

scholars became muballighs, teachers, and exponents of the Bahá'í Faith who frequently travelled from place to place. Through such persons the stream of scholarly works continued. The exigencies of the times however determined that these were mostly still introductory and polemical works.

Of major importance among the activities of the Bahá'í scholars of this period was the work of Mirza Abu'l-Fadl Gulpaygani (q.v.) in relating the prophecies in the Hebrew and Christian Bibles to the Bahá'í Faith. This opened the way to the conversion of Jews and Christians in Iran, Syria, and Egypt. Gulpaygani's other notable achievements include his conversion of a number of Sunni scholars of the al-Azhar University in Cairo and his presentation of the Bahá'í teachings to the Bahá'ís of the West during his four-year sojourn in America.

Other important Bahá'í scholars of this period included Shaykh Muhammad Qa'ini Nabil-i-Akbar (q.v.), Shaykh Muhammad `Ali Qa'ini (q.v.) and from a somewhat later period Mirza Asadu'llah Fadil-i-Mazandarani (q.v.). Many others wrote istidlaliyyih, works written in proof of the Bahá'í Faith usually written from the viewpoint of a particular religion. Among such authors were Haji Mirza Muhammad Afshar (from an Islamic viewpoint), `Andalib (Christian), and Mirza Mihdi Arjumand (Jewish and Christian).

Bahá'u'lláh himself gave encouragement to the development of scholarship and on some occasions referred questions that had been asked of him to scholars such as Gulpaygani to answer.

Western Scholarship on the Bahá'í Faith

The first accounts of the Babi movement to be published in scholarly journals were a brief notice by the American missionary, Dr Austin Wright, published in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenl?ndische Gesellschaft* (vol. 5, 1851, pp. 384-5) and notes concerning some Babi manuscripts by Bernard Dorn published in Russia in 1865.

Of much greater importance in alerting the West to the rise of the Babi movement was the book *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale* (Paris, 1865) by Arthur, Comte de Gobineau (q.v.). More than half of the book is devoted to the Babi movement. In the same year, a Russian scholar from the Caucasus, Mirza Kazem-Beg, produced a book on the Babis,

Bab i Babidui (St Petersburg, 1865), which also came out in French translation in the *Journal Asiatique* in 1866.

These two works were to remain the main source of information on the Babi movement in the West for many years. They mark an important turning-point in that the accounts that had appeared before this gave the general impression of the Babis as revolutionary communists and anarchists. Gobineau was the first to demonstrate that there was some considerable substance in the teachings of the Bab as well as heroism in the actions of the Bab and the Babis. He did this so well that a number of European intellectuals became very interested in the Babi movement.

Edward Granville Browne (q.v.) was the first academic to concentrate on the new religion. He travelled to Iran in 1887-8 and subsequently in 1890 to Cyprus to meet Azal and to `Akka to meet Bahá'u'lláh. He was the first to appreciate and document the nature of the change that had transformed the Babi movement into the Bahá'í Faith. He published the results of his researches in a number of papers and books. His later work on this subject was, however, somewhat biased towards the claims of Azal and against the Bahá'í position.

Equally assiduous in his efforts although concentrating almost exclusively on the Bab was the French consular official and writer, A.-L.-M. Nicolas (q.v.), who had been born and raised in Iran. He wrote a history, *Seyyed Ali dit le Bab* (Paris, 1905), as well as translating a number of the Bab's most important works. He is also the first to have written at any length on the *Shaykhis*, *Essai sur le Cheikhisme* (4 vols., Paris, 1910-1914). Nicolas also adopted a somewhat hostile attitude towards the Bahá'í although not adopting the same pro-Azali position that Browne had done. However it is reported that late in life, he was reconciled to the Bahá'ís.

In contrast to Browne and Nicolas who concentrated their efforts on the Bab, there were, at this time in Russia, a number of scholars who were concentrating more on the Bahá'ís. Baron Victor Rosen (1849-1908) in the course of cataloguing the collections of Arabic and Persian manuscripts at St Petersburg, took a close interest in the Bahá'í movement and wrote a number of papers on the subject as well as arranging for a collection of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh to be published. Aleksandr Tumanski was a Russian soldier and orientalist who took a close interest in the Bahá'ís and spent some time with the Bahá'í community in Ashkhabad. He published the text and a translation of the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* as well as a number of papers.

