

Appendix One: A Few Expository Notes on the *Lawh-i haft pursish*

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The truth of the Zoroastrian religion, the official faith of ancient Iran and that of its modern remnant community (now roughly 100,000 worldwide), is categorically affirmed in Bahā'ī scripture. The founder prophet Zoroaster (fl. c.1,000 BCE?) is reckoned to be a Manifestation of God. To date however, relatively little research has been done in the area of Zoroastrian doctrine and Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture. Through a study of Zoroastrian sacred writ, much light can be thrown on the hundreds, if not thousands of Tablets which the central figures of the Bahā'ī Faith addressed to Zoroastrians. It is hoped that the following selected notes expository of a few doctrinal aspects of the *Lawh-i haft pursish* (details will not be gone into here) will be of value to Bahā'īs with a particular interest in Bahā'ī doctrine and matters Zoroastrian.

□ The appearance of Shāh Bahrām

"To Him [Zoroaster] must have alluded when, according to tradition, He foretold that a period of three thousand years of conflict and contention must needs precede the advent of the World-Savior Shāh Bahrām, Who would triumph over Ahriman and usher in an era of blessedness and peace." (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* [Wilmette, Illinois:BPT.,1974] p.95)

Many centuries of oral tradition and written scripture lie behind multi-faceted Zoroastrian messianism. Zoroastrianism has an especially rich body of apocalyptic texts which have influenced both Semitic and Asian eschatological teachings. The roots of Zoroastrian messianism have been tentatively traced to the Gāthās – the most ancient sacred hymns, stemming from Zoroaster himself. In these hymns the future active participle, Saošyant (lit. 'He who will bring benefit', 'Future Benefactor') occurs three times in the singular (Yasna 45:11; 48:9;53:2), and a number of times in the plural (46:3; 48:12; cf. 30:9;61:5;70:4).¹ *Astvat Ersta* meaning "He who embodies righteousness" (refer Yasna 43:3), is considered the Avestan

¹ See Mary Boyce. *A History of Zoroastrianism* Vol 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill) p. 234.

designation of the Zoroastrian World Reformer, the Saošyant.¹ Two earlier messianic saviour figures (Saošyants), who figure in several Zoroastrian apocalyptic texts -- such as the Iranian [Greater] and Indian [Lesser] *Bundahišn*, ("Primal Creation"; XXXII/III;XXXV) -- were modelled after the two brothers of Zoroaster named (Av.) *Uxšyat. Ǝreta*, "He who makes righteousness grow" (Pahlavi, *Ušēdar/Hušēdar*; in Bahā'ī interpretation the Prophet Muḥammad) and *Uxšyat. nemah*, "He who makes reverence grow" (Pahlavi, *Ušēdarmāh / Hušēdarmāh*; in Bahā'ī interpretation, the Bāb) (see M. Boyce, 'ASTVAT ƎRƎTA' *Enc.Iranica*, 2:871).

Shāh Bahrām is not a messiah figure explicitly mentioned in the most ancient Zoroastrian texts. In various guises he does, however, figure in quite a number of Zoroastrian apocalyptic and related writings.² A key Middle-Persian text in the Avestan script (Pāzand) is the composite and repeatedly revised *Commentary on the Vahman yašt (Zand ī Vahman yašt [Vohuman Yasn])* or (in abbreviated form) *Bahman Yašt*, (7th-12th cent. CE? reflecting earlier traditions and having an Avestan substratum, see *Elr.* 3:491f) -- it was translated into Persian at the end of the 15th century. Within it there is reference to the warrior deliverer Wahrām Warzāwand who, along with Pišyōtān [son of King Vīštāspa] the priest, will restore true religion to Iran: "And regarding that Vāhrām the Vargāvand [= Wahrām Warzāwand] it is declared that he comes forth in full glory.. with the seat of true explanation of the religion, he restores again these countries of Iran.." (trans. West, *SBE* 5 Pt. 1, 229-30). The name Wahrām Warzāwand (lit. 'Wahrām/ Bahrām the Strong/Powerful') is essentially synonymous with the later victorious,

¹ Various articles and notes analyze the tradition of the Zoroastrian World Reformer, Saošyant. See for example, G. Messina, 'Il Saušyant-nelle tradizione Iranica e la sua attesa' *Orientalia* 1 (1932) 170-1; Jean Kellens, 'Saošhant' in *Studia Iranica* 3 (1974), pp.187-209. See also J.R. Hinnells, 'Zoroastrian Saviour Imagery and its Influence on the New Testament' *Numen* XVI pp.161-185.

