



of Persians with whom everything was so highly spiritualized that contact with reality was often lost. Islam suffered more heresies at the hands of Persians than of all other races professing the religion of the Prophet. The dogmatism of Semitic Islam blossomed into metaphysical speculations in which lie

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embedded the memories of Persian mental history. We therefore find that the same old theme crops up again and again in a new garment and under a new name and is always hailed with boundless enthusiasm.

In modern times a movement which has rapidly gained ground not only in the East but also in Europe and America and which has become a religion supposedly professed by millions has its roots in Persia. A new religion has arisen, a religion of humanity, a universal creed for the whole of mankind which in its present form is not only a factor of social and perhaps of political importance in Persia, but to judge by its literature written in English, seems to have been enthusiastically accepted by many Americans. The religion of Bahiism is a characteristic example of the Persian spirit. It is a remarkable phenomenon that in countries which show such a deep contrast in cultural matters as America and Persia, this religion has made such an amazing progress. This alone would justify our interest in its study.

It is known that after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the Muslim community soon split asunder into hostile parties which in the course of time developed into distinct theological sects: the Sunnis and the Shiites, the latter being the partisans of Ali. According to the Shiite view Muhammad appointed Ali to succeed him as the spiritual head of Islam but his rights were usurped by the first three Caliphs (Abu Bakar, Omar, and Othman). The Shiites of course do not approve of and do not believe in the legality of the election of a Caliph, as this office, or as they call it, the Ima'mate, is inherent in Ali and his descendants. It was conferred by God first upon the Prophet, then upon Ali by the Prophet and afterwards on Ali's descendants. It has, therefore, nothing to do with popular choice or approval. The Caliph of the Sunnis is an outward, visible, defender of the faith; the Imam of divinely ordained successor of the Prophet, perfections and spiritual gifts, whom all the Shiites is the endowed with all the faithful must obey, whose decision is absolute and final, whose wisdom is superhuman, and whose words are authoritative. The Imámities are descendants of Ali's son Husayn who according to popular

belief had married the daughter of the Persian-Sassanian king, Yazdigird III, and who died a martyr's death at Kerbela (A.D. 680). This explains the affection in which the Iiii'ams are held in Persia, since they are regarded as the direct descendants not only of the Prophet but also of the royal house of Sassan. The Imimites are divided into the Isma'ilis or adherents of the seven Ima'ns, and the Ithna Ashariya or adherents of the twelve Ima'ns. We are mostly concerned with the latter here. Ima'ns left no male issue, but as the world an Ima'ns, the Shiites of the sect of the twelve century-

last Ima'ns never died but only retired from resides in a fabulous

The twelfth cannot do without Inia'ns-the state believed that the

mortal ken and town called Jabulka among his faithful disciples from where he will issue forth in the fullness of time to do justice among mankind. He will appear as the Ima'ns Mahdi, the God-directed, whose messianic advent every Shiite is eagerly expecting. It is held that since the disappearance of the Ima'ns two main periods have passed : (a) the minor occultation (ghaibat-i-sughra) A:H. 260-329 (A. D. 873-942) during which four intermediaries communicated his instructions who were called the Bdb, or gate, as they permitted entrance to the will of the Ima'ns; (b) the major occultation (ghaibat-i-kubra) during which no intercourse, not even indirect, was possible with the Ima'ns. At the end of the 19th century Sheikh Ahmed al-Ahsai revived the idea that amongst the Shiites there must always be one perfect man capable of serving as a channel of grace between the absent Imim. and his church. Thus such personages as were convinced of their superhuman faculty and Godly inspiration may consider themselves as intermediaries, as gates so to say, to the knowledge of the absent ImAm. In the 10th century a certain Ash-Slialmaghani ibil Abi Azakir had suffered death under the Caliph Ar-Ra'diii for a teaching heretical doctrines which included -among others the tenet of transmigration of souls. Sheikh Ahmed and his successor, Seyyid Kazini of Rasht, did not however make use of the title Bib, but their conception of the 'perfect Shiite' was identical with the idea connoted by this title. ...

religion of Persia since the 16th

...

assuming this same title of Ba'nd for ...

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The tenets of the Sheikh school may be summarized as follows : Sheikh Ahmed believed that the body of man was composed of parts derived from each of the nine heavens and the four elements; that the grosser elemental part perished irrevocably at death and that only the more subtle celestial portion would appear at the resurrection. He named the subtle body : Jism huwarkilya (which seems to be derived from a Greek word, perhaps Hercules?) and believed it to be similar in substance to the forms in the world of similitudes. He denied that the Prophet's material body had, on the occasion of his night journey to heaven, moved from the spot where it lay in a trance. He believed himself to be under the special guidance of the TniAnis. He regarded the Ima'ms as creative forces and based his thesis on dialectics. For God is spoken of in the Koran (23.14.,) "the best of Creators"; consequently He cannot be the sole creator. He went so far in his ultra-Shiite tendencies that he interpreted the words of the first chapter of the Koran : *ayyidka nabudu* (Thee do we worship) as referring to Ali.