A number of other Western oriental scholars also wrote important articles about the new religion at this time although none of them had a sustained interest in the subject: Prof. V.A. Zhukovski of St Petersburg; Prof. Clement Huart of Paris; Hermann Roemer of Tübingen; Prof. Ignaz Goldziher of Budapest; and Prof. Arthur Christensen of Copenhagen. There were also some who were considered eminent scholars in such fields as religion, but who were not oriental scholars, and who also wrote about the Bahá'í Faith. These included such figures as Dr. Benjamin

Jowett, Prof. Thomas Cheyne and Prof. John Carpenter of Oxford; Prof Auguste Forel (q.v.) of Switzerland; and the philosopher Leo Tolstoy (q.v.) of Russia. Among the nascent communities of Western Bahá'ís, the most proficient scholar was the Frenchman, Hippolyte Dreyfus (q.v.). He succeeded in gaining a mastery of Persian sufficient to investigate the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith in their original language. There exist some articles and letters that indicate that he was interested in research but the needs of the time dictated that his main efforts were in the field

of translation of the Bahá'í scriptures.

Anti-Bahá'í Polemical scholarship

Just as the earliest followers of the religion of the Bab were `ulama, so the earliest opponents of the religion were also Muslim clerics. Foremost amongst these in this early period was the Shaykhi leader Haji Muhammad Karim Khan Kirmani (q.v.), who wrote four treatises against the Bab, the first in 1845. Since that time many Muslim scholars have written treatises against both the Babi and Bahá'í Faiths, such as the *Miftah Bab al-Abwab* by Mirza Mahdi Khan Za`imu'd-Dawlih (Cairo, 1321/1903-4). Muslim anti-Bahá'í polemic has increased in the years since the Iranian Revolution.

From the early decades of this century, this stream of Muslim anti-Bahá'í polemic has been joined a rising amount of Christian anti-Bahá'í polemic. This was initiated by Christian missionaries in Iran such as S.G. Wilson and J.R. Richards, but has been extended in recent years to Christian theologians especially those from a Protestant fundamentalist background. Polemic from other religious groups against the Bahá'í Faith has not thus far been of major importance although it is anticipated that this may increase in the future.

In addition, there have been attacks on the Bahá'í Faith made by secular opponents. The largest volume of such material was generated in the Soviet Union as part of the communist anti-religion drive.

Also to be included in this category are the works of "Covenant-Breaker" (q.v.) groups. These begin with Azali polemic in the 19th century such as the *Hasht Bihisht* of Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani. For other examples see Ahmad Sohrab, *Broken Silence* (1942); and Herman Zimmer,

A Fraudulent Testament devalues the Bahai Religion into Political Shoghism (1973).

Lastly, there remain a number of works written by apostates. `Abdu'l-Husayn Avarih, for example, was a Bahá'í who wrote an important history of the Bahá'í Faith, the *Kavakibu'd-Durriyyih*. He later left the Bahá'í Faith and wrote the *Kashfu'l-Hiyal*. Other examples include the works of Subhi and Niku.

Modern Bahá'í Polemical Scholarship

During much of the period of Shoghi Effendi's leadership there were comparatively very few works of scholarship produced by the Bahá'ís. In part, this may have been due to the prodigious output of Shoghi Effendi himself who produced numerous works in English and Persian, including histories, commentaries, and translations of scripture. Although Shoghi Effendi made appeals for the emergence of "a more profound and coordinated Bahá'í scholarship" in order to explore the "deeper teachings" of the Bahá'í Faith and present them "intelligently and enticingly" (*Gift of Teaching*, p. 25) and

although there were intellectuals in the Bahá'í community, there was very little response to this appeal from Shoghi Effendi. Most scholarship in the Bahá'í community continued to be mainly geared to producing polemical and introductory literature along lines that had, by the middle of the 20th century, become somewhat stereo-typed and out-dated.

Among Iranian Bahá'í scholars, there was some diversification away from works of polemic to commentaries on scripture and histories.

In particular should be noted the voluminous output of `Abdu'l-Hamid Ishraq-Khavari

(q.v.) and the historical works of `Azizu'llah Sulaymani, Muhammad `Ali Faydi, and Muhammad-`Ali Malik-Khusravi. In more modern times a number of scholars with training in more modern academic disciplines arose and began to disseminate writings (mainly in the form of articles) informed by such areas as western philosophy. Notable among these are `Abbas `Alavi, `Ali-Murad Davudi, Badi`u'llah Farid, and Kamalu'd-Din Bakhtavar.