² Some references are provided in Christopher Buck's unpublished, ground-breaking essay, 'Was Bahá'ulláh Sháh Bahrām Varjāvand despite Zoroastrian 'Prophecies'? (AAR/SBL PacNW region 1982) which draws heavily upon K. Czeglédy, 'Bahrām Čōbīn and the Persian Apocalyptic Literature' *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 8 [1958], 21-43. Informative papers can be found in Hellholm, D., (ed), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism held in Uppsala, August 12-17 1979), Tübingen, 1983. A useful bibliography of 'Works on Iranian Apocalypticism' exists in Fereyduñ Vahman, *Arda Wiraz Namag, The Iranian 'Divina Commedia'* (= Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, Monograph series No 53; London and Malmo: Curzon Press Ltd, 1986) pp. 319-321. Mary Boyce's 'On the Antiquity of Zoroastrian Apocalyptic' in *BSOAS* XLVII (1984), pp.57-75 is illuminating.

kingly figure Shāh Bahrām (loosely, "King of Victory").¹

Zardušt Bahman Pazdu was the author of a legendary celebration of Zoroaster in pure Persian verse, the *Zardušt-nāma* (1278 CE). Purporting to be based on a lost Pahlavi work and closely related to book VII of the encyclopedic *Dēnkard* ("Acts of Religion", 9th-10th cent. CE), it contains explicit reference to the eschatological advent of Shāh Bahrām.²

While in modern, new Persian the word Shāh indicates a "ruler" or "king", the epithet Bahrām, signifies, for example, various kings, heroes, an angel or the planet Mars (see Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary*, 210). In fact the word Bahrām is actually based upon the Pahlavi form (= Warahran/Wahrān) of the Avestan Vereθthraγna (Verethragna = lit. "smiting of resistance"), the designation of the Old Iranian personification of Victory; a key figure in the Zoroastrian pantheon (see Boyce, *History*.. 1:63f; G. Gnoli, 'Bahrām' *Elr.* 3:510f). Bahrām was the name of six Sassanian kings and notables as well as many later Iranians. The celebrated military commander and king of Iran, Bahrām VI Čōbīn (rg. 590-1) was expected to return and appears, through later legends about him, to have contributed to messianic portraits of the Zoroastrian conquering saviour (see K. Czeglédy, 'Bahrām Čōbīn.. esp.38f; A.H. Shahbazi, 'Bahrām VI Čōbīn' *Elr.* 3:519f; Buck, C. 'Was Bahā'u'llāh Shāh Bahrām..'Boyce, *On the Antiquity*, p.73).

In past times then, some Zoroastrians have expected an eschatological king and saviour who, among other titles, has been designated Shāh Bahrām ("King of Victory"). In the last days he is to liberate humanity and rule Iran. As Bahā'u'llāh considered himself to be this figure, the prophecies are obviously to be understood non-literally.

¹ Worth noting is the fact that Zoroastrian ("Magian") belief in the messianic advent of Wahrām Warzāwand (as 'Bahman Varjāmwand' [sic.]) appears to have been registered by the intemperate, Spanish, Sunnī (Zāhirī) Muslim writer Ibn Hazm (994-1064 CE) in an anti-Messianist paragraph of his *Kitāb al-Fisāl*... (Refer J.W. Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology*.. London: Lutterworth Press, 1955, 1/2:223).

² See Rosenberg, F., ed. and tr., *Le Livre de Zoroastre (Zaratusht Nama)*, St. Petersburg, 1904. This text, informed by earlier Pahlavi sources, contains the only extant surviving manuscript version of the Persian text of the *Zaratusht-Nāma*. Legendary material contained within it appears to have been known to Bahā'u'llāh, 'Abdu'l-Bahā and various Bahā'ī apologists. Iranian expectation of Shāh Bahrām is most likely based upon this text. cf. also the Persian version of the Pazand/Pahlavi *Jāmāsp Nāmag* which is analyzed in Tord Olsson, 'The Apocalyptic Activity. The Case of Jāmāsp Nāmag' in Hellholm, 1983 p.21ff).