After the death of Sheikh Ahmed, Hajji Seyyid Kazim, of Rasht was unanimously recognized as the leader of his school. Kazim, did not, nominate a successor.- According to Ba'bi historians he had hinted that the transitional state of things under which he and his master Sheikh Ahmed had assumed the guidance of the faithful was drawing to a close, and- that a brighter light was about to shine forth from the horizon of the spiritual world. From whatever quarter the sun of truth shall arise it will irradiate all horizons and render the mirrors of believers' hearts capable of receiving the effulgence of the lights of wisdom. The Sheikhs were anxiously expecting the appearance of some one who should assume the leadership of their party. One of them, Mulla Husayn of Bushrawayh proceeded to Shirfiz, and on his arrival there paid a visit to Mirza Ali Muhammad, with whom, he had become acquainted at Kerbela- and who was also a staunch adherent of the school.' Mirza Ali Muhammad learning of the death of Kazim, announced his divine mission, and adduced in support of his claims, the commentary on the Sura of Joseph.

' I have closely followed the histories of Babiism. and Bahaiism translated, edited

and ably expounded by the late Prof. Browne.

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Mulla Husayn of Bushrawayh was soon convinced of the truth  
-Of the young man's assertion and heralded the advent of the new

a n of

leader, who assumed the title of 'B'ab'. Mulla Husayn  
Bushrawayh became the gate of the gate and the first letter or  
the first to believe. The rapidity with which the movement  
spread was wonderful. Representatives of all classes hastened  
to tender their allegiance to the young Seer of Shirfiz, but it was  
from the old Sheikhi party that the most eminent supporters of  
the new faith were recruited. The followers of the B'ab were  
called Bibis. A number of the Sheikhis however, refused to  
recognize him and adhered to another representative of the  
doctrine, Hajji Muhammad Karim Kha'n; and a fierce quarrel  
ensued between the two parties. The orthodox Sheikhis proved  
to be the foremost and most implacable enemies of the Bibis and  
their relentless persecutors. There was very little difference  
between the preachings of Mirza Ali Muhammad called the  
'Bib,' and those of Hajji Muhammad Karim, since each claimed  
to be neither more nor less than the intermediary between the  
absent ImAm and his followers, exactly in the same way as were  
the four original gates who had served as channels of communica-  
tion between the Twelfth Inia'm and his followers during the  
period of the minor occultation.

It was in 1844 that the new light arose on the horizon of  
the Shiites, but it was bitterly challenged by the followers of  
other 'lights' who claimed an equally valid heavenly inspiration,  
although their success among mankind still continued to be  
determined by mundane factors. The historical importance of  
any idea is not determined by its intrinsic merits, or its alleged  
divine origin, but often depends on the skill with which it is  
adapted by its expounders to suit local conditions. The history  
of Bibism, a new religion arising out of the soil of Persian  
Shiism, with its appeal to the imaginative, the heroic persever-  
ance of its martyrs, the unscrupulous machinations by which  
each faction assailed its antagonists, and the final adaptation of  
the doctrine to the tastes and predilections of modern minds  
corroborates this old maxim of history.

The Bab was only 27 years of age at the time of his mani-  
festation. The sensation created by his advent frightened the

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ulemas, and they induced the Government to arrest him and after  
a trial to condemn him to imprisonment'. This action on the  
part of the Persian Government added to his fame, and gave  
impetus to the proselytizing efforts of his followers. The clash

with the intolerant followers of orthodoxy soon provoked reprisals which led to bloody conflicts. Mulla Husayn of Bushrawayh and Hajji Muhammad Ali took shelter in an old fortress in Mazenderfin which had to be taken by storm after a siege of 7 months; revolts and risings of the followers of the Bib occurred at Zanzan, Yazd and Niriz which were put down with great cruelty on the part of Government. The spread of the new creed was amazing. In the course of 6 years the whole of Persia, was filled with Babis, a clear proof that the idea appealed to the imaginative Persians. The revolutionary attitude of the Babis gained many adherents among the peasants who were dissatisfied with the economic situation in Persia, and the Government was compelled to try to crush the movement at its root. The lenient treatment accorded to the Bib up till then was abandoned and he was sentenced to death on the charge of high treason and was executed at Tabriz in 11850. This was followed by a vigorous persecution of his followers. Finally in 1852, when an attempt at the life of the Shah was perpetuated by some of the Babis, the whole sect was violently suppressed. The beautiful poetess Kurrat ul Ayn and many others, innocent of all complicity in the conspiracy, were tormented and cruelly murdered. Some of the initiates fled to Baghdad, and a branch of Babis arose from this small group of exiles. They modified the doctrine and developed it into a form more acceptable to those who had no sympathy for the exuberant fancies of the Persian mind. Among these fugitives there was, a man called Mirza Yahya who was such an enthusiastic believer in the Bib's manifestation that he had travelled across the whole of Persia with his half-brother Mirza Husayn Ali to see the Bab. The Bab heard of Mirza Yahya's zeal and devotion, and declared that in him was fulfilled the prophecy long current in Shiite tradition in the form of a conversation between Ali and Xumayl "regarding the coming of eternity." The Bab conferred a light shining from the dawn of"

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o the particular teachings differ only in outward form according to (the title of Subh-i-Ezel (the dawn of eternity), gave him his own ring and authorized him to develop the needs of the time. The Babis is also considered to be one of these philosophies of Babism as he thought fit, and appointed him as a manifestation