In the West, Dr. John E. Esslemont (q.v.) did considerable research in writing his book,

Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era (London,

1923), the book that has universally been regarded as the textbook of the Bahá'í Faith until recent times. A few further introductory books were published in the next few decades, the most notable being those of George Townshend (q.v.).

In the period following the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the number and variety of books published has increased markedly. The area of history and biography has been well served. A start has been made in the area of applied scholarship: the application of the social teachings of the Bahá'í Faith to areas such as social and economic development and education. However, up to the present, the area of theology and philosophy have been comparatively neglected.

Modern Western Academic Scholarship on the Bahá'í Faith

After the death of E.G. Browne in 1926, the scholarly study of the Babi and Bahá'í Faiths lapsed in the academic institutions of the West. A small number of theses on the Bahá'í Faith were produced. The thesis of Mikhail Ivanov, *Babidsjie vosstaniya v Irane (1848-1852)*, was published in Moscow in 1939. Among the Bahá'ís also there was little scholarly activity, the only exceptions being Alessandro Bausani in Italy and Adelbert M?hlschlegel and Hermann Grossmann in Germany. The needs of the Bahá'í community dictated that the majority of the literature which it published, apart from scripture, was either introductory or polemical in nature.

This state of affairs continued until the 1970s when the Bahá'í community grew to the extent that it could sustain the "luxury" of a more analytical type of scholarship and there was a renewed upsurge in such studies. This renewal was initiated by the writings of Hasan Balyuzi (q.v.). It has been carried on to a large extent (but not exclusively) by young Bahá'í scholars seeking to study their religion at post-graduate

level.

A number of important theses on the Shaykhi, Babi, and Bahá'í movements have been written in recent years. A measure of the change in level of academic activity can be gauged from the fact that between 1920 and 1970 only eight Ph.D. theses were produced while between 1970 and 1982, twelve were completed (between 1983 and 1987, a further seven theses were produced). Some of these theses have now been published: Peter Smith, *The Babi and Bahá'í Religions* and Abbas Amanat, *Ressurrection and Renewal*. In addition, an increasing number of papers have appeared in academic journals, such as *Iran*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Religion*, *The Journal of Religious History*, *Zygon*, and *Conflict Quarterly*. The series *Studies in Babi and Bahá'í History* (now renamed *Studies in the Babi and Bahá'í Religions*), and more recently the *Journal of Bahá'í Studies* (Ottawa, Canada) has provided an important additional place for the appearance of academic material. Research notes and preliminary papers have been circulated in the *Bulletin of Bahá'í Studies* (Newcastle, England).

At the University of Lancaster in England, annual seminars on Bahá'í studies took place between 1977 and 1980. Informal Bahá'í groups studying the Bahá'í Faith at varying academic levels have been meeting in Britain since the early 1970s, and in Los Angeles in the mid-1970s. The recent establishment of Bahá'í Chairs at the University of Mysore in India (1990) and at the Centre for International Development and Conflict Resolution at the University of Maryland (1993) signals an important new development in this area.

The Bahá'í Encyclopedia began as a project of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of the United States in 1983. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States agreed to sponsor the project in 1984 after the plan was endorsed by the Universal House of Justice.

Associations of Bahá'í Studies

A significant step in the development of Bahá'í studies occurred with the setting up in Canada in 1974 of the Canadian Association for Bahá'í Studies, which was renamed in 1981 the Association for Bahá'í Studies. This initiative has spread and there are now some seventeen Bahá'í studies associations around the world with the Association for Bahá'í Studies office in Ottawa acting as a coordinating center.

These Associations for Bahá'í Studies aim to improve all levels of scholarship in the Bahá'í Community. They have tended to concentrate upon developing polemical scholarship and what can be termed applied scholarship (applying the Bahá'í social teachings to the problems of the world). They have made a tentative start in the area of promoting the academic study of the Bahá'í Faith.

Bibliography.

A listing of Ph.D.

theses on Bahá'í-related topics can be found in Bahá'í World, vol. 18, pp. 890-1; Collins, Bibliography, 303-310. An account of the Lancaster seminars can be found in BW 18:204-5 (see also references at the end of this article). On the Association for Bahá'í Studies, see BW 18:194-200.

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