Justice, Haifa, Israel. in a letter of Feb 9th 1983.

Questions-:

1. What are the origins and authenticities of the photographs and illustrations of the figures of the Faith in the book Babizm i Bekhaizm by Atrpet Sargis Mubagajian? [cf. Momen, The Babi and Baha'i Religions..p.59.Ed.]
2. Are the lists of dissertations in the recent Baha'i World Vol. XVII reviewed by the Universal House of Justice, and are accession Nos. available at the World Centre for these?

3. What is the status of the World Centre's bibliographical effort; will future Baha'i World volumes have improved bibliographies; and is the Association for Baha'i Studies in Canada compiling a bibliography?
4. What information can I obtain regarding the World Centre's librarian's efforts and pertinent goals?

The reply

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date 20 March 1983

From: Ad hoc committee to answer questions posed by Mr. Robert Stauffer in his letter dated 9 February 1983.

1. In an earlier search for Atrpet Sargis Mubagajian's sources of information for his book "Babizm i Bekhaizm", a report was found among the documents filed by Shoghi Effendi indicating that Mubagajian went to Tabriz to investigate the Baha'i Faith. He, unfortunately, met with Jalil Miskar Khu'i, a Covenant-breaker, and received his information from this man. What Mubagajian was told, particularly about the period after Baha'u'llah, was grossly incorrect. Jalil also sold Mubagajian other pictures and portraits which later appeared in the book. The report further states that the portraits identified as those of Baha'u'llah, the Bab, and Tahirih are obviously forged. However, the drawing made of 'Abdu'l-Baha in His youth bears, of course, a great resemblance to the original picture.
2. These are not reviewed by the House of Justice, nor is there a separate list of accession numbers held at the World Centre. Those items available from University Microfilms are listed in "Dissertation Abstracts" put out by the University of Ann Arbor, Michigan.
3. The Library advises that they are completely re-working and revising the bibliography in "The Baha'i World", Volume XVII. The World Centre has received no report of progress or plans from the Association for Baha'i Studies (Ottawa) although it has indicated that it is working on a full bibliography.
4. The kind of information Mr. Stauffer is seeking is not readily available at this time and the pressure of work at the World Centre does not permit the staff to give a satisfactory description of the activities in which he is interested.

[Communicated by Robert Stauffer].

In recent years, a number of articles and passages in longer studies have been devoted to the activities, trial, and ultimate fate of Mulla ^cAli Bastami, generally reckoned to have been the first of the so-called 'Letters of the Living' to leave Shiraz in 1844 in order to initiate the Babi propaganda in the Shi^ci shrine centres of Iraq (see M. Momen 'The Trial of Mulla ^cAli Bastami: A Combined Sunni-Shi^ci Fatwa against the Bab', Iran XX, 1982, 113-143 (originally presented as a paper at the fourth Baha'i Studies Seminar at Lancaster University, 1980); idem The Babi and Baha'i Religions, 1844-1944, pp.83-90; H.M. Balyuzi The Bab, pp.58-68; A. Amanat 'The Early Years of the Babi Movement: Background and Development', Ph.D. thesis, Oxford University, 1981, pp.219-252; D.M. MacEoin 'Molla ^cAli Bastami', Encyclopaedia Iranica, forthcoming).

These accounts are generally in agreement as to the main details of Bastami's activities in Iraq and the nature of the charges brought against him in the course of his trial in Baghdad in January, 1845. There is, however, some discrepancy in the versions given of his ultimate fate, following his banishment from Iraq. All are agreed that he was first sent to Istanbul (by way of Bolu), where his case was to be considered in more detail by the appropriate authorities. Momen indicates that a proposal was made that Bastami be exiled to 'one of the islands' (I suggest a possible reading here of 'Algeria' here, however), but that this was turned down in favour of 'hard labour imprisonment in His Majesty's naval yard' (see Babi and Baha'i Religions, p.90, citing documents in the Ottoman State Archives).

Amanat (p.251, citing a letter printed in Mazandarani's Zohur al-haqq, vol.3, p.109) and Balyuzi (p.68, without citing his source, but presumably using the foregoing) both state that Bastami was brought to Istanbul and subsequently banished to Kirkuk, where he died in prison. Now, the letter printed in Zohur al-haqq appears to be perfectly authentic (although Amanat's attempt to identify its author -- p.250 f.n.7 -- is somewhat misleading), and the details it gives are corroborated in a number of points by other sources (e.g. the reference to Bastami's despatch to Bolu -- cf. Momen 'Trial', p.140). What can be the explanation for these two seemingly irreconcilable but well-documented versions of Bastami's fate?

The answer is, in fact, extremely simple, although I must confess that it did not strike me immediately. I was puzzled by two things in the Balyuzi/Amanat interpretation of part of the letter in Zohur al-haqq. Firstly, the word which both read as the place-name 'Kirkuk' or 'Karkuk' is, in the original, actually written as kurk (كورك), a point noted by Amanat. No dictionary referred to by me gave that as an alternative spelling for Kirkuk, and there was, indeed, no prima facie reason why it should be. There are one or two other places to which this might refer, but none of them seemed to me particularly likely.