(the Isma'ili sect has seven incarnations of the his own successor. Deity, called Nfitik, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ, On the BAb's death Subh-i-Ezel was unanimously recognised Muhammad and Isma'il), and the party of Subh-i-Fzel continued as the spiritual head of the sect. But his half-brother who had to revere him as such, while the followers of Bahfiullah looked received the name of Baha'ullah, the Splendour of God, came into upon Bahfiullah as this manifestation. It is incumbent on the greater prominence owing to the retiring habits and also on prophets to use the language appropriate to his audience. It account of the extreme youth of the leader himself. Other will be different for little children, or for young men or - for men claimants to the leadership also arose but did not gain any of mature age. The prophet's words must not therefore be taken following. The two brothers lived in peace and harmony at too literally, but must be explained with reference to the actual Baghdad, where the Turkish Government had permitted them to circumstances in which they are uttered. This is the justification - reside and where they had many followers. Here the original notion of an allegorical interpretation which is so dear to the Shi'ite doctrine underwent many changes, Bahdullah conducted a secret mind. The Isma'ili sect was equally prone to explain away the but successful propaganda in Persia. He matured his ideas for literal meaning of revealed scriptures; when the Koran says, that the future, and gradually remodelled the tenets for which the Jesus had no father, the interpretation is that he received instruction in Persia had sacrificed their lives. The circumstances mentioned from no trustworthy teacher : when it says that he raised in Baghdad gave him a wider horizon and this compelled him to the dead, it signifies that he brought knowledge to the dead under - take a broader view. He retired for two years to the hills of Tanding. The Babis handled this allegorical interpretation

Kurdistan to meditate upon his ideas. Subh-i-Ezel still adhered (ta'wil) in a masterly way. \_ They denied the physical existence to the orthodox tenets of BAbism - but his peace-loving nature of Paradise or Hell; as the rough Arabs could not understand prevented an open hostility with Baha'ullah. ethical values Muhammad spoke to them of Good and Evil in As time ripens the blossom into luscious fruit there occurs symbolic form. When, in course of - time, one particular form a profound change in the outward appearance, although the of expression in the teachings of a prophet becomes obsolete, . a

new manifestation appears and modifies the teaching in a suitable-

organic continuity is not destroyed. Similarly a religious idea becomes changed in the course of time by the influence of leaders who advance the eternal progress of the world. The Babi who have an active grasp of the realities of the situation. doctrine is most definite on this point. It recognises and Ba'bisin has been altered profoundly by the gradual assimilation emphasizes changes in human affairs, and wishes to mould every of new conceptions, some of which were entirely foreign to the thought in accordance with the progress of the world. The original doctrine. According to Babi views, the essence of God, can be no final revelation -1 and no last prophet, an idga which wits the primal divine Unity, is unknowable and entirely transcends very sympathy of evolution, and which in human comprehension. We can know nothing about it, we been avowed by Mirza Ghulam see only its manifestation in the succession of prophets. There Ahmad. According to the Babi doctrine the prophets, as manifestation is no fundamental divergence or conflict between the prophets, manifestations of the Universal Reason', were forerunners of progress all of whom represent the same Universal Reason. Their and were always in advance of mankind. This is why every prophet had been and must be rejected by his own people. 'So 'The language of the Babi himself and the terminology of transcendental lore did also the Babi fare, when one thousand. years after the disused by his followers reflect the exuberant flight of fancy which often glorified beautiful words without much meaning. The followers were given fantastic names appearance of the Twelfth Imam (A. H. 260; the Babi's manifestation full of esoteric allusions.

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manifestation took place in 1260 A. H.), he was persecuted and put to death. In order to prevent mankind from falling into the same error he emphasized that even his manifestation was not the last and that others would again come in future ages to bring new revelations suited to new circumstances and altered conditions.

The theory of evolution seems to be embodied in a theology which believed in a succession of prophethood all manifesting the one and the same Universal Intelligence but

under diverse conditions and aspects. This view, which is apt to make Balbism a sympathetic doctrine even to modern rationalists, was not, however, the source of inspiration for the innumerable martyrs who died for Ba'bism. What attracted them to the new creed even at the cost of their lives was the mystic doctrine of Ba'bism which was full of transcendental correspondences and equivalents between names based on numerical values of letters., and of the theory of divine manifestation.

Almost all the constituent elements of BAbism had their source in the medieval heresies of Persian origin. The nation instinctively cherished and clung to these mystic doctrines --in which it found a peculiar charm.

Muhammad very soon discarded the title of the BAb and assumed that of the Point (Nuqta). There is a spurious tradition according to which Ali is supposed to have said that all that was in the KorAn was contained implicitly in the opening chapter, and all that was in this chapter was contained in the first line (Bismillah), and finally in turn in the initial B of the Bismillah. and this in turn in the point which stands under the Arabic B, and Ali is also supposed to have said "I am the point which stands under the B."

Mirza Muhammad was henceforth called the Primal Point, or His Holiness the First Point: the manifestation of the Primal Will. The Babis believed that the primal will is incarnated in the intermediaries between man and God. In one sense it is identical with God, for a tradition says that whosoever visited Husayn in his tomb was as one who hath visited God on His Throne. So likewise the BAb said "Oh Ali, none hath known

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God save I and thee; and none hath known me save God and thee, and none hath known thee save God and I."