□ The doctrine of the 'Bridge of the Separator' (Av. 'čhinnvatō peretu'; činvat-bridge).

Zoroastrian eschatology knows of a traverse or 'bridge' which departed souls must cross in order that their deeds or worth can be evaluated. The Gāthās mention it "symbolically as a transitory stage between the darkness of the world and the new life which is happiness for the righteous."¹ According to *Yasna* 46, Zoroaster and the true believers in Ahura Mazdā, unlike their enemies, will cross the bridge successfully. In later Zoroastrian literature the 'bridge' is a concrete cosmological reality spanning various Iranian mountains. It has two extremities, "one which stands at Čagād ī daīdīg, the lawful summit, and the other at Alborz. When a righteous man crosses the bridge it becomes nine lances wide. In the case of a sinner it becomes as sharp as a blade. The righteous person is helped by Astad and Mihr to reach Paradise, whereas the wicked one falls into the darkness of Hell, after having suffered terrible anguish." (Vahman 239; see Vidēvdāt XIII. 8-9, etc).

The doctrine of the bridge has many parallels. It is reflected in most major religions including Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.² The extensive Islāmic tradition literature (*aḥadīth*) speaks of the 'bridge of the separator', which all deceased persons cross, as the 'bridge of *al-Sirāt*'. For the righteous it is a wide expanse crossed easily with angelic help, while for the wicked it is a sharp, narrow pathway to hell.³ The following words are from a tradition related by Imām Ja'far al-Sādiq, "The *Sirāt* of God is [Imām] 'Alī (d. 40/661) whom God made His trustee over the knowledge of all that is in the heavens and on the earth.." (cited in al-Bursī, *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn*. [Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1978], 140).

Both the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh wrote explanations of *Sirāt* as the 'traverse / bridge of *Sirāt*.' The former commences Persian Bayān II:12 -- which is expository of *Sirāt* -- as follows: "In

¹ See Vahman, *Ardā*., 239. See further, S.G.F. Brandon, *Man and his Destiny in the Great Religions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962), p.152ff.

² On Judaeo-Christian literature see for example, H.R. Patch, *The Other-world according to Description in Medieval Literature*, Cambridge Mass. 1950. See also J.J.L. Duyvendak, *A Chinese Divina Commedia*, Leiden, 1952.

³ See for example, Enrico Cerulli, *Il Libro della Scala e la questione delle fonti Arabo-Espagnole della Divina Commedia*. Città del Vaticano, 1949; Al-Ghazālī, *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife*. (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1989), pp. 205-210 (= a translation by T.J. Winter from Book XL of al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' ulūm al-dīn*, section on the *Sirāt* ["Traverse" or "Bridge"]).

every age the intention of [the bridge of] *Ṣirāt* is the Manifestation of God (*zuhūr Allāh*) and his Cause" (or, whatsoever he hath commanded i.e. the Bāb and his revelation). In Arabic Bayān II:12 he relates the *Ṣirāt* with the Bābī messiah "Him who God shall make manifest" (*man yuzhiruhu Allāh*) and his "Cause" (*amr*). Zoroastrian tradition as mediated through Islamic channels clearly informs the Bāb's exposition. In a Tablet to Javād Bahā'u'llāh (the Bābī messiah) taught that today is the eschatological "Day" in which he, as personified *Ṣirāt*, calleth aloud, 'I am the Straight Path (*al-sabīl al-mustaqīm*; cf. Qur'ān 1:3 etc., *Majmū'a*, 146 trans. TB:237).

□ The lineage or ancestry of Bahā'u'llāh

Zoroastrians have a profound respect for lineage. They generally expect their various messiah figures, including the ultimate messiah, Saošyant (though conceived of a virgin), to be of the seed of Zoroaster. In replying to question seven (see above) about the lineage and ancestry of Bahā'u'llāh in the *Lawh-i haft pursish*, reference is made to a treatise on this subject written by the apostle of Bahā'u'llāh and Bahā'ī apologist, Mīrzā 'Abu'l-Fadl-i Gulpāygānī (1844-1914). Though this detailed treatise was lost in 1300/1883, there exists another brief consideration of this subject by Gulpāygānī, the *Sharh-i shajara-yi jamāl-i mubāraka* ("Commentary on the Blessed Genealogical Tree"), written in New York in 1321/1903-4 in reply to an enquiry of Khusraw Bimān.¹