Secondly, the idea of banishment to Kirkuk seemed to me most improbable. The idea of banishing Bastami to 'one of the islands' or 'Algeria' had been rejected because 'it would be difficult to control his activities and prevent him spreading his false ideas' (Momen, Babi and Baha'i Religions, p.90) and, from this point of view, Kirkuk, not far from Baghdad, from whence he had originally been banished, would surely have been quite unthinkable.

I decided to return to the dictionaries, in order to check alternative vocalizations for كورك, and the answer was soon clear. The word was, in fact, the Turkish klrek, meaning, quite simply, 'forced labour'. Consequently, the two accounts of Bastami's fate can now be seen to correspond very closely, while the letter in Zohur al-haqq provides us with evidence that he did, in fact, die in prison towards the end of 1846.

THE IDENTITY OF THE BĀB'S LAWH-I HURUFĀT

Those who have ploughed through or even just dipped into my 'Revised Survey of the Sources for Early Babi Doctrine and History' may recall a reference (pp.119-121) to a particularly difficult problem of identification relating to a work by the Bab variously called the 'Lauh-i hurufāt', 'Risāla-yi Ja^cfariyya', 'Kitāb-i haykal' or 'Kitāb-i hayākil'. I indicated there that I knew of no extant text of any work by one of these names, but I am now in a position to provide positive identification of it. Before doing so, however, it may be best to recapitulate my arguments in favour of there being a single work referred to by different names.

According to Mulla Muhammad Zarandi, one of the works written by the Bab during his confinement in Chihriq was a 'tablet' for Mirza Asad Allah Khu'i Dayyan, entitled the 'Lauh-i hurufāt' (tablet of the letters) (Dawn-Breakers p.304). Zarandi goes on to say that this work had originally been regarded as an exposition of 'the science of Jafr' (i.e. gematria), but that when Mirza Husayn ^cAli Baha' Allah was in Acre he had written a letter for 'Jinab-i-Muballigh' in Shiraz (i.e. Mīrzā Ibrāhīm 'Muballigh' Shīrāzī), in which he had explained its meaning, deriving from it the theory that the appearance of man yuzhiruhu 'llāh was predicted 'no less than nineteen years after the Declaration of the Bab' (ibid).

I have identified a manuscript belonging to the Tehran National Baha'i Archives and catalogued (under the number 30030) as a work of the Bab's as, in fact, a copy of Baha' Allah's letter to Mirza Ibrahim Shirazi. In this letter, written in both Arabic and Persian, the work commented on is referred to, not as the 'Lauh-i hurufat' but as the 'Kitab al-hayākil' or, more loosely, 'kitābī dar hayākil-i wāhid' ('a book concerning the temples/talismans of unity') (p.19). The description given of the work in question on pages 19 following is, in fact, adequate to permit a firm identification, but before coming to that, I would like to link this reference to descriptions in two other works of Baha' Allah.

In a letter to Mullā ^cAlī Muḥammad Sirāj Iṣfahānī, there are several references to and quotations from a 'Risala-yi Ja^cfariyya', stated to have been written by the Bab for Dayyan (Ma'ida-yi asmani, vol.7, p.60). Among the passages quoted is the following: ان يا اسم الدين هذا علم مكنون مخزون قد اودعناك : واتيناك خزائنا عندنا 'O thou who art named Dayyān! This is a hidden and preserved Knowledge. We have entrusted it unto thee, and brought it to thee, as a mark of honour from Us' (cf. Lauh-i Shaykh, p.130; Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p.175). But when he quotes this same passage in another letter, Baha' Allah refers to the source as the 'Kitab-i haykal', again noting that it was written by the Bab for Dayyan. References in this letter (Ishrāqāt, p.47) to the contents of the 'Kitab-i haykal' are very similar to those describing the 'Kitab al-hayākil' in Baha' Allah's letter to Shirazi, and it seems fair to assume that he is speaking of the same work.

The descriptions and quotations given by Baha' Allah serve to identify the work referred to by these varying titles as none other than the final five sections (representing a series of 'grades') of the Kitab-i panj sha'n or Shu'ūn-i khamsa, written towards the end of the Bab's life (Tehran printed edition, pp.405-447), which deals with the construction of talismans along kabbalistic lines in order to show the unity of all things in a single person (i.e. the manifestation of the Universal Will), the ultimate purpose of which is to enable the Bab's followers to recognize man yuzhiruhu 'llāh when he appears. This is clearly the 'Kitab-i hayakil-i wahid' referred to in the Bab's Dalā'il-i sab^ca (Tehran edition, pp.45-46), which provides us incidentally with useful evidence for the dating of this latter work (since the Panj sha'n is precisely dated). It would appear that, at some point, these last sections of the Panj sha'n were distributed among the Pabis as an independent work, giving rise to the confusion we have noted as to its title and true identity. This in itself would explain a passage reading: ما نزل لحضرة الاسد والفرد الاعد السشرق بالنور الصمد ام الله الرباني ('What was sent down for his excellency al-Asad, the single, the unique, illumined with the eternal light, the name of God, al-Dayyan'), which Baha' Allah quotes in the letters referred to above. This sentence does not appear to occur in the Panj sha'n text, and it

is my assumption that it represents a scribal addition placed at the head of the text as distributed independently. Baha' Allah, however, as is evident from his use of the preceding words قوله تعالى ('He has said, may He be exalted'), seems to have taken these as part of the Bab's original text. Alternatively, these words may have been added by the Bab himself when the text was prepared for despatch to Dayyan.