Ba'bi mentality may be appreciated by the following extracts from the Nuqtatu'l-Kidf., one of the earliest and most authentic histories : 'as the same mirror may at different times reflect different objects, so the same individual may successively become

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the returns (or recurrences) of different prototypes.' When Mirza Muhammad, speaking more freely, as his followers became more receptive of divine mysteries, declared himself to be the Point, Mullah Husayn ceased to be only the Gate of Gate and became the actual Gate; and when he was killed,\* his brother Mirza Muhammad Hasan in turn received the title. But this is not all. Mirza Ali Muhammad was first of all, Balb, or Gate,

then Zikr or Reminder, than Nuqta or Point. For a while Mullah Muhammad Ali of Barfurush became the Point, and Mirza Ali Muhammad relapsed into being his Ba'b and during this time wrote nothing. "Sometimes it happens," so runs the Nitqtatu'l-Kdf, "that the Point becomes quiescent in effulgence and that this effulgence becomes manifested in the Gate, just as the apostle of God did not wield the sword but his wrath was made manifest in the form of Ali.- - But after the death of God's apostle, Ali became the Point and Heaven of Will, and Hasan became the Gate, and the Earth of Devotion, while Husayn and Salma'n and the rest were the Letters of the Living. So likewise in speaking of the Islamic cycle of prophethood, so long as Muhammad was alive, Ali declared himself to be only a servant amongst his servants, but that 'so soon as the Prophetic Mirror (by which is meant the sovereign form of Muhammad) was shattered to pieces, in less time than a twinkling of an eye, it (the Sun of Truth) arose in the mirror of Saintship (saintship represents the esoteric aspect of religion) so that Ali thus became the Mirror or 'Manifestation' of the Primal Will and the Proof of God upon earth was able to say; I am Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad." All theophanies are identical in essence and differ only in circumstance, just as the sun which shines to-day is the same as that which shone yesterday or that which will shine to-morrow'. These lights of the firmament of Prophethood and Saintships, like the celestial luminaries,

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have a rising and a setting, a manifestation and an occultation."

It is obvious that all these notions can be explained only by means of allegorical comparisons with the phenomena of nature with which they really have nothing in common. A figurative expression takes here the place of rational thinking in terms of concepts corresponding to realities

As to the eschatology of Bibism, it denies bodily resurrection but the spirit of the deceased may continue to take an interest in his earthly affairs, and some passages in Bibi writings also refer to the transmigration of souls, while the return to the life of his world is conceived in a symbolic sense as a reflection upon a mirror. However vague the Ba'bi doctrine may be on certain points it is essentially dogmatic and every utterance of the manifestation of the period must be accepted without demur. The Kitdb-i-Aqdas (the "Most Holy Book") of Baha'ullah begins with "The first thing which God has presented unto His servants is knowledge of the Day, spring of His Revelation and the Dawning-place of His Command, which is the Station of His Spirit in the world of Creation and Command. Whosoever attaineth unto this hath attained unto all go

od and whosoever is debarred therefrom is of the -people of error, even though- he produce all kinds of good deeds." The Ba'b and his immediate followers were not inclined to tolerance. According to the 'Baygn,' no unbelievers were to be suffered to dwell in the five principal provinces of Persia, and everywhere they were, as far as possible, to be subjected to restrictions, and kept in a position of inferiority. The Ba'bis are strongly antagonistic to Sfis on account of their individualism and 'inner light,' and to the orthodox Musulmans because they did not acknowledge in the Manifestations the fulfilment of Islam.

A most characteristic feature of 13a'bism is the belief in the intrinsic value of the letters of the Alphabet. The algebraic correspondences have puzzled men since the time of Pythagoras. In Muslim history it was the Hurufis who first attached magic power to numbers and- tried to derive secret meanings out of the numerical value of the letters of the Alphabet. Their system was eagerly taken up and elaborated by the Turkish Bekta'shi writers. The Isma'iliya sect believed in the number seven. The

Deity had seven incarnations, between each of the seven incarnations there arose seven Imams, each Imam was at the head of a heptad; seven operations were required in the making of a convert and so on. The Algebraic correspondences. developed by the system is practically built

-The irrahmdn, irrahim (in the name, of God the merciful, the compassionate) comprises 19 letters in Arabic script which are the  
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'Manifestation' of the Point under, the B, just as the whole Koran is the further Manifestation on a plane of greater plurality of the Bismillah. The number- 19 became a kind of a sacred number, a fundamental basis of the BAbi doctrine by which the truth of its tenets could be, algebraically proved.

-The Arabic word for one is Wdhid, and the numerical value of the letters composing the word, give the sum (6 + 1 + 8 + 4) = 19. This unity of 19 in turn, manifests itself as 19<sup>2</sup> = 361, which is the sum of the letters, 20+30+300+10=360 to which by adding "the one which underlies all plurality.." we get 361, the number of- all things, which, again is the square of -The number 19 was made the basis of all divisions of time, money, etc. The Ba'bi's idea of a coinage having 19 as its basis has however been abandoned along, with many other impracticable ordinances. Thus the Ba'bi year comprised 19 solar months of

ig days each, to which intercalary days are added between the  
 18th and 19th months. The last month is consecrated to  
 fasting. The unity is also manifested in the divine attribute  
 Hayy, the Living, which equals 8+10=18, and with the one  
 which underlies 'all plurality makes 1.9. The BAb together, with  
 his 18 disciples constituted the letters of the Living (ig). The  
 choice of Mirza Yahya by the BAb as his successor was, probably  
 determined by the fact that the numerical value of the name  
 Yallya was 36, a multiple of 18 on which account he was also  
 called Wdhid which is numerically equivalent to 28, the number  
 of letters constituting the Arabic alphabet. The town Adria-  
 norde. where the Babis were exiled; was called by them the land  
 of mystery: because the syllables i-- -the fi--m--6F-tYe-t-ow-n Ii-a-d