The consideration of Bahā'u'llāh's genealogy by Gulpāygānī apparently had its origin in an attempt to interpret a few stanzas of a poem of Abī Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Alī al-Shalmaghānī (executed 322/934).² Differing Bahā'ī opinions had been expressed in 19th century Tehran about its meaning. Loosely translated from the Arabic, it reads:

¹ Printed in R. Mihrabkhānī's *Rasā'il va Raqā'im-i Abu'l-Fadā'il* (Tehran: BPT., 135/1978, pp. 41-47). Balyuzi in *Bahā'u'llāh King of Glory* records that this reply to Āqā Khusraw Beman, written at 'Abdu'l-Bahā's instruction, was printed in Bombay as a pamphlet (p.11 fn). For a few details on the history of Gulpāygānī's first genealogical treatise (*nisāla*) see also Mihrabkhānī, *Zindigānī-i Mīrzā Abu'l-Fadl-i Gulpāygānī* (Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahā'ī-Verlag, 154/1988), pp.418-9 (item 15).

² Al-Shalmaghānī was a Shī'ī extremist who is reckoned to have preached incarnationist and other heretical ideas. He had considerable influence at the 'Abbasid court in Baghdad and was the assistant and lieutenant (*nā'ib*) of the third "gate" (*bāb*) to the hidden Imām, Ibn Rūh Nawbakhtī (305/917-326/928) who excommunicated him and his followers in 312/924-5.

"O claimant (or 'seeker', 'interrogator?', *tālib*^{an}) from the Hāshimite house (*bayt hāshimī*);
 And disclaimer (*jāhid*^{an}) from the house of the Chosroes (*bayt kisrawī*)!
 Assuredly was he hidden in a non-Arab lineage (*nisbat a'jamī*);
 One Persian, of noble, agreeable, descent (*fī'l-fārsī al-hasab al-radī*)".¹

In a Tablet to Abū'l-Fadl dated 26 Sha'bān 1299/1882, underlining the veracity of his application of these words to the person of Bahā'u'llāh, the Founder of the Bahā'ī Faith wrote, "O Abu'l-Fadl! Thou hast uttered the very truth and caused to be made manifest that which was concealed in His book (or 'his [Shalmaghānī's] writing?; cited Mihrabkhānī, *Zindigānī*, 419). Gulpaygānī's researches came to be related to Sassanian genealogy and the Shī'ī rulers and notables of Ṭabaristān (north Iran; spanning modern Māzandārān from where Bahā'u'llāh's family originated). Various Persian, Sassanian kings were named Khusro – in Greek Chosroes; Syriac, Kesrō/Kosro; Arabic, Kisrā; Persian, Khusraw (see M. Morony, *Kisrā*. EI² 5:184-5). Chosroes I son of Kavadh (Kavāt), known as Anosarvan (Ar. Anūshirwān; "of the Immortal soul") and *Dagdar* ("the Just" Ar. 'Ādil), reigned as king of Persia from 531-579 CE.² Abu'l-Fadl draws attention to the fact that Ridā Qulī Khān (1215/1800-1288/1871-2), known as "Prince of the Poets" (*Amīr al-shu'āra*), in his *Nizhād-nāmih* ("Genealogical Treatise") reckons that the line of the 'Alid Nūrīs of Māzandārān³ culminates in the person of Chosroes I, the

¹ Arabic text cited Gulpaygānī, *Sharh-i shajara*. in Mihrabkhānī, *Rasā'il*, 41. Abu'l-Fadl notes that some, by virtue of the reference to Hāshimite status and the use of "Persian" (Fārsī; understood to mean Shī'rāzī), found prophetic allusion to the Bāb in these lines. The Bāb, as a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, was a Hāshimite, a descendant of Hāshim b. Abd Manāf – the common ancestor of Muhammad, 'Alī and al-'Abbās whom the 'Abbāsids claimed descent from. He was also a Persian born in Shī'rāz.

² Two subsequent Sassanian kings, dominant during the late Sassanian period, were named 'Chosroes': Chosroes II Abharvez (Ar. Kisrā Aparwīz; Per. Khusraw Parwīz, 591-628 CE., nephew of Chosroes I and possibly a Christian) and Chosroes III (630-2). Chosroes II was among those rulers contemporary with the Prophet Muhammad who received a letter of proclamation from him. He is said to have torn up this letter inviting him to Islām and planned to kidnap its author. Legend has it that the Prophet foretold his death.