Since I have dealt at length with the contents of this section of the Panj sha'n in a recent paper ('Nineteenth-century Babi Talismans', BRISMES Conference, Cambridge, July 1983), I shall not repeat myself here but instead refer readers to that paper. There can be no question that, whatever title we choose for it, the 'Kitab-i hayakil-i wahid' is one of the most important documents for any study of the latest stage in the development of the Bab's complex thought.

Denis MacEoin
Newcastle Upon Tyne
July 1983

RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MISCELLANY

New Titles from Kalimat Press, 10889 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90024. USA.

Moojan Momen (Ed), Studies in Babi and Baha'i History, Kalimat Press, 1983, pp.337. ISBN 0-933770-16-2 [\$ 19.95].

Includes the following essays-:

Denis MacEoin, Early Shaykhi Reactions to the Bab and his Claims.

Moojan Momen , Early Relations between Christian Missionaries and the Babi and Baha'i Communities.

Peter Smith , The American Baha'i Community, 1894-1917: A Preliminary Survey.

William Collins, Kenosha, 1893-1912: History of an Early Bahá'í Community in the United States.

Loni Bramson-Lerche, Some Aspects of the Development of the Baha'i Administrative Order in America, 1922-36.

[Juliet Thompson], The Diary of Juliet Thompson , Kalimat Press, 1983, pp.396., Preface by Marzieh Gail. [\$ 14.95]. ISBN 0-933770-27-8.
The first publication of this day by day account of Juliet Thompson's experiences with 'Abdu'l-Baha and with other Baha'is and associates.

Concordance to Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, Kalimat Press 1983, pp.504. ISBN 0-933770-25-1. [\$ 9.95].

Moojan Momen, The Social Basis of the Babi Upheavals in Iran (1848-1853): A Preliminary Analysis, International Journal of Middle East Studies 15 (1983) pp.157-183.

Constant Hames[?], review of H.Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh King of Glory (George Ronald, Oxford 1980) in Archives de Sciences Sociales de Religions, Vol.53 (1982), p. [?].

Jean-Pierre Digard, review of Momen, The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions.. (George Ronald, Oxford 1981), in Archives de Sciences Sociales de Religions, Vol.53 (1982), p. [?].

David S. Ruhe, Door of Hope, A Century of the Bahá'í Faith in the Holy Land George Ronald, Oxford, 1983, pp.247. ISBN 0-85398-149-3 (cased), 0-85398-150-7 (paper).

Alexandre Bennigsen, Les musulmans oubliés; L'islam en U.R.S.S. aujourd'hui/Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, Francois Maspero:Paris 1981. ISBN 2-7071-1238-0 /BP 65.R8 B43.

"A brief mention of the Bahā'īs in Russia is made on p.184 of this book. It is indicated that there are a maximum of 50,000 Baha'is in Turkestan and various other cities of southern Russia."

[Robert Stauffer].

The Swarthmore College Peace Collection

Robert Stockman reports that about a third of this collection of 1912 contains reports of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's visit there as printed in local papers, etc. Available on microfilm: (check: OCLC # 8303668)

[Robert Stauffer].

Al Haj Garba Isa Nsukka [Nigeria], anti-Bahā'ī letter headed "Opposed" in The Middle East No.105 (July 1983), p.5. [Ed].

^cAli Akbar Furutan, Hikāyat-i Dil: az Daftar Khātirāt, George Ronald, Oxford 1981, pp.301 .ISBN 0-85398-116-7. [in Persian].

A reprint of the 1st Teheran Edition of 1977 . [Ed].

National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Germany, The Baha'i Faith is Not a Political Movement/ A'yin-i Bahā'ī yik nahzat Siyāsī nīst [in Persian], np. 1361 [= 1983] pp.138.

[Shoghi Effendi + Universal House of Justice], al-Hayāt al-Bahā'īyyat [an Arabic translation of the English compilation Living the Life], Published by the NSA of the Bahā'īs of Ethiopia [nd.c.1980?], pp.104.

FORTHCOMING BAHĀ'Ī STUDIES SEMINAR

The Bahā'ī Studies Seminar announced in the last issue of the Bulletin will be held in the Catholic Chaplaincy (of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne) over the weekend SEPTEMBER 10th-11th 1983 (note change of date). Enquiries regarding venue, accomodation, etc., and offers of papers may be made either to Dr. Denis MacEoin, 2 Buston Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne or to myself (ED).