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the same numerical value (260) which!) ~Corr ~onds to the~ N-...and herald -This  
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in ~-vvhich Fthe tw~elt 1

.....inent of a similar nature, was not accepted and recognized un--

.....aninously. Some, even among those who -originally belonged

This doctrine is full of metaphysical transcendentalism, and

even such reforms as savour of utility, such as the amelioration to the circle  
 of the BAb,

vehemently opposed the new manifesta-

'Of the position of women or the prohibition of chastisement of God. A

fierce

and disgraceful quarrel attended with

children are entirely based on mystical considerations. For... Violence broke

out between the

rival parties, until finally the

example, the Babi taught that the future manifestation of God.. Turkish

Government had to

intervene in the fight between the

shall first appear as a child, it would therefore constitute a grave two

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Subli-i-Ezel, who

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Famagusta in

it was necessary that tile chastisement (f cliddi .....nal  
 The play oil words formed another inoportant element in the.... the island of  
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 philosophy of Ba'bism. ....each of the factions four.adherents of the  
 opposite group were  
 .....attached, so that the Turkish Government' could be kept  
 The conflict between Mirza Muhammad the Ba'b apd Hajji..... informed ~  
 regarding the  
 'activities of both the parties. The  
 Muhammad Karim KhAn regarding the status of the Interme-..... followers of  
 Bahalullah put to  
 death all the four Ezelis attached.  
 diary to the hidden Imaim clearly shows, however, tile reaction  
 of external factors on the growth . of a revealed religion. It was to their  
 party. The hostility  
 between the two Ba'bi factions  
 .....continued with pen and dagger alike. The sect of the- Ezelis  
 not the intrinsic value of the rival doctrines which decided tile which had  
 adhered to 'the  
 original doctrine 'in its rigid and  
 issue, but the influence exerted by the respective leaders oil  
 their contemporaries. The growth of a doctrine and its ulti-... narrow form,  
 gradually declined  
 in influence while the followers  
 .....a in strength. Balia'ullah succeeded in  
 .....of Bali'ullah gained  
 mate success is determined by the simplest human factors,  
 I ..... getting recognized by a large number of people as the,manifes-  
 anthropological  
 and social. The fact that the social factors were .....tation of God, and  
 he gradually put the 1~6'b in the background  
 of greater importance than the transcendental and metaphysical. as compared  
 with his own heavenly  
 splendour. The name of

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nature of the doctrines was clearly recognized by the new leader the sect was  
 changed from that  
 of Ba'bism to Bahá'ísm. Tile,  
 BallAullah, who by his carefully conducted propaganda suc-..... doctrines of  
 -the Bfib were  
 regarded only as preparatory and  
 ceeded in Attaining a supremacy over the more dogmatic and..... provisional,  
 while Bahaullah was  
 authorized to give them a final  
 single-minded Subh-i-Ezel'. .....shape and sanction. And Bahiullah made

full use of his

A new period in the history of the movement set in with..... authority. The B&bi religion was

firmly rooted in Persian

the rise of Bahiullah. The little party of emigrants at Baghbad Sliitism and it had no chance

of I making proselytes outside the

were too near the Persian frontier, and the Persian Governinent

.....Shiite world. Bahiullah discarded all restricting metaphysical

requested the Porte for their transfer to Adrianople in 1864... peculiarities.

He also modified

the attitude of 'uncompromising

Here BaliAullah publicly announced that it was he in whom..... hostil~y to the orthodox

Musul-mans, and to the Shah of -Persia

God had become manifest in accordance with the prediction of... which had

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the Ba'b. He strictly adhered to the doctrines of Ba'bism, and. eve VmPathetic

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i.....n p\_\_- \_

although there is some evidence to show that he had at one time d`evelo~ed the ethical side of

the teaching, and in Fi-s-l~-tters: to

considered himself to be merely the successor of the Ba'b, he.. potentates he

used a gentle and

patient tone. He had a clear

now assumed a new role: he was the promised one, -the real..... grasp of the

aspirations'of the

human. mind in the 20th century, '-

manifestation of God, to whom the 13a'b was only a forerunner.. and included in

his teachings ~a

very wide scheme of social

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reform in a most synipathetic way, but with the simplistic

views of a dreamer. Anti-alcoholisni, unemployment help,

women's suffrage, reforin of criminology, socialism, local auto-

noiny in political administration, universal language, interna-

tional union, and general peace, all figured in his programme.

Nor was Balliullah Aevoid of th!~\_\_power of clairvoyan .