³ Detailed research into Bahā'u'llāh's genealogy would include a study of the 'Alids of Tabarestān, Daylamān and Gīlān on which an important article has been written by W. Madelung in *Encyclopædia Iranica* (ed. E. Yarshater) 1:881-886. Certain of the works listed in the bibliography may be important, e.g. H.L. Rabino de Borgamile, 'Les dynasties Alaouides du Mazandéran' in *Journal Asiatique* 210

"Just".¹ He also notes, as Balyuzi summarizes it in his *Bahá'u'lláh, King of Glory*, that "final confirmation came from Hájí Mírzá Ridá-Qulí, a half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh, who told Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl categorically, in answer to his query, that the Núris possessed a genealogical table tracing their line back to Yazdigird the Sásánian." (Balyuzi, BKG:11, drawing on Gulpaygānī's essay cited *Rasā'il* p.44f).

Of probable relevance to the study of Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy are the traditions about Shāhbānūya (Shahrbānū = 'Lady of the Land'), daughter of the last Sassanian King, Yazdigird III (632-651 CE).² She is said in various Shī'ī and other sources to have married the third Shī'ī Imām, Husayn (martyred 61/680) and to have been the mother of the fourth Imām, 'Alī Zayn al-'Abidīn (b. Medina c. 36/656-7 -- c.94/712). In Shī'ī traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad and the Imāms, the fourth Imām was reckoned the "son of the two elect [lines]" (*ibn al-khīratayn*) -- descended through both the Arabs of Quraysh (Hāshimites) and the non-Arabs of Persia, from Chosroes (for details see Majlisī, *Bihar al-Anwār* ² 46:4f).

Aspects of the Zoroastrian popular legends about Shahrbānū and the shrines associated with her have been studied by Mary Boyce and others.³ Boyce recounts popular Zoroastrian and Shī'ī legends associated with two different shrines relating to her (at Yazd and Rayy [near Tehran]).⁴ She also sums up a few of the contradictory Sunnī and Shī'ī traditions about

(1927) pp.253-77.

¹ Gulpaygānī, *Sharh-i shajara..* in Mihrabkhānī, *Rasā'il*, 42ff.

² She is also, for example, variously named; Ghazāla, Solāfa, Salāma, Shāhzanān (see W. Madelung, "Alī b. al-Husayn.." *EIr.* 1:849).

³ See Mary Boyce, 'Bībī Shahrbānū and the Lady of Pārs' *BSOAS* XXX (1976), pp. 30-44. Madelung writes about her alleged descent, "According to reports of a legendry character she was a daughter of Yazdegerd, the last Sassanian king of Persia, captured in the Arab conquest.. This descent is commonly accepted by Shi'ite tradition but is not confirmed by the early sources and is rejected by some of the genealogists. According to Ebn Qotayba, his mother was said to be from Sind.." (art. cit. 839).

⁴ See Boyce, Bībī Shahrbānū, 31-3; see also Sayyid Ja'far Shahīdī, *Cherāg-i roshān dar dunyā-yi tarīkh* (Tehran, 1333/1954; esp. the chapter relating to Shahrbānū). Above what purports to be the grave of Shahrbānū in Rayy we read, "This is the tomb of the Mother of Believers, the most excellent of princesses, my Lady Shahrbānoe. May Allāh sanctify her secret!" (Boyce, Bībī, 38). In the *Ziyārat-nāmih* of this shrine the princess is called Shahrbānū daughter of Yazdigird, as well as "Shāh-Jehān" (King of the World), "Shāh-i Zanān" (King of Women) and "Jehān-Bānū" (Lady of the World) (refer *ibid*).

Shahrbānū, traditionally the mother of the fourth Imām.

