



from the Bahá'í Faith. The two great champions of this approach are Shoghi Effendi's Nabil and the Guardian himself. At least in the form we have it, Nabil's history is, among many other things, an attempt to justify Babi history as being in conformity with Bahá'í standards. Thus, in the study I did of his treatment of the battle of Zanjan, he downplays, reinterprets, or omits anything that portrays the Babis as aggressive. Such an approach is very characteristic of the Guardian who translated Nabil and who carefully refers to the various battles as "upheavals," rather than "Babi revolts," in *\*God Passes By\**. Such a position served to strengthen the quite valid Bahá'í claim to be apolitical and law-abiding.

Probably as a result of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's distancing of the Faith from the Babis, Babi studies were generally out of fashion with Iranian Bahá'í scholars in the period between the death of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Islamic Revolution. Virtually none of the Bab's works were published by the Iranian Bahá'ís, and not very much was written about the Bab. The current revival of interest in Babi studies arose in the West. The exception was Fadil. Apart from the three volumes of Zuhuru'l-Haqq dealing with the Shaykhis and Babis, he is far more likely than his contemporary Ishraq-Khavari to cite Babi parallels as explanations for Bahá'í texts and teachings. He is also far more likely to cite Islamic parallels. Fadil was thus stressing the continuity of the Bahá'í Faith with Babism and Islam and stressing the Shiite and Babi aspects of the Bahá'í Faith at a time when the general policy was to stress the distinctiveness, rationality, and modernity of the Bahá'í Faith. Moreover, his deep and detailed knowledge of Babi thought and history tended to undermine the two rhetorical moves that would distance the Bahá'í Faith from the esoteric and sectarian aspects of the Babis.

In contrast, all three of those responsible for Fadil's fall and the suppression of Zuhur al-Haqq were committed to other interpretations of the Faith. xxxx was a Russian-trained educationist deeply involved in the modernization of Iranian education and with little

sympathy for the esoteric Shiite tradition that Fadil recognized in the Babi and Bahá'í Faiths.

Ishraq- Khavari also was exclusively concerned with Bahá'í topics to the exclusion of Babi material. He also translated of Shoghi Effendi's translation of Nabil into Persian (from an Arabic translation of the English!). Shoghi Effendi was Western-educated and his views are well known. The suppression of Fadil's work can thus be seen as an attempt to preserve the integrity of a particular reinterpretation of Bahá'í history--one that portrayed the Babis as (1) marginal to current Bahá'í concerns and (2) proto-Bahá'ís--against an interpretation of Babi and Bahá'í history that (1) stressed the distinctive features of the Babis and (2) implicitly stressed the continuity of Islam, Babism, and the Bahá'í Faith.

Update on Zuhuru'l-Haqq.

The Persian Review Panel wrote to the World Centre requesting permission for publication of Zuhuru'l-Haqq, vol. 4 (Bahá'u'lláh, 1852-1867 period). I've just received a copy of the World Centre's response to the committee and I append a translation.

5 Nov 1996

The Persian Reviewing Panel, 536 Sheridan Road Wilmette, IL 60091 USA

The letter of 20 June 1996 of that Panel regarding the publication of volume 4 of Zuhuru'l-Haqq was considered by the Supreme Body.

It instructed us to inform you that the World Centre, when in the future considers such enterprises timely, will undertake publication of narratives of the early believers, including the Zuhuru'l-Haqq series, which will be accompanied by adequate footnotes and other explanations.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,  
Department of the Secretariat

cc. Dr. Ahang Rabbani

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