In the\* -year 1869 lie wrote to Napoleon III rebuking him for \_4s

Vill-iwfi-i-Ji-he had treated a

fo-rin-eri-e from him. 0 owing

sf~-rn-warii~n-g--7--T-11~-doiigs will throw thy kingdom into

confusion; sovereignty shall pass from thy hands to requite

thee for thy deeds, and thus thou shalt find thyself in grievous

loss. Convulsions shall seize all peoples in yonder land, unless thou dost arise in this cause and in this straight path follow the spirit. Hath thy poilip made thee vainglorious? By my life, it shall not endure, nay, it shall pass away, unless thou dost cling unto this strong cord. We behold abasement hastening upon thy heels and thou art yet of them that are heedless'. It is characteristic that an English Bahai writer believes firmly that the debacle of France in 1870 would have been averted if Napoleon had adopted the noble cause and the straight path of the Bahai.

Bahfiullah was by no means led by Germanophile motives 'in beholding abasement hastening upon the heels' of Napoleon. In the Kitdb-i-Aqdas which was begun in Adrianople and finished in Akka, he sent a similar stern admonition to the Emperor of Germany:m-

'O King of Berlin . . . Recollect the one who was greater than thee in station (Napoleon III), and whose position was higher than thine. - Where is he? and where are his possessions? Be admonished and be not of those who sleep. He cast the tablet of God behind him when we informed him of what had befallen us from the hosts of oppression and thus disgrace beset him from all sides until he returned to the dust in great loss. O King, think deeply concerning him as well as about those like unto thee who conquered cities and ruled over servants of God-and -God brought them down from palaces to graves. Be warned and be of those who are mindful'.

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'O Banks of the River Rhine, we have seen you drenched in gore because the swords of retribution were drawn against you. You shall have another turn. And we hear the lamentation of Berlin, although it be to-day in manifest glory.'

The English writer alluded to above says : "during the period of German success in the Great War of 1914-18, and especially during the last German offensive in the spring of 1918, this well-known prophecy was extensively quoted by the opponents of the Bahai movement in Persia in order to discredit BahAullali; but when the forward sweep of the victorious Germans was suddenly transformed into a crushing and overwhelming disaster, the efforts of these enemies of the Bahai cause recoiled on themselves, and the notoriety which they had given to the prophecy became a powerful means of enhancing the reputation of Bahiullah."

A message of consolation is addressed to Persia in the Kitdb-i-Akdas

'O land of Ta (Teheran) be not sorrowful from any cause.  
God hath made thee the dawning place of the joy of the world.  
If He will, He will bless thy throne with one who will rule  
with justice and gather together the sheep-of God-which have  
been scattered by the wolves. Verily He will treat the people of  
Baha' with joy and gladness. So, He is of the essence of the  
people in the sight of God.'

'Rejoice, for God hath made thee a Horizon of light, because  
in thee was born the Dawning Place of the Manifestation. Soon  
affairs will be changed in thee and a republic of men shall rule  
over thee. Verily the countenance of Grace ~ will - not cease to  
behold thee with the eyes of love. Soon peace will overtake  
thee after commotion. Thus it hath been decreed in the Book  
of Wonders.'

Turkey, which had given shelter to Baha'ullah and his  
followers, did not fare better at his hands ~ than France and  
Germany. There are several passages: in Ahe Kitd-i-Aqdas  
which predict the downfall of the Ottomans,'but evidently his  
wrath was~directed against this kingdom, ~;It had ~whi&a handful  
of dust is greater before God,' because it did not take up his  
cause in a way which would have satisfied him, ~Thou didst

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unite with the Ruler of Persia for doing me harm,' so he wrote  
to Ali Pasha, 'although I had collie to you from the Dawning  
Place of the Almighty, the Great, with a cause which refreshed  
the eyes of the favoured ones of God. Didst thou think that  
thou couldst put out the fire which God hath enkindled in the  
Universe? Its blaze and flame will be increased. Soon it will  
encompass the world and its inhabitants. Soon the land of  
martyrs (Adrianople) will be changed and will pass out of the  
hands of the King" and commotion shall -appear in the districts  
and affairs will be in confusion because of what hath happened  
to those captives' (BahAullah and his companions).

The Turks cared little for the threats of Baha'ullah. The  
Sufiite -element in his doctrine did not appeal to them, and his  
cosmopolitan teachings found deaf ears among the awakening  
nationalists. The Government had an eye on him, and when  
his quarrel with Subh-i-Ezel led to violence, it prevented further  
blood-shed by separating the rival factions, and Baha'ullah never  
attained any political power in Turkey.

His exhortations sound overbearing and egoistic if we dare  
doubt his infallible prophethood and venture to judge them as  
those of a normal mortal. He addressed Americans in the  
Kitd-i-Aqdas, 5 some fifty years ago in the following words :

'O, Rulers of America, Presidents and Governors of the Republic therein, hear the call from the Dawning Place on High. There is no God but me, the speaker and the Omniscient : Bind up the broken limb with the hands of justice, and break the sound limb of the oppressor with the rod of the Command of your Lord, the Ruler, the Wise.'

In the writings of Bahá'u'lláh we notice a clearness of style which in striking contrast to the rugged and unimpeachable character of Bábí li tu-re~Through him God addresses His creatures, proclaiming His love for them, teaching them His attributes, making His will known, announcing His laws for their guidance and pleading for their love, allegiance and service. In his writings the form of expression frequently changes. Sometimes it is evident that the man himself is speaking, then

of This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, for Adrianople is still in the hands of the Turks and, -

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without a break the writing continues as if God Himself were speaking in the first person.