Among the traditions recorded by Boyce about the mother of the fourth Imām is that of Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Sa'd (d. 845 CE author of the *Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*) who "states that 'his mother was a slave-girl (*umm walad*) called Ghazāla, who, after Husayn, was married to his client [mawlā] Zuyaid, to whom she bore 'Abdullāh ibn Zuyaid' [see *Ṭabaqāt*, Leiden, 1904, v, 156]. Ibn Qutayba (d. A.D. 889) amplifies this slightly: "Alī Asghar [the fourth Imām] son of Husayn is the only person through whom any descendants of Husayn survive. It is said that his mother was a Sindī woman called Sulāfa, or it is said Ghazāla, who after Husayn was taken to wife by Zubaid, the client of Husayn ibn 'Alī. She bore to him 'Abdullāh ibn Zubaid, who is therefore of the same mother as Alī ibn Husayn' [*al-Ma'ārif*, Cairo, 1935, 94]." (pp.33-4). She also refers to the *Firāq al-Shī'a* of Nawbakhtī (10th cent CE) where various names/titles of the fourth Imām's mother are given, including her pre-captive designation, Jehānshāh and that she was the daughter of Yazdigird III. A late tenth century CE *Tārīkh-i Qum*¹ speaks of "Shahrbānoe daughter of Yazdigird" also referring to Salāma (or Sulāqa) who is again Jehāb shāh daughter of Yazdigird (p.197). Ibn Bābūya al-Qummī (Bābawayh, 306/908-381/991) in his *'Uyūn akhbār al-Ridā'* records a tradition from Sahl ibn Qāsim Nōšjānī (d.818 CE) to the effect that Imām 'Al-Ridā (the eighth Imām, d. 203/818) said to him in Khurāsān: "I and you are kinsmen" and related this to the marriage of Yazdigird III's daughters to the Shī'ī Imāms Ḥasan and Husayn (see Tehran lithograph 1275/1858, 309). Such is a summary of a few legendary and sometimes non-historical traditions noted by Boyce. They invite detailed analysis.²

Bahā'u'llāh appears, in certain Tablets, to deny descent from the Prophet Muḥammad. In a Tablet to Mashadī Ismā'īl Zaqānī he refers to himself (as did Muḥammad and the Bāb) as an "unlettered one" (*al-ummī* cf. Qur'ān 7:157-8) whose advent is predicted in all the sacred books. He states that neither his clothes nor his appearance indicate any special status:

"The garb He weareth, His flowing locks, His head-dress, attest the truth of His words."

¹ Ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Tihirānī, Tehran 1313/1934, 195-6.

² An obviously unhistorical tradition is also recorded in the *Kitāb al-kāfī* of Kulaynī (d. 939/40 CE) to the effect that Imām 'Alī rescued Yazdigird's daughter and facilitated her marriage to his son Imām Husayn (*al-Kāfī*, Tihiran, 1381/1962, 1, 466).

These words are continued with reference to "Certain ones among both commoners and nobles" who have objected to the effect that he is "neither a member of the ecclesiastical order (*'ulamā'*) nor a descendant of the Prophet" (Muhammad, lit. 'one of the Sayyids', *sādāt*). In response to this Bahā'u'llāh states,

"Say: O ye that claim to be just! Reflect a little while, and ye shall recognize how infinitely exalted is His present state above the station ye claim He should possess. The Will of the Almighty hath decreed that out of a house wholly devoid of all that the divines, the doctors, the sages, and scholars commonly possess His Cause should proceed and be made manifest." (GI XLIV).

In *God Passes By* Shoghi Effendi sums up, in the following manner, the fundamentals of the Bahā'ī belief with respect to the genealogy of Bahā'u'llāh:

"He derived his descent, on the one hand, from Abraham (the Father of the Faithful) through his wife Katurah [see Gen 25:1], and on the other from Zoroaster, as well as from Yazdigird, the last king of the Sāsānīyān dynasty. He was moreover a descendent of Jesse, and belonged through his father Mīrzā 'Abbās, better known as Mīrzā Buzurg -- a nobleman closely associated with the ministerial circles of the Court of Fath-'Alī Shāh -- to one of the most ancient and renowned families of Mázandárán." (p.94).

In certain of the abovementioned sources it is indicated that Shahrbānū (daughter of Yazdigird III), after the death of her husband (the third Imām), married his client (mawlā) from whom a son 'Abdu'llāh was born. As Bahā'u'llāh seems not to be descended from the Prophet or the Shī'ī Imāms, it would seem likely that further research into the traditional material -- not that this is all historical -- might attempt to trace his genealogy back through 'Abdu'llāh and his mother to the Sassanian kings, including Yazdigird III and Chosroes I.¹

¹ The present writer plans to write up in more detail (in a forthcoming BSB) his notes upon the genealogy of Bahā'u'llāh as it relates to Abrahamic / Semitic religious tradition.