His mission was to bring about unity of all mankind in and through God. He said

'Of the Tree of Knowledge the all-glorious fruit is this exalted word : of one tree are all ye the fruits and of one bough the leaves. Let no man glory in this that he loves his country, but let him rather glory in this that he loves his kind.'

It was this ethical and humanitarian spirit, rather than the dry metaphysical doctrines of Bahá'ísm which gained new followers all over the world, while those who were allured by the glamour of mysticism still found ample scope in it. In Akka, where Bahá'u'lláh lived as an exile, people flocked to see him, and by this intercourse with the world his doctrines broadened. He dropped most of the minor restrictions imposed by the Bábí, which were dictated in many cases by his personal tastes and feelings. Such were the prohibition of smoking and the eating of onions, the regulations as to clothing, forms of salutation, the use of rings, perfumes, the names by which children might be named and so on. The laws of Bahá'u'lláh, with the exception of the law of inheritance, are much simpler in character and are such as may be enforced in practice. For example, smoking is not only unbecoming, but also unbecoming to the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, while the Esotericists still maintain the prohibition as strictly ever.

In the nineties, a Syrian Christian converted to Baha'ism, Ibra'him. George Khair-ullah, settled in the United States, and started active propoganda in America on behalf of the new revelation. He delivered a large number of lectures on BahAism-and published a number of books which were favourably received. The monotonous factory life of over-industrialized America harbours a naive sentimentalism which finds pleasure and enthusiasm in all humanitarian ideas, and it was not surprising that Bahfiism. developed a vigourous branch-

Footnote:

\*While acting as an interpreter to Abdul Bahfi during his tour in Hungary, I remember that I once offered him cigarettes, and he carefully selected one and smoked it with apparent enjoyment.

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movement in America, marked, by the production of a copious but shallow literature.

Baha'ullah died in 1892. He nominated as his successor his eldest son Abbas, also called Abdul Balia, servant of Baha'. Balia'ullali had conferred on his son, in accordance with the usual practice in his community, the sonorous title 'Ghusn-i-Azam,' the most mighty branch ; the younger son Mirza Muliaininad Ali was called 'Gliusn-i-Akbar,' the most great branch. Abdul Balia's life was accompanied by thrilling romance. He was born at Teheran before midnight on the 23rd May, 1844 (5 Djuhidliatula, 1260) in the very same hour in which the Baha' declared his mission.

He was eight years of age when his father was thrown into prison. On one occasion he saw his father moving along the prison yard heavily shackled, his neck bowed under the weight of a heavy steel collar, his body bent by iron chains. This awful sight created a lasting impression on the mind of the boy. At Baghdad, long before the manifestation of God became clear to Baha'ullah, the son suddenly felt a conviction that it was his father in whom the divine spirit should shine forth. Sixty years later he dictated to his secretary\_ his impressions of that period in the following- words:

"I am the servant of the Blessed Perfection Baha'ullah. In Baghdad I was a child. Then and there He announced to me the Words and I believed in Him. As soon as He proclaimed to me the word, I threw myself at His holy feet and implored and supplicated Him to accept my blood as a sacrifice in His pathway. What greater glory can I conceive than to see this liek chained for His sake, these feet fettered for His love, this

body mutilated th  
If in

~X LOWD. LU Lhe dePtns ot the sea for His cause.  
reality we are His sincere lovers, if in reality I am His  
sincere servant, than I must sacrifice my life, nay all, at his  
Blessed Threshold.

Froill. this time his friends began to call him : the mystery  
of God; a title by which he was known during the residence in  
Baghdad. Several wonderful stories are related about the innate  
sagacity with which while yet a boy he solved the most intricate  
metaphysical problems. A curious story is current about the

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circumstances of his marriage. For a-long time he showed no  
inclination for marriage, and no one understood the reason for  
this. Afterwards, it became known that there was a girl who  
was destined to become his wife, one whose birth came about  
through the blessing which the Ba'b had given to her parents in  
Ispahan. They had no children although the wife was longing  
for a child. On hearing this the B'fih gave the husband ~ an  
apple and told him to share it with his wife. After they had  
eaten of that apple, it soon became apparent that their long  
cherished hopes of parenthood were about to be fulfilled, and  
in due course a daughter was born to them. This daughter was  
the elected wife of Abdul Bahfi. In the constant odour of  
sanctity and miracles, Abdul Bahfi was brought up as the future  
leader of the community.

In the face of the clear testament of Bahfiullah little room  
was left for dissension, and yet a conflict over the same old  
principles soon broke out among the followers. The question  
was again whether Bahfiism was a final revelation in which the  
possibility of new innovations ceased with the passing of the  
Manifestation of God, or whether Abdul Baha' was entitled to  
further inspirations of his own. , ~ In the Kitdb-i-A qdas Bahiullah  
himself had explicitly, -stated that 'whosoever lays claim to' any  
authority to promulgate 'e fresh revelations before the completion  
of a millenium is assuredly a liar and an imposter'. Abdu  
Bahfi's - brothers and some of . the. leading Bah6is therefore  
strenuously resisted the claim of Abdul Bahfi to promulgate,  
new doctrines or fresh. ordinances, on the ground that a millenium-  
of occultation must pass before a new exposition of the divine  
will would be necessary. Thus the BahAi religion split . into  
two hostile parties fighting in Persia as well as in America an'd--  
other countries of the world. Ibr6him Khair-ullah espoused the  
cause of the conservative party, and consequently Abdul Baha'

was also obliged to send missionaries to America to counteract, Khair-ullah's propaganda. ..The strife between the, different Bfibi ~ factions, the heads of all of which -claim aTir t divine mspi:~a-tionis i-diiifiguring Ew ii -the Fis th~,E zin -t qv

~~ ent,

and is an insoluble ~ contradiction in Ats -baak-

Assuming: the BAb. to have -been divinely inspired (and this

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possible in design and workmanship. It should stand in a large garden, surrounded by a number of accessory buildings devoted to educational, charitable and social purposes so that the worship of God in the temple may always be closely associated with reverent delight in the beauties of nature and practical work. Such temples are being built in IshkAb6d, Bombay and Wilmette on lake Michigan near Chicago.

Abdul Baha' lived at Akka, under the strict supervision of the Turkish Government. He was visited from all parts of the world by ardent followers or curious sightseers. After the Turkish revolution he was declared free and in 19TT lie undertook tours in Europe and America, delivering lectures, answering questions and expounding the doctrines of his religion of unity. The reception accorded to him must have deeply impressed him, and probably created an impression in his mind that his religion will soon be universal on earth. The universality of his teaching naturally attracted a large number of pacifists, suffragettes, esperantists, theosophists, prohibitionists, socialists and the ultra-liberals, while the mysterious effect,.which oriental dress, beauty of personal appearance and the unfamiliar music of oriental language never fail to produce on Western minds, drew others out of pure curiosity. He succeeded in establishing new centres -of -BahAis\_n1 in Germany, France and elsewhere, while in America he gained a final ascendancy over the followers of his brother.

In Persia the persecution of BAbis and Bahfiis has\_gradnally TE e 0 who

ceased. e-re--are a few BASIs belongi g to th Id school, MI themselves Kullu Shavis, and do not care about the quarrel between Ezelis and Balifiis, and a large but indeterminable number of BahAis proper. Lord Curzon in his book on "Persia and the Persian Question," published in x892, wrote : "the lowest estimates place the number of BAbis in Persia at half of a million. I am disposed to think from conversations with persons well qualified to judge that the total is nearer one million. They are to be found in every walk of life from the ministers and

nobles of the Court to the scavenger or the groom, not the least arena of their activity being the Musalman priesthood itself. Judaism continues to grow at its present rate of progress, a time may conceivably come when it will oust Mollaniiiadaiisin from This, I think it would be unlikely to do.

did it appear upon the ground: round-Cu~ner the flag of a hostile faith. But it is its recruit~ ~a~ won from the best soldiers of the garrison whom it is attacking, there is greater reason to believe that it may ultimately prevail." This prediction however was not fulfilled; the movement after a phenomenal rise again subsided within normal limits.

Abdul Bahá survived the Great War, and saw a good deal

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of his life-work come to fruition. The Bahá'ís set a good example of material work in transforming the barren Akka (Akbrab-ulbilfid) into a little garden. They organized extensive agricultural operations near Tiberias during the war, and secured a great supply of wheat by which a famine was averted. Since the British occupation of Syria, Abdul Bahá became the centre of a large circle listening to his words, and hundreds of visitors from the East and West flocked to his house. The British Government was so profoundly impressed by his character and his great work in the interest of peace and prosperity of the people that they conferred on him a knighthood of the British Empire. When he departed from the earthly life in 1921 the British High Commissioner officially took part in his funeral. -

He died without issue. His grand-son Shauk-i-Rabbani student of Oxford, was proclaimed as his successor, but he was unable to form a group of followers. - it

is not unlikely that the Bahá'í movement will be the platform of universalism. A typical example of recent writings is furnished by the 'New Humanity' by Mirza Alimad Sohrab, the Secretary of Abdul Bahá, in which the idea of universality is indiscriminately applied to such concepts as universal peace, universal patriotism, universal language, universal opinion, universal dawn (?), universal age, universal newspaper, universal femininity, universal painting and

'P. 181. "This is the age of women, for this very reason if for no other, it is a universal age."

' P. 290. "In her hands is the jar of star (scent) of the rose of understanding.

An artist whistled into my ear; "I would rather spend one hour with her than seventy years with a Saint."

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literature, universal aviation and broadcasting, universal penance and so on. It is a work not devoid of charm but without the slightest basis of science or a positive back-ground of history.

The after-effects of the Great War in Persia are however not very conducive towards the growth of mysticism. In the West there was a decided reaction against materialism, in the East there was a movement towards positivism, a process which has its psychological as well as social reasons. Bahfiism is not likely to continue to exercise its old majzic influenm--on

is now more inclined to be captivated by the forward march of industrialism. Romance will pass away with the gro;thand the colour of life will dissolve into the gray haze of outward uniformity. Nothing is more cruel than realities, for even if they give contact with truth, they fail to bring happiness, the illusion of. pious hearts.

Water when analysed consists of two elements without taste and flavour, still it quenches the thirst and is the substance of life. Likewise every religion can be analysed into elements of myth, legends and popular lore; still it- quenches the thirst of man for guidance and truth and sustains him in his stumbling progress through errors and deficiencies in his slow approach to the harmony pervading the universe.

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